

April 20, 2020

UCLA Department of Art Faculty statement in support of  
Cost of Living Adjustments for Graduate Student Workers

The faculty of the Department of Art at UCLA voted unanimously to support the implementation of a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all University of California graduate students. We are deeply concerned with the situation faced by graduate student workers throughout the UC system, whose wages have not kept up with inflation across the state. We witness firsthand the struggles that our graduate students face due to the high cost of living. TA salaries do not even cover rent for many students in Los Angeles, which has the most expensive rental market in the state. A significant percentage of our students face food, housing and basic needs insecurity. This is both unreasonable and unacceptable. In solidarity with our MFA graduate cohort, we ask UCLA and the University of California to increase graduate student employee salaries to enable our students to live with dignity and to participate fully in research, teaching and service.

Art Department faculty condemn the firing of the UC Santa Cruz graduate student workers who participated in the COLA strike in the fall of 2019. We affirm each individual's right to freedom of expression. We will actively resist retaliation against student workers who participate in collective actions for COLA. We are committed to supporting the rights of all UC graduate students, to maintaining a climate of justice and equity marked by mutual respect, and to supporting cost of living adjustments for all UC graduate workers.