



THE TEXAS FACULTY ASSOCIATION

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Faculty group urges halt to in-person fall graduation ceremonies

The Texas Faculty Association today urged Gov. Greg Abbott to instruct state university governing boards to cancel or postpone fall graduation ceremonies or hold virtual graduation events. The group called on private colleges and universities to also refrain from holding in-person ceremonies.

“Many faculty members around the state report that their universities are scheduling in-person fall graduation ceremonies, which will require faculty to attend and will allow family members to be present. With the resurgence of COVID-19 cases in Texas, we think this is a dangerous idea,” said Pat Heintzelman, president of the Texas Faculty Association and an instructor at Lamar University in Beaumont.

“Despite what some people would like to think, Texas hasn’t returned to normal yet. We are still in the middle of a deadly pandemic, and we fear in-person graduation events that include families and more than a handful of faculty members will be super-spreader events for the virus,” she added.

COVID-19 hospitalizations and the seven-day average of new COVID cases in Texas have both increased more than 70 percent since the beginning of this month. Some 7,055 new COVID cases and 81 deaths were reported in Texas Tuesday, and 5,512 Texans were hospitalized with the disease.

“The last thing we need are more large public gatherings. Universities should set the example for health and safety,” Heintzelman said.

The Texas Faculty Association is an affiliate of the Texas State Teachers Association.