March 5, 2020

Dear striking graduate students across the University of California system,

We are writing to you from the Lect_s en Lutte group to express our solidarity with your ongoing movement for fair pay and dignified working conditions. We are excited to learn that the COLA4all movement is spreading to other University of California campuses and to witness the shutdown of UCSC. We are also shocked by the recent announcement that graduate students at UCSC have been fired or will not have their contracts renewed. In the face of intimidation from university administration and the police, you have shown truly inspiring determination.

Lect_s en Lutte is a group of casualized teaching staff from various universities in and around Paris that has come together to organize our approach to the ongoing social movement in France. Since December 5, 2019, those of us who have been able to strike have been doing so, while those of us with greater job insecurity have chosen to teach about the social movement during class time. Since the last time we wrote to you, the French government has invoked a constitutional provision to limit debate and rush to a vote the proposed retirement pension reform that would leave everyone worse off—particularly women, minorities and teaching staff. Universities are facing an additional threat from a proposed law (the Loi de programmation pluriannuelle de la recherche, or LPPR) which would greatly increase job insecurity in academia and stifle academic freedom. Today, universities across France participated in a national day of action, including demonstrations and occupations of several universities in Paris. On March 6 and 7, universities across France will meet to discuss the next phases of our movement, and we expect more actions to come. In the face of the privatization and commodification of higher education and academic research, we refuse to allow business to continue as usual.

We wish to reiterate our support for your cause as we fight together against the neoliberalization of higher education and against the increasing precarity faced by university teaching staff. Therefore, we commit to continuing to raise awareness of the COLA4all movement on the picket line and as part of our teach-ins. Please let us know how we can further support your movement.

Solidarité from Paris!

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