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6 April 2020

Members of the General Managers' Meeting (GMM)
Stellenbosch University

Dear Colleagues

Re: University services with regard to Staff Health and Wellbeing

Amidst all the important communication that you receive, we send one that is directly dealing with **the health and wellbeing of our staff**. We face extraordinary circumstances. In the context of the Coronavirus pandemic we have to ensure business continuity as optimally as possible. We deal with challenges and concerns in personal life, in the institution and in broader society. In our quest to be an Employer of Choice, the University wants to contribute to the health and wellbeing of staff. Health and wellbeing is truly an individual and institutional mandate and priority.

Last year in June, we sent a letter to all staff to indicate what health and wellbeing services are available under normal circumstances. This letter summarises the services that are available to staff in the context of the Corona pandemic. Services of the Division for **Campus Health Services (CHS)**, the **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** of the Division of Human Resources, and the **Coaching services** offered by colleagues Margaret Orr and Almene Potgieter are briefly outlined. These services are available **electronically**. Besides these services that are offered institutionally, various environments work on **environment-related services**. The institutional services aim to strengthen these environment-related services.

Colleagues, please bring these services under the attention of the staff in your environment.

I. Services related to the Division of Campus Health Services (CHS)

As an **essential service**, Campus Health Services are operating and open on both the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses in this time, for services to staff.

Consultations should, however, take place in alignment with the current guidelines of the National and Provincial Departments of Health, which determine that **physical face to face consultations** cannot

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take place without prior telephonic screening. Such screening will take place by phoning the CHS telephone lines (Stellenbosch - 021 8083496/ 3494 and Tygerberg - 021 9389590) during office hours. An after-hours information service, rendered by a physician, can also be accessed (0764310305). Healthcare staff of CHS can also offer assistance regarding management protocols for physical and mental health issues.

CHS is a **screening site** for possible Covid-19 cases or contacts. This means that referral for testing to a dedicated testing unit will be facilitated by health care workers at CHS. This testing can be done following a telephonic screening consultation. This telephonic screening will establish whether a staff member meets the current screening criteria that are determined by the National Department of Health through the National Institute for Communicable Disease (NICD).

With regard to **relevant information** relating to Covid-19 (emotional, mental or physical), staff can be assisted by a CHS healthcare provider (during office hours 021 8083496/ 021 808 3494/ 021 9389590 or after hours 0764310305).

Please visit the SU [dedicated website for Covid-19](#) for **updated information** as well as the [CHS website](#) for **the most recent information**.

2. Services related to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) of Human Resources

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides various services in these challenging times. These services include the following:

- Emotional support and advisory services;
- Virtual face-to-face counselling sessions by internal and/or external professionals;
- Trauma counselling (both debriefing and crisis intervention);
- Appropriate referral services.

These services are available **electronically** for all employees, and also for all line-managers.

All the services seek to address challenges like the following: **work-related challenges**, also working from home challenges; **personal challenges** like family and relationship concerns; alcohol, drug or online gambling abuse; stress and life changes; various forms of violence, including gender-based violence (GBV); challenges related to HIV/Aids; illness; death; grief.

The contact persons for the EAP Services are colleagues **Shibu Mamabolo** (shibu@sun.ac.za; 079011836), and **Adean Schippers** (schippers@sun.ac.za). Follow this link for further information <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/human-resources/employee-wellness>.

3. Services related to Coaching for leaders and line managers in the time of Corona

These are extraordinarily anxious times for all of us, most particularly for leaders who have so many considerations to juggle, and so many people looking to them for calm, clarity, and wisdom. Many leaders are finding themselves the lightning rod or punching bag for the anxieties and frustrations of their staff and colleagues. Individuals are being expected to provide Olympic level leadership, while simultaneously grappling with the anxieties and concerns of their own lives, and their own responses to the crisis. All of us are in some way or other feeling de-skilled and overwhelmed.

Here's how the coaching programme can help.

Colleagues Margaret Orr and Almene Potgieter are the University's **fulltime leadership coaches**, serving as a resource available to leaders and managers to support their personal and professional effectiveness and resilience, and their ability to make a powerful and engaged contribution to the wellbeing of their teams and departments over this challenging period.

Here are some of the questions leaders are currently bringing to their coaching conversations:

- How do I keep my staff focussed, motivated, and energised?
- How do I manage my own anxieties, fears and concerns?
- I'm feeling overwhelmed, and exhausted, and struggling to be productive.
- How do I manage my own irritation with other people's irrationality?
- How do I manage a team at a distance?
- How do I balance positivity and forward-focus with empathy and concern for my staff?
- Why are my staff behaving so badly?
- How do I show up as an authentic leader in this situation?
- What are good coping strategies for me / for my team?
- What are the big questions (life, mortality, legacy) that I need to be thinking about right now? What really matters, after all?
- What values do I want to honour in how I personally get through this / How do I lead my department through this?

Coaching is voluntary and entirely confidential.

Please also note that coaching is distinct from mentoring, counselling, therapy, conflict resolution, and mediation, and should not be conflated with these, or used when one of the other forms of supportive intervention is more appropriate. Individuals will be pointed in the direction of alternative resources for themselves or members of their teams where there are needs the coaching team are not equipped to meet.

Over the period of lockdown and physical distancing, individual leaders can access the supportive space of a coaching conversation via Skype, Microsoft Teams, telephone call, or email. Sessions are customised to the client's needs – they may range from a 15-minute check-in, to a quick exploration of strategy via email, to a 30-minute venting space, or a 60-minute in-depth coaching conversation.

For more information or to set up an initial conversation, contact:

- **Margaret Orr** (for senior and executive leadership levels 1-4, as well as academic Vice-Deans and Heads of Department / Department Chairs)
margareto@sun.ac.za
- **Almene Potgieter** (for support staff managers / supervisors and other individual employees at levels 5-7)
ap@sun.ac.za

In conclusion, colleagues, please take the liberty to contact us also with recommendations you might have to improve these services. Call our attention to important matters that you think we do not address. We journey together in most challenging times.

In verbondenheid,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nico Koopman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nico Koopman
Vice-Rector - Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel