

## STUDENTS + WORKERS RUN THE UC!

For both newcomers and veterans of this university, yesterday felt like a historic step in undoing the stranglehold that the University of California's administration has held for so long over its vast community. Employing the state's largest workforce and operating as its largest landlord, the University seeks to maintain business-as-usual under all circumstances. Yesterday's disruptive rally however has put UCOP on edge—the office senses its peril as students, workers, faculty, and members of the Santa Cruz community engage with the issues that bind them together and contemplate further actions.



Judging by the mood at the solidarity rally in front of Kerr Hall, we're all beginning to feel the sense of power that comes with collective actions. Since the end of last quarter, this movement has accelerated at a pace that few could

have foreseen. With only a week of organizing, we managed to withhold over 12,000 grades across the campus before the winter break. Now in January, we are standing alongside our AFSCME comrades with K7, whose indefinite strike is a further reconfiguration of a political climate in which strike actions are assumed to blow over by the next working day. We feel agitational rumblings from our lecturer comrades in AFT, who will be out of a contract, and unbound from its no-strike clause, by February. Undergraduates showed up in support by the hundreds, and their potential demands can be a crucial factor in driving ours forward. We've seen outpourings of support from the many unrepresented sectors of the university's labor force, emboldened by this new opening. And the energy displayed here is already beginning to be observed across other UC campuses. The administration should be aware (though we've learned not to underestimate their ignorance) that if our demands are not met, they will cascade into larger ones, enveloping more workers and students every week. In fact, this is exactly what has happened already.

Propelled by this momentum, hundreds of students and workers marched together from Kerr Hall to Porter/Kresge and Rachel Carson dining halls, in yet another free lunch occupation that tipped its hat to the Black Panthers' breakfast program. Even as the administration considers targeting "leaders" with retaliatory measures, the mass nature of our action resists the administration's

characterizations. In continuing to demonstrate solidarity with food service workers on campus, we also raise the spectre of a mass movement on campus, a prospect the administration is likely terrified by. Yet the possibility of retaliation, especially against those undertaking the courageous dining hall actions, is something we should all actively preempt precisely by broadening our struggle—these are tactics anyone can employ.



Meanwhile the UC police department is reporting acts of vandalism on campus, acts that supposedly put your "safety" in jeopardy while shoring up their authority to enforce it. And while the university always shells out for phalanxes of police (which make no students feel safe), they continue to refuse reasonable working conditions for the K7 skilled workers who precisely look after your everyday safety on this campus. Until their strike, they have been the ones working to actually upkeep this otherwise decrepit institution, even as their own working conditions have deteriorated year after year. (One wonders if a cop could adequately repair a light fixture or a broken heating system. They can certainly be counted on to clear a path for scabbing workers.)

UCSC is a unique place.

True to its word, it always bucks the tide. Just consider: What kind of university claims it cannot improve its own conditions and that its 'hands are tied' in all areas that directly impact its students and workers? What kind of institution, which ostensibly would like to preserve its authority (or what remains of it), masquerades under such pretenses of impotence and weakness? Clearly, one that refuses to countenance any change that threatens the current structure of power. As the administration continues to instrumentalize its own dubious frailty, we, despite and against our vulnerability, act in such a way that demonstrates our collective strength. In coming together, we reaffirm our commitment to struggle against the university's perverse power, thereby affirming our own, which is qualitatively different. When we met in a General Assembly last night, we put our issues before each other and imagined what else a university could be—if we all act together. Hundreds of graduate students collectively decided to radicalize our next steps.

