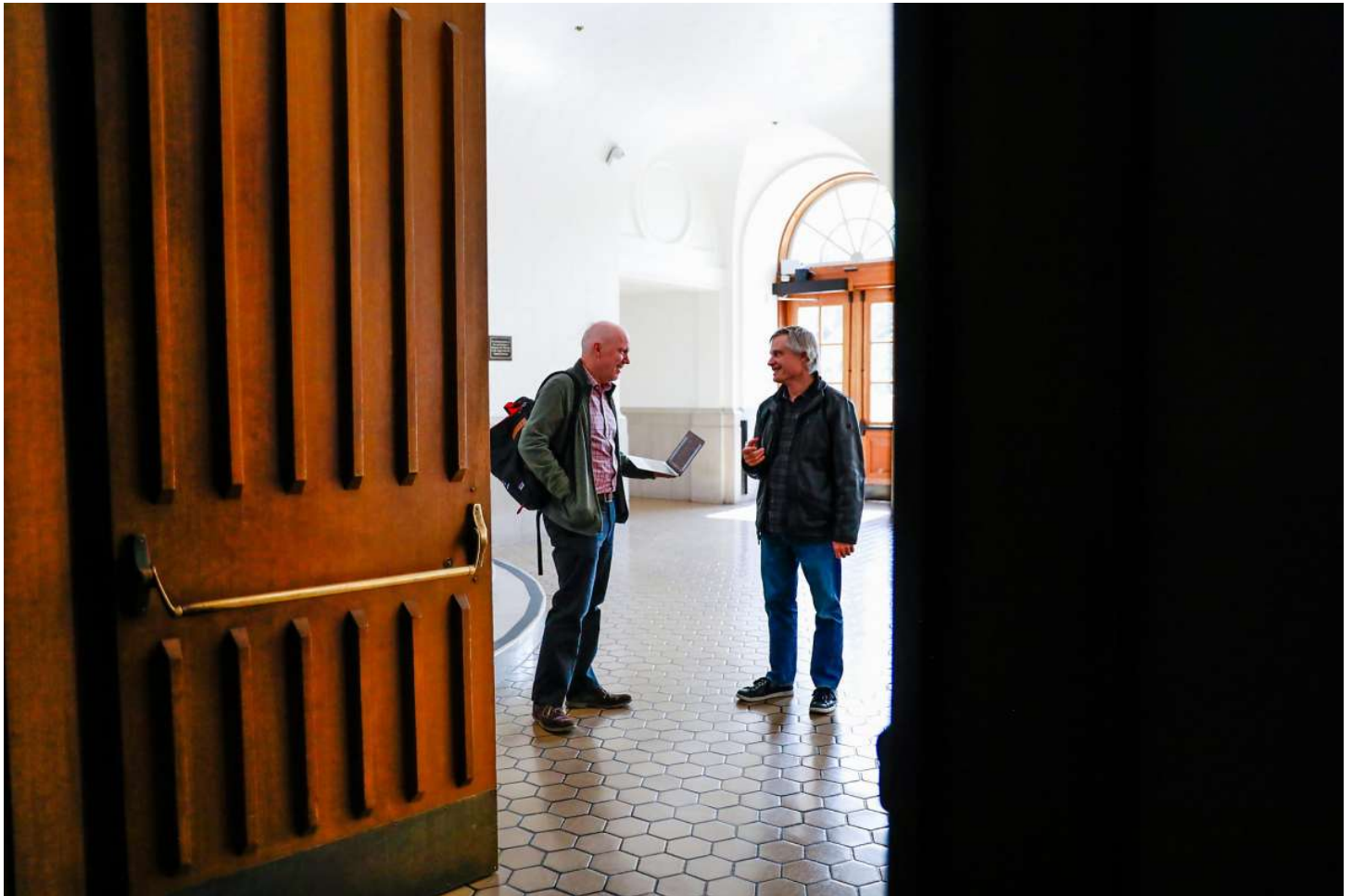


teach classes from home

Ron Kroichick

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Jon Hays and Ezra Daly (right), who work in IT, prepare to get classes up on the web so students can access them remotely at UC Berkeley on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 in Berkeley, California. All UC campuses have suspended in-person classes for the rest of the spring semester in response to the coronavirus.

Photo: Gabrielle Lurie / The Chronicle

The union representing University of California lecturers stepped up its demands Friday for UC to provide suitable working conditions as part of its response to the coronavirus pandemic.

“It seems ludicrous that a university like this, with the resources it has, cannot do better,” said Katie Rodger, a lecturer in the writing department at UC Davis. “... I’m so appalled right now. If I had a student in the system, I’d be furious.”

Lecturers teach more than 30% of student credit hours in the UC system, though they generally work on short-term, part-time contracts. The University Council-American Federation of Teachers represents about 6,500 librarians and non-tenure-track teaching faculty, including more than 3,500 lecturers, throughout the UC system.

In negotiations over the past month, union officials said, the university administration acknowledged lecturers are “crucial to the continued function of the university.” UC also announced a moratorium on spring layoffs.

This counted as welcome news among lecturers, but they also contended the university did not go far enough. They want UC officials to provide ergonomically sound chairs and reliable internet service for lecturers teaching from home.



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Union leaders also noted one example last week in which Jillian Azevedo, of UC Davis, complained about her working conditions at home and was told to teach from her small, shared campus office, where social distancing was not possible. Azevedo has since returned home to teach and bought her own equipment.

ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

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Andrew Gordon, spokesman for the UC Office of the President, said the university has been in contract negotiations with the lecturers' union for nearly a year. The union's previous contract expired at the end of January.

"UC has been working very hard to provide lecturers with the support they need, including resources for working at home as well as using their empty office on campus if working at home is not feasible," Gordon wrote in an email Friday.

"While we strive to provide resources for remote instruction from home, the university (like many organizations) does not typically provide items such as desks. ... Such requests would be handled on an individual basis to determine how we can best accommodate their needs."

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