



Risk Alert

Meaningful. Actionable. Timely.

October 23, 2024

Business Continuity Planning: The Threat: Disruption is Inevitable— Preparedness is a Choice!

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) is an institution built on excellence, but even excellence is vulnerable to unexpected disruptions like hurricanes, cyberattacks, utility failures, and public health crises. The question isn't **if** a disruption will occur but **when**. Without a robust business continuity plan, FAMU's ability to deliver on its mission is at serious risk.

Why This Matters to FAMU's Strategic Priorities:

Business continuity is not just about surviving a crisis—it's about thriving despite one. It is how we protect FAMU's mission, safeguard the student experience, and continue our pursuit of Carnegie R1 status. Without preparedness, we risk everything we've worked so hard to build. We cannot allow anything to jeopardize our strategic priorities:

- **Student Success** depends on uninterrupted learning and support.
- **Academic Excellence** relies on protecting our research and intellectual property.
- **Leveraging the Brand** hinges on our ability to deliver a seamless and exceptional experience even during disruptions. Continuity ensures we maintain trust with students, faculty, donors, and the community.
- **Fiscal Health** requires operational resilience to avoid financial losses.
- **Organizational Effectiveness** needs plans to keep our talented staff and faculty focused and engaged, even in difficult times.

Potential Consequences of Inaction:

- **Operational Chaos:** Without continuity plans, departments, colleges, and schools may face shutdowns or prolonged disruptions to essential services, leading to student dissatisfaction and reputational damage.
- **Data Breaches & Intellectual Property Losses:** Failure to secure systems during a crisis can result in breaches that could cripple our reputation and competitiveness as we strive for R1 status.
- **Financial Fallout:** Interruptions in operations could lead to millions in financial losses due to halted tuition payments, research grants, and potential legal and regulatory fines.
- **Reputational Damage:** Once trust is broken among students, faculty, staff, and the public, it's extremely difficult to rebuild. Our ability to deliver the FAMU brand of excellence in customer service and academic outcomes is at risk.



Alert Type

Awareness

Watch

Warning



"Don't wait for the storm to arrive before securing the foundation. Your actions today will determine how FAMU rises tomorrow. Remember:

- *Protect the students. They rely on us to keep their academic journeys on track.*
- *Protect the brand. Our reputation depends on providing seamless, exceptional service, even in a crisis.*
- *Protect the future. Our financial health, research leadership, and institutional growth are built on resilience and preparation."*

– FAMU Deputy COO & Chief Risk Officer Deidre Melton

Call to Action: Here's What You Must Do NOW

As educators, you are responsible for maintaining the flow of knowledge to our students, no matter the circumstances. Ask yourself:

- How will I continue delivering course content if campus facilities are inaccessible or online systems are down?
- Do I have backup materials (lectures, assignments, etc.) ready in alternative formats to share with students during a disruption?
- What steps have I taken to ensure my students can access course materials remotely in the event of an extended disruption?
- Do I have contingency plans for completing assessments, grading, and reporting final outcomes during a crisis?
- How can I support students who may face challenges (technological, logistical, etc.) in continuing their education during a disruption?

As researchers, your work contributes to the cutting edge of innovation, and it must be protected. Ask yourself:

- How will I protect and access my research data if the university's IT systems are compromised or unavailable?
- Do I have secure backups of critical research files and data stored offsite or in the cloud?
- How would a prolonged campus shutdown or lab closure impact my ongoing research projects, and what contingencies are in place?
- Have I considered how interruptions might affect grant deadlines, project timelines, and funding sources?
- Am I prepared to maintain communication and collaboration with research partners if regular systems are down?

As administrators and staff, your roles ensure that the operations of this great institution continue without pause, safeguarding the experience of our students and the future of FAMU. Ask yourself:

- How will my department continue critical functions if we cannot access the physical office or our primary systems?
- Do we have clear, actionable continuity plans for essential services (e.g., payroll, student services, financial operations) in case of a disruption?
- Have we cross-trained staff so that essential duties can still be performed if key personnel are unavailable?
- How do we ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, and institutional requirements during a prolonged disruption?
- Are there alternative vendors or backup plans for essential supplies and services if our primary sources are interrupted?
- How will we maintain the high level of service expected of FAMU during a crisis?

Final Words: Protecting FAMU Starts with YOU

The strength of FAMU lies not only in our history and achievements but in our collective ability to navigate challenges and emerge stronger. Let's lead by example and show the world what it means to be a part of the FAMUly—a community that stands together, ready to overcome any challenge, committed to excellence in all we do.



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