

# How FIU has met the Academic Mission during COVID 19

## 1. Classes shifted to remote instruction for Spring 2020

For the Spring Term 2020, the number of classroom, hybrid, and primarily distance course sections converted to remote instruction\* in response to the coronavirus, by undergraduate and graduate levels is shown below.

Level	Number
Undergraduate	3,590
Graduate	2,015

\* “Remote instruction” is defined as courses that were originally scheduled to be classroom, hybrid, or primarily distance learning for the Spring Term, but were provided remotely due to the coronavirus. These courses fit the established definition of Distance Learning but are tracked separately by some institutions.

## 2. Assistance provided to Faculty

FIU had several support structures and initiatives in place that were easily leveraged for academic continuity upon campus closure:

- Canvas Support:
  - 24 / 7 / 365 Canvas support was already available to faculty and students
  - The [canvas.fiu.edu](http://canvas.fiu.edu) website, which includes of self-support knowledgebase articles for faculty and students, was already available
- Minimum Usage Initiative: Launched in March 2018, the Minimum Usage Initiative ensured that all class sections had pre-existing Canvas course shells. These shells were leveraged immediately to administer content and communication plans to students when the courses were changed to remote instruction, thus, facilitating course conversion in a short period of time. (<http://ecampus.fiu.edu/documents/lms-usage-provost.pdf>)
- Site-wide Zoom License:
  - Instructors and students already had access to Zoom, which allowed for quick adoption of Zoom for remote synchronous meetings.
- Centralized Reporting: FIU leadership already had access to several dynamic data points and reports from the Learning Management System and Student Information System to make decisions and take action both efficiently and effectively.

In addition to those items mentioned above, several FIU units partnered in a short time to leverage additional resources and accelerate and execute necessary communication and training plans.

- Academic Continuity Team (ACT): this task force was created to serve as the operational hub for preserving academic continuity during a time of crisis. As university leadership made critical decisions for the institution, the task force would operationalize those and work with each academic unit to ensure support.
- This task force brought 3 FIU departments together and leveraged human capital, technologies and expertise. The 3 departments are the Center for Advancement of Teaching, Educational Technology Services and FIU Online.
- Academic Unit Designees were appointed and proved to be crucial in communicating unit specific needs and ensuring communication pathways with academic unit leadership.
- ACT created and deployed a Remote Teach Ready micro-credential for faculty. The two-day workshop provides faculty with key technology tools and skills to teach remotely. To date, 179 faculty have registered for 5 cohorts with 75 of those having already attended.
- The Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) expanded the pre-existing, two-day Hybrid/Online Tune-up workshop. 110 faculty have registered for 3 cohorts with 79 having already attended. CAT will also double its capacity for hybrid certification summer workshops from 30 to 60.

The university also leveraged our Student Information System (Panthersoft) to enable additional reporting during this transition period. An attribute that indicates which sections were transitioned to remote teaching was added and used to leverage outreach and support to instructors.

**Estimated # of faculty members trained and/or assisted with conversions of their courses by Distance Learning staff to remote instruction/fully distance learning**

Faculty Trained/Assisted with Conversions	Number
	1,012

In addition, accommodations were made for advising, orientation and tutoring of students.

**Remote Advising:**

By March 16th, all academic advisors were trained and equipped to continue advising remotely using Zoom. Since March 16th, 14,246 students have made appointments with their advisors.

**Remote Orientation:**

All freshman orientations for the Summer will be conducted remotely. Orientation staff, peer mentors, advisors, and other orientation partners will provide a remote orientation experience for all of our incoming freshman students. The first remote freshman orientation is scheduled for May 18th, with 336 freshmen scheduled for the event. It will be the first of 7 freshman orientation sessions. All students will meet in groups and individually with their advisors.

**Remote Tutoring:**

The Center for Academic Success (CfAS) has transposed all of its on-campus services to a virtual format. Individual tutoring and learning strategies workshops now take place via Zoom. Tutors employ the various features of Zoom to facilitate instruction while incorporating additional devices like tablets, cell phones, and free interactive software to allow for graphing and drawing. Since remote operations

took effect, CfAS has had 2,172 visits. The learning strategies workshops for biology, chemistry, and physics make up 71% of those visits where students can meet in small groups with their tutors.

### **Remote Career Support:**

All services provided by Career and Talent Development have been made available to students remotely including individualized career coaching, career preparation workshops, and employer networking events. For the month of April, 401 students have attended virtual career coaching sessions; 445 students participated in 11 Career Development workshops, and 217 students attended our first remote employer networking event on 4/28/20. Additional employer networking events are scheduled in the coming weeks

### **3. Equipment provided to students**

FIU's Division of IT (DoIT), in partnership with our libraries, had a pre-existing program in place for students to check out necessary devices. DoIT increased the device inventory and added hotspots to be distributed to ensure students were well-equipped to continue their studies remotely. The increased efforts began on 3/27/20 and are still ongoing. Once our library officially closed its doors, our College of Arts, Sciences and Education volunteered to continue the distribution program. To date, 395 laptops with webcams and 85 hotspots have been distributed to students. Additionally, through several communications, students were also informed of local internet providers that ran promotions for reduced rates so that they could take advantage of it, if need be.

### **4. Software/Hardware purchased**

Several purchases have been made for software and hardware in order to support academic continuity, including:

- Honorlock - Honorlock was previously being used at the university for fully online courses. In order to support remote teaching, the university has entered into a university-wide agreement with Honorlock to take advantage of Honorlock's COVID-19 rate and to increase the number of exams to account for exams previously proctored in the classroom. Honorlock provides remote proctoring services. Additional details are provided below.
- Cisco Jabber - The university was already using Cisco phone services for the entire university. Additional Cisco Jabber licenses were purchased for the Academic Continuity Team staff that are providing course design, course conversion, and remote teaching support for faculty and students.
- 8x8 - The university was using 8x8 for its front facing Canvas support to users. Additional 8x8 telephony IVR licenses were purchased for our front facing Canvas Help team that are offering instructor and student support for Canvas, Zoom, Honorlock, and additional technologies used for remote teaching and learning.
- Virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) provides faculty and staff with access to University resources, data, and applications from off-campus locations. VDI can be accessed from a variety of devices, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, and regular desktops, provided you have an internet connection.
- Zoom Webinar Licenses - FIU expanded the existing Zoom license to include additional webinar licenses to serve large institutional events and instructional needs for programs such as Student Orientation that exceed 300 concurrent users.
- A \$100,000 Technology Fee proposal has been submitted to procure online lab resources such as Labster.

## **5. Steps taken to secure exams**

FIU had preexisting agreements with multiple virtual proctoring solutions, including Proctor U, Honorlock and LockDown Browser. When the university turned to remote learning in mid-March, it entered into a university-wide agreement with Honorlock to take advantage of Honorlock's COVID-19 rate and increase the number of exams monitored by Honorlock in order to account for exams previously proctored in the classroom. Honorlock provides remote proctoring services and had already been integrated into our Canvas environment and heavily utilized by online instructors and students. Given the emergency nature of this move to remote teaching, FIU prioritized funding to cover this cost in an effort to alleviate the potential unplanned financial impact for students.

Additionally, the faculty was instructed on pedagogical strategies that discourage cheating, such as writing alternative assignments, discussion board questions, and exam questions. Two separate but connected series of workshops were conducted: Remote Teach Ready and Hybrid & Online Tune-up. In consultation with FIU's Writing Across the Curriculum faculty, participants were guided in and practiced writing assessment questions that require students to reference information shared in specific lectures, videos, and/or other student work as well as incorporating locally/personally relevant information as it relates to course content. While having the advantage of increasing student engagement, questions designed in this manner have the additional benefit of requiring "insider" information and, therefore, provide an added layer to preserving academic integrity. This assistance is also in place for faculty to develop questions for spring finals and for the planning assessments for summer courses.

## **6. Steps taken for remote delivery of courses in Summer 2020**

The Academic Continuity Team (ACT) created summer schedule spreadsheets for each college that included an array of data points to help academic units identify critical needs courses as well as support needs for faculty. The data points included whether there were FTIC Cohort 2016 undergrads that needed a course for summer/fall graduation; whether or not a course had been taught online previously and by whom; the instructor of record's experience teaching online and/or LMS usage data; the employment status of the instructor of record (i.e. 9mo vs 12mo vs adjunct); and the regularly scheduled modality for each section. ACT leaders met with Academic Unit Designees and senior college administrators to review the data and answer questions. Colleges then used the data to help make scheduling decisions such as change of instructor, cross listing of sections, and/or modifying the number of fully online / remote sections.

The number of course sections originally intended to be offered as fully distance learning courses in the summer term(s) by undergraduate and graduate levels are shown in the table below.

Level	Number
Undergraduate	1,102
Graduate	367

The number of course sections that were not originally intended for fully distance learning delivery (Classroom, Hybrid, primarily distance learning) in the summer, but will be offered as remote instruction due to the COVID-19 restrictions are shown in the table below.

Level	Number
Undergraduate	1,723
Graduate	1,698

Summer Data includes all Summer Terms (A/B/C) sections on the schedule as of 4/20/20. However, it is important to note that the institution will make safe accommodations for instructional labs that require physical / clinical skills to operate zero credit workshops in Summer B. This time may be utilized for both the labs scheduled during Summer B but also for those scheduled for Summer C/A that need to make up essential elements/skills.

## **7. Increase in master's offerings for students going to grad school**

FIU has seen a 16.8% increase in the number of applications to fully online Master's degree programs for Summer 2020 in comparison to Summer 2019 and a 14% increase thus far for Fall 2020 in comparison to Fall 2019. Some notable increases in applications/interest include the largest attendance ever in the Chapman Graduate School of Business' financial aid webinar and the largest Professional Master's in Business Administration summer cohort for its fully online program.

These increases are due, in part, to steps the University Graduate School (UGS) and individual colleges are taking to work directly with students to encourage and facilitate recent and upcoming graduates to apply for graduate degrees. The UGS and University Admissions have collaborated with the Graduate Program Directors to extend deadlines and process applications more efficiently. They have also launched virtual information sessions about graduate school opportunities and funding. There have been multiple communications sent to current graduates about graduate school and to past graduates about the opportunities available in graduate school at FIU. The team is working closely with specific departments to create a personalized application as well as communication plans to help them encourage their graduating students to transition directly to a graduate program.

FIU's College of Engineering and Computing (CEC) is working directly with our Office of Admissions to waive the application fee and to automatically admit BS students with GPA>3.5 to their respective MS programs. They are also in the process of consulting with the Graduate Council on removing/modifying the 30 credits to degree requirement for students to enter their 4+1 programs as well as waiving those application fees. With the exception of the Masters of Science in Information Systems, FIU's College of Business (COB) offers all of its graduate programs both in-person and fully online and are leveraging

existing policies and practices to facilitate graduate school applications including three virtual open houses (one focused on international students) and zoom webinars organized by program of study for recent/upcoming graduates. To reassure students about starting in the fall, they are messaging potential face-to-face students about how the COB's pre-existing, 8-week dynamic schedule will allow students to move to online/remote learning in the fall as needed. They also plan to continue marketing and actively recruiting until classes start in August.

## 8. Private funding raised for emergency aid

- Since beginning remote instruction, the FIU Foundation has funded 238 students for a total of \$280,002.16.
- **FIU Foundation has raised \$1,771,170 to date to support disaster relief needs.**
- As of April 30, the FIU Foundation has processed payments to 288 restaurants for a total of \$1,158,479.04. These payments have been made from the SOBE Industry Relief Fund.

### Disaster Relief New Cash & Pledges

Date range: 3/16 - 4/30/2020

Project Name	Total Raised	# of Gifts
BU Dean's Destination Fund	\$ 27,255	41
CARTA COVID-19 Knight Foundation Fund	\$ 20,000	1
CARTA COVID-19 Support Fund	\$ 3,656	28
Enrollment Services Pay it Forward/ Panther Protection Fund	\$ 88,749	380
HM DDA & Hospitality Relief Fund	\$ 25,000	1
HM SOBEWFF® & FIU Chaplin School Hospitality Industry Relief Fund	\$ 1,441,292	172
LW AccessLex COVID19 Hardship Scholarships	\$ 25,000	1
MD GFF NeighborhoodHELP Food Insecurity	\$ 100,000	1
UW Disaster Response & Recovery Fund -FIUstrong	\$ 39,103	178
UW HR University Hardship Fund	\$ 1,116	69
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,771,170</b>	<b>872</b>

- **We have activated [FIUstrong](#).**
- Focus is on institutional priorities such as financial aid and technology needs
- **Since the site's launch on April 1, we have added considerable content:**
  - President Rosenberg's video appeal for support
  - Data that shows both impact and need, regularly updated
  - Student testimonials
  - Panthers Respond page: Stories about the many ways FIU is combatting the pandemic, including alumni and faculty on the frontline
- FIU Foundation Board Chairman Brilliant and Vice Chairman Cabanas sent emails to all chairs of advisory boards asking them to actively engage their membership in supporting FIUstrong. The FIU Foundation provided a sample letter they could use to reach out to their members for support.
- The FIUstrong Committee met on April 29. At the time of the meeting we had a total of:
  - \$17,000 available for emergency assistance
  - 495 student requests totaling approximately \$600,000 in assistance

- 40 applications from faculty and staff totaling roughly \$35,000 in assistance
  - Student employees were referred to FIU's Office of Scholarships
  - 31 faculty and staff require assistance

## **9. Steps taken to distribute CARES funding**

FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg established an emergency aid task force on April 9, 2020. The taskforce has extensively discussed the requirements of the CARES Act, U.S. Department of Education guidance, and how to make the process as efficient as possible. The taskforce included members representing the General Counsel's office, the Scholarship office, Financial Aid, Academic Affairs, and University Compliance.

### ***General Guidelines***

- Assist students negatively financially impacted as a result of FIU's transition to remote learning and closing of our campuses due to COVID-19.
- Ensure students meet basic eligibility requirements based on guidance and applicable regulations from the U.S. Department of Education.
- Ensure students receive funds quickly.
- Ensure our most financially vulnerable students receive funding. FIU will prioritize the applications of our Pell Grant recipients particularly the students with a \$0 Estimated Family Contribution (EFC), students close to graduation, and other students with compelling circumstances.

### ***Process***

- FIU will use an application process through PantherSoft (my.fiu.edu) that ensures an accessible, secure, and authenticated process.
- Students will attest to being impacted by COVID-19 as required by the CARES Act.
- Students are requested, but not required, to upload supporting documentation and given the opportunity to further explain their circumstance if documentation is unavailable or cannot otherwise be provided.
- Grant amounts are consistent with our published *Cost of Attendance* for living expenses, technology, health care, and childcare, but in no event shall exceed the maximum Pell Grant.

## **10. Community response examples**

In response to the shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers treating patients during the coronavirus pandemic, Florida International University (FIU) and Baptist Health South Florida are partnering to [3D-print reusable face shields](#). FIU's College of Communication, Architecture, + The Arts (CARTA) is at the center of the initiative, mobilizing its 3D printing facilities, faculty, staff and students to produce over 4,000 face shields for Baptist Health system and other organizations. More than 35 3D printers housed in the college's CARTA Innovation Lab in the Miami Beach Urban Studios (MBUS) are printing the protective equipment, as well as additional printers in the CARTA Robotics and Digital Fabrication Laboratory and the College of Engineering & Computing

In addition, [FIU has made 28 ventilators](#) available for efforts to treat the growing number of COVID-19 patients. The ventilators are part of FIU's training and response equipment and were turned over to State of Florida emergency coordinators.

FIU is partnering with Miami-Dade County, the Florida Department of Health, and the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition to [open a COVID-19 testing site](#). The new drive-thru testing site opened on Wednesday, April 8, 2020 at the fairgrounds. The site performs 300 tests per day by appointment and to date has performed over 10,000 tests as of 05/20/2020.

## **11. Teaching initiatives and planning for Fall face to face instruction**

One of the biggest challenges faced by the university was the rapid spread of the global pandemic which forced many of these moves in a span of under 2 weeks. The attentiveness, cooperation and willingness of our extraordinary faculty to transition to remote instruction within that time frame is what made it all possible. We ensured that students, faculty and staff had the support and resources they needed to continue learning and work. However, many are dealing with separate individual challenges in their own homes that may be influencing their day to day activities. The university has made special attempts to provide virtual care to our community through counseling and wellness sessions offered on a weekly basis.

### **Offering of Undergraduate Labs:**

Because of FIU's robust fully online program offerings, many labs already had preexisting online sections. These were and will be leveraged to create either more online capacity or to support the transition from face-to-face to remote labs as enrollment needs dictates. Labs that are electives and have existing online versions are also having additional sections added or caps increased to replace other elective labs that did not already have an online version. For example, Biology added additional sections of Histology, Parasitology and Cell Bio labs to ensure demand for upper division elective labs are met.

### ***External partnerships with SUS institutions***

1. The ACT team has also developed a protocol for FIU faculty to use Canvas course sharing functions specifically to allow faculty to share and receive online lab content with and from other SUS institutions.
2. FIU is a member of the Florida Consortium of Metropolitan Universities along with UCF and USF. The university leads of the Consortium are leveraging past collaborations across institutions to connect faculty with each other specifically to share lab resources.

### ***Labs without preexisting online versions***

As a part of FIU's Minimum Usage Initiative (see above), all lab classes have Canvas shells automatically created prior to the start of the semester. The existence of these shells allowed faculty to upload video demonstrations, replacement lab assignments, mock data, and links to web-based simulations. Other labs were able to deploy pre-existing lab resources from the publisher of the class text (e.g. LearnSmart in McGraw Hill) or have negotiated institutional rates for virtual laboratory simulation sites such as Labster. Additionally, faculty are also using content simulation sites (such as



The next Provost town hall will be held on May 29 at 12:30pm where the focus will be discussion of the draft Fall teaching plan and the combination of the following different instruction modalities:

1. Quality assured fully online classes
2. Certified hybrid classes (with hybrid rotation/HyFlex options)
3. Face to face classes paired with online/hybrid sections
4. Approved synchronous remote classes
5. Face to face labs, hybrid labs and online labs paired with 0 credit workshops