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## ***UC Santa Cruz Chancellor's Inauguration Met by Hundreds of Students, Community Supporters and UC Workers Demanding a Fair Contract***

California – UC workers, students, and community supporters will greet the new University of Santa Cruz Chancellor George Blumenthal with a day of actions demanding a fair contract for 20,000 patient care and service workers. Picketing and other actions are planned throughout the day including a 12 noon picket at Cowell College Hillside overlooking Inauguration Rally expecting to draw hundreds of people and culminating at 3pm with the largest action at the main entrance of campus.

The 20,000 UC patient care and service workers statewide have been negotiating for a fair contract since August, 2007. They do everything from assisting in surgeries to cleaning dorm rooms in the University of California's ten campus/five hospital system.

***"As the inauguration activities are occurring, we want our new Chancellor to see all the workers, all the students and our supporters and know we will not back down until we get equal pay for equal work. So many of us are struggling to make ends meet—we can't afford to wait any longer."***  
– Nicolas Gutierrez, Senior Custodian

For service workers, wages are as low as \$10 an hour, and 96% of UC service workers are income eligible for at least one of the following public assistance programs: food stamps, WIC, public housing subsidies, and reduced lunch. Many work 2-3 jobs to meet their families' basic needs.

President Bill Clinton, Robert Kennedy Jr., and Speaker Emeritus of the California Assembly Fabian Núñez have been joined by UCSC scheduled speakers Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, Angela Davis, Professor Wally Goldfrank and Associate Professor Paul Ortiz in pledging not to speak at UC graduations unless the contract is settled. All of the commencement speakers, students, and workers remain hopeful that an agreement will be reached so that the cancellations of scheduled appearances are not needed.

*"The University has repeatedly flunked the test of fair bargaining with the workers who help to make this one of the best university systems in the world. UC must observe the principles of equity and negotiate a fair contract now. When this happens, I will be proud to be a UC commencement speaker."* – Associate Professor Paul Ortiz

*"I am proud that so many commencement speakers have made the decision only to speak at UCSC's graduation if a fair contract has been negotiated for workers. The ceremony is important to me and my family, but in the bigger picture, making sure that people in our community are not living in poverty is even more important for all of us,"* said Becca Gourevitch, a UCSC graduating senior from College 10

Also at issue are UC wages which are dramatically behind other hospitals and CA's community colleges where workers are paid an average of 25% higher for the same work. Patient care workers are concerned this is contributing to high-turnover, staffing shortages, and over-reliance on temps which can affect patient care as extra time is needed to train the constant flow of new staff.

State funds comprise only 8.6% of the funding for the 20,000 workers. The vast majority of funding comes from the UC hospitals which posted profits of \$371 million last year. CA State-appointed neutral Factfinder Carol Vendrillo, who independently evaluated the labor dispute, said, *"It is not the lack of state funding but the University's priorities... It is time for UC to take a broader view of its priorities by honoring the important contribution that service workers make to the U.C. community and compensating them with wages that are in line with the competitive market rate."*

The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3299, AFL-CIO represents 20,000 patient care and service workers at UC including licensed vocational nurses, medical techs and assistants, respiratory therapists, custodians, cafeteria workers, and security officers. 2201 Broadway Ave, Suite 315 Oakland, CA 94612, (510) 844-1160, media@afscme3299.org

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