



**Graduate Assistants United**  
YOUR UNION, YOUR VOICE.

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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 1, 2020

### **GAU Stands with All Workers; Launches Anti-Austerity Campaign**

**GAINESVILLE, FL** – UF administration’s conduct during the pandemic typifies a larger pattern of behavior designed to reduce labor costs, increase labor servility, and increase the university’s bottom line. Austerity measures, such as potential furloughs and whispers of reductions of future TA positions, are a means to that end. They increase the burden on faculty and graduate workers, dramatically reducing the quality of education and research. Simultaneously, the administration pushes ahead with plans to reopen campus at the cost of the health of the UF and Gainesville communities, while failing to address longstanding issues of social justice and racism on campus.

Callous budget cuts, increased workloads, careless reopening, and ignoring persistent racism on campus are related. They are all part of the corporatization of UF and universities across the country **and it must end**. GAU is therefore launching an anti-austerity campaign to fight back!

Examples of the administration’s recent callous, negligent, and exploitative conduct include:

- A draconian furlough policy that places the burden on graduate assistants, OPS workers, TEAMS employees, and support staff while leaving administration salaries untouched
- Failure to address the needs and concerns of people of color within the UF community
- Demolition of the affordable Maguire Village and University Village South graduate housing complexes
- Insufficiently transparent communication of information related to COVID-19 that puts the health and safety of on-campus workers at risk

We demand:

- Furloughs that start from the top with the administration and no furloughs or layoffs of OPS workers, TEAMS employees, or other support staff
- Diversion of endowment funds to offset revenue losses and prevent staffing and service cuts, including those arbitrarily declared “restricted” by the Board of Trustees
- Transparent communication related to COVID-19 that will allow those who work on campus to make informed decisions about their own safety

- An additional year of guaranteed funding for any graduate assistant employed during the pandemic to account for delays in research progress due to COVID-19
- Anti-racism action, including yearly anti-racism roundtables and trainings
- A town hall between the president, provost, and black advocacy organizations on campus
- Expansion of cultural studies programs, including the addition of cultural studies course options to satisfy general education requirements for incoming freshmen
- A renewed emphasis on affordable housing on and immediately surrounding campus, including a reversal of plans to demolish Maguire Village and University Village South

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*GAU is the official labor union representing the more than 4,000 graduate employees at the University of Florida. UFF, FEA, NEA, AFT, AFL-CIO. For additional information, contact GAU Communication Chair Stephen C. Phillips at [communications@ufgau.org](mailto:communications@ufgau.org) or 352-575-0366.*