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UC Student-Workers Rally Against GOP Tax Plan Attacks on Higher Education *Union Members Call on UC Administration to Confront GOP Plan by Reversing Tuition Hikes and Expanding Financial Support for Graduate Students*

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On Wednesday, November 29th, students and workers at all nine teaching campuses of the University of California (UC) will participate in a nationally-coordinated day of action opposing the GOP Tax Plan. From Davis to San Diego, student-workers are planning walkouts, rallies, letter-writing, and petition-signing actions targeted at Congress and the UC administration.

The House tax plan targets higher education workers by taxing tuition waivers as income, drastically increasing the amount student-workers pay in taxes while locking out current and future students who can't afford the increasing cost of higher education. Both House and Senate versions of the bill attempt to make student-workers and other working people pay for tax cuts for the rich and corporations, while paving the way for privatization of education and research on a wider scale.

"Treating tuition and fee waivers as taxable income will be financially devastating for graduate students and push out many of the best and brightest," said Emily Yen, President of the UC Student-Workers Union, UAW 2865. "It will be a huge impediment to recruiting and retaining the next generation of researchers, especially the talented ones from non-wealthy backgrounds. On a societal level, it would imperil scientific and social innovations that tackle important issues ranging from curing cancer to increasing access to early childhood education."

Union members argue that the GOP Tax Plan continues the hollowing out of higher education as a public good – a process that has accelerated in recent years. The UC administration and UC Regents have contributed to this process through repeated tuition increases and the growth of a bloated administrative class at UC.

"Republicans in Congress want to strip-mine higher education like it's one of Donald Trump's business ventures," said Kavitha Iyengar, a Graduate Student Researcher in the Law School at UC Berkeley. "Unfortunately, UC administrators have paved the way for the Trump agenda by raising tuition and fees on students while hoarding money for lavish parties and skyrocketing executive pay."

On Tuesday, the UC administration responded to increasing pressure from the union-led coalitions by launching a public advocacy campaign against the GOP Tax Plan. As part of the actions on Wednesday, union members will call on the UC administration to take additional steps to meaningfully confront the GOP Tax Plan, including reversing tuition hikes and expanding financial support for graduate students during contract negotiations with the UC Student-Workers Union in 2018.

"The Grad Tax is an attack on higher education and academic research. Under this proposal, graduate education would become inaccessible to all but the wealthiest students," said Lydia Majure, a Postdoctoral Scholar in Neuroscience at UC Berkeley and Trustee of UAW 5810. "We need to stand together to demand that elected officials reject this disastrous plan. If the Grad Tax does become law, universities must protect students by reducing or eliminating graduate tuition for research programs. This proposal would have huge adverse effects on research in the United States, so this should concern postdocs, faculty, and research staff as well."

The campus actions are expected to draw thousands of students, academic workers, and their supporters, with strong visuals and dynamic speakers, including undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty members.