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February 19, 2020

**JANET NAPOLITANO, PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: Academic Council Statements on the UCSC Graduate Students' Strike and Police Presence at UCSC

Dear Janet,

The Academic Council has approved the following statements concerning the graduate students' strike at UC Santa Cruz and the associated police presence in response to the strike. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Statement on UCSC Graduate Students' Strike

The Academic Council of the University of California wishes to express its deep concern over the trajectory of the labor conflict at UC Santa Cruz and its hope that both sides will strive to achieve a just resolution of their differences. In a public statement, UCSC graduate students have offered, without requiring a reason, to enter the grades of any undergraduate student who requests it, which demonstrates the graduate students' strong sense of responsibility and support for the undergraduate mission of the University of California. In further achieving a resolution several principles must be acknowledged:

- 1) Doctoral funding and support are complex issues.
- 2) The success of UC's undergraduate and graduate missions are inseparable. If graduate education is not flourishing, undergraduate education cannot flourish either.
- 3) Graduate students cannot be expected to fulfill either their learning or teaching responsibilities when they face significant housing and food insecurity. The University should be committed to providing adequate housing and food security in concrete ways to its doctoral students.
- 4) The University should refrain from punitive action against graduate students during the strike and from retaliation against them once the strike has been concluded. The preservation of high quality graduate and undergraduate programs demands no less.

With the wildcat strike having brought attention to the significant challenges facing graduate student employees, Council believes that the best way forward includes both sides working together through the collective bargaining process to address the legitimate demands of graduate students regarding food and housing insecurity.

Statement on Police Presence at UCSC

The Academic Council of the University of California is distressed over the UC administration's deployment of an armed police presence in response to the peaceful student protest and strike at UC Santa Cruz. [Numerous national journalistic accounts](#) and personal testimonies (including [in-person video recordings](#)) from students, staff, and faculty at UCSC describe a climate of fear, violence, and hostility that has been created by militarized, riot gear-wearing police officers, including non-UC police who have little familiarity with our students or the long history of campus protest in the UC system. This police presence disturbingly [echoes recent](#) and [historical](#) examples of [police force](#) at the [University of California](#) that must not be repeated.

The Academic Council supports more than 200 faculty at UCSC who are calling on the UC and UCSC administrations to:

- 1) Substantially roll back the police presence at the UCSC student strike, which is addressing urgent issues of financial, food, and housing insecurity. There is no reason for 50-70 police officers to engage in shows of force against students involved in peaceful demonstration.
- 2) Demilitarize the police presence at UCSC, which has thus far had the effect of intimidating peacefully demonstrating students with implicit and explicit threats of violence; this armed police presence has multiple adverse effects on the teaching mission of the university, including the classroom work undertaken by graduate students, Senate faculty, and contingent faculty.

Academic Council supports the principles of debate, engagement, and collaborative/consultative problem solving in approaching the difficult issues raised by the UCSC student strike and protest. The escalated police presence on the campus does not serve the shared objective of reaching an outcome that best serves the needs of all our students and fulfills the mission of the University of California.

As noted in the Edley-Robinson report, "Our University is charged by the State of California with the profound responsibility of educating its sons and daughters. Its policies at every level must reflect that core educational mission. This is particularly true when it comes to protest and civil disobedience—activities that frequently will advance the University's educational mission by allowing students to become active, engaged, and responsible citizens, and to express cutting-edge ideas. We must view civil disobedience by protesters through the lens of the core values of our institution."

Sincerely,



Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair
Academic Council

cc: Academic Council
Senate Directors