

THE ORACLE

WELCOME BACK

2020

SPRING

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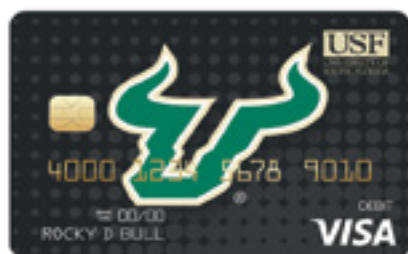
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Students return to campus with limited COVID-19 protocols amid variant surge



Clinton Engelberger

NEWS EDITOR

The COVID-19 omicron variant has been rapidly spreading around the world, however, USF won't be taking the same approach as it did when students returned to campus in fall 2021, according to College of Public Health Dean Donna

Petersen.

The campus will remain fully in person and will provide fewer online alternatives to promote students attending in-person classes.

"We made the decision before the fall semester to try to find ways to live with this and to ask everyone to cooperate in the spirit of our collective responsibility," she said.

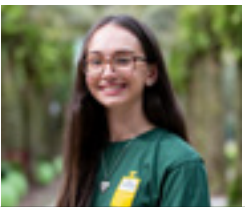
"We opened our classrooms [in fall] and we did a decent job, but the delta variant threw us for a loop. But those numbers were coming down, and we made the

■ See OMICRON on PAGE 7



No new guidelines have been set in place for the spring semester as all USF campuses remain fully open, USF Health experts say. ORACLE PHOTO/LEDA ALVIM

On-campus stadium planning committee discusses location, impact of stadium



Alexandra Urban

EDITOR IN CHIEF

The plans for an on-campus stadium are underway as Vice President of Athletics Michael Kelly and Senior Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Affairs Jay Stroman lead the on-campus stadium planning committee.

In a Dec. 7 Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting, Stroman introduced the four sub-committees formed which include site location and design, revenue and finance, communications and marketing and legal.

Kelly said the stadium is currently in the pre-planning phase, which typically lasts about a year to a year and a half.

Afterward, there will be a design phase which is an 18-month to two-year project, according to Kelly. The construction usually takes about two years.

"Rarely does any project from this initiative ever take less than five years," Kelly said. "That's why we've kind of realistically targeted anywhere between 2026 fall and the 2028 fall as being when we envision this coming to reality."

Four possible locations have been proposed since 2016, according to Kelly, including the southwest corner of campus near Bruce B. Downs Boulevard and Fowler Avenue, the intramural fields near Juniper-Poplar, the Museum of Science and Industry site and Fowler Fields.

In the BOT meeting, Kelly

introduced a fifth possible location — Sycamore Fields. He said the new option would be considered due to its proximity to the Athletics district and on-campus student housing.

"[Originally] there was not [a location] that was identified right within the Athletics district, and so that's come into play now with some land adjacent to ... the Lee Roy Selmon Athletic Center," Kelly said.

While no location has been decided yet, the committee will evaluate different locations this semester and one must be finalized by July.

The funding plan and cost of the stadium is still unknown, but will need to be determined based on what is feasible for the university. For the type of stadium he has in mind to meet the university's needs, Kelly expects it to be between \$150 to \$300 million.

The committee will determine the funding sources which may also influence the price of the stadium. However, much of it could come from philanthropy and "dedicated resources that would come from the ultimate use of the facility."

■ See STADIUM on PAGE 7

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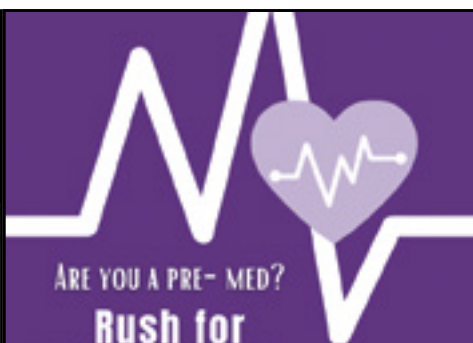
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OMICRON

Continued from PAGE 4

decision at the end of the term to continue with that approach.”

Many other protocols, such as flipping classes online or giving on-campus residents the option to show their vaccination cards upon their return, will not be enforced for the spring semester, Petersen said.

One reason for the lack of protocols may be correlated to the lessened severity of this variant compared to past ones, according to Petersen.

“So many people are getting infected ... but it doesn’t cause a severe illness,” she said. “So the hope is that this variant burns through the population and builds immunity, just by the virtue of having infected so many people, and that’ll make it harder for a new variant to take hold.

“We’re not planning on [moving classes online]. We don’t think omicron requires that level of intervention. But should the virus itself change or something else emerge? That’s certainly a tool we have in reserve if we need it.”

The way the university will report students who test positive for the virus will change as well, according to Petersen.

“We are not going to be tracking locally anymore like we were. We’re seeding that responsibility back to the Florida Department of Health,” she said. “Obviously, we’re testing at USF Health Morsani clinic and we’re testing at Student Health and we will continue to report those results to the Florida Department of Health.”

Students will still be required to self-isolate should they test positive, as Petersen said the isolation beds on campus are limited in capacity. While no exact number was given, she said they have about a third of the beds they had available at the

start of the pandemic.

Following the recently changed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, students can return to campus if they test negative for the virus and show no symptoms after a five-day quarantine, Petersen said. If they still test positive after five days, it’s encouraged they don’t return to campus until they reach 10 days of quarantine.

Petersen predicts the general consensus among students and faculty returning to campus will be mixed.

“To anyone with particular concerns, we want to hear from you and we want to work with you as best [as] we can,” Peterson said. “We are encouraging our faculty to be flexible and to accommodate students’ needs as best they can.

“On the other hand, I’m hearing a lot of enthusiasm for people wanting to be back to something normal. To the extent that we can create a normal university experience for all of us, that’s what we’re hoping to achieve. And what I’m hearing is that people are eager to have that kind of experience.”

Although there are few requirements in place for students to follow, Petersen said the university encourages everyone returning to campus to wear their masks properly and stay home if they aren’t feeling well.

“We are fully open but we are asking people to do what they can to contribute to our collective health and safety. The messaging hasn’t changed because of the omicron variant,” she said.

“Case numbers are surging, so we’re continuing to encourage vaccines, masking when indoors and to stay home when you don’t feel well. We’re just proceeding to get to a point where we will live with COVID-19. We don’t think it’s ever going to go away.”



The on-campus stadium planning committee will continue to discuss the potential details for the stadium, such as its location and design in the spring semester. SPECIAL TO THE ORACLE/USF

STADIUM

Continued from PAGE 4

“[Revenue streams associated with ownership is] kind of the big reason as to owning a stadium as opposed to renting,” Kelly said. “You then now have all the revenue streams [coming from] naming rights for the facility, the concessions revenue, the parking revenue [which will] pay for the building ultimately.

“There’s still some work to be done and depending on if there’s other uses of the facility that have an academic mission or purpose to it as well or a health mission or purpose could also be able to be included in the facility.”

A student contribution to the funding is still uncertain, but on-campus stadiums typically require some sort of student funding.

“This is ultimately a, in my opinion, a campus life enhancement for the long term for the university,” he said. “Ultimately, what the students and the campus feels about it and the use of it and how they can do certain fees are an important part of it. So that remains to be seen.

“But [student contribution is] not uncommon for some recent

campus stadiums. When there’s been interest, we anticipate to have that as a potential funding source.”

The communications sub-committee will begin focus groups in the spring semester, which will serve to find what students, alumni, donors and investors will want out of the stadium, including social areas and different seating options of varying prices such as suites, club seats or standard seating.

“You have to just design it to try to meet everybody’s needs, but that’s what will be fun,” he said. “Instead of making an existing facility workforce, we have a chance as a community to design it exactly what students think is cool for them.”

To tailor to student and different departments’ needs, the stadium will likely have multiple uses, other than home games.

“We have to identify what we need as a university and what else we would want in that facility,” Kelly said. “You want to have it be, mentally, a place for athletics, but potentially for concerts and other events that the campus community brings to the area.

“If it becomes something that the student body in the Tampa

Bay community uses day in, day out, it just kind of creates more vibrancy around the facility.”

Kelly said he hopes the stadium allows the university to build a better sense of community in the area, something that can be made difficult with an off-campus stadium.

Attracting alumni to return to campus, as well as making it more accessible for the student body to attend, would increase engagement and attendance at the games and allow students to become more involved in the Athletics department, according to Kelly.

Although the stadium is still in the early development stages, Kelly said the lasting impact it will have once completed will mark a unique and rewarding experience for the USF community and everyone involved.

“When you keep coming back for years to come, you’ll know that you were part of the class to make that happen,” he said. “You finally get to take a look at where you stand in history. So this is an exciting time for the campus community.”



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While the design and material are still undetermined, construction is set to begin over spring break. ORACLE PHOTO/ ALEXANDRA URBAN

New material to replace groundwork outside MSC

By Clinton Engelberger
NEWS EDITOR

The groundwork on the east side of the Marshall Student Center is receiving an update as it appeared to be outdated and worn, according to Associate Director of Communications Aaron Nichols.

The former area, featuring the word “USF” in green with a gold background as well as the word “Bulls” in gold with a green background, has now been removed as it awaits a future update.

“The material that was used in that space had deteriorated significantly and needed to be removed before it became a safety hazard,” Nichols said in an

email sent to The Oracle.

Nichols said USF Facilities Management is currently working on construction plans and permits to replace it with a different material. One idea in the works is a concrete walkway featuring the USF logo and colors, but Nichols said a final decision has not been made yet as to what material will be utilized.

Construction is currently planned to take place over spring break, Nichols said, which begins March 14 for USF students.

While the previous material has been removed and replaced by sod, it’s only temporary with the purpose of erosion control to keep the soil from washing away, according to Nichols.

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Protect the USF community and get vaccinated

By Marcelene Pilcher
OPINION CO-EDITOR

With the rise in media coverage and public panic over the COVID-19 omicron variant, USF Health Senior Vice President Charles Lockwood released a statement Dec. 6 imploring USF staff and students to receive multi-dose vaccinations to stop the spread of the virus.

If you plan to return to USF in person this semester, getting vaccinated is integral to protecting your health and that of your peers.

Vaccinations are the most effective method of COVID-19 prevention, with Moderna achieving 91.3% efficacy and Pfizer achieving 95%, according to a February Yale Medicine study.

Compared to the 70% prevention efficacy rate of mask usage as stated in a December Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) brief, vaccines are the most consistent and potent safeguard against infection and transmission.

Not only are vaccines effective for prevention, in the case of contraction, they are highly effective against severe illness, according to the CDC.

Despite the vaccinations readily available to American citizens, 98% of the approximately 1,000 Americans dying from COVID-19 everyday refused the vaccines for reasons other than health exemption, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation's (KFF) Vaccine



When returning to campus this semester, vaccinations are the best way to protect yourself and fellow Bulls from COVID-19.
ORACLE PHOTO

Monitor Dashboard.

"The greatest threat of this variant is not illness but its potential to take our focus away from the real public health challenge, the delta variant, which continues its relentless onslaught fueled by unfounded, irrational vaccine hesitancy and lethal misinformation," Lockwood said in his statement.

Approximately 53% of adults who refuse the vaccine do so on the grounds that it is too new, and 53% of refusals are also due to concerns over side effects, according to KFF.

COVID-19 vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history, according to the CDC.

The vaccines were developed with science that has been proven effective for decades, and the safety monitoring of the COVID-19 vaccines' implementation has been the most intense in U.S.

history.

The U.S. government has developed multiple new monitoring methods for the vaccinated to track their progress and report side effects. The technology is called v-safe, and you can enroll on the CDC website.

Any and all side effects to date have been recorded, and are much more treatable and trackable than the effects of a COVID-19 infection.

In the return to USF campus, all students and staff should follow Lockwood's advice and consider vaccination for their own health and the health of their peers.

Don't allow misinformation to prevent you from saving lives.

Marcelene Pilcher is a sophomore studying integrated public relations and advertising.

USF rightfully combats structural racism

By Brielle Lopez
OPINION CO-EDITOR

The final report of a collaborative USF and St. Petersburg structural racism study was presented to the city council Dec. 9. Mayor Rick Kriseman of St. Petersburg says he's open to the report's recommendations.

Universities should reach out to their local communities to conduct similar studies. Many aspects of racism were found to be present in modern-day St. Petersburg, and if other university communities unite nationwide, reparations could result.

Many jarring statistics were found in the final report, such as wage gaps, property inequity and health disparities.

Red-lining resulted in a modern disparity in Black home ownership. The whole of Pinellas County showed that 35% of Black households own their home compared to 69% of white households.

A significant gap was found in the wages of non-Hispanic white citizens and non-Hispanic Black citizens. Separated by field, business was the most disparaging with an average difference of \$25,000 in earned yearly income.

The study suggests that ensured pay equity will boost incomes, resulting in more consumer spending that supports business growth and job creation. The city council is seemingly ready to support such recommendations.

In a December city council meeting, Kriseman stated he was thankful for the study, according to USF Newsroom. He claimed to be open to researchers'

recommendations, stating it's up to city officials, community leaders and citizens to keep this progress going.

A supportive community is necessary when conducting studies like this, which St. Petersburg was, according to Ruthmae Sears, lead investigator of the study and USF professor, in a June 2021 interview with The Oracle.

"[The community] wants to share their story. They kind of tell you what's wrong, and kind of tell you, 'Why don't you try this?'" Sears said. "They want to make sure you see what was shared, because they know we're really going through these artifacts."

The final report to the city council ends with a list of solutions for issues found in the study. Among these include creating an equity department, continuing support for this work and implementing an effective accountability strategy.

"The city has agreed to share whatever data we need," Sears said. "They're not putting a bandaid [on it], they're really trying to do authentic repair to somebody who's in need."

Other communities could learn from this study. Universities should reach out to their cities to fund such studies, allowing unified reparations to be made. We must dismantle structural racism as a nation, and doing so starts at a community level.

Brielle Lopez is a senior studying English.

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SPRING SPORTS

Continued from PAGE 14

over Cincinnati on Jan. 5.

Baseball looks to continue its reign

Last year, USF baseball shattered its ceiling of expectations. Despite being tabbed to finish in last place by a conference coaches' poll and a 31-30 regular season record, the team got rolling when it mattered most.

The Bulls won the American Tournament Championship and pummeled through the Gainesville Regional. A berth in the 2021 NCAA Super Regionals was the program's best result in its 56-year history.

With a strong recruiting class in addition to returning a good chunk of last year's roster, the Bulls are in a strong position going into the season.

Offensively, USF was led by redshirt sophomore infielder/outfielder Carmine Lane who batted .306 with 11 home runs last season. Redshirt sophomore pitcher Orion Kerker was the team's best reliever with an ERA of 2.88 and is transitioning into the starting rotation in 2022.

With tough opponents who have also reached an NCAA Regional such as Charlotte and UConn on the schedule, the Bulls will look to continue the program's growth towards unprecedented heights.

Georgina Corrick back for another season

Arguably one of the best pitchers in Division I softball, senior Georgina Corrick is coming back for a fifth year at USF.

With an ERA of 0.98 and 333 strikeouts in 2021, Corrick was named AAC Pitcher of the Year. She also led the Bulls with 228.1 innings pitched, 28 complete



USF softball pitcher Georgina Corrick is returning for her fifth season. She was named the AAC's pitcher of the year in 2018, 2019 and 2021. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

games and 15 shutouts.

Corrick was an important asset to the team's 31-19 record last season and she will be integral to its success yet again in 2022.

New era for USF football

USF football's sideline will look very different this spring as the Bulls will have new offensive and defensive coordinators following the departures of Charlie Weis Jr. and Glenn Spencer, respectively.

Spencer was fired Nov. 21 after his defense surrendered at least 500 yards six times over the course of the season. He'll be replaced by former Miami defensive analyst Bob Shoop.

Shoop has shown success in programs he has worked with for the past 33 years including being a coordinator at schools like Vanderbilt, Penn State, Tennessee and Mississippi State.

Weis decided to leave for the offensive coordinator job at Ole Miss under Lane Kiffin. USF has yet to announce a replacement for him.

Men's golf return strong team for title defense

After winning the conference championship at the end of the spring 2021 season, USF men's golf continued to dominate in their fall tournaments, both as a team and individually.

The team's best performance was at the Marquette Intercollegiate in September, where it finished second overall in a field of 17.

Individually, the team boasts two valuable players who also performed well in the fall.

Junior Albin Bergstrom finished third out of 72 in the White Sands Bahamas Invitational with a finish of nine-under-par 207. Junior Luke Gifford also had a similar performance at the Windon Memorial Classic finishing T3 at six-under-par 207.

The Bulls will look to defend their conference crown in 2022 to win the program's fifth title in seven years.

SIGNING DAY

Continued from PAGE 14

Zach Perkins, who revealed the move on Twitter on Jan. 4. A product of Tampa's Berkeley Prep, Perkins has four years of NCAA eligibility remaining.

Defensive back Aamaris Brown is also making his way back home. Coming from Kansas State but a graduate of local juggernaut Armwood High School, Brown saw reduced playing time in his sophomore season and chose to enter the transfer portal.

He will be joined by former high school teammate Clyde Pinder Jr. The defensive lineman spent two seasons at North Carolina before choosing to return to USF, his father's alma mater.

A notable defensive addition from the junior college ranks is three-star linebacker Jhalyn Shuler. The South Carolina native is ranked by 247 Sports as the third-best junior college linebacker and in the top-20 junior college recruits overall. He chose USF over offers from programs like Texas Tech and Texas State.

The transfer class may be highly gifted but it seems recruitment on the high school level doesn't stand on the same pedestal.

247 Sports' Composite ranks USF's incoming freshman class 90th nationally and eighth in the AAC. Rivals.com isn't much more generous, slotting the Bulls in at No. 85.

Under center, the Bulls will be welcoming two freshmen quarterbacks. USF secured a commitment from Lake Mary's Gunnar Smith amid an offer from Kentucky and interest from Notre Dame and West Virginia.

Smith will be joined by another three-star quarterback in Byrum Brown from Rolesville, North Carolina.

Both Smith and Brown can

expect to compete for the role of backup to incumbent Timmy McClain after Cade Fortin, Katravis Marsh and Jarren Williams announced their intentions to transfer. Williams has since moved to Alabama A&M, while Fortin and Marsh remain uncommitted.

One local commit among the incoming freshmen is wide receiver Javohn Thomas. During an injury-shortened senior year at Sickles High School in Tampa, he had 30 receptions and scored seven touchdowns in just five games.

Thomas will split his time between Raymond James Stadium and the Yuengling Center while at USF as he's also committed to the basketball team as a guard.

On defense, the Bulls will welcome three-star defensive lineman Eddie Kelly of Winter Garden. He is a particularly impressive recruit for USF, as he had offers on the table from big-name programs like Florida and Florida State.

Leading up to National Signing Day, USF still has several offers on the table for players who have yet to sign anywhere.

One to keep an eye on is defensive lineman Tra Thomas of Independence Community College. He has offers from Kansas and Buffalo, but USF is leading the race for his signature, according to 247 Sports.

The next few weeks will be critical for the Bulls to solidify their roster for 2022 and beyond. Scott has his work cut out for him between juggling offers and commitments and trying to integrate new coordinators on both sides of the ball.



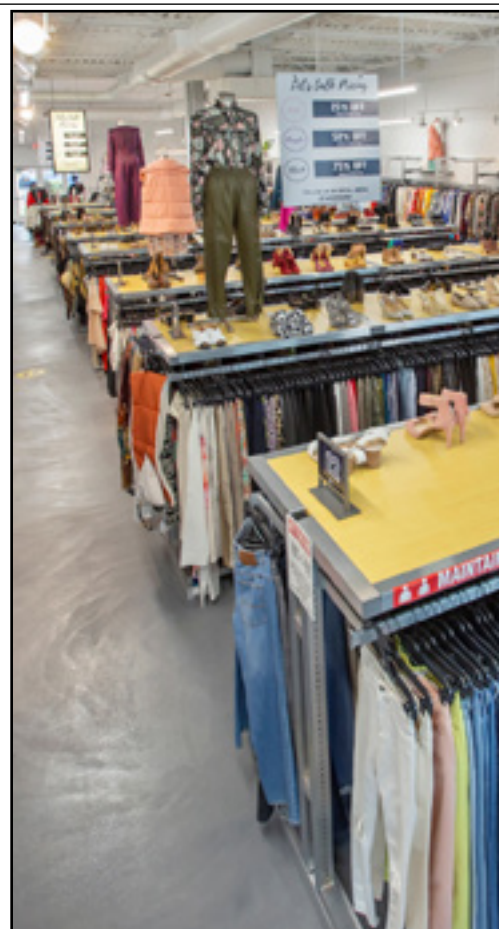

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Major headlines for USF athletics in spring 2022



Lanie De La Milera

STAFF WRITER

Here are a few things Bulls fans can look forward to.

March Madness coming full speed ahead

After finishing the nonconference portion of their schedules, USF men's and women's basketball will continue their run through the AAC in 2022.

Coach Brian Gregory's squad has to pick up the pace from its current 5-9 record (0-2 AAC) or risk ending their season earlier than desired.

Freshman guard Caleb Murphy leads the team in scoring at 11.9 points per game, joined in double-digits by senior guard Javon Greene at 10.4. Murphy also leads the Bulls in assists.

Women's basketball has hit



USF women's basketball will look to make a strong push towards postseason play this spring. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

the ground running as it looks to defend its conference title. Ranked No. 24 with a record of 11-4 (1-0 AAC) and yet to lose at

home.

The expectations are high for the Bulls following a strong nonconference slate. They'll

look to keep their momentum throughout conference play, which began with a 61-46 win ■ See SPRING SPORTS on PAGE 12

Football recruiting update ahead of National Signing Day



Alberto Camargo

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR



USF football continues to build its recruiting class to add to a roster that will return 10 starters on offense and nine on defense. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

With National Signing Day approaching Feb. 2, USF football is looking to improve upon its current crop of recruits, headlined by one of the highest-ranked transfer classes in the nation.

As of Sunday, the Bulls have 24 new faces coming to campus

in 2022, 13 on defense and 11 on offense. The class includes 14 transfers, the most in the FBS.

However, this isn't a matter of quantity over quality. All but one of those 14 transfers are three-star recruits by 247 Sports' Composite rating, which also ranks the transfer class as No. 2 in the nation, behind only Florida State.

The strength in numbers indicates a clear focus from coach Jeff Scott to improve the Bulls' depth, a weakness that consistently plagued them throughout the 2021 season.

The transfer class is led by former Clemson wide receiver

Ajou Ajou. The Canada native is returning to the Tampa Bay area where he spent his final year of high school at Clearwater Academy International.

Ajou isn't the only former Clemson player to commit to USF. Three-star running back Michael Dukes and safety Ray Thornton have also decided to leave the national powerhouse for an opportunity to play under Scott.

Among the 14 transfers, eight are returning to their Tampa Bay roots like Ajou. The most recent to announce his commitment is Maryland offensive lineman ■ See SIGNING DAY on PAGE 12

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NEAR USF

A large, curved swimming pool with a slide, surrounded by palm trees and a resort building. The pool is filled with clear blue water, and the slide is a light gray color. The pool is surrounded by a concrete deck. In the background, there is a resort building with a red roof and orange walls, surrounded by palm trees and other tropical vegetation. The sky is blue with white clouds.

Resort-style pool | Lodge-style clubhouse | 24-hour fitness center | 24-hour computer lounge | Basketball court | Free parking | HART bus line | Pet-friendly



Campus Lodge

hour fitness center | 24-hour
ing | HART bus line | Pet-friendly