October 15, 2013

UCSC Graduate Students,

On Friday, October 11, 2013, UC Labor Relations instructed the UCSC Graduate Division, as well as individual Departments, to disseminate a statement regarding their perspective on the ongoing negotiations with UAW 2865 (the UC Student-Workers Union, which represent TAs, GSIs, tutors, and readers).

The GSA feels that this statement was misleading and a significant mischaracterization of the goals and objectives of the current bargaining campaign. To get more information about the specific ways this letter was misleading, feel free to read the response composed by a number of members from UAW’s bargaining:

http://bit.ly/1fxPolb

The Administration did not present all pertinent facts, and twisted the facts they did present to unfairly paint the Union in a negative light. The GSA perceives the motivation for this letter to solely be to increase the political bargaining power of the UC Management, not to inform or educate students. We therefore feel that this letter represents propaganda from management, and therefore was misguided and inappropriate to send this letter utilizing a system which should be used primarily for academic and informational purposes. We condemn this usage of the Graduate Division and various Departments as the method for disseminating their statement. We also call on the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor, and Graduate Dean to make a campus policy that messages like this from UC Management will no longer be condoned as acceptable material to be sent to graduate students utilizing Graduate Division or Department resources.

In particular, the GSA condemns placing Graduate Advisors/Coordinators in a position of needing to disseminate this statement to graduate students. In an academic environment of open debate, to coerce Department staff members to disseminate propaganda without offering access to the various perspectives of graduate students who are involved in the debate goes against our principles as a University. We also recognize that many staff and Faculty at UCSC are strongly supportive of our Union, and that some staff members often felt the brunt of the responses that were incited by this statement. The GSA strongly supports those staff members who support our graduate studies, and would like to apologize on behalf of UCOP for putting them in the difficult position where their job duties are being placed in contrast to their personal values.

In past bargaining, the UAW has won a number of victories – victories which have often “trickled out” to other non-bargaining workers (i.e., Graduate Student Researchers), making the UAW bargaining campaign important for all students. Recent victories include full fee remission (previously only ~66%), higher wages, health care, and childcare reimbursement. This time, members of UAW 2865 are looking at their role as frontline instructors in the UC system and fighting to keep classes manageable, as well as fighting to ensure that members receive wages and benefits that support quality education. As the front line educators and researchers, UAW members care about both quality of education and access to education. As pivotal players between
undergraduate education, research and graduate education, their negotiations affect the core of the UC mission.

Quality Demands – UAW is negotiating about Class Size, Online Education, ASE compensation and fee remissions, parking, October pay, Job Security, and Research Assistant bargaining rights

Access Demands – UAW is negotiating about increasing Non-Discrimination coverage, Undocumented Worker Rights, and bettering the positions of underrepresented students both graduate and undergraduate

Student-Family Demands – UAW is negotiating for Affordable Housing, Better Childcare Support, Quality Healthcare, and More Access to Leaves

For more information, we encourage you to visit:
http://www.uaw2865.org/contract2013/

The GSA supports providing graduate students the opportunity to engage with the UAW Bargaining efforts, and will continue to provide information about the goals of the UAW bargaining campaign, as well as opportunities for UCSC students to get involved if they so choose.

Sincerely,

The UCSC Graduate Student Association

CC:
Chancellor Blumenthal
EVC Galloway
Dean Miller
Graduate Advisors Group