

# “All workers should take action”: University of California strike against genocide expands to UCLA and UC Davis

Our reporters  
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The anti-genocide strike by University of California (UC) academic workers against the crackdown on campus protests expanded on Tuesday with 6,400 United Auto Workers members walking out at UCLA and another 5,700 at UC Davis. They joined 2,000 academic workers at UC Santa Cruz who have been on strike since May 20.

In mid-May, 48,000 academic workers in UAW Local 4811 voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike at the nation’s largest state university system. The initiative came from rank-and-file graduate students, researchers and other academic workers who were outraged by the April 30 attack on the Palestine Solidarity Encampment at UCLA by right-wing Zionists, which was aided and abetted by the police. The following day, police carried out a violent assault on the student encampment resulting in dozens of injuries and the arrests of nearly 200 students and academic workers.

In an effort to get ahead of this rank-and-file rebellion and smother it, the UAW apparatus, which is working actively for the reelection of “Genocide Joe” Biden, initially called out students at only one of UC’s ten campuses. The maneuver by UAW President Shawn Fain is modeled on the bogus “standup strike” during last year’s auto industry contract battle, which kept two-thirds of the UAW members on the job producing profits for the automakers.

UAW officials only sanctioned the strikes at UCLA and UC Davis because they feared that rank-and-file academic workers would take matters into their own hands and walk out with or without the permission of the UAW bureaucracy.

At the same time, the California Public Employment

Relations Board denied the university’s request for a court injunction to outlaw the strike last week, no doubt out of concern that such a back-to-work order would be defied by striking workers—potentially triggering far broader strikes to defend students around the country. For the time being, state officials have opted to rely on the UAW bureaucracy to do their dirty work by isolating and wearing down the resistance of striking workers.

At present only a quarter of the UAW members at UC are on strike, with the last week of classes beginning next week. The UAW bureaucracy has also sought to prevent any strike from continuing into the summer quarter by inserting a June 30 termination date in the strike authorization provision.

The UAW bureaucracy has also done as little as possible to inform members in the auto and other industries about the UC strike. Where they have learned about it, chiefly from the efforts of the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) there has been broad support for the striking academic workers and their fight to defend basic democratic rights.

WSWS reporters spoke with several striking UCLA workers as several hundred walked picket lines and marched through the campus chanting, “Our university,” “UC, UC, you’re no good, treat your workers like you should!” and other slogans.

A medical resident who wanted to remain anonymous said, “As a healthcare worker, as a doctor, we absolutely need to protect the right to speak against genocide. Innocent people are being murdered and have been and are being killed, bombed and starved. For all practical purposes, every hospital in Gaza has been

destroyed or no longer functions. Hospitals, schools, UNRWA—every single institution has been destroyed with the intent to cause as much harm to the Palestinians in Gaza as possible.

“So, it is our duty as people that have taken an oath to do no harm, to be healthcare workers, to protect human life. It is our duty to speak out when we see something, anywhere in the world.”

Emily, a UCLA planetary science graduate student, added, “I mean what is at stake and what should be the main focus are the lives of the roughly two million people still in Gaza. They’re experiencing genocide right now at the hands of the Israeli government and all the governments that are supporting it.”

Speaking on the need to expand the strike, she said, “If we’re being honest, we’ll probably need even more workers to go on strike, more campuses to come up and more activity in terms of the people who originally were doing the encampment.

“I don’t think just the university activities and strikes are going to be enough to stop the genocide. I think it would take a lot of organizing in terms of the entire country. You would need multiple unions to come together and organize something like a general strike.”

Anna, a professor in the Department of Education, stressed the lessons of history. “It’s unfortunately been true across history that when people rise up and demand justice for the many, the few often come down hard. It’s been fascinating to me over the last five, ten years to see the way that we’ve sort of created this narrative that nonviolent protest means that nobody is inconvenienced. That’s never been true of protests across history, across time, and certainly not of effective protests.”

Theo, a history graduate student, was disgusted with the ongoing genocide. “It’s abhorrent. As citizens, our tax dollars directly fund this genocide and then our students and workers at the University of California, it’s our tuition that directly goes to this genocide. So workers, students, community members, faculty have been out in the streets for months. That’s only escalated with the student encampments to say that we demand the university end its complicity.”

Theo also agreed the strike needed to be greatly expanded. “All workers should take action in this moment. It’s super important for all of us to stand together.”

Aaron, an adjunct professor who was not a member of the UAW, said, “The UAW represents workers at companies that are directly involved in manufacturing equipment and weapons for Israel. So, if this kind of strike could get expanded to those type of companies, it would be really an important move. I hope that other people in the UAW are thinking about how they could stop this genocide.”

Alfonso, a communications graduate student, was also supportive of mobilizing the working class to halt the Israeli and US war machines. “If we could organize to pull that off, a general strike in all industries, that would be great. In other words, students appealing to workers. I think there is talk about that. There needs to be a mass organizing power to pull it off.”

The expansion of the UC strike is an important step in the growing entry of the working class as the basic force against war and police repression. But academic workers must take the initiative independently of the UAW apparatus, which is aligned with Biden and the pro-war Democratic Party, and expand the strike to all 10 UC campuses, as well as the entire UAW membership, including in the auto and defense factories.

To enforce their strike mandate and democratic will, UC workers must form rank-and-file strike committees to mobilize for immediate, system-wide work stoppages. Against the attempts by the bureaucracy to limit their struggle, they must turn out to the autoworkers and the entire working class for support, establishing lines of communication to prepare for joint actions.

*To get involved in the fight for rank-and-file committees, fill out the form below.*



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