

Preparing for a Post-Pandemic World in the State University System: Recommendations to be Addressed in the Short Term

Delivering a Quality Student Experience

1. Expand and sustain digital services for student outreach and engagement for mental health and substance abuse tele-counseling. Develop a mechanism for SUS staff to share counseling support at other institutions in times of crisis.
2. Develop, research, and disseminate strategies, standards, and training associated with best practices in remote and multi-modal (i.e. Flex) instruction and student resources to support faculty, staff, and student success.
3. Address sustainability of financial support associated with federal relief funding, which was necessary to 1) increase the extent of IT resources and software in classrooms and teaching laboratories, although it does not cover the cost of a refreshment cycle, and 2) provide loaner laptops, hotspots, webcams, and other IT support to students without access to the necessary infrastructure for off-campus learning. Develop recommendations for when and how to implement emergency aid for SUS students when the effort is not directed by the Federal Government.

Creation of New Knowledge and Its Application

1. Develop and deliver system-wide professional development programs for faculty, student researchers, and technical staff utilizing digital platforms to enhance their skills in grant writing, equipment use, and other skills transferrable across institutions. This should be an ongoing effort given the rapidly changing technology available to researchers.
2. Identify opportunities, then build and support statewide, interdisciplinary research communities, networks, and clusters with a focus on grand challenges and global problems affecting Florida. The SUS ExpertNet should be updated accordingly (<https://expertnet.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.home>).

Operating an Efficient Enterprise

1. Each university should update policies and practices to support in-person, fully remote, and/or hybrid work and instruction options based on market forces along with department service needs and demand.
2. The SUS should continue to leverage volume contract savings on software and technology to create efficiencies across institutions.
3. In concert with plans being discussed with key stakeholders, explore easing statewide restrictions on the use of carryforward fund reserves permanently to enable a nimble response to research and student financial needs by universities.

Planning for Additional Post-Pandemic Analyses

1. It would be prudent for the SUS to determine what additional data beyond that collected for SUS accountability reports should be collected and analyzed to provide strategic guidance on performance improvement in a post-pandemic Florida.