

WITH U • FOR U

DFA Employee Newsletter



A message from
Chief Financial Officer &
Vice Chancellor, Mary Lou D. Ortiz

**Managers/Supervisors: Please share this email with DFA campus temporary and contract employees. For those who do not have regular access to emails/laptops/PCs, please print and share this email accordingly.*

Dear DFA employees,

I want to begin by expressing my heartfelt thoughts to all who have been impacted by the recent wildfires. Many of you may have friends, family, or personal ties to those affected by these catastrophic events. Please know that [resources](#) remain available to support you, including [guidance to ensure preparedness](#) in case such events occur closer to campus. Additionally, I want to thank the UC Irvine teams who extended their services and support to our colleagues at UCLA during this challenging time.

On another note, I hope you had a chance to see the exciting news about UCIPD's recent achievement. The UC Irvine Police Department has earned [accreditation from the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators \(IACLEA\)](#), the leading authority in campus public safety. This prestigious recognition highlights UCIPD's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, service, and accountability. Please join me in congratulating UCIPD on this significant accomplishment!

As we enter the new year, I'd also like to remind everyone to complete the [required cybersecurity training](#) to avoid losing access to UCI Single Sign-on applications. Ensuring that we all stay vigilant and informed is critical in protecting our university from cyber threats.

With our [strategic planning](#) efforts well underway, I'd like to take a moment to thank you all for your contributions. Over the past year, we've made substantial progress in this journey and cabinet members have begun the process to update their strategic goals for the upcoming report out session. I'm especially encouraged by the progress made with [continuous process improvement \(CPI\) project submissions](#). Your initiatives highlight opportunities to refine processes, align goals, and ensure that our plan remains dynamic and responsive. As subject matter experts in your areas, I

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Featured Events

April 2025 | TBD
[DFA Virtual Town Hall](#)



encourage you to continue championing these efforts and drawing inspiration from the [innovative projects your colleagues are leading](#).

Looking ahead, I'm planning to host a [virtual divisional town hall](#) in early April. This will be an opportunity to share updates, celebrate successes, and discuss key initiatives. In the meantime, if you would like to present a 5-10 minute topic featuring a department program or achievement that you feel would be helpful for the division to learn more about, please email WithUForU@uci.edu with your ideas.

Thank you for your continued dedication and contributions to our division's success.

Sincerely,

Mary Lou D. Ortiz
Chief Financial Officer
Vice Chancellor, Finance & Administration



DFA's Vision, Mission, and Values

We are **With U • For U**. We are proud to support the UC Irvine community. Our vision, mission, and values set our direction, guide our decisions, and foster a shared culture. [Learn more](#).



DFA-HR Reminders

As we enter the new year, please review the following key updates and reminders to help you stay informed and prepared:

- **2025 Wellness Ambassadors:** Looking to prioritize your health and well-being this year? The 2025 Wellness Ambassadors are here to support you. Learn more about this program and how it can benefit you by visiting the [Wellness Ambassadors page](#).
- **California Wildfire Resources:** Explore assistance programs available through [UCI HR – Disaster Relief](#) and the [Life Resources Program](#). For additional details, review the [email](#) from campus HR.
- **Leave Requests:** Need to request leave time or have questions about eligibility and options? [DFA-HR](#) is available to provide guidance on the programs and options currently available in 2025.
- **UC Learning Center (UCLC):** Stay ahead of required trainings by reviewing upcoming deadlines

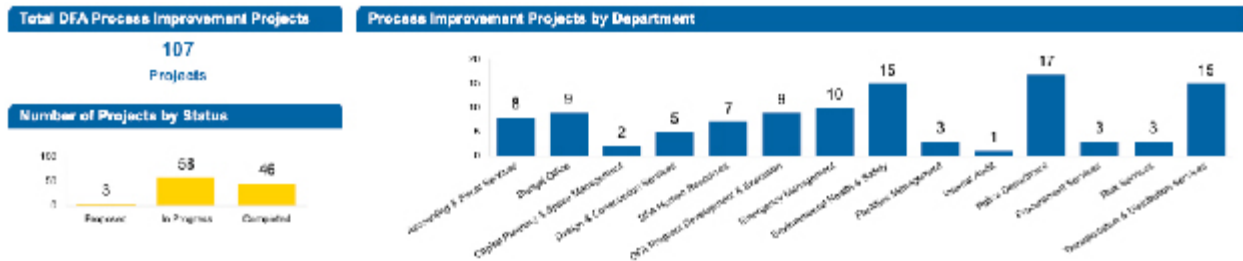
by logging into your account on [UCLC](#) and navigating to Assigned Trainings. You may also discover additional trainings to assist you in your current role and future development needs or aspirations by searching for available courses by topic in the top search bar.

Article provided by DFA-HR



Continuous Improvement Focus: DFA's Process Improvement Library

DFA's CPI [project library](#) features process improvement projects from all DFA departments, including proposed, in progress, or completed. Thanks to the diligent and consistent efforts across departments, during the first half of FY25 we more than doubled the projects featured on the [CPI dashboard](#) and substantially increased the number of completed projects.



Source: <https://dfa.uci.edu/pde/projects/index.php> (as of January 22, 2025)

In the upcoming newsletter issues, we will feature completed process improvement projects from different departments which might benefit or inspire others.

TAKE CPI ACTION

Incorporate CPI in your daily activities. Identify a bottleneck, own it, and improve it!
View and download the [DFA CPI flyer](#).



Submit Ideas/Projects

Submit information about a [process improvement project](#)



Browse Existing Projects

Explore [DFA's CPI dashboard](#) for current, proposed or recently



Explore DFA's CPI Toolkit

Explore the [DFA's CPI toolkit](#). Contact us at

[or idea in your department.](#)

completed process improvement projects in our division.

WithUForU@uci.edu with any questions and suggestions for additional tools.

Article provided by DFA Program Development & Execution



Clash of the Cans 2024 Recap

UC Irvine Transportation is proud to announce that during the 2024 [Clash of the Cans](#) food drive, we partnered with departments across campus and UCI Health to donate **over \$1,000 and 500 pounds of non-perishable goods** to the [Orange County Food Bank](#) and the [UCI Basic Needs Center](#). The donations gathered during the food drive support both organizations in providing essential supplies and necessary items to secure the basic needs of our UCI students and Orange County families. Thank you to all our campus and DFA partners for participating and supporting this food drive to provide meals to those in need!

Article provided by UC Irvine Transportation & Distribution Services



Police Department Toy Drive 2024 Recap

One of the highlights of UCIPD's annual Toy Drive is the Toy Toss, hosted by UC Irvine Athletics during

the basketball game on Thursday, December 5, at the Bren Events Center. Fans brought plush toys to toss onto the court at halftime, where they were collected by the Spirit Squad. This event alone resulted in UCIPD gathering 11 large bags of toys. UCIPD representatives, including PSR Flavio Ramos, PSR Mohamed Abdelwahab, Sergeant Albert Zheng, CSA Adriana Madrigal, CSA Michelle Garcia, and Sergeant Bolano, received the toys from the Spirit Squad.

On Tuesday, December 17, UCIPD staff distributed toys at the UCI Health Santa Ana Clinic, UCI Health Anaheim Clinic, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Medical Center in Orange. Participants included Director of Administration Alicia Reich, Accreditation Manager Cedric Young, Financial Analyst Kelly Nguyen, Corporals Akingbemi and Beadle, Officers Kemper and Iraldo, PSS Enriquez, PSRs Ramos, Abdelwahab, Aguiar, and Sweeney, and PSAs Orr and Delgado. UCI Athletics staff and student-athletes also joined for the first day of toy distribution, adding to the holiday spirit.

On Wednesday, December 18, UCIPD staff visited the Autism Clinic at the UCI Health Irvine Medical Center for morning and afternoon toy deliveries. Team members included Court Liaison & Evidence Analyst Monique Contreras, Records Analyst Justus Moore, Sergeant Bolano, Corporal Soon, Officers Patton, Liev, and Vasquez, PSS Agramont, and PSR Nelson. Officer Vasquez and PSS Agramont dressed as Santa, with Patient Experience Administrative Assistant Vanessa Alvarez as an elf, delighting the children and creating memorable moments.

Article provided by UC Irvine Police Department



IT Accessibility Tipsheets

All UC Irvine employees support the university's mission and commitment to inclusivity by incorporating accessibility, including digital accessibility, into their work product and service delivery. Check out these tipsheets to create more accessible documents, emails, videos, and webpages:

- [Creating Accessible Webpages](#)
- [Creating Accessible Documents](#)
- [Writing Accessible Emails](#)
- [Creating Accessible Videos](#)



Storm Water Pollution Prevention: Protecting Waterways

As the rainy season approaches, it's vital to remember that stormwater runoff flows untreated into local waterways. Storm drains are for rainwater only, yet motor oil, paint, and trash often end up there, polluting creeks and the ocean. Our campus community can help by properly disposing of waste and avoiding spills near storm drains. To learn more visit [UCI's stormwater management site](#).



Contract Administration team members (left to right): Director Brenda Duenas Medina and her team, Abel Saldana, Ladita McBride, Viola Teoxon, and Myai Mitchell

Contract Administration Spotlight

The Contract Administration team has the important tasks of drafting and administering design and construction contract documents for both the Design & Construction Services and Facilities Management departments. Working closely with department project managers, the team facilitates the bid and award processes for construction as well as the consultant selection process for design and other professional services. The contracts team is vital to ensuring the successful completion of capital projects.

Services provided:

- Prepare design and construction contract documents and provide appropriate business, policy, and legal review prior to their execution.
- Provide consultation and advice on complex contracts and assist with the interpretation of contract language consistent with university policies and procedures, which may include consultation with the Office of General Counsel.
- In close collaboration with campus risk management, determine appropriate insurance coverage and ensure contractor and consultant compliance with all contractual requirements.

Learn more or [contact the Contract Administration team](#).

Article provided by UC Irvine Design & Construction Services



UCI UCPath – Delivering Meaningful Improvements

The [UC Irvine UCPath team](#) had a stellar 2024, enhancing UCPath functionality through close

collaboration with the UCPath Center in Riverside, and all 14 UC locations.

The team, working with our UCPath partners, delivered three major release cycles—March, July, and November—and supported monthly updates for change requests, off-cycle changes, and defect fixes.

The efforts focused on advocating for UC Irvine’s needs, testing new features, and providing training, communication, and post-deployment support. The team deployed 17 projects that delivered meaningful improvements. Highlights are:

- **Employee Impact:** Automated disability reinstatements, improved access for former employees, pronoun choices, expanded leave options.
- **HR Efficiency:** Streamlined hiring processes, automated recruiting tool interfaces, simplified workflows in "Ask UCPath."
- **Financial Efficiency:** Enhanced salary cost transfers and improved financial assessments.

Looking Ahead to 2025

Upcoming projects include final pay improvements, stronger system security, simplified general ledger workflows, enhanced self-service tools, and better benefits election functionality. Our team is excited to help realize UCPath application improvements and continue to support our UCPath user community in the new year!

Article provided by UC Irvine Accounting & Fiscal Services



Sustainability Corner: UC Irvine Sustainability Operations

The Division of Finance & Administration has a handful of units whose primary purpose is in campus infrastructure, development, and facilities. These departments also have a responsibility and a commitment to sustainable practices that benefit the campus.

- [Campus Planning & Sustainability](#)
- [Design & Construction Services](#)
- [Environmental Health & Safety](#)
- [Facilities Management](#)
- [Procurement Services](#)
- [Transportation & Distribution Services](#)



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: Making Implicit Bias Training More Inclusive at UC Irvine

DFA and Student Affairs were awarded a joint grant under the [Addressing Bias and Building Community at UC Irvine \(ABC at UCI\)](#) grant program funded through UC Irvine’s Office of Inclusive Excellence. The objective is to provide Spanish translation for the UC [Managing Implicit Bias \(MIB\) Series](#) training. The proposal includes conducting in-person MIB training sessions with Spanish translation as well as providing Spanish subtitles to the online on-demand MIB training via UCLC. This project offers an important opportunity to expand the accessibility and impact of the Managing Implicit Bias Training. Through this project, we aim to reinforce our shared commitment to creating and sustaining an inclusive environment. Details on how this will be implemented are coming soon!

DFA EMPLOYEE PROFILES



Oracio Velasco
Irrigation Mechanic, Facilities Management

I have been at UC Irvine and in my current position for over two months. I repair broken irrigation main lines, repair broken sprinklers, wire tracing and irrigation controller programming.

What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most? I enjoy the challenge of tackling complex problems and finding solutions.

After a long day at work, what do you look forward to the most? I look forward to getting back to my family and a nice home-cooked meal.

Favorite travel spot? Cancun, Mexico.

If you were stuck on an island, what three things would you bring? I would bring a fishing rod, fishing tackle, and a fire starter.



Lori Jessell
Lead Designated Campus Fire Marshal, Environmental Health & Safety

My role entails leading a team of dynamic members while we ensure buildings comply with building and fire safety regulations. We accomplish this by performing inspections, reviewing building plans, and educating others. We conduct inspections and look for hazards, code violations and general conformance to proposed building plans and maintenance in the built environment. We advise on safety plans, evacuation planning and general emergency planning to help prevent fires and protect life and property.

What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most? Collaboration – coming together as a team, both internal and external team members, to solve the challenges that we face in the built and to be built environment. The teamwork that it takes to ensure Fire and Life Safety, to help prevent fires and protect life and property.

What are 3 words to describe your department? Dynamic, collaboration, and passionate.

What piece of advice would you give to a new employee? Your career and your goals are in your own hands. You can do anything you set your mind to and achieve goals you set for yourself. When you achieve your goals, be sure to turn around and assist the next person coming up. If we all do that, no one will face challenges alone.

Favorite travel spot? I love the Caribbean and areas with warm weather, warm clear water, and a relaxed feel.

If you were to write a book about yourself, what would you name it? A Phoenix Rises.

People would be surprised if they knew: I am most proud of what I have been able to achieve in life by pushing myself to always be better and always do better. From a single mom on public assistance, to a proud mother of two with three grandchildren (so far) and a long, successful, career in the Fire Service serving communities to help ensure safety and recovery when needed.



Michael Webb
Senior Business Systems Analyst, Accounting & Fiscal Services

I have been with UC Irvine for almost two years as a senior business systems analyst working on the Financial Management Support and Decision Support Team. I currently help build reports, troubleshoot data questions, and manage projects to answer big hairy questions about our KFS Financial Data. I come from a background working over 12 years in nonprofit work including IT and systems administration, fund development, and organizational communications. I enjoy working with data, but I really love empowering people with data to accomplish big goals. If you ever have a question about reporting, statistics, coding, or dream about a better future for higher education and technology I would love to collaborate and get to know you!

After a long day at work, what do you look forward to the most? I love walks with my wife, Jenny, and our dog, Marcie. Getting out of the house and seeing nature is the best remedy to the difficulties with remote work.

What piece of advice would you give to a new employee? UC Irvine is a big place and you will never know everything there is to know about the data, the history, or its future but I suggest you do your best to become an expert in knowing the people you work alongside. They will be your life raft in this process. If you get to know people, all the details will fall into place, and you won't fear the learning process.

Favorite travel spot? My wife and I love London. We have done quite a bit of international travel, and it was one of the best experiences we have had together. Can't get enough of going to the theater!

DFA NEW HIRES

DFA new hires hired between November 1 to December 31, 2024.

Design & Construction Services:

- Myai Mitchell

DFA Campus Operations:

- Justin Low

DFA Program Development & Execution:

- Monica Sierra

Environmental Health & Safety:

- Lori M Jessell
- Roger Pareja

Facilities Management:

- Cesar Campos
- Frederick Gibbs
- Guillermo G Hernandez
- Keith Johnson
- Oracio Velasco

Office of the CFO & Vice Chancellor:

- Norma Angelica Ortiz

Police Department:

- Emily Kandis Craighead
- Erik Alexander Mejia
- Isaac Rittikaidachar
- Jacob Robles
- Ken Matsunari
- Morgan Iwanuma
- Nathanael Grant Lyche
- Oguzhan Ulusan

UCI Division of Finance and Administration | With U • For U

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