

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 the new academic year gets underway, teams across our division are supporting students, faculty, staff, and campus operations that make that transition possible. From keeping campus moving and maintaining our facilities to managing resources, supporting safety efforts, and helping people get the services they need—DFA is integral to the success of UC Irvine.

At the heart of this work are our people. I was pleased to see UC Irvine recognized by [Forbes among its 2026 Best Employers for Company Culture](#). While rankings provide one measure of an organization, the culture they recognize is built every day by the people who work here — through how we serve one another, collaborate, and contribute to our shared mission.

That commitment extends beyond our individual roles. I'm proud to see DFA colleagues participating in [UC Irvine Staff Assembly](#) and contributing to the broader staff community. Bridgette Neri, Michael Walako, and Chloe Hsieh are among those helping represent and engage our staff through this important work. I encourage you to learn more about Staff Assembly and consider ways to get involved. I also hope many of you were able to attend last month's staff appreciation picnic and enjoyed time connecting with colleagues. Please visit the [Staff Assembly Flickr page](#) for event photos.

Last month, we held our annual DFA cabinet strategic retreat, where we focused on how we can strengthen collaboration, improve the way we work together, and better support our teams and the university. Building on the recent [announcement](#) of the updated [DFA strategic plan](#), we will continue to highlight progress on our divisional priorities in the months ahead, including a new recurring section focused on DFA's AI initiative.

I look forward to connecting with many of you through our upcoming in-person strategic roadshows. These smaller department-level conversations provide an opportunity to share progress on our divisional priorities, hear directly from teams, and better understand the opportunities and challenges shaping our

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[DFA In-Person Town Hall](#)
Wed., Oct. 28 | 10-11:30 a.m.
in Student Center

work across DFA. I value these settings because they allow for more focused dialogue and help ensure our priorities remain informed by the experiences of the people doing the work every day.

Finally, I encourage you to join us for the [DFA in-person town hall](#) on Wednesday, Oct. 28, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. This town hall will feature a new format, beginning with an interactive showcase from 10 to 10:45 a.m., followed by a divisional update. Please [submit questions](#) in advance by Friday, Oct. 23, so we can address as many as possible during the update.

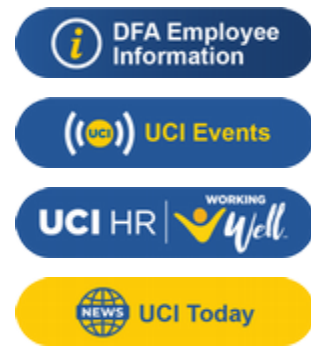
Thank you for everything you do to support UC Irvine, DFA, and one another. The beginning of the fall quarter is a demanding time across our campus, and I appreciate the expertise, collaboration, and commitment that all of you bring to this important work every day.

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

[DFA HR](#) and [DFA Business Services](#) launched new websites, complete with easy access to popular resources and chatbots to help you get the information you need quickly. The “Ask ZotGPT” icon in the bottom right corner of each webpage is your access point for answers and support when you need them. Popular topics include leave-related inquiries, policy clarifications, and payroll questions.

Article provided by DFA-HR



Continuous Improvement Focus: Design & Construction Services: Capital Project Management

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

A recently completed CPI project by Design & Construction Services (DCS) features the implementation of an [improved capital project and asset management system](#). Previously, DCS relied on fragmented systems for project management, document control, and capital project tracking, causing duplicate data entry, increased risk of errors, inconsistent practices, and limited reporting transparency. DCS completed a review and enhancement of its project management, document control, and financial tracking processes and deployed them within Trimble Unity Construct, a UC-adopted construction management system. Early results indicate improved reporting accuracy, better document distribution, and increased project management efficiency. For more information or to discuss this project, please contact [Michael Morrell](#).

Design & Construction Services: Capital Project Management



Problem:

DCS relies on fragmented tools for project management, document control, and capital project tracking, including multiple vendor systems, outdated accounting tools, and informal shadow systems. These systems are not integrated with KFS, requiring duplicate data entry across platforms and increasing the risk of errors. The lack of integration also creates inconsistent practices, limits reporting transparency, and requires manual, time-intensive reporting and cross-referencing.



Goal:

Consolidate DCS's fragmented project tracking tools into a single, modern platform that standardizes project management and document control, improves communication, and automates billing and financial cost reporting.



Solution:

Implemented Trimble Unity Construct, a UC-adopted construction management system that supports capital project and asset management with improved cost and progress visibility. The platform replaces legacy systems, centralizes document control, enables cross-team collaboration, and integrates project data with campus financial systems to streamline workflows.



Result:

Completed a full review and enhancement of project management, document control, and financial tracking processes and deployed them within Trimble Unity Construct, piloted on the Mesa Court Community Center Expansion project. Early results show improved

reporting accuracy, better document distribution, and increased project management efficiency, despite ongoing refinements related to KFS integration and OIT security coordination. The platform is now positioned for broader rollout across future projects.

Project Contact: Michael Morrell, DCS

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



AI Corner: DFA's AI Journey Moves into Implementation

AI is becoming an increasingly important part of how work gets done, and DFA is moving from **AI planning into implementation**. Microsoft Copilot is serving as our initial flagship pilot as we begin putting our AI strategy into practice. For this first pilot, a small group of participants has already been identified to explore practical use cases, gather feedback, and help inform how DFA approaches broader AI adoption with this particular tool over time.

At the same time, DFA is establishing an [AI governance](#) and [advisory structure](#) to help guide responsible AI adoption, build employee capabilities, and identify opportunities where AI can improve

DFA operations and service delivery. Formal processes and additional guidance will be rolled out in the coming months.

What can you do now?

- **Build AI knowledge:** Check out OIT's AI [resources](#) and [training](#) and take advantage of available courses to build practical AI skills.
- **Share an idea:** If there's a process or task in which you think AI could make a meaningful difference—or if you are already working on a project involving use of AI—talk with your [DFA cabinet representative](#) or share the idea/project directly with [Shaina Sims](#).
- **Stay curious:** Look for opportunities to learn, experiment, and understand how AI may apply to the work.

DFA's AI Corner will keep you up to date on AI initiatives, learning opportunities, practical tips, and ways to get involved as this work continues.

Article provided by DFA Program Development & Execution



Grow Your Skills with UCI Udemy

Employees and students receive free access to more than 5,500 curated courses through Udemy. Taught by industry experts, these online courses offer current, relevant instruction across a wide range of topics. Learn at your own pace while building knowledge that supports your professional development and personal goals. Visit UC Irvine's [Udemy webpage](#) to explore available learning opportunities today.



TELUS Health Becomes New Life Resources Program Provider

Effective August 1, 2026, TELUS Health will provide UC Irvine's Life Resources Program (LRP) services to all employees and household members. Confidential support includes counseling and legal, financial, and well-being resources. Those receiving ComPsych counseling before August 1 may continue uninterrupted. New requests will transition to TELUS Health. Visit the [LRP website](#) and [transition FAQs](#) for details and access.



2026 Supplier Showcase Connects Community with Suppliers

More than 300 UC Irvine employees attended Procurement Services 2026 Supplier Showcase on September 17 at the Bren Events Center. The annual event featured 49 booths, including 43 supplier booths and six UC Irvine and UC program booths, showcasing the range of suppliers and resources available to departments.

This year's showcase featured suppliers spanning technology, workplace solutions, hospitality, medical supplies, facilities, promotional products, and scientific supplies, including 10 participating small businesses.

A special thank you to our platinum sponsors: Avantor, Avidex, bluespace interiors, Manhattan Stitching Co., Office Solutions, Tangram, and Syntech Roofing & Waterproofing; and our gold sponsors: 4imprint, Club Colors, Fisher Scientific, and Karan & Associates, Inc. Their support helped make this year's event possible.

UC Irvine and UC programs were also represented, including UC Systemwide Procurement, UCI Police Department, UCI OIT, UCI Passport Services, UCI Procurement Services, and UCI PALCard. In addition to visiting exhibitor booths, attendees took part in opportunity drawings, enjoyed a complimentary lunch, and networked with colleagues and supplier representatives throughout the event.

Thank you to our sponsors, participating suppliers, campus partners, and everyone who joined us and helped make this year's Supplier Showcase a success. Visit the [event webpage](#) to view the complete list of participating suppliers.

Article provided by UC Irvine Procurement Services



September is National Preparedness Month

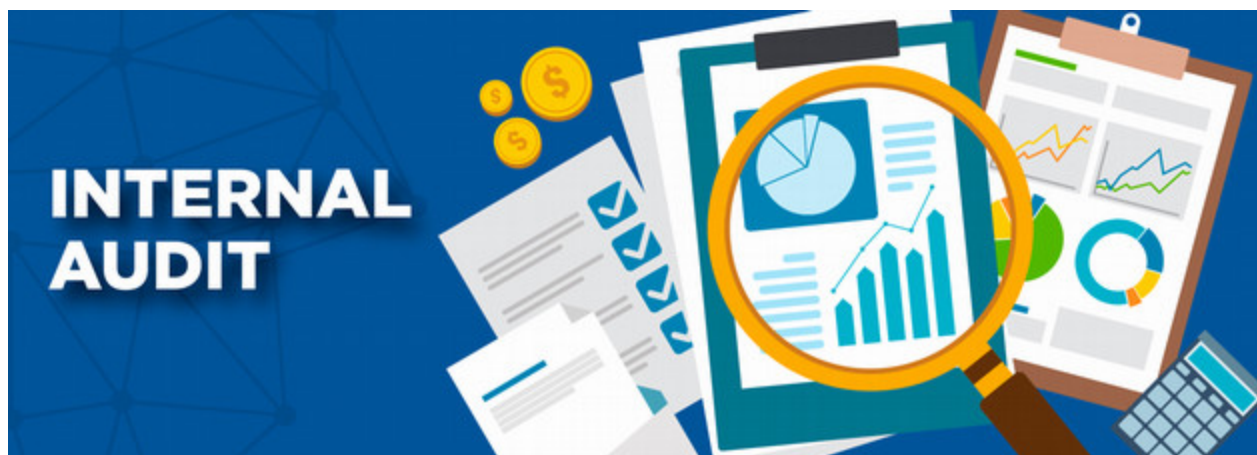
September is National Preparedness Month, an opportunity to consider how each of us can be better prepared for emergencies at work, at home, and in our communities. Following National Emergency Management Awareness Month in August, it is also a great reminder that preparedness is a shared responsibility. Take a few minutes to review your emergency contacts, know how you will receive emergency notifications, and consider the supplies and plans you may need during an emergency.

Emergency Management is also pleased to welcome Parker Dunwoody, Workplace Violence Prevention Program manager, to the department. This transition strengthens coordination between emergency preparedness and workplace violence prevention efforts across UC Irvine.

To learn more about [UC Irvine's Workplace Violence Prevention Program](#) or follow us on Instagram @uciwvpp.

Learn more about [Emergency Management](#) at UC Irvine and the resources available to our campus community.

Article provided by UC Irvine Emergency Management



Trust and Accountability: Internal Audit as a Trusted Partner

UC Irvine Internal Audit Services (IAS) partners with campus and health leaders to strengthen operations, manage risk, and support informed decision-making. IAS advances trust, accountability, and continuous improvement through:

- **Audits:** Independently assess governance, risk management, and controls, with practical recommendations to strengthen operations and reduce risk.
- **Advisory Services:** Collaborate with campus partners on risks, controls, policies, processes, and initiatives to add value.
- **Investigations:** Evaluate allegations involving fraud, misuse of resources, financial irregularities, and significant control weaknesses.
- **External Audit Coordination:** Help departments navigate external audits and coordinate responses.
- **Training:** Share expertise and best practices in governance, risk management, and internal controls.

Through these services, IAS supports DFA's Strategic Plan and values of integrity, efficiency & effectiveness, teamwork, and change & innovation.

Need assistance? Contact IAS at [949-824-6757](tel:949-824-6757) or visit our [Contact Us page](#).



PathPal Now Offers Spanish-Language Support

PathPal, an employee support chatbot within the [UCPath portal](#), has expanded access to include self-service guidance for Spanish-language support. PathPal is UCPath's AI-powered chatbot that helps employees and managers quickly find information and guidance for common UCPath self-service tasks. With this enhancement, users can ask questions and receive responses in Spanish.

What's New

- Employees can now interact with PathPal in Spanish.
- PathPal will recognize questions asked in Spanish and respond in Spanish, or an employee can select their preferred language.
- Spanish-language support will extend to PathPal's current content, including guidance and resources for common employee and manager self-service questions.

Note

- Live chat support will continue to be offered only in English.
- Conversations that include both English and Spanish may result in PathPal responding in English, Spanish, or both.

Important Information:

PathPal uses artificial intelligence to generate responses based on UCPath knowledge resources. Though designed to provide helpful guidance, AI-generated responses may occasionally be incomplete or inaccurate. Employees should carefully review information provided by PathPal and verify details when needed.

Article provided by UC Irvine Accounting & Fiscal Services



Sustainability Corner: Plans for a Sustainable Future

UC Irvine's 2027 Long Range Development Plan will guide the campus's physical development over the next 15 to 20 years. The proactive framework considers academic needs, sustainability goals, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and responsible growth. Through planning and community partnership, UC Irvine aims to create a resilient, welcoming campus prepared to support future generations. Visit the [LRDP website](#) to learn more and explore.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: DFA Workplace ESL Program 2026

Thirteen Facilities Management (FM) employees are currently enrolled in DFA's Workplace English as a Second Language (ESL) program. The program provides Spanish-speaking staff with an opportunity to strengthen their English speaking and listening skills for the workplace. Participants attended 10 weekly classes in April-June 2026 and will complete another 10 weekly classes in October-December 2026.

[DFA's Workplace ESL program](#) was launched in 2021 in support of our values of diversity, equity, & inclusion. Since its launch, 21 employees from FM have graduated from the program.

DFA EMPLOYEE PROFILES



Robert Conti
Fire Safety Specialist, Environmental Health & Safety

I have been with UC Irvine and in my current position for two and a half years. I am responsible for conducting and supporting Title 19 Fire & Life Safety inspections across campus. My primary responsibility is assigned lead for ACC Housing Inspections.

What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most? I enjoy being able to meet so many different members of the campus staff, faculty, and students while organizing and conducting inspections! Getting to learn about all the different departments and jobs that come together to help the campus operate has been a true blessing!

What is one accomplishment at work that you are most proud of? Why? I haven't been here too long, so I'm very proud of getting hired I'll say! Joining such an intelligent, welcoming, effective, and just straight up fun team is very rewarding!

What do you like most about UCI/department? So far, the Fire & Life safety team and the EHS department as a whole! Everyone here has been so kind and informative and have gone above and beyond to make me feel like a true member of the department despite my short time here. The department is packed full of people who I'm excited to work alongside each day!

If Hollywood made a movie about your life, who would you like to see cast as you? Donald Glover.

People would be surprised if they knew: How bad my glasses prescription actually is (there's a reason I'm leaning so close to those extinguisher tags!)

Motto or Personal Mantra: Leave things better than you found them. Or, fix things better than they broke it.

DFA CUSTOMER APPRECIATION SPOTLIGHT

Facilities Management Moving Crew

"The crew is always on time, professional, efficient, and respectful. Over the past year, they have helped us on several occasions with a variety of projects, including moving furniture and hauling away materials from our child care centers. Every time they have assisted us, they have done an outstanding job.

I simply wanted to take the time to recognize their hard work and dedication. They are a tremendous team, and we truly appreciate the excellent service they consistently provide."

Laura Finley-Sanbrano MA
Senior Director
UCI Child Care Services

DFA NEW HIRES

DFA new hires hired between July 1 - August 31, 2026.

Accounting & Fiscal Services

- Arnold Ortiz

Design & Construction Services

- David Nguyen

Facilities Management

- Bernice Villanueva
- Josue Ozuna
- Melissa Gonzalez
- Rodolfo Castro

Police Department

- Alex Chuong Quan
- Analiese Kristine Cordova
- B Cruz
- Dorian Calderon
- Kyle M. Davis
- Liv Estes Eichert
- Louis Guzman
- Oscar Alfredo Ruiz
- Parker Dunwoody*
- Rossana Caro
- Ryley Hamilton

**Temporary/external contractor employee turned official DFA employee.*

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