

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

322 Wheeler Hall #1030
Berkeley, CA 94720-1030

November 11, 2022

Dear Chancellor Christ and President Drake,

The Faculty of the Department of English at UC Berkeley have observed with concern growing signs of economic insecurity among our graduate students. Salaries have failed to keep pace with inflation or rising rents in our area, leaving many struggling to pay their bills. Graduate students are an essential part of our intellectual community. We partner with them to deliver undergraduate instruction and to produce cutting-edge research. Faculty would not be able to carry out our jobs without them. Declining wages and benefits undermine our ability to recruit a diverse and excellent cohort of graduate students to continue the research and teaching missions of the public university. We all benefit when graduate students are paid a living wage.

As members of the English faculty, we affirm the right of student workers to engage in lawful strike activity, which may include picketing, cancellation of sections, or 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 will publicly oppose unlawful retaliation measures should these be proposed by the university. We will not inquire about the strike status of any graduate student under our direct supervision, nor interrupt our mentoring of graduate students, whatever their position on the strike. We urge the university to take all measures to protect international students should a strike be called, and we will ourselves take all measures in our power to protect our international student workers.

We ask the administration to immediately implement a sufficient cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and an increase of ASE wages to allow our graduate students to study and to work in fair and livable conditions. We urge the university management to bargain in good faith with the union so that a just and adequate solution may be reached.

We stand with striking graduate student workers at Berkeley and across the UC system.

Sincerely,

Celeste Langan
Colleen Lye
Poulomi Saha
David Landreth
Janet Sorensen
Bryan Wagner
Geoffrey G. O'Brien
Scott Saul

Elizabeth Abel
Josh Gang
Kathleen Donegan
Kent Puckett
Sukanya Banerjee
Ian Duncan
Grace Lavery
Nadia Ellis

Eric Falci
Steve Goldsmith
Elisa Tamarkin
John Alba Cutler
Vikram Chandra
Amanda Jo Goldstein
Victoria Kahn
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Kevis Goodman
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Beth Piatote
Maura Nolan
David Marno

Fiona McFarlane
Joanna Picciotto
Steven Lee
Cecil Giscombe
Mark Goble
James Grantham Turner

Oliver Arnold
Dora Zhang
Katherine Snyder
Kristin Hanson