

Hola!

I'm Nicolas Meza-Retamal (he/him), a 4th year grad student in the Physics & Astronomy program at UC Davis, and I do research on Supernovae!

I have mostly been a TA (25% or 50% full time) during my time here, but I've also been a GSR for a few quarters, so I am well aware of the needs of both positions. I'm running for Head Steward as part of the [Organize to Win \(OTW\)](#) slate because I believe in the power of collective organizing to make a better UC for all of us, and I'm confident that if we all contribute we can achieve our collective goals! As a Head Steward I will be a link between us students/workers, our union and the UC system, and provide the necessary leadership to face our future challenges and upcoming struggles to get the conditions we deserve.

I've witnessed students struggle first hand since 2011. In my home country (Chile) I was part of a movement of thousands of college students on the streets fighting for our rights, demanding better conditions and equality. Many of the challenges and demands we face there also echo through our UC system. I was greatly inspired by our big strike in 2022 and I've decided to have a more direct role since. I was actively involved in organizing my department for the strike authorization vote last year, as well as organizing during the strike. I helped organize town halls and polling for our department, and I represented my department in interdepartmental meetings to work more closely with our coworkers. This level of engagement helped us to build a strong community of involved workers in Physics. Although we achieved great improvements after the strike, I learned the importance of union organizing and that a democratic and transparent union is key to building and growing our collective power. This is why I am running in this election together with [OTW](#).

As Head Steward, I will work to make our union more transparent and accountable to its members. I believe that we need to keep rank and file members of our union actively involved and listen to their perspectives at every point in our contracts' lifecycle. That is how we create a union that truly represents all of its members and can win substantial demands in bargaining.

I know that it is common for us students/workers to be reluctant to be involved in union stuff. I know because I was that student that looked from afar confused in our college politics myself. But it doesn't have to be far. Vote for me, alongside OTW, so that together we build a better union and UC!

Cheers,

Nico