

December 21, 2023

FROM: Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Life Sciences (CACLS)

TO: Chancellor Christ, EVCP Hermalin, VCR Yelick and Vice Provost Plaut and Dean García Bedolla

Dear Chancellor Christ, EVCP Hermalin, VCR Yelick, VPF Plaut and Vice Provost and Dean García Bedolla:

We are writing to communicate our concerns about the impact of the 2022 UAW contract settlement with graduate students, postdocs and academic researchers which, we believe, without additional funding for departments, will have a **catastrophic impact on the teaching and research mission of the University.**

In this letter, we focus on the community the Chancellor's Advisory Committee for the Life Sciences (CACLS) represents, faculty in the Life Sciences at UC Berkeley. In conversations and meetings with our colleagues, we have heard and continue to hear that faculty are grappling with serious challenges relating to the prevalence of externally funded Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) and course offerings that rely heavily on the contribution of Teaching Assistantships (TAs). This situation is exacerbated by new financial constraints stemming from the many postdoctoral scholars employed by faculty in the Life Sciences who are also covered by external funding that was obtained before the 2022 UAW contracts and that is (and will continue to be) restricted by funding ceilings.

Below is a summary of our requests and recommendations, on which we elaborate on page 4 of this letter.

1. We ask that UC negotiators consult with faculty representatives prior to offering or agreeing to contract terms.
2. We request that the campus implement graduate tuition relief or waivers from the Graduate Division or central campus. We request that Graduate Division fellowships be increased concomitant with the rising costs of GSR positions and tuition/fees.
3. We request an annual justification for graduate tuition and fee increases and that campus consider a cohort-based model for graduation tuition and fees, similar to what has been implemented for undergraduates, to help faculty plan their grant budgets.

4. We ask that UC adopt a system similar to other public institutions, where students who have advanced to candidacy pay (much) reduced tuition.
5. We ask campus leadership to explore and implement programs to support additional TA resources for laboratory and field-based courses.

To better understand faculty concerns, CACLS developed and distributed to Department Chairs and Deans a survey (see [Appendix A](#)) among Life Sciences faculty between April 17 and 27, 2023. The CACLS survey received 122 responses representing nine colleges/schools/ORUs (see [Appendix A](#) below for list). **Among the reported adverse impacts, the most striking to the Committee is the negative impact on morale and mental health of the faculty, along with the decrease in expected acceptance of new graduate students reported by ~77% of faculty.**

The goal of the survey was to determine the impact of the strike settlement on the following key aspects of faculty wellbeing and their research and teaching missions:

1. Research groups and research productivity
2. Teaching, instruction, and mentoring
3. Department and Division support for graduate programs
4. Potential future impacts on research, instruction, and departments
5. Effects on the motivation, morale, and mental health of faculty

A graphical and numerical summary of responses is provided in [Appendix A](#). The complete, detailed results of the survey can be found in [Appendix B](#). In brief, the survey showed consistent and widespread concerns that the UAW contract, without additional funding for departments, will have a **disastrous impact on the teaching and research mission of the University**. For example, 86% of respondents anticipate or expect that the strike settlement will adversely impact their Division or Department. We detail some of these concerns below:

#### Impact on teaching and research

- 77% of faculty indicated they are accepting fewer graduate students.
- 46% of faculty indicated they are accepting fewer postdocs
- 74% of faculty indicated their Division/Department is now accepting fewer students
- 81% of the faculty indicated that the strike settlement would adversely impact their teaching/instruction.

One respondent wrote:

*“We are accepting FAR fewer students. Whereas a typical grad entry class might be 20-25 students, we have 5 this year and 5-10 is the likely new normal”.*

We note that the expected reduction in graduate student admissions will have a snowball effect on other aspects of the University's business. Fewer graduate students (and postdocs) will result in a **reduction in research output**, which will, in turn, **impact the international standing of UC Berkeley and our ability to attract external funding**. (We recommend the article by S. Zhang et al, "[Labor advantages drive the greater productivity of faculty at elite universities](#)" published in *Science Advances*, November 2022 that describes this phenomenon with data). **Eighty-two percent** of respondents anticipate or expect that the strike settlement will adversely impact their research group and/or research productivity. The reduced number of graduate students will also have a **strongly detrimental effect on our teaching mission**. **Eighty-one percent** of faculty anticipate or expect that the strike settlement will adversely impact their teaching/instruction. In the Life Sciences, in particular, teaching is strongly dependent on GSIs who often lead laboratory and field sections of the courses not only by providing mentorship to students in the lab and in the field, but also by ensuring they are performing experiments and fieldwork in a safe manner. High student to GSI ratios for these types of courses puts our students at risk. Unfortunately, the solution to this is to offer fewer such hands-on opportunities to UC Berkeley students. In sum, fewer graduate students directly translates into **fewer opportunities for undergraduate students** to engage in hands-on mentored research. Likewise, an increase in the student to GSI ratio in lecture courses results in fewer opportunities for undergraduate students to engage intellectually with course content in discussion sections and graded work. Moreover, a reduction in GSI support will further burden faculty with additional instructional duties and salary/tuition costs. Thus, in general, there is concern that the **quantity and quality of the course offerings will be reduced**. One respondent wrote:

*"Our division will have to increase the # of undergraduate students per GSI moving forward. We will not be able to achieve the vision of a research-enhanced educational experience for our undergrads while simultaneously contracting the size of our PhD program."*

There is, again, particular concern for the laboratory-and field-based instruction that is crucial in providing a quality education to undergraduate students in the Life Sciences. A respondent wrote:

*"We already had too little support for lab courses, and it now looks like teaching these is no longer worth it. I'm planning to change the format of my main undergraduate course after next year to remove the lab section. "*

Forty-two percent of respondents answer that they have changed their course format and/or assignments due to decreased campus support.

In addition to the survey data, CACLS gathered data from the Graduate Division on Life Sciences PhD program admissions and acceptances from the 2013-2014 academic year to the current academic year, 2023-2024. We provide this data in [Appendix C](#) below. Overall, there is a slight decline in graduate students admitted from 2022-2023 to the current year 2023-2024, when the UAW contract went into effect. However, a closer look at the raw data shows that specific programs had a sharp decline in graduate enrollment this year. Neuroscience is at 56% of last year's level, Plant Biology is at 64%, and Letters & Science programs are at 84%. Based on this data, all three are at the lowest levels in ten years. That said, we believe that the full impact of the contract on graduate admissions in Life Sciences is yet to be felt. A continued assessment of graduate admissions data should be done each year.

### **Impact on faculty retention and recruitment**

If the increased cost of GSRs is not offset by increased support to departments, this will severely impact faculty by reducing the size and corresponding productivity of research groups, which will also result in **a less competitive environment for recruitment and retention of faculty**. For example, faculty respondents wrote:

*“The increase in salary is totally ok given the cost of living in the Bay Area and the competitive nature of recruiting the best students. What has affected us negatively is the utter lack of support from the university. If you want to maintain a leadership role among public universities you have to change the view of getting money from research labs to finding ways to support them. If these things do not change quickly, I am very skeptical that we can maintain a strong research program - because faculty and students will both leave or not come in the first place.”*

*“I was already burnt out and the fallout from the strike has exacerbated things.”*

**Critically, 68%** of respondents indicated they will need to **write more grants** than they have before to support their research grants. This will **markedly increase the workload and stress** for faculty and their research groups and will **decrease faculty time available for quality teaching and mentoring**. In addition, there is widespread concern that work previously carried out by graduate students now must be carried out by faculty. Thirty-four percent of respondents report that they now do more work that was previously done by GSIs. In addition, there are concerns regarding junior faculty. A comment from a respondent:

*“I feel sorry for young faculty starting at UC. It will be hard to build a thriving research group at UC with the resources provided by the University”*

**The strike and its settlement has left a lasting mark on faculty morale.** Many faculty feel that they did not receive adequate support and information during the strike and its aftermath. We share several comments from survey respondents below:

*“I feel frustrated about faculty considerations being absent from the bargaining table; being put in positions that pitted us against our trainees and/or our undergraduate students; being (in some cases) now viewed as the "enemy" by graduate students. We all want to pay trainees a living wage but in most cases faculty and departments receive no financial support to do so. The absence of transparency and near complete lack of useful/reliable information from UCOP and campus throughout the entire process is unacceptable and only serves to further sow the seeds of mistrust across campus”.*

*“This is not only a big impact but also the way the impact is handled is a disaster. Faculty and instructors are being left alone to deal with the impact of the strike. The information available is all through comments and whispering, very misleading. The disproportionate impact on junior faculty is not addressed. Basically, the message from the university is ‘deal with it’.”*

The decline in faculty morale is clear in many aspects of the survey results. For the question, *“How would you rate your motivation and morale as a faculty researcher at UC Berkeley in light of recent changes in faculty teaching and funding responsibilities after the strike settlement?”* **Fifty-six percent** of faculty indicated their motivation and morale as very poor or poor.

### **Requests and Recommendations**

We believe there are a number of ways campus leadership could help mitigate the impacts of future contracts on faculty, their research groups and their teaching. We outline these requests and recommendations below.

1. For future such negotiations, we ask that UC negotiators consult with faculty representatives prior to offering or agreeing to contract terms. This is not a request for faculty to be present at the negotiation table; rather, it is a request to create an open channel for faculty representatives to provide feedback on terms that could potentially be difficult or impossible for faculty to manage or carry out.
2. Given that the financial situation in departments and research groups in the Life Sciences is no longer viable due to the impact of the strike settlement, we request that the campus implement graduate tuition relief or waivers from the Graduate Division or central campus. Increases in Graduate Division Fellowships concomitant with the rising costs are essential to help offset the increase in GSR costs. We note that NIH compensation for salary and tuition is typically \$13,000-\$20,000 below UC Berkeley contract levels, prohibiting many faculty and researchers from hiring GSRs without additional funding from campus (as NIH Grants Management disallows the current GSR funding levels).

3. We ask the University for greater accountability around graduate tuition and fees. Given that faculty shoulder the burden of increased salary costs, now in excess of what is allowed by NIH as mentioned above, we request an annual justification for graduate tuition and fee increases, especially if they are increasing at a rate higher than undergraduate fees. We recommend that the campus explore a cohort-based model for graduation tuition and fees currently used for undergraduate tuition in order to help families plan their budget. Similarly, implementing a cohort-based model for graduate students will help faculty plan their grant budgets.

4. Given the context of increased salary mandates, we ask that UC adopt a system similar to other public institutions, where students who have advanced to candidacy pay (much) reduced tuition.

5. We ask the campus to explore and implement programs to support additional GSI resources for laboratory and field-based courses.

In summary, we believe that **without additional campus support, we should expect lower research output, reduced support for undergraduates in their courses, lower quality of instruction, and severe challenges in faculty retention and recruitment.**

Lastly, we encourage the administration to institute procedures for information sharing and faculty support during future strikes and their aftermath, including more clear guidance on effort reporting.

With respect,

Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Life Sciences (CACLS) 2023-2024

Co-chairs

Eva Harris, Infectious Diseases and Vaccinology, School of Public Health

Rasmus Nielsen, Integrative Biology

Ben Blackman, Plant & Microbial Biology

Chris Chang, Chemistry

Steve Connolly, BioEngineering & EECS

Marla Feller, Molecular & Cell Biology & Neurobiology

Seth Finnegan, Integrative Biology

Karsten Gronert, Vision Science, School of Optometry

Rasmus Nielsen, Integrative Biology

Michi Taga, Chemistry

Russell Vance, MCB/Immunology and Pathogenesis

Ian Wang, Environmental Science, Policy, and Management

Jen Chywan (Wally) Wang, Nutritional Sciences & Toxicology

Former CACLS members (on Committee when survey was conducted)

Stephanie Carlson, Environmental Science, Policy, and Management

Anders Naar, Nutritional Science & Toxicology

Susan Marqusee, Molecular & Cell Biology and QB3

Whendee Silver, ESPM/ES Ecosystem Ecology (Co-Chair)

## **Appendix A: CACLS: Survey for Life Sciences Faculty on the Impact of the Strike Survey Questions and Responses.**

College/Schools and ORUs represented in survey responses:

Rausser College of Natural Resources; School of Public Health, College of Chemistry, College of Letters & Science [Division of Biological Sciences and Social Sciences (Psychology)]; College of Engineering (BioEngineering); School of Optometry and Vision Science, Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute, and QB3.

### 1. Has the strike settlement impacted your research group and research productivity?

I am accepting fewer PhD students.

(77%) indicated yes

I will need to write more grants than I have before to support my research group.

(68%) indicated yes

I have less time to work on publications for journals or other scholarly activities.

(55%) indicated yes

I am accepting fewer Postdoctoral researchers.

(46%) indicated yes

I am having difficulty fulfilling obligations related to my current federal grants.

(36%) indicated yes

I am less willing to take on and lead bigger proposals or research programs.

(32%) indicated yes

I am accepting fewer undergraduate researchers

(15%) indicated yes

The strike settlement has not affected my research group and/or research productivity.

(11%) indicated yes

### **Selected follow up comments for above question.**

“Relief on grad tuition, postdoctoral retirement/health benefits, would enable existing grants to cover increased costs in salary”

“Students did not attest to striking, forcing faculty to misreport effort on federal grants.”

“If faculty don’t receive supplemental funding from the institution, it will be more economical to staff the lab with a few postdocs and several techs without grad students. The budget will prevent us from fulfilling our training mission.”

“I don't have any PhD students, but was building up to do so. With this hot mess and the uncertainty about % time, I will not be taking PhD students in the near future. It is causing me to explore other options for pursuing research either by having no students and doing it all myself, or going outside the university.”

“I expect to shift toward less integration of graduate education with research, at least in the next few years. I rely on a mix of PhD student GSRs and staff researchers for similar types of work, and will probably shift the balance toward more staff effort rather than PhD GSRs, given that the cost has converged and the new settlement makes it more difficult to employ PhD students who are also supported by federal training grants. Also I am acutely aware that the settlement is only for 3 years, the strike seems to have produced great results for UAW, and it's hard to see any reason why a strike would not recur in 2025.”

“And enraging to have no say and have never been taken into account by UCOP, UAW, UC Berkeley etc. as they negotiated and signed an unfunded mandate and then (as was obvious was going to happen from the get-go) dumped the entire mess onto the faculty, who are already stretched way past the limit. I feel we (I) am just about past the breaking point; we need resources to absorb at least some of this shock. Let me emphasize that I fully support a living wage for all, but UCOP/UC Berkeley squeezing more blood from a stone (the faculty) is not the answer.”

“The new pay scales are above what NIH allows for postdocs (and will be soon above what NIH allows for GSRs), thus I will not be able to appoint postdocs and students in the future who want to work here at Berkeley under the old pay rates but no longer will be able to.”

“My lab manager will most likely have to leave. Funding their salary/benefits is no longer likely to be possible once the PhD/postdoc salary hikes kick in.”

“However, the strike has had a \*cultural\* effect that's harder to quantify. I've talked with several PIs whose students/postdocs struck, and those faculty feel betrayed. It seems like we're now officially in a regime where employment and degree progress are formally separated, and I'm concerned what effect this will have on the mentor-mentee relationship.”

“I am disappointed that the university made generous agreements with the UAW on graduate student appointments -- the base pay at 100% plus benefits is an unreasonable number. I am disappointed that departments / deans / graduate division did not make a statement to distinguish research as a student activity for research units and towards the thesis from the GSR appointment duties. I am also disappointed that to this day the university has not recovered wages given to striking employees for work they did not do. The university must be responsible for state and federal funds awarded.”

“I feel very uncertain about the new rules and I don't feel confident in the UC administration to clarify these rules or consider their impact on externally-funded research. I also feel an ongoing sense of conflict in interactions with graduate students that is different from my past experiences. This disrupts my ability to manage research in my group and I am much more inclined to hire non-student research staff because I will be able to have clear expectations.”

“The university must find a way to increase the number of PhD students that can be admitted to departments that rely on GSI slots for supporting their students. The burden has been placed squarely on the shoulders of individual PIs to fund their labs. This may work in some disciplines (for example those that are funded by large NIH awards), but current NSF awards in biology are simply not large enough to sustain this model in most situations. The consequence is that the graduate program in Integrative Biology is being decimated. Faculty will start leaving Berkeley for other institutions if this trend continues.”

**2. Has the strike settlement impacted your teaching/instruction/mentoring? Please check all that apply.**

I have changed my course format and/or assignments due to decreased campus support.  
(42%) indicated yes

I now do more work that was previously done by Graduate Student Instructors.  
(34%) indicated yes

I have fewer Graduate Student Instructors than previously.  
(30%) indicated yes

The ratio of undergraduates to Graduate Student Instructor has increased.  
(28%) indicated yes

(23%) indicated yes

The number of Graduate Student Instructors has not changed for my courses.  
(11%) indicated yes

**Selected follow up comments for the above question.**

“I will be teaching a lab in the Fall. My dept. already said that there will be less funds for GSIs. This translates to less GSIs per student (my course will have about 100 students in it. Before the strike, I had 2 GSIs, which was already crazy). Not only is it a pedagogical issue, but it's also a safety issue if there are not enough GSIs in a lab.”

“Eliminated most assignments and assessments due to lack of GSI support.”

“I won't really know about this till I teach a course with GSIs again. The uncertainties are the biggest problem right now.”

“I think it is unrealistic that the institution expects to treat the post-strike environment as a zero sum game, cutting GSI positions to keep overall budgets fixed. Our student/instructor ratio is already very high and will get higher. It is not fair to ask instructors to take on this extra work, or to 'innovate' technological solutions to instruction that can depersonalize education.”

“I am concerned about equity on a number of fronts--for our graduate student instructors, for undergraduates, and for teaching. I already spend at least 200-300 hours grading per semester. I don't know how I would possibly do more, so my teaching would have to be altered, probably for the worse.”  
“Bluntly, I am forced to do less with less. There is no getting around the fact that I cannot meet research and service expectations and fill-in for a lack of GSI support.”

“GSIs do not fulfill their required teaching hours, and I don't know how to enforce the requirement to meet the minimum hours. Moreover, some GSIs cannot complete their duties in only 20 h per week. I don't see how I can meet my teaching objectives for an upper level course with the GSI support we anticipate will be available under the new settlement.”

“We already had too little support for lab courses, and it now looks like teaching these is no longer worth it. I'm planning to change the format of my main undergraduate course after next year to remove the lab section. The recommendation from the Dean's office that we simply adjust our teaching practices to cope with less GSI support is, frankly, insulting. We can't always simply do more with less, no matter how often the university tells us to, and the university isn't offering any resources for radical redesigns of courses and teaching practices.”

“This is not only a big impact but also the way the impact is handled is a disaster. Faculty and instructors are being left alone to deal with the impact of the strike. The information available is all through comments and whispering, very misleading. The disproportionate impact on junior faculty is not addressed. Basically, the message from the university is ‘deal with it’.”

### **3. Has the strike settlement impacted your Division/Department? Please check all that apply.**

My Division/Department PhD Program is now accepting fewer students.  
(74%) indicated yes

My Division/Department must now support GSIs previously funded by campus Temporary Academic Support (TAS) funds.  
(38%) indicated yes

The strike settlement has not affected my Division/Department.  
(3.5%) indicated yes

### **Selected follow up comments for the above question.**

I don't think I know the full impact on the department at large, but I expect it to be massive.”

“All our PhD students have always been fully funded in our PhD program (never less than at the 25% GSI/GSR level both SP and FA; vast majority at the 50% GSI/GSR SP/FA + full time over summer level). But the rigidity of the labor agreement has eliminated flexibility to draw on multiple sources and various approaches to compensation, and our PhD program (which is ranked #4 nationally) will shrink by about 20 percent in order to manage the uncertainty regarding future funding.”

“My department already scrapes by on very limited funds. Not sure how we will handle any financial

obligation if the department is expected to shoulder costs that we previously have not shouldered.”

“As far as I can tell, my department has no clear idea on how to fund future students. We are 40+ faculty and were allowed to accept a handful of students. This will completely cripple our department.”

“We are accepting FAR fewer students. Whereas a typical grad entry class might be 20-25 students, we have 5 this year and 5-10 is the likely new normal.”

“Our division will have to increase the # undergraduate students per GSI moving forward. We will not be able to achieve the vision of a research-enhanced educational experience for our undergrads while simultaneously contracting the size of our PhD program.”

**4. Looking forward, I anticipate or expect that the strike settlement will have an impact on my experience as a faculty at UC Berkeley. Please check all that apply.**

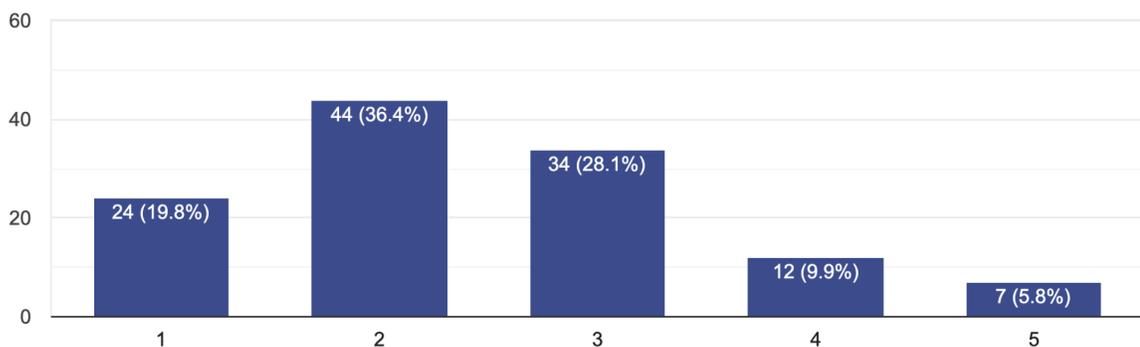
I anticipate or expect that the strike settlement will adversely impact my Division or Department.  
(86%) indicated yes

I anticipate or expect that the strike settlement will adversely impact my research group and/or research productivity.  
(82%) indicated yes

I anticipate or expect that the strike settlement will adversely impact my teaching/instruction.  
(81%) indicated yes

**5. How would you rate your motivation and morale as a faculty researcher at UC Berkeley in light of recent changes in faculty teaching and funding responsibilities after the strike settlement?**

121 responses

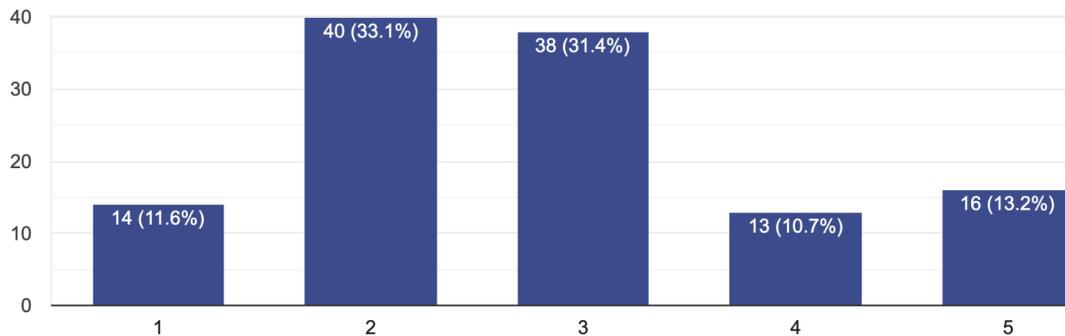


1 = Very Poor

5= Excellent

6. How would you rate your mental health and general well being as a faculty researcher at UC Berkeley as a result of recent changes in funding and support after the strike settlement?

121 responses



1= Very Poor

5=Excellent

### Additional Comments

“The increase in salary is totally ok given the cost of living in the Bay Area and the competitive nature of recruiting the best students. what has affected us negatively is the utter lack of support from the university. If you want to maintain a leadership role among public universities you have to change the view of getting money from research labs to finding ways to support them. If these things do not change quickly, I am very skeptical that we can maintain a strong research program - because faculty and students will both leave or not come in the first place.”

“The contracts for undergraduate TAs are resulting in the decimation of our large Data Science and CS courses. It is uncertain how displacing thousands of students from those programs will impact teaching across campus.”

“Lab size is correlated with research output and, ultimately, international rankings of the university.”

“I have to look into hiring staff positions not GSRs as the cost is too high for me.”

“I see the strike as a community destroyer, and its ripple effects are going to be felt for a long time. Repairing the damaged relationships will surely require immense, long term effort--but will faculty have the energy or motivation for it when we are already massively overextended and tend to feel like we are the big 'losers' in the strike settlement? I feel frustrated/angry about faculty voices being absent from the bargaining table; being put in positions that pitted us against our trainees and/or our undergraduate students; being (in some cases) now viewed as the "enemy" by graduate students. We all want to pay trainees a living wage but in most cases faculty and departments receive no financial support to do so. The absence of transparency and near complete lack of useful/reliable information from UCOP and campus throughout the entire process is unacceptable and only serves to further sow the seeds of mistrust across

campus.”

“I will have to accept fewer PhD students, postdocs and undergraduate students and hire fewer technicians, and there will be less funding for reagents and supplies, all of which will of course decrease productivity and competitiveness and greatly increase stress. This will make UCB and my lab less desirable and thus make it difficult to recruit super high-quality personnel. I will need to write more grants, while shouldering additional administrative responsibilities and time commitments and less instructional support. Not a pleasant vision of the future.”

Given the lack of funding for graduate students and our already shrinking TAS budget, I anticipate a much smaller graduate program in IB. I have had numerous IB grad students tell me over the years that they chose Berkeley over other top program despite Berkeley being the worst financial offer because of the size and vibrancy of our departmental graduate student community. As we lose this it feels like our graduate program has entered a death spiral. I'm already contemplating just focusing on postdocs going forward but this will also be challenging with the new salary minimum that is well above the stipend provided by many external postdoctoral funding sources.”

“There are two aspects of the strike that impact my experience as a faculty member.

1) The financial costs are of course a concern. Everything costs more now and it probably translates to a ~10% increase in costs. This is significant by itself but even more serious when layered on top of other financial stressors. Grant funding is generally stagnant but costs are increasing all the time. My NIH grant has been flat (on average) for almost 15 years now but every aspect of being a professor is more expensive now. It is not sustainable to ask faculty to continually write more grants to cover the increasing costs.

2) More significant than the financial burden are the damages to our community at multiple levels. Trust between faculty and trainees has been eroded due to the strike. It would be great if the campus could provide a roadmap for rebuilding relationships. Additionally, trust between faculty and the administration has also taken a hit. At every crisis point faculty are asked to make more sacrifices and concessions. Budget cuts have reduced staff support, covid response required more effort from faculty in teaching and mentoring, and the strike demands more financial input from faculty. I know the administration cares about the faculty but sometimes, due to lack of communication and unclear messaging, faculty feel isolated and out of the loop.”

“The way the strike was drawn out and settled by the university seems to have convinced the graduate students that the university is against paying them living wages. After reviewing all of the information that we as faculty received from the university during the strike, I believe that faculty were put into an ambiguous position (whether this was on purpose or not is irrelevant) that prevented many of us from discussing the strike with our students and maintaining a line of communication and support throughout the strike. The university also placed pressure on faculty to retain high level of course quality in an impossible situation, which was directly pitted against the goals of the graduate student union to create maximal disruption. Because the university drew out the strike out much longer than necessary, the combination of these situations has resulted in a lot of tension between faculty and graduate students, and between graduate students and the university. In general I feel that graduate students are not providing

(and have not provided) any sense of empathy or understanding for the situation that faculty were put into by the university, which is angering faculty at this point as well. All of this has led to serious conflict in our department, affecting climate and recruitment.”

“The campus negotiated an increase in salaries for research personnel, but without asking the PIs whether we could afford the raise, and the raise was implemented very soon after the strike. For those of us who have grants, we could not ask for more funds to cover the raise in salaries, and the campus just expected that we could cover those raises. That’s very unfair to PIs. If the campus administrators agreed to the raise, they should be the ones to bear the cost, not the PIs! They do not represent the PIs!”

“Why were faculty not involved with or surveyed before negotiations?”

“Just pay students more and stop charging tuition to PhD students. Give that money to them for the work they do. It does not make sense for them to be researchers and be enrolled in a 299 course. Make that course disappear and stop charging tuition for those credits.”

“My primary concern with the arrangement is the definition of percent time and having caps on a student’s ability to seriously pursue research. The fact that it is so poorly defined is a recipe for disaster.”

“The most painful and frustrating part of this has been how so many of the problems resulting from the strike and new contract have been pushed down onto individual faculty to figure out. For example, I still do not have clarity on what to do about GSRs who did not attest as they should have, and there is now no one responding to my messages about this at [strikeattestation2023@berkeley.edu](mailto:strikeattestation2023@berkeley.edu). The campus seems to want us all to just “move on” as though it’s a psychological barrier we need to overcome, but we are still dealing with real problems like reporting effort to funders without clarity or guidance. Faculty need support and guidance to work through the real problems before there can be any moving on.”

“I felt that the needs and concerns of NIH supported PIs were not supported during the negotiations. Nobody was representing us or our interests.”

“I deeply support the strike’s improvements to worker conditions but am very disappointed by the way the institution has dodged responsibility for what it negotiated, and then passed on the financial responsibility to its faculty.”

“I feel sorry for young faculty starting at UC. It will be hard to build a thriving research group at UC with the resources provided by the University”

“Second, the lack of cogent communication from the UC Office of the President and even from our campus was a major problem during the strike itself. Faculty were left to sort out for themselves how to handle the situation. It was a challenging time for all. Yet, the departments did fairly well in navigating it on their own--many faculty switched to online instruction to both respect the picket line and to continue instruction to the undergraduates who form the core of our pedagogical duties. It was not possible to carry on with most Discussion sections (although we were not told how to deal with this). However, campuses then received an email

(<https://news.ucsc.edu/2022/12/regarding-faculty-rights-and-responsibilities-2022-11-30.pdf>) from the UC Provost Michael Brown that included the verbiage: “For example, under labor law a Senate faculty

member may not cancel classes, decline to grade exams, or withhold grades in solidarity with the strike while continuing to fulfill other aspects of their job such as their research or service obligations. This could put the faculty member at risk of disciplinary action under the Faculty Code of Conduct." This was a profoundly demoralizing letter, not to mention a confusing one. Its legal basis was immediately questioned by lawyers from the Berkeley Faculty Association among other entities (<https://cucfa.org/2022/12/response-to-provost-brown/>). Faculty were left reeling, concerned that there was going to be punitive action taken towards them while they were navigating one of the most trying and delicate experiences of their academic lives, all the while doing all of the academic work of the university as final exams approached, and trying to support the students and staff on strike who work closely with them as trainees and colleagues. The Academic Senate of both the Berkeley campus and the System should investigate the impact of that letter on the faculty promptly, including by inviting the President and Provost to answer questions relating to it and its effect on morale, etc.”

“There's a broad sense among faculty I've talked to that the campus didn't have our backs as faculty and units during this strike. The messaging from campus to faculty seemed to prioritize staying out of legal trouble above all else, leaving units on their own to address practical concerns (e.g. delayed deliveries, problems with grading). I hope the campus devotes some attention to repairing the relationship. Generally speaking, it might take some time (years) to fully understand the consequences of the new agreement, so I would encourage CACLS to continue surveying faculty.”

“So many details of the strike settlements make no sense and seem to have been negotiated by people with very limited knowledge of how scientific research on university campuses is actually funded and conducted. The fact that we are given no guidance on how to deal with the new policies or what their details even are is frustrating, at best. It speaks to how little the administration cares.”

## **Appendix B**

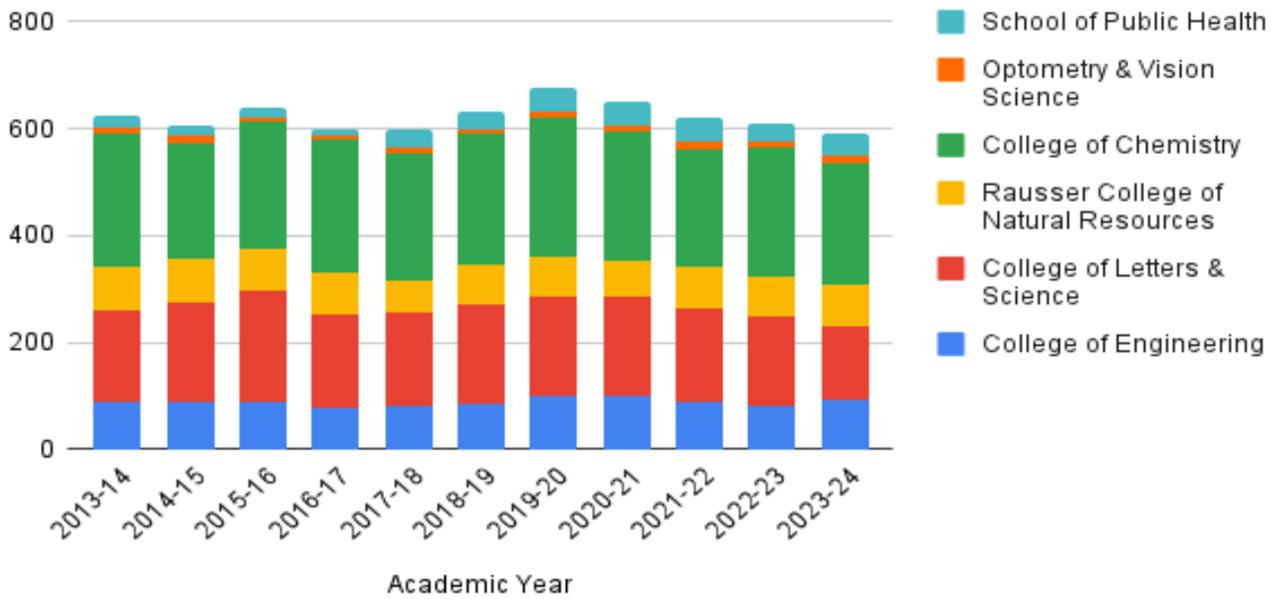
Link to [raw data from the Survey for Life Sciences Faculty on the Impact of the Strike Settlement](#)

## **Appendix C**

Graduate Admissions and Offers Accepted Data in Life Sciences PhD programs over period 2013-2014 academic year to current academic year, 2023-2024.

Raw data for individual PhD programs and aggregate data grouped by College/School/Division can be found [here](#).

## Graduate Admissions



## Graduate Offers Accepted

