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**Texas Faculty Association urges delay in reopening all universities, colleges to Sept. 8**

The Texas Faculty Association today urged Gov. Greg Abbott to instruct the governing boards of all state-supported universities to delay opening campuses to in-person instruction, labs and other student activities until at least Sept. 8. The association also called on community colleges and private universities in Texas to delay opening their campuses until the same date.

Until then, the group urged only online learning as Texas remains a hot spot in the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Universities are coming up with different plans to reopen their campuses while the virus is still raging through Texas. Thousands of new cases are being reported daily, and deaths are increasing,” said Pat Heintzelman, president of the association and an instructor at Lamar State University in Beaumont.

“Faculty at some universities are being allowed to choose how they will teach – face-to-face, online only or a hybrid version – but faculty at other universities are being required to return to their classrooms before it is safe for them or their students to do so. Many faculty members are scared and feel like they are being forced to put their lives at risk or lose their jobs.”

Heintzelman said campus openings can be reassessed as Sept. 8 approaches, but the Texas Faculty Association doesn’t believe it will be safe to reopen any earlier.

“We are talking about the lives and health of our students and their families, as well as faculty members and our families,” she said. “It is dangerous and potentially deadly to have face-to-face instruction during this pandemic.”

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