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Grant Revenue Up Dramatically as UC Rejects Proposals to Increase Salaries and Improve Benefits

UC Hides Behind California Budget Crisis; Researchers, Technicians and Postdoctoral Scholars to Protest at All Campuses

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(CALIFORNIA) – Two unions at UC representing employees who conduct the day-to-day research that makes the University a world leader in scientific innovation are picketing across California. UAW 5810, the Union for over 6,000 postdoctoral scholars, and UPTE/CWA 9119, the Union for over 9,000 researchers and technicians at the University of California, are protesting the University's hiding behind the California state budget crisis to refuse salary increases and benefit improvements for postdoctoral scholars, researchers, and technicians.

These employees' salaries and benefits are funded in large part by UC's growing grant revenues from federal agencies such as NIH, NSF, DOE, NASA, etc, and not from shrinking State of California funds. These grant funds, which have more than doubled since 1997, must be used on the projects they have been allocated for and may not be used to substitute for the loss of state funding at UC. Nonetheless, University negotiators claim that California's budget woes prevent UC from offering a fair compensation proposal to research workers.

"Postdoctoral Scholars, researchers, and technical workers play an invaluable role at UC campuses," says Representative Lynn Woolsey. "They have helped bring in billions of dollars in federal grants and contracts, and their work is part of what makes the University of California a world-renowned research institution. I urge the University to work cooperatively with the unions representing these workers to reach an agreement that exemplifies the sort of productive labor relations that Californians expect."

The University's strategy of hiding behind the state budget crisis has raised the ire of student leaders on campus as well. "There is an undeniable state budget crisis, and UC administrators must reprioritize how they spend state money instead of raising fees—focusing more on funding education than funding the disproportionately large and ever-growing senior management," argues Victor Sanchez, President of the UC Student Association. "In the same vein, UC administrators must use the robust research grant revenues they receive to compensate their research workers fairly."

"The University has enough discretion in research grant budgets to give fair increases in salaries and benefits to the front-line researchers who do the lion's share of the work driving the research mission of the University," notes Stanton A. Glantz, Professor of Medicine at UC San Francisco. "Indeed, the University will not permit faculty to submit grants unless the budgets allow for anticipated increases in salaries and benefits."

"The University should immediately stop hiding behind the state budget crisis and reach a fair agreement with these workers," said Jim Wells, Director, UAW Region 5.

Workers will picket on all 10 campuses of the UC system from 12-1 on Tuesday, December 15. Press conference to be held at UC Berkeley at the south entrance to campus (Telegraph and Bancroft). Speakers to include representatives from Congressional Representatives; Sharon Cornu, Secretary-Treasurer, Alameda Labor Council; Victor Sanchez, President, UC Student Association; as well as researchers, technicians and postdoctoral scholars.

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