Land Acknowledgement

The University of California recognizes that our campuses and other UC locations sit on the territory of Native peoples of California, and that these lands were and continue to be of great importance to Indigenous peoples. Every member of the UC community has and continues to benefit from the use and stewardship of these lands. Consistent with our values of community and diversity, we acknowledge with gratitude and make visible the University’s relationship to Native peoples.
How was I impacted in 2020?
Our UC Story

“I felt the most impact with personal health. Finding work-life balance has been challenging… social justice has always been a concern because I have friends, family, and my children are minorities and face inequalities... I have been exercising to maintain my mental and physical health. I have been eating better since I am home and cook more meals.”

Shellee Stewart
UC Riverside
“Often when campus information did come out, it was related to the experiences of students and faculty. The experiences of staff were implied, but not explicitly stated.”

Edwina Welch
UC San Diego
“As an Asian, I’ve been impacted by the scapegoating of East Asians for COVID deaths. Trump calling [the virus a racist name]. I fear for my family.”

Kevin Kawakami
UCLA
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OUR UC STORY

Impacts of 2020 and Recommendations to Advance UC Leadership in Supporting the Success and Well-Being of 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Staff

Presented by UC-CORO
2020 Southern Cohort
April 8, 2021
February 2020
COVID Cohort
Agenda

• Problem Statement
• Core Questions
• Methodology
• Findings
• Recommendations

“Maybe stories are just data with a soul.”
Brené Brown
Crises: COVID-19, Social Injustice & Economic
Problem Statement: Differential Impacts on UC Staff

- Women
- Non-binary persons
- People of color
- Caregivers
- Essential employees
- Lower-paid employees

- People with disabilities
- Non-traditional employees
- Employees without internet
- Employees living in multi-generational households
- Many others…
Core Questions

• What have been the impacts on the University of California staff members resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the concurrent economic and social injustice crises?

• What can the University of California do to respond to and mitigate the disparate impacts of the crises on staff members, and to transform the University into an exemplary leader in higher education that supports the needs and well-being of 21st-century employees?
Sector Investigations: UC, Higher Ed & Industry
Research: Gap Analysis
Research: Experiential Feedback
Research: 30 Staff Profiles
Findings

• Wellness & Mental Health
• Social Injustice
• Dependent Care
• Return to Site
• Financial Crisis & Assistance
• Communication & Outreach

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”

Zora Neale Hurston
Findings: Wellness & Mental Health

• UC lacks a plan that comprehensively addresses the multi-pronged challenges staff will face as we move toward a post-pandemic future
Feedback: Wellness & Mental Health

“The pandemic has been a very difficult time – difficult on staff – everything is like a house on fire. We did not slow down and breathe, all out sprinting, we really wore staff out. Also, we need to think about how to support the leadership.”

UCOP Staff Colleague
Findings: Social Injustice

• Financial disparity between campuses may impact effectiveness of local efforts
• Many peer universities declared Juneteenth a holiday
• UC campuses did not
“The University is on the right track. Talking about social injustice more. Encouraging departments to discuss it. But it can’t be a six month thing.”

UCLA Staff Colleague
“Sometimes I feel like Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is a contest to see who can do it better and how many people of color you can get into your department brochure. It’s not authentic and I want the EDI work to stop feeling like a check box.”

UC San Diego Staff Colleague
Findings: Dependent Care

- Availability and affordability remain challenges
- UC leave policies are fairly generous so no perceived gap
“Supervisors have been flexible with my work schedule during the day as long as I complete my eight hours… The challenge is that I feel like I am working all day long.”

UC San Diego Staff Colleague
Findings: Return to Site – University of California

• Currently no clear return to site guidance for all campuses
• UC policies don’t clearly address the potential for post-pandemic remote work
• UC has been treating remote work as a temporary measure
• UC does not have a plan to transition employees back to site or allow for regular remote work
“Many staff have been reporting to campus for work every day over the past year. All of the staff that left will have to be reintegrated, which is no small task… There should be an explicit plan to make that transition as smooth as possible to prevent a cultural integration shock.”

UC San Diego Staff Colleague
Findings: Return to Site – Industry

- Industry is reducing its real estate footprint
- Allowing more employees to work from home
- Providing space and opportunities to develop in-person communities, mentorships, networks, and creativity among the employees
Findings: Return to Site

- Higher education may not be business as usual when we return from the pandemic
- Industry has changed its work arrangements allowing for hybrid or fully remote work arrangements, where possible

72% of UC Berkeley employees prefer working from home when the University begins to bring a limited number of employees to work on-site
Findings: Financial Crisis & Staff Assistance

• Financial impact of pandemic uncertain and varies among UC locations

• Interviewed employees from UC Santa Barbara expressed concerns about the long-term impact on staff and deferred maintenance of building and equipment due to resource constraints

• UC is a leader in providing paid leave options related to COVID-19
Findings: Financial Crisis & Staff Assistance

“Salary freezes and lack of merit increases for non-represented staff members are frustrating, especially when people are being asked to do so much.”

UC San Diego Staff Colleague
Findings: Communication & Outreach

- Staff appreciate UC’s effort to communicate but desired a more effective strategy.

“Communication is important. Continue timely information.”
UC Irvine Staff Colleague
Findings: Communication & Outreach

“Communication from UCOP seems vague…”
UC Santa Barbara Staff Colleague

“Timing and lack of clarity of communications adds to my stress.”
UC San Diego Staff Colleague
“I have never yet seen any plan which has not been mended by the observations of those who were much inferior in understanding to the person who took the lead in the business.”

Edmund Burke
Recommendation #1

Develop a systemwide staff engagement process and an accessible and consistent communication strategy.
"For many employees, large town halls are not the type of environment where they feel comfortable asking questions. A better option is small groups of employees, where they ask questions, where managers can clarify any misunderstandings, where employees can feel heard, and where mutual trust and respect can be developed."

UC Santa Barbara Staff Member
Feedback: Systemwide Staff Engagement

“Multiple modes of communication (Zoom, Slack, email, Microsoft Teams, Google Chat) are helpful and too much at the same time.”

UC San Diego Staff Colleague
“Staff from less affluent backgrounds experience more hardship and do not always know what resources are available. In a post-COVID world, the University needs to ensure that communication continues for all about what resources are available, not just through email, but staff training.”

UC Santa Barbara Staff Colleague
Strategies: Systemwide Staff Engagement

• Establish regular two-way communication with staff members
• Leverage a variety of media and communication channels popular among staff
• Invite staff members to engage in a constructive dialogue, ask questions, raise concerns, and offer solutions to address emerging issues
Recommendation #2

Create and develop programs and structures that support UC telework and work-life balance
Strategies: Telework & Work-Life Balance

- UC should innovate and create new pathways for a reimagined workforce
- Prioritize strong support for work-life integration, including access to supplies and equipment
- Offer specific communication training for managing virtual groups, meetings, and patient care, including robust IT support
Strategies: Telework & Work-Life Balance

• Strengthen and expand wellness and mental health services
• Develop resources and enhanced training for supervisors to support employees in crisis, like a red folder system
Feedback: Telework & Work-Life Balance

“The pandemic has made it difficult to find consistent work-life balance because of changing environments. The uncertainty of many things caused some extra stress and anxiety but I have learned to find ways that work for me to work at maintaining balance.”

UC Riverside Staff Colleague
Strategies: Telework & Work-Life Balance

• Continue providing online resources and group sessions
• Provide managers with conflict resolution training
• Demonstrate a commitment to antiracist practices by providing guidance on how to manage a diverse workforce
Recommendation #3

Establish and strengthen structures and leadership that advance institutional equity, diversity, and inclusion
Feedback: EDI Structures & Leadership

“UCLA values equity, diversity, and inclusion and the next step is to focus on justice.”

UCLA Staff Colleague

“What investment is the system willing to make to create more positive, lasting change?”

UC Santa Barbara Staff Colleague
Strategies: EDI Structures & Leadership

- Commit to providing funds for creating EDI faculty, staff, and student advisors at multiple levels
- Expand antiracism training and research programs
- Create a roadmap for tracking campuswide priorities and progress
- Offer regular dialogues or forums with EDI advisors
- Offer various campus culture enrichment events
“The University is good at getting people in the room but we’re not good at having the tough conversation.”

UCLA Staff Colleague

“However, even with some progress, I still see academia as a rigid place that is difficult for minority members to succeed in leadership positions.”

UC Riverside Staff Colleague
Strategies: EDI Structures & Leadership

- Administrative units and departments should make a commitment to improving faculty, staff, and student diversity through recruitment and hiring as an advocate for social justice.
“Even at UC there are embedded structures that support systemic racism and social inequity… We must all do our part. Waiting for the President to eradicate racism is a lot of burden to put on the shoulders of one person. We must all become anti-racist. Staff surveys are excellent tools to gauge the temperature of staff. Using the results of these surveys to implement changes is even better.”

UCOP Staff Colleague
Strategies: EDI Structures & Leadership

• Campuses should improve institutional self-evaluation
• Partner with local communities to address antiracism as a public health issue
Conclusion

Position the University of California as an exemplary leader in higher education that supports the success and well-being of 21st century staff
“We have amazing staff who care about the University and the people we serve. Staff have been amazing at pulling together to serve the student and campus community.”

Yen Tran
UC Santa Barbara
Our UC Story

“I am working double the hours and one-and-a-half times the workload. But it feels good to contribute. Work is therapy. This is exactly what I came here to do.”

Albert Chang
UC Irvine
“I always get reminders that we are a team and that we will get through these challenges together, which is motivating to make sure that I can work at my best.”

Duyen Trang
UC Riverside
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Questions

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- Slide 3
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  - Protesting Health Workers (Upper Middle): David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA
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  - My Ethnicity is Not a Virus (Lower Right): Steven Senne/AP
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• Working from Home (Left): Craig Mitchelldyer/AP Photo
• Social Injustice (Middle): Sara Reingewirtz/Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG
• Economic Crisis (Right): narvikk/Getty Images

Slide 16
• University of California (Left): Steve McConnell/UC Berkeley
• Higher Education (Middle): W. Steve Shepard Jr.
• Industry: Jetta Productions Inc.

Slide 17
• Whiteboard Strategy Session: https://thejilliangroup.com/whiteboardstrategy/
Photo Credits (Slides 18-26)

Slide 18
- Employee Satisfaction Survey: https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/focusing-on-the-disconnect-mid-level-ma-69919/

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Slide 51: Interview: https://smallbusinessatwork.org/tool/6/playbook

Slide 53: Racism: A Public Health Crisis: University of San Diego