



GSOC-UAW LOCAL 2110

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The Union for Graduate Employees at New York University

GSOC Opposes NYU Admin's Decision to Reopen in Fall 2020

Yesterday NYU announced that it intends to reconvene in-person classes in fall 2020, despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As the union representing graduate workers at NYU, we are extremely concerned about our safety and that of our students and coworkers if classes are to resume in person. **We strongly oppose this decision, which was made by top-level NYU administrators without consulting the essential workers and teaching staff who it puts at risk.**

NYU claims it will “take measures” to ensure appropriate social distancing is maintained: from the perspective of teaching staff, this is unfeasible. NYU has over 50,000 students and is located in the center of the largest and most densely populated city in the country. Many of its classrooms—especially those used by graduate instructors and non-tenured teaching staff—are small. In person teaching does not allow for social distancing, even if just a third of students are present in person.

Not only has NYU failed to outline the measures it plans on taking in the fall, but current forecasts are less than optimistic. Public health [experts](#) suggest that social distancing measures may be necessary well into 2021 and beyond.

Additionally, NYU's refusal to meet the [demands](#) of workers and students during the spring 2020 semester, including providing PPE and hazard pay, raises serious doubts about their willingness to take proper measures in the fall. Essential workers at NYU died of COVID after the university failed to provide proper PPE, and offering in-person courses in the fall will only raise risks for workers.

The NYU administration has emphasized that classes will be flexible, and that students can choose whether they take classes in person or online. We reject NYU's decision to compel teaching staff to design continuously flexible classes without consulting us, and without having properly responded to our concerns about teaching during the spring 2020 semester.

The spring 2020 semester was disorganized and chaotic for students and teaching staff. The administration did not meet the demands for a universal pass grading system for students or additional pay for teaching staff who spent significant time transitioning their classes to an online format. NYU suggests that international students [“go local”](#) by attending one of the international campuses in the fall. Aside from the fact that this ignores international students without local campuses, the Go Local suggestion seems like a scheme to ensure that NYU can charge full tuition to international students who pay to study in the US.

The top-level NYU administrators who made this decision maintain that the university's finances are in turmoil while continuing to take their full 7-figure salaries. We believe that NYU's announcement is an attempt to secure tuition money, without regard for the safety or well-being of the workers who will have to report in-person. NYU has yet again chosen to sacrifice the well-being of students and workers for the sake of its bottom line.