



Office
of the
President

Dear friends and colleagues:

For the past several weeks, I've been continually impressed by the strength, resilience, and creativity of the University of California community in rising to meet one of the most urgent challenges of our lifetimes.

The University's response to the COVID-19 crisis has been truly remarkable – from health providers delivering first-class patient care, to UC researchers urgently studying the virus and developing treatments, to UC faculty quickly transitioning to remote instruction, to UC students and staff serving their communities by volunteering and caring for others.

Even in the midst of this crisis, important work in other areas has continued across the University. We are still preparing for a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court on UC's lawsuit to halt the rescission of the DACA policy. And our efforts to become a more sustainable institution have continued as we mark the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Despite the disruptions caused by the current crisis, UC students, faculty, and staff continue to carry out work that is essential to our missions of teaching, research, and public service.

I am proud to be a part of a community that is united by such a deep sense of purpose and commitment to action during this destabilizing period. Read on for highlights of these efforts.

May you all be well, and Fiat Lux.

Yours very truly,

Janet Ngohita



Helping patients on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis

University of California hospitals were some of the first in the state to treat COVID-19 patients. At each of our five academic medical centers, our more than 9,000 faculty physicians and 14,000 nurses have demonstrated yet again their deep commitment to serving patients and protecting public health.

- UC Health is sharing daily updates on its [Twitter account](#) about COVID-19 testing volume, positive tests, and confirmed cases across UC's five medical centers.
- UCSF is now offering [free COVID-19 sample analysis](#) for 30 days to all nine Bay Area counties' Departments of Public Health, which will enable more patients to get test results faster.

- At UC Berkeley, a team of engineers, emergency room doctors, and critical care pulmonologists have figured out how to [modify sleep apnea machines](#) so they can be used to help COVID-19 patients breathe, which could help alleviate ventilator shortages.
- Researchers at [UCSF](#) and [UCLA](#) have launched web-based apps that will use data submitted by members of the public to build a map of possible hotspots where there may be a higher risk for accelerated spread of the disease.
- UC Davis is [collaborating with the state](#) to quickly and significantly boost California's testing capacity. Researchers there have also developed a [new web application](#) that enables users to track COVID-19 cases and testing across the globe.
- Across UC, there are more than a dozen clinical trials underway – and more in development – to assess the effectiveness of existing drugs in treating COVID-19.

Meanwhile, hundreds of medical students at UC's six medical schools recently [celebrated Match Day](#), where they learned where they will serve as resident physicians after graduating in May. I couldn't be more proud of these new doctors as they join a health care work force that needs them now more than ever.



UC stands together to combat COVID-19 pandemic

The UC community has demonstrated remarkable strength, adaptability, and resolve over the past several weeks, all the while navigating profound changes to the way we live, work, and study.

After hearing about local hand sanitizer shortages, two graduate students at UC Berkeley jumped into action to [manufacture, package, and deliver sanitizer](#) to homeless shelters, senior centers, hospices, health centers, jails, and other facilities in need with populations at high-risk for COVID-19 infection.

At the UCLA Innovation Lab, engineers are using 3-D printing and laser-cutting tools to [manufacture surgical face shields](#) in order to build up supplies of personal protective equipment for health care workers. (Need more information and tips on wearing a mask? Read this [Q&A](#) with UC Berkeley disease detective Sangwei Lu.)

Employees of UC Riverside's Department of Theatre, Film, and Digital Production are [sewing hundreds of face masks](#) for their campus colleagues using existing materials found in the costume shop.

UC Davis staff members and students are [helping a local food bank](#) deliver food boxes and essential household items to seniors and others in vulnerable populations.

UC San Diego is currently providing temporary housing for emergency workers to support San Diego County's COVID-19 response efforts.

Earlier this month, teams of UCSF health care workers traveled to [New York City](#) and the [Navajo Nation](#) for one-month voluntary assignments providing urgently needed support for patients infected with COVID-19.

And to help student borrowers impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, UC took action to [suspend payments and interest charges](#) on \$140 million of UC-held loans, including \$92 million in Perkins loans given to students with exceptional financial need.



[New information filed in UC lawsuit to protect DACA](#)

In 2017, UC became the first university in the nation to file a lawsuit challenging the Trump administration's proposed rescission of DACA. Over the past three years, we have worked together to advance our case through

the courts and to advocate for DACA recipients on every front. We are now waiting for a ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court, which we expect sometime between now and June.

Last month, Yale Law School and the National Immigration Law Center filed a [brief](#) with the Supreme Court providing additional context about the potential impact of a DACA ruling in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. According to the [Center for American Progress](#), approximately 29,000 DACA recipients work in the health care field, including many who are now on the front lines fighting this crisis across the country. The Supreme Court has now [agreed](#) to accept this brief for consideration in its final ruling on the case.

Upending the lives of DACA recipients who only know this country as home would be unconscionable – and even more so during a dangerous pandemic. Like the Supreme Court’s [recent decision](#) on the Trump administration’s “public charge” rule, which will make it more difficult for low-income immigrants to obtain green cards and to access vital public services, an adverse ruling in UC’s DACA case will have profound repercussions for communities across California and the nation.

We continue to stand in support of [DACA recipients](#) and other undocumented members of our community as we await the Supreme Court’s ruling.



Looking toward a sustainable future

This month, millions around the world marked the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22. Across the UC system, students, faculty, and staff participated in online Earth Day events including [virtual climate workshops](#) and webinars on [compost and sustainable fashion](#).

Even in the midst of a pandemic, the UC community has continued to enact bold new commitments and solutions that will help us build a greener future.

Earlier this month, UC Berkeley became the first university in the nation to adopt a [single-use plastic ban](#). Under the new policy, the campus will phase out all non-essential single-use plastics by 2030. Meanwhile, four UC undergraduates were awarded the UC Natural Reserve System's first [Field Science Fellowships](#), designed to give students hands-on research experience and build pathways to environmental careers.

And if you're one of many who have turned to backyard gardening in the midst of the COVID crisis, don't miss these [tips](#) from UC Santa Cruz garden manager Orin Martin on how to make the most of your garden, from planting salad mix to the ideal spacing for root veggies. Martin also recommends

planting flowers: "Vegetables are food for the body, and flowers are food for the spirit and soul."

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Recently I was asked:

What is UC doing to help prospective students who are concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on their ability to apply for and attend a UC campus?

Here are my thoughts:

Understandably, many California high school students and their families are anxious about what recent changes to instruction and grading mean for their higher education dreams.

We at UC feel strongly that the current crisis should not threaten any student's ability to pursue and attain a world-class education. Earlier this month, we announced in partnership with the Academic Senate that we are [temporarily relaxing admissions requirements](#) pertaining to letter grades and standardized testing. This will ensure that no student sees their hard work wasted or their college plans derailed. We are also providing flexibility for students who need more time to meet registration, deposit, and transcript deadlines, and working with admitted students to adjust financial aid packages if family financial circumstances have suddenly changed.

More information about these adjustments can be found on UC's [admissions website](#), and I encourage you to share them with prospective UC students or their families. These steps reflect our deep commitment to keeping the doors of opportunity wide open to incoming students and ensuring that no one is harmed by circumstances outside of their control.

Do you have a question or suggestion for me?

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