

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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PRESS RELEASE

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Students call on University to avoid TA strike

Oakland, CA – The University of California Student Association, the official voice of over 200,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from the eleven UC campuses, issued a strongly-worded statement to the U.C. administration supporting UAW 2865 in bargaining a new contract for academic student employees. The statement criticizes the UC’s “unproductive and potentially illegal” behavior in negotiations. If employees are forced to call a strike in response to such behavior, the statement says, “As students, we will hold the Administration accountable for such a massive and unnecessary disruption in our academic lives.”

“I don’t want my TA to have to strike and have class cancelled because the UC won’t be a good employer,” said David Partida, a UCSC undergraduate. Over the past four years, strikes over unfair labor practice charges against the University have become the norm. Nurses, clerical workers and service workers have all called strikes in reaction to the University’s bargaining tactics. UCSA is demanding that the University bargain in good faith and avoid a strike by 12,000 teaching assistants, readers and tutors.

The contract covering academic student employees, represented by the United Auto Workers expires September 30th. Key issues in negotiations include salary increases, child care, dependent health care and workload.

According to Jesse Bernal, University Affairs Chair for UCSA and graduate student at UC Santa Barbara, “UAW is proposing wage increases to make academic student employee compensation comparable to other institutions. And that’s based on the UC’s own assessment of how far behind we are in competition with other universities to attract the best and brightest.”

The statement also highlights the issues facing academic student employees with families. Studies show that family responsibilities are a major barrier to women’s advancement in academia, particularly in graduate school. To address this inequity, the UAW has proposed child care subsidies and extension of health benefits to partners and dependents. UCSA has long championed access to education, and sees such improvements as a key to opening educational opportunities to everyone.

The University of California Student Association is the official voice of over 200,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from the eleven UC campuses. It is our mission to advocate on behalf of current and future students for the accessibility, affordability, and quality of the University of California system.

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