

AAUP Statement on UCSC Graduate Workers Strike

The American Association of University Professors supports the striking graduate student workers at University of California at Santa Cruz in their drive to win adequate cost of living compensation. We also support the various efforts undertaken by graduate student employees at other UC campuses to address these concerns.

Graduate student workers do important work to fulfill the university's academic mission and their compensation should reflect that simple fact. Santa Cruz as well as other cities where UC campuses are located have extraordinarily high housing costs that put a great burden on graduate students and other low wage workers. One-bedroom apartments in the Santa Cruz area rent for an average of \$2,600 a month but graduate students only earn about \$2,400. The university needs to recognize that this is an unsustainable situation.

The university's argument that it cannot address the problem because their graduate student workers are part of a statewide union is not accurate. Universities are creative places and we expect better from UCSC administration. Options include increases in wages, fellowships, stipends, and scholarships.

We know that when the university was facing oceans of red ink with its athletic department, it met that problem with creativity and flexibility. Surely, the university does not want to appear that it values playing games more than it does the education of its students.

Finally, we deplore the use of riot police against the graduate student picketers and condemn President Napolitano's threat to fire striking graduate student workers. No university should be taking that approach toward its own employees.