STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
COVID-19: April 2, 2020 Update
#SUSDoingOurPart

Board Members:
The COVID-19 virus continues its rapid spread around the world (200 countries), the United States (all 50 states), and Florida (59 counties). Here are the latest data as of today:

- 950,000+ COVID-19 cases and 48,000 deaths globally - World Health Organization.
- 217,000+ cases and 5,100 deaths in the U.S. – Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
- 7,773 Florida cases: 7,495 Florida residents and 278 non-Florida residents. 101 deaths have now been reported in Florida – Florida Department of Health.

The U.S. Government has extended social distance guidelines until April 30 following projections of increasing infections and mortality rates. Guidance from the CDC continues to encourage citizens to plan/prepare for the possibility of a COVID-19 outbreak in their community.

Nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the most sudden and significant changes to higher education since its early development. College and university leaders are now working daily to determine how best to provide continuity of education and support services to their students and communities for the remainder of this semester and on into the Summer. Campus leaders are also focusing on the need to address the academic, social, and mental health impacts of a totally online learning environment on students and faculty and are working to determine the long-term impacts (financial and other) of the cancellation of programs, services, events, and activities. Clearly, this is a stressful time as all involved are adjusting to a new “normal” in the delivery of education.

Florida
Governor DeSantis and the Florida Department of Health continue to provide daily updates to Floridians that are now focusing on policies designed to reduce the spread of the virus. Over 60,000 COVID-19 tests have now been administered to Floridians, with approximately 10 percent found to be positive cases. Over 60 percent of Florida’s COVID-19 cases exist in the counties of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach.
On April 1st, Governor DeSantis issued an important executive order that expanded restrictions for all Floridians and directed that “all persons in Florida shall limit their movement and personal interactions outside of their home to only those necessary to obtain or provide essential services or conduct essential activities.” This executive order follows an earlier “Safer-At-Home” order, which urged people in Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and Monroe counties to stay inside and practice social distancing. The Governor also ordered that air travelers from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut and highway travelers from Louisiana must go through checkpoints and complete information regarding their Florida stay and also must self-isolate for 14 days. To further control the importing of the virus to Florida, the Governor ordered a 14-day moratorium on vacation rentals in Florida and suspended outside visitation to nursing homes. Additionally, the Commissioner of Education recommended that all public and private K-12 schools remain closed until May 1, 2020.

State University System
All state universities remain operational and are focusing on providing instruction via remote learning modalities through the end of the Spring semester. University leaders have been busy. At each campus: (1) policies have been implemented to provide refunds or credits for students with residence hall and/or food service contracts; (2) grading options are being established for students to determine grades for their Spring Semester courses, including pass/fail and satisfactory/unsatisfactory options; and (3) commencement plans are being developed for Spring Semester graduation.

Since the early days of the virus outbreak, while working to maintain the continuity of their academic mission, state universities have immediately responded to ensure the safety and health of their campus communities. I am continuing to learn about our universities’ responsiveness to the needs of their students and faculty and am so impressed with the university/community partnering that is occurring throughout the State University System. Below are examples:

Helping the Campus Family
- FGCU has established an “FGCU Eagles Care” team intended as a holistic-service, clearinghouse call center for all things of concern to students. It is a one-stop approach for students to connect with a wide range of resources, services, and support.
- FSU has implemented virtual and telehealth health care and mental health services for students, including continuous online and telephone support.
- New College’s Center for Career Engagement and Opportunity provided an “All-Virtual” Career Fair for Cross College Alliance students to interact virtually with over 75 employers regarding job prospects and career opportunities.
- The UNF Lend-A-Wing Food Pantry is providing “grab ‘n go” food bags for students who must remain on campus.
- The FIU Media Technology Services, utilizing the ZOOM technology, is training and assisting faculty and students in online course delivery and enabling
students and faculty to meet virtually. In one week, over 4,000 ZOOM sessions were recorded.

- The UCF Global program staff initiated contact with over 3,000 international students and faculty scholars to check on them and offer assistance and support.

**Reaching Out to Florida Communities**

- The FAU Hospitality and Tourism Management program is offering a free certificate to industry workers whose jobs may be affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Through five online sessions, participants learn about hospitality law, career competencies, marketing and revenue management, finance, and service excellence.
- Most of the state universities have offered to utilize available 3-D printers to produce health care masks and test kit and ventilator components for the state’s needs.
- The FIU Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and the FIU Foundation has partnered with the South Beach Wine & Food Festival to establish $15,000 grants for area restaurants and bars that have laid off employees, often FIU students. Grants will provide up to $500 per employee.
- UF Health’s Department of Anesthesiology has developed a mask using sterile wrapping from surgical instrument trays that can be produced in large quantities.
- The FSU College of Social Sciences and Public Policy faculty and graduate students are assisting the Florida Department of Health to track the COVID-19 virus in the state and collect information vital in helping to prevent further spread.
- The USF Libraries Digital Heritage and Humanities Collections has created 3-D virtual tours of the region’s historical sites and state parks to support “stay at home” mandates and for those in self-isolation from the COVID-19 virus.
- Faculty experts throughout the SUS in medicine and health care, the physical and social sciences, research, business management, and mental health are providing information, resources, and analysis on the pandemic to the public and to local, state, and national media.

There is no doubt that our universities remain critical sources of knowledge, innovation, and expertise for the state and are eagerly “leaning in” to support the fight against the deadly COVID-19 virus.

**Take Good Care!**

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Syd Kitson, Chair

**REMEMBER:** Wash hands often with soap & water for 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.