



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

November 15, 2024

ACADEMIC COUNCIL CHAIR STEVEN CHEUNG

Dear Academic Council Chair Cheung:

I am writing to you regarding a tentative agreement between the University of California and International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) regarding a contract extension on the Academic Student Employee (TAs, Readers, Tutors) and Graduate Student Researcher (GSRs) collective bargaining agreements.

As we recently discussed with Academic Council and the Faculty Advisory Committee on Graduate Education and Employment, the University and the UAW has been working on a confidential basis with union leadership on a potential contract extension that would be mutually beneficial. This process allowed the parties to discuss privately whether a short extension would be possible but also limited our ability to engage in substantive discussions with valued stakeholders about the negotiations. Having reached an agreement – **which is pending a ratification vote by UAW members** – we are now at liberty to bring our faculty colleagues into this conversation. (Fortunately, the confidentiality provisions will not exist for the next round of successor bargaining and we look forward to extensive stakeholder engagement at that time.)

On the afternoon of November 15, 2024, the parties reached a tentative agreement that adds additional months to the existing agreement and hence extends the contract expiration date from May 31, 2025, to January 1, 2026. One of the most important consequences of this change would be to ensure that the contracts will no longer expire during finals and commencement, a particularly sensitive time for all of our campuses.

Graduate student employees receive their annual salary range adjustment on an October-September cycle, with the general range adjustment effective on October 1 annually. If ratified, the agreement calls for ASE and GSR salary scales to be range adjusted by 4% on October 1, 2025, which is an on-cycle range adjustment. Nothing about this contract extension changes the normal salary range adjustment cycle or process for graduate student employees.

Beyond the salary scales, a novel feature of this agreement involves the creation of a pilot “transition position program.” This was a particularly important concern for the UAW. It will provide for a very limited number of graduate student employees to apply for a transitional position if they have an irreparable employment-related conflict with their supervisor, or if their supervisor has left the University. This pilot program sunsets with

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the rest of the agreement on January 1, 2026. Other than these two revisions to the ASE and GSR collective bargaining agreements, all other terms remain the same.

This modest contract extension benefits both faculty and students, including undergraduate students. Through consultation with Academic Senate committees, including Academic Council, Academic Personnel (UCAP), Coordinating Committee on Graduate Affairs (CCGA), Faculty Welfare (UCFW), and the newly formed Faculty Advisory Committee on Graduate Education and Employment, we know that the current contract expiration date of May 2025 is potentially disruptive, especially vis a vis the administration of final examinations and commencement activities. With this contract extension, we are moving toward a January expiration cycle rather than a May cycle.

Moving the expiration date to January 1, 2026, also lays the groundwork for more productive bargaining. With this additional time, we will be working closely, and in collaboration with, the faculty representatives to the bargaining team, as well as the faculty advisory committee established by the Academic Senate, to engage in robust preparations.

There are also consequential legal disputes between the parties that we believe will be resolved this Spring, including disputes around recognition and the “no strikes” clause. The resolution of these issues is likely to impact bargaining proposals; having resolution prior to bargaining will allow us to be better prepared at the table.

Attached to this letter is a set of questions and answers to provide further information on this contract extension. I ask that you share my letter and the Q&A attachment with the divisional Senate Chairs to distribute broadly to all faculty.

Finally, I wish to thank you, and our faculty colleagues, for providing expertise and advice as we began consulting over the past few months in preparation for negotiations. We believe that this has substantially improved the process and enhanced our collective understanding of faculty concerns, which is precisely what the establishment of these consultative bodies was intended to accomplish. I look forward to finding common ground with our union colleagues to reach a successful agreement once negotiations begin in earnest next summer.

Thank you for your time and dedication to our academic community.

Best wishes,



Katherine S. Newman
UC System Provost and
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

UC Berkeley Chancellor's Distinguished Professor
of Sociology & Public Policy

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Attachment: Questions and Answers re Contract Extension

cc: President Drake
Chancellors
Academic Council Vice Chair Palazoglu
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Nava
Executive Vice President Rubin
Executive Vice Chancellors and Provosts
Senior Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer Bustamante
Senior Vice President Turner
Laboratory Director Witherell
Vice President Brown
Vice President/Vice Provost Gullatt
Interim Vice Provost Haynes
Vice President Humiston
Vice President and Chief of Staff Kao
Vice President Lloyd
Vice President Maldonado
Vice Provosts/Vice Chancellors for Academic Personnel
Vice Chancellors for Research
Deputy Provost Lee
Associate Vice Provost Jennings
Associate Vice President Matella
Assistant Vice Provosts/Vice Chancellors for Academic Personnel
Chief Human Resource Officers
Graduate Deans
Executive Director Lin
Deputy General Counsel Woodall
Principal Counsel Crossen
Acting Chief of Staff Garber
Deputy Chief HR Officer and Chief of Staff Henderson
Labor Relations Directors
Chief Policy Advisor McAuliffe

Attachment – Questions and Answers re Contract Extension

Below, please find a set of questions and answers related to this contract extension.

1. When is the University going to start bargaining with UAW regarding the newly merged graduate student employee (ASE/GSR) unit?

Subject to the UAW's ratification vote, the University will start bargaining with the graduate student employee unit in July of 2025. The parties have agreed to meet six months before the contract expires on January 1, 2026 to provide adequate time to negotiate a fair contract. The parties have also agreed to set ground rules before bargaining starts to ensure that issues that are unique to graduate student researchers and academic student employees are appropriately addressed.

2. I thought that bargaining for graduate student employees was going to start in February of 2025, has that date changed?

Subject to the UAW's ratification vote, yes. The current ASE and GSR contracts' duration is two and a half years. The University and UAW agreed to a brief contract extension in order to allow both parties time to prepare for bargaining and resolve several important issues that will impact bargaining proposals.

3. What is a ratification vote and when is UAW's ratification vote?

Any collective bargaining agreement between the parties requires ratification from UAW's members before the agreement is final and can be implemented. Ratification refers to the majority of the Union's employees (50% plus one) voting to approve the deal. The Union will schedule a ratification vote as soon as possible, but we do not yet have the date.

4. How will this contract extension impact annual salary range adjustments for graduate student employees?

Nothing about this contract extension impacts the normal salary range adjustment process or timeline. Academic student employees and graduate student researchers receive their annual salary range adjustment on an October-September cycle, with the general range adjustment effective on October 1 annually. For 2024-25, UAW represented graduate student employees received their general range adjustment on October 1, 2024, as provided for in the collective bargaining agreements. With the contract extension, on October 1, 2025, graduate student employee salary scales will be range adjusted by 4%.

The University understands that the costs of these contracts is impactful and that we are facing uncertain and difficult financial circumstances. To that end, the parties have also agreed that absent agreement by the parties, other than the 4% general range adjustment on October 1, 2025, there will not be another salary scale range adjustment in the 2025-26 fiscal year. The University has also made it clear that future bargaining agreements will not include off-cycle salary range adjustments.

5. What else does this contract extension include?

A pilot transitional position program that will expire with the contract on January 1, 2026. The

pilot program allows graduate student employees to apply for a transition position each quarter/semester if they have an irreparable employment related conflict with their supervisor, or if their supervisor has left the University. The University shall award up to six graduate student employees per year per location with a transitional position (i.e., two graduate student employees per quarter, or three graduate student employees per semester, per campus).

6. What does this mean in terms of potential strikes?

With this contract extension, the “no strikes” provision in the collective bargaining agreement is in effect through January 1, 2026, prohibiting strikes until that expiration date. As we have in the past, the University will take swift action to ensure labor peace and academic continuity through this academic year and for the duration of the contract extension.