



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

224 Yon Hall, PO Box 112014  
Gainesville, Florida 32611  
352-575-0366  
organizing@ufgau.org  
ufgau.org

## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 4, 2019

### **GAU Requests UF Commit to Transparency in Death Investigation of Graduate Assistant Huixiang Chen**

**GAINESVILLE, FL** – On the evening of July 3, 2019, University of Florida (UF) President Kent Fuchs sent an e-mail addressing the passing of graduate assistant Huixiang Chen to the UF community along with an official statement from the University. GAU believes this is an important first step to addressing the tragedy. We thank the University for informing the community about their response to the incident and commend President Fuchs for reminding us that we are not alone.

We believe that any investigation into the conditions surrounding Chen's passing must not be limited to academic misconduct. UF should fully investigate Chen's allegations of unsafe mental working conditions, as well as the treatment of international graduate employees at the University at large.

The hiring of an "independent investigator with acknowledged expertise in higher education" is a key step at the beginning of the investigation. We ask UF to provide additional information on this investigator, so the community can be ensured that an impartial and thorough investigation is being conducted.

GAU also believes it is paramount that UF commit to transparency regarding any findings by the University of Florida Police Department, the University's Office of Research, and the independent investigator, as is permissible under applicable laws, regulations, and rules.

It is our pledge to keep the graduate community informed of any developments. If you or a friend need immediate support, please contact UF's Crisis Services at 352-392-1575.

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*GAU is the official labor union representing the approximately 4,000 teaching, research, and graduate assistants 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.*