



SUS Planning for a Post-COVID World: Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Future Considerations

**Bret S Danilowicz, Provost, FAU
Chair, Innovation & Online Steering Committee
August 31, 2021**

www.flbog.edu

Key Questions:



- Is the SUS response going to be a return to the status quo or adapting to sustained change? How do we build excellence and greater resilience for the future?
- What inherent limitations and weaknesses, and potential opportunities, has the global pandemic revealed across the SUS and how successful have we been in addressing them over the past year?
- What are the most significant “lessons learned” with relevance to higher education? What “best practices” have emerged across the SUS that we may wish to share and adopt?
- What might the post-COVID “new normal” look like for higher education in Florida, and what innovations are most likely going to gain traction and sustain in the mid- to long-term?
- How can the 12 SUS institutions collaborate most effectively in anticipation of a potential paradigm shift in higher education?

Planning Framework:



- Framework: *SUS Planning for a Post-COVID World. Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Future Considerations* [January 2021],
- Academic Planning [March 2021],
- Faculty Success [March 2021],
- Student Access, Progression and Learning (academic continuity) [June 2021],
- Strengthening Campus Communities [June 2021],
- Preventive Health [August 2021],
- Administrative and Budgetary Considerations [August 2021],
- Extension Services [November 2021], and
- *Final Report and Recommendations* [January 2022].



Medical/Financial/Administrative and Other Considerations in a Post-Pandemic World (June 30, 2021) Contributing Stakeholder Groups:

- Medical School Deans,
- Public Health Deans,
- Council of Administrative and Financial Affairs,
- Athletics and Other Auxiliaries,
- Emergency Managers,
- Police Chiefs,
- Chief Information Officers,
- Human Resource Directors, and
- Financial Aid Directors

Delivering Continuing Education in a Post-Pandemic World (August 3, 2021) Contributing Stakeholder Groups:

- Directors of Continuing Education

Challenges:



- Maintaining IT staffing due to competition with private sector
- Campuses were not fully prepared to meet demands for nearly instant pandemic-related information
- Supply chains were disrupted leading to critical supply shortages
- Contracts difficult to adjust due to specified volume thresholds
- Sense of community among classmates, faculty, and patients not as strong in remote settings
- Motivating and keeping employees is challenging in a fully remote environment

Lessons Learned and Best Practices:



- SUS learned how to lead and support state efforts in testing procedures, pandemic research, and COVID-19 patient care
- Increased use of IT places the SUS at an increased risk of cybersecurity threats
- Change thinking about IT from a support unit to a strategic investment in the core academic mission of the SUS
- The way institutions recruit and retain employees must change with the workforce
- Remote interviews for students, residency, & staff positions allowed more equity and access and resulted in more diverse interview pools

Lessons Learned and Best Practices:



- A new appreciation of the value of telehealth for patient care, wellness visits, and counseling
- Arenas can be used for large-scale testing and vaccination for campus, local, and regional communities
- On-campus mail service can become a PPE warehouse and delivery system
- Large group meetings better attended when conducted remotely, particularly for off-campus clinical faculty
- Strategically offer free online professional development courses to faculty, students, staff, and community members.

Recommendations:



- Update statewide and SUS mutual aid agreements to bolster available support
- Develop a standardized SUS platform for near real-time sharing of emergency information
- Integrate SUS emergency managers into the state EOC
- Create a mechanism whereby public health expertise could be utilized by the entire state not just counties with academic public health programs
- Continue to develop statewide shared service contracts for commonly used software and platform services
- Expand 'best practice' IT collaborations like Florida LambdaRail, SSERCA, HiPerGator, and regional data centers
- SUS institutions should establish authority to temporarily reassign staff or contract staff to emergency preparation, response, and recovery needs

Recommendations:



- Explore requiring every SUS student to have health insurance to allow appropriate mental and physical health support
- Leverage relationships with contracted service providers into campus emergency response efforts through their networks, expertise, and buying power
- Increase university flexibility in spending E&G reserves allowing a nimble response to emergencies
- Develop plans to balance remote work with in-person need and cost of physical space use on campus
- Further explore if remote work options will increase the size and quality of the applicant pool for staff positions
- Explore the development of micro-credentials and their industry recognition, and how to use them across demographics served by Continuing Ed
- Continuing Ed should partner with Career Source to assist displaced workers seeking to start new careers in different fields

Next steps:



- Extension Services and report progress [*November 2021*]
- Final report and recommendations [*January 2022*]



www.flbog.edu