

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,

As we move further into spring, I've been reflecting on the importance of connection and collaboration across our division and campus community. Whether we're supporting major initiatives or simply taking time to connect with colleagues, our work is stronger when we learn from one another and stay focused on the broader impact of what we do.

That spirit was on full display during UC Irvine's [10th annual Giving Day](#). Thanks to the incredible generosity of the Anteater community, a record 4,927 gifts were made, totaling more than \$5.38 million in support of campus programs and UCI Health initiatives.

That same sense of collaboration continues to drive important work across DFA. Last month, [UCIBuy+](#) successfully launched campuswide following years of planning, partnership, and dedication. This milestone represents an important step toward creating a more streamlined and transparent procurement process for campus while helping reduce approval cycle times and strengthen compliance requirements. Thank you to the project team for their hard work in bringing this effort to completion.

Earlier this month, I attended the WACUBO conference, where keynote speaker, [Erica Dhawan](#), spoke about the importance of connection in problem-solving and innovation. One idea that stood out to me was the value of reaching beyond our immediate teams to gather ideas and perspectives from at least two internal and two external peers before moving forward. It was a helpful reminder that we don't have to solve every challenge alone—that some of our best ideas come from reaching beyond our immediate teams.

At the end of July, we will release updated divisional strategic planning materials, including additional information about DFA's new AI-focused goal. As this work continues to evolve, I encourage you to continue thinking about how innovation and continuous improvement can support our division.

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Featured Events

DFA Social

[Wed., May 20 | 9-10:30 a.m.](#)

UCI Service Awards

[Tues., Jun. 16 | 9-10:30 a.m.](#)



I hope many of you will take advantage of opportunities to connect with colleagues in the weeks ahead, including the upcoming [DFA Social on May 20](#) and [UC Irvine's annual Service Awards celebration on June 16](#).

Thank you for all you do to support DFA and UC Irvine's mission. Your collaboration and commitment continue to make a meaningful impact across our campus community.

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

We're excited to share that [DFA HR](#) and [DFA Business Services](#) chatbots are now live on our websites. You'll see the "Ask ZotGPT" icon in the bottom right corner of each page—your quick access point for answers and support when you need them.

As we look ahead to summer, now is a great time to review your vacation balances and plan ahead for time away. Check your current vacation balance by logging into your [UCPath](#) dashboard and submitting requests early to help ensure smooth scheduling across teams.

Article provided by DFA-HR



Continuous Improvement Focus: EHS: Safety Training Streamlining and Access Enhancement

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

One of the recently completed CPI projects by EHS features [streamlining and access enhancement for safety training](#) through a partnership with housing, dining, and Facilities Management to standardize training assignments, address onboarding and self-reporting gaps, and refine requirements using position-specific questionnaires. A train-the-trainer model supported by QR-code tools, and a centralized SharePoint resource hub were implemented. Safety fundamentals assignment and completion accuracy increased by 50%, while unnecessary high-hazard training assignments decreased by 37%, saving 148 staff hours. For more information or to discuss this project, please contact [Belinda Manalac](#).

EHS: Safety Training Streamlining and Access Enhancement



Problem: The Occupational Safety team noted inefficiencies in coordinating and delivering in-person trainings, struggling to meet Cal/OSHA, UC policy, and best-practice frequency requirements. High demand was also compounded by student employee turnover and limited computer access.



Goal: Improve training accuracy and efficiency while strengthening campus safety culture through expanded stakeholder engagement, consolidated training sessions, and a Train-the-Trainer (T3) model.



Solution: Partnered with Housing, Dining, and Facilities Management to standardize STSA-based training assignments, address onboarding and self-reporting gaps, and refine requirements using position-specific questionnaires. Analyzed high-hazard training demand and implemented a Train-the-Trainer (T3) model supported by QR-code tools and a centralized SharePoint resource hub.



Result: Safety Fundamentals assignment and completion accuracy increased by 50%, while unnecessary high-hazard training assignments decreased by 37%, saving 148 staff hours. The T3 program reduced Motorized Cart training hours by 75% (132 hours), Aerial Lift training by 83% (80 hours), and Forklift training by 60% (25 hours).

Project Contact: Belinda Manalac, Environmental Health & Safety

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



Digital Accessibility: MATCH

The purpose of [MATCH](#) is to provide clear guidance for implementing the five core digital accessibility practices across DFA digital content. These practices help ensure online information is perceivable, operable, and understandable for all users, including individuals with disabilities. MATCH supports DFA's commitment to inclusive digital experiences while aligning with UCI accessibility standards and compliance requirements.



Great Work Perks Discounts

As a UCI employee or retiree, you have exclusive access to [Great Work Perks](#). Enjoy unbeatable savings on entertainment, travel, family experiences, everyday essentials, gym memberships, and more – all at the lowest prices, guaranteed with tickets delivered immediately via email after purchase.



Celebrating Excellence: National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week at UCIPD

This past April, the UC Irvine Police Department proudly celebrated National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week by honoring our dispatchers for their life-saving work. The unit was nationally recognized as the DATAMARK Technologies 9-1-1 Center of the Year, a prestigious award highlighting their exceptional performance under pressure. The Team answers 100% of 9-1-1 calls within 15 seconds and 99.6% within 10 seconds.

The celebrations continued at the [APCO Public Safety Awards](#) Banquet, where two of our own received regional honors:

- [Mike Fitzpatrick](#) was named Individual of the Year for his calm, compassionate de-escalation of a student in crisis.
- [Jaelyn Higgins](#) received the Telecommunicator of the Year Honorable Mention for her leadership and proactive investigative skills.

From managing complex emergencies to securing our campus, these first responders are the heartbeat of public safety. Congratulations to the entire team for this historic recognition!

Article provided by UC Irvine Police Department



Sustainability Corner: Celebrate National Bike Month at UC Irvine

UC Irvine Transportation invites staff to take part in [Bike Month](#), celebrating active transportation and sustainability across campus. Connect with colleagues, explore cycling resources, and participate in events that support a more bike-friendly environment, including the 10th annual



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: Cultivating Community Workshop Spring 2026

Register to attend UC Irvine's Office of Inclusive Excellence Spring 2026 workshop **Standing Together: Allyship in Action** ([May 20, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. via Zoom](#)). A part of the series [Cultivating Community Workshops](#), the workshop explores the roles of allies and accomplices in advocating for marginalized

[WhimCycle Bike Festival](#) on May 13–14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Aldrich Flag Poles.

communities and challenging systems of oppression. The free workshop series fosters understanding of identity, belonging, and equity through interactive discussions and skill-building activities. Attendees who participate in five of the six workshops over a two-year period (2024-2026) [can apply for a certificate of completion](#).

DFA EMPLOYEE PROFILES



Stacey Romero
Records Analyst, Police Department

I have been with UCI for three months. As a records analyst, we review, approve, and process daily police reports, ensuring accuracy and compliance with CA DOJ reporting standards. As part of records maintenance, we also purge cases in accordance with UCOP retention policies. In addition, our team manages all court-ordered sealings for both adult and juvenile records, processes background checks and report releases, and provides analytical data to the CA DOJ and the university.

What do you like most about UCI/department? How everyone here has been so welcoming and easygoing. My coworkers have truly made me feel at home, embracing me with open arms from the start. Being part of a new workplace can feel intimidating, but every single staff member has made my transition to a new workplace seamless and so positive.

After a long day at work, what do you look forward to the most? I love going home to my partner, puppies, and the occasional spin class.

Favorite travel spot? My favorite travel spot is anywhere with a mix of good food and scenery.

What is the weirdest thing you've ever eaten? Duck taquitos. Not really an adventurous person with food. Oddly the duck taquitos weren't bad but would still never eat it again.

Motto or Personal Mantra: "Love your life and stay true to who you are."



Ladita McBride
Senior Contracts Analyst, Design & Construction Services

I have been at UCI and in my current position for one year and 10 months. As a senior contract analyst, I manage the bidding, awarding, and administration of contracts for campus construction projects. I prepare and review contracts, select qualified contractors, and ensure compliance with all policies and regulations. I support project teams in meeting UCI's quality and value standards while promoting the efficient use of university resources.

How has UCI/department helped you in your career development? My department has supported my career development by fully covering the cost of the Contract Management Certificate program through UCI Continuing Education. This opportunity to pursue this certification is extremely valuable to me. The classes are already deepening my understanding of contract law, negotiation, and risk management, and I'm gaining practical tools I can apply in my current role. As I continue through the program, I'm expanding my skills and growing professionally. I'm grateful for my department's encouragement and investment in my learning, which will help me advance my career once I complete the program.

What do you like most about UCI/department? What I appreciate most about my department is the supportive, collaborative atmosphere my manager and coworkers create. Everyone is helpful and approachable, always willing to share knowledge or lend a hand. My manager sets a great example by encouraging open communication and professional growth, making it easy to ask questions and seek guidance. The positive, friendly environment not only makes the workday enjoyable but also motivates me to do my best and continue developing my skills. I feel fortunate to be part of such a welcoming and encouraging team.

If you were stuck on an island, what three things would you bring? If I were stuck on an island, I would bring a magical bottle of tequila that never runs out, so if I found wild fruit like a mango or a coconut, I could mix a cocktail and imagine I'm relaxing at a beach resort. I would bring a hammock, because if I'm stuck on an island, I might as well relax and nap all day. I would also bring a satellite phone with an unlimited battery and signal, so I could call for help after I've enjoyed enough relaxation and time away from everything.

Motto or Personal Mantra: People and moments come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. It's important to appreciate each one for what they add to our lives.

DFA NEW HIRES

DFA new hires hired between Mar. 21 - Apr. 30, 2026.

Environmental Health & Safety:

- Miguel Alanis

Facilities Management:

- Andy Lee

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