

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 8, 2015

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Student Conference Motivates Demonstration for UC Workers Rights

Student representatives from all UC campuses protest from Berkeley Chancellor's Doorstep

BERKELEY, CA – 10am Sunday at the annual Students of Color Conference at UC Berkeley, attended by 900 students, 150 students marched across the campus to the UC Berkeley Chancellor's front yard. The Chancellor has commissioned a fence using \$400,000 of University Foundation funds to build around his on-campus residence, which has historically been open to the university community.

After one hour of crowd testimonies from the yard, students pushed past three police officers up the stairs to the Chancellor's doorstep. They requested a conference with the Chancellor Nicholas Dirks but he did not appear. Students dispersed voluntarily at 11:45 and continued to march through campus. Many students chanted phrases like "UC Berkeley, don't be racist, pay your workers living wages" and "I believe that we can win."

Students of Color Conference is provided to undergraduate and graduate students from all 10 UC campuses by the UC Student Association, who advocates for the affordability, accessibility, and quality of the UC. Representatives from the group had the following remarks:

"Students were motivated to action by the solidarity they feel for our brothers and sisters who work at the UC. Students and workers of color feel personally attacked by the exploitation of contract workers, who work the same jobs as permanent employees without the job security, benefits and rights they receive. Unfair wages and the exploitation of contract workers is a threat to economic justice." – Iman Sylvain, University Affairs Chair of the UC Student Association, Ph.D. Candidate at UC Berkeley

"I was moved today by the powerful statements of students who know that workers have the power to keep our schools in operation. Workers stand up for us when we demand fair tuition. For students of color, many workers look more like us than university faculty and leadership. We knocked on the Chancellor's door and windows to let workers know we have their back." – Daniel Juarez, undergraduate student at UC San Diego

On November 19-20, the UC Regents will review a preliminary budget for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Students at the demonstration today expressed that they want to see more investment in workers and students that will improve the quality of education provided at the University of California, not executive compensation.

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