

Memorandum
March 16, 2020

To: University System of Georgia Board of Regents
From: United Campus Workers of Georgia

Re: UCWGA calls for increased equity and solidarity in USG's COVID-19 response

United Campus Workers of Georgia (UCWGA) is concerned about the health and safety of our members, their colleagues, and the students and public they serve. Our goal is to make sure we are providing our membership---your employees---the most comprehensive safety and prevention measures in an environment that encourages them to engage in open and free communication without fear of reprisal or negative impacts on pay, paid leave, or continued employment.

Though UCWGA supports the actions taken so far by USG to reduce exposure rates and aid in the containment of the virus, these steps do not fully protect the most economically and biologically vulnerable members of our community. Many USG employees are still at high risk. While certain faculty, graduate students, and staff members will be able to work from home, others will not have that option. Additionally, 16 counties in GA have reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, many of which are home to USG employees and their families and have closed K-12 public schools, leaving employees who do not have access to child-care with few options but to take personal leave, if it is available. Similarly, staff who are immunocompromised but lack leave time will be forced to come to campus.

Each of these situations increases the exposure rate and puts our communities across the state at risk. Workers should not have to choose between their livelihoods and their safety. As such, UCWGA urges the USG BOR to give its institutions the permission and resources necessary to act in the best interest of its employees' medical and economic well-being by implementing the following:

- Guarantee pay for all employees, regardless of classification and/or EFT status, at current wages (including number of hours per week for hourly employees) in the event of a shutdown, self-quarantine, or exposure to COVID-19
- Ensure that no employee loses earned sick or paid leave as a result of shutdown, self-quarantine, or exposure to COVID-19
- Guarantee that all employees' health insurance policies cover in full the cost of testing for COVID-19 and treatment
- Allow all employees able to work from home or remotely to do so, and develop protocols to limit mandatory in-person work for employees whose job duties cannot be performed remotely, such as reducing building hours
- Provide personal protective equipment and adequate cleaning supplies for all employees who cannot work remotely

This is a global pandemic, and Governor Brian Kemp has declared a public health state of emergency. UCWGA knows that USG leadership is capable of decision-making that increases safety for its employees, students, and the communities in which they serve, and reduces transmission rates so that Georgia's healthcare system can effectively mitigate this crisis. During this time of uncertainty and threat to our health and stability, we need to stand in solidarity with one another. UCWGA is committed to a just and equitable workplace and looks forward to working together for the common good.

Sincerely,
United Campus Workers of Georgia
Communication Workers of America-Local 3265