

january-february 2023

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diversity equity & inclusion

newsletter

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uaw on strike

photo Ian Castro

On 14 November, graduate students, academic researchers, and postdocs embarked on a strike to negotiate fair wages, improved benefits, and an opportunity for working and living conditions in which all can succeed and thrive. DEI Newsletter

looks back on the incredible commitment made by those who have participated in the largest academic worker strike in US history. The following photos are courtesy of Ian Castro, Buddy Terry and other union members, story by Jenn Wagner.

the view from west crescent

More than just a picket line, union members and those joining in support found community through salsa dancing, live music, and shared meals, including an IB, strike-themed bake-off. Community such as this has been imperative to the 25% of Berkeley graduate students who have at some point experienced food or housing insecurity under pre-strike contracts.

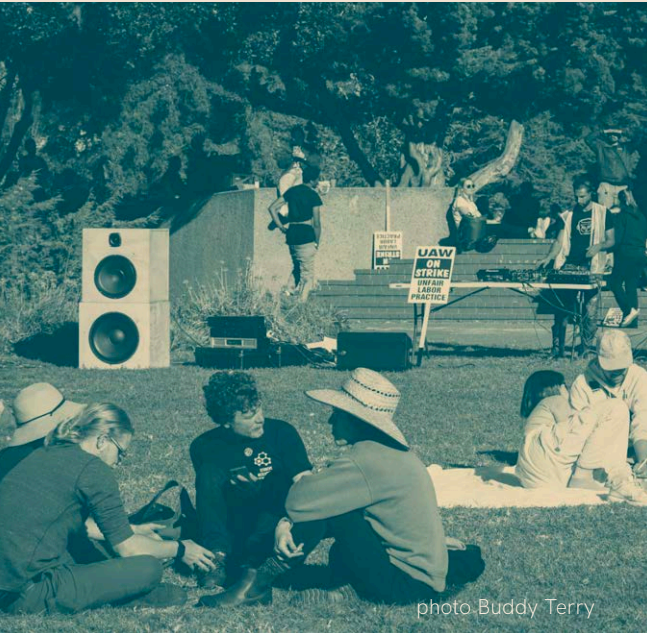


photo: Buddy Terry



photo Ian Castro



photo Ian Castro



photo Daisy Horr



photo Ian Castro

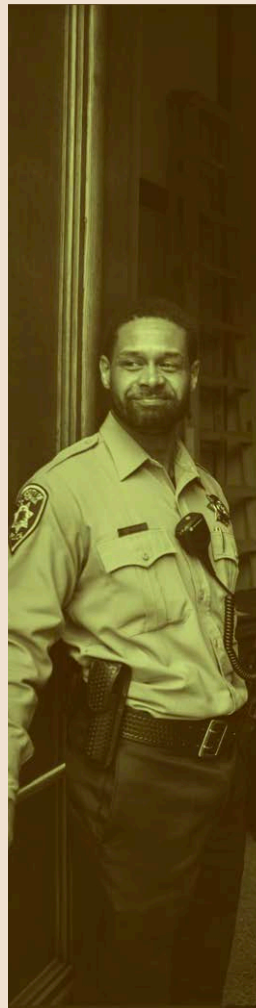


a day at california hall

by Jenn Wagner
Graduate Student

We were frustrated that UC's bargaining team had put forward proposals that were lacking in better wage, childcare, and NRST support. We knew grade withholding was one of our strongest moves and as that was approaching, we wanted to increase escalation to ensure our voices were being heard since none of the higher up positions had made a move to speak with our bargaining team members. Since Cal Hall is an admin building and has an office for Carol Christ, we thought we'd bring our voices to her. For me, the idea of coming together in a safe and organized manner to cause a civil disruption to make our voices heard was appealing and important. It was expressing the urgency for our voices to be heard and to encourage UC to bargain in good faith. Our display of civil disobedience was meant to emphasize our distress and the UC's apathy to our demands for a fair and livable contract.

The people leading our group were experienced and regularly reiterated the importance of this being a peaceful sit-in and a disruptive tactic.



On a rainy first of December, organizers bring the picket into California Hall, disrupting the work of campus administrators. UAW members continued their assembly throughout the night, sleeping on the hard concrete floors under UCPD's watchful eye.

No one would resist arrest if it came, we were not there to harm property or disrupt the student's ability to learn. We were there to disrupt meetings and demand a conversation with Carol. Once we entered Cal Hall, we parked and camped outside of her office for more than 24 hours. Unsurprisingly, we neither saw nor heard from her.

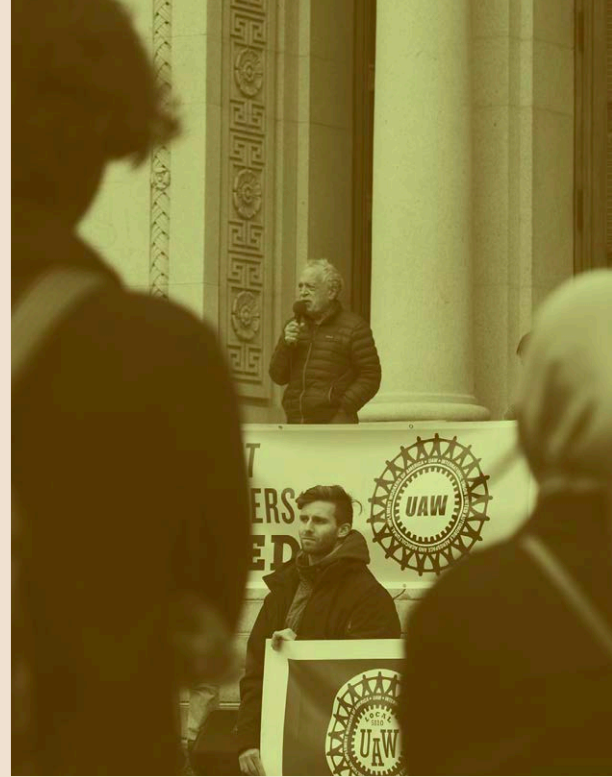
While one large group sat outside Carol's office and demanded a conversation, another large group of us marched in a circle on the 1st floor chanting and disrupting meetings. After an hour or so, most (non-striking) people had left the building, leaving only the union members and chill security guards. When we weren't busy chanting, we met and discussed plans for moving forward, future escalation tactics, and played games until we were ready for bed. Food and sleeping provisions were ~discretely~ delivered and we remained in Cal Hall until the following day at 12pm where we were greeted by fellow union members during our exit. The solidarity and support we were met with during our sit-in at Cal Hall was incredible; the escalation encouraged picket turnout and support, without a doubt.

all photos on this page: Ian Castro

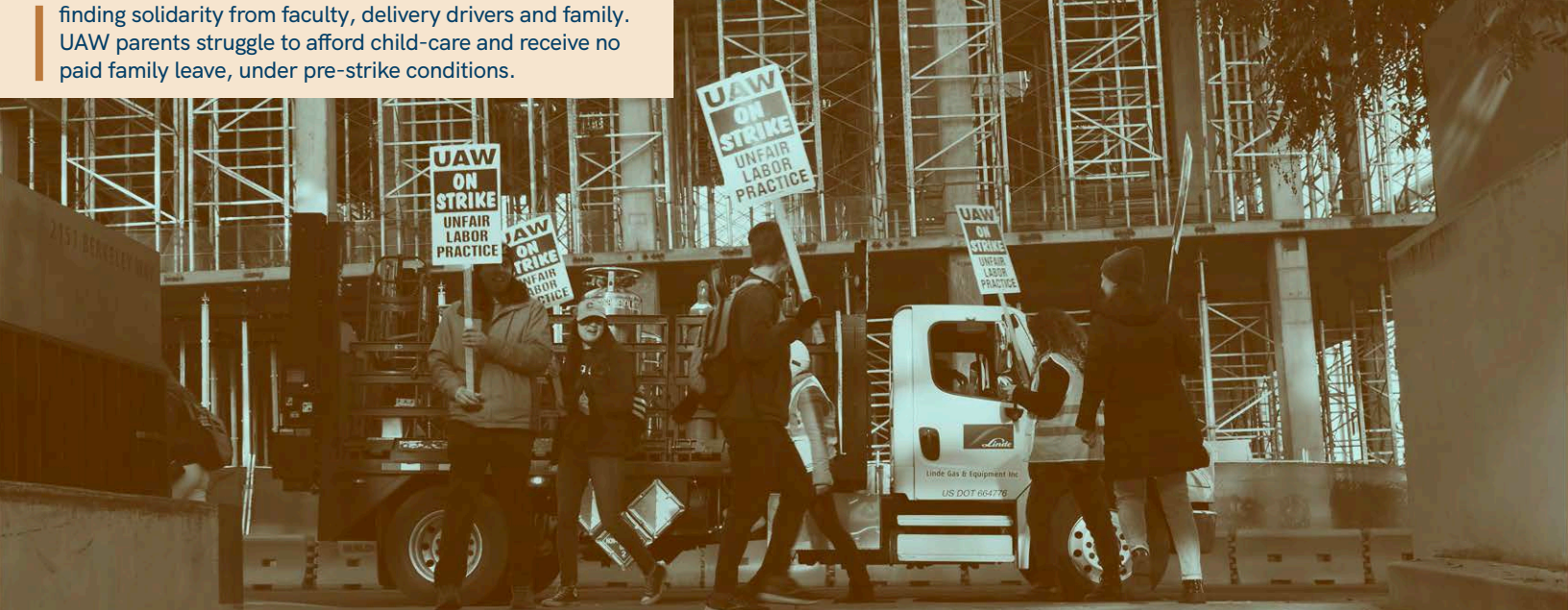
During this strike, because of efforts like this, I have had the opportunity to meet dozens of graduate students from all over campus and that alone is an experience for which I will always be grateful. I'd like to express my endless appreciation and respect for my fellow grad students and all the work they have done and continue to do to fight for a fair contract.



Top: the author (bottom left) and other IB graduate students participate in peaceful acts of civil disruption.
Left: students emerge from California Hall after 24 hours of occupation.



finding solidarity from faculty, delivery drivers and family. UAW parents struggle to afford child-care and receive no paid family leave, under pre-strike conditions.



all photo on this page: Ian Castro

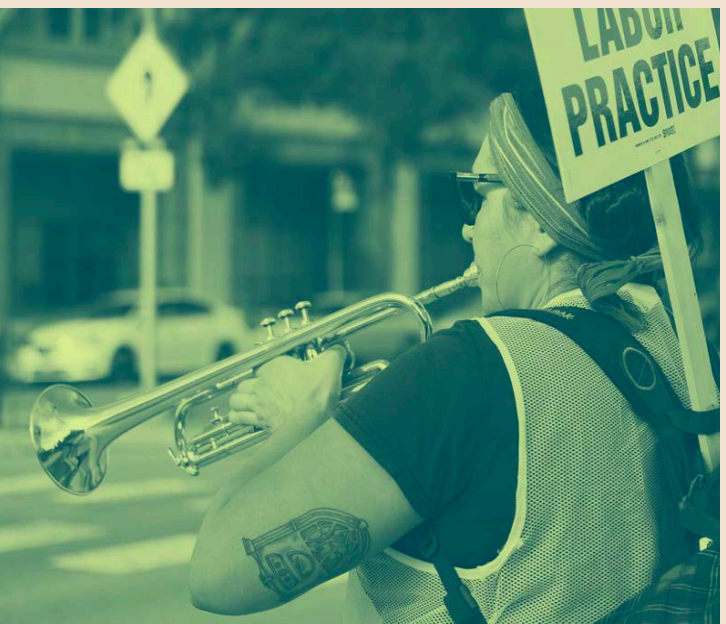
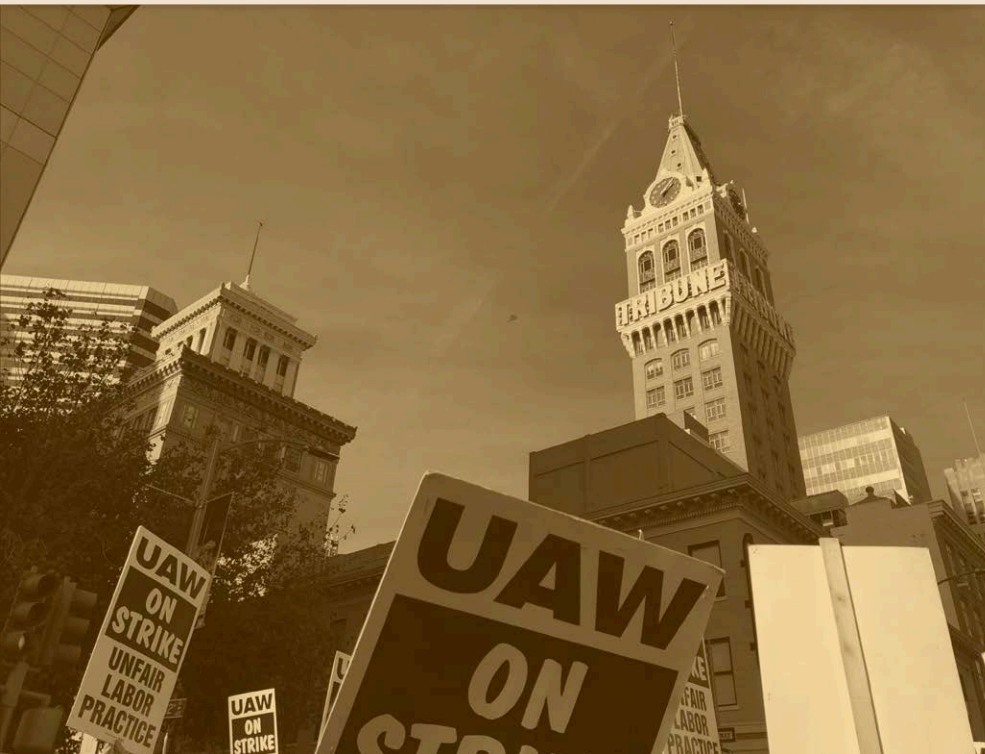




photo Reed



photo Ian Castro



While the inadequacies of pre-strike compensation, benefits, accommodations and workplace environment are felt most acutely on UC campuses the source of these challenges are most often found off of campus. UAW takes the strike to UC President Drake's newly purchased \$6.5 million Claremont home. UAW also shows their commitment outside the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) in Oakland and the state capitol in Sacramento. Over the past 30 years, state funding of higher education has experienced a precipitous decline in California.



where all the money goes

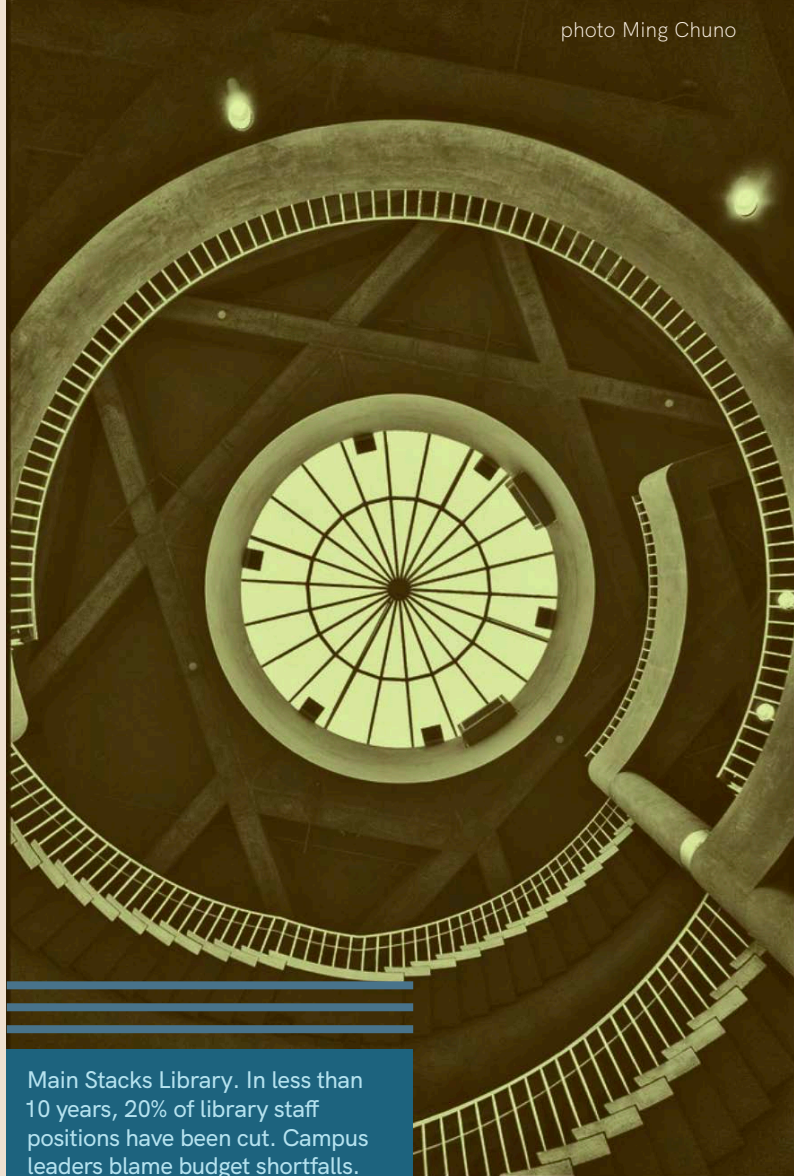
an interview
with

Dr. Khalid Kadir

by Gregory Arena
Graduate Student

For years, UC Berkeley undergraduates have made complaints about rising tuition costs and classroom fees. Instructional and laboratory staff, as well as faculty have felt the pinch of salary reduction, unfilled positions, and fewer classroom resources. And, graduate students, postdoc, and academic researchers are now entering into the sixth week of a UC-wide strike calling for a living wage, benefits, family leave, and a reduction in fees and other exorbitant costs for international graduate students among other demands essential to fostering a more inclusive work environment. Often, this frustration is met with a shrug from university administrators. The UC's short purse-strings, they claim, are tied to declining state and federal funding. But while this is an important part of the story, it is not all of the story. To explain the financial situation of the UC and UC Berkeley, and how we got here, DEI Newsletter sat down for an interview with **Dr. Khalid Kadir**. A continuing lecture in Global Poverty & Practice, Political Economy, and Civil and Environmental Engineering, Dr. Kadir's curriculum and research through the Blum Center for Developing Economies, is with a keen eye toward the role that politics and power play in shaping our public institutions. His interest in the political economics of higher education couples with a career at UC Berkeley tracing back to his time as a PhD student. Through his work and experiences at Berkeley, Dr. Kadir offers an astute perspective into the often daunting bureaucratic and financial machinations of the University of California.

Understanding the UC's finances begins with a look at who is and who is not receiving money on UC campuses. Between 2010 and 2011, UC Berkeley underwent a **workforce reduction** resulting in the loss of over 650 staff positions, allegedly as a last resort to close a widening budget deficit in the



Main Stacks Library. In less than 10 years, 20% of library staff positions have been cut. Campus leaders blame budget shortfalls.

wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Many of those jobs never came back. But even while a downsizing of staff and a growing austerity in how funds are applied has been an issue of concern for many departments, upper and mid-level management roles have continued to grow—both in terms of compensation and number. “Administrator logic is not that we need more instructors, it’s that we need more administrators to do the things that they want to do. There’s a tendency for people to think that the thing that they do is the thing that is most needed. Administrators will hire more people with the same language, same culture, same logics of organizing and managing, because those are the people who speak to [their] values and are therefore what [they] are looking for.” Not only does this solidify the growth of managerial positions, but the importance of jobs on campuses are



photo Ian Castro

Santa Barbara, who sees this as a fairly steady trend over the last 30 years. At present, Dr. Kadir notes that there are 1.5 managers per tenure track faculty member. On one hand, more administrative positions are required to balance a growing number of students enrolled in the UC system. But even this argument doesn't hold up, when considering that by percent, the increasing student population has been far outweighed by the growing number of administrators, counter to what might be expected if we assume greater efficiency with scale. How then does the UC justify such a substantial growth in the number of managerial positions? "One of the tricky things" says Dr. Kadir, "is there's a presumption that the numbers are being justified. And I think one of the challenges is that no one is really justifying the numbers." While many have called for a review of managerial and administrative bloat, that is unlikely to happen any time soon. Dr. Kadir points to a shift in control from faculty to administration as a primary force in what led to the university system's transformation and the growth of a managerial class. Much of the decision making is now firmly in the hands of upper-level managers.

This transformation includes shifting away from centering education and research as the foremost objectives of the school. When asked about the state of education in a **2009 interview** with the New York Times, then UC President Mark Yudof quipped that "the shine is off of it. It's really a question of being crowded out by other priorities." Those other priorities include expanded student services that go beyond meeting basic student needs. "Make sure you have concerts, make sure you have all the fun stuff. These services have exploded on campus as something that didn't exist in the 1990's or to the extent that they do now," says Dr. Kadir. Supplemental campus services plot a trajectory that parallels rising tuition costs. As tuition prices skyrocketed for undergraduates, increasingly administrators look upon students less as students, and more as customers. "If I'm going to charge you a lot of money for something, you're now a customer, the logic being students aren't just students, they are buying a product." As students are increasingly seen as consumers,

also evaluated by administrators. Administrators perceive administrative and managerial positions as holding greater worth, relative to other UC jobs. This overvaluing of management roles fits within a prevailing notion in corporate America, that offering and providing high salaries to leadership roles demonstrates the quality of those leaders, and the prestige of the organization. "There is this implicit logic that value and price are the same. All that has infected the understanding and reinforced this non-stop growth." This reinforces a belief that the UC is in competition with other schools to recruit and retain the most competent administrators, through offering the most generous total compensation to prospective candidates, which over time drives the salaries ever higher.

The phenomenon is nothing new. Dr. Kadir cites work by Christopher Newfield, a professor at UC



photo the West End



photo Peter Mootle

Though not part of the academic mission, sports play a big role the brand identity, advertising, and services at a university. Sports may also be a source of revenue. The 2012 retrofit of UC Berkeley's California Memorial Stadium, plunged the campus \$445 million in debt. The University's projected nine decade loan payments will outlast the lifespan of the retrofit, calling into question the prudence of such an investment.

universities across the US continue to place more emphasis on creating and filling positions that can satisfy these services to further entice more so-called customers. "The logic of customers, products and brand identity are pervasive. There is a whole new effort now to rebrand Berkeley, because of a tension and confusion between the designation of Cal as the athletics wing, versus the rest of Berkeley. Is that really the place to put our money and time? We've accepted the moment of neo-liberalization that we are in, so it's no surprise the university is a product of that right now." As with these expanded campus services, brand identity and marketing increasingly require more staffing, grabbing a larger piece of the UC and UC Berkeley's budgets.

Already, as a research institution, UC Berkeley has been criticized for placing too strong an emphasis on its research, to the deficit of students. Administrator's devaluation and defunding of education in favor of non-educational investments does nothing to improve the quality of that learning experience. "I asked this last year of my 60 students in my engineering class" recalls Dr. Kadir, "how many of you have taken a class where going to class led to you doing worse so you

just stopped going? Every single hand went up." While upper management's hands-off approach to education has had the contradictory benefit of allowing Dr. Kadir to feel he has more latitude in what and how he teaches, not all instructors are as committed to delivering their students a quality education. But he also knows there are some boundaries he can't cross. Essentially this comes down to making sure students aren't complaining about his course content. "That leads me to not talking about topics that might get me into trouble such as certain geopolitical issues. And this goes back to the idea of student services, they are a client, and you need to keep them happy." With heightened concern among staff surrounding job security, and with an increased use of graduate students and staff as a cost effective alternative to tenured faculty, there is evermore a threat to the ability of educators to challenge and engage with students in meaningful ways and to examine controversial ideas.

Though the UC has been considered a leader in upward mobility by so many working class Californians, the consumer mindset emphasized by campus and UC administration is geared less toward aspiring Californian students and more

toward recruiting out-of-state and international students, who are expected to pay as much as \$44,000 in tuition per year. Some have hailed these controversial tuition prices imposed on non-residents as progressive, or at least in theory. In 2009, then Chancellor Robert Birgeneau created the Blue and Gold Plan. That plan guaranteed full financial aid to students from households making less than \$40,000 per year. Under the Dirks administration that threshold was raised to include in-state students from households making less than \$60,000. Allowing undergraduate students, from low and middle income backgrounds to attend Berkeley for free has been facilitated only by increasing the enrollment of out-of-state and international students who pay these premium prices to attend Berkeley. In theory this plan is effective in that it can redistribute wealth from a more affluent out-of-state population to the nearly 40% of Berkeley undergraduates who are Pell Grant eligible. "But," as Dr. Kadir acknowledges, "it's never how it really works. The problem is that money all goes to other places too. Some of it gets transferred down, but never all of it. More is charged in tuition, more is given in grant aid, but the rest is siphoned off to other projects that allows this bloat to expand." In addition, many critics of the tuition policy have argued that rising enrollment of international and out-of-state students at Berkeley, only diminishes the school's impact on the education and betterment of **California residents**.

As federal and state funding has collapsed for public universities across the country, rather than conserving spending on frivolous expenses, "administrators looked to increase student fees and tuition costs and for external funding through development efforts." Though declining public funds are frequently bemoaned by UC leadership, curiously, fewer state funds have only fed managerial growth at UC campuses. State and federal money is specifically earmarked to be spent on student instruction. That means this money can not be applied to other development or special non-academic programs and projects. Yet money through tuition or from philanthropy is not restricted to instructional purposes. In part, this may explain why the UC is eager to invest

"We've accepted the moment of neo-liberalization that we are in, so it's no surprise the university is a product of that right now"

—Dr. Khalid Kadir



in development strategies that can bring in private donations, rather than applying that money to lobby the state for more funds. Dr. Kadir recognizes the important role that more public funds and policy reform could play in correcting these problems. "Right now, Harvard is get more money in tax write-off for their endowment, than [UC Berkeley] gets from public funding. Places like Harvard are now the real state schools. So there's a larger national conversation that needs to be happening around this. Why is Harvard getting so much money to train the elite?" Dr. Kadir also points to work by **Newfield** that demonstrates an uncanny correlation between declining state funding and rising enrollment of BIPOC at UC campuses. While more diverse campuses are something to celebrate, Newfield identifies that "the state's politicians have defunded UC in the exact proportion of its decline in white student share." Digging deeper,

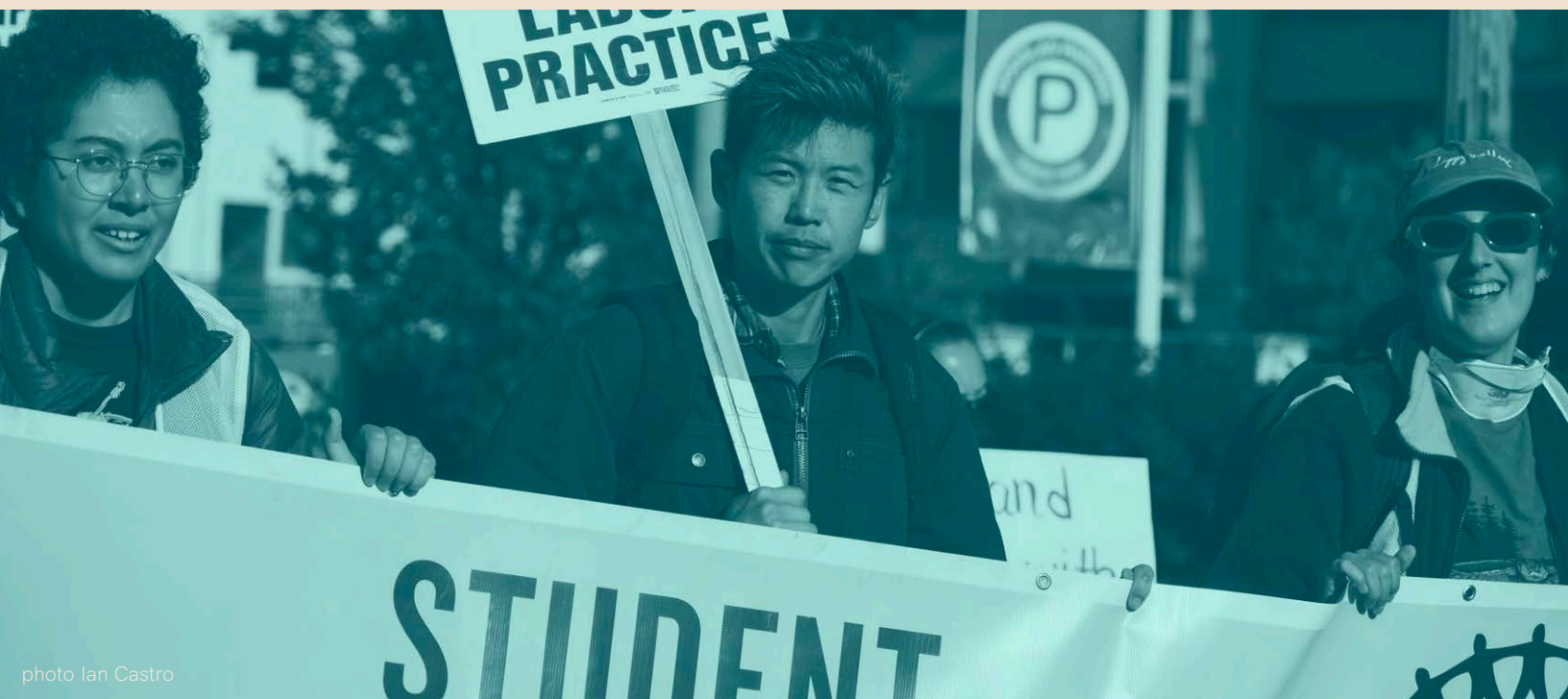
those UC campuses with a higher proportion of BIPOC students, also have the lowest state funding. These findings, claims Newfield, point to an internalized racism with how our state funds are allocated. More private money going to more privileged and whiter schools like Berkeley and UCLA, only exacerbates this funding discrepancy among UCs. But given the priorities of UC administration, Dr. Kadir is not certain the university should be entrusted with more state or federal tax dollars under its current financial and structural model. Administrators, in their focus on growth of revenue and assets, he asserts, “are bleeding the university and not growing it around the priorities we should have. When you have a bunch of administrators like this, I’m not sure they’re the right people to get that extra tax money. What are they going to use it for? They’re going to further feed that administrative bloat. So we need a change in the governance process first.”

Not only do philanthropic donations and grants from private groups offer managers and administrators greater flexibility with how they apply those funds, and biased which groups are privy to those funds, it can also compromise the integrity of the research we produce, and what we can teach. For example, “In some cases [programs] gave up the process of a peer review, in funding proposals. [Review] was run directly through a private group. That is a significant academic collapse...some contracts enable the donor to delay publication

of findings, and then there are those conflicts of interest between faculty who are getting money or contracts—directly or indirectly—from private interests, while also doing research at the University.” This can narrow the scope and direction of research and who it benefits as well as create deep ethical concerns as to the quality of that work. “This is a big issue in some departments. Faculty may have 10% appointments, because they are 90% corporate, making a fortune, and their labs have turned into proxy labs for these companies. How is that not corruption? And these companies are collaborating with the UC because they know they have cheap labor in the form of graduate students who are underpaid, as well as access to all the university’s infrastructure and resources.” In many ways the teaming up of public research schools and private interest, subsidizes corporate and personal gain at the expense of what little tax money the UC still receives from the state. Ultimately, notes Dr. Kadir “it’s not that they are buying the results of research, it’s not that crass, but the structure that they are building is one that is anti-science.”

The building waves of private money in our campuses, and in our labs and classrooms erodes the very **mission** of a university system which claims to commit itself to providing “long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge.”

(continued on next page)



Not only can private money adulterate our ability to honestly perform our mission as a public good, it also makes that job more difficult for educators, researchers, and supporting staff. Tuition hikes and donor funds create an imbalance in funding allocation to upper management and development. All this while undercutting critical academic and teaching resources, jobs and pay. During the 2010 state budget crisis, as the UC scrambled to find campus funding, then Chancellor Birgeneau said in a televised committee meeting that “the country has many great private universities, Stanford, Harvard, etc. and it doesn’t need another one. It needs great public universities.” But in that same meeting, he also said that “First of all, how do we maintain our preëminence, but secondly, how do we guarantee our public character?” That his first objective would be to maintain Berkeley preëminence, it’s status, or brand identity, speak greatly of the subtle but growing intrusion of market economics into how UC Berkeley and a rising number of state schools posture and identify themselves. Birgeneau was right, we don’t need another Harvard. And while a preëminence found in five percent acceptance rates or large philanthropic endowments, makes for great bragging rights, it isn’t something we should set our sights on either. Our sights should be set higher, on a preëminence found in providing quality education and a wealth of knowledge to as many people as possible. So long as administrators turn away from our fundamental missions to the public, we compromise our integrity and throw aside our greatest potential as an institution in the service of a collective good.



in history: Dr. Susan Solomon

by *Emily Bögner*
Graduate Student



The Earth’s atmosphere protects us from UV (ultraviolet) radiation from outer space, the sort that can damage cells and cause cancers in all kinds of plants and animals. A thin part of the Earth’s atmosphere called the ozone layer absorbs most of the incoming UV radiation from outer space: this is critical for the survival of life on our planet. In the late 1970s, the scientific community was shocked to discover the beginnings of a hole in the ozone layer over the South Pole. The discovery of this hole, the Antarctic Ozone Hole, was a major warning sign for scientists who were growing increasingly concerned about anthropogenic impacts on our planet. Scientists knew that if the ozone layer continued to thin it would pose a threat to life on our planet.

With the concerning discovery that the Antarctic Ozone Hole was growing, a team of scientists set out to find the root of the cause: their goal was to

reflection questions:

1. How did branding, marketing, or amenities influence your choice to work or pursue and education at UC Berkeley?
2. Where do you think the University should most focus the application of it’s funds?
3. If you work in research how does the funding you receive shape your approach to science?

stop, and if possible, reverse the damage caused by human activities. The leader of this team was Dr. Susan Solomon, an atmospheric scientist who received her Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of California Berkeley. Just five years after earning her degree, Dr. Solomon led her team to a surprising discovery: free radicals on the surface of ice particles in clouds above the Antarctic sped up the chemical reactions that caused large holes to form in the ozone layer. Her team demonstrated that chemicals used in refrigerators and freezers at the time were causing this problem. Their ground-breaking research on the ozone layer led to one of the most significant climate agreements, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, an international agreement which placed a ban on the harmful chemicals that produced the Antarctic Ozone Hole.

Since the agreement, these harmful chemicals have been banned, and continued monitoring of the ozone holes show it stabilized within 10 years, began to recover in 20 years, and in 2019 it was reported that the ozone hole was at its smallest since its discovery nearly 50 years prior. With continued efforts, scientists predict that the ozone hole will heal to pre-1970 levels by 2075.



For her contributions, Dr. Solomon has been recognized by Discover as one of the 50 most important women in science, by Time magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, and was awarded the 2021 Future of Life Award for her critical contribution to saving our ozone layer. The work by Solomon and her team continue to lay the groundwork for future discoveries about our changing planet.

upcoming events + campus resources

- 16 Jan.—MoAD: **Museum of African Diaspora** Free Admission Day, 11am-5.00, San Francisco
- 16 Jan.—**MLK2023 March & Parade**, San Franciscos Caltrain Station to Yerba Buena Gardens

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