

# 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 thank you for your continued professionalism during what has been a difficult time for DFA. While [budget reductions and staffing changes](#) present us with real challenges, I have full confidence that we will rise to this occasion as long as we don't lose sight of our mission to advance UC Irvine's brilliant future. Looking ahead, we expect to receive final budget numbers in August, and we'll share updates as soon as we're able. Your efforts during this period are truly appreciated.

Last month, UC Irvine proudly celebrated the graduation of more than [8,600 students](#). Notably, 42% of our bachelor's degree recipients are the first in their families to graduate from college—an inspiring reflection of UC Irvine's mission and impact. We were also recognized nationally by [The Princeton Review](#), which ranked UC Irvine the No. 4 Best Value College among public universities.

As we celebrate these achievements, I encourage you to participate in a few important upcoming efforts and events:

- The [Campus Workplace Violence Prevention Plan \(WVPP\) survey](#) is open through July 15. Your confidential feedback will help guide improvements to UC Irvine's [Workplace Violence Prevention Plan](#) and reinforce our commitment to a safe, supportive work environment. It takes just a few minutes to complete, and participants will be entered into a drawing to win one of four \$50 gift cards. Questions can be directed to [Parker Dunwoody](#), WVPP manager.
- The [Staff Appreciation Picnic](#) will take place on Wednesday, Aug. 14, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Aldrich Park. Hosted by Staff Assembly and made possible by dedicated volunteers, the picnic is a fun and heartfelt way to celebrate our incredible staff. All UC Irvine campus and UCI Health staff and retirees are welcome to join for food, activities, and community. Please [RSVP by Aug. 7](#) to help with attendance

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### Featured Events

**Thur., Aug. 14 | 11 a.m.-2 p.m.**  
[UC Irvine Staff Appreciation Picnic](#)

**Wed., Sep. 10 | 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**  
[Supplier Showcase](#)

**Tues., Oct. 21 | 11 a.m.-12 p.m.**  
[DFA Town Hall](#)

 DFA Employee Information

estimation. While an RSVP is appreciated, it is not required to attend the event.

- The [DFA Virtual Town Hall](#) is scheduled on Tuesday, Oct. 21, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. This is a great opportunity to stay informed on divisionwide updates. You're invited to [submit questions](#) in advance – please do so by Friday, Oct. 17. If you have not received a calendar invite, please check with your department head or email [WithUForU@uci.edu](mailto:WithUForU@uci.edu).



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

### New DFA-HR Director, Senior Business Partner, CJ Valentine

We're excited to welcome CJ Valentine to DFA HR as our new director, senior HR business partner. CJ brings vast expertise in human resources, with a strong background in driving strategic initiatives and enhancing workplace culture. He holds advanced degrees in organizational leadership and global business from Pepperdine University and is a UC Irvine alum!

### UCLC Training Deadlines

Stay ahead of your approaching [UCLC training deadlines](#) by reviewing your upcoming courses and calendaring for your completion.

- In your **Dashboard**, navigate to **Assigned Training** icon
- Click the **Expiration Date** once, which will organize your trainings by those that expire first
- Add a reminder to your calendar for timely completion

*Article provided by DFA-HR*



## Continuous Improvement Focus: AFS: Under \$75 Receipt Reduction for Travel/Entertainment

DFA's CPI [project library](#) features process improvement projects from all DFA departments, including proposed, in progress, and completed.

Accounting & Fiscal Services recently completed a [CPI project](#) which eliminated approximately 2-day delays in the processing of reimbursements for expenses under \$75, by implementing a process to enforce the policy based on which receipts were not required. The image below provides details on the problem and goal statement, the implemented solution, and the results. For more information or to discuss this project, please contact [Tanya Harris](#).

### AFS: Under \$75 Receipt Reduction for Travel/Entertainment



#### Problem:

Per the G-28 policy, receipts for expenses under \$75 are not required, with the exception of airfare, lodging, and car rental. Many departments, however, continued to upload receipts under \$75 when it is not required, taking time to process.



#### Goal:

- Reduce time and effort when processing Travel/Entertainment reimbursements.
- Standardize the process across UCI campus and medical center.



#### Solution:

The Accounts Payable team documented the new process in an SOP in March 2025, sent out a communication about the new requirement in their monthly AP newsletter, and continues to communicate the new standard to departments.



#### Result:

Eliminated approximately two days of delay as the Accounts Payable team was waiting for requested receipts to be uploaded, resulting in faster approval and payment reimbursement.

*Project Contact: Tanya Harris, Accounting & Fiscal Services*

Our goal is to showcase completed projects from various departments which might benefit or inspire others. Please reach out to [WithUForU@uci.edu](mailto:WithUForU@uci.edu) to help us showcase your project.

## 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 or idea in your department](#).



### Browse Existing Projects

Explore [DFA's CPI dashboard](#) for current, proposed or recently completed process improvement projects in our division.



### Explore DFA's CPI Toolkit

Explore the [DFA's CPI toolkit](#). Contact us at [WithUForU@uci.edu](mailto:WithUForU@uci.edu) with any questions and suggestions for additional tools.

*Article provided by DFA Program Development & Execution*



## Coming July 14: A New Look for UCPATH Online

UCPath online is getting a new, [user-friendly look](#) on July 14 to help you more quickly access your paycheck, leave balances, benefits, forms, and more.

### What's Changing?

While the main features, security, and functionality of UCPATH online will remain the same, updates include:

- A modern design that aligns with UC's digital brand
- A new top navigation menu for easier browsing
- Tiles that highlight most-used information like pay and benefits
- Improved mobile-friendly access
- A new Manager Hub and Transactor Hub
- *Please note:* Bookmarks will no longer be available

### Explore More

[Learn more](#) from videos, job aids, and FAQs about this redesign. The UCI UCPATH team will offer live webinars to showcase the updated portal and answer questions. Join us!



- All Employees: [July 16 at 11 a.m.](#)
- Managers & Supervisors: [July 17 at 1 p.m.](#)

[Log in to the UCPATH portal](#) on July 14 to explore more.

*Article provided by UC Irvine Accounting & Fiscal Services*



### Employee Experience Center (EEC)

The [Employee Experience Center \(EEC\)](#) is UCI's central support team for HR, UCPATH, benefits, leaves, payroll, and HR systems. In partnership with the UCPATH Center, the EEC helps resolve employee-related issues and questions. Committed to delivering consistent, high-quality service, the EEC listens to employee needs, responds with urgency, and works to build trust through accountability, clear communication, and effective resolution.

Contact UCI's EEC for additional questions or assistance:

- [949-824-0500](tel:949-824-0500)
- [eec@uci.edu](mailto:eec@uci.edu)
- [Open a Support Ticket](#)



### Heat Illness Prevention

EHS developed the [Heat Illness Prevention Program](#) to ensure that all UCI employees working indoors and outdoors are protected from heat illness and are knowledgeable of heat illness symptoms, methods to prevent illness, and procedures to follow if symptoms occur. Please refer to [Activation of Heat Illness Prevention Procedures](#) section on notifying campus of extreme heat.

For other related resources:

- [Seniors and Heat Related Illness](#)
- [Children and Heat Related Illness](#)
- [Protecting Your Pets During Hot Weather](#)



## Central Plant – Major Infrastructure Upgrade

The Facilities Management department recently completed a major infrastructure upgrade at the campus central plant, replacing a 2,500-ton centrifugal chiller that had been in service since 1998. The

original unit—a dual-path Trane chiller with serial number 1—was the first of its kind, making it a unique piece of campus history. The new chiller, also from Trane, features a more efficient single-path counter-flow design and is fully integrated into the central plant's digital monitoring system. Completed in just under 100 days, the project's biggest challenge was rigging the 81,000-pound unit, which required a street closure and a 234,000-pound-capacity crane. The new chiller now operates alongside seven others at the central plant, supporting the campuswide chilled water loop used for building cooling across the university. The project was funded through deferred maintenance resources, supporting the university's long-term goal of resilient and sustainable operations. Its completion helps ensure continued climate control for critical research, teaching, and learning environments.

*Article provided by UC Irvine Facilities Management*

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## AI Risk Factors Identified by Internal Auditors

When evaluating risk, [an article by the Institute of Internal Auditors \(IIA\)](#) identified several AI-related risks that could affect organizations such as UC Irvine.

1. **AI-generated fake documents and data:** These can appear authentic, potentially misleading employees into making critical errors.
2. **Advanced phishing attacks:** AI can automate and scale these attempts, making them more convincing and harder to detect.
3. **Self-learning bots:** These can identify and exploit new security vulnerabilities, increasing the risk of breaches and unauthorized activities.
4. **Theft of sensitive information:** This includes patient and research data, which is particularly relevant to UC Irvine as an academic and medical institution.

To mitigate these risks, the IIA article recommends:

1. Enhancing security measures;
2. Utilizing AI tools for anomaly detection;
3. Conducting regular threat assessments;
4. Involving internal audit in proactive risk management;
5. Fostering collaboration across departments; and
6. Ensuring leadership engagement

*Article provided by UC Internal Audit Services*

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## myCommute Feature Enhancements

The [myCommute](#) portal provides UCI affiliates with flexible tools to manage digital parking and sustainable transportation (ST) resources. Recent updates have been made to improve usability, simplify access, and strengthen support for ST resources. Key updates include:

- **Mobile-Friendly Access:** Optimized for use on any device.
- **Permit Management:** Improved calendar feature, account details, and email confirmations to streamline permit activation.
- **Carpool Matching:** Access RideMatch to connect with others who share your commute route.
- **Train Rebate Submissions:** Submit train rebates by accessing the form directly through myCommute.
- **Electric Vehicle Resources:** Sign up for ChargePoint and Pump2Plug memberships.

These enhancements reflect our commitment to optimizing tools and processes that deliver greater value and convenience to our patrons.

*Article provided by UC Irvine Transportation & Distribution Services*



### **Sustainability Corner:** **UC Irvine earns STARS Gold Rating** **for Sustainability Excellence,** **Continuing Legacy**

UC Irvine received a STARS Gold rating for sustainability from AASHE, recognizing its leadership in green practices like waste reduction, sustainable curricula, and energy-efficient buildings. The university continues to advance its legacy with innovative, eco-friendly projects.



### **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:** **Spanish Transcripts Now Available for** **Managing Implicit Bias Training**

Spanish transcripts are now available for all six modules of the online on-demand [Managing Implicit Bias training](#) on [UCLC](#).

This creates an important opportunity to expand the accessibility and impact of the training and reinforce our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment.

The translation project became possible through a joint grant awarded to DFA and Student Affairs under the [Addressing Bias and Building Community at UC Irvine \(ABC at UCI\)](#) grant program by [UC Irvine's Office of Inclusive Excellence](#).

# DFA EMPLOYEE PROFILES



**Li Luan**  
**Senior Project Manager, Design & Construction Services**

I have been with UCI and in my current position for three years. I am a senior project manager for Irvine Campus Medical Complex (ICMC) currently under construction.

**What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most?** The most rewarding part of my job is knowing our work supports the community and creates spaces that drive innovation in healthcare and research. Being part of a team making a direct impact on campus and beyond means a lot to me.

**What are 3 words to describe your department?** High intensity, mission-driven, and collaborative.

**Favorite travel spot?** I love traveling with my family, whether it's exploring ancient cities in Europe, forests in Canada, or the rich cultures of Asia. Each place is unique, and I think my favorite spot is still out there.

**If you were stuck on an island, what three things would you bring?** I'd bring a solar-powered blender (for smoothies on the beach!), a Monopoly game to keep the whole family entertained, and a speaker to play our favorite music while we wait for rescue. If we are stranded, we might as well make it into a fun family adventure!



**Bhavika Lodhia DrPH, MPH, CSHM, RSO**  
**Campus Environmental Health and Safety Manager, Environmental Health & Safety**

I have been with UCI and in my current position for seven months. I oversee the implementation of campuswide Safety on Site (SOS) program which helps demonstrate compliance with Cal-OSHA's injury and illness prevention plan by way of creating an SOS dashboard to house all of the campus records of compliance. I am responsible for conducting injury illness investigations as well as reviewing hot work permit requests, crane plan requests, and scaffolding requests. I also address safety concerns from all campus partners, and provide safety guidance on product purchases, safety equipment installations, and research projects from various campus customers. Additionally, I am also a part of the campus emergency operations center (EOC), and the campus workplace violence committee.



**What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most?** I love my team that I work with and see on the daily. They are all subject matter experts in their own rights and we all balance each other with respect to strengths in areas such as knowledge about a process, historical data, and providing specific expertise and guidance when needed.

**What is one accomplishment at work that you are most proud? Why?** Creating the Safety on Site dashboard to help implement the campuswide [Injury and Illness Prevention Program](#). This serves as a central repository for all recordkeeping and significantly reduced the emails going back and forth which are difficult to retrieve at a moment's notice. This has alleviated a lot of my team's time enabling them to focus on more project type work vs. the hand-holding coordinator model that has historically been in place.

**After a long day at work, what do you look forward to the most?** Spending time with my family and friends. Once I pick my 8-year-old son up from school we try and play outdoor activities such as pickleball and badminton, and indoor activities such as math games online or board games and card games. During my "me-time" I love to binge-watch shows on Netflix.

**People would be surprised if they knew:** I was born on Fiji Island (small dot on the map in between New Zealand and Australia) but was raised here in southern California since I was three years old. I traveled back with my husband and son for the first time after 40 years this past spring break to see family and hang at the beautiful resorts there. It was phenomenal and should be added to your bucket list (BULA!).

**Motto or Personal Mantra:** Your only competition is you (yourself). Do the best you can, giving 150% each time and it all comes back to you in terms of rewards in various ways. Your health is priority, but also live your life, go out and explore new activities, travel the world to see unique places, hang out with your parents and siblings you don't know what sort of timer they have on life, keep in touch with your close friends (your chosen family) who help keep you in a positive bubble and elevate you and inspire you to be the best version of you.



**Aarushi Gupta**  
**Senior Sustainability Planner, Campus Planning & Sustainability**

I have been with UCI and in my current position for one year. As the Sustainability Planner at UC Irvine, I lead efforts to advance campuswide environmental and social responsibility. My role includes sustainability reporting for both the UC system and AASHE, co-chairing the UC-wide Sustainability & DEIJ Working Group, and driving innovative sustainability initiatives across campus. I am currently working with my colleagues on the university's climate action and adaptation plan with a focus on climate resilience. I also mentor student sustainability fellows and collaborate with departments across campus to help them meet their sustainability goals.

**What is one accomplishment at work that you are most proud? Why?** I am proud of coordinating and submitting UC Irvine's AASHE STARS report and earning the highest score (84.49) amongst 173 other universities that achieved Gold. The AASHE STARS report is a comprehensive, self-reported assessment that colleges and universities complete to measure their sustainability performance across academics, operations, engagement, and administration. This was a huge undertaking as it requires coordination and information from almost every department on campus and over 2,000 fields of information input. The final report helps us understand where we do well and where we could be doing better.

**What are some upcoming trends or challenges that you see in your field?** One of the biggest challenges to sustainability is the capitalist economic system, which drives endless growth at the expense of planetary boundaries. Capitalism operates as an open, linear system. It extracts resources faster than they can regenerate and discards them after use, with little regard for recovery or reuse. This system not only depletes ecosystems but also fuels global imperial structures by exploiting labor and resources from the Global South to sustain consumption in the imperial core. True sustainability requires confronting these root economic and power imbalances.

**What has been your favorite project at UCI/department?** My favorite project so far has been redeveloping the Sustainability Fundamentals training for staff. I enjoy education and outreach as it is a core part of the effort to create a culture shift on campus. Check it out here and [take the short quiz to become a Sustainability Ambassador](#).

**Favorite travel spot?** Singapore! The food there is amazing – a mix of Malaysian, Chinese, Indian, and other cuisines come together in the best of ways.

**People would be surprised if they knew:** I inline skate an average of 80-90 miles a week! My goal is to hit 4,200 miles total this year.

## DFA NEW HIRES

DFA new hires hired between May 1 - June 30, 2025.

**Environmental Health & Safety:**

- Darryl Meadows

**Facilities Management:**

- Michael Alan McAllister

**Office of the CFO & Vice Chancellor:**

- CJ J Valentine
- Melissa Arias

**Police Department:**

- Athan J Luna
- Angel Antonio Moreno Banuelos
- Alexander Nunez Castillo
- Caleb Escalera
- Christina Joy Kunkle
- Clara Valdez
- David Alberto Moran
- Fred Young
- Isaiah Menchaca
- Jacklyn Marie Castorena
- Jeremie Bright-Egwatu
- Joshua Emmanuel Chavez
- Kimberly Taylor
- Lisette Calderon

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

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