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## **STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM** **COVID-19: May 15, 2020 Update** **#SUSDoingOurPart**

### **Board Members:**

Nationwide, attention is being focused on strategies that state government and community leaders are implementing to safely re-open their economies and societies. Policymakers in each state are gathering input from business owners, service industry, and educational leaders, as well as the views of their citizenry to make decisions most appropriate for their state.

As of today, here are the latest U.S. data on the COVID-19 virus:

- 1,400,000 cases and 85,000 deaths in the U.S.
- 43,210 Florida cases [*14 % increase since last week*]. 1,875 deaths [*22 % increase since last week*].

In addition to implementing the phased-in guidelines of “*Safe, Smart, Step-by-Step Plan for Florida’s Recovery*,” Governor DeSantis is keeping a laser focus on Florida’s battle with the COVID-19 virus and has been proactive on many fronts throughout the State. The Governor extended Florida’s state of emergency for 60 days, but has allowed Palm Beach County to move into Phase One of the state’s re-opening plan. Additionally, the Governor announced the following:

- Nearly 660,000 COVID-19 tests have now been administered to Floridians, resulting in approximately seven percent positive cases.
- Serology anti-body testing for health care workers and first responders;
- A mobile testing lab that will visit long-term care facilities throughout the state;
- A new critical care decontamination system for N95 masks of health care workers;
- A COVID-19 mobile App to gather health data from citizens relating to the virus.

### **State University System**

The SUS Task Force to re-open our universities, involving all university presidents and board chairs, has begun to meet virtually to consider reopening issues from a System perspective and to facilitate the efforts of each of the 12 universities to plan for a Fall opening. Preliminary issues discussed include: effective virus testing and contact tracing, the health and safety of the university community, the distinctiveness of each university’s health environment, alternatives to deliver academic instruction, and the availability and cost of resources.

As the central cog in each university's teaching and learning enterprise, the health and safety of faculty, particularly faculty who may have serious health conditions, is a key priority for fall semester planners. During spring semester, our faculty demonstrated that they could quickly and effectively deliver instruction remotely. Faculty will be a critical resource for academic planners in utilizing technology creatively to deliver classes using a variety of alternate modes.

Our universities continue to respond to the needs of their students and university/community partnering continues throughout the State. Here are more examples:

### **Reaching Out to Florida Communities**

- FAMU, in collaboration with the Bond Community Health Center, has extended its community COVID-19 testing site on its campus as a drive-thru and walk-up site for the community and surrounding region.
- An FIU economics professor is part of an international research team working with the World Bank to study the pre-COVID-19 virus migration patterns in South Asia to predict future outbreak patterns.
- FSU public health researchers are studying how our climate impacts flu transmission in relation to how COVID-19 might progress, suspecting that the virus could spread in the South over a longer period than in cold, dry climates.
- UF researchers are studying students from P.K. Yonge Developmental Research school to learn about a child's role in transmitting the COVID-19 virus.
- USF has increased COVID 19-related research projects in a number of areas, including biochemistry, infectious diseases and international medicine, medical engineering, nursing, pharmacy, public health, structural biology and virology to accelerate the discovery and validation of new technologies to diagnose and prevent the spread of the virus.
- UWF conducted a virtual roundtable for West Florida businesses on industrial supply chains how to maintain them in the coronavirus age.
- A New College environmental studies faculty is studying the effects of COVID-19 on the interaction between humans and animals, and also between humans and the planet.

### **Helping the Campus Family**

- FAU Division of Research sponsored a COVID-19 Change Challenge to gather research ideas of how to meet the demands of COVID-19 with monetary awards for students to support their research.
- FGCU's University Colloquium has redesigned its required undergraduate course with virtual field trips, experiential activities, and web-based resources to enable students to complete the course virtually.

- Florida Poly conducted its annual ABLAZE ceremony virtually by providing a video to recognize its outstanding faculty and staff with awards for teaching, research, and service.
- UNF College of Nursing has adapted its curriculum to provide students with additional simulation experiences, including case study videos and plans of care, in order to satisfy clinical requirements.
- The UCF Online Connect Center is providing strategies and resources for students and faculty to help create better experiences and outcomes in remote learning.

I appreciate all that our universities are doing to support their students and their communities!

Stay Safe Everyone!



Syd Kitson, Chair

**REMEMBER: *Practice Social Distancing! Wear a Face Mask!***