



May 9, 2018

Dear UC Merced - Chancellor Leland, Dean Jill Robbins, Dr. Paul Almeida, Dr. Nella Van Dyke, and Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Thomas W. Peterson,

As the official voice of students at the University of California, we are in solidarity with demands to support lecturers under attack at UC Merced. We were alarmed to learn of the mistreatment of Dr. Marco Antonio Guzman, Dr. Fernando Cortes Chirino and Dr. Jon Sigmon at the hands of the Sociology Department. In addition to joining their call for reparations, we applaud the efforts of the coalition of lecturers, students, the Sociology Club, and other members of the UC community bringing attention to this issue.

Part of UC's educational quality is its internationally recognized research commitment and academic pipeline, made up of undergraduate students, graduate students, lecturers, and faculty. Among UC campuses, UC Merced leads in fulfilling the academic aspirations of the most diverse population of students. Eighty-six percent of students served by UC Merced are students of color. Many of these students rely on the teachings of the lecturers named above, because their work in dismantling systems of racism and oppression directly affects them. These lecturers provide an unparalleled benefit to UC Merced by empowering students with a highly relevant education that is not only personally empowering but also necessary to address dangerous acts of racism surging today. Rather than showing appreciation for this service, the Sociology Department has intimidated lecturers speaking on these issues and refused to renew contracts, barring them from advancement in UC's academic pipeline, while rewarding faculty members who target undocumented students and engage in sexual assault. Furthermore, duties otherwise covered by lecturers are falling on working graduate students without additional resources.

We echo the following demands made by the Sociology Club at UC Merced:

1. Student representation on the board of the Sociology department in order to fully understand the decisions that are being placed on our education. Many times students do not have a say in decisions that affect their own degrees. Inclusion needs to occur in order to ensure that the department is being considerate of our student population.
2. Full reinstatement to the contracts of Dr. Jon Sigmon, Dr. Marco Antonio Guzman and Dr. Fernando Cortes Chirino. Each and every professor has sworn to preserve the education of their students and in order to fulfill this promise, it can begin by keeping these lecturers on board.
3. Students also demand to be included in the decision making in the hiring of prospective faculty. Almost 80 percent of students at UC Merced are students of color and that number is presumably higher for students within the Sociology major/minor. The department must ensure that those hired are aware of what it takes to work alongside and mentor students of these demographics. Having students involved in the decision will facilitate that.

4. Assigned TA's to all lecturers. Most of the lecturers are left with the responsibility of handling hundreds of students per semester without the help of a teaching assistant. This leads to a decrease of the time that they can provide to students due to the overflowing work that they must deal with without any help. TA's should not be exclusive to faculty.

5. The implementation of policy that secured employment and funding for lecturers; Lecturers with Security of Employment (or Lecturer with Potential for Security of Employment) is an Academic Senate faculty member appointed to help meet the long-term instructional needs of the University "that cannot be best fulfilled by an appointee in the Professor (Ladder-Rank) series" (PPM 230-20, VI. 7. a) as seen implement at various other UC's such as the University of California, Davis.

6. The Sociology Graduate Student Committee demands be addressed and fulfilled by the Sociology Department leadership. We recognize that not only have our lecturers and faculty been affected, but our undergraduate and graduate population as well. Our graduate students experience continuous exploitation by this department and we expect that their grievances and demands be addressed.

Sincerely,
UC Student Association
Board of Directors



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