

UC San Diego Graduate Student Association Executive Committee
Statement of Solidarity with UC Santa Cruz Striking Grads



We, the undersigned, are writing to express our heartfelt solidarity with the demand expressed by graduate workers at UC Santa Cruz, who are demanding a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of extra \$1,412 per month for all UCSC graduate students, to provide a decent standard of living necessary to engage in academic labor. The cost of living in Santa Cruz has been rising an average of 15% per year, but the union contract, which was rejected by 85% of UCSC graduate workers in the ratification vote, only grants an inadequate 3% increase per year in wages. As a result, student workers commonly spend more than half their income on rent or are unable to find housing at all, even though the university would not function without their labor.

On Sunday, December 8th, the General Assembly of hundreds of graduate workers at UCSC called for an indefinite wildcat strike to withhold final grades until the demand is met, with overwhelming support. We affirm the basic truth that our collective power as workers comes from our capacity to withhold labor that those who exploit us nevertheless depend upon, and from our deep bonds of solidarity and care for each other. Many of us share the experience of getting paid a poverty wage for academic labor in the face of exorbitant, ever-skyrocketing rent; we are tremendously inspired by Santa Cruz grad workers' courage, determination and conviction.

At UC San Diego, we face similar struggles with our wages. We feel fortunate that our Graduate Division has willingly begun working with us to explore a means of increasing graduate student pay, but not every UC institution's administration is willing to hear its graduate students' demands. Graduate students shoulder the majority of both the teaching and research labor performed throughout the UC system; we are the backbone of the academic experiences of undergraduate students and the research experiences of faculty. We stand in solidarity with UCSC graduate students, recognizing that their current situation forewarns of what may someday manifest at our own campus.

We call upon the UCSC administration to immediately pay the COLA of \$1,412 per month to all graduate students. We condemn any attempts by the administration to intimidate striking student workers and further demand that there be no retaliation of any kind against the strikers and organizers. We condemn the accusations of illegality and the refusals by administration to engage in direct dialogue with the graduate student representatives. We further call upon faculty at UCSC to support the strike, and not engage in any actions that would undermine the strike.

Dear fellow workers at Santa Cruz, your struggle is a source of hope for all of us, everywhere, who are seeking to build real workers' power in our communities. You deserve everything you are fighting for and so much more, and we are with you, always.

Solidarity Forever,
Rachel Flanagan, President
Thomas Grubb, Vice President of Academic Affairs
Valerie Saiag, Vice President of Campus Affairs
Victor Wang, Vice President of External Affairs
Krish Bhutwala, Vice President of Financial Affairs
Alex Whitehead, Vice President of Social Affairs
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