ICUF Institutions Continue to Support and Supplement Relief to Florida in COVID-19 Response Efforts

Florida's independent colleges and universities have worked tirelessly to support their communities and health care organizations combat the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Activities conducted by the institutions include providing meals and supplies to those working on the front lines, supporting students who may be seeking relief and participating in research efforts to help mitigate the spread of the virus. "Florida's independent colleges and universities - like every other organization in the state - have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Bob Boyd, President and CEO of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF). "But they've quickly shifted to focus on how they can have a positive impact on others. Their efforts are changing lives now and in the future."

Read some of the highlights from local media featuring the work of Florida's independent colleges and universities since the COVID-19 outbreak began in Florida.

Barry University
Miami Herald

Sixty-seven-year-old Hugh Murphy, who learned how to sew to make ends meet as a 17-year-old freshman at Florida State University and then picked it up as a hobby decades later, started sewing cloth masks in February, shortly after he realized he needed to do something — anything — to support his community facing the COVID-19 public health crisis. He’s a theater professor at Barry University, so he’s been working on the masks in between teaching his courses remotely from his home in Hollywood and donating them to whomever is in need. He shared pictures of them on his Facebook page recently, and a surgeon at Memorial Regional reached out. “I thought that she was going to ask me to make some cloth masks for her,” he said. “But she was asking me to design a new mask, so it turned into a mini engineering project.”
Beacon College
Daily Commercial

Two Beacon College faculty members developed ten tips to assist students with learning disabilities in response to schools’ necessary shift to distance-learning amid the coronavirus pandemic. The college, which was founded in 1989 to address a lack of educational institutions dedicated to neurodivergent students, created the list to be a resource for the parents of roughly 2.24 million students across the country who receive special education services at schools.

It was designed by Oksana Hagerty, an educational and developmental psychologist serving as assistant director of the school’s Center for Student Success, and Nicki Nancce, a licensed mental health counselor and associate professor human services and psychology at the school. “Remote learning is a dream come true for many students, but for those with learning differences, it may be a nightmare,” Nance said “Learning how to learn in a new way is often more difficult for them than they material they are trying to master.”

Eckerd College
Eckerd News

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) effectively shuttered Eckerd College’s campus on March 18, halting student research and laboratory work for the semester. Brian Conlin, chemistry stockroom supervisor for the Natural Sciences Collegium, saw chatter on his professional message boards about what other colleges were doing with all the lab supplies they weren’t going to need and had an epiphany. Conlin reached out to faculty, and the College put him in touch with Adam Colby ’09, assistant vice president for operations and emergency management, who knew just the place to send the more than 14,000 pairs of gloves, 220 masks and 130 goggles. Pinellas County Emergency Operations began accepting donated personal protective equipment from businesses and residents at designated drop-off centers on March 26. Unopened and unused surgical face masks, P100 masks, N95 masks, face shields, nitrile exam gloves (powder free), 5 and 7 mil nitrile gloves, safety glasses, surgical tear-away gowns, safety eye goggles, 60% alcohol hand sanitizer, 91% isopropyl alcohol, Clorox wipes, Lysol disinfectant spray, Sani-Cloth wipes and 3% hydrogen peroxide are in demand to supply local hospitals, long-term care facilities and first responders.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
WFTV

Teams at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University are helping health care workers responding to the coronavirus pandemic by building thousands of masks and face shields. Officials said 50 Embry-Riddle students will produce 5,000 face shields and distribute them between Halifax Health and AdventHealth hospitals. “Many of the students doing the work have lost their regular employment because of the global pandemic,” a spokesperson for Embry-Riddle said.

“This is an opportunity for them to earn some needed cash, as a number of students are struggling financially after the loss of jobs,” said Embry-Riddle’s student engagement and student union executive director Karin Gollin. “It’s also an opportunity for them to make a contribution to the local community, which is also a powerful motivator for them.”
Everglades University
@EvergladesUniversity

Abby Hamilton, Director of Student Services at the Everglades University Tampa Campus, is helping fight against Coronavirus by coordinating the sewing of homemade masks to be used in hospitals. She is sending this batch to an Everglades University student who works at the James A. Haley Veteran’s Hospital. They are in short supply of masks and have asked the staff to bring their own masks. Everglades University stepped in to support the hospital and our student.

Everglades University
@EvergladesUniversity

Dr. Luis Trujillo, M.D., PhD., Masters in Public Health Administration faculty member and Incident Commander for COVID-19 at the Florida Department of Health in Manatee County, Holly Griffith, EU Sarasota Masters in Public Health Administration - Concentration in Functional Nutrition Graduate, and Dr. Jennifer Bencie, Florida Department of Health in Manatee County Health Officer and EU Sarasota MPH Faculty, are putting their medical expertise to use and their lives on the line at the COVID-19 Drive-Thru #1, serving the community of Manatee County. Everyone at Everglades University is proud of the vitally important work they are doing to save lives in our community!

Florida Institute of Technology
Florida Today

Softly whirring, a bank of 3D printers inside a Florida Institute of Technology engineering laboratory is creating customized face shields, supplying Space Coast health care workers and first responders in the battle against the new coronavirus. Roughly a dozen students and staffers are manning the COVID-19 3D-printing project at the Melbourne campus and the university’s Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Innovative Design on Palm Bay Road. "Our production capacity is limited, because we're not an industrial facility. But within those limitations, we will be producing this for as long as necessary," said Marco Carvalho, dean of the College of Engineering and Science. So far, every time we have a request from a fire department or a police department, we keep producing the masks so we have them ready for them," Carvalho said.

Florida Southern College
The Ledger

In-person laboratory classes are suspended at Florida Southern College, and the school’s biology department has donated its protective equipment to Lakeland Regional Health Medical Center to help address shortages because of the coronavirus outbreak. The college reported delivering more than 20,000 pairs of gloves, 900 masks, 400 lab coats, 60 isolation gowns and 42 sets of goggles to the hospital Tuesday. “Florida Southern believes that in this time of crisis we are called to care for one another however we can,” FSC spokesman Grant Heston said. “We’re thrilled to make this contribution to help our community and heroic healthcare partners.”
**Jacksonville University**

**The Wave**

When an unprecedented event placed extraordinary stress on the Nellie Student Support Fund, members of the Jacksonville University community responded in a predictable way: They asked how they could help. “As members of the Jacksonville University family, we take care of one another, especially our students. It’s what we do,” says University trustee Robert Hill, who is one of dozens of Dolphins who have already made financial contributions to ensure the Nellie Fund can continue providing aid.

Since 2016, the Nellie Fund has helped Jacksonville University students pay unexpected expenses during emergencies such as hurricanes, fires, auto accidents, and family deaths. Today, students are calling upon the fund to help them get through a global pandemic.

**Keiser University**

**SeaHawk Nation**

Sarasota-area healthcare workers at three local hospitals will benefit from donations of personal protective equipment (PPE) made by Keiser University Sarasota. Nearly 7,000 pieces of protective equipment were recently donated to Sarasota Memorial Hospital, Manatee Memorial Hospital, and Venice Regional Medical Center. The donation included isolation gowns, surgical masks, and sterile and exam gloves donated from Keiser’s nursing and healthcare labs. The donations totaled about $700. “When we learned of the PPE shortage facing frontline healthcare workers at our local hospitals, we immediately conducted an inventory of our PPE supply to see how Keiser University could assist,” said Michele Morgan, campus president at Keiser University Sarasota. “Our local hospitals are such a critical component of our students’ educational experience and we felt it was an absolute must to support our educational partners while also contributing to the PPE supply necessary to protect hospital employees.”

**Lynn University**

**Lynn News**

As the World Health Organization named COVID-19 a pandemic, the global need for medical equipment and fast, effective supply chain management became apparent. That’s when Ja’dan Johnson, Lynn University class of 2021 and Watson Scholar, joined MegaBots Founder Gui Cavalcanti to create Open Source COVID-19 Medical Supplies (OSCMS). OSCMS launched as a Facebook group and grew to a community of over 40,000 in less than two weeks. The group’s mission is to mobilize makers and fabricators around the world to generate open-source plans, build a library of medical supply requirements and designs, and create distributable plans for organizing effective local responses to medical supply chain interruption.

**Nova Southeastern University**

**Connect FM**

COVID-19 has forced many family members to end visits to parents and grandparents or stop visiting older loved ones at nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The implementation of physical distancing is an essential step in reducing transmission of the virus. But in an effort to flatten the curve, physical distancing may be causing social isolation and loneliness. Although loneliness and social isolation can affect anyone regardless of age, the elderly are particularly vulnerable, especially under the current conditions of the pandemic.
Palm Beach Atlantic University

PBA News

Marissa Pacheco ’16 first felt a pull toward nursing when she was a 17-year-old soccer player whose severely broken, extremely bloody nose didn’t faze the nurses in the pediatric emergency room one bit. Now, about a decade later, Pacheco is a nurse who exudes that same sense of calm to her cardiac patients hospitalized amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Pacheco tested two of the patients at her California hospital for the virus and cared for them for several days while they awaited results. She’s made it a point to spend extra time with all of her patients while their families are unable to visit. She thoroughly answers family members’ questions by phone or FaceTime. “Being that listening ear puts them at ease,” Pacheco said. “Allowing people to talk and unpack, it makes a difference. Walking away knowing they feel a little lighter emotionally makes me feel so much better.”

Pacheco works in the cardiac stepdown unit at a hospital in Visalia, California, in the Central Valley. She cares for patients who border on requiring the Intensive Care Unit or a lower level of care. Pacheco described PBA’s nursing program as “hands down one of the best experiences I’ve had in my life” due to the academic rigor and personal care that professors have for students. Through their examples, professors prepared students for the human element of nursing. “They really, really put us in a position to excel as nurses,” she said. “It prepares you to be not only a standout nurse but also a standout person.”

Ringling College of Art & Design

Sarasota Herald-Tribune

Visual art brings people together. For thousands of years, it’s been a human thing, a social thing, not a solitary pleasure. That suddenly changed when the global pandemic forced most public art spaces to shut their doors. Now that virtual visits are the only option, museums and galleries around the planet have beefed up their online presence. The Ringling College of Art and Design puts most of its digital eggs in the basket of social media.

Rollins College

WKMG News 6 Orlando

Two Rollins College professors are creating gallons of hand sanitizer to donate to first responders. So far, Dr. James Patrone and Dr. Laurel Habgood have given 10 gallons to the Winter Park Police Department and five gallons to the Winter Park Fire Department. The two professors are planning to donate the hand sanitizer to the Orlando Regional Medical Center, as well, along with boxes of gloves and goggles. "We know there are people in need, and we know there are people on the front lines," said Dr. Patrone. "Since we have the ability now to fill this need, we’re going to do our best to help our community."
Saint Leo University

Saint Leo Blog

Saint Leo University is proud to have some members of its community who are working in the response efforts against the Novel Coronavirus, specifically called COVID-19. One such individual is Dr. Wendy Nesheim, an instructor in Saint Leo University’s Master of Science in Emergency and Disaster Management online degree program. Nesheim is the commander of GA-3 DMAT, a disaster medical assistance team that falls under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She has 55 team members consisting of doctors, nurses, paramedics, respiratory therapists and other medical professionals. Based out of Georgia, this DMAT group is the only such one in the state but serves the entire nation.

In its Coronavirus response work, her team has primarily served evacuees who have either flown in from other countries or who have disembarked from cruise ships. The team is ensuring these individuals undergo a 14-day quarantine, and the medical personnel regularly check their temperature and other symptoms. “Our main goal is to prevent any further spreading of the Coronavirus,” says Nesheim, who is also a registered nurse. In addition to managing the DMAT group and teaching for Saint Leo, she works as a research nurse at a vaccine clinic near Atlanta.

Southeastern University

The Ledger

Southeastern University has released “Going Remote,” a five-part learning series to help parents who are now faced with helping their school-aged children learn from home. The free videos provide tips and encouragement from SEU education professors Janet Deck and Sarah Yates. The professors, who have more than 30 years of teaching experience, have homeschooled their own children and taught in the public school system before joining the faculty at Southeastern. Each episode offers anecdotes and learning strategies to incorporate at home for each level of learning, from pre-K through high school.

St. Thomas University

Miami Herald

The abrupt end of college sports was devastating. Historic seasons felt incomplete, and fans missed out on March Madness. Meanwhile student-athletes had to come to terms with their new reality of virtual classes. But for those recovering from an injury, the school year’s premature end couldn’t have come at a worse time. Days, weeks, months of progress were at risk of being lost because of a players’ lack of access to proper weight equipment. About 31 student-athletes at St. Thomas University found themselves in this situation after the school closed on March 20. Luckily, they had Jim Tuffy. “When everything stopped and everyone went home, I kind of realized that we need to do what they were used to getting for therapy,” said Tuffy, the the Miami Gardens-based university’s assistant athletic director for sports medicine.

Following the lead of schools across the country, Tuffy went digital and began conducting therapy sessions via FaceTime or Zoom. This not only allows him to maintain the one-on-one experience with student-athletes but also assess their progress. Two weeks in and his revamped program looks to be a hit. “I thought I was going to have to do rehab alone, but the treatment has been above and beyond my expectations,” said STU Volleyball player Manuela Martinez, who’s recovering from ACL reconstruction surgery. “I’m incredibly grateful for everything that Jim has done.”
Stetson University

**Hometown News Volusia**

As COVID-19 continues to bear down on the American population, many experts are continuing to offer advice and support, according to Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations. Dr. Asal Mohamadi Johnson, assistant professor of public health at Stetson University gives sound advice on how to best prevent and manage the spread of Covid-19. Q: What advice can you give those who live with elderly or immune-compromised individuals? Dr. Johnson: “They need to make sure to stay healthy to reassure the safety of their vulnerable family members. They should avoid going out and stay home. If they must go out, they should keep their distance from other people and consider wearing masks and gloves. If they believe they are sick, it is critical they avoid any contact with the vulnerable family member and get tested as soon as possible. if positive, they must strictly adhere to isolation measures.”

The University of Tampa

**The University of Tampa**

The university's digital fabrication lab, or Fab Lab used for students in the arts to use innovative technology, is creating 3D printers to make "protective force shields" that wrap around a health care worker's head, protecting their glasses and respirator. The eight 3D printers each take roughly six hours to create one mask. Emma Quintana, coordinator of the Fab Lab, is assisting a COVID-19 testing site and Moffitt Cancer Center. Quintana also donated 100 of the masks created in the Fab Lab to Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg.

University of Miami

**WSVN**

Doctors at the University of Miami have received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to begin a study involving stem cell treatment to help fight the coronavirus. Dr. Camillo Ricordi and his team at UM’s Miller School of Medicine will be the medical professionals who will put the study to the test at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. “So far, the indication both from China and Israel are pretty remarkable,” he said. “In less than one month, we will know if the results are promising, and we are already scaling up production to do and treat many more patients planning for success.”

At center, Dr. Camillo Ricordi from the University of Miami’s medical school, is working on islet cell transplantation. Diabetes patients who have had the cell transplants are now living without insulin. **AL DIAZ MIAMI HERALD FILE**