



For the third Thank-You Thursday, this week we will recognize the scientists at UF COM and UF Health, who have made such important contributions over the past two months as we've battled COVID-19. Right from the start, they generously donated truckloads of PPE for frontline clinicians to use and offered the use of lab equipment and supplies for testing and other essential functions. Our scientists partnered with clinicians on innovative ways to produce extra masks and face shields and to develop necessary equipment like ventilators in the event of shortages. They have undertaken important epidemiological studies to help us understand the spread and impact of the virus. They are working on the development of vaccines and treatments. Our scientists are studying the short- and long-term effects of this pandemic on individuals and our community. Many have sacrificed months or even years of work by shutting down their research projects and programs, in order to maintain social distancing guidelines and help keep us all safe. Our research faculty had to quickly adjust to online teaching and helping their trainees to continue progressing in their academic requirements. Our science trainees have been flexible and cooperative and helpful—volunteering to take on new tasks for the greater good. The scientific community has banded together—creating peer support groups and looking for creative ways to maintain productivity during this time. The scientists will play a vital role in getting the world through this crisis, and we are so grateful to have such an outstanding group of researchers here at UF Health!

In honor of our scientists, you might enjoy this **brief video describing some research on the importance of expressing gratitude:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgYqyuLeayo&feature=youtu.be>

In addition, I encourage you to read this **special tribute to the UF Health workforce** by Dr. Linda Cottler (Professor of Epidemiology and Director of HealthStreet) and Matt Cottler (Director of Customer Support for UF Health IT): <https://www.gainesville.com/opinion/20200421/linda-and-matt-cottler-our-excellent-workforce>

This week, try to find some time to **send a personal note of gratitude/encouragement to someone you know who is involved in research at UF Health**. For inspiration, you can read about some of the sacrifices, efforts, and accomplishments of our researchers over the past couple of months in the messages copied below:

- The researchers have been heroes in this crisis. They did not even blink when we needed masks, reagents for tests, or a quick plan to ramp down research and keep everyone safe. ~ Michael S. Okun, MD, Executive Director, Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases
- I am very thankful and proud of all members of the college and health center during this time of COVID-19. Everyone I have encountered has gone above and beyond. I would like to thank all the graduate students who pitched in to close their labs down, and who adapted to online classes, lab meetings, and committee meetings with good cheer. I am also grateful for and extend thanks to all the investigators who altered their research emphasis to focus on SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. Likewise thank you to all the members of the biosafety committee who experienced an increase in workload reviewing all the proposals focused on SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. A special thank you is due to the laboratory and administrative staffs who have adapted to remote work sites and have continued to carry out their essential functions during these difficult times. Also I am thankful of the senior leadership team that we have in place in their efforts to lead us during these difficult times and keep everyone informed of the ever changing fluid situation. Thank you all. ~ Henry V. Baker, Chair of Molecular Genetics & Microbiology
- The Center for OCD, Anxiety, and Related Disorders thanks all of the research faculty, staff, and students who have stepped up during the COVID pandemic. They have donated supplies from their laboratories, organized childcare efforts for healthcare providers, and volunteered to help out in COVID specific research studies, often learning new skills in the process. We especially want to thank the many students who have been deployed to locations all over Florida to help with contact tracing efforts organized through the Florida Department of Health. All of these efforts are appreciated. Also greatly appreciated is the willingness to adjust work schedules, work from home while caring for children, elders, and others, and generally step up for the Gator Good. ~Carol Mathews, MD, Director of the Center for OCD, Anxiety, and Related Disorders
- I am proud of the ways in which our scientists have re-ordered the priorities of their work in response to the exceptional needs of our larger communities. Through their direct contributions (such as PPE) and their commitment to lowering the transmission rate by staying out of the workplace, even with cost to the progress of their own science, they play an essential role in mitigating this pandemic. ~ Sara Jo Nixon, PhD, Director of the UF Center for Addiction Research & Education
- During this very stressful time, I really appreciate your efforts to maintain the education experience of your graduate students and to maintain the productivity of your post-docs! ~ Mark Segal, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development
- Thanks to our research faculty, staff, students and post docs whose sacrifice and innovative thinking have contributed to our ability to defeat COVID-19. New initiatives and collaborations that have begun during this time will help us emerge from this crisis stronger than ever! Thanks to all!!! ~ Ellen Zimmermann, MD, Associate Dean for Faculty Development

- Despite the huge speed bumps for research at UF COM, we appreciate your dedication and commitment to keeping the machinery going. It benefits our students, faculty, and patients. ~ Alice Rhoton-Vlasak, MD, Faculty Council Research Task Force
- While COVID-19 cases were increasing, many researchers across UF were rapidly ramping down a vast array of investigative efforts. Other researchers continued “essential research” such as treatment necessary interventions, a significant number transitioned to working remotely, shifting efforts to “teleresearch” formats and focusing attention on data analyses; while still others rapidly ramped up COVID-19 related studies. The range of efforts, compromises, adjustments, and accommodations are many. The tenacity, resourcefulness, flexibility, generosity, and creativity are awe-inspiring. Without the teamwork, support, and guidance from the UF Institutional Review Board and COVID Task Force; the UF Office of Clinical Research; the COM Office of Research Affairs; and others, the impressive array of accomplishments would have been difficult if not impossible. Diverse, determined, and dedicated - Stronger Together! With great admiration and appreciation ~ The College of Medicine Faculty Council Research Task Force

Finally, as a reminder, if you'd like to continue in the spirit of spreading gratitude, you can **nominate an essential worker to receive a “thank you” message, or sign up to be matched with a nominee to film your own gratitude video** to share with them, by visiting the 6FTCloser website (developed by medical students from UF COM and elsewhere) at:

<https://www.6ftcloser.com/>

Thank you, Researchers!!!

Stay well,

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