



Statement on Financial

Aid

Speaker Sanchez, Senator Bazail, Senator Flores, Senator Rassieur, Senator Teixeira,
Senator Negrete-Retamales - August 2nd, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Appalled. Disrespected. Betrayed. Deceived.

There are no words to adequately describe the magnitude or ramifications of the latest series of crises caused by the administration. Failure after failure, GUSA had warned against or advocated for policies that the administration completely disregarded. Petition after petition, op-ed after op-ed, meeting after meeting, we were heard but not listened to. GUSA Leadership has been meeting with the administration since March and has consistently asked about financial aid. Our questions and concerns were always dismissed with the repeated statement that full need would always be met. **Students' lack of financial security has never been a priority for them.**

For the past month, members of the Senate, led by Sen. Bazail-Eimil, worked to educate the student body about the dangers posed by tuition reduction with the publication of infographics highlighting both Georgetown's precarious financial position and the general history of tuition reduction and its long-term impacts on low-income students. The data from the federal government and education researchers was overwhelmingly clear: **tuition reduction would hinder Georgetown's ability to support its most vulnerable students.** Unfortunately, the research accurately predicted our present circumstances.

On Friday, July 31st, at 6 PM EST, *some* students received their financial aid packages. Financial aid packages for students returning to campus in the fall and the incoming class have yet to be released. However, of the students whose packages were disclosed, many received exacerbated family contributions, seeing their financial aid reduced more than ever before. It is unacceptable that family contributions have increased extensively when, as a result of COVID-19, students will be unable to benefit from the plethora of on-campus resources that their tuition payments had given them access to in prior years. Further, the tremendous financial impact that the pandemic has imposed on students, especially those who are first-generation, low-income, and/or students of color, combined with **the excessive rise in family contributions, makes it nearly impossible for some Hoyas to continue their education at Georgetown.**

The Office of Student Financial Services stated in the town hall that they would be meeting the full need of students. **It is clear that this is not the case.** When university officials refer to students on federal work-study as "needy," we begin to realize the internalized biases held against low-income students. Students should not have to take out large loans to afford their Georgetown education, nor should they pay a higher family contribution despite a lack of an on-campus college experience and a decreased quality of education. Academic counselors have

recommended that students take a leave of absence or become part-time students. However, this is simply not an option for every Georgetown student, especially those who identify as FGLI.

Georgetown has an obligation not only to those students for which support is convenient but to *all* of its students, including those who are vulnerable and need support the most. Georgetown *must* immediately begin a full re-appraisal of financial aid packages that have already been released and a re-evaluation of those still being processed; it is imperative that the administration waive the student minimum contribution requirement for the upcoming semester. The University must also move to extend the financial aid appeals timeline for students to properly review and explain their current financial circumstances. Going forward, Georgetown must commit to a systematic overhaul in how it calculates financial aid. **The system has *been* broken, and it must change.** In all financial aid processes going forward, the University must display a heightened level of transparency—far greater than is now the case. To solve this crisis of its own making, Georgetown must commit to passion and a profound concern for its most vulnerable students—passion and concern that it has egregiously failed to employ in the past, but that it must employ in order to properly support those who need it.

As the GUSA Senate, we were elected or appointed to our roles to represent the student body's interests. Hence, we commit to creating a welcoming environment for all undergraduate students, especially our low-income students, who struggle financially during this time. **We recognize that the voices of FGLI students are often overpowered by students from backgrounds of privilege.** That is why we also request a much-needed transparent discussion with the administration to discuss the plans for financial aid going forward and to assess how information about financial aid is relayed to the student body in the future. First and foremost, we demand the University remedy this disastrous situation and the lack of financial support for its students.

Senator Daniella Sanchez (2022), *Speaker of the Senate*

Senator Eric Bazail-Eimil (2023), *Finance and Appropriations Chair*

Senator Rowlie Flores (2022), *Sustainability Policy Senate Chair, Transportation Policy Senate Chair*

Senator Leo Rassieur (2023), *Policy & Advocacy Chair, Student Conduct Policy Senate Chair, Gender Equity Senate Chair*

Senator Leo Teixeira (2021), *Student Workers Policy Senate Chair, Dining Policy Senate Chair*

Senator Sofia Negrete-Retamales (2023), *Undocumented Students Inclusivity Policy Senate Chair, Mental Health Policy Senate Chair, Financial Appropriations Adjunct*

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