



[FLVC Looking Ahead to New Opportunities After Challenges in 2020](#)

While 2020 was filled with challenges for both the Florida Virtual Campus and its member institutions, it was also full of success stories, said Dr. John Opper, executive director of Distance Learning and Student Services.

Dealing with the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic this past spring, Florida's colleges and universities were able to convert thousands of face-to-face classes to online courses in just a few weeks to ensure that students were able to finish their degrees and graduate on time, Opper said.

"The institutions have done tremendous work not only to convert the classes but to streamline policies and procedures to accommodate students in the best way that they can."

In December, the FLVC also transferred to a new host institution, Florida State University, which is a partnership that has resulted in some changes and potentially new opportunities, Opper said.

"I think that process went relatively smoothly," Opper said. "However, we also had to make some changes to our existing menu of services on FloridaShines, and as a result, there have been and continue to be changes on our website and some of our services."

Even with the transition, FLVC staff have continued to keep its myriad of services running without interruption, such as Distance Learning and Student Services, FloridaShines, and the Florida Academic Library Services Cooperative.

"We have continued to serve students and keep those sites and functions alive," Opper said. "I think FSU offers an opportunity for us to continue those services and maybe look in some new directions. But we are still exploring that."

While the beginning of 2021 will also present challenges for both the FLVC and its member institutions with the COVID-19 pandemic still prevalent and budget issues looming, the latter part of the year will hopefully provide relief as the vaccine takes hold and Florida's economy gets back on track, Opper said.

"I think the latter part of 2021 will be good for the Florida economy and I think we may see ourselves come out of what has been a very challenging year a much stronger organization," Opper said. "At the end of the day, we are all dedicated to keeping not only all the FLVC services up and running for students but helping our institutions so they can help their students finish their degrees and continue their progression into a career even though times are very difficult."



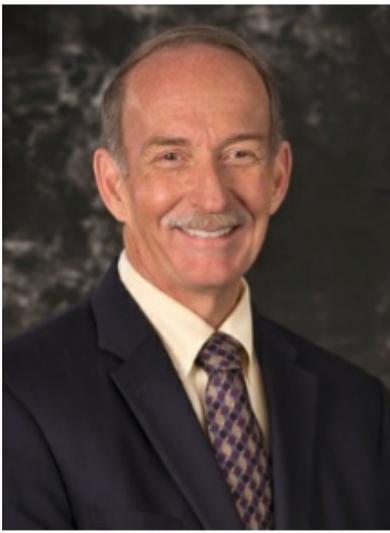
Connect with the [Florida Virtual Campus](#) and [FloridaShines](#) on Facebook!

Connect with the [Florida Virtual Campus](#), the [DLSS Members Council](#), and [FloridaShines](#) on Twitter!

Connect with the [Florida Virtual Campus](#) on LinkedIn!

[History of Distancing Learning in Florida Provides Lessons for the Future](#)

Amid a challenging economy, it will take creativity and collaboration for colleges and universities in Florida to improve upon their business model for distance learning.



That was the message from Opper when he recently gave a presentation on “25 years of Distance Learning in Florida” to an online gathering of the Florida Distance Learning Association.

Opper looked at investments the state has made in distance learning since 1995 and how they helped provide a foundation for the future. As institutions have shifted to strictly online courses during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has never been a better time for them to transform the business model for higher education using the advantages of technology and lessons learned over the last 25 years with distance learning, he said.

“The state made an investment, put some pieces in place,” Opper said. “We have an opportunity now, as we go through this COVID-19 situation, to rethink our model. And people right now at your institution are much more receptive than ever to change and new

ideas.”

In 1995, Opper said distance learning in Florida was mainly limited to correspondence courses, telecourses, and using synchronous video to deliver instruction.

“Most of what we would consider being the main activity was really what I would consider being technology-enhanced classes, using technology in the classroom as opposed to really doing what you think would be distance learning,” Opper said. “The state networks, at the time, were about data transmission, not about learning as much.”

There were also challenges back then including uneven broadband connectivity across the state as well as policy barriers that limited how far colleges and universities could offer distance learning courses. However, Opper said there were several events that “moved the needle” as to how distance learning was improved upon and expanded in Florida.

Among those was the creation of the Florida Information Resource Network, which would become a dial-up service for teachers and a learning network for the transmission of educational resources that served as a core set of broadband services for every school, college, and university. The formation of the Florida Distance Learning Network, a group that appropriated more than \$15 million budgeted by the state Legislature to help start several distance learning organizations in the state, was another important milestone.

The implementation of Florida’s distance learning fee by the state Legislature in 2008 helped provide institutions with the funding and infrastructure they needed to help meet student demand for online courses, Opper said.

“Despite budgetary constraints, Florida is well-positioned to maintain its high level of distance learning services,” Opper said.

“Florida has a robust online learning community,” he said. “We have good connectivity in and among our campuses. We have an excellent automated library system and a good set of e-resources and journals to support our learning activities. In addition, our tuition and fees are lower than in many other states. While the next few years will be challenging for higher education, think about, post-COVID, how you can transform your institution and use the technology and use the lessons you have learned now to optimize and transform your business model.”

To view the full presentation, please visit [25 years of Distance Learning](#).

[Florida Academic Success and Quality Initiative](#)

The [Florida Academic Success & Quality](#) (FLASQ) Initiative is one of the essential services that FLVC provides to Florida’s higher education institutions. The FLASQ serves as an “Umbrella of Collaboration for ALL,” which includes:

- the FCS and SUS institutions as well as the ICUF institutions

- institutions who are Quality Matters subscribers
- institutions who are not Quality Matters subscribers

The FLASQ supports high-quality design in courses and academic programs by providing access to resources, training, and best practices as well as encouraging collaboration among faculty and staff for maximum student success. The FLASQ's main focus areas are:

- instructional strategies and delivery methods
- instructional and learning technologies
- quality standards, rubrics, and best practices
- best practices in academic and student support services

[Subscribe to the FLASQ listserv](#) and receive newsletters, announcements as well as rich resources shared by the community members.

Survey Invitation: In January DLSS will send out an email invitation for your participation in a short *Online Quality Needs Survey*. The purpose of the survey is to find out how FLVC can assist you to achieve the educational quality goals and objectives for your institution. Please watch your email and prepare to participate!

[Online Course Offerings Double in the FloridaShines Statewide Catalog](#)

The number of online courses available to Florida students in the 2020-21 academic year doubled those offered in previous years.

With the transition to online modality this past spring, more than 120,000 courses were offered online from 40 institutions.

[The Statewide Catalog](#) is a centralized inventory of all programs and certificates offered from all Florida institutions, while still including all statewide institution profiles and online courses. Additionally, the Catalog was expanded to include the Florida Technical Colleges and Centers in the profiles and programs listings. This expansion will not only help students discover offerings and opportunities available from Technical Colleges and Centers but also support the Division of Career and Adult Education in statistics and reporting.



[Contract Savings for 2020-21](#)

The FLVC has a Quality Matter System license for our members to take part in which now has 30 participating institutions. The current savings are just over \$32,000 with our newest addition being Edward Waters College.

Last spring, we successfully finalized the ITN (Invitation to Negotiate) for proctored services that was awarded to both Honorlock and Proctorio.

Honorlock has 20 participating institutions, four of which are licensing by exam. The current annual savings for Honorlock are \$845,792 (by exam savings to be tallied at the fiscal year-end).

Proctorio has eight higher education institutions and one school district participating. Among those eight institutions, the annual state savings are \$1,390,695 with another \$1,350,000 saved from Pasco County Schools.

FLVC's next ITN effort will be for closed captioning services. If anyone would like to serve on that team, please contact Heather Thompson at HThompson@flvc.org. We have shared the specifications, gathered from our members, and are hoping to have them inserted into FSU contractual language soon.



DLSS
Distance Learning and
Student Services



Florida
Shines

Contact Details

Distance Learning and Student Services

1753 W. Paul Dirac Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32310

877-506-2210 (toll free)

DLSS.FLVC.org