



USM will win this war against COVID19

Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullah/Salam sejahtera.

I hope everyone is well and keeping safe.

This message is targeted – **mainly** - to all in USM Main Campus – students (undergraduates and postgraduates), plus staff alike.

More specific initiatives concerning Health campus, Engineering campus, IPPT, IPS KL, sains@USM, sains@Alor Star, CEMACS, Arkeo@Sg Batu, Create@Georgetown, and USM-KLE India will be issued by the respective Directors, and guided by this communique and those SoPs underlined by MKN and MoHE.

I am calling for everyone to remain vigilant, united, disciplined and focused in battling the invisible threat. The spirit is to continue operations – deliver excellent teaching and learning, and conduct impactful research, while handling our affairs under the new norm.

USM has been very successful in managing the COVID19 threat since March 2020 and we shall continue to do so.

We will approach recent matters via a three-pronged approach:

- 1** Suffocating the potential spread of COVID19;
- 2** Successful handling of controlled and scheduled movement of students returning to USM; and
- 3** Limiting unscheduled access and movement from and into the campus.

At stake here are the safety and wellbeing of **ALL**:

- **2,600 students** who chose to remain on campus (including those with family);
- close to **100 staff** and family members residing on campus (residential colleges staff, security, development office);
- **1,400 students** returning from Hari Raya;
- **1,100 students** returning under the Phase 2 return to campus scheduled earlier; and

- **3,100 staff** – academic and non-academic staff – who work on campus.

It is crucial that everyone plays their respective roles with level headedness, and to look out for each other during these testing times. We understand that we are responsible towards all – concerned parents, family, sponsors, agencies, embassies, and friends of USM.

1 SUFFOCATING THE POTENTIAL SPREAD

The **2,700** students, staff and families on campus: **Stay put for 10 days May 15th until May 25th 2021.**

The idea is to limit movement, thus reducing exposure to COVID19, and to limit potential spread.

1.1 Cafeterias will be operational and we will implement the approach of appointing student representatives for bulk purchases of household needs such as children diapers and milk powder.

1.2 We appreciate your sacrifice in choosing to stay on campus during Hari Raya and we hope you continue being gritty and patient.

1.3 We also know that some of you would wish to return home given the extended online activities (see Section 2), but we are with the opinion that the risk of exposure is significantly low if you remain on campus.

2 RETURNING TO CAMPUS

We have made careful preparations for those returning from Hari Raya and those scheduled earlier to return (Phase 2) – ALL **2,500** students.

What you need to know are the following:

2.1 USM has decided to postpone essential face-to-face (F2F) sessions – laboratories and the likes – to a tentative date of **June 7th 2021**. From now to 7th, all teaching and learning will be fully online.

2.2 ALL exams for this semester will be **online**.

2.3 Postgraduates – USM will continue to monitor the situation. We aim to **allow limited access to laboratories as soon as possible**. We shall review this June 7th date, for postgraduates, on a weekly basis. PhD/Masters supervisors – please take note.

2.4 Those needing to maintain live samples – you shall be permitted to access your labs on case-to-case basis. There will be an upper limit to the number of persons allowed in laboratories and the amount of time spent.

2.5 Given recent developments, if you decide to **cancel/postpone** your trip back to campus, we would appreciate it if you would inform your respective Schools.

2.6 ALL returning students will have to follow isolation procedures with the exception for those who choose to undergo swab tests within the stipulated minimum time before returning.

3 LIMITED ACCESS INTO CAMPUS

To minimise risks towards the 2,700 already on campus, and the returning 2,500, plus the 3,100 staff, while maintaining services, USM will be implementing the following for the period **May 15th until May 25th 2021**:

3.1 An upper limit of **10%** staff entry into campus. The rest shall work from home. Please activate call-redirection to ensure availability. Those under the High-Risk category are not allowed to come into campus without prior permission from Nerve Centres.

3.2 For the purpose of contact tracing (if necessary), and enforcing the 10% staff limit, the use of the SKKF system is compulsory.

3.3 An upper limit of 20 persons per day in terms of access into campus among PETAS students, and postgraduates.

3.4 A 50% reduction of third-party operators and contractors on campus (cleaners, maintenance contractors, landscape) during this 10-day period.

3.5 Cancellation of all F2F visits/discussions/meetings with external parties planned to be held on campus.

For enquiries, please contact **USM's Nerve Centres**.

My personal thank you to those from Nerve and Desasiswa, including Prof Aldrin, who worked until 2am for two consecutive Raya nights.

Thank you and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Dr. Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan, FASc.

USM Vice-Chancellor

15 May 2021