

Lessons Learned from the Fight for 50%

A collective document for Rank and File Student Researchers, from your comrades at UCSD.

1. The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house! Arbitration and Grievances give the University the advantage. We cannot trust these processes with our interests. If there is a deal, so be it – but this is not what power looks like!
2. We are the team. What happens next is up to us, the workers. We need to start planning our next moves.
3. We stuck our necks out to fight for 50%. We told our colleagues we would win. We were overconfident. We were retaliated against. Mistakes were bound to happen – without pointing fingers, we need to understand where things went wrong. We cannot afford to mislead the workers.
4. We won our contract because we had power. Direct actions in one or two departments, rallies, grievances, and arbitrations, are not enough. It takes a strike to win real change.
5. We rely on trust in each other and trust in our Union. This trust needs transparency, accountability, and space for the rank and file to voice concerns.
6. This is jargon: steps, appointments, arbitrations, mediations, table talk, backpay, settlements, admissibility, etc. The real outcome for workers is what matters!
7. We must not sacrifice the first and second years for short term gains. This is a fight for the future of academia. We need to think long term. Solidarity is necessary.
8. The University does not act in good faith. They are whittling us down with insulting proposals, asking for wild concessions, all to convince us to accept less.
9. Sometimes it is better to fight and lose than take a bad deal.
10. The Chancellor is our biggest obstacle. The Chancellor relies on good relationships with donors that we have to challenge.
11. Arbitration rulings set legal precedent, settlements do not.
12. “You can't win through grievances what you didn't win at the bargaining table” – so says the staff