



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
November 5, 2019

GAU Demands UF Revise Research Prize Policy and Honor GatorWings' Students and Faculty \$2 Million DARPA Prize

GAINESVILLE, FL – Last month, GatorWings—a team of University of Florida (UF) students and professors—won the Spectrum Collaboration Challenge, a three-year competition administered by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). GatorWings earned a \$2 million grand prize by winning first place.

In 2018, without consultation with Graduate Assistants United or United Faculty of Florida, UF changed its policy on research prizes to include that “monetary awards identified as prizes or obtained through a prize competition are the property of the University if faculty member(s) or their team utilize University time or resources in obtaining or competing for the prize.” As a result of this policy change, GatorWings students and faculty may not receive any money from winning the DARPA competition.

UF’s rationale for this policy change is that these prizes “are designed to reward R&D efforts that are not directly tied to future performance of work but rather for some achievement or accomplishment already achieved.” Moreover, “they are designed to reward accomplishments... rather than recognize individual scholarly stature.”

We believe not only that UF’s policy on research prizes is wrong, but that it expropriates the work completed by students and faculty. The GatorWings team and other scholars at UF have produced incredible research. The distinction by UF between “accomplishments” and “individual scholarly stature” is disingenuous and sets a dangerous precedent for other universities as well as other types of awards. Students and faculty should be rewarded for their scholarly accomplishments.

UF must revisit its policy concerning research prizes, recognizing that victories such as GatorWings increase the scholarly stature of the university community and contribute to our shared-goal of becoming a top-five public university. If you have encountered similar issues regarding research prizes, please contact our Grievance Committee at organizing@ufgau.org.

###

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 or 352-575-0366.