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## **POSTDOCS URGE UC TO COMPLY WITH PRESIDENT OBAMA'S NEW DOL RULE AND PAY THEM FAIRLY**

*Proposed Department of Labor Rule Would Stop the Exploitation of Postdocs by  
Forcing UC to Pay Them for Overtime Work – But UC Plans to Appeal*

**Berkeley, CA** – Postdoctoral scholars at UC were encouraged to learn that they would be covered by a new rule proposed by the Obama administration that would raise the salary threshold for the “bona fide professional” overtime exemption. The rule would require UC to pay the majority of the postdocs it employs for the overtime hours they work, for which they are currently not compensated.

“As someone who regularly works 60 hours a week at UC, this would make a huge difference for me and for my family,” said Sangeet Lal, a postdoc working in the Neuroscience department at UCSF Mission Bay. “It is so disappointing to hear that UC managers think we should work overtime and not be paid for it. I agree with President Obama – and I hope they do too – that people who work hard deserve to earn a decent living.”

UC postdocs are currently negotiating their next employment contract with UC management, but UC management’s uncertainty over whether the Obama administration will exempt them from the overtime rule is preventing UC from offering postdocs any childcare support. The lack of childcare support has contributed to many women being forced out of their positions as postdocs, and has helped create a dramatic gender gap within the academy. Although women receive more than half of the PhDs in this country, they represent only 21% of full professors in the sciences and only 5% of full professors in engineering.

“UC is using this rule as an excuse to threaten our wages and benefits – the exact opposite of what the President is trying to achieve,” said Anke Schennink, president of UAW 5810. “Postdocs aren’t paid enough to afford childcare, and yet we’re asked to work more than 40 hours a week. President Obama and the Labor Department are moving this rule forward to try to help people just like us – people who work extremely hard and aren’t paid accordingly.”

Postdocs work long hours in labs across UC performing highly technical work. They are the backbone of UC’s research mission, and have helped secure hundreds of patents and millions of dollars in grants for the University. Many of them are recent immigrants to this country, the best and the brightest in their fields in their home countries. All have already earned a PhD. The starting salary for a postdoc is \$42,800 – below the \$50,440 guideline that President Obama is proposing to qualify for overtime pay.

“We are publicly urging UC to abandon their opposition to this common-sense rule and fairly compensate the postdocs who work so hard on their behalf,” said Kristen Yankura, a postdoc in Sensory Neurobiology at UCLA.

Data from the Census Bureau released last week shows that most Americans make substantially less money in inflation-adjusted terms than they did 15 years ago. Stagnant wages have dogged workers for decades – a problem the Obama administration has been looking to solve.

UC's intransigence on this issue is just the latest in a series of labor-unfriendly moves that have sent three UC unions to strikes in just the past three years. Postdocs have empowered their bargaining team to call for a strike vote if deemed necessary such as over the University's unfair labor practices.

You can learn more about UAW 5810 online at [www.UAW5810.org](http://www.UAW5810.org), or join us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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