

Bard College Berlin Responds to COVID-19

In a matter of weeks, the coronavirus has jolted our lives almost completely. Bustling economies, international travel, cultural life, and some of the most fundamental expressions of personal contact have come to a near-standstill.

At Bard College Berlin the Spring Semester started at the end of January in the usual way, with engaging seminar sessions, animated discussions over shared lunches, lively community-outreach and civic-engagement, and extra-curricular activities.

Since then, much of what constitutes the essence of learning and living at the college has had to be rethought and revived in changed formats. We were fortunate to have been engaged in blended and online learning programs with partner institutions as well as with displaced students in and outside of Germany for several years. (A story about this topic was recently aired on [German national public radio](#).) Still, we needed to act quickly and methodically to ensure that all students will be able to complete their studies this semester and that those who are about to graduate will be able to do so on time. Just as importantly, we wanted to safeguard and elevate the open intellectual and civically engaged life of the college in the face of a world turning inward.

Five weeks after our first response to the coronavirus and three weeks after we moved all courses online, students, faculty and staff are healthy and have rallied. While many students have returned to their home countries, those who stayed in Berlin continue to benefit from our campus services: the cafeteria prepares meals to take away, the library offers its services on a personalized basis and Student Life is finding new ways to keep students engaged and to sustain our sense of connectedness. The Civic Engagement office remains a hub of creativity and solidarity, with students offering help to seniors in the neighborhood and teaching languages online to children who are unable to go to school.

Professors have transitioned all seminars, lectures and workshops as well as their advising and tutoring activities online. Students offer peer support and continue their campus life through virtual study groups, student clubs, and art-sharing-platforms. The hashtag #remoteBCB shows the liveliness of our community, the student blog [Die Bärliner](#) continues to publish and we are now able to invite you to attend public lectures and events that would otherwise have taken place on [our campus](#) or at [Bard Annandale](#).

Looking ahead, Bard College Berlin has every intention to begin the fall semester of 2020 in its normal format on campus. We believe deeply in the importance of person-to-person interaction for higher education, reasoned argument and building a community in which each member learns from the others.

We will of course attune our procedures in accordance with national, and international regulations.

The Admissions Office is facilitating online receptions for admitted students to meet each other as well as virtual class visits. A video campus tour is available on [Instagram](#). Admissions staff are offering individual advising sessions for prospective students online (contact admissions@berlin.bard.edu)

To help students who face financial setbacks that threaten to disrupt their education at the college, we have set up the Bard College Berlin Emergency Hardship Fund. If you would like to contribute, please follow this [link](#) and mention the “BCB EHF” in your subject line. We would be very grateful for your support.

We look forward to staying in touch with you. Please keep yourselves and your loved ones safe!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Florian Becker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'F'.

Florian Becker
Managing Director