



An update from John Vinney



Dear colleague

If things were normal, this week I would usually be writing to you to thank you for everything that we have achieved together so far this year, to look forward to the summer and to wish you a pleasant break over Easter. Of course things are far from normal, but the message is the same.

Thank you for everything that we have achieved together this year, and particularly in the last few weeks. We have moved on-line and into virtual and distance learning and working, so effectively. We have reacted quickly and changed fast, and I am proud of the focus that staff across BU have put on the wellbeing of staff, students and our wider community. I also want to acknowledge that many staff are also caring for family and friends, volunteering, home schooling or working on the front line in a range of vital roles. And we are all anxious about others and about the uncertainty and long-term impacts. None of this is easy, so thank you.

I also want to thank the direct support that BU and our staff are giving to the national effort. In the Faculty of Science and Technology, we are using our 3D printer to print face masks. Teams and individuals across the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences are working with the NHS – on the front line, providing equipment, helping with planning and other support. Members of staff and students from across BU are volunteering locally to help the vulnerable or to support their communities. Please share your stories with me, if you would like to.

There are things to look forward to after the break. We have all learned new skills in the last two weeks that we will be able to use. For example, I have recorded [a podcast](#) for staff! In a couple of weeks, we will hopefully have to do less fire-fighting and be able to give more focus to important but slightly less urgent tasks. The weather, which has been fantastic so far, should continue to improve, so that if we are able to get outside, even briefly, we will enjoy the sunshine. The new normal will be more normal – we will have adjusted to a certain extent and found new routines. We will be able to look forward to the next few months and, hopefully, to a reduction in the isolation measures we are working with now. We will see our students settling into new routines and making progress. And we will continue to learn new ways of working that will shape or inform the way that we work into the future.

My main message today, though, is to encourage you to take a break. Use the extra days of annual leave, spend it at home, of course, but doing something other than work. We all know how easy it is to have your phone or your laptop out and “just look at a few emails”, but please try to switch off

and relax. At this time more than usual, it is vital that we all recharge our personal batteries and connect with family and friends.

It may not be the Easter break you had planned, but I hope you have a restful break.

Best wishes,

John Vinney
Vice-Chancellor

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