

# Innovation Hub at Florida State University producing face shields to help fill void in supplies

Byron Dobson, Tallahassee Democrat Published 8:00 a.m. ET April 23, 2020



Richard Ensor, sculpture lab manager with the FSU Department of Art, performs finishing refinements on the face shield brackets after they are printed at the Innovation Hub on Florida State University's campus. (Photo: Bruce Palmer/ FSU Photography Services)

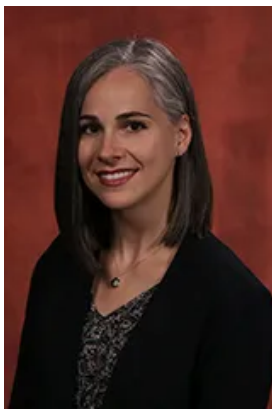
The creative minds working through the Innovation Hub at Florida State University are using their talents to produce face shields to help protect those on the front lines during the coronavirus pandemic.

Although the center — located on the first floor of the Louis Shores building in the center of campus — is closed, teams have been working to produce the protective shields over the past few weeks..

"The Hub slogan — 'empathize, ideate, build' — is a handy one here," Emily Pritchard, a research faculty member with the College of Medicine and one of the organizers, said in a release.

"We first empathize with the doctors and the patients and find out what they need and how we can better do that. Then, we ideate. How do we use the supplies we have, the tools we have and the people we have to build a solution that will make an impact in our community?"

This kind of thinking, encouraged at the multidisciplinary center, led to the face shield designs.



Emily Pritchard, a research faculty member at Florida State, has been appointed director of FSU-Mayo Collaboration. (Photo: Florida State University)

The shields evolve from a 3D-printed visor made according to a design that has been reviewed by the National Institutes of Health, the university said. A transparent plastic sheet attaches to the front of the visor, and a rubber band holds the headgear in place on the wearer.

The shields can protect a health care worker's face from coughs or splashes from potentially infected patients.

Getting the project off the ground has been a collaborative effort. For instance: 3-D printers were made available by The Learning Systems Institute and FAMU-FSU College of Engineering.



Procter & Gamble has launched into producing face shields for front-line medical workers as part of its efforts to curtail the spread of the new coronavirus. This is the Boston model, which is for single-use and uses a closed cell foam. (Photo: Provided)

Master Craftsman Studio employees cut transparent sheets to attach to the visors, and faculty and staff from the School of Information, the Department of Art and The Graduate School assisted with making the shields.

The shields have been issued to Southern Medical Group, Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and other locations in Tallahassee.

"We have delivered approximately 200 with another 500 going out in the next couple of days and about 700 in the works this week," Pritchard told the Tallahassee Democrat.

Pritchard said the teams recently upgraded to thicker front pieces which can withstand repeated cleanings. All disinfection is conducted at the healthcare facilities.



Ken Baldauf, director of the Innovation Hub at Florida State University. (Photo: Bruce W. Palmer/FSU Photography Services)

Ken Baldauf, director of the Innovation Hub, said the initial goal is to produce about 2,000, but that can be increased if needed.

"Our hope is that the traditional supply chain will step up eventually to be able to react to the needs of the professionals," Baldauf said. "We are a stop-gap measure. We're here just to step in and bridge the gap until supplies can get back to filling the need."

Southern Medical Group in Tallahassee has accepted about 100 of the face shields.

"I visited the Innovation Hub, and it was impressive to me how quickly they could make a safe and effective headpiece and shield," said Dr. John Katopodis, an interventional cardiologist with Southern Medical Group.

“There’s this determination to help health care professionals. Their call came out of the blue and it was more than welcomed.”

For more information, visit [news.fsu.edu/coronavirus/ppe/](https://news.fsu.edu/coronavirus/ppe/)

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