

Hi,

The vote will finish soon, so it may be a good time to discuss the Columbia strike before we don't need to.

BT says it is a lengthy minority strike, so their strategies are not good.

But if you dig into details of the strike, the actual question here is:

TA strike v.s. RA strike

Everyone probably feels that in USC, TAs are more willing to strike than RAs.

It is the same at Columbia. They put a lot of focus on TA, which is why considering the whole union (RA+TA), only a small percentage was on strike. You can watch [this webinar](#).

They also tried to [engage RA into strike](#), and similar strategies were used in UC strike last year:

>In STEM, many student workers only perform research work, which is fundamentally entangled with their personal academic progress...

>STEM student workers **canceled department seminars and colloquia and urged visiting speakers to cancel or postpone** in solidarity...

>STEM workers also set up picket lines in front of delivery bays, asking unionized drivers not to cross, and effectively **stopped deliveries ranging from lab equipment and office supplies to compressed gas and dry ice. ... Delivery stoppages forced STEM departments to finally engage with our struggle;**

In the UC strike last year, I heard an example that they stopped deliveries of Liquid Nitrogen, etc. , so labs couldn't do any experiments. And the RAs went on "vacation". From the union's perspective, some of these RAs were not "on strike" and were not counted into the percentage of "striking". But they were effectively not doing any experiments.

We had an argument with BT about whether TA strike is effective. There was a discussion in this slack channel on Nov 13rd: (not posted by me)

> It seems that the tuition is 2.5 times more than the research grant. Thus I don't agree that the disruption of teaching has less impact than the disruption of research.

In an in person conversation, BT also mentioned that USC already has contingency plans for TAs, like hiring more graders, so TA strike may not be effective.

Please refer to the chat history on Nov 13rd for the context.

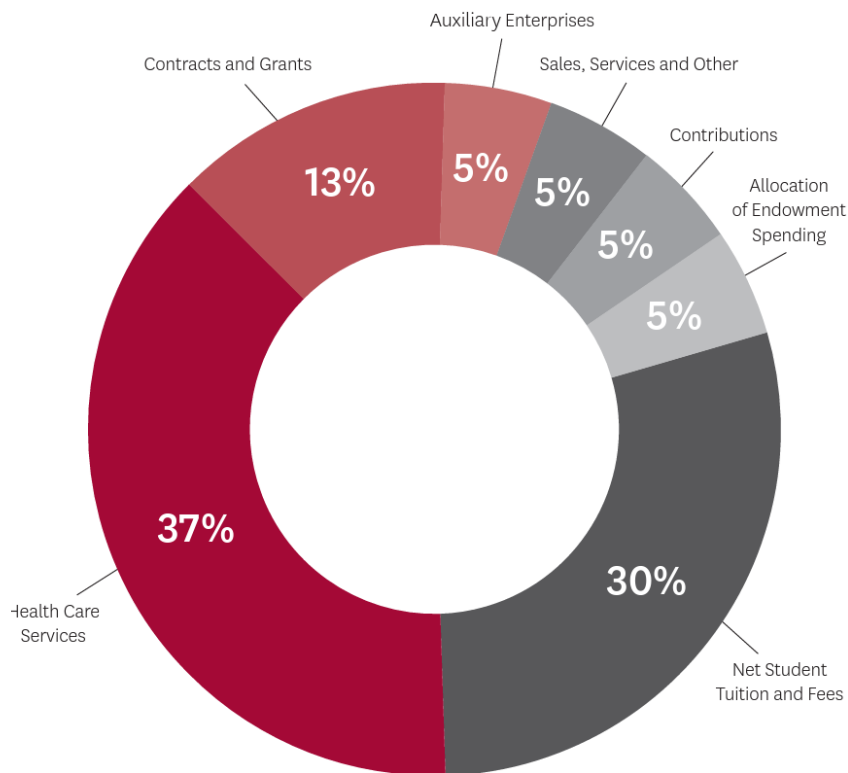
A side note:

If we focus too much on TA strikes in our message, RA may feel that they don't have to strike and choose to be a free rider, which is very harmful.

Also, stopping the deliveries of Liquid Nitrogen, lab equipment, etc., needs a lot of planning and one-on-one conversation, which I feel we are not yet ready for.

USC Operating Revenue

As of June 30, 2020



Direct action

At a certain time, they blocked every entry of their campus and shut down the whole university. They held hands and asked students not to enter the campus. [“Picket lines mean DON’T cross”](#) They tried to do a **hard** picket line, which is different from our last chance picket “soft picket line”.

A side note:

The situation at USC is different, we need a lot of time and effort to build up support for similar action. And I'm not even sure if we can do it.



Here is a [Google doc](#), if you want to share the above things