



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
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December 17, 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.

The University and the UAW met for four consecutive days of productive bargaining last week. In an effort to close the contract, the parties reached tentative agreements on eight articles: Arbitration and Grievance, ASE Classification, ASE Recognition, Discipline and Dismissal, Employment Files, Non-Discrimination, Respectful Work Environment, and Union Security. In addition, we reached a tentative agreement on two side letters/appendices on legacy ASE titles and the panel of arbitrators. Additionally, at the conclusion of the four days, the University and the UAW also agreed to a one-month contract extension through January 31, 2026. This reflects a significant amount of work and a strong example of constructive bargaining. Congratulations to everyone involved.

In addition to the ten tentative agreements, the parties exchanged several counterproposals on important articles, including GSR Personal Time Off, GSR Time and Effort, and Leaves. The University's GSR Time and Effort proposal aims to align notice procedures for GSRs who have workload concerns with the ASE workload article, while also clarifying existing exclusions for student effort that remains outside the bargaining contract. The University's Leaves proposal addressed new statutory leave provisions, while the UAW's Leaves proposal continues to expand short-term leaves, long-term leaves, and add a paid immigration-related leave. While the parties have not yet reached an agreement on these proposals, the University will continue to bargain them in good faith.

With a total of 18 tentative agreements reached to date, the University will shift its attention to economic proposals in the new year. As mentioned in my last letter, the UAW's initial wage proposal establishes a unified pay scale for salaried and hourly ASEs and GSRs; the union aims to place all ASEs and GSRs on a single salary scale by 2028. Under this model, GSRs would experience average annual range adjustments of approximately 10%, and ASEs would see about 6% adjustments. These numbers do not account for experience level increases, which would result in additional salary increases for this population.

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The University has not accepted the UAW's initial wages proposal and has spent a significant amount of time consulting with key University stakeholders, including faculty, to develop a counterproposal that supports UC's education and research mission while remaining realistic about the financial challenges the University faces in the years ahead. Additionally, the University understands grant budgets are not increasing fast enough to keep up with these costs. Furthermore, as agency budgets are cut, the UC expects the funding available to support GSRs to continue declining. All these pressures are being carefully considered as we develop the University's counterproposal for presentation next month.

With the one-month contract extension, our work will resume in January with five bargaining sessions that have already been scheduled. Campuses will be operating under a closed contract through January 2026. However, practically speaking, campuses will need to begin preparing for academic and instructional continuity in the event contract negotiations stall after January. I will maintain frequent communication and provide updates as negotiations progress over the coming month.

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.

Your partnership has been especially appreciated as we reach the end of the quarter and semester, and I appreciate your attention to these important issues. The bargaining process can be lengthy and tedious, and I appreciate your continued patience and the many ways you support our academic community each day. 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.

Lastly, I wish you a restful and rewarding holiday season.

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

cc: President Milliken
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