

**MEMORANDUM**

November 17, 2020

Dear members of the university community,

The holiday season is upon us, a time for all of us to take some well-deserved time off and celebrate our many blessings. At our FIU, we have much to be thankful for – the success of our students, the real impact our university has made in our community during this difficult time, and the overall unity and strength of our Panther family.

On Thanksgiving Day, and throughout this entire season of giving and gratefulness, may we cherish all that we have and continue to find ways to make a difference. May we also remember and reach out to those around us who may not feel as joyful this year. A kind word or a gesture of compassion can go a long way, especially now.

**Making smart choices during Thanksgiving**

While we can look forward to the forthcoming holiday season, we must not let our guards down. COVID-19 still poses significant health threats, with rising cases both locally and nationally.

To ensure the health and well-being of our university community, holiday gatherings will not be permitted on our campuses this year. Anyone wishing to celebrate with colleagues or business units can do so virtually. Hopefully next year we can resume traditional holiday celebrations.

It is also important that we all adhere to COVID-19 mitigation measures while we mark this holiday. Please limit the size of your gatherings and consider skipping “Friendsgiving” this year. The virus can spread even in small group gatherings, especially among family members or neighbors. No matter how small the group is, if the people gathered do not live under the same roof, there is a high potential for the virus to spread.

Anyone can spread the virus while being asymptomatic, but this is particularly prevalent among 18-35-year-olds. Because they tend to be healthier, they contract the virus, are unaware they have it, and become spreaders due to their social habits. This pandemic knows no limits or boundaries and slowing the spread should be everyone’s priority.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) has issued recommendations for holiday celebrations to help you and your loved ones stay healthy. I urge you to follow these guidelines as we work together to keep everyone healthy and safe. Among the recommendations is to follow physical distancing guidelines, wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, and wear a face covering at all times to protect yourself and those around you. You might consider getting together without sharing food. Experts agree that seeing friends and family outdoors while wearing face coverings is much safer than gathering indoors.

In addition, please get your flu shot. For students, the Student Health Clinics are providing FREE flu vaccines, while supplies last. Call 305-348-8385 (MMC) or 305-919-5620 (BBC) to schedule an appointment. For faculty and staff, call 305-348-3627 to make an appointment at the FIU Health Faculty Practice.

### **On campus housing residents**

The CDC recommends college students NOT travel home for Thanksgiving due to the possibility of spreading COVID-19. If you do plan to leave campus for Thanksgiving, please consider the following ways to reduce the spread of the virus and keep the FIU housing community safe:

- Get your flu shot
- Get tested for COVID-19, preferably a RT-PCR test, before going home
- Engage in a conversation about the pandemic with your family and discuss precautions to reduce risk. Remember that gathering outdoors is safer than indoors.

On campus residents must fill out a registration form by clicking on “Thanksgiving Break Registration” in the [housing portal](#). We need to know who will remain on campus during the break. Registration must be completed by 5 p.m. on Friday, November 20.

Thank you for your cooperation. I hope you have a Happy Thanksgiving. Please stay safe and healthy!