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**Faculty group urges governor to require universities to publicly report COVID cases on campuses**

The Texas Faculty Association (TFA) today urged Gov. Greg Abbott to use his emergency powers to order Texas colleges and universities to publicly report each week the numbers of positive COVID-19 tests and deaths among faculty, staff and students at each university campus or facility.

"This information is crucial to faculty and their families across the state. They are risking their health every day, working on campuses, and they are entitled to this information," said TFA President Pat Heintzelman, an instructor at Lamar University in Beaumont.

She said many colleges and universities have refused to release this information to faculty members who have requested it.

"If a faculty member submitted a public information request, the information would be too old to matter by the time it was released," she noted.

Heintzelman pointed out that the state now requires school districts to publicly report the number of confirmed COVID infections on their campuses each week.

"University faculty, staff and students need the same kind of data. Like some public school teachers, many have underlying health conditions that increase their risk. They need to know how widespread this disease may be on their campuses," she said.

"The governor can work through either his appointees on the Higher Education Coordinating Board or his appointees on separate university governing boards to accomplish this goal. He obviously wants university campuses to be open while the coronavirus pandemic remains dangerous. So, the least he can do is see to it that university administrators provide public information about COVID-19 infections in a timely manner."

Heintzelman said the Texas Faculty Association also is asking the governor to urge private universities to publicly provide the same information for their campuses.

"The Texas Disaster Act requires the governor to protect the health and safety of Texans during emergencies, and we don't believe Gov. Abbott has done all he can to protect the people who teach, study and work at Texas universities," Heintzelman added.