

We write on behalf of the Sociology Graduate Student Association (SGSA) at UC Irvine to express our solidarity with the striking workers at UC Santa Cruz. The UC relies heavily on its student workers. We are its teaching assistants, adjuncts, and research assistants. However, we cannot effectively conduct these responsibilities without just compensation.

Across UC campuses, a teaching assistant earns approximately \$2,400 each month. The cost of a space in campus housing at UCI runs from \$750-\$1,300 per month. Like UC Santa Cruz, off-campus options are limited. In the city of Irvine, median rent for a one-bedroom apartment is approximately \$2,083. Although UC Irvine provides below-market rate on-campus housing to its graduate students, the university is gradually eroding these protections. The most affordable units available are slated for demolition. The university is decreasing the number of years of guaranteed on-campus housing well below normative time to graduate. Our classmates who are reaching the end of their degree have faced eviction during the most critical time of their studies. UCI and UCSC often report that they are “doing the most for the American Dream” and are “#1 for social mobility,” according to national rankings. These statements ring hollow. Our current pay relative to Orange and Santa Cruz County’s increasing cost-of-living means that graduate studies at UCI and UCSC will eventually only be feasible for those who come from advantaged backgrounds.

Our work is integral to the operation of the UC. As fellow students and workers, we support UCSC workers in their demand for a cost-of-living adjustment to address these inequities.

In solidarity,

The Sociology Graduate Students Association, UC Irvine