

Dear Politics PhD Students:

I'm writing on behalf of the faculty in the Politics department, who met just now to discuss the ongoing grade strike. We want you to know that our department is deeply committed to supporting our PhD and undergraduate students. We understand that a graduate student COLA would benefit graduate students' well-being, which in turn would benefit undergraduate education. And we know you share our commitment to teaching quality and educational equity, because we see it in the outstanding work that you do with undergraduates every quarter.

We recognize that a collective decision to strike requires each individual to make their own decisions about their degree of participation and that different students bear different risks in participating. We want to be clear that we will not retaliate against any graduate student worker who chooses to participate in the wildcat strike. Our understanding is that striking TAs and readers are continuing to do the work of proctoring, grading exams, and calculating course grades, and that you are withholding the results of this valuable work that you do. Future department decisions about TA and GSI allocations will not be affected by your decisions regarding strike participation.

Along with over three hundred other UCSC faculty and lecturers, many professors in our department have signed the Faculty Petition. It concerns us that, according to the City on a Hill Press, in the last five years UC has given graduate student union workers only a three percent raise while Santa Cruz housing prices have increased by fifteen percent over the same time period. The serious financial challenges posed by living in Santa Cruz affect our ability to attract, train, and retain graduate students, which is critical for our mission as a department.

We are also, of course, concerned about possible negative impacts on undergraduate students, especially those who need their grades to be posted in a timely fashion because of financial aid considerations, graduate school applications, and prerequisite requirements for winter courses, among other issues. We appreciate your being sensitive to the particular needs of these students to the extent possible.

We are here to talk with you and address concerns as they arise. We encourage you to keep communicating with each other and with us. Let's stay in collaborative communication, as is characteristic of our department.

In support,
Kent Eaton

Professor and Chair of Politics
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