Hello, my name is Stuart Croft, I'm Vice Chancellor at University, and it's a great pleasure to to welcome you to our University, to welcome you to our community. You've probably heard the phrase unprecedented times, a great deal so far, probably every day for the last year or so. And clearly, these unprecedented times have created some real significant challenges for us as a University and as a community. We've had to rethink and change our practices around safety.

We're focusing even more on wellbeing. Of course, our teaching model has had to change. Government decisions have been, shall we say, always been helpful and timely. We've had to manage working with colleagues who have been furloughed, some for quite significant periods of time with financial pressures across the University, as there have been, of course, with every single organisation across the whole country at the moment. But we've come through this and we're still coming through this, I think, in a pretty strong position, to be honest.

And that's, I think because of the quality of our staff and the quality of our community, how we pull together and work hard for our students, for each other and for our community. What we've done through this process is to try to set out some core principles that help to guide us through these unprecedented times. And of course, the first has been a consistent focus on health and wellbeing. I would ask each and every one of you to keep these matters absolutely at the forefront and particularly thinking about how you might reach out to colleagues you knew you're just starting, but you can also be part of that community team, that effort to connect with others, check on people, make sure everyone's OK.

Second, of course, success of our students. That's a core part of the University. And we've spent enormous amounts of effort, resource and intellectual thought on how we can support our students through this process to be successful. Third, we focused on safeguarding our resources and safeguarding jobs, and we know across the country there have been real challenges for many organisations in supporting jobs. We are continued in our focus on keeping our community together. Fourth, supporting our transformation and high quality research, we have a fantastic reputation deserved for research because every single part of our University, our academy, and that now needs to be supported and encouraged this year and again into the future.

And fifthly being a good neighbour. We've had amazing examples of the work that individuals have done, that teams have done to support our communities outside as well as inside the University, over the course of the last year, we've had colleagues making sanitiser. We've had colleagues finding PPE everywhere, making PPE. We've had students working in hospitals. We've had colleagues working in food banks and volunteering and all sorts of other ways phoning people up who might be isolated or alone.
Now, as a University, we, of course, have a particular set of focus points and strategic priorities, and we aim by 2030 to be what we describe as one of the world's exceptional Universities. That's what we want to be. We are a charity, not a company, and we're not part of the private sector. And so we have responsibilities to deliver on our charitable objectives, which are about top quality research and top quality education. We are research led in what we do as a University committed to the success of our students and our alumni as well.

Inclusion is at the heart of what we do. We recognise that there are structural wrongs in our society and of course across the world as well. And our commitment it will take time is to address those structural wrongs. We are deeply committed to our region. University of Warwick grew out of Coventry and Warwickshire. Even though at the same time we are incredibly international University. There are many league tables as as we all know, one of my absolute favourites is the Times league table of the most international Universities, which is measured by the proportion of staff who are international, the proportion of students who are international, and the proportion of academic papers that are co-authored with others in different countries.

That is who we are. That is what we do, and in that, we regularly come in the top 20 in the world. And as a University, we were set up to be focused on innovation and our engagement with business, and that's a really important aspect of our work as well. In terms of what you will find, working with colleagues, working with your teams, our culture and our values are really important to us and are things that we are working on, as you would expect quite actively.

As an institution, as a community, we are tolerant of everything except intolerance. We will not accept abuse. We will not accept any form of violence. We are restless, that is one of the core characteristics, I think, of our of our culture. We're always looking to move on and do something better to improve, to change. And excellence, you will find everywhere a focus on excellence, how it is that we in all of our jobs can make our University better, can make us achieve more fully our charitable goals.

Now, if you're starting at a University or indeed any place of employment at this time, you might not actually have been to that place of employment. You may not actually have been to the campus yet, but I hope very much of the coming weeks and months, as things start to ease, you will enjoy the spaces that you will find on our campus and in our workplaces. These are challenging times and you are new, but please keep in touch, reach out, talk to people.

Be part of our community. Do sign up to our welcome event. See the hub for more information about all that. And finally, I'd just like to wish you a very warm welcome to Warwick, and I hope to meet you all in person soon. Very best wishes.