Dear Colleagues,

We recognize that the COVID-19 outbreak has created an unprecedented environment. On a weekly basis, the University of California’s Office of Federal Governmental Relations will share with you how UC is responding and adapting to the pandemic, as well as highlight campus, health center and national laboratory news.

This Thursday, April 23 at 4:00 PM ET, UC will host its first virtual briefing in a series of virtual briefings aimed at providing policy staff and federal stakeholders with COVID-19-related developments from UC experts. The first briefing in this series, “The UC Health Enterprise,” will center on the COVID-19 response from UC’s five academic health centers, collectively referred to as UC Health. Please RSVP no later than COB Wednesday, April 22.

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 outpouring of support and offers to help UC students in need, health care workers and researchers is truly inspiring. Last week, UC rolled out a new web page where those who are interested in donating or supporting relief efforts can find links to a variety of opportunities. >> Read More
- Following a recent expansion of its COVID-19 test processing capacity at a new diagnostic laboratory adjacent to the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub (CZ Biohub), UC San Francisco will offer COVID-19 sample analysis for 30 days, free of charge, to all nine Bay Area counties’ Departments of Public Health. >> Read More
- With the ongoing need for additional personal protective equipment, many in the UC community have sidelined their own work to provide support. A few examples include:
  o UC Santa Barbara’s California NanoSystems Institute has begun the 3-D printing of face shields. >> Read More
  o UC Riverside costume- and scene-shop employees have been stitching together face masks for their colleagues. >> Read More
  o A UC Berkeley lab is making free hand sanitizer for the needy >> Read More

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.

- At this time of year, admitted students would usually be flocking to campus to see what the school has to offer. But since prospective students aren’t able to visit, UC folks have come up with all kinds of creative ways to bring the campus to them: from soaring like a bird on an aerial tour, dropping into an online class, or going on TikTok to learn the campus clap, to name a few. >> Read More
• UC Santa Cruz is creating a new program that will prepare students and provide research to solve current and future global health problems. The new global and community health program will offer a multidisciplinary B.A. and B.S. degree; the program will also coordinate university-wide community and global health research efforts. >> Read More

• Every day, new information is spread on television, social media and in print. But how can you be sure what you’re seeing is true when so many sources proclaim to have the latest news? UC Merced’s Deputy University Librarian Donald Barclay recently discussed information in the digital age in the time of COVID-19. >> Read More

• UC San Diego recently launched a new COVID-19 webinar series: How will Coronavirus Change the World? School of Global Policy and Strategy experts will highlight the disruption the pandemic has caused to democracy, climate change, the economy and more on Thursdays from 3-4 pm ET through June 4. >> Read More

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.

• Two UCLA mathematics professors have been awarded a $200,000 rapid-response research grant from the National Science Foundation to use mathematical modeling, incorporating the specific features of COVID-19, to provide insights to those who are developing strategies to mitigate the spread of the disease. >> Read More

• Tracking social media “sick posts” could give public health officials a head start on identifying and responding to emerging disease outbreaks, researchers at UC Davis suggest in a new working paper. >> Read More

• UC Irvine researchers have developed a smartphone application for coronavirus contact tracing. The TrackCOVID smartphone application works by allowing users to log their interactions anonymously, making it easier to trace when and where people may have come in contact with someone carrying the COVID-19 virus. >> Read More

• Preliminary results of the first clinical trial of the promising antiviral therapy remdesivir conducted at UC Davis Health and other hospitals in the U.S., Europe, Canada and Japan found that nearly two thirds of severely ill patients hospitalized with COVID-19 who received remdesivir on a compassionate-use basis improved, with no new concerns about safety reported during the short clinical study. >> Read More

• Two UC-affiliated national laboratories – Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos – are part of a partnership to unleash U.S. supercomputing resources against COVID-19. The COVID-19 High Performance Computing Consortium is a unique public-private consortium, spearheaded by the White House, the U.S. Department of Energy and IBM, and includes government, industry and academic leaders who have volunteered free compute time and resources on their machines. >> Read More

• Loss of smell and taste have been anecdotally linked to COVID-19 infections. In a recently published study, researchers at UC San Diego Health report the first empirical findings that strongly associate sensory loss with COVID-19. >> Read More
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 15, in a letter to California state leadership, UC President Janet Napolitano outlined UC’s COVID-19 response costs. In March 2020 alone, these unanticipated costs – in areas from health to student housing – totaled $558 million. >> Read More
- On April 16, UC filed comments with the Federal Reserve regarding the establishment of the Main Street Lending Program, detailing the University’s specific requests. >> Read More

Thank you for your continued support of the University. If you have any questions about this week’s update or other issues, please reach out to me.

Best,

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Learn More About UC’s Coronavirus Response Efforts