

Students question temporary shifts to remote learning



Leda Alvim

EDITOR IN CHIEF

“It had to happen sometime — the university is making us go virtual for two weeks,” read an email sent from a professor Aug. 31 announcing the shift to online instructions due to a positive COVID-19 case.

In less than a week since the start of the fall semester, what some students hoped to be the “return to normalcy,” with packed classrooms and the return of in-person activities across campus, quickly turned upside down with the news they would

be returning to the desktops and virtual classrooms.

The rise of COVID-19 cases across campuses is forcing in-person classes to shift “temporarily” to online instruction for a two-week period. Students, faculty and staff who test positive or are exposed to the virus are required to be isolated while those with no symptoms skip the quarantine period and the line to get tested.

The news, however, didn’t come as a surprise to junior computer sciences major Ethan Wuitschick.

“I think it will be a somewhat effective short-term solution for handling outbreaks among students, but I think that it’s a token effort given how few masks I see in my courses and the number of high-risk situations on campus outside of classes,”

Wuitschick said.

In an email sent to students whose classes shift to online instruction, the USF COVID-19 Task Force advised students to monitor their health and symptoms, especially over the two-week period after being notified of the shift, and, if any symptoms are developed, to report it to Students Health Services (SHS).

Besides watching out for any early symptoms, the task force recommended the USF community to follow all mitigation measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Because you may have been exposed, you must wear face coverings at all times, practice physical distancing, wash your hands frequently, disinfect surfaces you touch and other



Students whose classes were shifted to online instruction within the first two weeks of classes because of positive COVID-19 cases discussed the effectiveness of this measure. **ORACLE PHOTO**

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Veterans weigh effects of 9/11 ahead of 20-year anniversary



Angela Cordoba Perez

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Carlos Moreira, a New Yorker working in the Marine Corps in California, woke up at around 4 a.m. for work. When he arrived at his office, he saw on the TVs that a plane had crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center around 8:46 a.m. on the

opposite coast.

Not knowing what was going on, Moreira tried to reach his family still in New York City, but all the phone lines were busy. All he could do was watch the news and wait for answers.

“Definitely, it was a roller coaster. It was a mix of emotions,” Moreira, director of campus engagement for Veteran Success and Alumni Affairs at USF, said. “Definitely a lot of worry and through the worry, the anger [also came] once the news started saying that we were being attacked.”

Only later that night, after 10 p.m., did Moreira get ahold of

his mother who told him how his father had to walk almost 12 hours to pick up his sisters and take them home safely since transportation was shut down in the city. The day after, he said, the whole country had shut down.

“On [Sept.] 12, everything was literally closed,” Moreira said. “Schools were closed, everything that was federal, government, state, military basically went into ... the high levels of force protection.”

The naval base in Puerto Rico where Wayne Taylor, assistant director for the Office of Veteran Success, was working at with his army unit went into lockdown

as well. He said when they saw the plane hit The Pentagon, they knew it was a terrorist attack.

Taylor remembers the anxiety he felt that day. He went to the school inside the military base to pick up his daughters and took them to the compound with his wife so they could stay safe.

“Even though we were in Puerto Rico, ... the unit that I was working with was a special unit,” Taylor said. “We knew that people might know where we were located. And so we knew that Puerto Rico at that time, especially with the airfield there, was a very important position for the United States to help get to

South America rather quickly if there’s any problems with any of our embassies.”

His unit was geared up and on standby to go anywhere.

After the 9/11 events happened, the longest war in American history started. More than 800,000 American service members were deployed to Afghanistan since October 2001, 2,352 of them have died and more than 200,000 wounded, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

For 20 years, U.S. service members were sent to Afghanistan. Todd Post, a senior

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Editor in Chief

Leda Alvim
@thats.leda

Managing Editor

Haley Wirth

Assistant News Editor

Angela Cordoba Perez
@AngelaCordobaP

Sports Editor

Francisco Rosa
@Cisco_Rosa
Richard Silva
@Rich_Silva18

Chief Copy Editor

Alexandra Urban
@Aurban318

Writers

Brielle Lopez
Marcelene Pilcher

Advertising Sales & Design

Christina Loizou

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studying psychology at the St. Pete campus, was 12 years old when 9/11 happened — 11 years later, he was serving in that war.

“There’s what you think [the war] might be and then there’s this what it really is, and it’s just a crazy place over there,” Post said. “It’s a different world for sure, and it makes me really appreciate being [in the U.S.]”

Post was one of many members of his family who served in the military, which was a significant reason for him joining. He said he feels 9/11 impacted his entire family since many of his relatives, including his father and brother, have been sent to Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern countries.

Although Taylor’s unit ended up going to South America following 9/11, he was sent to Afghanistan in 2004. Their mission, he said, was to find the

people who attacked them.

“We knew that the people who attacked us were using Afghanistan as a safe haven,” Taylor said. “They were using it to hide ... because of the way that the Taliban had set it up before. So we knew that they knew they could be safe there.”

With the recent retirement of American troops from Afghanistan and the 20th anniversary of 9/11 coming up, Taylor said these past few days have been of reflection for him. He believes it is important to learn and educate from the experiences lived since that day.

“I think it’s a great time for us to educate others that when you go to combat, we’re fighting an enemy, not a race,” Taylor said.

“You’re not fighting a religion, you’re actually fighting someone else who’s shooting at you, not saying that everyone is bad. When I say education, I think that’s what [people who remember 9/11] could do is educate more

from our experiences and talk about ‘What did we learn from 9/11? What can we share with others so they can take it [and] they can learn something, too?’”

Moreira said it’s important to remember the sacrifices that military, police, EMT first responders, firefighters and service members make every day, and understand the sacrifices that were made in 9/11.

“9/11 was a day of sorrow, anger, frustration — 9/12 the country came together as one,” Moreira said. “Neighbors were there for one another, people that didn’t know each other were there for one another. Even on 9/11, we have so many heroes that we don’t know about. They didn’t wear the uniform, they probably were the average Joe, but they stepped up to the plate to be there for one another, to even sacrifice their own life to save somebody else.”



With the recent retirement of American troops from Afghanistan and the 20th anniversary of 9/11 coming up, USF veterans describe how this day impacted their lives. **CREATIVE COMMONS**

CLASSES

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than attending classes, do not congregate or gather with other people for the next two weeks," the email stated.

Face masks are no longer required but "expected" across campus while social distancing inside classrooms isn't enforced. To some students, the measures have sped up the spread of COVID-19 inside classrooms.

"I never expected it to be this soon, but it's the price we pay at the fault of those who don't care about others," sophomore Carolyn Guerra said.

While Guerra said the switch to online instruction will be effective for the time being, until the vaccine is required, she believes classes will continue to suffer the switch between in person to online for "a long time."

"I think the switch to online is effective for a while in the sense that no one who is sick is going into the class and spreading it, but long term, masks should be required without excuses inside of buildings," she said.

The university is not allowed to require proof of vaccination based on SB 2006 signed into law May 3 by Gov. Ron DeSantis. However, as a way to aid in contact tracing across classrooms, SHS released a form encouraging students to voluntarily submit their COVID-19 vaccination records.

Junior Swetha Mukalel had all three of her in-person classes shifted online, with notifications announcing the change arriving between one and two days after attending class. She's been receiving guidance from two of her professors, however, she still hasn't heard anything about online meeting times from the

third one.

"I'm not really sure how effective this method will be," Mukalel said. "I'm concerned that after the two weeks are up, someone will test positive again and we'll be back online."

While some transitions have been smooth due to the class type and dynamic, others not as much. Senior health sciences major Steven Segalini said his class' transition to online instruction has been challenging mainly due to the interactive and collaborative component built into his coursework.

"Unfortunately our class is a 'flipped setting' so it is designed to be almost entirely interactive within the class and breaks down into smaller groups after a brief lecture," Segalini said. "This dynamic is very difficult to do online and is very confusing."

The shift, he said, is "not effective at all." The night before his Biology II class he was notified it was being shifted online and all the upcoming meetings for the next two weeks would be conducted through Microsoft Teams.

"I chose to go back on campus aware of the risks regarding COVID-19, and I have no desire to have my decisions made for me," he said.

Junior health sciences major Sarah Valenti's two out of three in-person classes, including Organic Chemistry I and Human Sexual Behavior, were shifted online, with participation and discussions through Microsoft Teams being accounted for.

"I am a bit upset that if USF knew that they would do this every time someone was positive, why go back at all, because positivity is inevitable," Valenti said.



Students whose classes were shifted to online instruction within the first two weeks of classes because of positive COVID-19 cases discussed the effectiveness of this measure. **ORACLE PHOTO**

The university has reported over 220 positive COVID-19 cases among students across all campuses since the week of Aug. 15, the same week when on-campus move-in started, bringing the total count to 1,870 students, faculty and staff since Aug. 24. As of Aug. 29, 43 people isolated, and 33 of those people exited isolation.

Tight, packed classrooms where masks are optional seemed to be the ideal scenario for a potential COVID-19 outbreak, health sciences major Kimberly Egoroff said. With two of her classes shifted to online instruction for two weeks, she

said she believes the university "tried to rush back into in person without establishing rules for students wanting to be in person."

"If students want in-person classes, those students should be required to wear masks or have the vaccine," Egoroff said. "If they don't want to, then online class should be their option. But again, I know schools cannot enforce masks or vaccines."

As the semester goes on and more cases are reported, the shift to a temporary online instruction becomes an alternative option to keep campus operations at full capacity. The issue for students like Valenti, however, depends on

how long the system will last.

"It's frustrating and stressful to be constantly thrown a surprise uprooting, when we are just establishing a new routine," Valenti said. "I'm worried that this remote learning is just going to be extended and extended every time someone is positive, and if that happens while remote, they may just push back the return date."

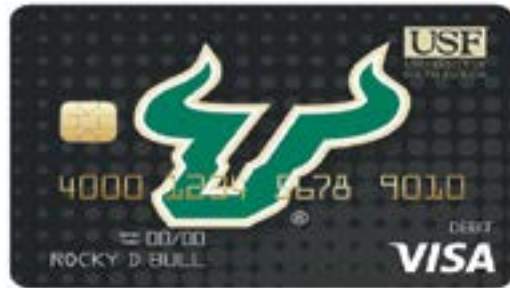
"I feel that we as a university need to just accept that people will get sick but if people do what they are supposed to do it's the only way we can move on."

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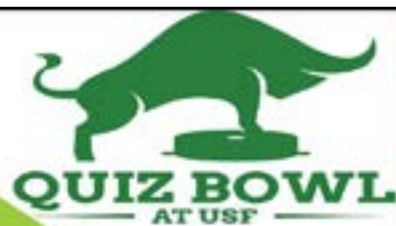


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Give USF professors control over their classrooms

By Marcelene Pilcher
CORRESPONDENT

USF is back at full capacity for the fall semester with roughly 50,000 students on all three campuses, according to 2021 enrollment data. This combined with no vaccine or mask mandates has raised concerns among faculty for the safety of themselves and their students in the face of COVID-19.

“As I indicated at the Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting on the 24th, I think faculty generally are quite disappointed at where we are with regard to the plan that we had for reopening,” said USF Faculty Senate President Timothy Boaz in a Sept. 3 interview with The Oracle. “We didn’t stay with the advice of our experts in USF Health.

“Changes were made to the [reopening] plan that aren’t based in science and data, and most of all, the health and welfare of the members of our USF community is no longer the top priority in that plan.”

If USF won’t enforce effective safety measures, it should at least give professors discretion in the level of online instruction on a class-by-class basis.

Other than a strongly worded Aug. 9 announcement that stated mask usage and vaccines are “expected,” it would appear USF’s hands are tied by the state when it comes to mask and vaccine mandates.

The current BOT consists of 13 members, six of whom were appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis and five of whom were appointed by the Florida Board of Governors



Students and faculty should put pressure on the USF Board of Trustees so professors can have more sway over what happens when their students contract COVID-19. ORACLE PHOTO/LEDA ALVIM

(BOG), the bulk of which were also appointed by DeSantis.

Based on DeSantis’ response to mask mandates in Alachua and Broward counties, the repercussions for a disobedient faculty head is clear. When school board officials rejected DeSantis’ ban and implemented mask mandates in public schools, the governor threatened to withhold the salaries of school board members who defied him.

The truth is, all classes are not created equal at USF.

“I think there are circumstances where we should have had more latitude to go online,” said Boaz. “I wouldn’t say all classes need to go online. I’m comfortable with the arrangements I have for my classes. They’re big enough that students can spread out, and the students that I have are complying with the request to wear masks, so I’m comfortable teaching.

“Not every situation is going to be like that. Some students may have family members at

risk. There are plenty of classes being taught in classrooms where they’re packed to 100% of capacity. There’s no opportunities for social distancing and I don’t think those are good circumstances.”

In these conditions, faculty members should have discretion on what is best for themselves and the students in their classes, be it to move online, socially distance the classroom or develop a hybrid method.

Students and faculty should address the BOT, whether in person, on social media or around campus, and make it clear the current state of affairs is not acceptable. If USF won’t prioritize the concerns of its faculty, they should have the power to protect their own health.

Marcelene Pilcher is a sophomore studying public relations and advertising.

USF should include translated texts in more courses

By Brielle Lopez
CORRESPONDENT

Students settling into the third week of classes and cracking open their required readings may notice a lack of diverse texts in their curriculums. As a senior English major, I’ve only now encountered my first translated text in a course.

Students across all majors would benefit from the inclusion of required translated texts assigned by their professors. Reading foreign literature provides an insight into issues and cultural norms that American students wouldn’t be exposed to otherwise.

Only 3% of all books published in America are translated works, as highlighted by an international literature study by the University of Rochester entitled “Three Percent.”

Other countries, such as Italy, contribute 50% of their publishing toward translated texts, according to Alta, a language and translation service. This gives other countries an intellectual advantage.

In a 2019 survey conducted by The Council on Foreign Relations, American adults were tested on their knowledge about geography, foreign policy and world demographics. Out of 2,000 participants, only 6% got at least 80% of the questions right.

Americans have gained nothing but ignorance by not listening to other countries’ perspectives, and translated texts are a step in the right direction.

Professors have the power to take this step by including translated texts in their

curriculum. Some USF professors have already done this, like my current Poetry II professor.

Going into my senior year at USF as an English major, I received my first required translated text just this semester. In my Poetry II class, I’ve been reading the book “Romancero Gitano” by Federico García Lorca, a Spanish poet, which was originally written in Spanish.

He spoke of the violence generated by the Spanish Revolution of 1936 in a way that made it sound like a beautiful sight to be enchanted by; a testament to how the government can seduce its citizens into submission through propaganda.

To properly analyze the text for assignments, conducting our own research on the Spanish Revolution and Spanish fascism was crucial to understanding the context within which Lorca was writing his poems.

Many of my classmates, most of whom are upperclassmen, and I were in disbelief as to how little we knew about other cultures’ forms of poetry, and that we’d never been assigned a translated text before.

If America as a whole won’t do what’s right for the education of its citizens, then professors should at least do right by their students and begin requiring foreign texts to expand their cultural knowledge.

Brielle Lopez is a senior studying English.

UF PREVIEW

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since Richardson and Jones are so similar, getting ready for the game could be a simpler task, according to Scott.

“Well, they’re both very similar in the fact that they’re excellent runners, and they both can throw the ball and stretch the ball down the field,” Scott said. “To me, I think it’s a bigger challenge, if you have one that’s, maybe a pro style, just a drop back passer and that’s all he does, and the other guy’s a runner, I think [with] that you have to split up your prep.

“But with both of those guys being super athletic, they love having the ball in their hands, and both of them can score anytime that they pull the ball. We’re preparing for the same quarterback, regardless of either of those guys, because you watch the film, both of them are very,

very similar in a lot of things that they do.”

The Bulls also have their own quarterback duel going on, with junior Cade Fortin and freshman Timmy McClain both vying for the spot. Against NC State, Fortin played the first five drives before getting taken out in favor of McClain. Toward the end of the third quarter, Fortin was brought back onto the field.

By game’s end, Fortin was 7-of-20 for 41 passing yards and an interception, coupled with 5 rushes for 23 yards. McClain finished 7-of-13 for 126 passing yards and two touchdowns to go along with four rushes for 16 yards.

Against UF, Scott expects both players to see playing time. He also mentioned sophomore Katravis Marsh could step in.

“I do [expect to play both Fortin and McClain against UF].

We’re going to let Cade go out there first,” Scott said. “We were planning to play Timmy last week, we weren’t planning to play him as early and on a regular schedule, we had some packages and things for him, but really just after struggling getting anything going there in the first quarter, we decided to change it up ... Both him and Cade, are talented players, they have a lot of pride in what they do.

“They work extremely hard preparing. And I expect both of those guys to play better this week.”

The Bulls will play their home opener in Raymond James Stadium against the Gators on Saturday at 1 p.m. The game will be televised on ABC and broadcast on 95.3/620 WDAE/iHeartRadio Bulls Unlimited.

QUARTERBACKS

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“We’re not playing both quarterbacks because we think it’s the best thing to do for us to win the game,” Scott said. “We’re playing both quarterbacks because we’re trying to figure out who our starter is.

“I think for us right now, I’ve said it before, we’re using these first four nonconference games [to name a starter]. The ultimate goal is to be able to have our starting quarterback really

“

This year we’re definitely a lot more capable to play better than we did on Thursday.

”

Coach Jeff Scott

emerge and feel confident going into the SMU game with who that is.”

Now, Fortin and McClain, along with sophomore Katravis Marsh, who threw for 125 yards on four passes during the spring game, will once again battle it out to see who will separate themselves and take the job once the conference slate gets going.

Noticeably absent from the front runners is sophomore Jarren Williams, who transferred to USF from Miami in the offseason and seemed to be in direct competition with Fortin throughout spring ball and fall camp.

Scott plans on starting Fortin against the Gators due to his practice performance, but as the season goes along and the conference schedule gets closer, game performance will become the main criteria.

“The practice performance determines who goes out there first and Cade’s earned that from all of his practice and what he’s done in the offseason,” he said. “But now when you get to the

season, now the next level turns into game performance, and that’s really at every position as well.

“There’s only so much you can do in practice. We try to put guys in pressure situations and intense situations but there’s nothing like getting out there in a game.”

Despite it being an eerily similar situation to last year when Jordan McCloud, Noah Johnson and Marsh served as the starting signal caller at

different points throughout the season, Scott said he still feels much more comfortable with his current quarterback situation and his team overall.

“I think we’re definitely further ahead than last year,” Scott said of establishing his starter. “I think the difference is we opened up against NC State instead of the Citadel, you know. I think that, to me, it doesn’t even feel like last year. I feel like we’re, from a team standpoint, we’re further ahead. I think we just didn’t go out and execute in our first game against a very talented team, and time will tell ... I feel like we’re better overall in some areas but we didn’t show it when it mattered on the field.

“What gives me optimism as we go into the next few games is, I know we’re definitely more capable. where maybe last year if we didn’t play well, I don’t know how much better we could get just because of some of the deficiencies we had. This year we’re definitely a lot more capable to play better than we did on Thursday.”



The Gators are one of two teams on USF’s 2021 schedule currently ranked in the AP Poll. **SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/USF ATHLETICS PHOTO**

Florida Preview

Bulls look to bounce back against No. 13 Florida



Richard Silva

SPORTS CO-EDITOR

It was a disappointing start to the season for the USF football team, losing 45-0 to NC State in the season opener, but the Bulls must quickly move on and gear up for another significant foe — No. 13 Florida on Saturday.

The Gators are loaded with talent at virtually every level of the game. From quarterbacks Anthony Richardson and Emory Jones on offense, to senior defensive lineman Zachary Carter on defense, the Bulls have their work cut out for them.

“[The game against NC State] was one of our 12 games, so we’ve got to be able to turn the page,” coach Jeff Scott said Tuesday. “We’ve got another huge challenge this week, Florida is an incredible team. Coach [Dan] Mullen and his staff have done an incredible job in his four years there. They’ve recruited very well, they’ve got the size, speed, athleticism all over the field [that] definitely presents a lot of challenges for our offense, defense and special teams.”

If USF is going to limit what UF does offensively, it’s going to start with defending the run.

“I think for me, it starts with being able to stop their running game,” Scott said. “They had over 400 yards rushing last week, and I think that starts with their offensive line. They’re really talented up front. They’ve got

four or five backs that are very, very talented [with] both size and speed. And then both of their quarterbacks are tremendous. Anytime they pull the ball they have a chance to score at any moment.”

In UF’s season opener against Florida Atlantic last week, the Gators ran rampant. Two players got over the century mark and they averaged 8.2 yards per carry as a team. Senior running back Malik Davis collected 104 yards and a touchdown, but Richardson paced the squad with 160 yards on the ground. As for Jones, he finished the night with 74 rushing yards.

Through the air, Jones led the way as he went 17-of-27 for 113 yards and one touchdown, he also tossed two interceptions. Richardson ended 3-of-8 for 40 yards.



Coach Jeff Scott said his team is “excited about turning the page” heading into its game against UF on Saturday. **ORACLE PHOTO/LEDA ALVIM**

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Quarterbacks

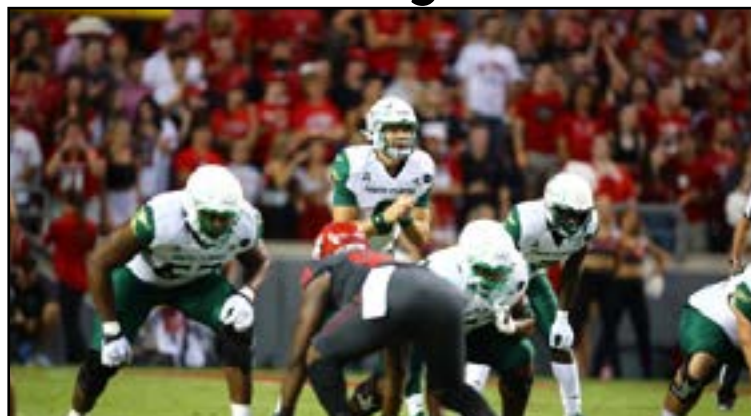
Bulls still looking for starter after Week 1 loss



Francisco Rosa

SPORTS CO-EDITOR

When the USF football program announced via an Aug. 23 tweet that sophomore Cade Fortin would be the team’s starting quarterback, it seemed to finally be the end of the quarterback purgatory that the



Sophomore quarterback Cade Fortin (center) will get the start against Florida, but freshman Timmy McClain is also expected to see snaps at the position, according to coach Jeff Scott. **SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/USF ATHLETICS PHOTO**

Bulls found themselves in 2020 when they played four different quarterbacks over the course of the season.

However, following the season opener against NC State on Sept. 3, it became clear that wouldn’t be the case. Fortin was replaced early in the second quarter by freshman Timmy McClain after completing three passes for zero yards in his first five drives.

Although both quarterbacks struggled against the Wolfpack, Fortin in particular had a rough outing finishing with just seven completions for 41 yards and an

interception. McClain, a true freshman, brought a little more life to the offense completing 53% of his passes for 126 yards, but threw two interceptions which ultimately led to him being pulled from the game as well.

During Tuesday’s press conference, Scott announced the team would be rolling with a multi-quarterback system until one proves themselves to be the better option than the others. He plans on starting Fortin on Saturday and for at least McClain to be cycled in.

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