Dear Colleagues,

The Santa Cruz Faculty Association (SCFA) continues to support our graduate students’ demand for a COLA to deal with high costs in Santa Cruz. Now that graduate students are involved in a grade strike, faculty have choices to make. We hope that our answers in the following FAQ will help faculty members determine their courses of action during the strike.

**Q: If my Readers/TAs withhold grades, do I need to volunteer to do the grading?**

A: No. Under HEERA (Higher Education Employment Relations Act), faculty do not need to volunteer to perform struck work that is outside our customary duties. The longstanding practice for courses with assigned TAs and/or Readers is for them to "Maintain/submit student records (e.g., grades)." This is routinely documented in their Description of Duties. (CAPM 700.411/Appendix A).

In addition, the Faculty Code of Conduct acknowledges that some circumstances may excuse a delay in grading. (APM - 015). In this situation, issuing grades without necessary input from TAs and/or Readers would not be fair to students. For example, it is impossible for instructors to grade students for participation in TA-led sections when the instructors did not observe those sections. Furthermore, it would disadvantage some students to arbitrarily discard the section participation part of the course grade.

**Q: If I am teaching a course without TAs or Readers, should I submit my grades?**

A: Yes.

**Q: The administration has claimed that the grade strike is illegal. How does that affect my rights?**
A: At this time, we cannot know for certain what the Public Employment Relations Board might decide ("PERB" is the state agency that administers HEERA). HEERA independently protects the decision not to volunteer to perform or duplicate struck work when doing that work is outside of past customary practice.

**Q: I have TAs and/or Readers who I expected to do the grading. Can the university discipline me for not providing grades in these courses?**

A: HEERA protects the rights of faculty to choose not to volunteer to perform struck work that is not normally part of their required duties, as we said above. The University would be wrong to discipline faculty in this instance.

If necessary, the SCFA is prepared to defend faculty, along with the rights of faculty in general to engage in protected activity, by filing charges against the University with PERB (the state agency that administers HEERA). Any disciplinary action would also have to go through appropriate Senate channels which act as an oversight and a brake on arbitrary disciplinary actions.

**Q: What should I do if I feel intimidated by administrative statements about the grade strike?**

A: Probably the best defense against intimidation is knowledge of your rights. And importantly, the SCFA is here for you. Please contact us if you or your colleagues feel intimidated.

**Q: Won't the withholding of grades harm our undergraduate students?**

A: Submitting grades without a complete understanding of undergraduate students' work would do a great deal of harm to them. Our undergraduate students are better off with the participation of TAs and Readers in their grading. In the long run, all of our undergraduates also benefit from having TAs and Readers who can afford their rents.

SCFA is happy to see that various campus units -- Financial Aid, the Registrar, and the Colleges -- are taking steps to ensure that undergraduate students are not harmed by the grade strike.

**Q: How can I join the SCFA?!**

A: Easy! Click [here](#) and welcome to your union!