

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Greetings from Montezuma,

I hope this message finds everyone well. I want to share a few updates from campus and let everyone know that our work continues as we both deliver our programming online and prepare for next year. I also want to let you know that we are not alone in navigating our current challenges and preparing for our future. I'm in frequent contact with the heads of our UWC campuses across the globe. We are considering together, along with UWC International, what it will take to make the UWC experience possible next year. It is wonderful to be part of such a dedicated group of professionals who know that our mission won't be deterred in the face of global crisis. In fact, this is when our mission is more important than ever!



Here are developments since we last communicated and a few things we are looking forward to:

- With the news that the IB has canceled the IB exam this spring, a number of our students who were living with host families have decided to travel home to finish their studies. Our dean of academics is communicating regularly with students, parents, and teachers as new information becomes available.
- We currently have 30 students still with host families. Our residential staff is checking in with them as well as with students at home to support them as they establish their new routines. Our dean of students is in contact with families to offer support as well.
- This past week I hosted two sessions to update alumni on our status and to respond to their questions and concerns. Over 50 alumni attended and we had great conversations.
- Along with our dean of students and dean of academics, I will be hosting a similar online conversation with parents of current students within the next couple of weeks - please look for announcements and a way to sign up for the sessions.
- We are committed where possible to keeping our employees fully employed as well as safe through remote work and social distancing on campus for all whose jobs require them to be on campus. Employees are engaged either in delivering online learning, supporting online learning, accelerating progress on our strategy to strengthen our foundation, or keeping us safe and secure. We are meeting as an employee community online every two weeks, to share updates, listen and learn, and make sure we are moving forward together.
- Our leadership team, in collaboration with our staff, is beginning to review different scenarios for how we will open in the fall. We know we will continue to have a lot of unknowns challenging our ability to plan. We promise, however, to let you know what we know as we know it. A tongue twister, but a promise nonetheless!

Much of this update has been about the ways we are communicating - with students, parents, employees, and alumni. I am acutely aware that many want more communication and more specifics. I ask for your patience, however, as we work with a fluid situation. We want to make the best decisions possible in the interest of our students and their success. This will take some time and discussion. I also want to encourage you to be in touch. We are all fed by good will and good stories at a time like this.

During the online conversations last week our alumni offered suggestions, encouragement, and expertise. One alumna, who works in distance learning, offered to be a resource to our faculty. Another who works in a distillery shared how his team has converted their distillery production to make and distribute hand sanitizer. It got me wondering: What are the opportunities made possible by this pandemic to live the UWC mission? A powerful answer to this question emerged last week with a stunning collaboration between our student-led African Chorus and faculty who produced a music video of *Shosholoza*, a song with [particular importance](#) to the UWC-USA community.

Thank you again to everyone for their wishes of support and encouragement.

To our health and healthy communication,

Victoria

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