**STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA**

**AGENDA**

**STEERING COMMITTEE**
for Implementation of the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education
and for Advising the Board of Governors Innovation and Online Committee
regarding Planning for a Post-Pandemic World in the SUS

**Virtual Meeting**
**May 14, 2021**
**9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**Chair:  Ralph Wilcox; Vice Chair: Bret Danilowicz**
**Members: Ellenberg, Furton, Glover, McKee (non-voting), McRorie**


1. **Call to Order and Opening Remarks**                **Provost Ralph Wilcox, Chair**

2. **Approval of Minutes**                                                 **Chair  Wilcox**
         **Minutes, Steering Committee, February 19, 2021**

3. **Student Affairs Considerations in a Post-Pandemic World**        **Chair Wilcox**

   - **Council of Student Affairs**                **Dr. William Hudson, Jr. (FAMU)**
   - **Health Services/Centers Directors**              **Dr. Michael Deichen (UCF)**
   - **Dean of Students**                                     **Dr. Larry Faerman (FAU)**
   - **Admissions Directors**                                    **Jody Glassman (FIU)**
   - **Diversity (Joint presentation)**
     - **Council on Equal Opportunity and Diversity**   **Michelle Douglas (FSU)**
     - **Council on Diversity and Inclusion**               **Rick Maxey (Polytech)**
   - **Housing Officers**                                        **Ana Hernandez (USF)**
   - **Counseling Center Directors**                         **Jon Brunner (FGCU)**
   - **Disability Services Directors**                      **Jennifer Mitchell (FSU)**
   - **Career Center Directors**                            **Lauren Loeffler (UWF)**
   - **Student Government**                          **Gov. Ally Schneider (UNF)**
   - **Collegiate Directors for Student Recreation**          **Chris Morris (FSU)**


4. **Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**                            **Chair Wilcox**

**1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks**

Chair Ralph Wilcox convened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. on February 19, 2021, with the following members present: George Ellenberg, Ken Furton, Joe Glover, Russ Ivey (designee for Bret Danilowicz), and Nancy McKee (non-voting).

Additional provosts who joined the meeting were Michael Johnson, Terry Parker, and Mark Rieger.

Also in attendance were the following Implementation Committee members and other guests: Drs. Michele Horton (UWF), Deb Miller (UNF), Andy McCollough (UF), Tom Dana (UF), Tom Cavanagh (UCF), Kelvin Thompson (UCF), Tom Dvorske (Polytechnic), Cindy DeLuca (USF), Mariam Manzur-Leiva (NCF), David Jaeger (FGCU), Julie Golden-Botti (FAU), Dan Flynn (FAU), and William Self (UCF), as well as Jennifer Smith (UF), Franzetta Fitz (FAMU), Robby Fuselier (FSU), Robert Seniors (FAMU), Kimberly Grainger (NCF), Gaby Alvarez (FIU), and Todd Chavez (USF).

Chair Wilcox announced that the CAVP unanimously endorsed the continued funding for TOPkit for the next five years. He brought attention to the CourseShare transmittal note and attachment in the agenda packet, indicating they would both be shared with all twelve provosts for distribution to their deans and faculty. Chair Wilcox also brought attention to the Committee's Work Plan for 2021.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Provost Ellenberg moved approval of the Minutes of the Steering Committee meeting and subsequent Post-COVID discussion, both held on November 18, 2020. Provost Glover seconded the motion and members concurred unanimously.

**3. 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education: Recommendations for the Post-COVID World**

The agenda packet contained recommendations regarding continued implementation by the system and/or universities of the 49 tactics in the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education, in addition to the STEM Labs initiative not in the Plan. Workgroup Leads (Drs. Deb Miller, Andy McCollough, Cindy DeLuca, Julie Golden-Botti, and Nancy McKee) highlighted those tactics that either had not been completed or whose implementation was not being recommended for continuation.

Provost Glover moved approval of the recommendations. Provost Ellenberg seconded the motion and members concurred unanimously.

**4. Academic Considerations in a Post-COVID World**

<u>Council of State University Libraries:</u>
 Mr. Todd Chavez, Chair of the Council of State University Libraries, provided the three most frequent responses from CSUL members to a survey he conducted for the seven categories listed below:

- Challenges:
  - Adapting staff to remote work environment (equipment, connectivity, policies, etc.);
  - Adapting and maintaining effective communication models for employees, leadership, students/faculty;
  - Emotional strain and stress on employees; impacts on morale; lost community; open-ended uncertainties.
- Best Practices:
  - Emphasize digital content and tech-rich services (Mr. Chavez said that decades of emphasizing electronic resources paid off);
  - Remote work and service provision has distinct advantages. Isolation must be managed;
  - Develop/support flexible policies and procedures (e.g., copyright, loans, work schedules, etc.) + Clearly articulate expectations for service, remote work, etc., and develop guidelines to support expectations.
- Lessons Learned:
  - Remote work works with clear expectations, consistent policies/guidelines;
  - Accurate, supportive, transparent communication is "King;"
  - Strong tech infrastructure for services and collection access is essential.
- Mission-Critical Collaborations:
  - IT;
  - Institutional faculty and student success entities;
  - Vendors and publishers. Mr. Chavez said that vendors and publishers came through.
- New Activities Promoting Student Success
  - Tech provision (e.g., laptops, hotspots, scanners, webcams, etc.);
  - Significant expansion of online services, instruction, exhibitions/events, etc.;
  - Touchless delivery of physical collections and equipment.
- New Activities Promoting Faculty Success;
  - Significant expansion of online support services, instruction, exhibitions/events, etc.
- Recommendations:
  - Strengthen commitment to and support for digital collections, platforms, and research tools;
  - Strengthen commitment to and support for tech-rich service provision and workflow management;
  - Align policies and procedures with post-COVID opportunities, esp. HR policies regarding remote work.

**Advisory Council of Faculty Senates:**
Governor William Self, Chair of the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates, asked, "What is the future of course modalities?" He said that currently there are two extremes: (1) Face-to-Face, traditional lecture/recitation at one end and (2) Web-based asynchronous at the other end. He said that hybrid or blended learning has new meaning post-COVID. Now that faculty have been trained in online education, there is an opportunity to develop a new taxonomy for course delivery.

Governor Self said that faculty training is essential. A lot of faculty were trained quickly and institutions need to build on that. He said that testing and evaluation have been a challenge. He also said it is important to have the appropriate IT infrastructure.

He asked who decides course modality for each course within the curriculum. Is modality considered part of academic freedom? Faculty own the curriculum, but who owns the modality? He said it is a question of

academic freedom vs. management rights at all levels. He suggested getting all voices together to develop, communicate, and enforce a policy.

Provost Glover said that an important discussion point is management's right of modality, but a much more underlying question is "What is the nature of residential universities going forward?" He said that deans are asking if they can hire faculty who never step foot on campus, but he asks what it means to be a part of an enterprise. Governor Self said he agrees on the question of what is a university. Faculty who never come on campus are not part of a community. He said there is a strength to having online access, but there needs to be a consideration of what a university will look like in ten years.

Chair Wilcox stated that a few years ago, there were conversations about the value of having a single learning management system. He asked how many institutions were using Zoom, Teams, or Cisco WebEx for video conferencing. There was a mix of tools used.

**Vice Presidents of Research:**
Dr. Dan Flynn, Chair of the Vice Presidents of Research, said that faculty were adaptable to public health recommendations on the number of people in labs and other protocols. He noted that:
- The work-from-home model is working well for certain types of positions, such as back office support functions where the work product can be accurately measured. He noted that utilizing work from home can free up space for mission-driven activities.
- Telehealth worked well for student health, as well as for engagement of patient populations for clinical studies. He said that it should be expanded.
- Some faculty may have been adversely affected by COVID and scholarly output may have suffered. He recommended that there should be a mechanism for some faculty to request a one-year delay in the tenure decision process.
- Faculty adjusted their programs very well and, in general, output of grant applications remained steady, and awards and expenditures were either steady (similar to the previous year) or down slightly.
- Online education works well. He said that Hyflex for professional students should be an ongoing model, and that certain types of courses work well through online presentation, while other types do not.
- Restarting face-to-face patient-based studies is and has been an ongoing concern, and most universities are moving back to allowing these types of studies with implementation of appropriate Centers for Disease Control guidelines.

**Implementation Committee:**
Dr. Cindy DeLuca, Chair of the Implementation Committee whose members are charged with managing institutions' implementation of the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education, stated that the Committee does not believe the SUS will return to the status quo as the digital baseline has shifted for both pedagogy and the way work is conducted at universities across the SUS. She said that the historical investments by SUS institutions in online infrastructure proved to be invaluable during the pandemic and remain a continuing mitigation strategy against future unforeseen events, such as pandemics and natural disasters.

Dr. DeLuca said that the pandemic necessitated the forging of new partnerships within universities and across the SUS. A newfound agility in decision-making emerged through collaborative but efficient governance that had to adapt to a quickly changing public health crisis. For instance, the STEM Task Force provided an opportunity to work together in finding solutions to online labs and other challenges in courses that are hands-on or have an experiential learning component.

She indicated that while leaders of distance education/online divisions do not want the online design and development work to be defined by the last 11 months, they recognize the experience has provided new opportunities for faculty partnerships and changed mindsets on adapting to and utilizing digital content across all modalities. The experience has confirmed what they knew: faculty get a lot more out of the development process than a high-quality course. They also take with them the knowledge, skills, best practices, and pedagogical strategies that they can continue to use in their on-campus and off-campus courses regardless of the modality.

Dr. DeLuca stated key lessons learned:

- Training in using digital technologies effectively is a must-have and has to be a strategic priority at SUS institutions;
- Cross-collaboration and a shared responsibility is key to adapting and finding solutions to complex problems;
- Improving pedagogy can make a significant difference in student success. Professional development opportunities were a necessity to assist faculty in improving student engagement in an online modality;
- The use of Canvas for syllabi and modules is of utmost importance in an unforeseen event.  This is often the primary method of communication between faculty and student;
- Investment in building a strong foundation is important.  For distance learning leaders, this was evident in universities' ability to quickly transition to remote delivery;
- Many students and faculty preferred synchronous courses, and distance learning leaders learned they need to develop and share strategies and standards around this delivery format;
- Students need to understand "digital literacy" and "how to learn" in different modalities before a pandemic, so creating student toolkits and modules is important.

She said that SUS universities can and must combine the best of digital with the best of the physical experience for students and meet them where they are in the learning process.

Dr. DeLuca said the Implementation Committee believes the "new normal" will include more flexibility and increased options for student learning while preserving traditional classroom interactions to achieve a resilient, sustainable, accessible, enriching education system.  A new normal will include more use of Zoom/Teams for meetings, conferences, and student services.

She indicated that continuing current cross-university partnerships will encourage institutions to innovate and collaborate in new ways to solve new challenges, such as through continual review of SUS contracts with tools and technology, developing a model for fees to support hybrid flexible course design, developing a model for quality review of synchronous courses, and sharing research regarding dual audience and learning outcomes.

Through the established Implementation Committee and its continuation through 2025, Dr. DeLuca said there is a very strong pipeline and path forward.  Through the Committee's collaborative work, universities have created TOPkit, the Research Consortium, the Task Force on STEM Labs, Florida Virtual Campus initiatives, and the Innovation Summit.

Dr. Cavanagh indicated there is an opportunity going forward to lead the way in aggregate research, especially in synchronous learning.

Chair Wilcox said there are conversations across the SUS regarding the taxonomy of modalities. He said it may be helpful to faculty for consistency of modality and important to the Board of Governors for

consistency in data collection. He urged the Implementation Committee to bring recommendations to the Steering Committee regarding a proposed taxonomy. He indicated the recommendations could be included in the report to the Innovation and Online Committee.


**Academic Coordination Group**:

Dr. Tom Dvorske, who chairs the CAVP Academic Coordination Group as Provost Parker's designee, said that the Group felt there will continue to be a strong demand for a strong, campus-based experience, although a sizable proportion of students have benefitted from the flexibility of expanded modalities and will likely continue to demand they be offered.

Dr. Dvorske said that a swift break to remote delivery accelerated efforts already underway to implement new instructional technologies and, as a result, more faculty may be inclined to expand their methods into multi-modal deliver or use technology in new ways to augment classroom instruction, even if they choose not to teach online again.

He said that with the pandemic came an urgent need to invest in substantial faculty training, instructional and student support, and in some cases, significant upgrades in both small and large-scale technology.

Dr. Dvorske indicated that some academic programs across the system saw greater opportunities than others, but all saw some opportunities, whether it was enhanced field experience, simulated lab experiences, or tighter lectures with more emphasis on problem-solving.  Other areas of benefit are student-support services and student life experiences, including advising, academic support (tutoring, coaching), orientations, and a range of student club activities. These activities will continue to benefit from an expansion of instructional technology tools and methods being added to their mix.

He said that the pandemic and move to remote and hybrid instruction required a rethinking of course construction and delivery and afforded the opportunity for faculty to begin using the technology both as course delivery and to professionalize students for the workplaces that are now being inhabited, where remote work is increasingly likely to become a new normal.

Related, some campuses found that a percentage of their own workforce, with appropriate human resources policies and guidance, could continue to work remotely quite effectively, an opportunity that requires careful study and collaboration among all institutions' HR departments.

Dr. Dvorske said that faculty have proven resilient and resourceful in this crisis. The pandemic increased collaboration between faculty, administrators, and staff to develop effective solutions to be implemented rapidly and successfully.

One of the most significant "lessons learned" is that institutions must remain flexible and nimble to adapt to change and to meet workforce demand.

He stated that it is important to remember that authoritative bodies had to relax their rules to allow for the nimbleness that took place a year ago. For example, SACSCOC provided blanket exceptions to distance education approval requirements. Dr. Dvorske cautioned that a return to a status quo of bureaucratic processes will have a significant impact on how institutions can move forward and have the ability to react to each institution's unique context. He said the group is optimistic about the ACG's collaboration with Board Staff on the redesign of new program proposal forms and the ARTS system for proposal submissions. He stated that the group encouraged continued exploration of areas of

opportunity for efficiencies in regulations, practices, and time-schedules to help institutions improve their responsiveness and effectiveness at addressing critical economic needs.

While best practices and faculty development offerings can conceivably be disseminated statewide through the TOPkit and Innovation Summit initiatives, they require campus-level resources to implement.

Dr. Dvorske indicated that the use of coaches, online tutors, workshops, learning assistants, and facilitators to ensure student success and aid faculty in delivering quality online and multi-modal instruction necessitates a much greater demand on personnel in terms of time and vigilance to student need and demand. Institutions have learned that it requires a mature student to remain engaged in more flexible delivery modes. Even mature students require a strong person-to-person virtual connection with campus and courses.

The impacts of the cost of the pandemic on underrepresented populations remain to be seen, including how this cost will impact enrollments and diversity on campuses, the ability to support these populations, and related metrics.

He stated that the following issues will start to make up the new normal and are likely to gain traction:

1. Mixed/Multi-modal methods of delivering academic support services and student recruiting and student life experiences will grow;

2. Greater opportunity in how to deliver education and flexibility in how to obtain it;

3. More opportunity to use "experts" in the field to enrich certain disciplines; and

4. A need for continued modernization of infrastructure and buildings with technological and environmental upgrades.

He said that colleagues at Florida Atlantic University put it succinctly: The "new normal" will include a multi-modal, tech-centric approach to content delivery while preserving traditional classroom interactions to achieve a resilient, sustainable, accessible, enriching education system.

Dr. Dvorske recommended that the Innovation and Online Committee consider this pandemic as a starting point for leveraging lessons-learned and best practices. He said that the system should draw from the 12 institutions' experience more dynamically with a comprehensive view of leading the paradigm shift in education through redesigning how the system supports institutions, and through how the institutions design education, support students, and measure our objectives in a post-Covid-19 world.

**5. Shared Languages Program**

Dr. McCollough said that the University of Florida has a significant investment in Languages and has received requests from in-state and out-of-state institutions for collaborations. UF will be willing to participate with other SUS institutions by offering programs as transfer opportunities.

Chair Wilcox requested Dr. McCollough to share further with the CAVP so provosts can take a preliminary proposal to their campus communities and come back with a sense of student demand and their interest in participating.  He asked Provost Glover to bring it to the CAVP during one of its Wednesday morning meetings.

**6. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

Chair Wilcox adjourned the meeting at 2:59 p.m.

**SUBJECT: The Post-COVID World in the State University System: Student Affairs Considerations**

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**PROPOSED STEERING COMMITTEE ACTION**

For Discussion

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Steering Committee will discuss student affairs issues that have emerged during efforts to address COVID-19, i.e., challenges, best practices, innovations, collaborations, and recommendations.

The following student affairs leaders have been invited to participate in the discussion:

- Council of Student Affairs      Dr. William Hudson, Jr. (FAMU)
- Health Services/Centers Directors      Dr. Michael Deichen (UCF)
- Dean of Students      Dr. Larry Faerman (FAU)
- Admissions Directors      Jody Glassman (FIU)
- Diversity (Joint presentation)
    - Council on Equal Opportunity and Diversity      Michelle Douglas (FSU)
    - Council on Diversity and Inclusion      Rick Maxey (Polytech)
- Housing Officers      Ana Hernandez (USF)
- Counseling Center Directors      Jon Brunner (FGCU)
- Disability Services Directors      Jennifer Mitchell (FSU)
- Career Center Directors      Lauren Loeffler (UWF)
- Student Government      Gov. Ally Schneider (UNF)
- Collegiate Directors for Student Recreation      Chris Morris (FSU)

To help prepare for the meeting with provosts, these leaders were provided the following questions to discuss with their counterparts in other SUS institutions concerning their respective areas of responsibility:

- 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 potential opportunities has the global pandemic revealed across the SUS and how successful have we been in addressing them over the past nine

months?
- 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?

The results of the May 14 meeting will be presented to the Board of Governors Innovation and Online Committee at its June meeting.

**Supporting Documentation Included:** None

**Facilitators/Presenters:**       Chair Wilcox and invited speakers listed above