

Dear Biomolecular Engineering PhD Students:

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 and success. Therefore, we support an immediate effort to identify funding sources for increased graduate student support. This may come as increased support for Teaching Assistantships, GSRships, or the like. We know the BME graduate students share in our faculty's commitment to education.

Graduate students who participate in the wildcat strike are knowingly making themselves vulnerable. Several have expressed their concerns about judgment, retaliation, and lack of support from faculty. Decisions about graduate student teaching assignments and other fellowships are controlled by a multi-layer process of university faculty and administrators. It may not be within the ability of individual Biomolecular Engineering department faculty to completely protect our graduate students from the consequences of this action. However, we the undersigned pledge that participation in this strike and strike-related activities will not be factored into our considerations for summer funding, awards, or for our recommended assignments to Teaching Assistant, Teaching Fellow, or Lecturer positions.

While our viewpoints on the strike are diverse, we agree that increased support for rent-burdened graduate students should be an immediate budget priority. The housing shortage in Santa Cruz is severe. The consequences of this situation are harshest for our graduate students, who are necessarily renters in this nearly impossible market. We support both short-term efforts to address the rent-burdened current graduate students and long-term efforts to address the underlying problem of a woefully inadequate supply of student housing on campus.

To address these issues and support our graduate students, we, the undersigned BME faculty, are calling on appropriate members of the administration including the acting EVC, Lori Kletzer, campus vice chancellor of planning and budgets, Peggy Delany, and Chancellor Cindy Larive to meet with representatives chosen by current graduate students from the Graduate Student Association and union representatives to establish constructive dialogue toward a solution. We fully expect that such a meeting would be a civil, good-faith effort toward finding a solution to the current crisis.

Please feel free to reach out to us regarding your concerns. We look forward to staying in collaborative communication.

On behalf of the undersigned Biomolecular Engineering faculty,

Josh Stuart, Chair  
Ed Green  
Kevin Karplus

Russ Corbett-Detig  
Benedict Paten  
Daniel Kim  
Christopher Vollmers  
Rebecca DuBois  
Camilla Forsberg  
Angela Brooks  
Todd Lowe