



UAW LOCAL 2865

2030 Addison Street,
Suite 640A Berkeley, CA 94704
Phone: 510-549-3863 Fax: 510-549-2514
Email: uaw2865@uaw2865.org
www.uaw2865.org

BOWING TO UNION PRESSURE, UC AGREES TO GIVE \$2,500 STIPEND TO ALL MFA AND PHD STUDENTS AT UC SANTA CRUZ

Santa Cruz - After a wildcat strike at UC Santa Cruz and months of actions by UAW Local 2865, the union that represents 19,000 student workers at the University of California, UC administrators have announced that they will provide all MFA and PhD students at Santa Cruz with a \$2,500 stipend retroactive to the 2019-20 Academic Year. Previous offers by UC insisted that any additional stipend be needs-based. Union members stood with workers at Santa Cruz, and demonstrated that student-workers at ALL UC campuses are rent burdened. Santa Cruz strikers continued their actions, and the needs-based criteria was removed. Eligibility will be contingent on TAs submitting their Fall 2019 grades.

“This morning’s response proves that when committed hard-working student employees work together, we can win tangible economic relief,” said Kavitha Iyengar, President of UAW Local 2865. “And while we are glad to hear this news, it is not enough, for three reasons: first, because it is not under the framework of a union contract and thus not legally enforceable, it is not guaranteed. Second, it is limited to workers at Santa Cruz. As our [framework](#) for a COLA demonstrates, workers at every single campus are rent burdened and need this relief. And third, even with these funds, student workers are *still* rent burdened.

“We are making progress – but we’re not done yet. We have been asking UC to [bargain with us](#) on this issue for over a month. On Friday night, UC President Janet Napolitano attempted to circumvent the union by [announcing](#) that she would meet with another group. That is unacceptable - the UAW is the only legally authorized collective bargaining organization for graduate student-workers and the university knows it. We will continue to organize and advocate for additional compensation and a #COLA4all until no student worker at UC is rent burdened. Because when we know we can pay the rent, we can focus on our real mission: delivering excellent educational and research support at UC.”

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. Union members have held a series of actions on campuses throughout the state demanding that UC bargain to address the sky-rocketing cost of housing. On Friday, union members at UCLA, Berkeley, Santa Barbara, Riverside, Davis and Merced demonstrated in support of those demands. Friday evening, Pres. Napolitano released a statement attempting to circumvent the union by meeting with UC’s Graduate and Professional Council, to which the union has [responded](#). The union has also contacted elected officials and circulated a [petition](#), which currently has over 2,100 signatures.