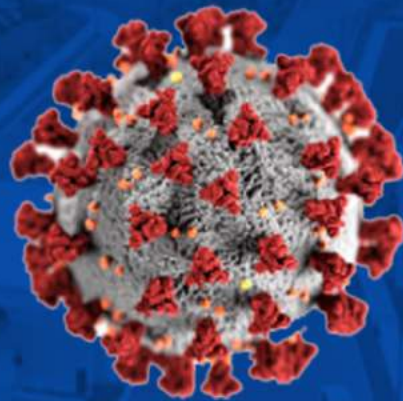




UNIVERSITY
OF THE BAHAMAS

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The Response of University of The Bahamas, March to December 2020: A Case Study for Discussion



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COVID-19 Case Study

Foreword

In March 2020, The Bahamas was brought to near silence as the COVID-19 pandemic reached us and society struggled to contain its spread and learned to live under Emergency Orders issued by the government. Like other countries, The Bahamas had no experience of such a disruptive event at a national level and UB had to quickly adjust so that it might continue the education of its students. I am particularly grateful to the Office of Information Technology for beginning the implementation of the latest version of Ellucian Banner in October 2016 and having data stored in the Cloud in 2019. This step significantly aided the University in the handling of emergencies associated with disasters, including the move to Emergency Remote Teaching.

In January 2021, I requested that the response of UB to the early days of the pandemic be set out in a case study. This study uses information from many areas of UB to provide an overview, which I hope will be a helpful resource to students and faculty. Unlike some case studies, this one invites students to discuss and debate the actions taken by UB so that they can come to their own conclusions as to how well we responded and how we might have reacted differently.

While it is my hope that no such pandemic will be encountered again, we can use this event as a teaching moment, so that in the future we shall be better prepared to deal with a national health emergency.

Dr. Rodney Smith, President & CEO, University of The Bahamas

Introduction

As the world grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education had to respond to restrictions imposed by governments. During this challenging period, University of The Bahamas (UB) was also forced to make changes to its operations in order to continue to serve the needs of the students, faculty and staff. This case study was developed based on the experience of the University during the first part of the crisis from March to December 2020.





BAHAMAS DASHBOARD



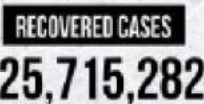
10th October 2020 – 6:15 PM

THE BAHAMAS

- 3806 ● NEW PROVIDENCE
- 654 ● GRAND BAHAMA
- 157 ● ABACO
- 56 ● BIMINI
- 33 ● EXUMA
- 27 ● ELEUTHERA
- 19 ● INAGUA
- 17 ● BERRY ISLANDS
- 12 ● LONG ISLAND
- 9 ● CAT ISLAND
- 10 ● ANDROS
- 7 ● ACKLINS
- 5 ● CROOKED ISLAND
- 3 ● MAYAGUANA
- 208 ● LOCATION PENDING



WORLDWIDE



*Source: Johns Hopkins University Live Coronavirus Dashboard



**THE BAHAMAS
MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

COVID-19 HOTLINE NUMBERS

502-7382 (9AM - 5PM, MON-FRI)

376-9350 (8AM - 8PM) 376-9387 (8PM - 8AM)

POINCIANA HILL, MEETING STREET | NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE

WEBSITE: BAHAMAS.GOV.BS/HEALTH & COVID19.GOV.BS

EMAIL: COVID19@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS

Source: Bahamas Ministry of Health

Method and Purpose of This Case Study

This case study does not attempt to give a comprehensive list of UB's responses to COVID-19 rather it attempts to give a board overview of its efforts, which are also embedded within the boarder frame of Emergency Orders issued by the Government of The Bahamas. Two specific areas examined within this case study, which focus on library services and research, are used to illustrate the complexity of UB's response.

Information from various areas of the University, together with data from the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 dashboard and press releases have been included to situate the University's response to the unfolding pandemic within the wider national response. The details of the Government's Emergency Orders, which were subject to frequent changes as the situation evolved, can be found at: <https://opm.gov.bs/category/press-room/emergency-orders-covid-19/>

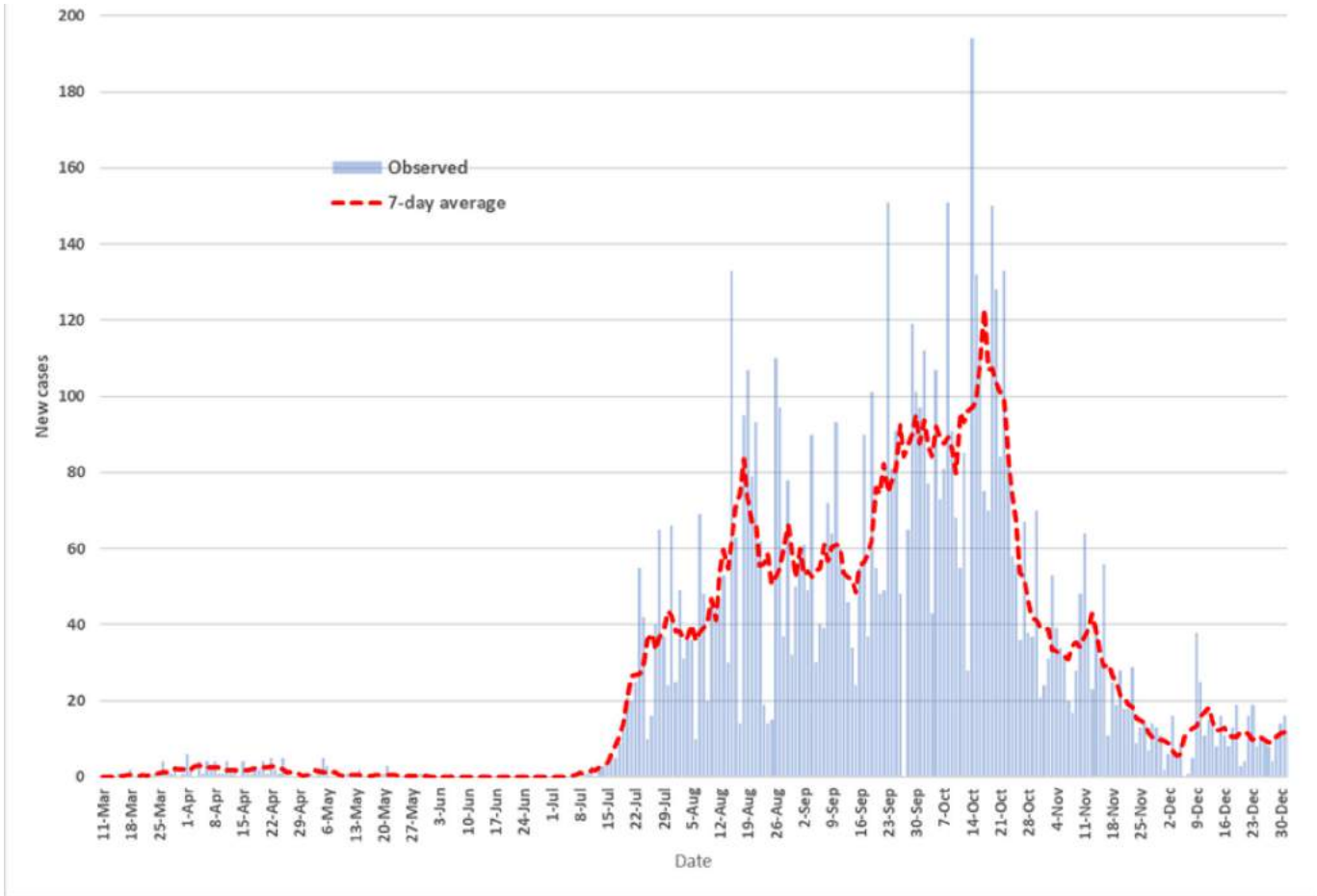
This case study will include questions for discussion and reflection which will allow students to assess the response of the University to the unfolding crisis. Students are invited to consider which, if any of the decisions made, should be repeated in the event of another pandemic or similar situation occurring. For example, students can consider: Were these discussions made at the appropriate time? Looking back with hindsight, how might things have been done differently? What might have been the financial cost of the decisions, and how did the Government's response influence the decisions of UB?

University of The Bahamas at the Time of the Pandemic

UB received its university charter in November 2016, having previously been The College of The Bahamas. It is the national university of The Bahamas and employs about 200 full-time faculty and has a little under 4,000 students. In 2019/20 its operating budget was almost \$52 million. The University relies upon government funding for much of its income. At the start of the Spring 2020 Semester, it was offering 1,172 course sections to 2,319 full-time and 1,156 part-time students. Of these sections, 8 were designated as "online" instruction courses, so about .7% of sections were Internet-based. Therefore, between three and eight faculty were probably using web-based instruction immediately before the pandemic.

Discussion questions: What best describes UB's approach to instruction prior to the pandemic? What are the pros and cons of this approach? How well placed would UB appear to be to come to terms with the events of 2020?

Seven-day Moving Average of New Daily COVID-19 cases



Derived from data from the Ministry of Health (2020)

The COVID-19 Pandemic in The Bahamas, March-December 2020

While cases of COVID-19 had been reported in other countries from as early as December 2019, the first official communication of a COVID-19 positive case in The Bahamas occurred on the 15th March 2020. Within days, the Government of The Bahamas closed schools and started to impose restrictions, such as curfews, in an attempt to contain the spread of the virus. These steps followed the examples of other countries which had been affected by the pandemic earlier in the year. These practices were also consistent with the WHO guidelines on containing infectious diseases. The three practices which were emphasized were: (1) washing of hands, (2) social distancing and (3) wearing of facemasks.

As of December 2020, the pandemic is considered to have occurred in two “waves” in The Bahamas: the first from the 15th March to the 4th July, and the second wave starting the 5th July, 2020. The second wave was triggered by the reopening of the country to international travel when lax restrictions on residents returning to the country allowed the reintroduction of the virus after a period of several weeks with almost no reported cases. The number of cases in the second wave dwarfed the number in the first wave, both in terms of the number of cases and number of deaths caused by COVID-19. These national figures obscure the fact that Grand Bahama experienced three waves to its island-wide pandemic in 2020. The direct impact of the pandemic on UB’s approximately 600 employees, was that six of them suffered severe responses to COVID-19 warranting sick leave and two employees died as a result of COVID-19.

Given the Emergency Orders adopted by the Government of The Bahamas which closed schools in March, UB had a choice to either suspend its instruction or move to some sort of remote instruction.

Discussion questions: What characterizes the so-called two waves of the pandemic in 2020? Face-to-face education was suspended in the second week of the pandemic. The 28th of August was the start of the Fall semester. In early June, what decision for teaching in Fall 2020 might have appeared appropriate?



Immediate Response of UB in Spring 2020

UB anticipated the need to move on-line, based upon the experiences of other countries. It should be noted that the notices on pages 9 and 11 are dated prior to or on the same date of the first reported cases of COVID-19 in The Bahamas. This occurred at a time when events associated with the pandemic were fast moving around the world. On the 5th March, UB advised faculty of the on-line teaching resources, and training videos available to them so that they could prepare to move their courses on-line if required. The concern associated with the spread of the pandemic was such that a meeting was called by the UB President on the 12th March to discuss plans, but this in-person meeting was cancelled as fear grew about the virus and its spread.

The University decided to move to on-line instruction. Classes were suspended for a week while faculty transitioned to Internet-based delivery where possible. Classes ended on the 27th April, so only the last four weeks of classes needed to be accommodated remotely. As most in-person services were suspended, no infrastructural changes were made at this time, other than ensuring extra efforts were made to clean common areas and ensuring that soap etc. were available for frequent hand washing.

Discussion questions: What other options might have been considered? Which choices would be in the best long-term interest of students? What might be the implications for the quality of instruction offered to students?

Office of University Relations

STATEMENT

3rd March 2020

Statement From The President on Heightened Vigilance Against COVID-19

University of The Bahamas has been closely monitoring reports concerning COVID-19, also known as the Novel Coronavirus.

COVID-19 is an infectious disease spread from person to person primarily through the droplets of an infected person who speaks, coughs or sneezes. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports today that more than 91,000 cases have been confirmed worldwide in 74 countries around the world with more than 3,100 deaths. On Sunday, 1st March, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis announced at a press conference that the Ministry of Health has developed a COVID-19 National Preparedness and Response Plan to ensure optimal readiness and response to this new corona virus infection.

As increased monitoring and public education happens in the face of new reported cases worldwide, we as a University community must heighten our own vigilance in order to reduce potential risks. For that reason, I am appointing a Task Force which comprises campus leaders and students to review and upgrade - if necessary - procedures and guidelines, conduct monitoring and make recommendations guided by the protocols of the Bahamas Ministry of Health and the Government of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

At the Oakes Field Campus in New Providence and the UB-North Campus in Grand Bahama, persons with severe respiratory ailments are encouraged to seek medical attention. You are reminded that the Health Services clinic at the Oakes Field Campus operates from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and nursing services are available at the UB-North centre in downtown Freeport from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. Persons who require assistance after these hours should contact Campus Police/Security.

Effective immediately, all non-essential, University of The Bahamas-sponsored travel is suspended until further notice. On 2nd March, the Ministry of Health issued a statement strongly discouraging Bahamians from travelling abroad to high risk COVID-19 jurisdictions. The World Health Organization (WHO) frequently updates this listing of countries. Persons who must travel should expect to be screened, tested and if necessary quarantined for up to 14 days.

Further, faculty are encouraged to utilize the available technology to deliver lectures online via our Moodle platform. Further tutorials will be shared with faculty and students on exactly how to use the Moodle app.

I am encouraging faculty, staff, students and administrators to actively reduce your risk of exposure to COVID-19 by following these steps:

1. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap.
2. Do not touch your face, especially after touching other surfaces.
3. Cough and sneeze into your elbow, sleeve or into a tissue (covering your nose and mouth) then properly discarded the tissue afterwards.
4. Avoid close contact with anyone who is showing signs of respiratory illness like coughing or sneezing.
5. Clean surfaces and objects regularly with disinfectant.
6. Regularly monitor the Bahamas Government, Bahamas Ministry of Health and UB's communications channels and educate yourself about COVID-19.

I urge you to review these measures and guidelines within your departments and also action them.

Periodically, the Office of University Relations will release information from health authorities on how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, updates and national announcements. We urge the University community to continue to regularly monitor the UB email, website and social media channels as well as campus noticeboards.



Dr. Rodney Smith, President and CEO, University of The Bahamas

Office of University Relations

STATEMENT

15th March 2020

COVID-19 Contingencies, Preventative Measures & Response

On Sunday, 15th March 2020, health authorities confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in The Bahamas. University of The Bahamas is taking proactive steps and implementing preventive measures in order to protect the health and welfare of faculty, staff, students and members of the public. Therefore, the following contingency measures have been activated.

Effective Monday, 16th March, UB campuses, centres and business operations including the Oakes Field Campus, Grosvenor Close Centre, and UB-North operations in Grand Bahama will transition to remote operations until further notice. Additionally, Chapter One Bookstore will be closed until further notice. All events scheduled for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester are cancelled or postponed until further notice. This includes Spring 2020 Commencement. A further announcement will be made about Commencement at a later date.

REMOTE INSTRUCTION

As a result, remote instruction and communications will commence on Monday, 16th March using online applications including MOODLE and Zoom. Faculty and student communications on course content will continue via online channels. A decision will be communicated by Friday, 20th March regarding laboratory and practicum classes. Teaching practice, kitchen classes and internships are suspended until further notice. Students and faculty needing assistance with remote instruction should contact the IT Helpdesk at 302-4588 or ithelpdesk@ub.edu.bs.

Academic Affairs faculty and staff will be permitted to access their offices on Monday, 16th March to secure their offices.

RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Further, students who are residing in university dorms are advised to gather their belongings and initiate arrangements to leave the dorms and return home, effective immediately. Students who are not in a position to do so, should contact the Director of Residential Life and Housing at 422-6429 and Dean of Students at 424-8559 for further instructions and assistance.

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

Staff are advised that although they are to work remotely effective Monday, 16th March, they should remain in contact with their supervisors. Staff members who provide essential services including Security, Physical Plant, Information Technology, and Business Office are advised that they will receive further instructions from their department heads.

The public is advised to use all available online resources to complete business transactions where possible during this interim period, including:

Communications (1)

When a situation is novel and dynamic, reliable communications on the current situation are essential.

The University's Communications team responded by setting up a webpage called COVID-19 Response and Updates <http://www.ub.edu.bs/COVID-19/> where constituents could find information about the University's response to the pandemic, policies, government updates, and other resources. This webpage would become an archive of most information distributed to University constituents as much of it was distributed via email and social media as well.

On the COVID-19 webpage Information is grouped under seven headings: Relief – information about how to donate to the UB COVID-19 Relief Fund and on how to access the UBCares Pantry for emergency food supplies; Dashboard - the Ministry of Health daily statistical infographic about the pandemic; Resources - links to WHO and Ministry of Health documents and infographics, websites, audio and video information about COVID-19); Notices – largely press releases from the University about policies; News – from the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Health; information for Students – from the Office of Academic Affairs, tutorials on how to use the curriculum management system and a list of contacts; and finally Faculty – links to tutorial videos about online instruction and remote learning, notices from Academic Affairs and another list of contacts.

The Communications team also mass distributed content via other channels: the University's weekly newsletter, The Clarion, Facebook, Instagram and email blasts to all students, faculty and staff.

Discussion questions: What are the strengths and weakness of this communications strategy? What might have been missing from it?



COVID-19

On 11th September 2020, the World Health Organization issued an update on the COVID-19 pandemic, declaring that the world was woefully under prepared for this disease and that all countries need to dig in together and invest to ensure a pandemic of this magnitude and severity never happens again. University of The Bahamas is committed to mitigating and reducing the transmission of the novel coronavirus – the virus that causes COVID-19. This webpage is dedicated to educating our community about the risks and sharing information on the university's COVID-19 responses and operations for the protection and welfare of

Summary UB COVID-19 Initial Response Timeline as Communicated by UB Announcements: March-April 2020

Date	Clarion UB Newsletter	Date	UB Facebook page
Mar 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UB monitoring situation • Public health protocols infographics (WHO and PAHO) (recurring) 	Mar 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Health Coronavirus public health message
Mar 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Tutorials on use of Microsoft365 	Mar 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UB remains open and operational
Mar 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Blue banner (recurring) • UB Response and updates on COVID-19 webpage • Announcement of campuses and dorms closing • Move to remote instruction: AA Contingencies move to online delivery • Counselling services • COVID-19 hotline numbers - Ministry of Health 	Mar 12 • UB remains vigilant on COVID-19 Mar 15 • COVID-19 contingencies, preventative measures & responsibilities Mar 16 • Use Online resources for transactions • Use Payment portal Mar 20 • Full transition to remote customer service	
Mar 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President's message • BOT message • UB Libraries – virtual services, free databases (recurring) 	Mar 23 • Counselling: coping techniques Mar 24 • Deadline to withdraw without academic penalty extended to Apr 21 Mar 27 • Press release about COVID-19 Pandemic forcing UB to adopt nimble responses	
Apr 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Edge on COVID-19 resilience • SGA message hashtag #UBstillstrong • Michelle Bettin OP-ed on mental health • Announcement of UB COVID-19 information page • Intramurals & Recreation Stay fit poster (recurring) • UB Contact list (recurring) • Contact tracing training 	Apr 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Affairs: http://www.ub.edu.bs/cultivating-adaptation-resilience-academia/ • Notice on grade policy amendment

Summary UB COVID-19 Initial Response Timeline as Communicated by UB Announcements: April-June 2020

Date	Clarion UB Newsletter	Date	UB Facebook page
Apr 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in grading policy Research Edge on COVID-19 with Dr Delon Brennen 		
Apr 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice about examinations Research Edge with Danny Davis in COVID-19 	Apr 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions policy amendment for Fall 2020
Apr 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions policy changes Survey on COVID-19 impact on youth (not UB) Withdrawal from class policy 	Apr 28 Apr 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online registration of current students Announcement of one summer session only
May 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions period extended SGA #Stillubstrong campaign/video 		
May 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UB COVID-19 Relief fund established President Smith interviewed about what UB response Announcement: Stress Survey CATS recipes (recurring for a few weeks) 		
May 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism New Norm webinar Interview with Leah Rolle about nursing Notices about graduation Mental health webinars/zoom sessions (recurring) Financial wellness webinar 	May 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video about new pathway for entry into the UB for fall 2020/spring 2021
May 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extending period for undergraduate applications NEMA Hurricane preparation Virtual Visual arts showcase Virtual Performing arts showcase Virtual Graduation meeting 	May 29-31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donations for UBcares pantry
June 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 4 reopening notice UB Athletics returning Online payments of overdue accounts Online Summer Arts Immersion Online Summer Mandarin course (recurring) 		
June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress survey results Greek Life Motivational Mondays JSTOR free access 		

Response of UB to the Extended Nature of the Pandemic

Academic Response

On the 9th of April, following approval by the Academic Senate, the grading policy was changed for Spring 2020 Semester to A/A-/Pass/No credit instead of the usual A-F grades to allow for the fact that students' instruction had been disrupted by the change to on-line instruction.

The Admissions Policy was amended for the Fall 2020 Semester and Spring 2021 Semester to allow for the fact that national examinations would not be taking place as usual. On the 23rd of April, UB published revisions to admissions which were based upon school GPAs and level of success in the UB placement examinations in English and Mathematics. Around 600 students took the placement examinations.

After the end of the Spring 2020 Semester, it was apparent that the University had to prepare in good time so that it could continue to serve students in the Fall 2020 Semester. It was apparent that faculty would need training to successfully move their courses to an on-line learning environment. Two training courses were offered to faculty during the summer months, one on using Moodle, and one on online course authoring: of the 93 faculty enrolled in the course on Moodle, 59 were successful and of the 53 faculty who initially enrolled in the online course authoring training, 26 successfully completed the course.

Discussion questions: Were the decisions made in a timely fashion? What other decisions should have been made in April?

Impact of On-line Teaching on Student Success

In the Fall 2020 Semester, while 44 of 1,252 course sections were officially designated "on-line", almost all sections were taught on-line to 3,329 full-time and 568 part-time students. It should be noted that the change from face-to-face instruction to Internet-based instruction appears to have posed some learning difficulties as the median grade moved from B+ to B with the move away from face-to-face instruction.

Surveys were conducted involving students, faculty and staff to obtain information about their concerns with regard to moving from their traditional working/learning environment to a virtual one. Some highlights from these surveys are given page 16. Where the same questions were asked in more than one survey, it is possible to assess the change in attitudes which occurred overtime.

Student Performance

	Semester			
	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020
% On-line sections			0.7%	100%
Median grade	B+	B+	B-	B
% students withdrawing	2.9%	3.5%	3.9%	2.6%

Opinions of Faculty

Preferred Teaching Option of Faculty	Dec-2020	Jul-2020
Virtually only.	65.3%	34.5%
Hybrid/Blended - You would place all material virtually but would have some face-to-face lectures with up to 50% of students present on campus and 50 % in the virtual environment.	19.3%	31.7%
Face-to face BUT only if the COVID-19 safety regulations are in place i.e., social distancing; face masks; hand sanitizing stations across the campus; regular consistent cleaning/sanitizing of University spaces; temperature monitoring.	13.5%	26.2%
Other (please specify)	2.1%	7.6%

Type of Class Delivered	Can Be Delivered Virtually	
	Dec-2020	July-2020
Lecture/Seminar	99.3%	97.1%
Teaching Practice	70.8%	29.6%
Laboratory	57.4%	51.5%
Studio	53.8%	47.6%
Fieldwork	51.4%	29.3%
Internship	41.9%	27.8%
Practicum	38.9%	17.9%
Kitchen	23.1%	14.3%
Clinical	15.0%	0%

Access to IT and other resources

Item	Students having access	Faculty having access
Smart phone	97%	Not asked
Internet connected computer at home	81%	100%
Age of computer over five years	26%	24%
Having a quiet place to study	51%	Not asked

The preference of faculty for teaching on-line reported in December 2020 was consistent with the fear of COVID-19 due to rising cases and deaths. Faculty expressed confidence that classes of all types, could be delivered in on-line modality.

Assistance to Students

In recognition that some students lacked access to computers at home, a COVID-19 Technology Relief Fund was set up and 600 students applied for help. As of December 2020, \$30,000 had been raised to help students.

Student Services

UB continued to expand its on-line services to students. For example: from December 2020 a new e-transcript initiative allowed students and alumni to apply online for an official transcript.

Discussion question: What else, if anything, could have been done to assist the students?

 **HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP**



CLICK & GIVE: Make a cash or no-cash donation directly to the #UBCOVID-19ReliefFund online.

GIFFTS IN KIND GIVING: An in-kind donation to University of the Bahamas is considered a gift of goods or services.

DONATE TECHNOLOGY: Provide UB students with new or gently used technology or accessories.

PURCHASES FOR THE PANTRY: Help fill Our Pantry with Items Students Need. For consideration, UB Cares Pantry needs:

- Hygiene products
- Dry goods
- Canned goods and meals
- Water
- Cleaning supplies
- Over the counter medications

#UBCOVID-19ReliefFund | #GIVEUBCares | #5HUBStrong | #LiveUBCaresupportUB
Check out UB COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.ub.edu/bahamas/>



A student receiving a laptop to assist with her on-line studies.

Information Technology (IT) Resources and Use

Any move to virtual teaching is predicated upon students and faculty having access to adequate hardware and Internet connectivity as well as a space at home which is conducive to study and instruction. A survey of students and faculty in March 2020 provided information about their access to IT resources, see page 16.

As of the beginning of the Spring 2020 Semester, a survey indicated that 29% of students were participating in a UB course via the Internet and 27% of faculty were giving instruction via the Internet. By the end of March, when UB had restarted classes, and had had access to some training videos, 85% of faculty were prepared to teach on-line to the end of term, and 94% of faculty were then teaching via the Internet.

Power outages can disrupt on-line learning. Power issues become more common in the warmer months, and so would have been a greater nuisance in the Fall rather than Spring Semester. Power cuts, added to the overall stress associated with the pandemic and required flexibility of both students and instructors to navigate the lost Internet time.



Source: Bahamas Light and Power Company

Discussion questions: What are the concerns, if any, arising from reliance on IT for delivery of instruction? What more might UB have done to ensure a smooth implementation of its chosen options?

Student Affairs

Student support was largely in the form of Information Technology assistance with on-line services and assistance with obtaining the hardware resources they needed to participate in on-line courses. The Student Government Association produced pod-casts to keep the student body engaged and informed of developments.

Changes to UB Administration

A COVID-19 Taskforce was set-up to devise a reopening plan for the University (page 20). Academic Senate meetings and other administrative meetings were moved online. Use was made of SurveyMonkey™ to facilitate decision making requiring voting, on such matters as student graduation papers.

Discussion questions: What are your thoughts on this plan? Is it practical, is it affordable? Is it appropriate given the tension between safety and the need to teach students? Is it too dependent upon decisions taken outside of the UB? Is it a helpful coincidence that it has similarities with the Prime Minister's plan for opening the economy? What might be the role of vaccinations in the reopening of UB? What would your plan for UB look like?

Infrastructure Changes

Adjustments were made to the University infrastructure as follows:

- Hand sanitizing machines were placed throughout the University and more specifically at the entrances of every building and at the bottom and top of each stairwell.
- Markers were placed at six-foot intervals in areas where customer services are provided, as for example, in the Chapter One Bookstore, the Portia Smith Student Services building and by receptionists' desks.
- Notices were put up regarding washing and sanitizing hands, obligatory wearing of face masks and maintaining six-foot distancing.
- Plexiglass barriers were placed on a number of desks particularly in those locations where persons serve customers, whether internal or external.
- UB continued to emphasize the cleaning and sanitizing of offices and installing Plexiglass as outlined in the statement from August (see page 22).

Discussion questions: Given the actions of UB to keep people off-campus, what is your view of the actions taken? Given what was known about the virus, what were the strengths and weakness of UB's response? What else, if anything might have been done?

PHASED REOPENING PLAN

Each phase is contingent upon national health protocols and emergency orders.

PHASE 1

Limited and brief access to campuses and office spaces in complete duties which require a physical presence.

Essential personnel:

University Police & Security
Physical Plant
OIT

Limited select essential staff upon approval of the President and Royal Bahamas Police Force

Required:

UB ID displayed
Wearing of masks
Physical distancing (at least 6ft apart)
Frequent and thorough hand sanitizing
Proper respiratory hygiene

PHASE 2

Primary office operations resume on reduced schedule with restrictions.

Office Operations/Personnel:

University Police & Security;
Finance, OIT, Portia M. Smith Building offices, Health Services (emergencies only with tele-health/medicine); Testing Services

Limited UB-North Operations;
Security, OIT, Physical Plant, Recruitment & Admissions

Restrictions:

Employees at high risk continue to work remotely No in-person customer service No cafeteria or cafe services Events remain suspended

Required:

UB ID displayed, facial masks worn, physical distancing (at least 6ft apart); frequent and thorough hand sanitizing; proper respiratory hygiene

PHASE 3

Additional office operations and in-person customer service resume.

Operations/Personnel:

Students and visitors allowed for customer service matters at all UB sites. Campus estates reopen for take-out. Individual or small group (5 or less) athletic training.

Restrictions:

No large assemblies
University Libraries, Wellness Centre and Student Union Building remain closed Events remain suspended

Required:

UB ID displayed; facial masks worn; temperature monitoring; physical distancing (at least 6ft apart); frequent and thorough hand sanitizing; proper respiratory hygiene

PHASE 4

Resumption of further office operations.

Operations/Personnel:

Classes delivered on-site (in smaller groups) and online Individual or small group (5 or less) athletic training. Faculty office hours resume Wellness Centre reopens (with appointments) University Libraries and all computer labs reopen. Geacze Research Institute reopens

Restrictions:

No large assemblies
Events remain suspended pending health permissions

Required:

UB ID displayed; facial masks worn; temperature monitoring; physical distancing (at least 6ft apart); frequent and thorough hand sanitizing; proper respiratory hygiene

PHASE 5

This phase is to coincide with full resumption of schools via on-site classes and is dependent on national protocols.

Operations:

Full university operations resume on-site at all campuses and centres. Fall 2020 classes underway Full cafeteria, cafe and restaurant operations Return to play for athletics Campus events and club activities resume with restrictions Chapter One bookstore operations resume. Student Union Building reopens

Required:

UB ID displayed; facial masks worn; temperature monitoring; physical distancing (at least 6ft apart); frequent and thorough hand sanitizing; proper respiratory hygiene

Communications (2)

As the pandemic progressed, UB attempted to demonstrate a sense of continuity and community by moving typically face-to-face events to virtual or on-line ones, such as special lectures, the annual University graduation and home-coming events. Beginning on the 31st of July 2020, the President of the University shared weekly messages of hope encouraging staff and students to look after their mental health, physical health and to support each other.

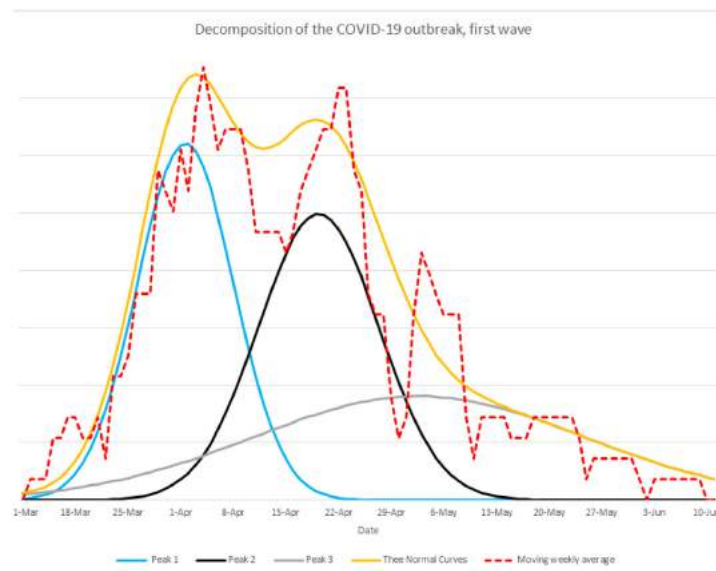
Discussion questions: What are the concerns, if any, of attempts to promote a sense of “normalcy” in unusual times? Given the increase in stress in the population what might be the outcome?

UB Participation in the National Response to the Pandemic

UB faculty participated in adapting the Johns Hopkins University online contact tracing course to the Bahamian context. This course was open to the wider community and so assist the Ministry of Health in its attempts to curtail the spread of COVID-19.

Two video public service announcements were produced to highlight local COVID-19 issues. Faculty participated in Ministry of Health-led training for small business owners on how to reopen their businesses to implement the Ministry of Health safety protocols.

Discussion questions: For a university of its size, was UB’s response adequate? If not, what else might it have been expected to do? What might be the financial implications of its activities?



Office of University Relations

13th August 2020

STATEMENT

Cleaning and Sanitization of Campus

All University of The Bahamas campuses remain closed and operations are continuing remotely.

The necessary protective and sanitization measures are being implemented at University campuses for the eventual resumption of on-site operations. Sanitizers are being installed throughout the University's campuses. Plexiglass screens are being installed in all heavily trafficked areas. Additionally, offices and buildings are being inspected for mold and cleaned constantly.

Nonetheless, the University has been advised that two of its employees have tested positive for COVID-19. These persons were operating from an isolated area. The Ministry of Health's Surveillance Unit has initiated contact tracing to determine the level of exposure to any essential employee.

Out of an abundance of caution, an external company has been contracted to conduct a thorough cleaning and disinfection throughout the campus.

Employees have been reminded that if they are not feeling well, and are exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, to stay at home, contact their medical provider, or the COVID-19 hotline, and follow the advice given.

The University takes seriously the health and well-being of all faculty, students and staff and the University community is advised to continue following the directives of the Bahamas Ministry of Health and the Emergency Orders.

Office of University Relations

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Chartered on 10th November 2016, University of The Bahamas (UB) is a beacon for national transformation. Approximately 5,000 students are enrolled in the University of The Bahamas system which includes campuses and centres on New Providence, Grand Bahama, and San Salvador, as well as UB online education. UB's diverse academic programmes, research engagements, athletics and leadership development experiences equip our students to become global citizens in a dynamic world. For more information, visit www.ub.edu.bs.

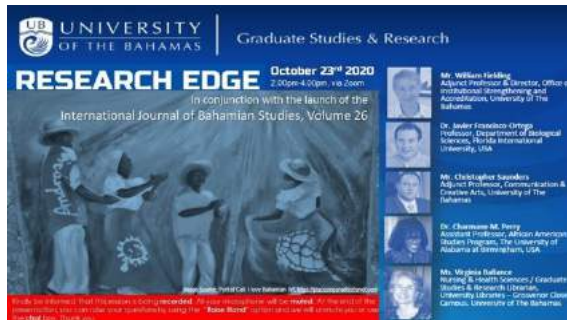
Summary UB COVID-19 Initial Response Timeline as Communicated by UB Announcements: July-December 2020

Date	Clarion UB Newsletter	Date	UB Facebook page
July 7	UB Phased reopening plan		
July 14	Fall 2020 info		
July 20	2020/21 remote operations plan Basketball preparation		
July 27	UB contingency plans Faculty survey results	July 29	E-transcripts
Aug 4	e-transcripts Staff survey on COVID-19 Academic calendar	Aug 4	Remote operations resumption under national lockdown
Aug 10	Virtual registration	Aug 9	Online advisement
		Aug 12	Online registration/parents day/club meetings
Aug 18	Virtual new student orientation		
Aug 24	COVID-19 email address established for concerns/suggestions UB Mobile APP	Aug 21	Postponement of practical and studio courses
Aug 30	Call for Interdisciplinary COVID-19 research GPPI digitization survey		
Sept 7	President's Open Door/Zoom meetings Virtual academic senate		
Sept 14	Student survey	Sept 16	Practical and studio courses & Library curbside pickup resume Resumption of computer labs
Sept 21	COVID-19 contact tracing course ULibraries Curbside pickup Student events podcasts		
Oct 6	COVID-19 Emergency Technology Fund		
Oct 13	UB COVID-19 public health videos Suspension of in-person classes		
Oct 19	10 mile virtual run		
Oct 26	Virtual IJBS launch	Oct 28	Extension of graduation deadline
Nov 2	Virtual Homecoming week of events	Nov 4	Banner setup -> registration delay by one week
Nov 9	Virtual event for local Media		
Nov 16	Virtual Hall of Fame awards Online registration for Spring 2021		
Nov 23	Online Alumni magazine / Virtual Alumni awards Online HR Helpdesk		
Dec 7	Virtual Christmas Tree lighting ceremony Virtual Music department Christmas concert	Dec 1	Etranscript portal available Online payments

Research

While research is a cornerstone of a university, research projects take time to plan. In the fast-moving events of the Spring 2020 Semester, time was a constraint to an organized response. Further, after May, faculty disperse for holidays. Consequently, there was no concerted UB-wide research response to the pandemic. However, a number of faculty undertook projects (see page 25) which contributed to the national response to the pandemic.

Discussion questions: Given the limited pool of faculty who might have appropriate skills to participate in research associated with a pandemic, could UB have done more? If so what? How might this have been organized given the timing of the pandemic within the academic year? How might this additional research be funded given the collapse in the economy?



UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS Graduate Studies & Research

RESEARCH EDGE

October 23rd 2020
2:00pm-4:00pm via Zoom

In conjunction with the launch of the International Journal of Bahamian Studies, Volume 26

Mr. William Harding
Adjunct Professor & Director, Office of Internationalizing and Accreditation, University of The Bahamas

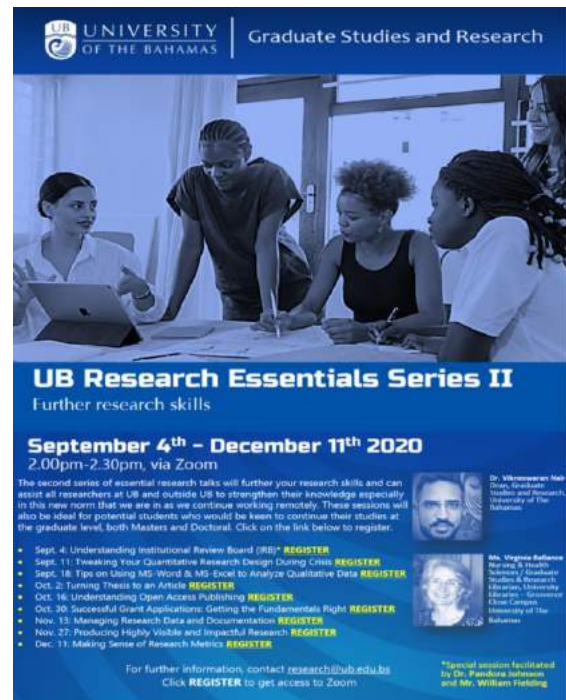
Dr. Jeefer Emmanuel Ortega
Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University, USA

Mr. Christopher Saunders
Adjunct Professor, Communication & Creative Arts, University of The Bahamas

Dr. Charmaine M. Perry
Assistant Professor, African American Studies Program, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA

Ms. Myrella Bellmore
Writing & Health Sciences / Graduate Studies & Research Services, University Libraries - Graduate Class Campus, University of The Bahamas

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UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS Graduate Studies and Research

UB Research Essentials Series II

Further research skills

September 4th - December 11th 2020
2:00pm-2:30pm, via Zoom

The second series of essential research talks will further your research skills and can assist all researchers at UB and outside UB to strengthen their knowledge especially in this new norm that we are in as we continue working remotely. These sessions will also be ideal for potential students who would be keen to continue their studies at the graduate level, both Masters and Doctoral. Click on the link below to register.

- Sept. 4: Understanding Institutional Review Board (IRB) **REGISTER**
- Sept. 11: Tweaking Your Quantitative Research Design During Crisis **REGISTER**
- Sept. 18: Tips on Using MS-Word & MS-Excel to Analyze Qualitative Data **REGISTER**
- Oct. 2: Turning Thesis to an Article **REGISTER**
- Oct. 16: Understanding Open Access Publishing **REGISTER**
- Oct. 30: Successful Grant Applications: Getting the Fundamentals Right **REGISTER**
- Nov. 13: Managing Research Data and Documentation **REGISTER**
- Nov. 27: Producing Highly Visible and Impactful Research **REGISTER**
- Dec. 11: Making Sense of Research Metrics **REGISTER**

For further information, contact research@ub.edu.bs
Click **REGISTER** to get access to Zoom.

*Special session facilitated by Dr. Paulette Johnson and Mr. William Harding

Case Study: Research

Two of the main research-related activities included the monthly Research Edge Forum and the bi-weekly Research Essential Series. Pre-COVID-19, it was a challenge to get a sufficient number of participants from both the UB community and the public to attend the face-to-face sessions at UB, although, the sessions were made available via Zoom for remote and off-campus access.

The mean attendance at the Research Edge fora from Fall 2018 to Fall 2020 demonstrated an increase in attendance via Zoom during the pandemic, 68.5 per session compared to 12 per session pre-COVID-19. It should be noted that in Spring 2020, five presentations were on various aspects of COVID-19 which would have been of interest to a wide section of society.

Prior to COVID-19, training in research, the Research Essential Series, was given in person (with Zoom access to those off-campus). In the first two months of Spring 2020, sessions were held at UB before the March lockdowns. Subsequently all sessions were conducted via Zoom. During the pandemic the average attendance moved from 20.8 per semester to 181.

Projects that were carried out by UB during the period of the pandemic included:

- To inform policy decisions in science education in The Bahamas during times of national emergency (pandemics, natural disasters etc.).
- A survey to assess the stress impact of COVID-19.
- Assessing the needs of students with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis in The Bahamas
- Assisted the Department of Gender Affairs to look at sexual abuse and domestic violence during the first wave of COVID-19.
- Generated visual dashboards and graphics to assist the Ministry of Health in interpreting the COVID-19 data.
- Model the impacts of SARS-CoV2 in the Bahamas under fixed and variable threshold parameters
- Panel discussion on changes happening across the globe that tourism in The Bahamas must be aware of post COVID-19.
- A survey to assess the stress impact of COVID-19 in the second wave.
- A project described the reaction of the Catholic Church to the restrictions on church services over Easter 2020 arising from the pandemic, from the view point of St. Paul the Apostle Church, Lyford Cay.
- A project illustrated how St. Paul's Catholic Church, Lyford Cay, is a good design for social distancing.

Discussion questions: Why was the move to on-line presentations successful? Is it a change that you would recommend should become permanent? What might be the advantages/disadvantages of your recommendations?

Case Study: Libraries

Libraries play a pivotal role in universities providing both learning and research resources. Libraries also provide computing facilities and study spaces for students, so they are more than just a repository of information. Given the need for social distancing and given the period when the university was closed to students, the UB libraries had to find new ways to provide library services.

As part of the response by the Office of Academic Affairs to moving instruction to the on-line environment, the University Libraries kept their “doors open” by offering virtual library services. Many tools and resources were already available and put into use. Ask a Librarian, a virtual reference service was implemented and all library staff were assigned to an on-line reference roster with services available virtually from 8 am-8 pm daily. In addition, an on-line appointments service was established, allowing users to book one-on-one or group sessions with library staff via Microsoft Teams or Zoom: 71 appointments were made with 9 librarians and library staff. (The appointments software is also being used by the IT Department for students to book a computer in computer labs). Librarians offered 9 sign-up sessions (database searching, avoiding plagiarism, website evaluation etc.) however few students signed up for the events.

A curbside pickup service, with safe-handling protocols, was offered for those patrons wishing to borrow print books from the library collection at the Oakes Field Campus. When it became clear that the libraries would remain closed to students, 44 new ebook titles were purchased and added to the ebook collection on EBSCOhost. In 2019 167 ebooks were accessed, and this moved to 392 in 2020. However, the number of searches using electronic databases moved from 2,064,402 in 2019 to 1,915,869 in 2020.

Access to the library’s research resources and to library personnel presented challenges to students and faculty during closure of the library and the work-from-home mandate during COVID-19. Prior to COVID-19 all library databases, notably those licensed from EBSCOhost, JSTOR, Credo reference were accessible remotely, from off-campus. Comparing usage statistics for 2019 and 2020 show that overall usage fell by 7.7%. However, the use of the ebook collection (also on EBSCOhost) increased by 57%.

Discussion question: What could the University Libraries have done to prevent the decline in usage of the EBSCOhost databases? Do you think that the decrease in student engagement with virtual or on-line library services contributed to the lower student GPA?



Office of The President

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