



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2020

United Campus Workers of Georgia Kennesaw State Chapter

Email: ucwga.ksu@gmail.com

Twitter: @KsuUcw

BOR Chair is Focus of Action to Reverse Layoffs

Kennesaw State union members argue layoffs are unnecessary and cruel.

Members of the United Campus Workers of Georgia Kennesaw State chapter will be encouraging KSU workers to contact Sachin Shailendra, Board of Regents Chair, to voice their opposition to layoffs at Kennesaw State. Shailendra, President of SG Contracting, is in his sixth year as BOR Chair.

The KSU chapter's action is part of a statewide union effort to reverse layoffs that have already occurred and stop any future layoffs. About 24 staff members at Kennesaw State were recently informed that their positions are being eliminated. The reason given for the layoffs cuts to state funding necessitated by the impacts of COVID-19. UCWGA members assert that this claim is misleading for several reasons.

The salaries of many of the laid off workers are not being paid from state funds, which is the source that was cut at the state level. Rather than using money set aside from vacant positions to retain staff, they have been told that there are no vacancies. However, information from an open records request indicated there were 250 vacant positions that could have served as a source to retain current staff.

The actual cuts for which the university had budgeted turned out to be less than anticipated originally. In addition, enrollments have actually increased compared to last year, meaning that revenue will be higher than projected. President Whitten has recently shared in a blog that "Kennesaw State is enjoying record growth in enrollment in its freshman class" and that the increase would "represent another boost of almost 25% over last year's record-breaking class."

Some of the laid-off workers are appealing the decision to the Legal Affairs office of the Board of Regents. Among the important facts offered in the appeal were allegations of retaliation and claims of inconsistencies in the facts provided by KSU to explain the layoffs.

In addition to being unnecessary, union members describe the layoffs as heartless and discriminatory. Those affected are predominantly women over age 50. Some were close to being vested in retirement benefits, and all are at risk of losing health insurance

coverage. Finding a new job in the midst of a pandemic while there is record unemployment will be extremely difficult, and unemployment benefits are often inadequate, with a maximum benefit of about \$365 a week. One laid off employee stated, "I don't know how I will make ends meet, I was denied insurance from the private health sector due to a pre-existing condition and am forced to pay \$900 monthly cobra payments in order to retain health insurance for me and my child"

Previously, the union had called on KSU President Pamela Whitten to stop the layoffs. Despite having collected over 400 petition signatures from workers, students, alumni, and community members, Whitten has yet to respond - although in a recent message to the KSU community, Whitten asked that everyone "please do your very best to be kind and respectful to everyone." Members are taking their cause to the next level, addressing their demands to the Board of Regents which has governing authority over the University System of Georgia.

UCWGA/KSU is a chapter of United Campus Workers of Georgia Local 3265(www.ucwga.com), and affiliate of the Communications Workers of America (www.cwa-union.org).

###