



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Academic Senate

Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607

senate.universityofcalifornia.edu

February 12, 2026

Academic Senate Division Chairs
UC Faculty

Re: Information for Senate Faculty in the Event of a UAW Strike

Dear Senate Colleagues,

CAMPUSES

Berkeley
Davis
Irvine
UCLA
Merced
Riverside
San Diego
San Francisco
Santa Barbara
Santa Cruz

MEDICAL CENTERS

Davis
Irvine
UCLA
San Diego
San Francisco

NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Lawrence Berkeley
Lawrence Livermore
Los Alamos

The United Auto Workers (UAW) is holding an authorization vote February 5-13, 2026 for an unfair labor practice strike. This vote involves University employees represented by [UAW Local 4811](#), which includes academic student employees (ASEs)—all teaching assistants (TAs), teaching fellows, associate instructors, readers, tutors, and graduate student researchers (GSRs) at all UC campuses. There is a closed contract in place through the end of February 2026, and we understand there is a requirement for three days of mediation in March before a strike can occur. With this letter, we are sharing what the Academic Senate has learned from University administrators about the potential strike and providing initial guidance for Senate faculty.

But first and foremost, we want to underscore a foundational principle of the University's shared governance, as codified in UC Regents [Bylaw 40.1](#): through the agency of the Academic Senate, faculty hold delegated authority to establish academic standards, evaluate academic achievement, and ensure the quality of instruction, research, and public service at the University. Nothing in the labor negotiations process alters the Senate's authority and responsibility to exercise judgment and act on all academic matters.

It is important that Senate faculty not take any actions that inadvertently or intentionally violate California's Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA). Represented employees have the legal right to strike. It is illegal for faculty in supervisory roles to discourage, question, or retaliate against any employee for exercising this right.

The Academic Senate is not directly involved in labor negotiations between the UC administration and represented employee groups. However, the Senate does have an advisory role on matters related to graduate student

employment. A systemwide, Senate-appointed Graduate Education and Employment Faculty Advisory Committee provides input to [Systemwide Academic Personnel](#) (SWAP) at UC Office of the President (UCOP) on policies, procedures, practices, and related issues relevant to graduate student employment. Furthermore, Senate leadership (including the [Academic Council](#), with all 10 Senate divisional chairs) is briefed regularly by Systemwide Academic Personnel and Systemwide Labor Relations (SWLR) on the negotiations with UAW Local 4811.

In discussions with SWAP and SWLR, Senate leaders have emphasized the importance of faculty authority and autonomy in all academic decisions related to graduate students. In addition, we have noted based on experience and current projections that state and federal support for instruction and research is mostly inelastic and does not expand in proportion to increases in labor costs. With this in mind, we have also stressed to the administration the need for available resources to be allocated fairly and appropriately to support both UC's educational and research missions, and the needs of all student groups and staff. We have also stressed that the responsibility to cover further increases in costs must be shared with the University and not fall solely to contracts and grants.

UCOP will be issuing updated guidance related to the potential strike to chancellors and executive vice chancellors/provosts. It includes instructions for faculty who supervise represented employees and a detailed set of FAQs to assist faculty and other supervisors of ASEs and GSRs. We encourage you to read this guidance carefully, particularly as it addresses how faculty may talk with graduate students, given their dual status as students and employees, should a strike occur. You can expect to receive this information from your campus administrative leaders shortly.

Regardless of one's personal views about a possible strike, Senate faculty have professional obligations as University employees. Under [Academic Personnel Manual Section 015](#) (*The Faculty Code of Conduct*), instructors of record are responsible for ensuring both continuity of instruction and timely submission of grades. Faculty are not obligated to pick up struck work, e.g., the work of teaching assistants. However, the instructor of record remains responsible for the class and for the assignment of grades based on student work, even in the event of a strike. Similar professional obligations apply to the continuity of the research mission, including the submission of research reports to sponsoring agencies, and timely certification of federally mandated effort reports.

While the faculty's obligations are real, their fulfillment may be challenging in the event of a strike. We provide several practical suggestions below and urge you to discuss them with your department chair and dean as needed.

Regarding ACADEMIC PROGRESS. By delegation of the Regents and as a core element of the University's system of shared governance, responsibility for academic judgment, including the assessment of academic progress and the assignment of grades in directed studies courses, is the sole prerogative of the faculty member responsible for the course. The systemwide Senate's Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA) provided [guidance](#) to faculty advisors regarding directed studies courses that involve research conducted for the student's thesis or dissertation, including [recommendations](#) to create syllabi that describe each course's academic goals and expectations, and [sample templates](#). Faculty can and should continue to discuss academic progress with their graduate student advisees regardless of a strike and should assign grades based on the student's accomplishment of the specified academic goals. As CCGA has advised, grades in any academic course are based not on the time spent on specific tasks but on the academic progress achieved.

Regarding UNDERGRADUATE INSTRUCTION. Instructors of record should verify that they have direct access to all course materials and student work (e.g., assignments and other graded materials), through their learning management system (such as Canvas) or other mechanisms as necessary. Instructors should also ensure that student grades are accessible and up to date.

Regarding RESEARCH EMPLOYMENT. Faculty supervising graduate student researchers should likewise ensure that sponsored research project records and reports are up to date (e.g., by asking GSRs for progress reports on key research results) and should develop plans to ensure continuity and appropriate access to important or sensitive research materials in the event of a strike.

Like you, we hope for a fair and timely resolution to the negotiations. We encourage all faculty to [stay informed](#) about the issues under negotiation, including the UAW's [proposals](#) and the administration's [current offers](#). Updates to Senate faculty are also being shared regularly by the systemwide Provost's Office via email distributions through campus executive vice chancellors/provosts.

We recognize that this message does not address all your questions and concerns. Please know that the Senate will continue to advocate on behalf of faculty and to communicate with University leadership as the situation develops. If a strike occurs, the Senate will provide additional information and guidance on available resources and on faculty responsibilities.

Sincerely,



Ahmet Palazoglu
Chair, Academic Council



Susannah Scott
Vice Chair, Academic Council

cc: Provost & Executive Vice President Newman
Vice Provost Varsanyi
Deputy Provost Lee
Associate Vice President Matella
Academic Council
Senate Division Executive Directors
Executive Director Lin