March 12, 2020

Dear Partners,

Pursuant to last week’s COVID-19 communication, we are reaching out once again to keep you informed of ongoing developments here in Jerusalem. As you are aware, many of our students are currently facing a very difficult decision-- whether to remain on-site in Jerusalem for the duration of their spring semester, or whether to return home. Some students have received very clear messaging from their home universities requiring them to come home, while many others have been given the option to decide for themselves what is best. Here at RIS we remain committed to supporting the decisions of our partners, our students, and their parents, as we collectively navigate this shifting landscape. Regardless of whether a student remains here in Jerusalem or returns home, our ultimate goal is to enable each and every student to complete her/his academic requirements this spring.

In accordance with our Ministry of Health’s revised guidelines, and in effort to accommodate the academic needs of students currently in self-quarantine and those who will be returning home, we have activated our academic contingency plan. Effective Sunday, March 15th, the Rothberg International School will be transitioning from in-person class attendance to a completely online delivery of the majority of RIS courses. Moreover, the Hebrew University has announced a one-week delay in the start of its spring semester, to enable the launch of its distance-learning platform. As such, any undergraduate students enrolled in English courses through the university faculties will begin these courses during the week of March 22, 2020, through the university’s online platform. We have communicated these updates directly to the students, including instructions on how to access the live streaming as well as the recorded sessions that we will be uploading to their Moodle learning platform.

The decision to shift to an online framework is not an easy one. While we know that distance-learning cannot compare to the dynamic, kinetic experience of in-person group learning, in the face of COVID-19 there is little doubt that this is a necessary step in ensuring the health and well-being of our students and staff. As always, we continue to closely monitor the situation, while offering as much support as possible to our students. If you have any questions or concerns, we welcome you to contact us.

Most Sincerely,

Prof. Noam Shoval, Provost
Ms. Yafit Sherer, Vice Provost