



Georgia's Higher Education Union CWA Organizing Local 3265



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United Campus Workers Georgia
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UCWGA CALLS FOR INCREASED EQUITY AND SOLIDARITY IN UGA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

Yesterday, March 12, 2020, the University of Georgia suspended all face-to-face instruction for the next two weeks (March 16-27) in order to mitigate the increasing spread of the COVID-19 'coronavirus.' Faculty and staff are to implement "business continuity plans and online instruction modules." Following Governor Brian Kemp's order that all state employees work from home, UGA faculty (including graduate teaching assistants) will temporarily suspend instruction while staff members with telecommuting abilities will have the option to work from home.

The United Campus Workers of Georgia fully supports UGA's decision. Suspending face-to-face instruction is essential for effective social distancing protocol and best practices since it significantly reduces exposure rates and aids in the containment of the virus. We urge the entire UGA Community to continue social distancing protocols and best practices in their personal capacities as well.

Nevertheless, these steps are neither wholly sufficient nor equitable. Many UGA staff are still vulnerable and at high-risk. While faculty, graduate students, and certain staff members will be able to work from home, other staff members will not have the option. Clarke County School District announced closures for up to two weeks, but many staff members do not have access to child care. For child-care, they will be forced to use personal leave as a result, *if it is available*. Staff who are immunocompromised, but lack leave time will be forced to come to campus. Many staff members cannot support themselves on UGA's wages, and have second and third jobs.

Each of these situations increases the exposure rate and puts our community at risk. Workers should not have to choose between their livelihood and their safety. As such, UCWGA calls on UGA administration to implement the following:

1. Emergency paid leave at current wages for ***all staff regardless of classification and/or EFT status*** for the duration of suspended instruction.
2. Guaranteed pay for all UGA employees, hourly and salaried, at current wages in the event of complete campus closure
3. Double wages for all essential personnel with the option to use emergency paid leave
4. Free campus parking for staff for the duration of suspended instruction
5. Cleaning supplies for all campus units for the duration of suspended instruction
6. Reduction in building hours (library, MLC, etc.) for the duration of suspended instruction

With these actions, the University community and Athens-Clarke County as a whole will be a beacon of effective action and fairness. As the flagship institution of the state, the University of Georgia has the opportunity to lead through this public health crisis. During this time of uncertainty and real threats to our health and stability, now is the time we stand in solidarity with one another.

In Solidarity,

United Campus Workers of Georgia - UGA Chapter
Communication Workers of America 3265