



## Announcement from the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dear Students,

With the recent guidance to now work from home and yesterday's announcement regarding the KAUST gate restrictions, I appreciate many of you may have concerns and feel a long way from family and friends. As we move increasingly into our own homes, I want to take this opportunity to encourage all of you to contact your friends and loved ones both here and around the globe; please assure them that we are doing everything possible to keep you safe and healthy. The measures that we have taken and will continue to take have allowed us to remain virus free; and as of today, there are **no cases of COVID-19 here at KAUST.**

As I am sure you are aware, **all students should now be working and carrying out research remotely** with classes continuing online. For those of you currently enrolled in classes, please take a moment to fill out the [online class survey](#), which is providing valuable feedback to those delivering your lessons. We are working hard to be responsive to the unique demands of the current situation, and your voice is important to us. Academic Affairs is working with each Division and its Faculty to limit the disruption to your education. While the hope is that the current situation resolves itself quickly, we cannot be sure how long it will last. As such, not only have plans been put into place to ensure the completion of mid-term and of final exams, contingency plans are being developed across all Divisions so as to ensure that your academic progress continues for the entire semester and beyond should circumstances require it. Throughout this process, please **maintain regular contact with your advisor** to establish clear expectations and assignment of tasks. Furthermore, I understand that some students may have concerns about their impending graduation as well as thesis proposals or defenses. You should reach out to your advisor or GPC as soon as possible to address these concerns.

Many of you may have questions beyond your academics. The KAUST Coronavirus Taskforce is your dedicated source for information about COVID-19 adjustments happening here on campus. Regular updates can be found at the [KAUST COVID-19 webpage](#). Be cautious about the information you read on social media and through other sources that may not be accurate. A dedicated helpline and email are now in

place to respond to inquiries related to COVID-19. Contact the Taskforce at [CoronavirusTaskforce@kaust.edu.sa](mailto:CoronavirusTaskforce@kaust.edu.sa) or by calling 012 808 0950, Sunday to Thursday, 7 am to 7 pm. A dedicated team from across the campus has been set up to respond to your inquiries and needs.

The next two to three weeks are critical for us as a community. As such, I ask you to please **strictly follow** the newly announced guidelines to reduce interpersonal contact:

- All indoor and outdoor activities should be limited to **under 10 people**;
- **Do not hold** parties or group gatherings;
- **It is recommended** to only mix with people in your family or people with whom you usually share living space;
- If you exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 you should **immediately return** to your home and contact via email, [patient-relations@kaust.edu.sa](mailto:patient-relations@kaust.edu.sa) or by calling 012 808 0940;
- If you leave campus, **you will not be able to return for at least 14 days**; this is in line with Government restrictions on domestic travel and our efforts to keep our community safe.

**It is crucial you stay engaged and positive**, and I would encourage all of you to visit the new [Virtual Community Hub](#), reach out to your [Resident Assistant](#), and join the [Official Graduate Student Facebook page](#) to connect with peers. Graduate Services staff are working remotely and are ready to connect with students virtually.

Social Distancing does not mean complete isolation. It is vitally important during this period that each and every one of you takes an active role in supporting those around you; **virtually reach out** to your neighbors, friends, and colleagues so as a community we stay connected. We must come together and support one another in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep our community safe.

**Yves Gnanou**  
**Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs**