

February 24, 2020

## Supporting UC San Diego Graduate Students

Dear Campus Colleagues,

Our graduate students are deeply valued members of our university community, who make vital contributions to the educational and scholarly mission of UC San Diego. Sustaining a strong graduate program underpins our intellectual identity and is crucial to maintaining our position as a leading research university.

As you may be aware, some graduate students on our campus and across the UC system have been participating in solidarity events in support of the wildcat strike at UC Santa Cruz and asking for increased cost-of-living support for Teaching Assistants across the system.

UC San Diego has long been pursuing strategies to address funding and housing concerns for all of our graduate students, including those serving as TA's. To recruit an exceptionally talented and diverse cohort of graduate students each year, we provide the strongest possible support packages and continually enhance the quality of student life.

Over the last decade, UC San Diego has both increased the size of its graduate programs and disproportionately increased its investment in graduate funding, even as state support for the university has declined. Today, the campus provides \$41,000,000 more in annual graduate funding than it did in 2009-10; in addition, faculty research grants and other external sources now offer \$42M more in annual graduate support than ten years ago. University funding for graduate students has increased by 82%, including a 70% increase in TA funding and an 88% increase in fellowship funding.

To comprehensively address the quality of life for graduate students, UC San Diego has been focused on increasing both on-campus housing and financial aid packages. Specifically,

- UC San Diego has been aggressively building more graduate student housing. By fall 2020, we will have nearly doubled our graduate housing to 5,300 beds at a significant discount relative to comparable housing available on the private market. Since our housing is on campus, it will also eliminate lengthy, expensive commutes for students. This increased

housing inventory will allow us to offer multi-year housing guarantees to all incoming graduate students.

- Our financial aid reform will also soon guarantee a five-year financial aid package (including external sources of support) to every incoming PhD student and a three-year package to every incoming MFA student. The comprehensive financial aid package, over the 9-month academic year, (for every PhD and MFA student within the guaranteed support period) will include: full academic-year tuition, fees and health insurance (including access to mental health services), and a stipend at least equivalent to what a 50% UC TA-ship appointment pays.

The terms of Teaching Assistant contracts (including their stipends) are negotiated entirely at the systemwide level through the UC Office of the President. These contracts are represented by a multi-year collective bargaining agreement, which was mutually negotiated and remains in effect until June, 2022. Individual campuses like UC San Diego do not have authority to alter or renegotiate the terms of an existing system-wide labor contract. Moreover, these contracts do not represent our many graduate students who are supported by fellowships, research assistantships, external funding, or other means.

Our graduate students represent the future of the academy—and we are committed to ensuring a bright future for graduate education at UC San Diego.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth H. Simmons, *Executive Vice Chancellor*

James Antony, *Dean, Graduate Division*

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UC San Diego's [Studio Ten 300](#) offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via [studio@ucsd.edu](mailto:studio@ucsd.edu). To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.