Dear Colleagues,

We recognize that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has created an unprecedented environment, and we want to share with you how the University of California is responding and adapting to the pandemic. With ten campuses, five academic medical centers and three UC affiliated national labs working on COVID-19 responses, UC launched a website that includes resources, campus-specific COVID-19 information and links to public health organizations, among other important information.

Learn More About UC’s COVID-19 Response Efforts

While this situation is fast-moving, UC’s Office of Federal Governmental Relations will continue to share regular updates with you that highlight the University’s ongoing efforts to respond to and address challenges around the COVID-19 pandemic.

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.

- On April 6, UC Health began publishing a daily dashboard on Twitter via @UofCAHealth showing the number of COVID-19 tests performed for UC Health patients. The information includes the total number of tests performed each day at each site and breaks down positive tests by age, gender and location.
  - All five UC medical centers are now performing in-house testing, and capacity continues to expand.
- To accelerate urgently needed breakthroughs in the COVID-19 pandemic, on April 6, UC announced that it will provide $2 million in seed funding to scientists across the state to help jump-start their high-impact research projects.
- Access to accurate information is essential in the fight against COVID-19 and a lack of widespread testing has hindered the ability of public health officials to gauge its spread, which is why recent apps launched by UCLA Health and UCSF Health are playing a critical role in enabling the public to help fight the spread of the coronavirus.

Student and Campus Life
While there is no doubt that the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year will be different, UC is committed to ensuring continuity and providing resources for its students.

- UC campuses have moved classes and exams to remote instruction to reduce the risk of transmission, with decisions being made at the campus-level, informed by the California Department of Public Health’s guidance to colleges and universities. You can find information on each campus on the right sidebar of UC’s coronavirus website.
- On March 31, UC took a number of steps to temporarily adjust admissions requirements to ensure that newly admitted students and prospective students are not harmed by educational disruptions from COVID-19. The measures include suspending the letter grade requirement for academic classes taken in winter, spring or summer terms of
2020; providing flexibility for students who need more time to meet registration, deposit and transcript deadlines; and suspending the standardized test requirement for students applying for admission as freshmen for fall 2021.

Research
UC researchers are advancing scientific understanding and developing new tools, while sharing their knowledge of COVID-19 with researchers around the world. Below are highlights of some of the efforts taking place across the system.

- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory’s Advanced Light Source is conducting research that may help in developing therapeutics to combat COVID-19. The lab is also part of a Department of Energy-wide working group that is working to identify ways to leverage the capabilities of the national labs.
- All five of UC medical centers - UC Davis, UC Irvine, UCLA, UC San Diego and UCSF - are among the 75 sites around the globe participating in a clinical trial sponsored by the National Institutes of Health to test the effectiveness of a candidate antiviral drug against COVID-19. The drug, remdesivir, was originally developed to treat Ebola.
- UC Berkeley and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are the headquarters of a new research consortium C3.ai Digital Transformation Institute that will fund artificial intelligence (AI) projects that contribute to solving major societal problems. Along with the recent announcement came a call for research proposals for AI techniques to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and possible future pandemics.
- UC researchers have posted COVID-19’s genome to the UC Santa Cruz Genome Browser, an interactive web-based tool used by researchers all over the world to study genetic data. They have added its protease structure to the Protein Data Bank Archive, which is managed by a consortium of data centers, including UC San Diego and UCSF. Notably, UCSF is working to ensure that current and future patients can be accurately and quickly diagnosed through a point-of-care test that it is developing through its gene sequencing program.
- Researchers from UC Riverside, the University of Chicago, the U.S. Department of Energy’s Argonne National Laboratory and Northwestern University have mapped a 3D protein structure of COVID-19 which allows scientists to figure out how to interfere in the pathogen’s replication in human cells.

Ongoing Challenges
As California’s third largest employer with more than 227,000 employees that serve more than 285,000 students and operate the nation’s largest academic health system, there remain many challenges ahead for our community.

- On April 10, we shared with your office a letter from UC President Janet Napolitano highlighting recommendations and requests related to the fourth emergency supplemental legislation. These challenges affect our key missions: students, research, health care and public service – particularly the role UC plays in providing life-saving health care services.
- On April 14, we shared with your office a letter from UC’s research leadership as well as a comprehensive COVID-19 research priorities document that provides a thorough analysis of the current state of affairs for our nation’s research institutions as well UC’s recommendations for necessary investments to ensure the U.S. research enterprise not only endures but also remains the world leader in innovation after COVID-19.
- On April 7, UC President Napolitano and Executive Vice President for UC Health Carrie Byington authored an opinion editorial for Inside Higher Ed underscoring the critical role
federal research will play in solving the COVID-19 crisis. The $1.25 billion for federal research agencies included in the CARES Act was significant, but additional and ongoing support for research universities and academic health centers battling COVID-19 on behalf of our nation is necessary.

Thank you for your continued support of the University. If you have any questions about the items in this week’s update or other issues, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Best,

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