

**STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION 2018-144**

**TITLE: Resolution Identifying Issues with Respect to the University of Florida's Extension of Financial Aid to Students Affected by Hurricane Maria**

**AUTHORS: Alfredo Ortiz, Senator Derlis Leyva, Senator Matthew Diaz**

**SPONSORS: Union de Estudiantes Puertorriqueños Activos (UEPA), Brazilian Student Association, Senator Mauricio Perez, Chairwoman Katie Hernandez, Senator Stephanie Beltran, Senator Felipe Gatos, Senator Daniel Ospina, Senator William Zelin, Zachary Amrose**

**WHEREAS**, the precedent set forth by Student Senate Resolution 2017-129 expresses the support of the Student Senate towards the people of Puerto Rico affected by Hurricane Maria; and

**WHEREAS**, incoming Puerto Rican students displaced by Hurricane Maria who were awarded Bright Futures awards cannot redeem their awards for the fall 2018 semester; and,

**WHEREAS**, the University of Florida does not recognize such students as Florida residents despite the fact that they have graduated from Florida high schools and otherwise completed all applicable Bright Futures requirements; and,

**WHEREAS**, under section 1009.21, Florida Statutes, full-time students who are citizens of Latin American or Caribbean countries (including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and who receive scholarships from the federal or state government shall be classified as Florida residents for tuition purposes; and,

**WHEREAS**, to qualify for Florida residence, such University of Florida students must be awarded a scholarship of a minimum of \$500 per semester paid from either state funds appropriated to universities in the General Appropriations Act from investment earnings as provided under section 1011.43, Florida Statutes, or from federally authorized scholarship funds; and,

**WHEREAS**, several University of Florida students have been awarded Bright Futures scholarships, but the scholarships have not been disbursed because they do not yet meet the residency requirements, according to the University of Florida; and,

**WHEREAS**, the denial of Bright Futures awards disqualifies the aforementioned University of Florida students from receiving the Latin American-Caribbean Scholarship and its benefit of in-state tuition; and,

**WHEREAS**, due to the University of Florida's requirement that the state or federal scholarship must be non-duty and funded specifically from state funds appropriated to universities in the General Appropriations Act, investment earnings as provided under section 1011.43, Florida Statutes, or from federally authorized scholarship funds; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Bright Futures scholarships are appropriated to universities through the General Appropriations Act; and,

**WHEREAS**, hurricane-affected freshman students are being charged out-of-state tuition, even as pre-existing students similarly affected continue to benefit from an unadvertised waiver, allowing them to be charged in-state tuition; and,

**WHEREAS**, University of Florida's Aid-A-Gator program offers financial assistance to employees and students who experience hardships such as the impacts of Hurricane Irma in 2017 and Hurricane Michael in 2018, as advertised in an email from University of Florida Public Affairs on October 10, 2018<sup>3</sup>; then,

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate acknowledges the need to more adequately advertise resources and financial aid offered to Hurricane Maria victims.

**THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate recommends that the University of Florida administration revisit their interpretation of section 1009.21, Florida Statutes, to acknowledge that students who have been awarded Bright Futures scholarships or the relevant hurricane relief, also in accordance with the General Appropriations Act that was in effect during the qualifying student's 2018 fall term, are eligible for the existing exception to the twelve month requirement for establishing residency provided by Florida Statute 1009.21(e) and the Latin American-Caribbean Scholarship, dependent on evidence of displacement by natural disaster.

**THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the University of Florida administration's efforts in extending a helping hand to student victims of Hurricane Maria and wishes to see continued support and aid for students affected by natural disasters.

*Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Provost Dr. Joseph Glover, Dean of Students Dr. Heather White, Student Legal Services Director Jon C. Adcock, Vice President for Human Resources Jodi Gentry, the Office of Multicultural and Diversity Affairs, Dean of the International Center Leonardo A. Villalón, Hispanic Student Association President Brenda Villanueva, Student Body President Ian Green, Student Body Vice President David Enriquez, Student Body Treasurer Stefan Sanguyo, University Board of Trustees Chairman Mori Hosseini, and University President Dr. W. Kent Fuchs.*

1 [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1009/Sections/1009.21.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1009/Sections/1009.21.html)

2 <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/latin-american-caribbean-lac-scholarship>

3 <https://benefits.hr.ufl.edu/gatorperks/aid-a-gator/>

  
Michael Murphy                      11/6/18  
Senate President                      Date