

University of California workers start 3-day strike over pay

May 7 2018, by Olga R. Rodriguez



Protesters cheer as they listen to a speaker during a rally on the UCLA campus Monday, May 7, 2018, in Los Angeles. Thousands of custodians, security guards, gardeners and other service workers at University of California campuses have started a three-day walkout to address gender pay inequalities and to demand higher wages. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

Thousands of custodians, security guards, gardeners and other service workers at University of California campuses started a three-day strike

Monday to address pay inequalities and demand higher wages.

Strikers gathered at sunrise on the 10 campuses throughout the state, wearing green T-shirts and carrying signs that call for "equality, fairness, respect."

The strike was called last week by American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299, which represents 25,000 [service workers](#), after the union and the university could not agree on a new contract and mediation efforts failed.

Another 29,000 nurses, pharmacists, radiologists and other medical workers heeded the [service workers](#)' call for a sympathy strike and will join the walkouts Tuesday and Wednesday, which is expected to disrupt thousands of surgeries and other appointments.

Medical center officials said they would continue to deliver essential patient care services, but hundreds of surgeries and thousands of appointments were rescheduled last week in anticipation of the strike.

AFSCME spokesman John de los Angeles said the union wants the university to stop its outsourcing practices and address what it describes as widening income, racial and gender gaps for service workers.

"They are actively seeking to hire contract workers in favor of directly employed workers simply because they are cheaper and that is driving inequality," de los Angeles said.

UC spokeswoman Claire Doan said AFSCME service workers are already paid at or above market rates and that the union is demanding a nearly 20 percent pay raise over three years.

"A disruptive demonstration will change neither UC's economic situation

nor the university's position on AFSCME's unreasonable demands," Doan said about the strike.

University officials said they have temporary workers to fill-in during the [strike](#) but that students should expect changes on shuttle routes, less food offerings at restaurants and other inconveniences.

Doan said the university is working hard to ensure patients and students receive services.

Brenda Bishop, an administration [worker](#) at UC San Francisco's anesthesia department, joined hundreds of striking workers who played drums and chanted "One, two, three, four, we won't take it anymore!" outside one of the university's medical centers.

"All the big wigs get big-time bonuses and we're just here to demand what we deserve," Bishop said, who has worked at UCSF for 20 years.

Outside UCLA Ronald Reagan Medical Center, dozens of workers waved at honking cars as they marched along sidewalks hoisting pickets that said "safe staffing now."

The driver of an SUV was arrested after he slowly drove through a crowd of protesters blocking a street outside the [medical center](#), said Los Angeles police officer Lizeth Lomeli. Video from the scene showed a demonstrator in a green shirt hanging onto the vehicle's hood as it moved through the gathering. No injuries were reported.

The UC system, which includes five medical centers and three national laboratories, has 190,000 faculty and staff and 238,000 students.

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