UC COVID-19 Newsletter: Week of Oct. 12, 2020

Welcome to the latest COVID-19 update with information about how the University of California is responding and adapting to the pandemic, as well as campus, health center and national laboratory news.

Preparedness and Response
Critical operations continue at all UC campus and system locations, and our health centers continue to provide vital services to their communities.

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has granted emergency use authorization for scientists at UCLA Health to begin using a new method of COVID-19 detection using sequencing technology called SwabSeq. The method is capable of testing thousands of samples for coronavirus at the same time, producing accurate, individual results in 12 to 24 hours.
- UC Davis Facilities Management personnel are joining researchers in collecting and analyzing samples from the campus sewer system as one more tool to potentially identify and halt an outbreak of COVID-19.
- UC Irvine created a dashboard that provides reports of positive COVID-19 tests and recovery case counts for those who are enrolled students, employed at UC Irvine or reside in student, family or graduate housing.

Student and Campus Life
UC is committed to ensuring continuity and providing resources for its campus and lab communities.

- Through a grant from the National Science Foundation, UC Merced, the University of South Florida and the Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors will host a virtual conference beginning in mid-October that will feature presentations and discussions about collaborative research at the intersections of COVID-19 and topics related to the environment, health and equity.
- On Oct. 8, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr. Anthony Fauci spoke at a Berkeley Forum event during which he discussed universal health care and the slow return to ‘normal.’
- UC Riverside staff, student workers and student volunteers continue to support students and their access to services such as tutoring, career and mental health services and the libraries by shifting most programs to a virtual format.
- With fall quarter now underway, UC Santa Cruz students are excited to start their college journey, despite the challenges created by a global pandemic that has reshaped society. Faculty and staff are ready to provide students with the best experience possible and the support to help them succeed.
Research
UC researchers continue to advance understanding and develop new tools to address and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are highlights of some of the efforts taking place.

- Researchers at UC San Diego, in collaboration with local partners, have been awarded a $5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to implement a program of widespread testing for COVID-19 in San Ysidro.
- A national study led by UCSF and UCLA revealed that COVID-19 symptoms in some pregnant women can be prolonged, lasting two months or longer for a quarter of the women who participated.
- UC Santa Barbara researchers recently released a surveillance study showing how COVID-19 can spread through a community via asymptomatic carriers.
- As the COVID-19 pandemic alters an individual’s environment, Berkeley Lab researchers explore how genetics and external factors interact to shape weight gain, alcohol consumption and lung health.
- With funding from the CARES Act, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, chipmaker AMD and information technology company Supermicro have upgraded the Corona supercomputer, providing additional resources to scientists for COVID-19 drug discovery and vaccine research.

Ongoing Challenges
We are thankful for the emergency legislation that Congress has passed to date, but we know that California and our nation won’t fully recover without additional investments to our states, as well as in research, health care and education.

- UC has experienced more than $2.1 billion in expenditures and loss revenue through Aug. 31, 2020, and because California’s economy has taken a big hit, the UC system could see additional – and substantial – losses. As the Congress works on an additional COVID-19 supplemental appropriations package, we would like to call your attention to UC’s priorities as they relate to support for states, higher education, health care research, and tax and financing issues.

Learn More About UC’s Coronavirus Response Efforts

If you have any questions about this update or other issues, please contact Chris Harrington with UC’s Office of Federal Governmental Relations.