



As the UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council, representing roughly 300 ethnic studies faculty across the UC system, we write to express our full support for the ongoing UAW multi-unit academic worker strike. We back their fight for fair contracts, and we support [COLA for all](#). We call on the University to acknowledge that academic student employees, academic researchers, postdoctoral scholars, and student researchers teach, grade, and do cutting-edge research at and for the University of California, yet most live precariously, trying to afford rent and food—in a word, survive—in some of the most expensive cities and locations in the nation. The University cannot exist without students, but it does not want the trouble of labor. Yet academic student employees, academic researchers, postdoctoral scholars, and student researchers are students and labor in the self-same skin. The one and the other are inseparable. At the heart of this strike is the question of how the University reproduces itself as such. We back the UAW academic workers' call for high-quality, accessible, and affordable childcare services, job security guarantees, protection against sexual harassment and other abusive conduct, and equity for international academic student employees, academic researchers, postdoctoral scholars and student researchers, as well as for disabled scholars.

We stand with all UAW academic workers in the struggle to make the University of California a public institution that is fair and equitable to all communities, both locally and globally, and through our academic programs and our community engagement, to promote critical consciousness that achieves what Paulo Freire calls praxis, the union of action and reflection. Through the work of our programs in ethnic studies, we dedicate ourselves not just to research, teaching, and service, but also, to analyses of the structural violence of racial capitalism, including the multiple normalized ways in which this society writ large, including at the public university, have pushed workers to mobilize and challenge their deleterious conditions. We are sadly deeply aware that funding packages have not adjusted to inflation and rent increases, making our departments and programs unable to attract the most promising racially minoritized scholars. We also recognize that like our graduate students, our undergraduates—many of whom come from first-generation backgrounds—experience housing and food insecurity. Staff experience enormous precarity, as well, often commuting great distances to work on our campuses.

At the end of the 1960s, ethnic studies emerged out of a powerful democratizing strike against the University of California, which shut down the University and challenged its reproduction of the status quo. We see the struggle of labor as inextricably tied to our mission for social justice. In addition to the class dimension of the struggle for livable wages, we call attention to and support the longstanding internationalist fight by the grassroots membership of the UAW for gender, racial, and anticolonial justice as part of their vision for fair working conditions. For years, UC student laborers have been at the forefront of struggles for accommodations for international, disabled, racially, and gender diverse workers, including the struggle for access to gender-neutral restrooms, child care, safe working conditions during pregnancy, visa and job security. As the UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council, we also highlight and endorse UAW's longstanding commitment to justice for Palestine as well as to climate justice. All of this reflects that a new generation of academic workers is committed, through the lens of labor, to a broad vision of justice far beyond what some call "bread and butter" issues. We view this move as integral to the labor movement and voice our support for a more encompassing and internationalist fight for labor justice.

As the University of California strives to become a Research 1-Hispanic Serving system, it must acknowledge the invaluable labor of the 48,000 workers who are now striking for a living wage. As the UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council, we express our solidarity with the UAW academic workers as they fight to win fair contracts. We oppose any form of retaliation against any legally protected strike actions.

In solidarity,

UC Ethnic Studies Faculty Council