

## **UCR Department of Political Science Statement on the Strike by Graduate Student Employees**

Political Science faculty stand in solidarity with academic workers in our department and across the UC system in their ongoing contract negotiations for fair compensation, improved job security, stronger workplace protections, better support for parents and families, expanded rights for international scholars, and improved accessibility to retain disabled workers.

Academic workers, including graduate students, are an essential part of our intellectual community. We partner with them to deliver the best possible undergraduate instruction and produce cutting-edge research. In our lecture courses, graduate Teaching Assistants are often the key instructors with whom undergraduates learn, connect and develop relationships. Faculty would not be able to carry out our jobs without them.

Our Political Science graduate students also help build and maintain intellectual and professional networks that are critical to the Department's mission and climate.

Wages and benefits that have not kept up with the cost of living -- especially soaring housing costs -- undermine our ability to recruit a diverse and excellent cohort of graduate students to continue the research and teaching missions of the public university.

These and other gaps in the university's support for graduate students present a major equity issue, preventing us from recruiting and supporting talented graduate students from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds and from retaining such students when they are admitted and enrolled.

First generation students, underrepresented students and international students have borne the heaviest burdens. The financial instability many graduate students face remains a significant and unjust obstacle to fulfilling their responsibilities. These burdens affect their quality of life, the quality of their scholarship, and their capacity to instruct our undergraduate students at the highest level.

We affirm the right of student workers to engage in lawful strike activity, which may include picketing, cancellation of sections, and stopping grading. We will not engage in retaliation against graduate students based on their participation or non-participation in strike activities in all matters under our direct control, and we oppose unlawful retaliation measures against either striking students or faculty respecting the picket line.

We will respond to undergraduate concerns about the disruption of their education with compassion while affirming the right of the graduate student employees to strike for adequate benefits and compensation. We urge the university to take all measures to protect international students, and we will take all measures in our power to protect our international student workers.

We urge the university to bargain in good faith with the union so that a just and adequate solution may be reached.