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We are writing to give our heartfelt support to the graduate student worker's strike action at UC Santa Cruz. The striker's campaign for economic justice makes sense to workers in the Bay Area. The housing crisis impacts workers throughout the entire region where the wages for a vast majority do not translate to just and fair compensation given current housing costs. Here in the Silicon Valley, many of our students, workers and faculty struggle with the same problem. Current rental and home prices have become untenable and out of reach for everyday working-class people.

We admire the courage of UC Santa Cruz graduate students who have endeavored to take a stand on this issue. Their struggle is not only rooted in the desire for fair compensation but it is also part of a broader struggle around the status of public education in our society. Decades of neglect and austerity have wreaked havoc on public education throughout this country. This long-term trend not only impacts staff and faculty it, more importantly, substantially harms students. When underpaid teachers and support staff – whether they work in research universities, K-12 districts, or community colleges – struggle to meet their own basic needs, it fundamentally interferes with our shared goal: quality education for all.

We hope the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the University of California more broadly, will take graduate student workers demand for a cost of living adjustment seriously. We are aware of the economic burden that workers face in Santa Cruz. This cost of living adjustment is not only good for the workers, it is good for the students they serve and reinforces the idea that an investment in education serves the greater public good.

In solidarity,

Chris White, president

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