

Library Redux

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<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2020/04/09/library-redux/>

With the Florida Board of Governors' decision in mid March to move all instruction in the State University System online for the spring semester, the FAU Libraries have been operating almost entirely remotely since March 19. We are providing limited in-person services to check out laptops and other computer equipment to students in need and to provide curbside pickup of items from our print collection in the main library in Boca Raton for faculty.



Working remotely means that each of our homes is doubling as our office. For some of us who live alone, that has meant taking over a table or a room and resigning ourselves to having contact with other people only through the phone or the computer. For others of us with children, it has meant sharing our new office spaces with our children's new home schooling space or with their play space. Like the rest of the world, dealing with the pandemic has meant a complete readjustment in how we live our lives and carry out our work.

Working remotely has not lessened our commitment to or connection with the students and faculty of FAU and our local community. In the past few weeks, library faculty and staff have interacted with hundreds of students and faculty over email, by phone, via chat, text, or online meeting formats to assist them with their research, their instruction, or their questions about their future. For example, during the first two weeks of working remotely, staff of the [Interlibrary Loan department](#) set up numerous new accounts for students and faculty, processed over 230 borrowing requests, lent over 940 digital articles or book chapters, scanned over 70 items from our physical collections for other SUS Libraries, hospitals, and federal and state agencies, and provided curbside delivery of dozens of items from our print book collection.

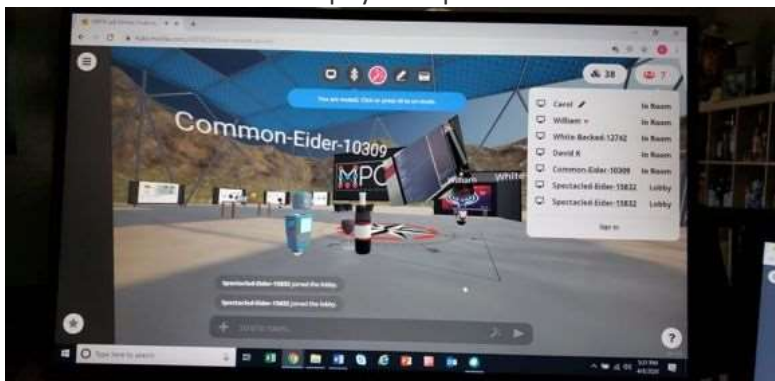
In the first two weeks of working remotely, our newly created LibGuide on [Home Schooling](#) was viewed almost 1100 times. Our newly created LibGuide on [COVID-19 Resources](#) has also been exceptionally popular. Our dozens of [video tutorials](#) continue to be very popular and our [Lib2Go](#) page has guided hundreds of our students and faculty to the wide array of resources and services we have available to them. This week, we will be adding virtual office hours to make it possible for our students and faculty to connect online with a live person and have a video chat.

Showing our commitment to the broader University mission and our support for our students, twenty-seven library faculty and staff are volunteering five or more hours a week to take part in the University's initiative to reach out by phone to most of our current students. Through these conversations, we let our students know that FAU cares and callers are trained to direct students to whatever assistance they need for tutoring, finances, advising, or just coping with the human effects of the pandemic.

The new environment has sparked our creativity and caused us to find new ways to engage with our students and our community. We have held bingo games on social media for students based on library services. For Poetry Month, we are hosting a Spoken Word video contest for students. While we might have started these efforts to address the physical isolation we are all experiencing, some of our efforts will likely continue even after we are back in our physical spaces and having face-to-face interactions once again. A prime example of this change is coming from the [Jaffe Center for Book Arts](#). Accustomed to offering hands-on workshops for students and the community, the Jaffe has branched out into live video streaming events that are also recorded [on their site](#) for viewing at a later time. They have just completed episode 2 of Book Arts 101, featuring the Director of the Jaffe Center, John Cutrone, talking about book arts and showing some prime examples. The community response to the first two episodes has made it clear that this is a format that works and that will enable the Jaffe Center to reach a broader group of people who want to learn about the amazing, quirky world of book arts.



While the stay-at-home directives and the temporary closure of the libraries have kept us from enjoying our physical spaces and seeing each other face-to-face, the technology continues to make it possible for us to find new ways to work and play together. The [Rubin and Cindy Gruber Sandbox](#), which was due to open on March 30, is currently sitting vacant, waiting for students to start their journey into the world of artificial intelligence. But, not to be controlled by our current reality, the co-directors of the Gruber Sandbox are developing a virtual version of the Gruber Sandbox to enable our students to enter the space and begin to explore some of its capabilities virtually. Still in the early development stages, this virtual reality version of the Gruber Sandbox will likely continue even after we are able to enter the physical space.



The greatest irony for me in this time of physical isolation is how close it has brought us in other ways. The faculty and staff of the FAU Libraries are stretching their understanding of connection and service and are demonstrating every day that we are always here for our community.

Be well, stay home, stay safe until we can meet in person once again. In the meantime, visit our [website](#), our social media pages, and reach out to us to discover all the ways that we can help enrich your research, study, and personal growth.