



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
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December 4, 2025

ACADEMIC COUNCIL CHAIR AHMET PALAZOGLU
EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLORS AND PROVOSTS

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to you with my monthly update regarding ongoing negotiations between the University and the United Auto Workers (UAW) for the unified Academic Student Employees (ASE – TAs, AIs, Fellows, Readers, Tutors) and Graduate Student Researchers (GSR) bargaining units. Please share this message with all faculty. As we near the end of the academic term and approach the holiday season, I want to offer my appreciation once again for your continued engagement during this particularly busy time.

Bargaining with UAW has continued at a steady pace since my last update: the union presented nine proposals and counterproposals during November's two bargaining sessions. The union addressed topics such as appointment security, defined contribution and retirement plans, past practice, wages, and waivers. They have requested that their Defined Contribution Plan contributions be invested in a "Social Equity Fund" or a similar option, and that the quarter/semester limit cap for employing graduate student employees be removed.

The UAW's initial wages proposal includes a unified pay scale for both salaried and hourly ASE and GSR employees with an additional consumer price index based cost of living adjustment, guaranteed income for hourly employees (regardless of the number of hours worked), and provisions to recognize experience across all titles, which would expediate the rate at which graduate student employees receive experience level increases. The union seeks to have ASEs and GSRs on the same unified salary scale by 2028.

Under such a unified salary scale model, GSRs would average 10% increases annually and ASEs would average 6% increases annually. To achieve a 4-salary point unified salary scale in 3 years, the distribution of increases would vary widely, such that GSRs would receive increases ranging from 8-21% in 2026, and 4-14% in 2027 and 2028. Teaching Assistants would receive increases of 4-8% annually and Associate Instructors would receive increases of 3-8% annually. Readers would receive increases ranging from 12-14% in 2026 and then 12-13% in 2027 and 2028. Tutors would receive increases ranging from 1-6% in 2026 and then 4-18% in 2027 and 2028.

Given the significant budgetary constraints we face, and the uncertainties surrounding the federal funding landscape, the University is prioritizing the review of these proposals, including costing and impact, in consultation with University stakeholders, including the

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faculty advisory committee and the faculty bargaining team members, as it determines next steps. We also recognize that this topic is central to a final agreement for all parties, hence our concentration on its resolution.

Concurrently, the University presented 11 proposals and counterproposals related to ASE recognition, ASE workload, required training and orientation, union access, and union security. The University is seeking clearer expectations for ASEs for reporting any anticipated workload increases, retiring the Teaching Fellow, Remedial Tutor, and Special Reader titles in favor of existing titles with the same scope of work such as Associate Instructor, Tutor, and Reader, and aligned training and orientation language for ASEs and GSRs to continue to provide clarity that academic training activities for credit, or are required of all students in a program, are excluded from the scope of employment.

Lastly, both parties continue to exchange counterproposals on key articles, including employment files, discipline and dismissal, grievance and arbitration, immigration, non-discrimination, and a respectful work environment. The ongoing movement on these important topics reflects meaningful progress in negotiations, and the University remains hopeful that several of these articles will reach a tentative agreement very soon.

The University and the Union plan to engage in an expedited bargaining sprint across four consecutive days in December, with the shared goal of making as much progress as possible before the ASE/GSR contracts expire on January 1st. Both parties remain committed to reaching a fair agreement that supports UC's education and research mission while remaining realistic about operational and financial constraints.

For up-to-date information on ASE and GSR bargaining, please see [UCnet](#) and [UC Press Room](#) websites for additional information on these negotiations and updates on other bargaining units.

Thank you for your continued patience and dedication throughout this process, and for the many ways you strengthen our academic community each day. I am grateful for the steadfast commitment you bring to our students and to the University's mission. I look forward to finding common ground with our union colleagues to reach a successful agreement that benefits the graduate student academic employees, the faculty, and the overall mission of the University.

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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cc: President Milliken
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