

Being Thankful

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<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2020/11/24/being-thankful/>

As everyone tells us almost every minute of every day, 2020 has been a tough year. Every one of us – students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community friends have been challenged. The challenges have been health-related, economic, emotional, educational. family, and everything else that affects our lives.

In spite of – or sometimes because of – these challenges, this year has also enabled us to develop and strengthen our appreciation for what we have and gives our lives meaning, satisfaction, and hope.

Within the FAU Libraries, we have much to celebrate and for which we are thankful. As Dean of the Libraries, I am thankful for:

- Our ability to adapt so quickly and provide core services to our students and faculty.
 - Our [Library Statistics in COVID-19](#) tells a short story of the thousands of people we have helped since mid March when COVID-19 hit: we have provided more than 22,000 interlibrary loans, made more than 350,000 electronic resources available, welcomed more than 21,800 visitors to our facilities since we reopened the buildings on August 20, helped more than 7800 people through phone calls, email, chat, and virtual consultations, and engaged with another 2400 people who took part in over 130 virtual presentations and events hosted by the Libraries.
 - Our innovative use of technology to serve the Libraries' users in new and expanded ways, including more on-demand video content, [live tracking of available study and computer spaces](#), and contactless delivery of ILL and circulating books through lockers located outside the library buildings in Boca Raton and Jupiter. Many of these tools will be used even after we return to "normal" and will allow us to expand access to services beyond normal building opening hours. More and more we are looking to provide broader access to a wider range of services without having to increase staffing.
- The support and gratitude of every library faculty and staff member for their colleagues during this time. Popular wisdom says you have to love yourself before you can truly love someone else. I would say that our ability to continue to reach out and help our users effectively is due to how library staff and faculty have looked out for their colleagues, as well as FAU's students and faculty, and offered help and support where needed.
 - That support is manifested through people stepping up to do new things, fill service gaps, and continue to help each other out with big and little things.
 - One of the most visible signs of this institutional gratitude is in our ongoing [Shout Outs](#) page where we celebrate library folks giving thanks for each other.
- The survival of the Florida Virtual Campus beyond a budget veto so that we are able to continue to have an online catalog, interlibrary loan services, effective access to our electronic journals and databases, and a Digital Library that captures much of the University's faculty and student scholarly output, as well as letting the world know about some of our gems.

- Our ongoing commitment to our strategic principles, most notably a wide range of programming and partnerships to promote true diversity, equity and inclusion, as documented in our [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion landing page](#).
- The many partnerships the Libraries have developed with units across campus to provide essential services to our students during this time of crisis. Three key partnerships in the past few months have been:
 - In collaboration with [Beyond Food Program](#) and Food Pantry, the [FAU Libraries are making non-perishable food available to students](#) to raise their food security level to persist toward academic success. Library staff have also donated 5 boxes of food in support of this program.
 - In collaboration with OIT and Student Financial Services, the Libraries [have loaned out over 200 laptops to students in need](#) so that they can attend their online courses successfully.
 - In response to student needs and in support of programs such as the Educate Tomorrow program, the [FAU Wimberly Library has created a space for students to reserve a quiet, private spot to take exams](#).
- The safety precautions taken by the University and the compliance of students to keep us all safe during the pandemic.

So in this very strange Thanksgiving season, I wanted to say thank you to our students, our faculty, our staff, our University Administration, and our friends and supporters in the community. May we all stay safe. may we learn to appreciate the little things, and may we find ourselves stronger and simultaneously more sensitive to the needs of our small and large communities.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.