

1 **RESOLUTION 1920-014**

2 **A RESOLUTION AGAINST THE PLAN TO RETURN TO CAMPUS**

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4 Culture; Aviva Neff.366, Chair, Academic Affairs; Abby Grieff.2, Chair Healthy, Wellness and Safety; Verdaynea Eason
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6 Sponsor: Executive Committee
7

8 WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students (CGS) is the representative body of all graduate students enrolled
9 at The Ohio State University as established by Article II Section 1 of the CGS Constitution; and
10

11 WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students or its appointed representative(s) have the power to act as an
12 advisory agent on behalf of graduate students on all matters brought before personnel, committees, or agencies
13 of The Ohio State University involving the interest of graduate students as established in Article 14 III Section 3
14 of the CGS Constitution; and
15

16 WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing public health crisis with more than one hundred thousand
17 Ohioans infected¹ and hundreds of thousands more affected by state efforts to mitigate the health risks posed by
18 the pandemic; and
19

20 WHEREAS resuming on-campus operations requires tens of thousands of The Ohio State University students,
21 staff, faculty, and other personnel to return to campus to learn, work, and live in congregate settings, increasing
22 the risk of spreading the virus to all those in the University District community as well as the city of Columbus
23 and Franklin County; and
24

25 WHEREAS many carriers of the virus are asymptomatic, increasing the likelihood of it being spread
26 unintentionally between persons on The Ohio State University campuses²; and
27

28 WHEREAS several universities have announced plans to limit in-person interaction by utilizing mostly online
29 learning, including Harvard, Princeton, Georgetown, Rutgers, and Indiana University, among many other
30 institutions of higher education around the country^{3,4}; and
31

32 WHEREAS universities that have reopened in recent weeks have seen increased spread of COVID-19 in their
33 communities, resulting in returns to online learning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the
34 University of Notre Dame, North Carolina State University and Michigan State University⁵; and
35

36 WHEREAS in the city of Columbus, Columbus State Community College, Columbus College of Art and
37 Design, and Columbus City Schools, with the support of Mayor Andrew Ginther and Columbus City Council,
38 have moved all learning online this fall; and
39

40 WHEREAS the nation's top infectious disease experts — Dr. Robert Redfield, Director of the Centers for
41 Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and

¹ <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/dashboards>

² https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/7/20-1595_article

³ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/07/coronavirus-roundup-more-universities-announce-plans-largely-online-fall-terms>

⁴ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/08/12/colleges-walk-back-fall-reopening-plans-and-opt-online-only-instruction>

⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tommybeer/2020/09/07/reckless-and-reprehensible-frat-party-linked-to-coronavirus-outbreak-at-unh-here-are-the-latest-college-coronavirus-updates/#2e07f5adb3a0>

42 Infectious Diseases — fear the confluence of the autumn flu season and the COVID-19 pandemic will be, “one
43 of the most difficult times that we've experienced in American public health”⁶; and
44
45 WHEREAS these experts had hoped the rate of new COVID-19 cases would be 10,000 a day in the United
46 States by this fall, but the nation is still experiencing 40,000 new cases a day and there are more than 5 million
47 American cases overall⁷; and
48
49 WHEREAS Franklin County has the highest number of COVID-19 cases of any county in the state of Ohio¹;
50 and the Ohio Department of Health describes Franklin County as being in a Level 3 Public Emergency with
51 “very high exposure and spread” and advises residents to “limit activities as much as possible”; and
52
53 WHEREAS the burden of health risk has not been adequately mitigated or shared through public health
54 distributive justice, thus leaving our most vulnerable populations at greatest risk, including our students with
55 disabilities⁸; and
56
57 WHEREAS Columbus City Council has resolved that “[...]we now are witnessing a coronavirus pandemic
58 which is shining a stark light upon the long-running racial divide - Black patients are dying in larger-than
59 expected, record numbers, COVID-19 is killing Black people at 2.4 times the rate of white people and Black
60 people are disproportionately suffering in-part due to long standing, unaddressed health disparities as well as
61 systematic racism and other socioeconomic inequities[...]" and the effects of this pandemic will have a greater
62 impact on Black and brown people^{9,10}; and
63
64 WHEREAS the Big Ten athletic conference, of which The Ohio State University is a member, has postponed
65 the entirety of their fall season due to COVID-19 concerns¹¹; and
66
67 WHEREAS confusion around the legal standing of the Buckeye Pledge in a court of law has invoked fear and
68 distrust among many graduate students by pushing the burden of responsibility on to students and graduate
69 associates instead of the desired collaboration and togetherness; and
70
71 WHEREAS The Ohio State University offers more than 12,000 courses online already per the Office of
72 Distance Education and eLearning and, as the only Digital Flagship institution that ranks #1 in online
73 undergraduate programs, Ohio State should be able to move all classes barring those that are absolutely require
74 to be in person of its course offerings online and offer specialized, socially-distanced courses for areas of study
75 that require in-person learning^{12,13}; and
76
77 WHEREAS there are multiple approaches for criteria and implementation of COVID-19 testing, but the current
78 federal, state, and local reagent and other testing resources are not adequate enough to meet the demand
79 necessary to fully monitor the health and safety of every student¹⁴; and

⁶ <https://abcnews.go.com/US/fauci-david-muir-us-difficult-time-covid-19/story?id=72294432>

⁷ <https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/us>

⁸ <https://ohiohospitals.org/News-Publications/Subscriptions/Ohio-Hospitals-Newswire/Articles/New-Report-Details-Disparity-in-COVID>

⁹ <https://www.columbus.gov/racismresolution/>

¹⁰ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html>

¹¹ https://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/29640222/sources-big-ten-pulls-plug-fall-football-season

¹² <https://odee.osu.edu/program-60/searching-for-courses>

¹³ <https://online.osu.edu/about>

¹⁴ <https://spectrumnews1.com/oh/columbus/news/2020/08/14/nationwide-shortage-on-reagent-limiting-covid-19-testing>

80
81 WHEREAS the health risks posed by the reopening of campus for congregate events and activities— despite
82 the updated procedures recently announced during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to all university students,
83 staff, faculty, university personnel, and University District community—are far greater than the possible
84 negative impacts of remote instruction on the student experience and university function as a whole; and
85
86 WHEREAS the stress of living through a global pandemic can have detrimental effects to mental health¹⁵,
87 bringing students back to campus runs the risk of distancing them from established support systems, and Ohio
88 State does not have adequate counseling staff or resources to address the increased need for mental health
89 support; and
90
91 WHEREAS The Ohio State University has offered no adequate and fully explanatory circumstances or timeline
92 under which any in-person instruction would be terminated; and
93
94 WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students recognizes that there are some graduate students who wish to
95 return to campus to perform research activities, hone their face-to-face teaching skills, or other administrative
96 tasks, and supports their freedom to remain in-person should it not compromise the health and safety of others;
97 and
98
99 WHEREAS resuming additional and unnecessary on-campus in-person activities jeopardizes the ability of
100 graduate students to continue in-person research by increasing the risk of the spread of COVID-19; and
101
102 WHEREAS the Council of Graduate Students has and will continue to engage with university leadership
103 through committees, forums, and individual communications to resolve these issues.
104
105 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students stands in opposition to the current
106 university plan to reopen campus, begin unnecessary in-person instruction, and other congregate activity during
107 one of the most severe and lethal pandemics in modern global history.
108
109 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Council of Graduate Students strongly urges the university to further
110 restrict congregate activities such as classroom learning and in-person meetings that would require students,
111 staff, faculty, and other personnel to be physically present on campus, unless those in-person activities are
112 absolutely necessary and have no online alternative; these restrictions should continue until adequate testing,
113 contact tracing, and isolation/quarantine resources are available and Franklin County is downgraded to a Level
114 1 Public Health Emergency¹⁶.
115
116 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students is both dissatisfied and disappointed in
117 the university’s premature dissolution of the Pandemic Transition Task Force without transparent
118 communication of the reorganized Implementation Team and in the overall lack of consideration for the health
119 and wellbeing of its students, staff, faculty, and personnel — and the health and safety of the Columbus
120 community at-large — in its decision to return to campus despite warnings by top health experts.
121

¹⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

¹⁶ Adequate testing is defined as testing anyone engaging in congregate in-person activities at least every 48 hours;
<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/08/03/study-recommends-testing-students-every-two-days-college-football-players-push-back>

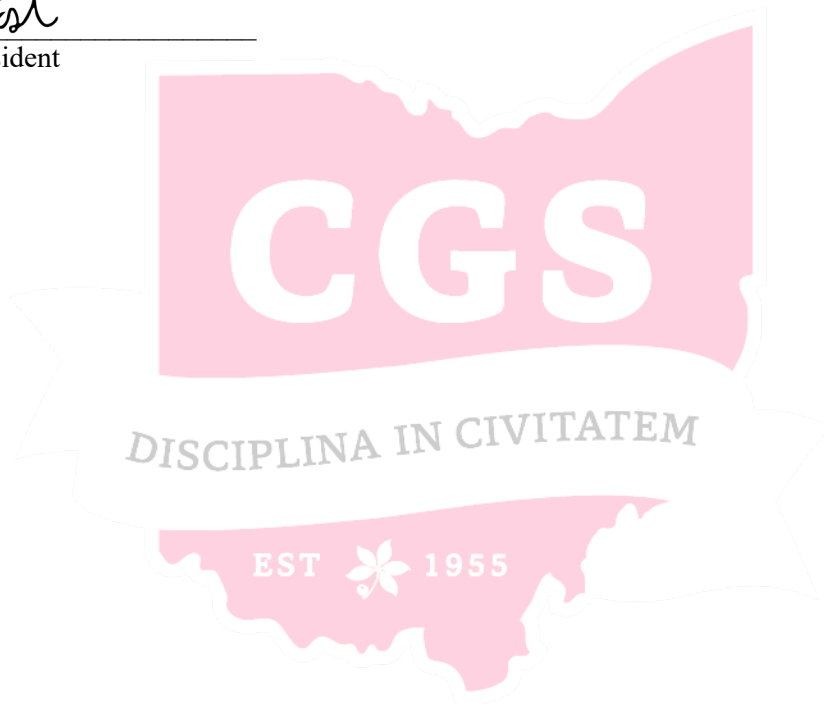
122 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students demands representation on the Post
123 Pandemic Implementation Team and any further discussions on implementation, with additional representation
124 to be granted to undergraduate students and professional students.

125
126 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Council of Graduate Students directs its President, Vice President, and
127 Chief of Staff to distribute this resolution to all proper leadership and authorities of The Ohio State University
128 and its partners.

129
130
131 Approved: Yes/No

132
133 Date: 8/24/20

134
135 
136 _____
137 Stephen J. Post, President



Council of Graduate Students
at The Ohio State University