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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

April 14, 2010

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

Dear President Yudof:

I am writing to urge the University of California to finish negotiations immediately for a first contract covering the 6,000 Postdoctoral Scholars who chose UAW representation in November 2008. I understand UC and the UAW will meet again on April 15 and 16, and I hope an agreement can be reached at that meeting.

Postdoctoral Scholars are the backbone of the University's research enterprise, which is the envy of the world. These employees perform much of the front-line scientific inquiry that not only brings important improvements to all our lives, but also attracts significant funding in the form of contracts and grants to the University. These contract and grant revenues at UC, the bulk of which come from the federal government, have increased dramatically in recent years, due in large part to the important work of Postdoctoral Scholars.

I understand that UC and the UAW have met on more than 50 occasions since bargaining started last February and that only a few issues remain that have not been resolved. I understand that UC is: expressing "philosophical opposition" to annual experience-based step increases, even though the NIH provides them to its Postdoctoral Scholars; proposing overall salary increases that fall far short of what UC has recently agreed to provide numerous other similarly-situated employees; and proposing that Postdoctoral Scholars have less basic contractual rights than the 12,000 UAW-represented Academic Student Employees (ASEs) when it comes to job security and the right to exercise one's conscience by choosing not to cross other employees' picket lines.

I urge you to do whatever is necessary to ensure a speedy conclusion to negotiations for a first contract. A fair contract should improve Postdoctoral Scholar compensation and benefits to reflect the continuing expansion of UC's research budget, as well as at least match the compensation standards of the NIH and what UC has recently provided for similarly-situated employees. It should also extend to Postdoctoral Scholars all the basic employee rights it has agreed to in its contract with ASEs represented by the UAW.

A fair contract will enhance UC's ability to attract the best and brightest researchers who play such a critical role in advancing our nation's economic growth and improving our collective health and well-being.

I look forward to hearing about a speedy resolution to this important issue.

Sincerely

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress