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One Out of Three UF Graduate Assistants Earns Below the Poverty Line

Gainesville, FL- Nearly 4,000 graduate assistants at University of Florida's are responsible for conducting a significant portion of the university's teaching and research. However, one out of three UF GAs earns below the poverty line after paying approximately \$720 in fees each semester. For many UF GAs, this amount is more than their biweekly paycheck.

Full-time GAs who are appointed at 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent, the way GAs' workloads and stipends are calculated) and earn the minimum stipend of \$13,000 per academic year are required to pay at minimum \$1400 in student fees (\$1920 for 12-month appointments), which is about 10.77% (14.77% for 12-month GAs) of the minimum stipend. All full-time GAs pay the same amount in fees per semester, regardless of their salaries.

Graduate Assistants United (GAU), the union which represents around 4000 UF graduate assistants, has been bargaining with the UF administration since late August about finding a way to help those GAs who are most heavily impacted by the burden of fees. GAU has made countless proposals and has attempted to accommodate the concerns of the administration while simultaneously seeking to improve the situation of impoverished GAs. However, the administration has rejected such proposals repeatedly.

GAU hopes that the administration will change course and join us in our efforts to address the problems affecting GAs. After over two and a half months of bargaining, UF knows as well as GAU does that the status quo is simply unacceptable.

About Graduate Assistants United (GAU)

UF Graduate Assistants United (GAU) is the official labor union that represents all Graduate Assistants at the University of Florida. Founded in 1972, GAU has been fighting to improve working conditions for GAs for over a generation. The organization negotiates a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the University of Florida that guarantees GA stipends, access to health care, personal leave days, due process, intellectual property rights, and more. UF-GAU is affiliated with the United Faculty of Florida, the Florida Education Association, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the AFL-CIO.