

# Workers and students demand all-out strike in support of University of California academic workers

**Our reporters**  
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A three-day vote to authorize a strike by 48,000 academic workers, members of United Auto Workers Local 4811 across the University of California system, has overwhelmingly confirmed workers' determination to wage a political struggle against the genocide in Gaza and systematic repression of democratic rights.

The WSWs welcomes the outcome of the vote and calls for an all-out offensive against the Biden administration and its Republican accomplices: the ongoing repression of the protests by the state confirms that a full political struggle is necessary against the Democratic Party and the entire political establishment that supports criminal wars and genocide abroad and attacks on basic rights and freedom of speech at home.

On Thursday, police attacked a protest encampment at Chicago's DePaul University, where officers in riot gear dismantled a pro-Palestinian encampment, arresting two.

The UC struggle is placing workers and students in direct conflict with the UAW bureaucracy. The union apparatus is making every effort to limit and minimize the action to toothless "standup" strikes only on selected campuses, against the rank-and-file demand for a full strike. The union has artificially imposed a June 30 end date to the strike, which, despite having authorization, they have yet to call.

The bureaucracy has deliberately prevented its own members involved in similar action from uniting in a common and more powerful struggle. In addition to 48,000 Local 4811 members, another 6,000 at Local 4121 were involved in a strike at the University of Washington that began and ended on the same day, as it was called off by the union announcing a tentative agreement. In Detroit, workers in UAW Local 869 at Stellantis' Warren Stamping Plant also voted in favor of a strike over health and safety grievances but have been kept on the job by the union.

Workers must reject attempts to isolate the UC strike from other industrial actions and take the struggle into their own hands. In order to carry out their demands, a political fight

against the Democrats, Republicans and the complicit union apparatus is a necessity: the formation of an independent rank-and-file committee must be the priority. The struggle must be expanded to all campuses and factories. The entire UAW membership must be informed of what is at stake: war and genocide must be stopped by halting production and democratic rights must be fiercely defended against the repeated attacks perpetrated by the Biden administration.

There is wide support for the protests and for a determined strike across the board among workers and students. On Thursday, the Wayne State chapter of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Detroit, Michigan issued a statement which read in part:

The WSU IYSSE endorses the powerful strike vote by 48,000 California academic workers and pledges to take this fight against genocide, war and attacks on students to the UAW members in the auto plants. In a statement published on April 30, over 100 faculty members at Wayne State University (WSU) in Detroit also denounced the "McCarthyite repression against students on campuses across the United States" and violent police attacks on free speech.

These actions are important steps in stopping the repression of students on campus and in bringing awareness of our overwhelming opposition to the continuing genocide.

However, it is only the working class which can stop this war, and the growing drive to World War III. Students must be warned that the UAW does not intend to carry through a fight against war. On the contrary, UAW President Fain—Genocide Joe Biden's right-hand man, has pledged to transform the plants back into an "Arsenal of Democracy," referencing World War II.

In Detroit, we are well aware of the UAW's betrayal of the recent auto contract which paved the way for the mass termination of supplemental employees. The UAW leadership has continually made decisions against the workers' interests, including the "stand up" strikes that let production continue at the auto plants and ending strikes before deals are made. The workers who remain are increasingly facing unsafe conditions, as shown by the strike vote at Stellantis' Warren Stamping plant.

Therefore, we urge UAW members to form independent rank-and-file committees to wrest control away from the bureaucracy and place it in the hands of workers themselves. The IYSSE supports the call for an immediate strike against the US-Israeli genocide, spreading the strike to the auto plants and mobilizing the industrial working class. We call for workers to stop the handling of any and all supplies to Israel that could be deployed for military purposes. We denounce the arrests of over 3,000 students and the violent attacks on our rights.

Hands off students, defend democratic rights! For a nationwide and international strike against the genocide and war!

A UC-Irvine grad student in sociology told the WSWS she voted to strike because

The bottom line is you're not protecting your workers in any of the ways that you should, whether it's a living or wage or just protecting them from violence on campus.

You shouldn't allow your workers or your students to be hit with rubber bullets, like what does that say about who these institutions are and how much they care about us? They don't, and I think that's a very obvious sentiment.

A faculty member at the University of Washington told the WSWS:

The strike action and the encampment have had a positive impact in my workplace. My colleagues and I are discussing this every day and the student perspectives are being heard. I encourage the students to continue studying the broader

perspectives and implications of their grievances, and to link their actions.

The common struggle is against the corporate power structure, and the struggle is worldwide. Students in the UC system and here at UW must not accept half measures and sellout deals. The working class is hearing you.

The students on strike and the students in the encampment are taking a big risk. We've all seen how far administrations are willing to go to put down encampments. The grad student strike here ended after one day. I asked a student who had been on the picket line if the TA was a good deal; he said it was OK. I asked why the deal was reached so fast; he said maybe the university just needed to know they were serious. But he admitted that a one-day strike probably didn't frighten anyone.

In opposition to the UAW's "stand up" strike the faculty member said, "there should be an all-out strike. These students are being attacked by thugs acting on behalf of the administration."

Leila, a SAG-AFTRA actress and co-host of the PunchUpPod, told the WSWS,

I wholeheartedly support UC academic workers' vote to strike in solidarity with their students, who have been attacked by the administration, by brutal police and by violent counter-protesters. The bipartisan mission to keep funding wars, while creating new laws to criminalize speech and our right to protest, must be fought relentlessly.

We need all hands on deck for as long as it takes to end this genocide, but also to shift US priorities to invest in people, climate, care, and community.

She added, "I'll never support a strike where people are still expected to create profit for the evil they're protesting."



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