



**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  
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### **GAU Opposes Face-to-Face Mandate for Spring 2021**

**GAINESVILLE, FL** – In recent weeks, the University of Florida has issued directives requiring the same number of face-to-face courses in the Spring 2021 semester as were offered in the Spring 2020 semester. GAU adamantly opposes this directive and believes it risks the health and safety of graduate employees, students, and the community.

We will utilize every tool we have to fight implementation of this directive, including but not limited to events aimed at increasing public awareness of the dangers students, instructors, and staff confront from face-to-face class meetings; assisting with efforts of our statewide affiliate—United Faculty of Florida—in lobbying the Board of Governors and state legislature; and the filing of workplace safety and/or workload grievances (e.g., if a graduate employee on a .50 FTE appointment is made to work more than 20 hours a week due to having to teach more sections than usual to ensure physical distancing of students and/or fill in for faculty who refuse to report to classrooms).

Please be aware that while all college deans and most department chairs have been directed to finalize plans to offer these face-to-face courses by October 15th, the policy is technically unofficial. Neither the Board of Governors nor the UF Board of Trustees has approved a formal policy on spring reopening. Therefore, any 'finalized' plans could very well change after the October 15th deadline. In fact, GAU and our statewide affiliates suspect this directive, which has been made in one form or another at most state universities and state colleges, was informally demanded by Governor Ron DeSantis as an attempt to project a sense of normalcy heading into the general election. Therefore, a lot can change in November.

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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.*