

Thursday, February 20, 2020

**RE: Statement of Yale Law School Community Members in Solidarity with UCSC Strikers**

We the undersigned members of the Yale Law School community in New Haven, Connecticut stand strongly in support of the graduate workers of the University of California Santa Cruz community striking for compensation that will allow them to live with dignity and stability.

**For years, UCSC graduate workers [have engaged all reasonable avenues](#) to get the UCSC administration, UC-System, and Santa Cruz government to address the crisis of housing affordability** facing students and workers. Because school officials have failed to take sufficient action, graduate workers understand they have no choice but to engage in a wildcat strike.

The response of the UCSC administration and UC system to the workers' strike has been deplorable. **We condemn in the strongest possible terms attempts to threaten, coerce, or arrest workers for engaging in a peaceful protest demanding compensation that will allow them access to basic necessities and stable housing.**

**We find it particularly concerning that the UC system has [threatened to effectively terminate workers participating in the strike](#).** The UC system is aware that such action would spell disaster for graduate workers who are [parents](#) and/or debt-laden, and the UC administration has gone so far as to [intimate](#) to international students that termination could result in severe immigration consequences, including deportation, for students whose visas require complete enrollment and who are unable to afford tuition without the waiver provided to TAs. This type of intimidation behavior is unacceptable, abusive, and antithetical to the [self-identifying](#) values of UCSC as “the original authority on questioning authority.”

We reiterate and affirm what our colleagues at USC [have written](#):

UCSC students live in one of the most brutal housing markets in the US where the average rent is [\\$2242/month for a one-bedroom apartment](#). **However, UCSC graduate students are paid only \$2400/month.** Many UCSC graduate workers are at **constant risk of homelessness** or face other financial stresses which make it impossible for them to succeed in their academic programs. **These graduate workers provide UC Santa Cruz with valuable teaching, grading, and research labor which allows the university to function,** but the university does not respect its graduate workers enough to pay them a living wage. Other UC schools, including UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, and UC Davis, have also begun their own COLA campaigns in solidarity. As California graduate students, we too stand in solidarity with the striking workers at UCSC and support their demands for a living wage.

Instead of meeting the graduate workers' demands with empathy, the university has instead refused to negotiate and has resorted to force and intimidation. This

week, UCSC brought in over one hundred riot police to intimidate, attack, and arrest the peaceful protesters. The UCSC administration has also sent emails implicitly threatening the immigration status of striking international students, and encouraged undergraduate students to expose their TAs who had gone on strike. These actions are the most recent steps in a long history of retaliation against student protesters initiated by the University of California, which for example, includes the pepper-spraying of peaceful protesters by university police during the Occupy UC Davis movement in 2011. **We absolutely condemn the cowardly approach UCSC has taken as its graduate student employees express their need for a liveable income.**

The University must cease any and all retaliatory actions against strikers. We call on the University to immediately engage with the strikers and meet the workers' demands for a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), a measure which UCSC has both the power and the means to achieve.

In solidarity,

Alexandra Ricks, 1L  
Ali Murat Gali, 1L  
Andrew Ntim, 1L  
Anthony Tohme, 1L  
Atticus Ballesteros, 1L  
Casey Gilfoil, 2L  
Elaine Emmerich, 1L  
Eleanor Roberts, 1L  
Eli Pales, 1L  
Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred, 1L  
Frankie Hedgepeth, 1L  
Ify Chikezie, 1L  
Joel Sati, 1L  
Jonathan Cohen, 3L  
Joshua Britt, 1L  
Kathryn Pogin, 3L  
Kelly M. Hernandez, 1L  
Logan Malach, 1L  
Marnie Lowe, 1L  
Matt Kellner, 2L  
Patrick Liu, 1L  
Paula Garcia-Salazar, 1L  
Petey Menz, 3L  
Pirzada Ahmad, 2L  
Ramis J. Wadood, 2L  
Samuel Hull, 1L  
Zoe Masters, 1L

Zoe Tucker, 3L

For anyone financially able to we highly encourage you to [donate to the support fund for striking workers at UCSC](#). All funds donated through *gofundme* are being distributed back to the UCSC collective for food, action supplies, potential legal fees, and docked pay.

You can find out more about the striking students at UCSC at their website <https://payusmoreucsc.com/> or follow them on Instagram or Twitter at: @payusmoreucsc or @cola4all