



Georgia's Higher Education Union CWA Organizing Local 3265



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United Campus Workers of Georgia-UGA
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UCWGA CALLS FOR COMPASSION IN RESPONSE TO 14% BUDGET DECREASE

The University System of Georgia (USG) announced that all Georgia public universities have been advised to implement a 14% budget decrease for fiscal year (FY) 2021. The UGA chapter of the United Campus Workers of Georgia (UCWGA) strongly encourages UGA to implement this in the fairest way possible with no layoffs and progressive pay cuts that minimize the harm to the most vulnerable workers at UGA.

On Friday, May 1, at 6:49 PM, faculty, staff, and graduate students were notified by email about the University System of Georgia's planned budget reductions for FY 21. Due to a drop of revenue caused by COVID-19, state agencies have been directed to develop spending proposals that include a 14% reduction of their base budget. While across the board cuts are not permitted, furloughs, layoffs, and hiring freezes for nonessential vacant positions are possible. USG Chancellor, Steve Wrigley, instructed all institutions to strategically plan for meeting this reduction and to submit this plan by May 20th.

The UGA chapter of UCWGA emphatically urges UGA's president Jere Morehead to use the discretion allocated to each university to carry out this reduction in the most equitable way possible. We hope that UGA continues to prioritize precarious workers as it did with its decision to implement paid leave during this spring semester.

In order to do so UGA must commit to the following plan of action:

- 1) No layoffs, and no program or department closures whatsoever.
- 2) A progressive pay cut with higher paid personnel giving up a larger percentage of their salary. Drawing more from those who have the largest discretionary income would minimize the harm of the budget decrease for the most number of workers.
- 3) No furloughs, salary freezes, or pay cuts for workers making less than \$40,000/year.
- 4) No cuts in graduate worker stipends and no increases to student fees.

In the email, Chancellor Wrigley noted, "the health and safety of our students and employees are our greatest priorities," and that "Our priority continues to be helping our students complete a college education. Our mission is more critical than ever as we take a leading role in helping all Georgians recover." Georgia's higher education is successful because of all its employees. While faculty are on the frontlines of

education, teaching would not be possible without contingent faculty and graduate students, or maintenance workers, janitors, administrative professionals, technicians, librarians, and food service staff. For the many workers who were struggling to pay essential expenses prior to COVID-19, furloughs or pay cuts would be devastating.

The dire conditions we face present an opportunity for UGA to demonstrate its commitment to the workers who make the campus run. Our community cannot afford to compound the economic challenges we face by harming our social fabric. Since the financial effects of COVID-19 on families will last well through FY 21, we encourage UGA to implement this progressive plan of action, even if it requires using some of the invested income generated by its \$1.125 billion endowment. As Chancellor Wrigley noted, UGA needs to be among the state leaders helping Georgians recover.

In Solidarity,
United Campus Workers of Georgia-UGA
Communication Workers of America 3265

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