

Reimagining the Libraries Post COVID19

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<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2020/06/14/reimagining-the-libraries-post-covid19/>

Since March 19, the FAU Libraries have been operating remotely, with the vast majority of services being provided virtually through email, phone, chat, video tutorials, online instruction, and virtual office hours, with the extensive suite of remote services being highlighted in our Lib2Go guide <https://library.fau.edu/lib2go>.



**ONLINE RESOURCES
AT YOUR FINGERTIPS**

Lib2GO

Need to access databases and journals? Or want to virtually meet with one of our librarians? Click the link to learn more about our remote resources.

VISIT TODAY AT [LIBRARY.FAU.EDU/LIB2GO](https://library.fau.edu/lib2go)

Checkout of laptops and other equipment for students in need has been handled through in-person delivery by appointment at library facilities. In spite of the fact that the vast majority of our partner libraries from whom we borrow materials have also been closed and are not lending physical items, interlibrary loan (ILL) services have continued unabated, with thousands of electronic articles being provided to FAU patrons in the past few months.

ILL staff have also been providing curbside delivery of items from our Boca library's physical collections to FAU faculty throughout the entire COVID19 closure three times a week by appointment. [Curbside delivery of materials from the Boca library's physical collections](#) was just recently expanded to be available to students as well as faculty. It was very well received and heavily used by students in the first week. If staffing and delivery options between campuses permit, we hope to be able to expand the service beyond the Boca campus library.



Curbside delivery for faculty and students in Boca

We have been able to continue serving the FAU community and facilitate their teaching, research and study by a creative redesign of services, underscored by our fundamental dedication to the success of our students and faculty. Even when we return fully to our physical facilities, we anticipate that many of these virtual services will continue, as they enable us to reach all users more effectively and provide more on-demand services.

The Deans and Directors of the libraries of the Florida State University System (Council of State University Libraries – CSUL) developed and approved on May 19 a set of [Guiding Principles and Assumptions about Reopening Physical Library Facilities post COVID19 Closure](#). While we all have different facilities, different university missions, and different student bodies, we have all been working in the past few years to develop library spaces that support both quiet, individual research and study as well as active, collaborative spaces. Large sections of today’s academic libraries have been intentionally designed as intensive, interactive learning spaces, where flexible design enables students to redesign spaces on the fly.



The fifth floor of the Wimberly Library designed for flexibility and high-intensity use

High usage of our facilities has been a point of pride. The fact that many students enter the libraries and spend hours at a time working and studying — alone in quiet zones or together in collaborative spaces — has warmed our hearts. [I have written about those very aspects in this blog space numerous times.](#)



The fourth floor of the Wimberly Library – the quiet zone

Now, the very design features that enabled high-intensity, flexible, lengthy usage of our spaces are precisely those that will create the greatest challenges as we plan for bringing people back into our libraries before the pandemic is completely over. Many of us are feeling heartbroken at needing to exercise tight control over our spaces, at having to limit the number of people who can safely be in our spaces, at having to reduce flexibility in the way the facilities are used. This professional heartbreak is being played out in public libraries as well, as a recent New York Times article entitled [Libraries Strive to Stay “Community Living Rooms” as They Reopen](#) documents.



Students enjoying the new Diversity Burrow in the Wimberly Library

We have an entire section of our [website that documents how we have “reimagined” the Wimberly Library](#) on the Boca campus in recent years. As I was looking at this page the other day, I realized that we needed to reimagine our services for our new reality so that we can continue to meet the needs of our users while we have to (temporarily, we hope) enact restrictions for our physical facilities.



Dean Hixson trying out one of the seating options at the Jupiter Campus Library

The FAU Libraries have submitted a plan for reopening our physical facilities that is under review by the FAU University Administration to ensure that it meets health and safety guidelines and is in alignment with the [University's own plan for reopening in the fall](#). The University's draft plan was just presented to the FAU Board of Trustees on June 12 and will be presented to the Board of Governors (BOG) in Tallahassee on June 23. Each university within the State University System of Florida has prepared its plan in accordance with the BOG's [Blueprint for Reopening Campuses](#).

As we get feedback on our plan for reopening the FAU Libraries' physical facilities, we will share information widely with our students, faculty, and staff, as well as with the local community. We will need your input, your support, and your patience as we move forward.