

An Open Letter to the UCSC Community

-- Please Forward Widely --

12 December 2019

Over 400 faculty members have signed a petition in support of UCSC graduate students, which recognizes the impossible rent burden they face in Santa Cruz, as well as problems connected to insufficient income for living in one of the most expensive areas in the country. Faculty and graduate students collaborate in advancing the joint research and pedagogical mission of the University. In order to accomplish that mission, UCSC graduate students need to be paid a living wage.

UCSC graduate students currently find themselves in an unlivable situation. It is impossible to run a research university when graduate students, lecturers and staff are not paid enough to live. There is no future for the university in this scenario.

FOG (Faculty Organizing Group) has been troubled that, instead of taking concrete steps to improve this situation, UCSC has distributed official communications that seek to pit faculty against students, graduates against undergraduates, and to generally encourage the campus to ignore graduate student demands.

We are happy to learn that the campus is committed to ensuring that the graduate student actions do not "impede students' academic progress at UC Santa Cruz" <https://news.ucsc.edu/2019/12/grade-strike-info.html>, assuaging any concerns for undergraduates being harmed by these actions; nevertheless, we know that graduate student precarity also harms undergraduate education.

FOG calls on the administration to work in good faith toward a meaningful and swift resolution of graduate student demands. As part of that good-faith effort, we call on the administration to abandon its hard-line tactics and not to punish or retaliate against students involved in these actions. As educators, we know that graduate students are a vital component of the research and teaching mission of the University, and that no University can continue to function if it alienates and threatens its students. The future of UCSC is at stake.

FOG also encourages faculty to support graduate students in their efforts to secure a cost of living increase. As one example, several departments have issued no-retaliation statements, and we encourage every department to do the same. Please contact us at

UCSCFacultyOrganizingGroup@gmail.com for template language. There is strength in numbers.

Love + solidarity,

FOG