A Collective Refusal of Spring Appointments

This letter, undersigned by the graduate students of the History of Consciousness department, marks a collective pledge to refuse TA and GSI positions in the event of a mass firing of our colleagues and comrades.

On Friday, February 14, UC management issued threats of retaliation against graduate students for participating in a labor action aimed at relieving severe rent burden. UC President Janet Napolitano threatened these students with “termination of existing employment at the university,” while UCSC Interim Executive Vice Chancellor Lori Kletzer threatened that all who do not submit fall quarter grades by Friday, February 21, will not receive spring quarter TA or GSI appointments.

In solidarity with those working for our collective interests, and in order to protect our colleagues and our department, we the undersigned pledge the following:

If, for their participation in ongoing strike actions, including the withholding of grades and the engagement in a teaching strike, any UCSC graduate student worker is fired from their current winter quarter TA or GSI position, or barred from spring quarter TA or GSI positions, we will not accept any spring quarter TA or GSI appointments.

Napolitano and Kletzer are threatening to fire graduate student workers seeking to be paid enough to live where they work. Such threats are an affront to faculty rights, to graduate and undergraduate education, and to the future of our department and our university. We will not stand by when our fellow workers, in demanding relief from rent burden, are threatened with loss of employment, the subsequent inability to support themselves and their families, and the consequential imperilment of their continued graduate education. Relief from rent burden is just, and remains in the interests of a university prioritizing quality teaching and research.

We ask that the university negotiate in good faith to bring this strike to an end. We suggest that the university function for our collective good. We assert that the university works only when we work.

Sincerely,

The Graduate Students of the History of Consciousness
Department University of California, Santa Cruz