November 18, 2021

Michael Drake, President
University of California
Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607

RE: Recognition of Student Researchers United-UAW

Dear President Drake:

We write to urge you to immediately recognize Student Researchers United--UAW as the union chosen by the majority of 17,000 UC Student Researchers.

On behalf of the State Legislature, we are proud that the University of California is our nation’s premier research institute, securing more research funding and producing more patents than any other university in the nation. These incredible achievements play a critical role in California’s leadership on science and innovation – achievements that would not be possible without the hard work and contributions of 17,000 Student Researchers.

These Student Researchers are essential drivers of UC’s research mission, performing experiments, writing research grant proposals, and generating creative ideas that push the boundaries of the fields in which they work.

But despite their enormous contributions to the University of California, Student Researchers face persistent inequalities in the workplace. These issues include low wages, long hours, and workplace harassment and discrimination – all of which detract from Student Researchers’ ability to perform their timely and groundbreaking research.

This is why a majority of these workers (more than 12,000) submitted authorization cards to the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) in May choosing to form a union: Student Researchers United-UAW. PERB verified this majority and the right of the union to be recognized in early August.
The legislature passed SB 201 in 2017 to recognize the collective bargaining rights of all Student Researchers at the University of California. This bill corrected a decades-long injustice that UC Student Researchers did not have the right under the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act to form a union because they were considered solely students and not employees. With the passage and signing of SB 201, the California Legislature and Governor joined in righting this wrong and extending collective bargaining rights to all UC Student Researchers.

It is our understanding that the University has disputed the composition of the bargaining unit, arguing that workers in certain job titles are merely students and not workers with the same arguments UC made against SB 201, and is denying recognition of the new union. **We urge you to swiftly drop this dispute, and recognize Student Researchers United-UAW as the union for Student Researchers in all the titles in which they work.**

We respectfully urge you to ensure that the rights and democratic decision of more than 12,000 UC employees are respected by your administration, and that the University immediately begins the task of negotiating a contract that improves the working conditions of all Student Researchers.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Buffy Wicks  
Assemblymember, District 15

The Honorable Mike Gipson  
Assemblymember, District 64

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski  
Senator, District 10

The Honorable Cristina Garcia  
Assemblymember, District 58

The Honorable Isaac Bryan  
Assemblymember, District 54

The Honorable Ash Kalra  
Assemblymember, District 27
The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez  
Assemblymember, District 80

The Honorable Brian Maienschein  
Assemblymember, District 77

The Honorable Robert Rivas  
Assemblymember, District 30

The Honorable Miguel Santiago  
Assemblymember, District 53

The Honorable Blanca Rubio  
Assemblymember, District 48

The Honorable Rudy Salas  
Assemblymember, District 32

The Honorable Mark Stone  
Assemblymember, District 29

The Honorable Marc Berman  
Assemblymember, District 24

The Honorable Patrick O’Donnell  
Assemblymember, District 70

The Honorable Ed Chau  
Assemblymember, District 49
The Honorable Luz Rivas
Assemblymember, District 39

The Honorable Eloise Reyes
Assemblymember, District 47

The Honorable Wendy Carrillo
Assemblymember, District 51

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Senator, District 12

The Honorable Freddie Rodriguez
Assemblymember, District 52

The Honorable Kevin McCarty
Assemblymember, District 7

The Honorable Joaquin Arambula
Assemblymember, District 31

The Honorable Connie Leyva
Senator, District 20

The Honorable Jim Cooper
Assemblymember, District 9

The Honorable Dr. Akilah Weber
Assemblymember, District 79
The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
Assemblymember, District 60

The Honorable Alex Lee
Assemblymember, District 25

The Honorable Adam Gray
Assemblymember, District 21

The Honorable Lena Gonzalez
Senator, District 33

The Honorable Autumn Burke
Assemblymember, District 62

The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
Assemblymember, District 4

The Honorable Josh Newman
Senator, District 29

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Senator, District 25

The Honorable Dave Min
Senator, District 37

The Honorable Richard Bloom
Assemblymember, District 50
The Honorable Lisa Calderon  
Assemblymember, District 57

The Honorable Josh Becker  
Senator, District 13

The Honorable Dave Cortese  
Senator, District 15

Cc: Cecilia Estolano, Chair of the UC Board of Regents  
    Michael Brown, Provost & Executive Vice President