



United Campus Workers of Louisiana Calls on the LSU Board of Regents to Immediately Halt Face-to-Face Activities to Stop the Spread of Covid-19

For Immediate Release

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(Baton Rouge, Louisiana) United Campus Workers of Louisiana calls on the LSU Board of Regents to immediately halt face-to-face activities to stop the spread of Covid-19.

A week into LSU's regular semester, **the University has reported 366 positive cases of COVID-19 in the Baton Rouge campus community and 20 students are quarantining on LSU's main campus.** As of Wednesday, September 2nd, **the University has charged four student organizations with violating the university's code of conduct as it relates to the coronavirus,** and videos shared with local television station WAFB show **wild parties held by LSU students with no masking or social distancing.**

This problem is not unique to LSU. An August 26th article in the *New York Times* reports that **more than 6,600 cases of COVID-19 have been linked to U.S. colleges even before the academic year has begun at most schools.** Other higher education institutions are reporting even larger outbreaks since opening their campuses for the fall semester: **Georgia College** in Milledgeville has reported **over 500 cases, 8% of its student body; more than 1,000 students** have tested positive at the **University of Alabama;** the **University of Iowa** has reported **607 cases** since opening; and **Illinois State University** has reported over **500 cases.**

We have learned more about how Covid-19 is transmitted since LSU created plans to reopen. While masking impedes the transmission of Covid-19 from person to person, it does not fully protect others from contracting the virus in enclosed spaces. **Mounting evidence indicates that COVID-19 can be spread by aerosols,** not just respiratory droplets (CDC), **which makes the risk of transmission greater in enclosed spaces** such as the buildings on LSU's campus, where windows do not open and the air-exchange rates of the HVAC systems are insufficient to prevent occupants from breathing contaminated air. Additionally, **the CDC estimates that approximately 40% of Covid-19 infections were transmitted by people who are asymptomatic,** so LSU's daily symptom checker that everyone must complete before coming to campus is inadequate for protecting the university community.

In light of these facts, **reopening a university system that operates in all 64 parishes in Louisiana endangers everyone in the state, particularly the state's underserved and high-risk populations.** For the safety of the LSU community and the state at large, United Campus Workers of Louisiana calls on the Louisiana Board of Regents to act in accordance with its "constitutional mandate to serve the educational, health care and economic development goals of Louisiana" and immediately halt face to face activities on campus.

United Campus Workers of Louisiana

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