LETTER OF DEMAND:
Extension to Graduate Waiver of Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition

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31 August 2020

Dean Susan Etner (UCLA Graduate Division), Vice Chancellor Gregg Goldman (Finance)

CC: Chancellor Gene Block, Executive Chancellor Emily Carter, Assistant Vice Provost Samuel Bersola (UCLA Graduate Division), Associate Dean Renate Lux (UCLA Graduate Division), Acting Associate Dean Onyebuchi Arah (UCLA Graduate Division)

Dear Dean Etner, VC. Goldman,

On April 19th 2020, our union UAW 2865 sent out a letter to the UC Office of President (UCOP) calling for extensions of Non-Residential Supplemental Tuition (NRST) waivers and a lift of the six-year teaching limit. These measures are important for many doctoral students, especially international students, who are currently dealing with disruptions brought on by the COVID-19 crisis in their professional and personal lives. After sustained efforts by our members to organize around this issue, UCOP has deferred this decision to individual UC schools.
Since that time, as a result of pressure from graduate students on each campus, the UC as a whole has agreed to lift the six-year teaching limit, yet only UC Davis and UC Berkeley have taken steps to extend NRST waivers; the former has indicated that it will utilize an existing fellowship program to ensure access to NRST funding for international graduate students, while the latter instituted a universal one-year NRST waiver extension. We, the undersigned UAW 2865 members and graduate students, representing the richness of our campus’ plurality and diversity across fields of study, urge UCLA to follow suit.

Access to research resources, including Library materials, has drastically been curtailed in addition to the economic, political, social, physical, and psychological hardships we already face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated effects. Our research in many fields has effectively come to a grinding halt, while fees and deadlines have not sufficiently adapted to the reality that we have all made sacrifices to meet responsibly.

Effectively financially penalizing doctoral students who are, or will become subject to NRST – many of whom are international students – is completely unacceptable, cannot be justified, and goes against the values of UCLA and the UC system, particularly the words of Chancellor Gene Block dated 7th July 2020 in response to the ICE directive against our international student community:

“UCLA is proud that we have attracted the best minds from around the world who have helped us build a vibrant learning community, advanced vital research and strengthened essential international collaborations...We value the voices, insights and presence of every single member of the UCLA family, including those from other countries who have created an intellectual home here, who have established roots in our communities, and who greatly contribute to our campus. UCLA stands with our international students during this challenging period”

The imposition of NRST, which often amounts to an extra $15,000.00 a year, is a heavy and disproportionate burden on students who are paying for resources they can no longer access during this period. International students do not qualify for federal assistance like that contemplated in the CARES Act, cannot ordinarily seek employment outside UCLA, cannot work more than 20 hours a week during term, cannot safely return to their home countries in many instances, and, moreover, face challenges working from abroad if they do return. All of this amounts to an economic strangulation that is further compounded by NRST.
We therefore urge UCLA to:

1. to issue a universal extension to the graduate waiver of NRST for a period of no less than 1 year;
2. apply this extension to doctoral students who have already advanced to candidacy and those who will advance to candidacy within the next 3 years

Students who are affected are not just those who have advanced to candidacy, but also those who have planned to advance and now are struggling to meet deadlines and requirements because of the drastic changes to inter alia teaching, housing, employment, research access, and administration. In addition doctoral students who were planning to go on the job market next year now find that option a remote possibility, and many would have to stay in their programs longer as a result of this disruption in their job search.

Union members believe this is a serious issue concerning equity among the student body across all UCs and will continue to take strong organizing efforts to advocate for this demand. We hope to see UCLA live up to its rhetoric by taking timely action to demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of all its students by covering the NRST for all affected students. At this stage, we call on you to meet with us to discuss these issues, such that they can be sufficiently resolved.

Yours sincerely,

Graduate student members of UAW 2865

Signed:

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<td>Vijay Ravi, PhD Student</td>
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410. Pei-Shan Chung, PhD Student, Bioengineering
411. Ching-Yu Chuang, Master student, Civil and Environmental engineering
412. Spencer Frei, PhD Candidate, Statistics
413. Tania Varela, PhD candidate, Spanish and Portuguese
414. Eduardo Diaz, PhD student, Spanish and Portuguese
415. Madison Felman-Panagotacos, PhD Candidate Spanish & Portuguese
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449. Anthony Meyer, PhD Candidate, Art History
450. Clive L. Lau, PhD Student, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
451. Daniel Abbe, PhD Candidate, Art History
452. Yu-Ching Hsiao, PhD student, Mechanical engineering
453. Adina Matisoff, PhD Candidate, Geography
454. Sofia Pitouli, MA/PhD Student, Art History
455. Yen-Ju Lin, PhD student, ECE
456. Sayantan Mukhopadhyay, PhD Candidate, Art History
457. Joanna Szupinska, PhD Student, Art History
458. Sara Markowitz, PhD student, Psychology
459. Amy Crum, PhD Student, Art History
460. Meng Du, PhD student, Psychology
461. Nicholas Ichien, PhD Student, Psychology
462. Toni Boltz, PhD Student, Human Genetics
463. Ryan Grgrurich, PhD Student, Psychology
464. Jonathan Banfill, PhD Candidate, Education
465. Maureen Gray, PhD Candidate, Psychology
466. Gabriel Locke Suchodolski, PhD Candidate, Sociology
467. Lesley Thulin, PhD Candidate, English
468. Jodie Miller, PhD Student, French
469. Kyle Bijan Rosen, PhD Student, ELTS
470. Gurleen Bal, PhD Student, Physics
471. Tristan Tibbe, PhD Student, Psychology
472. Jason Chin, PhD Student, Psychology
473. Brandon Green, PhD candidate, Ftvdm
474. Laura Munoz, PhD Candidate, Spanish and Portuguese
475. Julia M Schorn, PhD Student, Psychology
476. Yeohoon Choi, PhD Candidate, Art History
477. Jiajin Li, PhD Candidate, Human Genetics
478. Suryansu Guha, PhD, FTVDM
479. JoAnna Reyes Walton, PhD Candidate, Art History
480. Rebecca Wolff, PhD Candidate, Art History
481. William Davis, PhD Candidate, Architecture and Urban Planning
482. Caroline Reilly, PhD Candidate, Sociology
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520. Alessandra Amin, PhD Candidate, Art History
521. Juan D. Delgado, PhD Candidate, Sociology
522. Joel Herrera, PhD Candidate, Sociology
523. Matías Fernández, PhD Candidate, Sociology
524. Meixi Lin, PhD Candidate, Ecology and Evolution Biology
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531. Amber Sackett, PhD Student, French & Francophone
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581. Kellie Roddy, PhD student, Archaeology
582. Yanina Gori, PhD Candidate, Anthropology
583. Daysha Omorogie Edewi, MFA, Theater
584. Yvonne Carrillo, PhD Student, Sociology
585. Sasha Winkler, PhD student, Anthropology
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587. Yael Assor, PhD Candidate, Anthropology
588. Nicolyna Enriquez, PhD Student, Art History
589. Tlaoli Fuentes, PhD Candidate, Anthropology
590. Xinong, MA student, East Asian Studies
591. Yiming Ha, PhD Student, History
592. Lilit Ghazaryan, PhD student, Anthropology
593. Jack Wilson, PhD Candidate, History