

# California Legislature



October 19, 2021

Michael Drake  
President, University of California Office of the President  
University of California  
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor Oakland, CA 94607

Dear President Drake:

We urge you to prioritize labor peace and job stability for lecturers by coming to an agreement with the University Council-American Federation of Teachers (UC-AFT) that recognizes the contributions of UC lecturers with reemployment preferences.

UC-AFT members have sought to address these issues in collective bargaining and have proposed solutions that are consistent with existing industry standards for public higher education in California. For years now, reemployment preferences for contingent faculty at all California community colleges and all California State Universities have helped balance labor and management interests and ensure that great teachers can continue teaching. It's time that these same practices are adopted across the UC system.

After two years of bargaining the University of California and UC-AFT have reached an impasse for a successor contract for lecturers. These teaching faculty members, who teach one-third of undergraduate credit hours, have been working without a contract since February 1, 2020. In May 2021, they voted by 96% to authorize their colleagues on the UC-AFT bargaining team to call a strike.

Lecturers, who typically hold Ph.D.s or other terminal degrees, have good reason to object to the conditions of their employment. Their median earnings in 2019 were \$19,067<sup>1</sup> and the current system subjects UC-AFT faculty to discriminatory patterns. Among the UC's faculty ranks, as in private industry, the more secure and better compensated jobs are held disproportionately by men. In 2019, only 35% of UC ladder rank faculty were female whereas women make up more than half of all lecturers.<sup>2</sup> Furthering this structural bias against women faculty, many lecturers and their families are excluded from eligibility for health insurance as a result of pervasive

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<sup>1</sup> To replicate this number, go to <https://ucannualwage.ucop.edu/wage/> and search for lecturer job titles ("LECT-AY"), then sort by earnings and look for the middle observation.

<sup>2</sup> Obtained from UC's diversity dashboard: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/uc-workforce-diversity>

under-employment. The share of lecturers eligible for medical benefits has dropped steadily over the last 3 years, including during the pandemic, so that nearly half are left without access. By creating low-wage, short-term jobs without benefits, the University is externalizing its costs to the larger community. For an institution that prides itself on expanding both health care access and educational equity, this is a shameful situation.<sup>3</sup>

Most lecturers in their first several years of employment report never having their teaching observed by a faculty peer, let alone receiving a full performance review. Without a contractual process for evaluating lecturers in their first several years, the University cannot possibly retain the best instructors and risks replicating historical inequities through patronage and bias. By refusing to evaluate lecturers or use a merit-based retention process, the University also fails to foster a skilled teaching faculty, instead punishing experience and letting excellent faculty go arbitrarily. Sadly, UC students are being cheated of educational continuity and dependable mentorship.

We look forward to your written response on these issues.

Sincerely,



Chair, Assembly Labor and Employment Committee



Mark Stone  
Assemblymember, 29<sup>th</sup> District



Lorena Gonzalez  
Assemblymember, 80<sup>th</sup> District



Blanca Rubio  
Assemblymember, 48<sup>th</sup> District



Miguel Santiago  
Assemblymember, 53<sup>rd</sup> District

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<sup>3</sup>Lecturers are eligible for medical benefits if they have a 44% or higher appointment. While data on how many are eligible is not publicly posted, a good indicator is the share who actually receive medical benefits. According to data from the State Controller's office, only 38% of lecturers received benefits in 2019, compared to 86% of tenure track professors.



Alex Lee  
Assemblymember, 25<sup>th</sup> District



Isaac G. Bryan  
Assemblymember 54<sup>th</sup> District



Luz Rivas  
Assemblymember, 39<sup>th</sup> District



David Chiu  
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Assemblymember, 15<sup>th</sup> District



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Assemblymember, 28<sup>th</sup> District