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January 22, 2019

President Janet Napolitano
Office of the President
University of California
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

CC: Michael Brown, Provost and Executive Vice President
Rachael Nava, Exec Vice President, COO, and Chief of Staff

Dear President Napolitano,

I'm writing to express concern over UC's choice to deny union recognition to 4,800 Academic Researchers (ARs). This crucial group of researchers helps make UC one of the world's premiere research institutions, driving the latest innovations and discoveries in areas such as biotechnology, medicine, agriculture, and green energy. Not recognizing their union, Academic Researchers United / UAW 5810, is an unnecessary use of UC and PERB resources.

Like Postdocs, who formed UAW Local 5810 in 2008 and have bargained multiple contracts successfully with the University, ARs have chosen to unionize to improve their working conditions, and thereby improve research at UC. UAW 5810 has a strong track record of addressing critical ongoing issues at UC, such as gender inequality and protections for international scholars.

In September, Academic Researchers United / UAW 5810 filed authorization cards with the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) signed by a supermajority of ARs. UC chose to deny recognition of ARU / UAW 5810 in early December, saying that it doubts the appropriateness of the unit.

In 2004, the Legislature passed AB 1230 that amended HEERA to allow higher education employees to unionize through a card check process, in part to avoid lengthy

legal battles that strain State resources. In the case of ARs, the academic title series included in the proposed unit, Coordinator of Public Programs, Professional Researcher, Project Scientist, and Specialist, were previously ruled to be part of a single bargaining unit, and these employees share very similar working conditions and job duties. Given these facts, I urge UC to recognize the union and begin collective bargaining with ARU / UAW 5810 as this is a prime opportunity to demonstrate productive and cooperative labor relations practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Skinner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Nancy Skinner
Senator, 9th District