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 hope everyone had a restful winter break and a great start to the new year. As we step into 2026, I am proud of what we accomplished together in 2025, from supporting UCI Health's new 144-bed, all-electric hospital to advancing divisional priorities. Your hard work and dedication make these milestones possible, and I am excited for all we will achieve this year.

I also hope you had an opportunity to review the University of California's 2025 highlights shared in President Milliken's staff news update, as well as his Leadership Conversations series, which launched with Chancellor Gillman.

This year marks the third year of our divisional strategic planning efforts. As shared previously, we will be adding an eighth divisional goal focused on advancing DFA's approach to artificial intelligence (AI). More information will be shared in the coming months. In the meantime, if you have ideas or suggestions to inform this work, please email WithUForU@uci.edu or share them with your department head.

As a reminder, our strategy is a rolling five-year plan. This year, departments will review and refine their goals and develop implementation plans outlining key deliverables, which will then be entered into Align. We will share additional information at our DFA town hall on Wednesday, March 18, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Until then, please reach out to your DFA cabinet member or SAN representative with any questions. You are also welcome to share comments and suggestions at any time by emailing WithUForU@uci.edu.

Thank you again for your continued dedication and commitment to our shared goals. I look forward to the work ahead and to all we will accomplish together in 2026.

Sincerely,

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Employee Profiles

New Hires

Featured Events

Co-Worker Appreciation Week
Mon. 3/2 - Fri., 3/6

DFA Virtual Town Hall
Wed., 3/18 | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

DFA Employee Information

UCI Events

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

With the start of the new year, please be sure to make note of the following 2026 dates:

- Campus closure dates for 2026
- New Employee Orientation (NEO) Schedule

UC has updated the UC Ethics and Compliance Briefing core training. If you have not completed this required training, please log into your UCLC account and check your due date so that you are not out of compliance. You can check all your upcoming due dates by:

- UC Learning Center (UCLC) → Assigned Trainings → Filter by Required → Sort by Due Date

Article provided by DFA-HR

Continuous Improvement Focus:
Police Department: Systemwide Mutual Aid
Request Form Automation

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

UC Irvine Police Department recently spearheaded a systemwide CPI project to replace outdated PDF forms used by all UC police departments for mutual aid requests with a Smartsheet-based digital system. The new process reduces paper waste and errors while adding automatic routing, tracking, and data accuracy. Since implementation, processing time has decreased by 50%, 95% of forms are fully completed, and no requests have been misdirected within a two-month period. For more information or to discuss this project, please contact Cedric Young.

Police Department: Systemwide Mutual Aid Request Form Automation

Problem: All 10 UC police departments used outdated PDF forms for mutual aid requests, resulting in paper waste, lost emails, misdirected communications, and missing critical information requiring additional staff time.

Goal:
- Streamline and automate the process.
- Enhance data quality, tracking, and accountability.

Solution: Spearheaded by UC Irvine PD, the project implemented a Smartsheet-based digital system to replace the manual process. The new process reduces paper waste and errors while adding automatic routing, tracking, and improved accuracy.

Result: Since implementation, processing time has decreased by 50%, 95% of forms are fully completed, and no requests have been misdirected within a two-month period.

Project Contact: Cedric Young, Police Department

Our goal is to showcase completed projects from various departments which might benefit or inspire others. Please reach out to 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 with any questions and suggestions for additional tools.

Article provided by DFA Program Development & Execution

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI is emerging as a divisional goal. Explore existing resources and build your foundation by completing the four AI training courses and reviewing other ZotGPT resources.

Emergency Evacuation Stair Chair Training

Emergency Management has launched a new quarterly Emergency Evacuation Stair Chair training that provides hands-on instruction on the proper use of stair chairs during emergency situations. For more information, visit Evacuation Stair Chair training.

CLASH OF THE CANS

$361 & 1,023 LBS OF FOOD WERE DONATED TO OC FOOD BANK & UC IRVINE'S BASIC NEEDS CENTER

DONATE UC IRVINE

UC Irvine Transportation

Clash of the Cans Food Drive 2025 Recap

UC Irvine Transportation is proud to share that during the 2025 Clash of the Cans food drive, we partnered with departments across campus and UCI Health to donate over 1,000 pounds of non-perishable goods and $361 in monetary donations to the Orange County Food Bank and the UC Irvine Basic Needs Center. The donations gathered during the food drive will support both organizations in providing essential supplies and necessary items to secure the basic needs of our UC Irvine students and Orange County families. Thank you to all our campus and DFA partners for participating and supporting this food drive to provide meals for those in need!

Article provided by UC Irvine Transportation & Distribution Services

UC Irvine Police Department Toy Drive 2025 Recap

The UC Irvine Police Department hosted its annual toy drive from Nov. 14 through Dec. 12, collecting a significant number of toys to support families in need during the holiday season. In partnership with UCI Athletics, donated items were distributed on Dec. 16 and 17 to patients and families at multiple UCI Health facilities, bringing joy and comfort to those receiving medical care. The remaining toys were donated to Crime Survivors, a local organization supporting victims of crime. The UC Irvine Police Department extends its sincere appreciation to the UCI community for its continued generosity and unwavering support in making this initiative another meaningful success!

Article provided by UC Irvine Police Department

Driving Change: How UCI UCPath Powers Progress

UCPath at UC Irvine isn't just about transactions—it's about transformation. Behind the scenes, the UCI UCPath team works tirelessly to streamline processes, optimize resources, and deliver cost savings that benefit the campus, medical center, UCOP, and UCPath center. Every improvement means better efficiency, stronger compliance, and smarter use of university funds.

While the UCPath center in Riverside serves all UC locations, UC Irvine's local team provides hands-on expertise in technical enhancements, security provisioning, training, general ledger accuracy, case resolution, and roadmap projects. Wins for 2025 included flawless fiscal close, faster funding corrections, and childcare reimbursement tracking—all while rolling out new enhancements and training transactors.

Looking ahead, the team is tackling compliance, risk mitigation, general ledger phase 2 simplification, eForm upgrades, and FICA redesign.

"The best part of my job," says Georgana Thompson Simonowitz, UCPath director, "is seeing our team's work translate into real improvements that make UC stronger."

When UCPath improves, so does the UC system—and that's something worth celebrating!

Article provided by UC Irvine Accounting & Fiscal Services

UCI Health Irvine Hospital Opens:
A Milestone Achievement for the Division

As a remarkable manifestation of UCI's strategic pillars one, three, and four, the UCI Health – Irvine Hospital welcomed first patients on Dec. 10, 2025. The $1.3B project was procured, contracted, managed, and inspected by DFA's Design & Construction Services team over a five-year effort in collaboration with Capital Planning, Facilities Management, UCI Health, and the State's HCAI Agency – acknowledged as a model for the future of hospital delivery in California. The hospital is the first all-electric hospital of its size in the country, burning no fossil fuels in support of the building systems: a feat considered impossible until UCI led the way. The hospital sets a new standard in patient care, with healing views to the San Joaquin Marsh. The buildings located on the North Campus are highly sustainable, on track for LEED "Platinum" Certification and LEED "Gold" Certifications. LEED is the industry standard measure for sustainability, with "Platinum" at the highest level.

Article provided by UC Irvine Design & Construction Services

Sustainability Corner:
UC Sustainability
Officers' Workshop

UC Irvine was proud to host the annual UC Sustainability Officers' Workshop, bringing together sustainability professionals from across all 10 UC locations. This hybrid gathering provided an opportunity to connect, share best practices, and collaborate on systemwide challenges. Through presentations and engagement activities, participants exchanged ideas and advanced the collective goals outlined in the UC Sustainable Practices Policy.

Interested in sustainability at UCI? Become a Staff Ambassador!

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:
Cultivating Community Workshops
Winter 2026

Register to attend UC Irvine's Office of Inclusive Excellence winter 2026 workshop **Engaging Equity: Navigating Power and Privilege** (Feb. 9 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom). The free series fosters understanding of identity, belonging, and equity through interactive discussions and skill-building activities. Each session equips participants with practical tools for reflection, dialogue, and action to foster more inclusive and equitable communities at UC Irvine.

DFA EMPLOYEE PROFILES

Skye Starlite Paig
Project Manager, Design & Construction Services

I have been with UC Irvine and in my current position for two years. As a project manager with Design & Construction Services, I act as the university's representative and point of contact for our construction design-build partners.

What has surprised you most about working in your department or UCI? The size of our department is the most surprising thing about working for Design & Construction Services. There are so few people managing all the new construction work on campus. I would have guessed the department would be at least three times as large for the number of projects that we manage.

What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most? I like the variations in my day the most. I may be out on the construction site, monitoring the project financials, discussing with the contractor on their plan to mitigate upcoming risks, reviewing drawings for conformance with codes and campus standards, or collaborating with other departments with their reviews or potential impacts to their department regarding construction work. No day is ever exactly the same. The variation in tasks and the complexity of the work keeps my mind engaged so that I am never bored.

What is one accomplishment at work that you are most proud? Why? I recently earned my CASp (Certified Access Specialist) certification. This is something I have wanted to get for nearly a decade but always pushed it off. I'm proud to now be better able to support the university's Strategic Plan Pillar 1 to oversee the development and deployment of the physical infrastructure to support campus growth and accessibility by aiding in review of plans for accessibility compliance with state and federal codes.

Favorite travel spot? Like most people, I like to travel, but the place I go back to over and over again is camping in the coastal redwoods in northern California. Staying a week under the giant canopies always soothes my soul.

Before your time at UCI, what was your most interesting or oddest job? The strangest job I had was working at Disneyland when I was in high school/early college. I was in store operations but ended up specializing at the main gate area in the stroller and wheelchair rental shop. Late at night after the park closed, we would gather the abandoned strollers, hook them together, and pull them back up to the main entrance where we cleaned, stacked, and pushed them into rows for the night. This was back when the strollers were all made of metal and vinyl, each weighing about 35-pounds. Some nights I would pull a hundred or more strollers in this long train by myself up the hill of Main Street. Pulling 3,500 pounds gets you in excellent shape without going to a gym.

People would be surprised if they knew: Some people know this already, but I went skydiving in my 20s and my primary parachute did not open. Luckily, the secondary parachute did.

DFA NEW HIRES

DFA new hires hired between Nov. 1 – Dec. 31, 2025.

Facilities Management:

- Claudia Adame
- Daniel Robertson

Police Department:

- Andres Alberto Sabillon
- Daniel Robertson
- Dejonte Austin Marin
- Leonardo Lino Delgado

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