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4 August 2020

Daniel Hoogstra  
RUSU President  
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Dear Daniel

Thank you for your open letter and let me begin by acknowledging the deep and widespread impacts of COVID-19. From the outset, the people of RMIT have focused on caring for our community, both financially and psychologically, to help them deal with the challenges of the pandemic.

The wellbeing of our students remains our priority at RMIT, tangibly demonstrated through our provision of mental health care, legal services, as well as a \$15 million investment to provide additional financial hardship support and technology grants. Students who were unable to pay their tuition fees, by the usual deadlines, were given extensions in semester 1 and we will work with any student struggling to meet their financial commitments as we progress through semester 2. Everyone's circumstance is unique, so we encourage individuals to reach out for help.

As a global university of technology, design and enterprise, RMIT prides itself on the ability to continually and rapidly adapt to a changing world. The challenges we're facing this year only highlight the ongoing importance of investing in new ways of learning and teaching.

In response to the disruption caused by the pandemic, we built on RMIT's digital capabilities and expertise to shift at pace to remote learning and teaching. To support this transition, we reallocated resources to develop online learning guidelines, conduct quality assessments, invest in our people with professional development, upgrade our systems and introduce new learning technologies. We have seen excellent results from our Course Experience Surveys and we are focused on continuous improvement.

Irrespective of the financial challenges facing the University sector, we are unwavering in our commitment to deliver transformative student experiences, now and into the future, and continuing to adapt in every way we can to ensure our students get a quality education that prepares them for the world of work. We also recognise our students need more than just academic guidance through this experience and we continue to provide extensive support in relation to mental health and wellbeing via counselling, online meet-ups and activities.

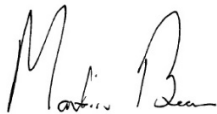
We are intensely focused on student progression and success, which means that we have been prioritising our practical based activities such as labs and studios, those activities that require hands on teaching first. Some of our essential services Vocational Education students started this transition back in May, with many more Higher Education students following. Regrettably, this activity is now paused in line with Stage 4 restrictions. We are currently reviewing in detail the permitted activities announced by the government this week that apply to the tertiary sector and research community as we look to reset our transition to campus plans. We will continue to do everything we can to respond to changes in government directions and restrictions to ensure our students are supported.

In accordance with our COVIDSafe plan, when we resume practical based activity on campus, we will continue to follow our meticulous safety protocols including physical distancing, enhanced cleaning and sanitisation of our spaces, mandatory temperature checks on arrival at campus and wearing of face masks.

While we are unable to support the direct request of a 20% reduction in student fees, we will continue to invest in our core purpose of learning, teaching and research and support our students to succeed in these challenging times.

There is no easy way through this. Together with RUSU, I believe RMIT is demonstrating great care in a situation that is defined by competing priorities. Thank you for the wonderful support you're providing our students, it's never been more important or appreciated than right now.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Bean'.

**Martin Bean, CBE**  
**Vice-Chancellor and President**