



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UAW 2865: NAPOLITANO SHOULD BARGAIN WITH THE UNION THAT REPRESENTS STRIKING GRAD WORKERS, NOT CIRCUMVENT IT, TO MAKE PROGRESS ON COLA

Berkeley - Last night, in the wake of an ongoing wildcat strike that has ignited concern across the country, UC President Janet Napolitano issued a statement saying she would hold a meeting not with the union that represents the strikers, but with the UC Graduate and Professional Council, a group that does not have legal authority to bargain on the workers' behalf. Kavitha Iyengar, the President of UAW Local 2865, which represents the affected grad workers and more than 19,000 academic workers across the UC system, issued the following response:

"While we meet regularly with the UC Graduate and Professional Council and have great respect for their work, the UAW is the only legally authorized collective bargaining organization and the university knows it. UC administrators are fully aware that only the union can bargain a legally-binding contract that will make progress for student-workers and hold the University accountable. The time has come for UC to meet us at the bargaining table so that we can work to resolve the issues that have left so many student-workers economically insecure. Conflating COLA negotiations with UCGPC's other advocacy efforts is an attempt to buy time and deflate the energy of this movement – and it will not work. Today, we repeat the demand we made in our January 15 letter to UC: come to the table with us so we can bargain over compensation for Academic Student Workers at the University of California."

Background: On January 15, 2020, UAW 2865 [formally asked](#) UC to agree to bargain with the union for a cost of living increase to support rent-burdened academic workers, many of whom spend upwards of 60% of their income on rent. They refused. Workers at UC Santa Cruz have been on a wildcat teaching strike for a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for over a week. The union has held a series of actions on campuses throughout the state demanding that UC bargain to address the sky-rocketing cost of housing. Yesterday, union members at UCLA, Berkeley, Santa Barbara, Riverside, Davis and Merced demonstrated in support of those demands.

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