

Wed, October 26, 2022

Dear fellow BMS community members,

The diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) committee of the Biomedical Sciences (BMS) graduate program stands in solidarity with the SRU-UAW members in their bargaining with the University of California. We fully support a lawful and fair bargaining process, and strongly affirm the students' right to this process. Collective bargaining gives a voice to the historically marginalized for equitable access to opportunities that many enjoy as a product of their historical privileges and identities. We fully condemn any interference with this process from faculty, staff, or students by virtue of intimidation, harassment, or punitive measures that intimidate or discourage students from voicing their demands.

The exuberant cost of living in the state of California has become a prohibitive structural impediment to accessing even public institutions for higher education. Such barriers have a disproportionate and severe impact on students from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds, and continue to dissuade the brightest minds from diverse backgrounds from considering UCSF or institutions in the UC system for higher learning. As this is very clearly an equity issue, we will continue to fight and advocate for equitable access to these opportunities within the complex power hierarchies that still plague our education systems. In the meantime, protecting this process will ensure that students can safely voice these concerns and demands, and access a fair bargaining process.

The scientific process and production of knowledge has historically been monopolized by a privileged few, which continues to have a detrimental impact on shaping the types of questions, the perspectives, and the societal impact of our research. In institutions where the spirit of training is to build a generation of independent thinkers, the sovereignty of students in this process needs to be honored and fully upheld, for equitable access to education to become a reality. Removing structural barriers, such as cost of living, transportation, parental support, visa and immigration costs, and many other costs that students incur for the pursuit of knowledge is the minimum expectation from an institution that prides itself with its commitment to equity, community and social justice. We urge the University of California to bargain in good faith and acknowledge the significance of this moment in history in ensuring access to a world-class institution.

Several members of the BMS faculty have generated a strong letter of support for the students. You can read and sign this letter here: <https://forms.gle/3BRKVqnwfdFKv3gSA>

We also call on UCSF community members to respect the proceedings, regardless of their position on the matter, and support our students as they courageously navigate this process. Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,
The BMS DEI committee