

Spring Semester 2021 in the FAU Libraries

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<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2020/12/24/spring-semester-2021-in-the-fau-libraries/>

During the [Spring 2021 semester](#), library faculty and staff will continue to serve the FAU community through a hybrid model of on-site and technology-enhanced services that ensure public safety while meeting the needs of FAU faculty and students.

Because health and safety guidelines regarding the spread of the COVID-19 virus have not changed and the timeline for widespread vaccination is not yet determined, the FAU Libraries will continue to operate on a reduced schedule and with limited, socially-distanced seating and no direct access to book stacks. Access will continue to be limited to students and faculty of FAU and Palm Beach State College who have active OWL or Panther cards allowing them to swipe into the buildings.

Over the summer of 2020 and in the fall 2020 semester, we expanded concierge-style services in the Libraries to help people get the resources and help they need. We established [virtual office hours](#) for all hours that the buildings are open, set up contactless delivery lockers for people needing books, laptops, or interlibrary loan materials, set up a telepresence at service points staffed by live people, created more [on-demand tutorials and videos](#) so people can get help when they need it, 24/7, and much more. We also implemented a [new mechanism, called OpenAthens, for people](#) to be able to access the electronic books, journals, and databases the Libraries pay for, allowing people to search the open Internet and be brought seamlessly into the FAU virtual library for the information they need for their study, class projects, and research.

Since March 2020 to the end of the fall 2020 semester, the FAU Libraries have served thousands of FAU and affiliated students and faculty, as well as our local community. Our library faculty and staff have answered over 6000 emails, had live chats with over 1000 people, have provided answers and assistance over the phone almost 3000 times, and have had virtual meetings with over 600 library users. Our [Web site](#) has been used almost 1.5 million times, with our [subject and course guides](#) being used over 200,000 times. The electronic books, journals, and databases that we license for FAU students and faculty have been used over 476,000 times. We have lent out more than 2800 books and other items from our collections and processed more than 30,000 Interlibrary loan requests from August to December 2020.

Due to the pandemic, students have not been able to use our buildings as effectively or creatively as they have in the past. Since August 20, 2020 when we reopened our facilities, a little over 22,000 FAU students have used the physical libraries. In contrast, we had over 950,000 visits to the main library in Boca Raton in the 2018-2019 school year. We are looking forward to the future when our buildings can be fully reopened and students can use them for the highly collaborative, active-learning spaces that [we have been designing them to be](#).



For an overview of what our services for the spring 2021 semester look like, please consult the [Libraries Spring 2021 Guide](#). While we are hoping to bring more people back on site and expand face-to-face offerings, health and safety guidelines permitting, the hybrid model of service is expected to continue through the spring. Everyone hopes that the FAU Libraries, and the whole University, will be back to “normal” by fall 2021. We miss our students – who used to flock to the Libraries before the pandemic, as a place to collaborate and engage in active, group learning. We miss our co-workers. We miss interacting directly with the broader community. Stay safe and we’ll see you in the spring 2021 semester.