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FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2020

# SEE YOU ON THE PICKET!

'Fuck the UC' is not so much a slogan of any one group or the position of a political current on campus. It is instead the reflexive response by thousands of people, who, upon receiving each and every communication sent by the university administration, heave a collective sigh—and not the kind that follows the sensation of relief, but of annoyance. Few would deny that the administration's limited correspondence with the movement has been annoying. But the peculiar annoyance elicited by admin is felt more acutely precisely because it is useless. For all its institutional standing and its alleged clout, the administration is an essentially useless body, a body comprised of managers for whom utility is an entirely foreign function. It would be one thing if the administration at least strived for usefulness. But in having no useful tasks at their disposal, the members of the administration seek instead to inflict upon others the profoundly annoying fact of their existence. Listen carefully when the administrators disgorge one ineffectual email threat after another, or when they summon graduate students into "meetings" consisting chiefly of blustery yelling, or when they loiter helplessly along the fringes of mass student rallies. If you strain your ears hard enough, between the chants of undergrads, lecturers, workers, and graduates, you can hear the same feeble whimper: "we exist too..." If you read closely enough, between the lines of their threats, you can find the dismal sadness of administrative life.

'Fuck the UC' is a collective response to the ongoing conundrum of finding ourselves under the managerial thumb of an institution which is set up to thwart and derail the expression of even the most minor grievance. When grievances are translated collectively into broadly resonant demands, however, the administration becomes increasingly ill at ease with its own uselessness, and attempts to remedy it by assuming the role of disciplinarian. What the administration lacks in terms of argumentation and commitment to principles, however, they make up for in lurid fantasies of despotic rule. This is the context in which their threats of discipline, doled out to hundreds of graduate students this week, should be read. One does not need to be an academic to detect a certainty quantity of embarrassment embedded in such fantastic messages, messages that fail to intimidate though cannot but succeed to annoy, and are thus embarrassing for having succeeded only in failing.

'Fuck the UC' was also the subject of yesterday's rally, where it was chanted by undergraduates with rage, joy, and other accompaniments, at classmates who might one day become comrades ("Out of the dorms, into the streets!"), playfully at high school students on vanilla campus tours ("Don't come here!"), and at every administrator within earshot ("No Justice, No Peace!"). The rally was led by undergraduates, who are augmenting their dynamic solidarity with other campus groups by crafting an array of demands of their own. For a few hours, even the lawn of the Chancellor's \$10 million mansion became something it was never intended to be—a useful space

for vibrant organizing and mutual aid, pointing in the direction of what a world without chancellors might look like.

Meanwhile, the statewide graduate student worker union (UAW 2865) has given its blessing to the flurry of intercampus solidarity and organization work already underway outside the official union channels, even as it urges individual wildcats to forsake the strike and return to work. We, who are well acquainted with the UC's retaliatory repertoire, understand that our union president finds herself compelled to do this, on pain of legal sanction. However, their Wednesday communication to UAW members, which framed UCSC wildcats as excluding other campuses or neglectful of conditions elsewhere, made little sense to us, and elicited all too familiar shudders of annoyance. The awkward attempt to simultaneously distance themselves from us and ignorantly co-opt COLA4All reeked of the kind of factionalism that Santa Cruz set out to ignore when we launched the COLA campaign. We have neither time nor interest to play these games, and look forward to a moment when statewide marshals its considerable resources to advance the struggle.

Our struggle, our time and our interest, looks ahead to Monday, February 10, when our grading strike becomes a teaching strike. The base of campus will become a site to protest the UC administration and contest the deadening top-down and debt-fuelled affair formerly known as the UC model of education. At the base, graduate students will be withholding and transforming their labor, picketing against their living conditions and hosting alternative sections, offering mutual aid and educating one another in precisely the ways we have never been able to in the classrooms up on the hill. Come for breakfast, screen printing and button making, talks and workshops, training on de-escalation and self-defense, a sewing bee and a birthday celebration, guest speakers and dancing classes. At the close of the day, as campus administrators plead for guidance from their UCOP suzerains, we will meet to decide how we'll struggle again on Tuesday: one day longer, one day stronger.

SEE YOU ON  
THE PICKET!

(MONDAY:  
7:30AM,  
base of  
campus)

