

Thousands rally at UC Davis against police brutality and education cuts

Jack Hood**23 November 2011**

Over 5,000 students gathered on the University of California, Davis quad on Monday to protest police brutality, social inequality, and tuition hikes. During a general assembly in the afternoon, the students voted 99.5 percent in favor of a university strike, to be held on November 28.

The strike date coincides with the UC Board of Regents meeting, which was postponed last week due to fears that it would be shut down by student protestors. Instead of holding the meeting at their usual spot at the University of California, San Francisco, the Regents will be convening in four separate locations and connecting via teleconference. This ensures that there will be no central place for students to gather in opposition.

The mass rally at Davis is an expression of growing opposition to the ruling class' use of violence to break up peaceful demonstrations. It came a few days after police officers pepper sprayed peaceful protesters in an event that has provoked international outrage. (See, "The police assault at University of California, Davis.")

Chancellor Linda Katehi, who ordered the police to shut down Friday's attempt to establish an encampment on the UC Davis campus, was allowed to speak at the demonstration on Monday. However, she refused heed calls to resign.

"She is B.S.-ing her way through. She'll resign in a few days," said Shane, an undergraduate student, who added, "I hope that the strike goes through all of the UCs."

"She didn't address the issue, she just came and left," said four-year undergrad Nneka.

Though calls for Katehi's resignation and the abolition of the University of California Police Department are widely supported by the student body, many also

explained to the *World Socialist Web Site* that these demands are not sufficient to deal with underlying issues of social inequality.

"I hope there is a complete overhaul of the economic system," said Shane. "My family relied on social services when I was growing up, and they're cutting [those programs]... The rich need to give our money back. They're living in luxury and they should give it up."

Another undergraduate, Ndidi, explained her position: "Bringing attention to our solidarity is a step against capitalism... I want to see this movement come up with a plan for what to do after capitalism."

Students are furious with the state's response to the movement: "If this is how our government handles people, then we need to address this... They're treating us like roaches by spraying us like this," said Ndidi.

The WSWS also spoke to several students at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where the events in Davis have been followed closely.

Greg said that he saw the video of the attack on Davis students. "The protesters were peaceful, not using violence, practicing civil disobedience. The cop made a big show of spraying them. He looked happy about it. It is not right at all. They are abusing their authority, and infringing on the students' first amendment rights."

Sydney, another student, added, "I think it is really ridiculous. The students were peaceful, the cops didn't have to do that. I saw the video on Facebook. A lot of people are circulating it."

Danielle said she thought the police violence was horrible. "The police should not do that. A lot of my friends feel the same way. Everyone is talking about it. I know a lot of students are writing letters to the government and chancellors in opposition to the use of violence. I support the student protests. As I understand,

they were protesting the fee increases. Fees are going up, and students are going into debt and not getting jobs after college. We have a right to be protesting.”

The desires of the students to end student debt, fully-fund higher education and tackle inequality cannot be met within the confines of the capitalist two-party system. Democrats and Republicans alike are competing with one another to see who can slash social spending the most, and some of the most violent attempts to repress the anti-Wall Street movement have come from the Democratic Party.

Soaring tuition in California—an increase in tuition of up to 81 percent over four years set to be approved by the UC Regents—is a direct response to the budget cuts implemented by Democratic Governor Jerry Brown and the Democratic Party-controlled state legislature.

On Tuesday, President Barack Obama himself refused to answer a “mic-check” call from the audience at a public town hall in New Hampshire regarding the arrests of nearly 5,000 peaceful demonstrators.

“Alright, OK guys, it’s ok... I appreciate you guys making your point, I’ll go ahead and make mine,” the President said, ignoring the protestors’ question.

The president’s response is consistent with the Democratic Party’s line, which has been to ignore the demands of the protestors while simultaneously crushing their peaceful demonstrations. There are reports that the actions of mayors throughout the country have been coordinated with the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security.

Supporters and members of the International Students for Social Equality distributed hundreds of leaflets at the demonstration Monday, calling for an independent political movement of the working class based socialist program to defend public education and democratic rights. (See, “The police attack on UC Davis: The working class and the defense of democratic rights”)



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