

Unite all California State University workers and students

Vote NO on the California Faculty Association sellout at CSU! For rank-and-file control of the struggle!

Steering Group of CSU Rank-and-File Committees
31 January 2024

Do you work for or are you a student in the CSU system? Tell us about your situation and what you think of the union's conduct. To contact us, please fill out the form at the end of this statement.

The Steering Group of California State University Rank-and-File Committees, composed of faculty, lecturers, grad students and undergraduate students, is calling for a NO vote on the tentative agreement of the California Faculty Association by the widest possible margin. We urge our coworkers to join us in organizing independent, democratically-run rank-and-file committees in opposition to this historic betrayal. The terms of this TA will affect the entire workforce and student body, and therefore, we must unite across the system. The very right to high quality public education is at stake.

Professors and lecturers have been astonished by the actions of the CFA bureaucrats, who are proving to all that they represent the interests of the CSU trustees and not the rank and file. CFA members voted overwhelmingly to strike calling for a series of demands, including a 12 percent raise in the 2023-2024 academic year, concrete staffing gains for counselors so that they can provide vital support for our students, and substantial raises to pull the poorest paid among us, the lecturers, out of poverty in some of the most expensive areas of the state and country. The new contract falls far short, with only a 5 percent raise this year, and 2024-25 is contingent on state funding.

We are calling on all workers across each campus to prevent the union leadership from hastily shoving this deal through and then claiming a victory, as was done to our graduate students and teaching assistants back in October when the United Auto Workers Local 4123

prevented them from striking and celebrated a deal with a measly 5 percent wage gain, amounting to \$70 increase a month, as a victory. In the course of that struggle, the Academic Workers Rank-and-File Committee at San Diego State University was formed.

The first order of business is to ensure the defeat of this contract by the widest possible margin. This vote itself, however, cannot be entrusted to the CFA bureaucracy. Instead there must be transparent voting with trustworthy rank-and-file members democratically elected among peers to be in control over all aspects of the voting system to prevent any tampering. We cannot rely on the bureaucracy who brought us this agreement, favorable only to the CSU trustees, to oversee the vote.

Rank-and-file committees are required to halt the union's attempts to ram through the current rotten agreement, to connect professors and teaching staff across campuses, and broaden the fight for demands and improvements which are required not only to improve immediate conditions for faculty and lecturers—many of whom are barely surviving—but also for the undergraduate and graduate population whose education is negatively impacted by the increasing demand on professors and their decline in living standards.

Meanwhile we must begin preparing for a resumption of our strike, this time under control of the rank and file and not the union bureaucrats, and other coordinated actions based on our demands. No strike should be allowed to be called off without the democratic vote of the membership. Central to these is raising the wages of our lowest paid educators out of what amounts to poverty wages in this state.

We demand:

• **An end to the casualization of our profession! No Party, a party of war and Wall Street, expresses its more precarious and miserably paid jobs!**

• **A 12 percent General Salary Increase for 2023-2024 and Cost-of-Living Adjustments tied to inflation for 2024-2025. Reopen the wage negotiations for other CSU workers who want to fight for a living wage. No wage increases can be tied to state funding.**

• **A 25 percent additional increase for lecturers and teaching staff in Ranges A and B, retroactive to July 2023.**

• **Class sizes must be significantly reduced by at least 25 percent. Class sizes have been growing for years. Not only does this overburden faculty, but graduate students and TAs often bear this brunt. Furthermore students are annually paying higher costs for lower quality education. As educators we cannot teach the way we would like or assign the papers and writing assignments to benefit students because the administration has allowed class sizes to balloon.**

• **Vastly improved counselor-to-student ratios. Students must receive top quality education, as well as adequate attention to psychological issues. After four years of a pandemic that has claimed more than one million lives in the US and growing up in the shadow of US wars, brutality, social inequality and the threat of fascism, they must be given proper mental health support and counseling.**

• **A Teaching Assistant assigned to each instructor who teaches at least three courses per semester.**

• **24/7 technical support for all professors and teaching staff.**

• **Rank-and-file control of our dues to ensure there is a strike fund that would allow us to actually sustain a strike until our demands are met. Full documentation of all spending to provide transparency to all members.**

• **Live streaming of negotiations of all sessions, with rank-and-file delegates voted by workers at each campus playing an active role. What is there to hide?**

• **Transparent voting with rank-and-file control over all aspects.**

The fact that we have not been able to raise and address these vital issues within the structure of the CFA bureaucracy is evidence of the wide gap of interests between them and the rank and file. While there have been suggestions that the current CFA leadership must go, there is no indication that anyone else replacing it would better represent workers, outside of ourselves, the rank and file. The apparatus' subordination to the Democratic

Party, a party of war and Wall Street, expresses its hostility to the interests of workers.

As one faculty member highlighted, "The CFA is not in touch with our demands at all. And I wonder how many people in the CFA leadership—when's the last time they taught a class? I want to go on strike against the union."

Rank-and-file organs of power must be built to turn this fight into a political struggle against the privatization of the universities and public education. Meanwhile, there has been no significant fight by the trade unions to halt this process. Today the corporatist and state integration of the trade union bureaucracies is hardly even contested after a long period of betrayals.

Despite the passage of the California Master Plan back in the 1960s which was to guarantee free college to all, tuition has skyrocketed. Students are graduating with tens of thousands of dollars in debt and are treated as cash cows by the administration, which continuously raises tuition on top of food, housing, parking and books which students need.

Academic workers, like all workers, as well as students are under attack on various fronts. The state and the two-party system, in coordination with the unions, are attempting to completely transform public education into a for-profit diploma machine, hijacking our social resources from vital needs toward criminal military endeavors and the bailout of the financial elite. No bureaucracy will help, no state functionary will stop it, no political party tied to capitalist interests will compromise Wall Street interests.

But the working class can put an end to it. We are committed to reaching out to our brothers and sisters on other campuses and beyond, to organize a network of workers throughout the country and across the globe and wage a unified struggle against any and all forces hostile to the interests of the vast majority of working people. Only we can make that difference.

We encourage everyone who agrees that workers must lead this struggle to contact us to join and help build the Steering Group of CSU Rank-and-File Committees at every campus. To contact us, please fill out the form below.



To contact the WWSW and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact