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Academic Insight

A newsletter brought to you by Academic Affairs

A Message from Vice Provost Phil Kass

My colleagues and I in [Academic Affairs](#) are pleased to present you with our first newsletter for the academic year. It strains credulity to believe how almost all facets of our academic lives have been meaningfully altered since late last winter. Each year I teach epidemiology to our veterinary medical students, and I provide them with examples of relatively recent disease epidemics that have threatened both animal and human populations, while admonishing them that even despite the significant medical advances of the 20th century, the era of infectious disease epidemics is anything but over. I always wondered if they believed me.

As we move forward this year, we want to share with you some of what our priorities are, and let you know that we will do our very best to achieve as many of them as we can. Academic Affairs recommits to:

- assisting colleges and schools in hiring outstanding research faculty with a strong and demonstrable commitment to teaching, scholarship and service that will promote the success of historically underrepresented and marginalized student communities and address the needs of our increasingly diverse state and student population;
- seeking extramural funding to support innovative faculty hiring practices, as we have successfully done for the past three years;
- collaborating with our colleagues across campus to promote inclusive excellence and a safe and welcoming environment;
- fulfilling the responsibilities and action plans of our SEA Change (American Association for the Advancement of Science) and IChange (National Science Foundation) memberships, in partnership with our campus colleagues;
- working with the Academic Senate to bring greater clarity and uniformity to our guidelines about our Step Plus academic advancement program;
- working our other UC campuses and American Association of Universities member institutions to establish and strengthen reference check programs in faculty hiring; continuing to advise deans on salary equity issues as they arise;
- providing workshops for our academic community to support professional development;
- keeping the campus informed through announcements and newsletters about campus policies and resources, particularly those that are new and time-sensitive;
- continuing to support work-life and benefit programs both locally and systemwide to support the needs of parents and caregivers, and
- continuing to support in every way possible our dedicated and altruistic team of wonderful associates in the Office of Academic Affairs, who work tirelessly to improve the professional lives of our academic colleagues at UC Davis.

I welcome your thoughts and advice, and wish you the very best in this coming year. Please stay safe and well.

Phil

Open Enrollment - UC Benefits

Open Enrollment for UC Benefits is underway, and ends at **5pm on Nov. 24**. Highlights include changes in cost-sharing, Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA's) and additional legal insurance protections. Please review [UCOP's webpage](#) to learn more about these changes. Make your Open Enrollment changes through UCPath [here](#).

Key Updates

Daily Symptom Survey

Information about the campus' status regarding returning to normal operations is maintained on [this site](#). As a reminder, employees, students and any visitors are required to take the **Symptom Survey** before entering a university-managed facility.



Flu Vaccination Requirement

The Executive Order requiring all faculty/academics, staff, students, and others accessing UC facilities to receive a flu vaccination by **Oct 31**. The [revised Executive Order](#) is available on UCnet, along with a [revised and more inclusive set of FAQs for employees](#).

Extended Paid Administrative Leave - New Extension

UC President Drake issued [a letter](#) which outlines an amended order noting his extension of the Extended Pay Administrative Leave from 12/31/20 to 6/30/21. Please note that the one-time allotment of 128 hours (or 16 days) has not been increased. Additionally, our office will be receiving updated guidance documents which we will share with you once received.

Faculty Parent Support Group



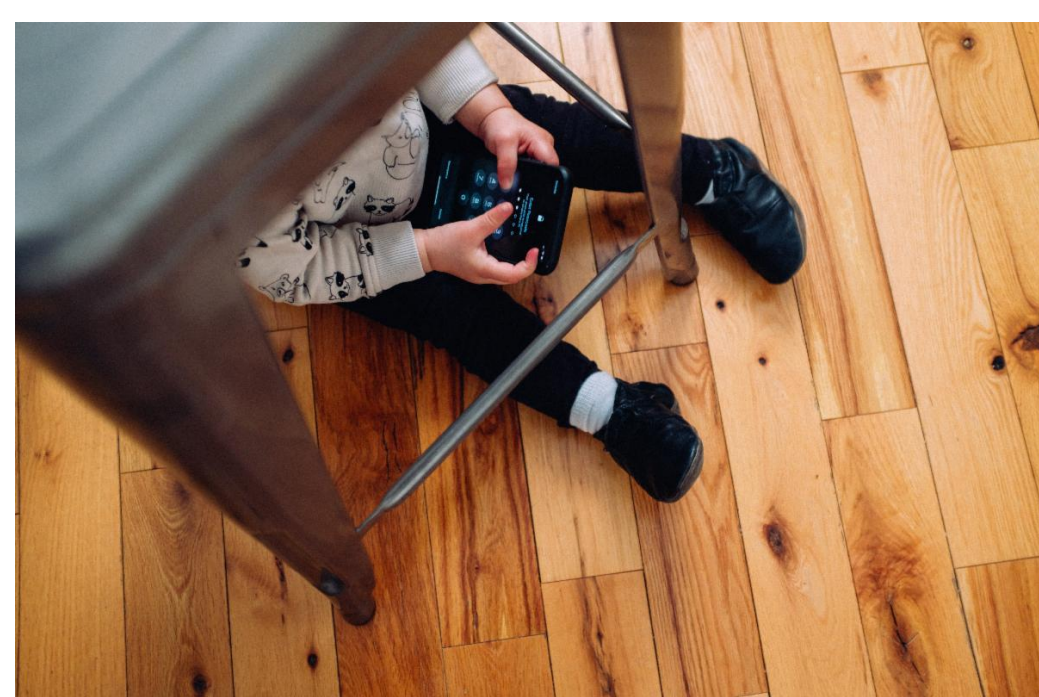
With the continuation of remote work, the pressures on faculty with young children are significantly higher than usual, making it even more challenging to respond to work demands. Our **Faculty Parent Support Group**, convened by Professor Diane Wolf, provides an opportunity to **confidentially** share concerns, hear from other faculty, and develop

strategies to navigate these new challenges. Click [here](#) for the schedule. In addition to group meetings, Professor Diane Wolf is also making herself available throughout the Fall quarter to support faculty parents. To arrange a one-on-one confidential meeting at your convenience by phone, Zoom or any other venue, please email Diane directly at dlwolf@ucdavis.edu.

Child and Family Care Options UPDATE

In an effort to better support working parents and guardians with finding child and family care, UC Davis Human Resources has created a booklet and updated their guidance to reflect changes in relation to COVID-19.

Please visit [their website](#) to attain this valuable information.



Professional Development Awards Program for Unit 18 Members for 2021-2022

This competitive program provides funding to enable Unit 18 members to engage in professional development activities that will enhance their effectiveness in their current position. **Applications due to the Vice Provost - Academic Affairs by January 19, 2021.**

Application instructions are posted on the [UC & UC Davis Awards](#) webpage. Questions should be directed to [Ellen Bonnel](#), Academic Federation Assistant to the Vice Provost - Academic Affairs (530-752-4827).

National and International Awards Highlights

Congratulations to the following faculty on their recent recognition:

- **Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola**, Professor of Clinical Internal Medicine (2021 Ohtli Award of the Mexican Government);
- **Jennifer Curtis**, Engineering Dean & Distinguished Professor of Chemical Engineering (ASEE Benjamin Garver Lamme Award; Elected Fellow of the American Physical Society);
- **Jay Lund**, Distinguished Professor of Civil & Environmental Engineering (Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Prize for Water Management & Protection);
- **Jodi Nunnari**, Distinguished Professor and Chair of Molecular and Cellular Biology (Elected Associate Member, European Molecular Biology Organization);
- **Lorena Oropeza**, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Diversity & Professor of History (Elected Fellow of the Academia de Liderazgo);
- **Pamela Ronald**, Distinguished Professor of Plant Pathology (GCHERA World Agricultural Prize)
- **Sharon Strauss**, Professor of Evolution & Ecology (American Society of Naturalists' 2020 Sewall Wright Award).

Furthering Accessibility through InterACT

The Manetti Shrem Museum has launched [interACT](#), a Zoom webinar platform, to amplify the voices of Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) students, faculty/academics, and staff by being a "third space" where conversation and connection can happen through gatherings hosted and presented by campus community groups. **This means providing virtual space for meetings, public programs or performances, as well as staff support.**



How it works:

- Museum staff will provide technical and production support.
- The museum will co-sponsor and promote the program **if requested**. Use of interACT is offered free for all. Just fill out the [interACT form](#).

To learn more about interACT please visit [museum's website](#). Don't forget to also check out [upcoming events](#) with prominent artists, writers, and curators.

Transitioning to Retirement Workshop Series

The expert-led Transition to Retirement workshop series provides faculty/academics advanced planning strategies to meet their retirement goals within the **next five to eight years**. Workshop dates and topics are:

- **Introduction & Understanding the UC Retirement Plan** - January 15, 2021
- **UC Health Insurance for Retirees and HR Presentation on Separation and Retirement** - January 22, 2021
- **Financial Planning in Retirement and Social Security** - January 29, 2021
- **Work/Life Transitions** - February 5, 2021

Register for these workshops [here](#). For more information, visit our [website](#).

Capital Resource Network (CRN)

Virtual Tours

In light of the current climate and restricted interactions, we have created virtual 'tours of the neighborhoods' to accommodate our incoming faculty/academics and staff who are transitioning to the UC Davis family and are limited in traveling to the area to seek housing.



Davis Area Tour



Sacramento Area Tour

CRN Client Spotlight: Welcome Provost Croughan!

"The CRN was absolutely incredible! They walked me through all of my housing options and helped me think realistically about the best options. They provided great information on short-term rentals, homes to purchase, movers and storage options, and even vetted all services to find the best price and service. They connected me to the perfect realtor who in turn connected me to the perfect newly built home that I purchased. Everything was in place (new home, utilities, etc) for me to get settled just in time to start my new position. They even vetted options for stronger internet connection at my partner's home so I can stay connected on weekends. I literally could not have done it without them!!"



Referrals to the CRN are made through the Academic Affairs online electronic form submission tool accessible [here](#). More information about the Capital Resource Network can be found [here](#).

Partner Opportunities Program

Client Spotlight: Assistant Dean Abbasi Syed



"When my husband joined the faculty of the UC Davis Religious Studies department, everyone was so kind and welcoming. They made us feel like a part of the community even before we moved here. This support extended to the POP program - they immediately stepped in to help me navigate the job search process at UC Davis. It was a huge transition for our family - we would not have been able to handle it so well without their support and guidance. They made me feel like an Aggie even before I stepped foot on campus!"

Erum Abbasi Syed,
Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies

More information about the Partner Opportunity Program can be found [here](#).

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ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



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