

Subject:

UAW Strike Preparation Information for Faculty

From: Mary Croughan

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To: academic-senate Sympa List <academic-senate@ucdavis.edu>; academic-fed Sympa List <academic-fed@ucdavis.edu>

Subject: UAW Strike Preparation Information for Faculty

Dear Colleagues

As was communicated in my previous email on November 4, the University of California received official notice from the United Auto Workers (UAW) that all four of its bargaining units (covering Academic Student Employees, Academic Researchers, Postdoctoral Scholars, and Graduate Student Researchers) intend to strike on November 14, 2022.

The strike notice served to the University does not specify an end date. The UAW elected to call this strike despite significant progress at all four bargaining tables, in response to what they contend are unfair labor practices by the University's negotiating teams. The University disputes that it committed unfair labor practices, but respects the UAW workers' right to strike. Strikes for unfair labor practices are legal under California law, unlike the wildcat strike the University experienced in 2020, during which student grades were withheld.

As of today, we have no reliable information on how many employees will elect to participate in the strike, or how long it will last. With so many unknowns, it makes sense to plan for this coming labor action as if a significant portion of the more than 4,000 UAW-represented employees on our campus^[1] will refuse to perform their usual duties beginning on Monday, November 14, 2022.

In light of the above, I am asking all faculty to take steps to help ensure continuity of instruction and research for as long as these employees choose to exercise their right to strike.

Continuity of Instruction/Education

Among the employees represented by the UAW are Graduate Student Employees, including Teaching Assistants (TAs), Readers, Tutors, as well as Associate Instructors ("Associate In_"). Should a significant number of Teaching Assistants and Associate Instructors participate in the strike by refusing to perform their usual duties, this could cause significant strain on the University's ability to educate its enrolled undergraduate students.

There are steps you can take now to minimize disruption to the learning environment. Consider asking all UAW-represented employees you supervise to provide you with all current in-process grading before Monday, November 14, 2022, and ask that they ensure that you have Canvas access as the Instructor of Record. If you elect to do this to minimize potential grading disruption, you should do so with all TAs under your supervision.

If some TAs elect to continue working while others strike, it is permissible to assign additional duties to TAs who remain working, within limits. Teaching Assistant duties are outlined in work agreements completed and signed by departments/faculty and TAs at the beginning of the quarter. Any additional duties assigned must fall within the established work agreements. Faculty should also be cognizant of the number of hours of the TA appointment and should not assign work that would exceed the appointment hours. Finally, *faculty must honor the TAs' right to strike so no TA should be pressured to report to work during the strike.*

Continuity of Research

All Principal Investigators (PIs) and every Director of a Campus Research Center or unit should prepare to preserve active research and continue ongoing research without professional researchers, graduate student researchers, or postdoctoral fellows. Depending on the research in question, this may include directing all researchers on a project to deliver a status report on pending projects and requesting that they provide their PI with access to (or digital copies of) their complete research materials before Monday, November 14, 2022. Because we do not know who will participate, such requests should be directed to all employees within a work unit, rather than employees believed likely to strike. In any discussions regarding continuity of work, please remember UAW workers' have a right to strike should they choose to do so.

Continuity of Animal Care

If you are a PI in a research center that includes animal-related research or animal care, it is your responsibility to ensure continuity of animal care and welfare through any strike activity. We recognize that a large amount of animal-related research on the UC Davis campus is performed by members of the four bargaining units described above, and the strike has the potential to be disruptive.

You should take steps necessary to maintain continuity of care for your animals and have a backup animal care plan should one be needed. While it is not permissible to ask employees about their plans to participate in strike-related activities, it is permissible to remind all employees of their responsibilities to animal welfare and to request that they keep you informed about any anticipated changes to animal experiments or interruptions to animal care. As you communicate with these employees, please remember that you may not say or do anything that could be perceived as coercive, or as discouraging employees from engaging in lawful labor actions, including a strike.

We recognize that vertebrate animal research occurs in a variety of facilities and laboratories on campus and there are differences in support available. Please contact your Dean if you need additional guidance.

Conclusion

At this time, we cannot predict how many UAW represented workers will elect to participate in the strike or how long the strike will last. If you have particular questions not addressed here, you can email them to strikequestions@ucdavis.edu. In the meantime, this communication will be posted on the Academic Affairs website. I recognize that additional guidance will be required as the situation develops on our campus. We will not be sending out additional emails, but rather **we will be providing updates and answers to frequently asked questions on the Academic Affairs website** so that you always know where to look for the most up-to-date information.

Thank you for your continued service to the University as we meet these latest challenges.

All the best,
Mary

Mary Croughan
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
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^[1] The UAW has not noticed the UC Davis Medical Center that it is a location at which UAW-represented workers will be asked to strike. While this memo is being sent to all UC Davis faculty, the memo likely only applies to Davis campus faculty.

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