



UNIVERSITY OF
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Dr. Jennifer L. Rice
President, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate
Associate Professor, Department of Geography
University of Georgia

Dr. Chris Mojock
President, Mary Frances Early College of Education Faculty Senate
Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Kinesiology
University of Georgia

Dear Dr. Rice and Dr. Mojock:

I have received your July 28 letter and the corresponding resolution co-sponsored by the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate and the Mary Frances Early College of Education Faculty Senate. I have shared both documents with key members of the University's senior administration for review and consideration.

I want to respond to several points raised in your correspondence, and I will begin with the matter of University governance. The authority for providing formal input on institutional matters and decisions clearly rests with the University Council, as defined by our University Statutes, and I would note that the University Council has organized a special meeting to take place on August 12. It is unclear to me where either college-level senate derives the authority to demand changes to University-wide policy and operations or to dictate actions that apply to the entire University System of Georgia (USG). Our University Council is an active and productive governing body, and I find your claims regarding "the glaring failures of governance" to be unsubstantiated and inappropriate considering the role and purpose of your college-level faculty senates.

Second, I want to emphasize that the USG Board of Regents has approved plans for all 26 public institutions in Georgia to reopen beginning next week. In fact, many USG institutions are scheduled to begin fall classes ahead of UGA, including Georgia Tech, Augusta University, Georgia Southern University, and Kennesaw State University. Moreover, UGA's reopening plans were developed by nine working groups involving approximately 140 members of our faculty and staff, who worked around the clock to plan for a safe return to campus. The final 225-page planning document produced by these working groups has been shared broadly and repeatedly with the campus community since June 9. For the record, I did not receive any feedback on these plans from your respective faculty senates until July 28, nearly two months after the release of our reopening plans and upon the eve of students returning to campus. In fact, many students, having relied on our reopening plans, already have relocated to the Athens area in preparation for the fall semester.

While the nine working groups are no longer in operation, having completed their charge, campus public health and medical officials continue to play an active leadership role in guiding the University's planning and response. Dr. Garth Russo, Executive Director of the University Health Center, is chairing the Medical Oversight Task Force for COVID-19 and working alongside Dean Marsha Davis, Dean Lisa Nolan, and Dean Shelley Nuss. This group is coordinating processes and information exchange related to various testing practices, surveillance strategies, and clinical services. The group is also helping to facilitate the contact tracing efforts of the Georgia Department of Public Health.

In addition, the University has established the Preventative Measures Advisory Board (PMAB) to provide recommendations to the University's senior leadership team and the colleges and units on issues regarding monitoring and mitigation efforts. The PMAB consists of technical area experts in infectious disease, medicine, public health, health and safety, and communications. Dean Nolan co-chairs the PMAB with Mr. John McCollum, Associate Vice President for Environmental Safety, and the group includes several faculty members.

I want to commend these individuals and the hundreds of faculty and staff across campus who have been working tirelessly and constructively to maintain essential operations and plan for our full return to campus. I have been encouraged by the leadership, dedication, and hard work of so many members of our University community who are taking positive steps to enable the institution to address the many challenges resulting from the pandemic.

Generally, employees of USG institutions, including UGA, are expected to return to campus by the start of the fall semester to conduct their work. Under the circumstances and given our mission to educate students, it is not practical or prudent to allow individual employees to decide whether to work from home or campus. In order to plan for and deliver the high-quality educational experience our students expect and deserve, and to be fair to all employees, the University must apply consistent standards for work schedules. The University has issued guidance for flexible work schedules and telework options and also developed a process to accommodate at-risk individuals. This information, too, has been shared widely with the campus community.

It should be emphasized that we have a variety of instructional platforms to ensure adequate social distancing, from remote hybrid to online hybrid to hyflex, among other options. In conjunction with the Office of the Vice President for Instruction and the Office of Space Management, teams have measured and marked all centrally scheduled classrooms to provide appropriate physical distancing, and plexiglass barriers are being installed, where appropriate, at lecterns for centrally scheduled classrooms.

As I have stated repeatedly throughout this crisis, the health and safety of the University community is—and will remain—the top priority as we gradually reopen our campus and prepare for the upcoming fall semester. Last Friday, July 31, the University distributed an ArchNews email describing in detail the investment of millions of dollars in health and safety measures to protect our campus community against the spread of COVID-19. I am sharing some notable examples for your reference:

- The University plans to conduct 24,000 tests by Thanksgiving at a rate of up to 300 tests per day on samples collected from volunteers among our faculty, staff, and students.
- The University is pilot testing DawgCheck, the notification tool recommended by the Medical Oversight Task Force, with weekday reminders set to begin by August 10.
- UGA has purchased approximately 4,300 gallons of hand sanitizer. Additional hand sanitizer and PPEs are being provided free of charge by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA).
- More than 4,000 sanitation stations (containing over 2.5 million wipes) are being installed to provide occupants with surface disinfectant wipes. You will find these wipe stations near each classroom across campus.
- The University has stocked cleaning supplies, including disinfectant misters, that are EPA-listed and meet Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for effectiveness.
- Our building services team has intensified its focus on high touchpoint and common area cleaning. Classrooms, common spaces, and restrooms will be thoroughly disinfected daily. Teams have been specially trained to disinfect contaminated areas according to CDC and ISSA-Worldwide Cleaning Association Standards.

- More than 150,000 face coverings have been purchased—two for every faculty, staff, and student.
- We also have provided each individual member of our campus community with a digital thermometer—60,000 were ordered—to be used each day prior to reporting to work, class, or other campus activities.
- Additional disposable masks and face shields for faculty, staff, students, and campus visitors have been acquired in the event someone comes to campus without a face covering.
- Dining Services has purchased over 35,000 reusable containers to be used in the residential dining areas for meal plan service.
- The University has developed mandatory training modules for faculty, staff, and students to learn more about UGA's health and safety precautions and their personal responsibility to help protect the campus community.
- More than 2,000 plexiglass barriers have been manufactured by FMD skilled trades workers and are being installed, as recommended by the requesting department's risk assessment team.
- HVAC operating schedules in buildings (including classrooms) have been adjusted to run longer hours, even when spaces are not occupied, to increase the amount of airflow going through space. The amount of fresh/outdoor air flow in classrooms and lecture halls has been increased, to the extent possible.

This list is not exhaustive by any means, and much more work is being done behind the scenes to prepare for the upcoming academic year. I was pleased to discuss many of these measures and other components of our reopening plans this afternoon during a live webinar that I organized for faculty, staff, and students to raise their questions about UGA's plans for the fall semester.

Sincerely,



Jere W. Morehead
President

cc: Dr. Steve Wrigley, Chancellor, University System of Georgia
Dr. S. Jack Hu, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Dr. Denise A. Spangler, Dean, Mary Frances Early College of Education
Dr. Alan Dorsey, Dean, Franklin College of Arts and Sciences