STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
COVID-19: May 21, 2020 Update
#SUSDoingOurPart

Board Members:
In the U.S., all 50 states have begun to reopen their economies and societies in various stages by loosening restrictions that were enacted to help curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Most states are progressing by using a series of metrics to monitor their health environment, and are recommending a series of measured steps to reopen depending on the extent of new virus cases and on the status of the state’s health care system. Both small and global businesses and service, retail, and entertainment industries are gradually reopening, using national social distancing guidelines and state policies designed to promote a safe experience for both employees and consumers. According to most governors, it is a balancing act.

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

- 1,551,853 cases and 93,439 deaths in the U.S.
- 47,471 Florida cases [10 % increase since last week]. 2,096 deaths [12 % increase since last week].
- 772,669 COVID tests have now been administered in Florida, with 6 % positive cases.

This week, under Governor DeSantis’s Recovery Plan, Florida entered a full phase one reopening of the State. Accordingly, nonessential businesses resumed operations with proper social distancing requirements, cleanliness rules and limited capacity, with hair salons and gyms getting the most attention. Restaurants, currently limited to 25 percent capacity statewide, can now double the number of dine-in customers. Theme parks, such as Disney and Universal Studios, can now start submitting plans to begin accepting visitors. Broward and Miami-Dade counties will now begin a slower, phased-in process. The Governor also issued an invitation to professional sports teams to come to Florida to practice and play games (with no spectators).

State University System
The SUS Task Force to reopen our universities, involving all university presidents and board chairs, is working with Chancellor Criser to develop a blueprint for reopening with guidelines that all universities can utilize as each institution develops its plan to reopen this coming Fall. In addition, the Task Force established a Clinical Advisory Committee on testing and tracing that will be recommending a clinical framework for repopulating a campus.

While the impacts of COVID-19 on university life are not yet clear, they will be substantial and will affect all aspects of teaching, learning, working, and living on a residential campus. It is now particularly stressful for new students as the traditional admissions process has been dramatically altered. Returning students are facing unknown class options and delivery formats and many are unsure of where they will be living and what the educational environment will look like. University leaders and planners, however, remain focused on offering students a healthy learning environment and a positive on-campus experience in the Fall.
Below are outstanding examples of ongoing university partnering and community service:

**Reaching Out to Florida Communities**
- FAU College of Medicine students collected and donated 23,000 items of personal protection equipment (PPE) to health care workers throughout Palm Beach County. The medical school’s FAU COVID-19 Pandemic Response Team spearheaded this project.
- UCF Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Researchers are developing a lozenge or gum-like compound with cornstarch that may help add an extra layer of protection in addition to face masks and reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- UF chemical engineering faculty are developing a COVID-19 test that can be administered at home using saliva and a paper strip that will quickly tell users if they are infected.
- FGCU College of Business and College of Health & Human Services have launched RESTART SWFL, an initiative dedicated to helping businesses respond to the impacts of the pandemic on their operations, workforce, vendors, and customers.
- UWF Haas Center’s economic impacts study revealed an overwhelming percentage of Florida residents postponed travel plans and reduced spending during the pandemic.

**Helping the Campus Family**
- USF launched an initiative, USF Heroes, to recognize and express appreciation to students, faculty, staff and others within the USF community who have made significant contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FAMU College of Law has provided financial and technology support, including scholarships and laptops, to more than 50 law students experiencing unexpected medical, travel, housing, and other personal expenses due to the pandemic.
- FIU students participated in “Washington & the World,” a virtual fly-in seminar where they were exposed to national policy decisions making, ranging from trade, international development and diplomacy. Participants are working toward FIU’s first D.C. Advocacy, Communications and Careers Digital Badge, a new micro-credential initiative.
- Florida Poly is partnering with Microsoft to offer Microsoft Mondays, free online professional development workshops.
- New College students, faculty, staff, and alumni created the 2020 Senior Wellbeing Project, a virtual scrapbook for graduates of pictures, advice, stories, reflections, and well wishes from the NC family.
- The FSU Museum of Fine Arts (MoFA) has rescheduled exhibitions and programs and developed remote internships and educational opportunities for students, as well as virtual trip activities through a new “MoFA at Home” initiative.
- The UNF Preschool and UNF First Lady is offering virtual story-time sessions online for parents to share with their children while at home.

Many thanks to our university leaders for their commitment to serve the State!

Take Good Care!

Syd Kitson, Chair

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