

November 14, 2022

UC Santa Cruz Academic Senate

RE: Update on UAW Strike

Dear Colleagues,

We write to update faculty on issues related to the UAW strike which began today, November 14, 2022. UC systemwide was notified that several groups of graduate student workers represented by the United Auto Workers (UAW) conducted a strike authorization vote that ended November 2 and the large majority of members voted to authorize a strike. The UAW represents postdoctoral scholars, academic researchers, academic student employees (teaching assistants/readers/tutors), and graduate student researchers.

While the Academic Senate is not involved in the negotiations between the University of California Administration and the union, we support the learning and well-being of all students, graduate and undergraduate, and others represented by the striking unions. Graduate students play an essential role in research and teaching at the University of California, and the Academic Senate is actively engaged in efforts to enhance graduate student welfare. Further, the Senate wants to support all faculty as they navigate a situation that will affect teaching, research, and mentoring.

Graduate students cannot meet the expectations of their programs as researchers or teachers while living with intense financial insecurity. The inability of graduate students to live in our community undermines all the work of our campus, as faculty research and the undergraduate and graduate missions are inseparable. The graduate students, in their varied roles on campus, are our valued partners and colleagues.

Faculty have raised many questions about their rights in response to the strike. It is imperative that faculty have flexibility in how they respond to the strike, and faculty do have a protected right to honor a picket line or engage in a sympathy strike. Due to the complexity of the situation and the variety of instructional responsibilities, however, we cannot recommend a one-size-fits-all response to the strike for all faculty.

Faculty possess customary discretion and autonomy to adapt their courses to strike circumstances while honoring Academic Senate regulations. At this time, changes to those regulations are not anticipated, although a lengthy strike would raise questions about regulations governing final exam format. In regards to these and other strike-related matters, we welcome your input as we continue to work to find answers and solutions. We will keep you informed of any developments in the divisional or systemwide Academic Senate, and we urge you to communicate with enrolled students about change and continuity in your courses.

We want to draw your attention to the multiple campus and systemwide communications intended to provide faculty with an update on the state of labor negotiations, and provide guidance for instructors and supervisors of GSRs during the strike. These communications include systemwide Provost Brown's November 9 email, [CPEVC Kletzer](#), [The Council of UC Faculty Associations \(CUCFA\)](#), [Santa Cruz Faculty Association \(SCFA\)](#), [CITL Resources on Labor Actions](#), and [Senate Chair Cochran and Vice Chair Steintrager](#).

If after reviewing these materials, you still have questions, please let us know via senate@ucsc.edu so we can notify campus leadership about your concerns.

We are grateful for your commitment to our students, our colleagues, and the larger UCSC campus community.

In Support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Gallagher", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patty Gallagher, Chair

On behalf of the Senate Executive Committee

cc: Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate