



**The Union of
POSTDOCS**

Representing over 6,500
Postdoctoral Researchers at
the University of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jacob Burstein-Stern, jacob.burstein.stern@uaw5810.org, 206-954-1938

UCLA POSTDOC SECURES REAPPOINTMENT AFTER SPEAKING OUT AGAINST PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION AT UCLA

Victory Comes After UC Postdoc Union Mobilizes Thousands of Supporters

Los Angeles, CA- Last Thursday, after days of mass collective action by thousands of UC Postdocs, Academic Researchers, Academic Student Employees and community members, UCLA agreed to renew UCLA Postdoc Sandra Koch's appointment. Sandra, a Postdoc in neurobiology, was facing retaliation in response to a pregnancy discrimination grievance that she filed last year.

In just three days, over 3,000 people signed a [petition](#) to UCLA Chancellor Block demanding Sandra's reappointment. The petition was launched by the Union of Postdocs at UC, UAW Local 5810, which represents over 6,500 Postdocs and 4,500 Academic Researchers at the University of California and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. On Thursday, hundreds were ready to stage a sit-in at the UCLA administrative office when news of her reappointment broke.

In summing up the experience, Sandra said, "It's been an emotional journey but I am ecstatic to be able to stay in my research career that I love, and with my family in this country. I want to thank everyone who joined me in taking a stand against the injustice I experienced at UCLA. I hope that this will encourage more members of the academic community who are facing discrimination to understand and exercise the collective power we have as a union to stand up for our rights and see justice done."

"No one should have to face discrimination at work, and no one can take on an institution alone. Sadly, Sandra's story is not unique, which is why UAW Local 5810 is committed to tackling insidious problems in academia, including gender inequality and discrimination, and their root causes. This victory would not have been possible without Sandra's bravery in speaking out and fighting to continue her research career, and the power we demonstrated when thousands of

individuals came together to demand what's right," said Anke Schennink, President of UAW Local 5810.

In the spring of 2017, Sandra informed her then-faculty supervisor that she was pregnant and was told that she needed to leave the lab. Sandra exercised her rights under the Postdoc Union contract to negotiate a settlement that included switching labs to continue her research at UCLA. In the new lab, Sandra has fellowship funding and the support of her new supervisor, but UCLA Human Resources had refused to renew her appointment on July 1 in clear retaliation for raising discrimination claims.

Read Sandra's story [here](#), and the Daily Bruin Editorial Board's piece highlighting Sandra's case and pregnancy discrimination at UCLA [here](#).

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