



UAW LOCAL 2865

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Peter Chester
University of California Office of the President
Executive Director, Labor Relations

Dear Peter Chester,

UAW 2865 is in receipt of the University's intention to meet to discuss solutions to rent burden faced by graduate students at UCSC ([please see attached email](#)). As we have previously stated, the union stands ready to bargain in good faith over compensation for ASEs. We write now to reiterate our demand to bargain over compensation for ASEs at the University of California.

While the University asserts that it will meet with graduate students to discuss "practical solutions to the housing burden" in their role as "graduate students," rather than employees of the University of California, the Union has long bargained with the employer over matters of compensation, including all means to address the housing burden faced by ASEs across the system. As you know, our [initial set of bargaining goals](#) from 2018 bargaining over our current agreement articulated that it was a UAW 2865 bargaining goal to "Increase ASE compensation to keep pace with real cost of living and be competitive among UC's peer institutions."

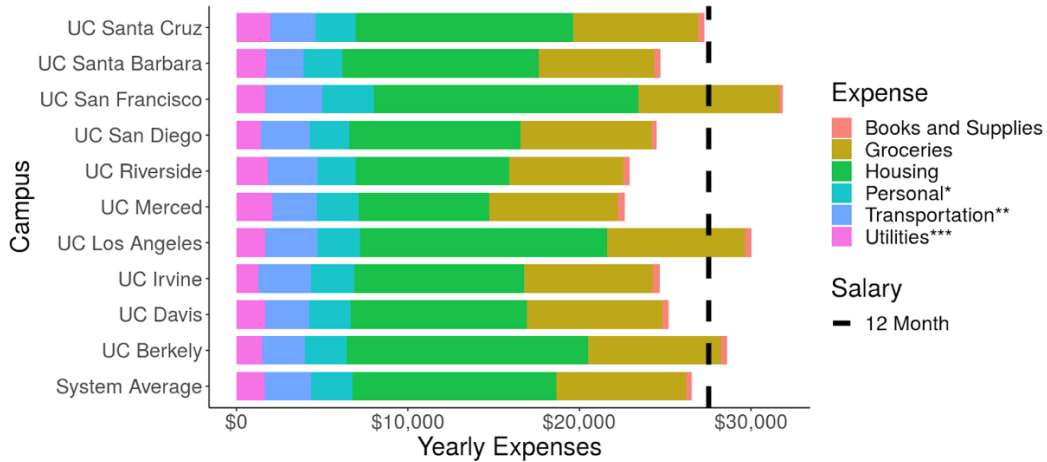
Following this round of bargaining, in August 2018 Academic Student Employees across the University of California system voted to ratify our current agreement. This occurred amidst legislative initiatives to address the state's housing crisis. At that time, [Proposition 10](#), which would have allowed cities and localities to re-introduce rent control measures by repealing the 1995 Costa-Hawkins Act, was slated for the 2018 midterm ballot. UAW 2865 members endorsed and campaigned for Proposition 10. Unfortunately, despite winning majorities in San Francisco, Alameda, and Santa Cruz Counties, the measure did not succeed at the state level. During the 2019 term of the California state legislature, UAW 2865 continued to work with [a statewide coalition to pass a legislative program on housing](#). These recently enacted measures, however, are notably not strong enough to allow low-wage ASEs to live without rent burden. In Alameda County, for instance, the statewide rent cap measures (calculated at the rate of increase of the CPI plus 5%) would result in a rent cap of 9% annual increases for ASEs working at the biggest campus in the system.

[Amidst the growing housing crisis](#), the cost of living for ASEs continues to increase at a rapid rate. For this reason, the University of California should partner with the Union to devise a solution. According to [the University's own data](#), since at least 2017 the cost of living for ASEs across the system has been far greater than salaries averaging, as ours do, \$21,000/year.



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Living Expenses Across all UC campuses for Single Students



Because of the University’s indication that it would like to discuss “practical solutions to the housing burden,” UAW 2865’s consistent demand to “increase ASE compensation to keep pace with the real cost of living” and the simultaneous sky-rocketting costs of living and the failure of recent legislative measures to be able to address the housing crisis, we believe the circumstances have changed to such a degree as to necessitate immediate bargaining over this important issue. Please advise us of dates you would like to meet.

Cost of living concerns have consistently been a high priority for academic student employees, and we have bargained over these matters in every set of contract negotiations at the systemwide table since 2000. We look forward to continuing to improve standards of living for Academic Student Employees at UC. We believe both the Union and the University have an interest in ameliorating the economic hardships faced by its academic student employees who face some of the most high-rent cities in the city and country, and welcome sitting down to negotiate over these matters.

Sincerely,
 Kavitha Iyengar

UAW 2865 President, on behalf of the Executive Board