

MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2020

news on the picketline

BECOMING UNGOVERNABLE

By emailing the entire student body pleading that they search for the cop inside themselves and snitch on TAs and instructors in solidarity with the strike, the administration has once again overplayed its hand. By treating students in this way, admin take on the posture of a prison warden who, lacking reliable intel, attempts to appeal to their less-unruly inmates (though in our case, the administration doesn't even offer its informants anything in return--some bargain!). This posture is even clearer in the email sent on Friday to international graduate students, whose immigration and visa status they not-so-subtly implied would be at risk for striking. It is not hard to imagine this directive being issued by head jailer, Janet Napolitano, whose anti-immigrant playbook is never lacking in repressive "solutions." The fact that the administration of UCSC—the people who closely guard the "authority" necessary to "question authority"—call themselves progressives, however, is no contradiction. Behind every Larive, Kletzer, or Blumenthal stands a Napolitano waiting to tell you about the successes of tighter border policies, soaring property values in California, and the massive UC development projects that seek to push them even higher; these successes will be boon to all—provided you have the right immigration papers, lots of money, and do not engage in "criminal" (read: strike) activity.

For reasons beyond their ability to grasp, the admin's repressive gamble has been laughed at and roundly rejected. After this most recent spectacular failure, the admin is clearly scrambling to assert its supposed "authority." Witnessing that "authority" crumbling, in a university that it manages but cannot lead, the administration is now painting itself as the victim, whose "rights" are being infringed by striking graduate students. "One of the central benefits bargained for by the University is the right to be free of any strikes during the term of the agreement," says EVC Kletzer in an email euphemistically titled "Opportunities for Dialogue" (lol). Besides threatening workers with dismissal from employment, the email asserts that virtually everyone on campus, but especially the administration, is being victimized by the strike. Flipping the script, they say that graduate student workers are so intransigent (some of them have called us "terroristic," others "Trumpian," still others "Nazi") that we have supposedly turned down every occasion for dialogue with the administration. These lies come from the same benevolent administration that continues to "offer" us such luxuries as a one week "pause" in the punishment they intend to mete out to us, the same administration that refused to meet at all up until this point.

What is more significant in this email, though, is the emphasis on sticking to "the contract" whose no-strike clause

is held so dearly by the university and the UAW statewide "leadership" alike (—more than 80% of grads at UCSC rejected this contract). So treasured is the no-strike clause that they invoke it like some inalienable "right," presumably alongside the rights to speech and association (some rights are convenient for them and some rights aren't). The truth is, the no-strike clause in our contract is the cost of doing business with the UC, as a worker, and it is imposed in every contract, more or less in step with the interests of bureaucratic union officials who would prefer for us to simply go back to work. The reality is that the power of our labor is not based in the contract, but in the will of the rank and file workers. In the case of our wildcat strike, the rank and file is clearly not interested in this garbage contract, much less the UC's interpretation of it.

Ignoring the administration's gracious request that we call off the strike in exchange for nothing at all, graduate student workers mobilize today for our first concerted picket action. What we accomplish today is up to us, and we will have to make a number of important decisions as to how we will act from here. We will be faced with opposition from administrative cops and the actual cops they ship in from all over the state (one might wonder how many COLAs could be funded if all these overtime-police were to simply stay home, or even better, retire). Strikes, as we've already seen, have the potential to organize our actions and efforts in ways we have not expected, and our capacity to hold off disciplinary threats is embedded in our collective activity here. Undergraduates, faculty, lecturers, campus workers are already standing behind us, acting and organizing themselves in ways we have not seen before on this campus. In undertaking this mass action, with its militant, open-ended character, it is now our turn to make an "offer": give us a COLA or this campus becomes ungovernable.

MONDAY 10 FEB

- SANTA CRUZ:** COLA PICKET, 7:30am, base of campus
- SANTA BARBARA:** March to Demand COLA, noon, Cheadle Hall
- SAN DIEGO:** March for COLA, 1pm, Silent Tree at Geisel Library
- LOS ANGELES:** UCLA 4 COLA Rally, noon, outside Young Research Library
- DAVIS:** COLA 4 ALL Solidarity Rally, noon, MU Flagpole
- BERKELEY:** COLA Organizing Assembly, 4pm, Graduate Assembly (444 Eshleman)



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