

Department of Environmental Health & Safety

Strategic Plan 2020-2025



FIU | Operations
and Safety
Environmental Health & Safety

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Message from the Director



I am pleased to present the 2020-2025 strategic plan for the Division of Operations and Safety's Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S). As the university continues to grow exponentially, we strive to take a global approach in creating and maintaining a "Safety Aware" environment, while actively engaging and involving our students, faculty, and staff in the process.

During the 2016-2021 EH&S Strategic Plan, EH&S focused on program enhancements, streamlining processes, and identifying areas for safety integration and improvements. We implemented initiatives to promote a "Culture of Safety" with emphasis on establishing reporting mechanisms and increasing awareness that facilitated cross-university collaborations and University support.

The 2020-2025 EH&S Strategic Plan will continue to build on the previous successes of the 2016-2021 Plan, with more focus on behavioral influences, education & outreach, measurable outcomes, and compliance support. Most importantly, this plan emphasizes that we all play a role in building a strong foundation to support our culture of safety. As we continue to work towards accomplishing these goals, EH&S looks forward to creating new learning experiences, promoting safety accountability, and supporting FIU's goal to be recognized as a top 50 public university.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tamece Knowles". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Tamece Knowles, MS
Director, Environmental Health & Safety

Florida International University: Who are We?

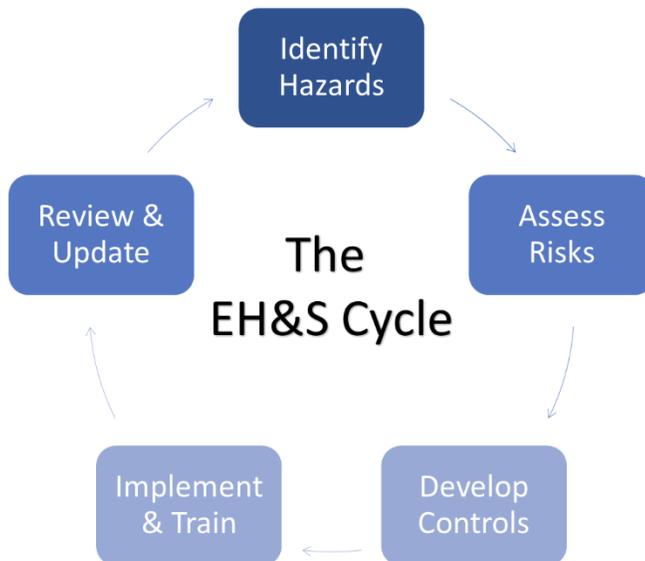
Florida International University (FIU) is among the top 10 largest universities, with a student body of nearly 54,000. As Miami's first and only public research university, offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, FIU is worlds ahead in its service to the academic and local community.

Designated as a top-tier research institution, FIU emphasizes research as a major component in the university's mission. The Florida Board of Governors designated FIU as an “Emerging Preeminent State Research University,” and FIU continues to retain the top tier Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education category for doctoral research universities – R1: Doctoral University – Highest Research Activity.



Environmental Health & Safety

FIU EH&S is responsible for providing customer-oriented support and guidance to ensure a safe work and learning environment for the University community. EH&S proactively identifies and mitigates hazards that could potentially impact FIU using a “continuous improvement cycle”.



EH&S provides various safety compliance services, training, and resources to all FIU locations (leased and owned) – 12+ FIU sites, 200+ buildings, and 1000+ research areas – specializing in the areas of General Safety, Environmental Compliance, Lab Safety, Fire Safety, and Safety Education.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to identify the goals that EH&S seeks to accomplish over the next five years to further enhance safety and regulatory compliance, promote awareness, and support the culture of safety at FIU.

Mission

The EH&S mission is to support and guide the University community in protecting our people, environment, and property while assuring regulatory compliance. EH&S compliance programs are designed with a service-oriented, educational, and collaborative approach for the University community.

Vision

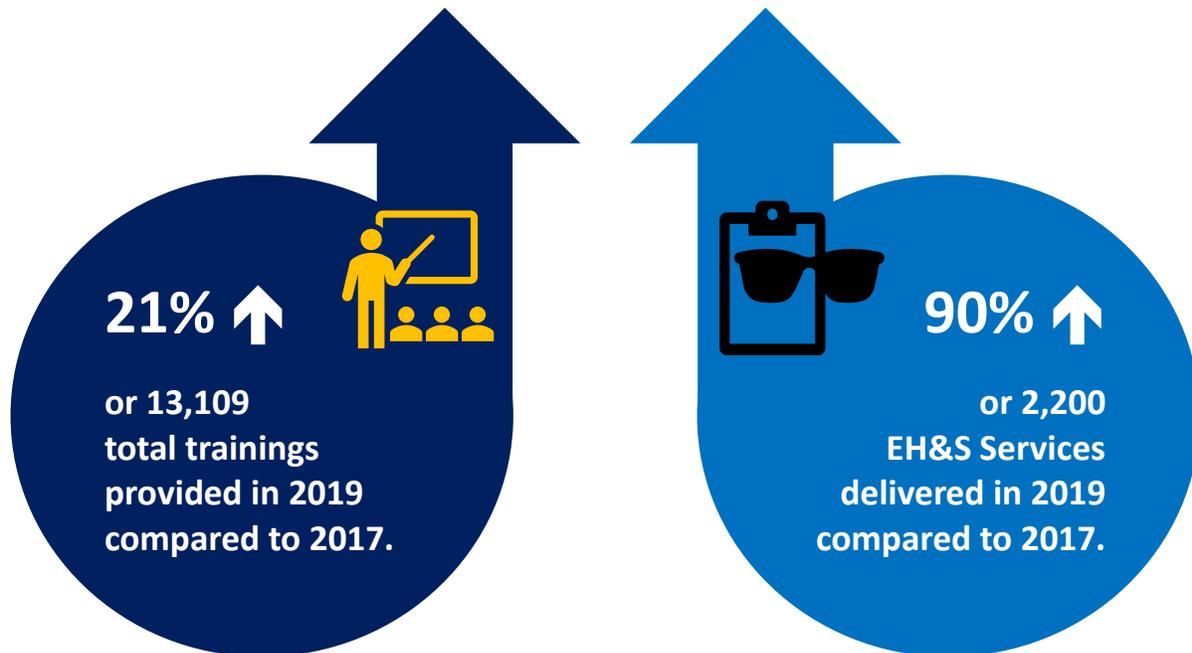
EH&S aspires to be the “go to” reference for program development and education outreach/training. We will continue to foster partnerships with entities that promote and support FIU’s Next Horizon 2025 vision. We will continue to provide real world learning experiences for students to support their transition into the workforce and facilitate cross-university interactions and collaborations to support information sharing, streamline processes, and improve efficiency.

Departmental Direction

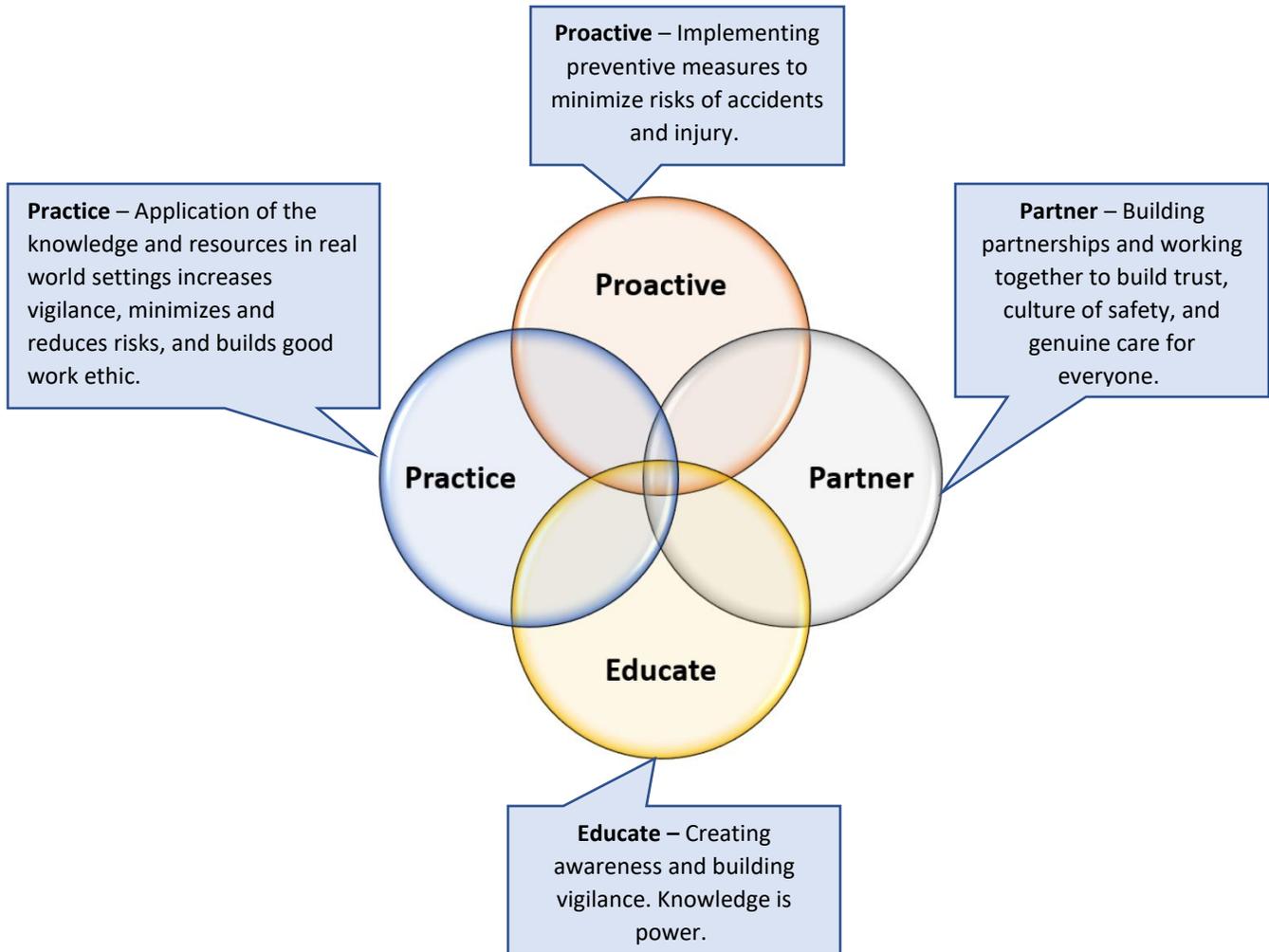
Over the past decade, EH&S focused on strengthening our ability to serve the university community. Although we encountered various challenges, we were able to make significant strides in improving the culture of safety and compliance at FIU.

- Analyzed EH&S programs to actively identify gaps, issues and develop resolutions

- Increased EH&S resources to support university research and academic growth by hiring additional safety and compliance experts
- Revamped our image (updating website, organizing EH&S spaces, establishing social media outlets) and increased visibility through leadership walkthroughs and inspections
- Established channels of communication to encourage safety reporting (safe@fiu.edu, FIU-SAFE, University Safety Officer, Health & Safety Reporting Form, Roundtables, Near Miss Reporting, etc.)
- Increased our outreach to engage and involve the university community (collaboration with Facilities Management, University Sustainability, State Fire Marshal, FIU Embrace, etc.)
- Increased communication and compliance services at FIU satellite locations (Aquarius Reef Base, National Forensic Science Technology Center, Naples, Miami Beach Urban Studio, Jewish Museum of Florida - FIU, etc.)
- Implemented a laboratory self-audit compliance program to promote safety accountability and reduce lab-related incidents/injuries/violations
- Provided safety support for large scale events (SOBE Food and Wine Festival, FIU Engineering Expo, Presidential Rallies, Athletic events, concerts, private association events, etc.)
- Facilitated online and instructor-led safety training sessions to over 12,000 users in 2019
- Provided over 2,200 EH&S services to the FIU community via safety assessments, incident investigations, and compliance inspections in 2019



In the next 5 years, the direction of EH&S will continue to shift to the “Collaborative Safety Approach” – Proactive, Partnership, Education, and Practice. This approach will be instrumental in providing a strong foundation for a sustainable and resilient culture of safety at FIU.



Our global “Safety Approach” aligns with FIU’s goals to support student success, innovative research, and responsible stewardship. EH&S will focus our efforts on addressing behavioral influences - shifting from reactive to proactive; standardizing procedures; communication and transparency; opportunities to educate – lessons learned; responsibility and accountability; and celebrating those who go above and beyond to promote safety in the work and learning environment.

2020-2025 EH&S Performance Goals

EH&S created six performance goals that align with all three of the FIU Next Horizon 2020-2025 strategic plan’s priorities: Amplify Learner Success and Institutional Affinity, Accelerate Preeminence & Research and Innovation Impact, and Assure Responsible Stewardship.

A breakdown of the applicable FIU priorities and descriptions of the EH&S performance goals are provided below.

Next Horizon 2020-2025 Priority #1 – Amplify Learner Success and Institutional Affinity

- Goal 2: Align curriculum with career needs to ensure employment readiness, postgraduation success, and workforce and industry advancement
- Goal 3: Connect with alumni and our communities (local, regional, national, global) through targeted marketing and communication campaigns, foster engagement opportunities for current students, and build corporate/business and philanthropic partnerships

Next Horizon 2020-2025 Priority #2 – Accelerate Preeminence & Research and Innovation Impact

- Goal 1: Cultivate novel and interdisciplinary research, scholarship and creative activities across all levels of the university
- Goal 2: Support and continue to grow our pre-eminent programs

Next Horizon 2020-2025 Priority #3 – Assure Responsible Stewardship

- Goal 2: Ensure all investments are in support of the university and its mission
- Goal 3: Optimize operations and sustainability performance

EH&S Performance Goal 1. Enhance Education and Outreach Experiences

EH&S will continue to promote safe and healthy learning environments to support exceptional learning experiences. We will create a safety conscious workforce by integrating safety into academic curriculums, facilitating real world learning opportunities and experiences outside of the classroom setting (practicums, internships, volunteers, etc.). EH&S will also continue to promote safety awareness and engage the university community via interactive events, seminar, and workshops.

Objective #	Description	FIU Priority #	FIU Goal #	Completion Date
1.1	Create EH&S project database and streamline process to facilitate real world learning opportunities and experiences outside of the classroom setting – EH&S Sponsorship Program; FIU Summer Internships; Student Employees	1	Goal 2	2021
1.2	Expand online training capabilities – improve technology and appearance – interactive – (partner with FIU Division of Information Technology	1	Goal 2	2020
1.3	Upgrade EH&S training facility in Campus Support Complex	3	Goal 2, Goal 3	2021

1.4	Create robust awareness campaign for FIU Employee Safety Committee and Near Miss Reporting	3	Goal 2	2020
1.5	Develop and implement Supervisor accountability and responsibility training (partner with HR and University Compliance)	3	Goal 2	2020
1.6	Develop process to proactively identify employees that require safety training (partner with HR and University Compliance)	3	Goal 2	2020
1.7	Expand social media presence and resources for large scale safety events and campaigns	1	Goal 3	2021
1.8	Create University-wide safety flyer/newsletter; distribute via HR News	1	Goal 3	2020
1.9	Partner with student groups and organizations to increase engagement and safety awareness – Campus Safety Walkthrough, etc.	3	Goal 2	2021
1.10	Implement safety education webinars using safety trends/concerns identified through various EH&S reporting sources (Zoom); make accessible via EH&S webpage	3	Goal 2	2021

EH&S Performance Goal 2. Optimize EH&S Operational Performance

EH&S strives to provide service excellence while ensuring compliance with applicable regulatory requirements. EH&S plans to expand the team of safety professionals to support university growth and operations, while cross-training existing EH&S employees to promote service excellence and continuity of operations with focus on emergency response support. EH&S will also partner with other State University Systems (SUS) and research institutions to determine best practices and mirror successful operations.

Objective #	Description	FIU Priority #	FIU Goal #	Completion Date
2.1	Identify and implement FIU resources to document and track regulatory assets by location	3	Goal 2, Goal 3	2021
2.2	Develop and implement response SOPs in collaboration with University Police and responding outside agencies; obtain training in appropriate response measures	3	Goal 2, Goal 3	2021

2.3	Review and revise EH&S documents and procedures (SOPs)	3	Goal 2, Goal 3	2021
2.4	Expand EH&S Team to support university growth and operations	3	Goal 2, Goal 3	2021
2.5	Implement multifunctional EH&S compliance database system with capabilities to integrate with FIU systems (multiple phases)	3	Goal 2, Goal 3	2022
2.5	Coordinate joint compliance audits with other SUS and research institutions to facilitate collaboration and information sharing	1	Goal 3	2021

EH&S Performance Goal 3. Expand Research and Academic Support

EH&S will implement innovative safety procedures and policies to address research needs while promoting best practices in the areas of lab safety, hazardous waste management, and environmental compliance. EH&S will also foster collaborations with researchers, departments, and graduate programs to assist in developing innovative EH&S platforms and equipment. EH&S will continue to participate in the researcher onboarding process to provide the resources for research safety and compliance success.

Objective #	Description	FIU Priority #	FIU Goal #	Completion Date
3.1	Continue to integrate safety courses and requirements into academic curriculums based on hazard assessments	1	Goal 2	2020
3.2	Create contact/inspection database for FIU offsite locations; provide additional support as required	2	Goal 2	2021
3.3	Develop standardized safety procedure templates to address research and academic needs	2	Goal 2	2021
3.4	Identify collaboration opportunities for students, department units, and researchers to develop innovative EH&S program platforms and/or equipment	2	Goal 1	2021
3.5	Support FIU Association for Assessment and Accreditation for Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) compliance and re-accreditation	2	Goal 2	2022
3.6	Implement database system for tracking consistent compliance and acknowledging safety accomplishments	3	Goal 2, Goal 3	2021

EH&S Performance Goal 4. Facilitate External Partnerships and Funding Opportunities

EH&S will create opportunities to collaborate with FIU Alumni, SUS locations, and outside entities through outreach and training events, supporting FIU’s goal to increase visibility and enhance institutional reputation. EH&S will also explore additional funding sources to support departmental growth and asset acquisition.

Objective #	Description	FIU Priority #	FIU Goal #	Completion Date
4.1	Complete Safety Program Agreement with Miami Dolphins Foundation; identify opportunities to expand agreement services	1	Goal 3	2020
4.2	Identify potential funding opportunities to support departmental growth and development	3	Goal 2	2021
4.3	Coordinate joint compliance audits with other SUS and research institutions to facilitate collaboration and information sharing	1	Goal 3	2021

EH&S Performance Goal 5: Enhance Infrastructure Support

EH&S understands the impact of a safe learning environment on student, faculty and staff success. EH&S will continue to collaborate with the Department of Facilities Management to proactively identify issues that may impact FIU infrastructure. EH&S also stresses the importance of protecting those who are responsible for maintaining FIU infrastructure (maintenance, custodial, grounds, etc.). EH&S will continue to partner with Facilities Management Department to identify high risk operations and implement safety programs.

Objective #	Description	FIU Priority #	FIU Goal #	Completion Date
5.1	Complete University Security and Access audit (via FIU Infrastructure Safety Committee)	1	Goal 2	2020
5.2	Streamline EH&S damage assessment procedures and update FIU Damage Assessment Matrix	1	Goal 2	2021
5.3	Continue to identify high risk activities that impact Facilities personnel; implement safety programs and procedures (partner with Facilities Management Department)	1	Goal 2	2020

EH&S Performance Goal 6: Establish Methods for Measuring Change in Compliance and Culture
 EH&S will develop methods to identifying successes and failures in our programs and procedures. Feedback from the FIU community is instrumental in determining what is working, and what could use improvement. EH&S will also generate high-level visual reports to highlight new initiatives, safety trends, and compliance concerns.

Objective #	Description	FIU Priority #	FIU Goal #	Completion Date
6.1	Develop and implement safety culture and service survey (partner with University Compliance, HR, and Academic Affairs)	3	Goal 3	2021
6.2	Identify leading and lagging indicators, and key indicators to track EH&S performance	3	Goal 3	2021
6.3	Develop template for high-level EH&S data analysis reports – EH&S Year in Review Infographic	3	Goal 3	2020

Final Thoughts

As FIU continues to grow nationally and internationally, it is important that EH&S strives to achieve higher safety and compliance standards. By strengthening our collaborations, working together to increase safety awareness, and actively engaging the University community in safety accountability and responsibility, EH&S will continue to go above and beyond to ensure a safe work and learning environment at FIU.

EH&S encourages feedback and input from the University community. We welcome opportunities for new initiatives, projects, and collaborations that support our goal to provide a strong foundation for a sustainable and resilient culture of safety at FIU.

Plan Development, Maintenance, and Revision

The FIU Department of Environmental Health & Safety 2020-2025 Strategic Plan will be developed, evaluated, maintained, and revised in accordance with the schedule and procedures set forth in the **Standard Operating Procedure for Plan Development, Maintenance, and Revision.**