

Dear FDM Graduate Students,

Your actions have the power to do a great service for the campus and for the UC system by bringing needed attention to the problem of the cost of living — not only for you, but for also for the undergraduates and the entire community.

Some may wonder why the issue is so critical at UC Santa Cruz. According to the 2019 Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey (<http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf>), Santa Cruz is the 5th least affordable housing market in the world; more affordable than Hong Kong, Vancouver, Sydney, and Melbourne, but less affordable than everywhere else!

What makes it worse is while Santa Cruz is getting more and more expensive, the State of California's investment in the UC has been on a steady decline. According to the California Budget & Policy Center, even as UC enrollment has increased, state general fund support has declined. Enrollment has increased by 113% since the early 1980s. At the same time, direct state investment in the UC has dropped. Despite recent state funding increases, inflation-adjusted General Fund spending per student is down by half (51%) since the early 1980s (<https://bit.ly/2E8iqsK>).

All of the faculty of the department have independently signed the UCSC Faculty Petition in Solidarity with Graduate Students. We are with you on this: something needs to be done to address the cost of living for graduate students; and the costs of an undergraduate education in California should not be leveraged against graduate student stipends, benefits, or wages. The undergraduate and the graduate student should not be pitted against each other; nor should the value of one education come at the cost of the other.

We will not retaliate against any graduate student worker who chooses to participate in this strike. Future department decisions about TA and GSI allocations will not be affected by your decisions regarding strike participation. We appreciate your efforts to coordinate with the college and departmental advisors to insure that undergraduates are not hurt by the strike activities.

In solidarity with your purpose,  
Warren Sack, FDM Chair  
Peter Limbrick, FDM PhD DGS  
Jennifer Maytorena Taylor, FDM MFA DGS

P.S. The chair has circulated this letter to the tenure-track faculty starting last night and a large majority of the faculty have made it known that they too would sign this letter. No faculty member has voiced opposition to this letter. You, the graduate students, should rest assured that it is likely that all of the faculty will eventually sign this letter. It is most likely that the end-of-term demands on the faculty have made them unable to respond quickly. It is being sent now, with only three signatures, so that you receive something from us sooner rather than later.

