

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Research and Technical Unfair Labor Practice Strike September, 24<sup>th</sup> 2009

## **What is this strike about?**

The UC administration has been meeting with our elected representatives for 18 months but has failed to meet its legal obligations to bargain seriously, especially in the critical areas of research worker safety (even after the preventable death of a UCLA researcher), layoff protection, salary raises, and benefit costs. This ULP (unfair labor practice) strike is a protest against UC's unilateral implementation of health benefits and transportation increases after our contract expired, Yudof's attempts to implement furloughs without bargaining any guarantees of job security, the layoff of our elected bargainers, and other examples of bad faith bargaining by UC. We've reluctantly been forced to realize that the only way to get movement from real administration decision-makers is through a strike.

## **Who decided to strike? Why now?**

In a secret ballot in July (May for one campus) an unprecedented number of UPTE members voted on this question and 82% voted to authorize a strike. The state UPTE officers and the lead bargainer chose the date based on input from members and supporters.

## **Do I have to tell my supervisor?**

This is your decision. The union has notified the central administration who in turn will notify departments. Many members with positive relations with their supervisors inform their supervisors in the same way you'd inform them of a scheduled day off, telling them that you will not be working that day to honor the UPTE strike.

## **Can I take sick leave or vacation?**

Do not call in sick unless you are legitimately ill. The University may request some kind of medical verification of illness. If you are out ill, do not participate in picket lines. If you use either sick leave or vacation that day, you should be aware that UC will consider you on work status and not on strike. They will use this information in the media to belittle the strike's effects.

You can be on vacation if it has been approved. If you do use vacation, spend it on the picket line. You will not receive strike benefits if you are on vacation.

## **How is this a legal strike and can I be disciplined?**

Unfair labor practice strikes are completely legal when an employer commits pervasive and egregious unfair labor practices such as bad faith bargaining, unilateral implementation of changes, direct dealing with members, failure to provide information, and retaliation against bargainers. UC has committed all of the above.

**If you receive any threat of discipline, inform UPTE immediately and we will take action.**

**Is UPTE striking on its own?**

No, UPTE is not on its own! While the level of support varies by campus, we expect broad support. Faculty and student groups are organizing their own events for that day and plan to join us on the picket line. The strike is sanctioned by the county Central Labor Council and building trades and teamsters will honor our picket lines. Other unions are committed to sending members to our picket lines.

**What if UC comes up with an offer before the strike?**

If the threat of a strike causes the administration to begin to bargain seriously, the UPTE lead bargainer and state officers have the power to call off the strike if they believe that will get us closer to a fair agreement.

**Does UPTE have a strike fund?**

Yes, UPTE has a healthy strike fund. UPTE will pay "Solidarity Gifts" of \$40 to each member who signs in on the picket line for at least a four-hour shift. Be sure to sign in to receive your solidarity gift.

**I'm an AP/99 member. Can I join RX/TX members on the picket line?**

Yes. Tell your supervisor that you do not cross picket lines and therefore will be honoring UPTE's strike. For most people that will be enough. Call us if you are told you'll be written up if you don't come to work, because UC can't do that as it is illegal. Those AP/99 members who do not go to work and join the picket line for at least 4 hours will be eligible to receive the UPTE "Solidarity Gift", a payment of \$40. If you choose to go to work you can still join the picket line before work or during lunch.

**I'm an HX member. Can I join RX/TX members on the picket line?**

You can join on your own time. HX employees currently have a contract with a no strikes provision. UPTE may strike with HX in the future on the basis of unfair labor practices committed against HX but the limited bargaining on wages and benefits has not yet proceeded that far. We strongly encourage HX members to participate in picket lines before and after work and during lunch and breaks.

