A WORD FROM THE DEAN

I am pleased to share with you the 2020 Annual Report of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA (DGSOM). Reflecting on this past academic year, one fraught with extraordinary challenges, inspires in me a deep sense of awe and admiration for every member of our community.

Our amazing staff, faculty, trainees and students strove to make things better amid the uncertainty and devastation caused by a global pandemic and traumatic acts of racial violence, both of which exposed systemic inequities plaguing the United States. I’ve watched you respond to these crises with incredible strength and compassion, seeking opportunities to help and creating new avenues to support our local and global community.
Over the last year, our medical school has undergone sweeping changes to transform how and where we work and learn. Our ability to transition our operations and establish new school-wide safety protocols are in large part thanks to the efforts of our staff, whose leadership and creative problem-solving have enabled us to continue to deliver on our mission.

Many of our researchers began unprecedented efforts to pause and safeguard hundreds of studies and experiments across the health sciences. DGSOM labs donated hundreds of PPE materials, rapidly mobilized novel COVID-19 studies and interventions, and collaborated with our campus colleagues in nursing, public health and engineering to find new ways to respond to our community’s most pressing needs.

In our hospitals and clinics, our health care teams have persevered through an unrelenting year. With courage and compassion, they have treated and comforted those affected by COVID-19, implemented new guidelines to protect the health and safety of those we serve, rapidly adapted to new clinical and operational modalities, and served as mentors for our next generation of physicians as they navigate complex medical and ethical scenarios.

All of your efforts and sacrifices have unequivocally reduced the spread of coronavirus, protected the health and well-being of our community, contributed to new treatments and paved the way for long-term resolutions to this pandemic.

At the same time, the violent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so many others sparked a national social justice movement that catalyzed our DGSOM community to confront longstanding inequities and build a better world. Students, trainees, faculty and staff have opened their hearts and minds to the individual and organizational changes necessary to confront and dismantle structural racism. They have spearheaded influential calls to action, organized peaceful demonstrations, implemented local and systems-level changes, and advocated passionately and courageously for important changes.

In short, your humanism has created new ways of engaging with and improving the health and well-being of people near and far. The following pages will expand on these and other accomplishments, telling the story of your remarkable resilience.

I am equally appreciative of my leadership team in the DGSOM Dean’s Office and of other leaders and colleagues whose talent, energy and collaboration have been a defining feature of our school’s success and impact. I also wish to express my gratitude for our patients, who put their trust in the work that we do—from research to education to clinical care to community engagement—and to our partner-affiliated institutions for their essential role in every aspect of our mission. Finally, I would like to thank our philanthropic donors and the DGSOM Board of Visitors for their dedication to the success of our school.

The world will likely remember 2020 for innumerable reasons. When I look back on it in years to come, I’m certain I will think not of the chaos, but instead of the collaboration and optimism, the unified drive toward change demonstrated by our community, and the profound impact your actions have on our mission to heal humankind in a time of historic pressure.
Looking forward, I have every confidence that your strength, scholarship, commitment and brilliance will allow us to create a brighter future. In the upcoming academic year, I remain focused on six overarching goals, which you will find highlighted throughout this report:

1. Ensuring that academic medicine continues to thrive at UCLA as we face an evolving balance between today’s health care environment and the world of academic biomedical research and education.

2. Fostering interdisciplinary efforts, particularly activities that advance population-wide health equity and bridge clinical medicine with academic scholarship in the basic sciences, social sciences, data sciences and engineering.

3. Increasing the financial transparency and health of the school by establishing a modern funds flow model for UCLA Health (UCLA health system and the DGSOM).

4. Transforming our culture at the DGSOM through the Anti-racism Roadmap and Cultural North Star, initiatives designed to guide our decision-making and ensure that everyone in the DGSOM community feels welcome and valued.

5. Enhancing our mentorship and leadership training programs in a manner that promotes diversity inclusion and provides growth opportunities for all DGSOM employees.

6. Elevating the school’s internal and external communications.

These goals are aimed at optimizing the impact of our collective work. This annual report itself is written in the spirit of enhancing internal communication, and is part of a larger effort to highlight the many ways that each and every member of our DGSOM community contributes to our mission. The annual report is also designed to provide insight into the school’s strategic priorities and decision-making processes, as well as to raise awareness of all the resources that are available to DGSOM staff, faculty, students and trainees. Acknowledging all the accomplishments and advances made by our staff, trainees and faculty would require a tome. The specific individuals and programs highlighted below are intended to serve as exemplars of the countless achievements made by members of the DGSOM. Please join me in recognizing all the amazing and impactful contributions your colleagues — those who are and are not individually called out here — have made throughout this challenging year.
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HIGHLIGHTS

For a quick overview of this lengthy report, you may refer to the bulleted highlights below.

- The UCLA Institute for Precision Health leveraged its infrastructure — including biobanking resources — to rapidly initiate COVID-19 research.

- The UCLA Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) helped establish a governance structure for COVID-19 research, and in collaboration with the UCLA Office of Clinical Research’s study activation team, launched COVID-19 therapeutic trials in fewer than two weeks. Clinical trial activation typically takes three months.

- Sri Kosuri, ScD, in the UCLA Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, along with the DGSOM laboratories of Valerie Arboleda, MD, PhD, Leonid Kruglyak, PhD, Jonathan Flint, MD, and Eleazar Eskin, PhD, developed Swab-Seq, an innovative next-generation sequencing strategy for larger scale SARS-CoV-2 detection.

- Arleen Brown, MD, PhD, Keith Norris, MD, PhD, and Steve Dubinett, MD, were awarded an NIH Community Engagement Alliance Against COVID-19 Disparities grant to lead a statewide coalition of 11 academic institutions and their community partners to address COVID-19 misinformation and promote inclusion in prevention, therapeutic, and vaccine clinical trials for populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

- DGSOM raised $10,826,109 in philanthropic funds to support COVID-19 research. The funds were allocated to 56 projects by the DGSOM COVID-19 Research Oversight Committee, in partnership with task forces dedicated to health equity, basic to translational research, and clinical research.

- The UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center (JCCC) renewed its Cancer Center Support Grant for an additional five years, continuing its status as one of only 51 cancer centers designated as comprehensive by the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

- Highlighting its extraordinary impact in fighting cancer, the JCCC was the lead institution for three FDA approvals this year, including atezolizumab with bevacizumab combination therapy to treat unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma (led by Richard Finn, MD), erlotinib plus ramucirumab to treat lung cancer (led by Edward Garon, MD), and Prostate-specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA) PET imaging for prostate cancer (led by Johannes Czernin, MD, and Jeremie Calais, MD).
The JCCC also played a prominent role in four additional FDA approvals this year. These include sacituzumab govitecan to treat triple-negative breast cancer (led by Sara Hurvitz, MD), durvalumab to treat extensive-stage small-cell lung cancer (Jonathan Goldman, MD), capmatinib to treat non-small-cell lung cancer (Edward Garon, MD), and brexucabtagene autoleucel CAR T-cell therapy to treat adult patients with relapsed or refractory mantle cell lymphoma (John Timmerman, MD).

DGSOM, in collaboration with the UCLA health system, launched a new Research Theme in Health Equity and Translational Social Science.

The DGSOM established the Anti-racism Roadmap to co-create, with DGSOM staff, trainees and faculty, an action path to ensuring racial justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in our school.

The DGSOM Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion responded to structural inequalities by, among other initiatives, launching a Restorative Justice Pilot Program and a Diversity Champion Training Program.

DGSOM leadership initiated monthly Anti-racism Roadmap Dialogue events with the entire DGSOM community and the senior leadership of UCLA Health initiated a monthly series called Conversations with Leadership: Steps to Advance Racial Equity for the entire UCLA Health community.

The Early Authentic Clinical Experience (EACE) program began engaging first-year medical students in immersive clinical experiences designed to advance professional identity development around providing compassionate care with cultural humility.

The UCLA Centennial Campaign and UCLA Health raised $2 billion for pioneering research, patient care, medical education, and more.

Of our 711 enrolled medical students, 92 percent received grants or scholarships, with close to 30 percent of the student body receiving full-tuition support. Of this 30 percent, the David Geffen Medical Scholarship generously provided a total of 182 students with full tuition and living expense stipends. Additionally, David Geffen made a landmark reinvestment in our flagship scholarship, ensuring that an additional 120 students will benefit from this fund, bringing the total to more than 400 recipients over a 10-year period.

DGSOM students founded LA COVID Volunteers to provide child care, tutoring, errand support, and PPE to frontline health care providers.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, with the amazing support of our IT partners in DGIT, DGSOM rapidly and successfully shifted to virtualized or modified ways of working, learning, teaching, conducting research, and celebrating milestones such as Match Day and graduation.

With support from DGSOM and the UCLA Samueli School of Engineering, the UCLA Graduate Programs in Bioscience (GBP) added a new Home Area in Medical Informatics.

The DGSOM Masters in Genetic Counseling program received accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling and welcomed its inaugural class of 10 students in September 2020.

The DGSOM Behavioral Wellness Center (BWC) transitioned to remote operations while also expanding the scope of its services to provide much-needed community support, safe spaces and trauma-informed care.

DGSOM Chief Administrative Officers and other senior administrators completed a nine-month Executive Leadership Program with the UCLA Anderson School of Management. Covering multiple topics – including strategy, operations, business communication and leadership – the program concluded with a graduation event where the participants presented their final case studies and recommendations to DGSOM leadership.
• Clara Lajonchere, PhD, Deputy Director of the UCLA Institute for Precision Health, was appointed Chair of California Governor Gavin Newsom’s California Precision Medicine Advisory Council.

• Judith Currier, MD, Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases in the Department of Medicine, was appointed to NIH Director Francis Collins’s NIH COVID-19 Therapeutics Working Group.

• Dennis Slamon, MD, PhD, led a study that found that adding ribociclib, a targeted therapy drug, to standard hormone therapy significantly improves overall survival in postmenopausal women with hormone-receptor positive/HER2-negative advanced breast cancer.

• Paul Boutros, PhD, led an international research team that created a new way to estimate how fast an individual cancer is evolving.

• Weizhe Hong, PhD, documented the representation of sex information in the dorsal medial prefrontal cortex of mice, with male mice showing a stronger encoding of female cues, with the strength of the representations predicting sex preference behavior.

• Nanthia Suthana, PhD, and colleagues studied humans with chronically implanted electrodes to identify neural representations of the location of oneself and of others in a shared environment, providing new insights into how the human brain encodes spatial navigation and awareness of others.

• Keriann Backus, PhD, (Biological Chemistry) received a David and Lucile Packard Foundation Fellowship for Science and Engineering.

• Weizhe Hong, PhD, (Biological Chemistry) received the Young Investigator Award from the Society of Neuroscience, a Vallee Scholar Award, and a Mallinckrodt Scholar Award.

• Student-advisor pair Clara Cano and Kathrin Plath, PhD, (Cell & Developmental Biology) received the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Gilliam Fellowship for Advanced Study.

These highlights represent just a sampling of the remarkable contributions and accolades of DGSOM faculty, staff and trainees in our research, education, community engagement and clinical care mission areas. More detail is provided in the sections below.
ADMINISTRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Strategic planning

The current DGSOM strategic plan has its origins in an intensive school and health system-wide strategic planning process conducted in 2011 under the leadership of the former Dean, Dr. Eugene Washington. This year-long strategic planning process, which benefited from input from hundreds of DGSOM members, led to the development of the following, enduring mission statement for the DGSOM:

To improve health and health care, DGSOM will:

• Create world leaders in health and science
• Discover the basis for health and cures for disease
• Optimize health through community partnerships
• Heal humankind one patient at a time

The DGSOM 2011-2015 strategic plan was complemented by development of a DGSOM Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategic plan in 2013, which was led by the DGSOM EDI Office and EDI Faculty Committee.

We launched a DGSOM and health system-wide Strategic Plan Refresh in January 2017 to update the UCLA Health 2011 Strategic Plan, and to optimally align DGSOM and the UCLA health system under the banner of UCLA Health. As part of the Strategic Plan Refresh, facilitated by The Chartis Group, we conducted an analysis of UCLA Health’s current position, strategies, and vision for the future across all four of its mission areas. We subsequently engaged ECG Management Consultants to redesign our funds flow model to support the financial sustainability of the four mission areas of education, research, community engagement and patient-care. After a year of data collection, with invaluable input from our departments and from the Dean’s Office and health system finance teams, our aim was to spend this year testing models developed by ECG to determine the impact on department budgets and adjust the models as necessary. This plan, however, was put on a temporary pause when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020.

The extraordinary events of the last 10 months have highlighted the critical value of academic medicine — from the biomedical research required to develop preventions and cures to the care of patients and communities to the training of a new generation of
physicians and scientists prepared to address this and future pandemics. Recent events have also underscored the importance of robust strategic plans that support all of academic medicine’s mission areas.

The pandemic has served as a stress-test of DGSOM’s strategic plan in fundamental ways. Years of developing interdepartmental research programs have allowed us to quickly stand up a structured series of oversight committees, strategically leverage generous philanthropic contributions and distribute funding to the most impactful COVID-19 research on campus. Building on the infrastructure put in place by the Institute of Precision Health and the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, we were able to rapidly collect biospecimens for COVID-19 research and implement COVID-19 clinical trials (including vaccine trials) in record time. These examples demonstrate the value of working in an interdisciplinary manner as well as ways in which we can streamline our efforts to become more effective and nimble in having impact.

Recent instances of police violence toward Black Americans have also magnified the need for greater investment in and unwavering focus on the promotion of equity and diversity and the eradication of systemic discrimination at DGSOM. To address this urgent need, the Dean’s Office committed additional funding to EDI priorities, developed an Anti-racism Roadmap under the leadership of Dr. Clarence Braddock, launched anti-racism training and restorative justice programs under the direction of Dr. Lynn Gordon and the EDI Faculty Committee, hired an Anti-racism Roadmap Program Manager (Julian McNeil), and initiated a search for a new Vice Dean of Justice, Equity and Diversity Inclusion position. All of these activities – among other actions taken and in progress – were created in collaboration and/or coordination with the Office of Health Equity and Diversity Inclusion in the UCLA health system, UCLA (Chancellor and Executive Vice-Chancellor’s Rising to the Challenge initiative) and UC Health (“Disrupting the Status Quo” Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Special Report).

More broadly, the pandemic has highlighted a number of ways in which we can optimize our strategic plan. First is through clearer communication of our strategic priorities (which is one of the goals of this annual report). Second is the need to incorporate metrics, milestones and continuous quality improvement into our strategic plan so that we can nimbly respond to any outside threats and opportunities. Third is the need to align strategic planning at all levels within UCLA Health (e.g., across the health system and school, between departments and institutes), and across UCLA Health, UCLA campus and the University of California. These lessons will guide our strategic planning in the post-pandemic era.

Leadership updates

Over the past year, several outstanding leaders were appointed to the following posts, including:

- **Maxime Cannesson**, MD, PhD, as Chair of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine.
- **Oscar Joe Hines**, MD, as Interim Chair and Executive Medical Director of the Department of Surgery and Interim Surgeon-in-Chief of the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.
- **Alexander S. Young**, MD, MSHS, as Interim Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, Director of the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, and Physician-in-Chief of the Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA.
- **Medell Briggs-Malonson**, MD, MPH, MSHS, as Interim Chief, Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for the UCLA Hospital & Clinic System.
Each of these leaders, and the many others who have taken on leadership roles as vice chairs, program directors and others, bring fresh energy, enthusiasm, insights and vision to our institution.

**Faculty recruitment**

In total, the DGSOM appointed 320 new faculty members in 2020. In addition to appointing many of our own physicians, physician-educators and physician-scientist trainees, we also recruited talented scientists and clinicians from other institutions and schools, including:

- **A. Lenore Ackerman**, MD, PhD, returned to campus from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center to serve as Assistant Professor-in-Residence in the Departments of Urology and Obstetrics & Gynecology and Director of Research for the Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery Fellowship.

- **Ambre Bertholet**, PhD, joined the Department of Physiology from UCSF to serve as Assistant Professor.

- **Aparna Bhaduri**, PhD, from UCSF accepted an Assistant Professor position in the Department of Biological Chemistry.

- **Steven Cramer**, MD, joined the Department of Neurology from UC Irvine as Professor In-Residence and Medical Director of Research at California Rehabilitation Institute.

- **Anne Churchland**, PhD, became Professor in the Department of Neurobiology after serving as principal investigator in neuroscience at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

- **Joseph G. Crompton**, MD, PhD, returned to UCLA as Assistant Professor of Surgery after completing fellowship training in Surgical Oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

- **Hong-Wei Dong**, MD, PhD, returned to UCLA from Keck School of Medicine of USC to serve as Professor in the Department of Neurobiology.

- **Helena B. Hansen**, MD, PhD joined the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences from New York University and will serve as co-director of the new Health Equity and Translational Social Sciences Research Theme.
• Oluwatayo Ikotun, PhD, joined the Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology as Assistant Professor after serving as Senior Research Investigator at Bristol Myers Squibb.

• Jennifer M. Lucero, MD, MA, joined DGSOM from UCSF to serve as Associate Dean for Admissions, Associate Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine and Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Vice Chair for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Anesthesiology.

• Chongyuan Luo, PhD, joined the Department of Human Genetics as Assistant Professor following completion of postdoctoral training at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, CA.

• Chao Peng, PhD, joined the Department of Neurology as Assistant Professor from a position as Research Associate at the University of Pennsylvania.

• Harold Pimentel, PhD, joined us from Stanford to serve as Assistant Professor in the Department of Computational Medicine.

• Ritu Salani, MD, MBA, joined the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology from Ohio State University to serve as Professor and Director of the Division of Gynecologic Oncology.

• Keith Vossel, MD, joined the Department of Neurology from the University of Minnesota to serve as Professor and Director of the Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer’s Disease Research at UCLA.

• Yi Yin, PhD, joined the Department of Human Genetics as Assistant Professor following completion of postdoctoral training at the University of Washington.

Please join me in welcoming these and all of our new faculty members to our DGSOM community.

Finance

The DGSOM Financial Affairs Office, under the leadership of Senior Associate Dean Anja Paardekooper and Executive Director Chuck Hajek, continues to provide invaluable financial information and analyses in service of our mission. The team focused on advancing two key priorities in fiscal year 2020: the UCLA Health funds flow redesign and the UCLA Ascend Project, which includes implementing Oracle Financials Cloud to support UCLA’s core mission by modernizing the financial systems and transforming business. These priority efforts, however, were placed on pause to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the COVID-19 pandemic upended nearly every aspect of our lives, we also faced uncertainty about how the operational ramp-down would impact our financial health. The Financial Affairs team immediately responded to the crisis, demonstrating a remarkable combination of expertise and collegiality as they developed analyses to determine the scope of the financial impact and inform the development of mitigation plans. Working closely with department chairs and administration, and with leadership in the Dean’s Office, the team swiftly pivoted the annual department budget process to review the financial impact of COVID19, and to work with the individual departments to establish mitigation plans. To track the cost of responding to the pandemic, they...
developed a process that will be used by the campus to inform potential cost recovery from FEMA. In addition, they supported the pursuit of Coronavirus, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds to offset lost clinical revenue and health care-related expenses due to COVID-19.

While responding to the pandemic, the Financial Affairs team also launched several new financial and payroll reports through our enterprise business data warehouse, DG Inform. Moreover, they created, and are currently piloting, several decision support dashboards that promise to provide critical data about the financial and clinical productivity performance of the school. We look forward to rolling out these dashboards in the coming year.

As our institution resumes work toward priorities beyond COVID-19, the Financial Affairs team will continue monitoring performance to gauge the pandemic’s financial impact and provide insights that will ensure our success in a post-pandemic world.

**Portfolio Management Office**

In 2020, DGSOM formed a new Portfolio Management Office (PMO) to address an organizational need for project-management support, expertise and accountability. The PMO will help advance complex projects through greater alignment, prioritization, measurement and communication. The PMO’s primary function is to ensure the organization is governing and communicating the efficacy of its projects, programs, and initiatives in pursuit of strategic objectives and in alignment with lean-agile thinking.

The PMO is led by its executive director, Christine Daycock, and includes Julian McNeil, Anti-racism Roadmap program manager, and Anna Dow, agile coach, scrum master and technical program manager for the data analytics, finance and digital communications teams.

Human Resources

The onset of the novel coronavirus in 2020 had a tremendous impact on staffing and the way we work. In March 2020, nearly all on-site work in DGSOM was transitioned to remote operations, with the exception of essential on-site personnel and approved research personnel (effective June). The majority of DGSOM personnel will continue to work remotely well into 2021. This transition has presented unique challenges that will undoubtedly continue to stretch our thinking about how we accomplish our work and how we connect to our workplace and colleagues.

The shift to remote work required coordination and assessment of on-site exceptions for the entire DGSOM population, requiring synchronization amongst all department-level managers and Human Resources (HR). HR created a tracking system in conjunction with operational leaders to assess on-site requests and track approved personnel. To address the pandemic’s financial impacts, UCLA instituted a hiring pause. In response, DGSOM HR developed a new position request process, prompting leaders to evaluate their workforce and strategically manage hiring and department budgets.

I recognize how challenging these major transitions have been for everyone, and am full of gratitude for the resilience and dedication of all DGSOM staff as they pivoted to remote work and as others engaged in in-person work using an array of public health precautions, including PPE and physical distancing. I am also grateful to Senior Associate Dean Anja Paardekooper, UCLA Health Chief HR Officer Susi Takeuchi, and Senior Director for HR Strategy Shawn Kang for their leadership and guidance in managing all the transitions and adaptations imposed by the pandemic.

Throughout the year, HR has also continued its pre-pandemic work to build strong staff leadership teams. In association with the UCLA Anderson School of Management, HR launched an Executive Leadership Program for Chief Administrative Officers and other senior administrators within the School of Medicine. The program, taught and facilitated by Anderson faculty, covered multiple topics, including strategy, operations, business communication and leadership. The program culminated in a graduation event in which participants presented their final case studies and recommendations to DGSOM senior and executive leadership.

HR also launched three internal task forces, Racial Justice and Social Equity, Remote Work and Well-being, and Sustained Business Process Improvement. Each task force is made up of a cross section of Chief Administrative Officers and senior leaders within DGSOM. The goal of each task force is to engage collaboratively across departments and bring forward recommendations to modernize our work environment, improve the health and well-being of our workforce, and elevate social justice throughout our broader community.
Digital technology (DGIT)

In the past year, DGIT welcomed a new Deputy CIO and Associate Dean for Computing, George Morris, who brings to UCLA deep expertise and experience in using technology to enable research, education and administrative functions. Prior to joining the DGIT team, Morris held IT leadership positions at Dartmouth College and Harvard University’s Weld Hill Research Center and Arnold Arboretum, among others.

In light of the pandemic, we faced an urgent need for technological infrastructure capable of supporting an enterprise-wide transition to remote work and teaching. The DGIT team rose to the occasion, with each team and each employee shouldering additional responsibilities to make the remote transition not only fast and smooth, but also optimal for the success of faculty, researchers, students, and staff. To highlight a few accomplishments:

- DGIT teams helped develop the daily UC Health Symptom Tracking tool, the “tap-and-go” fast pass entry system into clinical spaces, the virtual recruitment and orientation overhauls for medical students and trainees, and websites to support new activities and communications, such as the Anti-racism Roadmap website, the DGSOM coronavirus information website and the reporting resources page.

- DGIT’s audiovisual team supported a complete organizational shift to remote events ranging from systemwide town halls to graduation ceremonies and virtual site visits.

- The education technology team vetted solutions and provided guidance and training to support remote work, teaching, learning and COVID-impacted clinical training.

- The infrastructure team provided back-end support for UCLA COVID testing and research activities.

- The IT Connect team launched virtual “walk-up” support services and modified their in-person support model to follow strict safety precautions.

In addition to this critical COVID-19-related work, DGIT teams created an LCME dashboard to support the DGSOM accreditation site visit in February 2021, updated network capabilities and hardware to provide greater wireless network connectivity and bandwidth to support greater workloads, and expanded the UC OATS Conflict of Commitment tracking system, a winner of the 2020 UCOP Golden Sautter Award, to all 10 UC campuses.

DGIT also launched a self-service Amazon Web Services platform that expands core computing, creates a shared version-control system for researchers and developers to collaboratively store and work on code, and implements targeted disaster recovery and business continuity programs to protect critical DGSOM systems and services.

Space

To safeguard the health of our community, UCLA greatly reduced space utilization for research, education, clinical activities, and administration during the campus COVID-19 ramp-down from mid-March to early June. Although most
education and administration continue to be remote, utilization of clinical research space has increased substantially, with strict safety measures and limits on personnel density when appropriate. Following campus guidelines, research in non-clinical space has returned to 25 percent space density, creating continued challenges for productivity, especially for our largest laboratories. During the campus ramp-down and the subsequent low-density phase, a subset of high-priority construction and renovation projects managed by UCLA Facilities Management and external contractors continued, with careful safety protocols to ensure worker safety. On behalf of our school and research teams, I’d like thank everyone involved for their careful planning, attention to safety, and follow-through on these important projects:

- **The renovation of five open laboratory rooms in the Center for Health Sciences (CHS) South Tower:** These laboratories have either been completed or are nearing completion, and all will be occupied in early 2021.

- **Extensive renovation of Café Med:** Installation of a new ceiling, lights and furniture were completed, and renovations are now underway in the dining area west of Café Med.

- **New Good Manufacturing Practices facility:** I am pleased to share that we won a $7.2M NIH C06 grant to construct a new Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) facility on the B level of CHS, with Vice Dean for Research Steve Smale, PhD, as the principal investigator. Expected to be complete in 2023, this new facility will replace our current, outdated facility in the Factor Building. The grant funds will be combined with funds from a visionary donor, and the facility will be overseen by UCLA’s Human Gene and Cell Therapy Program directed by Donald Kohn, MD, and managed by our Human Gene and Cell Therapy Facility Director, Sujna Raval-Fernandes, PhD. The new GMP facility will allow UCLA to expand its leadership in developing life-saving therapies for devastating diseases. Recent examples include Dr. Kohn’s successful cure of a form of severe combined immunodeficiency and other hematopoietic disorders, efforts by Antoni Ribas, MD, PhD, Linda Liau, MD, PhD, MBA, Robert Prins, PhD, Steve Dubinett, MD, and Yvonne Chen, PhD, to develop novel cancer immunotherapies, and efforts by Sophie Deng, MD, PhD, to treat limbal stem cell deficiency.

### Philanthropy

December 2019 marked the completion of the UCLA Centennial Campaign, one of the most ambitious fundraising campaigns ever undertaken by a public university. UCLA Health Sciences raised $2 billion for pioneering research, patient care, medical education, and more.

During fiscal year 2020, the development team raised 16,549 gifts from 13,524 individual donors – a 19 percent increase from fiscal year 2019. In January 2020, the Simms/Mann Family Foundation committed a remarkable $18-million to support the expansion of the Simms/Mann-UCLA Center for Integrative Oncology. As part of an ongoing $50 million campaign, the foundation’s gift contains a matching component to inspire others to contribute to the Center’s work. The Center provides psychosocial care for patients and families facing cancer, and trains clinical workers to provide these services in oncology programs around the country. This commitment enables the provision of a wide range of services – including psychosocial and psychiatric support, workshops and groups, nutritional guidance, and spiritual care – to patients in all UCLA hematology/oncology clinics throughout Southern California. Furthermore, the gift funds the role of John Glaspy, MD, as the inaugural Simms/Mann Family Foundation Endowed Chair in Integrative Oncology.

As the pandemic mounted in March 2020, many donors and friends provided critical funding to support UCLA’s doctors, nurses and frontline staff who were treating...
COVID-19 patients, as well as researchers studying the virus and developing treatments. This included more than $10 million in philanthropic support for COVID-19 research at the DGSOM. Additionally, the community quickly rallied to help secure PPE, masks, and wellness items for our health care workers. We are grateful to the more than 3,000 individuals and organizations who were there for us.

While we haven’t been able to host events on campus, the development team has hosted numerous virtual events to share vital information, raise funds, and celebrate milestones. DGSOM and UCLA Health launched “Your COVID-19 Questions Answered,” educational webinars produced by UCLA Health Sciences Development. The series feature experts discussing the latest developments in COVID-19 research and patient care and the virus’s impact on specific conditions.

More than 3,850 donors and friends of UCLA attended “Party on the Pier: Home Edition,” a virtual version of the annual UCLA Mattel Children’s Hospital event that included celebrity guests, interactive programming, and online carnival games. The event raised more than $700,000 for children’s health.

Marketing and Communications

This year, our community, state and nation turned to DGSOM leadership, faculty, students and trainees as trusted sources of information and expertise. The UCLA Health communications department led efforts to highlight and promote the work of DGSOM across a wide array of internal and external channels.


New Content Team: UCLA Health Communications also launched a new Content Team over the summer to integrate original content across earned and owned channels. It includes two general writers and will add three science writers.

Biomedical research advocacy: Our government relations team worked to increase funding for biomedical research, expand access to DGSOM faculty physicians and strengthen federal and state graduate medical education programs. The team successfully advocated for a $2 billion increase in NIH funding, and met federal lawmakers during the Annual Rally for Medical Research. In Sacramento, they continued supporting the state’s precision health program and successfully cautioned against a state bill that would have restricted resident training affiliations. Locally, the team partnered with the L.A. Mayor’s office to expand “street medicine” programs for persons experiencing homelessness.

DGSOM COVID-19 communications: In response to the pandemic, my leadership team and I redeployed Dean’s Office staff to serve on a dedicated DGSOM COVID-19 Communications Team. The team has worked to ensure accurate, coordinated and transparent communication with staff, faculty and trainees since the onset of the pandemic in February. In addition to my biweekly “Dean’s Update” emails, we also launched a DGSOM COVID-19 website, regular virtual town halls; a new form for members of the DGSOM community to submit COVID-19-related questions and suggestions; and a new onsite reporting form to ensure more local, timely attention pertaining to DGSOM-specific safety and compliance concerns.
EDUCATION

Overview

We are proud to report that the DGSOM continues ranking among the nation’s leading medical schools. According to the annual U.S. News and World Report survey of medical schools, DGSOM ranks #6 in research and in the top 10 for several specialty programs, including psychiatry (#5), surgery (#8), radiology (#9) and anesthesiology (#10). Furthermore, DGSOM received more than 10,000 medical school applications last year, resulting in an acceptance rate of less than two percent.

Undergraduate Medical Education

Admissions

Our admissions team, now led by Associate Dean Jennifer Lucero, MD, has quickly navigated the changing landscape of medical school admissions, including a 30-percent increase in applications year-over-year.

In the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team fluidly transitioned to a virtual admissions process, which included a virtual Second Look event in the spring and synchronous and asynchronous admission interviews in the autumn.

Anticipating the challenges faced by this year’s applicants, the admissions team incorporated new elements to allow flexibility, including a later application deadline and accommodations for delayed MCAT scores. Community support has continued through virtual office hours, remote information sessions, and a new online social engagement platform to connect applicants to current students in real-time. We proudly launched a new virtual recruitment website featuring an inspiring set of videos highlighting what makes medical education at the DGSOM such a special experience.

Curricular Affairs

The 2019-2020 academic year marked a period of rapid advancement and change in medical education at DGSOM. The COVID-19 global pandemic required an all-hands effort to ensure educational continuity and unimpeached progress toward graduation for all medical students. Through intensive collaboration with the DGIT team, we were able to find the right platforms and train faculty and staff in a remarkably short period of time. Through the efforts of our Faculty Professional Development program, more than 80 faculty have attended sessions on remote teaching and learning, with topics ranging from the basics of Zoom to redesigning a lecture, workshop, or course for online audiences. Both students and faculty provided positive feedback on the level of engagement that has been possible in the virtual setting.

The UCLA Simulation Center team was also instrumental in adapting our educational programs during the pandemic. They helped secure lab supplies needed to create face shields and provided essential virtual and remote training. These outstanding educators also spearheaded the creation of the COVID-19 onsite training safety guidelines in use across Health Sciences education. The team worked closely with the emerging infectious disease team to update safety measures for return to work and learning on campus.
At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our clerkship chairs and coordinators converted clerkships to remote activities, creating novel remote courses on an extremely short timeline. The creativity and collaboration demonstrated in this work was phenomenal. Subsequently, Curricular Affairs worked in conjunction with our clinical partners to plan a safe return to the clinics and wards with appropriate adjustments made for ongoing COVID-19 risks. Working closely with campus leadership and infectious disease specialists, we successfully offered on-campus anatomy and clinical skills courses for our first-year medical students, who are among the small number of students on campus this fall.

A key component to the success of our curriculum is assessment and evaluation, and we were delighted to welcome Drs. Heather Davis, EdD, Director of Student Assessment, and Mark Grichanik, PhD, Director of Program Evaluation, to lead our newly restructured Educational Measurement Unit. They bring deep expertise in assessment and program evaluation and have already begun helping us revise practices where needed to ensure our assessments and programs are valid, reliable, equitable, accessible, and precise.

In addition to curricular changes brought on by the pandemic, we have made great strides toward an anti-racist curriculum at DGSOM. Under the leadership of newly appointed Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs, Jason Napolitano, MD, we recruited two Structural Racism and Health Equity Theme Chairs, Lindsey Wells, MD, and Shamsher Samra, MD, MPhil, who are working closely with DGSOM students to add modules on structural determinants of health to the curriculum and evaluate all our current curriculum and assessment items for signs of bias or opportunities to incorporate uncovered topics. We have also secured funding for structural racism student tutors who will begin their work evaluating and teaching key elements of the curriculum in the coming weeks. The first week of medical school (Introduction to the Profession) was overhauled this year to have a distinct focus on structural determinants of health. The common book for this year is *How to Be an Antiracist*, by Ibram X. Kendi, and structured small-group discussions have been carefully crafted for both the first- and second-year classes.

**Philanthropic support**

In the 2019-2020 academic year, our medical students continued benefiting from generous philanthropic support. Of the 711 enrolled medical students, 92 percent received grants or scholarships, with close to 30 percent of the student body receiving full-tuition support. Of this 30 percent, the David Geffen Medical Scholarship generously provided a total of 182 students with full tuition and living expense stipends. This fall, David Geffen made a landmark reinvestment in our flagship scholarship, ensuring that an additional 120 students will benefit from this fund, bringing the total to more than 400 recipients over a 10-year period. Mr. Geffen’s philanthropy has been a key factor in propelling the school to new heights and allowing our students to pursue their passions unburdened by debt.

Another important philanthropic gift supports the Dean’s Leadership in Health and Science Scholarship, which funds an extra year of education for medical students,
enabling them to earn a second degree or engage in a productive year of full-time research. This year we received 30 applications for this coveted scholarship — the highest number of submissions to date — and we were able to award nine new scholarships covering full tuition plus an annual living stipend. Of the nine recipients, two obtained a master’s degree in the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, one obtained a master’s degree at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, and six were fully funded to engage in a focused year of research with a UCLA faculty member. In addition, The Leaders of Tomorrow Scholars Program provided full tuition for eight students, and the L.A. Care Scholarship provided full tuition and living expense stipends for 16 students.

These continuing collaborations with our philanthropic partners help us provide competitive scholarship packages that recruit and support extraordinary students, helping them achieve their highest aspirations without the burden of medical school debt.

Highlights from the Class of 2020

In May, we proudly celebrated the accomplishments and graduation of the class of 2020 at the 66th annual, first-ever virtual, DGSOM Hippocratic Oath Ceremony. The virtual format allowed guests to attend the ceremony from around the globe. Nadine Burke Harris, MD, MPH, FAAP, California’s first Surgeon General, provided the keynote address with wonderful advice for the new physicians, reminding our graduates that as they are called to the front lines to safeguard the well-being of others, the power of the Hippocratic Oath has never been clearer. Melissa Markowitz, class speaker, reminded students that being a graduate in this era means stepping up when you are needed the most.

Almost half the graduating class headed into primary care specialties, helping address the national primary care physician shortage, and approximately 20 percent of the graduating class headed into the operating room as future surgeons. One third of the class will remain in the University of California system, with the majority of those physicians staying in the DGSOM family. The majority of those graduates venturing out of California will head east — to New York and Boston.

Student engagement

In response to the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the Los Angeles community, DGSOM students founded LA COVID Volunteers (LACV) to help local hospitals procure PPE and provide health care workers child care, tutoring, help with errands, and more. (Read more about this effort in the Community Engagement section of this report.)

A record 144 medical students presented their summer research activities at the 2020 Josiah Brown Summer Research Poster Fair and a total of 98 students received school support to travel to national conferences and present research findings.

Continuing a history spanning more than two decades, DGSOM’s student-led free clinic programs continued their inspiring efforts to provide health care to some of our most vulnerable community members. Collectively, these programs provided care to underserved communities across Los Angeles, while also offering medical students valuable learning and leadership experiences.
The American Medical Student Association (AMSA) and UCLA residents organized a voter registration campaign as part of the nationwide “Healthy Democracy Campaign,” and DGSOM finished in the top three in “post-season” rankings. As a result of these efforts, medical students registered 225 new voters and helped 285 individuals receive their vote-by-mail ballots.

Several student organizations took on significant leadership responsibilities, hosting major conferences this year:

- For the second year, the Asian Pacific American Medical Students Association (APAMSA) hosted a regional conference, “2020 AAPI Mental Health Conference: Taking Action,” that brought together medical and undergraduate students from 14 different APAMSA chapters across Southern California, Nevada, and Arizona.
- Now in its sixth year, the Pride Alliance at DGSOM and Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science collaborated with other regional medical and health professional students to organize the SoCal LGBTQIA Health Conference at Geffen Hall, entitled “Together We Shine: Illuminating the Past, Present, and Future of LGBTQIA+ Healthcare.”
- Now in its 24th year, the Healthcare Symposium welcomed all members of the community to “Structural Vulnerabilities in Health: Medical and Public Health Solutions.”
- Ultrafest, organized by the Ultrasound Student Interest Group, affords students at all levels the opportunity to learn, develop and hone their ultrasound skills for critical scans.

Collectively, these groups provided meaningful professional development opportunities and valuable information to more than 1,000 medical students.

Pipeline and outreach programs

Our commitment to ensuring a diverse physician workforce continues through the work of our outstanding pipeline programs: the UCLA Pre-medical/Pre-dental Enrichment Program (PREP), the UCLA Re-application Program (RAP) and the UCLA Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP). The PREP and RAP programs, designed to assist current and aspiring applicants to realize their dream to become physicians, achieved tremendous success this year.

As with all our educational programs, our pipeline programs quickly adapted to remote learning platforms, actively engaging participants from across the United States and beyond. Highlights include:

- Eight PREP graduates and one RAP program graduate entered medical school in 2020. Of these nine new medical students, three students joined us at DGSOM.

Curricular redesign

This fall marked the inaugural launch of two new elements for our phased curriculum implementation.

- Our SHPEP program, which provides exposure to educational pathways toward a variety of health care professions (e.g., medicine, nursing and dentistry), provided 74 educationally and financially disadvantaged community college students with enriching educational experiences, including problem-based learning workshops, virtual clinical casework, and community-based health projects.
- Our outreach and engagement team represented DGSOM’s educational program opportunities to students at 25 community colleges, universities and health professional fairs across the nation, engaging more than 7,000 potential medical students and pre-med advisors.

These efforts move us toward our goals of diversifying the physician workforce and ensuring all interested students have the information, encouragement and support they need to pursue their dreams.

“Your efforts have unequivocally reduced the spread of coronavirus, protected the health and well-being of our community and lit the path toward ending this pandemic.”
plan: Early Authentic Clinical Experience (EACE) and our cadre of incredible faculty, the Educators for Excellence. In contrast to the traditional shadowing experiences of a preceptorship, the EACE strives to engage first-year medical students in an immersive clinical experience. EACE enables students to develop specific skills, including how to provide compassionate care with cultural humility, communication and interpersonal skills, and how to become a self-directed adult learner with the agency and capacity to recognize and appreciate the learning value in any opportunity or experience. The experience also demonstrates the value of being part of an interdisciplinary team.

Following a rigorous selection process with outstanding candidates, we are delighted to share that the 30 Educators for Excellence have officially begun their work teaching our first-year medical students and developing the content for the new “Foundations of Practice” course debuting in August 2021. This year, the faculty are working with small groups of students longitudinally in Clinical Skills 1, Doctoring 1 and Problem-Based Learning. These faculty have also started regular evening faculty development workshops covering topics such as teaching with technology, working with the Center for Accessible Education, being an anti-racist educator and being an upstander. Next year, these accomplished and dedicated faculty teachers will equip first-year medical students with the tools and basic abilities they need to perform daily patient-care activities through hands-on Foundations of Practice modules.

For a detailed update on the Curricular Redesign process, please click here.

**Graduate Medical Education**

Our 90 residency and fellowship programs are national leaders, a reputation bolstered by the fact that our residents and fellows receive training at UCLA Health, the best hospital in the West, ranked #1 in California and #4 nationally by U.S. News & World Report, and listed for the past 31 years on the National Honor Roll, a distinction reserved for only 20 hospitals that provide the highest quality care. Living up to this reputation, our graduate medical education (GME) trainees have been on the front lines providing outstanding clinical care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

GME priorities for 2019-2020 focused on equity and diversity inclusion (EDI), and patient safety. Here are a few specific examples of innovations in the GME space this year:

- New EDI efforts included the first annual Road to Residency event, which offered guidance and mentorship to medical students across the region. This one-day program, which was created by UCLA residents, attracted more than 100 UIIM (underrepresented in medicine) medical students from across the region. These students participated in mock interviews and specialty-specific panel discussions and also received tips for “surviving and thriving” in medical school.

- In response to the tragic murder of George Floyd and so many other traumatic acts of violence directed at Black and minority communities, GME partnered with DGSOM and UCLA Health to listen, support, and act to address systemic racism.

- Christina Harris, MD, was appointed as Assistant Designated Institutional Official (DIO) for Equity and Diversity Inclusion in Graduate Medical Education.

- UCLA became one of 10 GME sponsors in the nation chosen to participate in an ACGME Learning Collaborative on Patient Safety. Through this initiative, all interns will receive intensive training on patient safety principles.

- Since the onset of the pandemic, GME has engaged in providing both physical and psychological safety for our trainees on the front lines.
This year, our GME team partnered with department leadership and our marketing team to launch a robust virtual recruitment website designed to highlight what makes graduate medical education training at UCLA so special. In addition, all didactic, recruitment and on-boarding/orientation efforts transitioned to online platforms.

**Continuing Medical Education**

Under the leadership of CME Director Martin Quan, MD, the Office of Continuing Medical Education maintained continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic and laid the foundation for pivoting to live virtual event programming. Despite the cancellation of live courses, 5,877 learners from across the country and within our UCLA community participated in one or more of our accredited CME activities during the 2019-2020 academic year. These activities included 50 live courses, conferences and workshops, 24 grand rounds series, and 22 online on-demand activities. To serve these varied communities, these activities were planned with course chairs not only from our Westwood and Santa Monica campuses, but also from Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, the VA, and our community practices. Highlights include:

- Offering long-running popular courses in geriatrics, pediatrics, vascular surgery, urology, and ophthalmology;
- Developing new courses on organ transplant, tropical medicine, and comprehensive medical care for transgender and gender-nonbinary patients; Collaborating with the Graduate Medical Education Office to organize the ACGME-UCLA interactive workshop on Developing Faculty Competencies in Assessment; and
- Hosting the NCAA/Pac 12 Mental Health Summit in January on the UCLA campus.

**Graduate Programs in Bioscience**

Graduate education thrived under Graduate Programs in Bioscience (GPB) thanks to the directors of the associated degree programs and Home Areas. The program received a record number of admission applications, leading to a cohort of highly qualified students entering this fall. Of these, 28 percent are from backgrounds historically underrepresented in science and 12 percent are international. This year, GPB also added a new interdisciplinary Home Area in Medical Informatics, with support from DGSOM and the UCLA Samueli School of Engineering.

In 2020, bioscience graduate students achieved notable recognition for their science and innovation. Of particular note is the student-advisor pair who received the prestigious Howard Hughes Medical Institute Gilliam Fellowship for Advanced Study: Clara Cano and Kathrin Plath, PhD (Cell & Developmental Biology).

A number of students also received prominent individual fellowships: NSF Graduate Research Fellowship (Elena Coley, Yesica Mercado-Ayon, Zeena Rivera), NIH National Research Service Award (F30/F31) (Sandy Alvarez, Elizabeth Burnette, Patrick Chang, Joseph Munier, Ngoc Nguyen, Christine Olson, Sean Pianka, Geoffrey Pronovost, Kaleab Tessema), American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship (Todd Kimball, Namita Padgaonkar), Isabel & Harvey Kibel Fellowship (Jensen Abascal), California Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (Moe Ishihara), Department of Defense Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (Danielle Morrow), Gates Millennium Scholars Graduate Fellowship (Patricia Mendez), and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Postgraduate Scholarship-Doctoral Program (Cassandra Klune).

GPB students play a key role in our school’s research efforts, contributing as authors to more than 100 publications in 2020. Several GPB students authored their first papers: Narsis Attar and Oscar Campos discovered that the histone H3-H4 tetramer is a copper reductase enzyme, revealing a novel role for histones in cell biology (Science, Siavash Kurdistani senior author); Arun Durvasula identified DNA from a previously unknown branch of extinct humans in the genomes of present-day West Africans, uncovering a contribution of so-called ghost archaic ancestry to the gene pool of this population (Science Advances, Sriram Sankararaman senior author; covered by The New York Times, NPR and BBC); Gabriel Abril Rodriguez demonstrated that inhibition of the PAK4 oncoprotein overcomes tumor resistance to checkpoint immunotherapy, providing a new approach to combination cancer therapy (Nature Cancer, Antoni Ribas senior author).

For the second year in a row, GPB students excelled in the UCLA Graduate Division “Grad Slam,” a campus-wide competition for three-minute talks aimed at communicating research to a lay audience. Of the 10 finalists, six were GPB students, including first-place winner An-Chieh Feng (Immunity, Microbes and Molecular Pathogenesis) and second place winner Cassandra Meyer (Neuroscience).

GPB, together with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, established the Taylor M. Brown Memorial Award to recognize PhD students in the biosciences who reflect
the characteristics that made Taylor such a special member of the UCLA community.

Research mentoring flourished at multiple levels. To date, more than 370 students, postdoctoral scholars and faculty have participated in mentor development and train-the-trainer programs led by GPB Director for Recruitment and Inclusion Diana Azurdia, PhD. For her success in promoting EDI in graduate education, Dr. Azurdia received the UCLA Academic Senate 2020 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award for staff.

Postdoctoral fellows

More than 450 postdoctoral scholars contribute to research programs at the DGSOM. During the COVID-19 pandemic, postdocs have been the backbone of DGSOM research efforts and have kept research moving despite the challenges of working from home and the restrictions on ramping up in-person research. Many postdocs pivoted to COVID-19 projects, helping to better elucidate the virus, identify potential treatments, design new diagnostics and define appropriate public health responses.

The DGSOM Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, led by Lynn Talton, PhD, transitioned its variety of postdoctoral training programs to the virtual space so postdocs could remotely continue their professional development in teaching, grant writing, mentorship, and responsible conduct of research. An online format has proved to be ideal for certain types of training, and it will likely remain part of many postdoctoral programs even beyond the pandemic.

DGSOM is well-represented in the leadership of the Postdoctoral Association at UCLA, including Association Chair Leslie Sedgeman, PhD, (Cardiology), Vice-Chair of Operations Caroline Johnson, PhD, (Neurobiology), Vice-Chair for International Affairs Daniel Velez-Ramirez (MIMG) and Vice-Chair for Communication Farha Khan, PhD, (Physiology). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Postdoctoral Association advocated for postdocs, endeavoring to mitigate long-term career impacts and meet their PPE, transportation, and child care needs.

A few notable postdoctoral awards include:

- Lisa Kohn, MD, PhD, (Pediatric Allergy and Immunology) and Sam LoCascio, PhD, (Biological Chemistry) were awarded the A.P. Giannini Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Award.
- Nan Hultgren, PhD, (Ophthalmology); Cynthia Kusters, MD, PhD, (Human Genetics); Maylen Perez Diaz, PhD, (Semel Institute); Marsa Taheri, PhD, (Physiology); and Kyle Wylie, PhD, (Semel Institute) were awarded NIH Individual Postdoctoral Fellowships.

To learn more, visit biomedpostdoc.ucla.edu.

Alumni Affairs

This past year, the Alumni Affairs Office continued successfully revamping and increasing awareness of the DGSOM’s alumni program for both our MD and resident alumni, as well as current students and residents. October 2019 marked our second annual Medical Alumni Reunion Weekend, as we welcomed back to Westwood the classes of ’59, ’69, ’79, ’89, ’94, ’99, and ’09. The flagship event gained significant momentum, with attendance increasing nearly threefold from its inauguration the prior year.

With commencement transitioning to a virtual format for the Class of 2020, Alumni Affairs, along with the Student Affairs Office, delivered nearly 150 celebratory gift boxes to the newest alumni of the DGSOM and continued to engage alumni from across the country for the annual Career Conference. Event programming is set to increase as the AAO plans for additional student-alumni engagement opportunities and new partnership events with other UCLA professional schools in 2021.

Behavioral Wellness Center

Four years after its launch, the Behavioral Wellness Center (BWC) at DGSOM continues adapting to new and complex challenges, which range from social isolation and disruptions of academic schedules due to the COVID-19 pandemic to exacerbations of racial trauma, injustice, and the tumultuous political environment. As these challenges...
impact trainee and student routines and well-being, the BWC has worked judiciously to be attentive and responsive to the needs of trainees and students and make modifications to clinic operations and services.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a rapid transition to entirely remote operations, under the leadership of Karen Miotto, MD, and Artha Gillis, MD, PhD, and with support from DGSOM leadership, the BWC has expanded the scope of its services to ensure physician trainees and graduate students can easily access the mental health services and resources they need.

The BWC expanded outreach efforts, increased the availability of diverse clinicians with experience in trauma-informed care and established drop-in groups to provide the DGSOM trainee and student community with immediate access to safe community spaces and support. As a result of these actions, more trainees and students are receiving services.

To learn more, please visit medschool.ucla.edu/bwc.

Global Health Program

The Global Health Program has continued to grow and thrive over the last year, despite the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Global Health Selective for first-year medical students attracted 37 participants in the fall of 2019. A record 19 second-year students joined the Global Health Equity Pathway, in which students commit to longitudinal scholarly work with a global partner site and mentors at DGSOM.

The Los Angeles Global Health Conference, held at UCLA on February 1, 2020, was a major highlight of the year. Our Global Health Program partnered with USC’s Institute on Inequalities in Global Health to host nearly 300 students and professionals from across Southern California, as well as speakers from around the world, including an inspirational keynote address by Dr. Elizabeth Bukusi who traveled from Kenya. The 2020 event focused on health disparities in local and global contexts, with an emphasis on gender equity, migrant and refugee health, and epidemics and disasters. This annual conference, organized with core leadership from DGSOM first- and second-year medical students, has become a signature event at DGSOM and is helping to foster a passionate community of learners across Southern California who are committed to fighting for social justice and health equity.

March 2020 brought an abrupt halt to many Global Health initiatives due to the surging COVID-19 pandemic. Twelve first-year medical students showed their resilience and adaptability when, on short notice, they were required to modify their summer global health research activities to remote collaborations from Los Angeles. The many impressive summer achievements include those of Olivia Man, who engaged virtually with colleagues in Brazil to look at the role of climate change and migration on the re-emergence of mosquito-borne diseases; Angela Bi and Ryan Elliot, who worked alongside a team in Mozambique to examine opportunities to improve the identification of infants with HIV at a large referral hospital in the nation’s capital; and Kate Coursey and Rose Paneno, who examined barriers to the uptake of HIV treatment in Malawi. All these students, along with 12 of their classmates, remain committed to their global health research and virtual collaborations, and have joined the Global Health Equity Pathway to continue the fantastic work they started last summer.

Following the program’s restructuring in 2019, the last year has been one of many “firsts,” including the launch of a new Global Health Seed Grant Program designed to provide UCLA faculty with start-up funding for multidisciplinary research with a global partner. The team was thrilled to award the first two Global Health Seed Grants in the spring: one to UCLA pediatrician Chris Buck, MD, who, with his colleagues in Mozambique, will be investigating strategies to better identify infants with HIV; and the second to Steve Shoptaw, PhD, and Cathy Reback, PhD, in the Department of Family Medicine, who, with collaborators in Vietnam, will be performing
research to reduce health disparities among Vietnamese transgender women. These UCLA investigators are addressing important clinical questions while also building capacity for in-country research by mentoring junior investigators in Mozambique and Vietnam.

Despite the inability to travel since March 2020, the Global Health Program has continued supporting partners around the world. The team recently collaborated with LA COVID Volunteers to create and distribute nearly 500 face shields to partner institutions in Malawi, Mozambique, Peru, and rural South Africa, and procured additional personal protective equipment to assist partners in Iquitos, Peru — an area particularly devastated by COVID-19. In the spring of 2020, UCLA infectious disease and critical-care specialists hosted a remote case conference where they provided guidance for COVID-19 care to clinicians in Iquitos. Over the summer, the program also partnered with Circles International to facilitate a mental health and well-being seminar for these same providers in Iquitos to help them with the extreme stress and fatigue of managing the COVID-19 epidemic with scarce resources. The Global Health Program’s role in supporting global partners has never been more critical, and they continuously seek ways to engage in meaningful collaborations with colleagues from afar.

In Los Angeles and throughout the world, COVID-19 has exposed health disparities, with many devastating epidemics around the globe occurring in settings already dealing with constrained health resources. Global Health’s mission has never been more important, and their resolve is strengthened as they look to train the next generation of global health leaders and support UCLA faculty in their efforts to improve health equity globally. To learn more, visit the Global Health Program website.
RESEARCH

Like all activities over the past year, DGSOM research was dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In mid-March, the Chancellor’s Office asked laboratories to pause almost all research for more than three months, with the exception of COVID-19-related research. Clinical trials, clinical research, and community research were also significantly curtailed due to COVID-19 safety concerns and the need to focus hospital resources on COVID-19 patients. In early June, research began to ramp up following strict guidelines developed by a committee chaired by Vice Chancellor for Research Roger Wakimoto. The guidelines permitted laboratory research to return to 25 percent space density and allowed clinical trials, clinical and human subjects research, and community research activities to resume to a limited extent following careful evaluation of safety measures by departmental leadership. The DGSOM Dean’s Office also launched an anonymous reporting form for those working onsite to share any concerns, questions or observations related to COVID-19 safety protocols.

To coordinate COVID-19 research activities, we established an Oversight COVID-19 Research Committee chaired by Owen Witte, MD, along with a Clinical Research Task Force (co-chaired by Judith Currier, MD, and Arash Naeim, MD), a Basic/Translational Research Task Force (co-chaired by Gay Crooks, MD, and Emilie Marcus, PhD), and a Health Equity Task Force (co-chaired by Christina Harris, MD, and Enrico Castillo, MD, MSHPM). A Scientific Prioritization and Feasibility Committee (chaired by John Belperio, MD) was established to evaluate requests for researcher access to COVID-19 patients, patient samples, and patient data. Vice Chancellor Wakimoto also established a High Containment Use Committee (chaired by Jerome Zack, PhD) to monitor requests for use of UCLA’s Biosafety Level 3 facility for live virus experiments.

Our DGSOM colleagues have been remarkably effective and impactful in ensuring that UCLA participates in a large number of major clinical trials for COVID-19 therapies and vaccines. These include early trials that contributed to the FDA approval of remdesivir, trials for several other potential therapeutics, and trials for two leading vaccine candidates. To date, more than 300 basic, translational, clinical, and health equity research projects have been registered through the DGSOM COVID-19 research registration portal. More than $10 million in philanthropic COVID-19 research support has been distributed. One of many highlights was the development of an innovative next-generation sequencing strategy for SARS-CoV-2 detection by a team led by Sriram Kosuri, Sc.D, in the UCLA Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and the DGSOM laboratories of Valerie Arboleda, MD, PhD, Leonid Kruglyak, PhD, Jonathan Flint, MD, and Eleazar Eskin, PhD. This new test is now being used for UCLA’s asymptomatic testing program and for asymptomatic testing at other locations.

Other projects receiving support include studies that examine:

- Host genetics and response to SARS-CoV-2 (led by Bogdan Pasaniuc, PhD);
- The use of convalescent plasma in treating COVID-19 (led by Arash Naiem, PhD);
- The optimization of SARS-CoV2 antibodies to create pan-specific antibodies to anticipate future coronavirus outbreaks (led by Peter Bowers, PhD);
- Barriers and facilitators of COVID-19 clinical trials and vaccine acceptability among multi-ethnic communities in Los Angeles (led by Arleen Brown, MD, PhD); and
- Enhancing COVID-19 knowledge and safe practices in the Spanish-speaking community (led by Alex Kopelowicz, MD).

These represent just a handful of the impactful studies conducted by UCLA researchers, and supported by our generous philanthropic community.

Research accomplishments

DGSOM researchers continued to make groundbreaking advances in our understanding of basic biological processes and disease mechanisms, in the translation of this
knowledge to the clinic, in the development and investigation of novel therapies, diagnostics, and devices, and in addressing health and health care inequities. Major advances by DGSOM researchers include:

- **Weizhe Hong, PhD**, documented the representation of sex information in the mouse brain, with male mice showing a stronger encoding of female cues in the dorsal medial prefrontal cortex, where the strength of the representations predicts sex preference behavior.

- **Kathrin Plath, PhD**, and **Douglas Black, PhD**, with **Mitchell Guttman, PhD**, at Caltech, uncovered an assembly that includes multiple RNA-binding proteins and forms a condensate that is essential for X chromosome inactivation and can sustain silencing in the absence of the Xist long non-coding RNA.

- **Steven Bensinger, VMD, PhD** used shotgun and isotope tracer mass spectrometry to document changes in the macrophage lipidome in response to microbial and inflammatory stimuli, providing a framework for efforts to take advantage of differential lipidomics to influence immunity.

- **Arjun Deb, MD**, and **Jake Lusis, PhD**, demonstrated that type V collagen regulates scar tissue size in the heart as well as the mechanical properties of scar tissue in an integrin-dependent manner, thereby providing insights into the relationship between scar tissue size and cardiovascular outcomes following myocardial infarction.

**Research rankings**

DGSOM remained tied for sixth in the U.S. News and World Report research rankings. Our research award funding ranking from the National Institutes of Health rose from 13th in fiscal year 2019 to second in fiscal year 2020, largely due to the lead role of Dr. Judith Currier’s Leadership and Operations Center for an AIDS Clinical Trials Group in coordinating multiple national COVID-19 clinical trials. With this additional support, our NIH and non-NIH funding totaled more than $900 million.

In addition to the previously mentioned $7.2 million NIH grant for a new Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) facility (see “Space” section above), the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, directed by Michael Teitell, MD, PhD, successfully renewed its long-standing National Cancer Institute core support grant. Under the direction of Susan Bookheimer, PhD, UCLA’s Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center, within the Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA, also successfully renewed its long-standing NIH P50 support grant. Major new team-science research support was obtained by Scott Kitchen, PhD, and Irvin Chen, PhD, in the form of an NIH U19 grant: “Genetic engineering of cellular and humoral immunity to cure HIV.” A team led by Antoni Ribas, MD, PhD, Roger Lo, MD, PhD, and Tom Graeber, PhD, obtained a new NIH Program Project (P01) award (“Combination therapies to defeat melanoma resistance”), with a second new P01 obtained by Guido Eibl, MD, Enrique Rozengurt, PhD, and Stephen Pandol, MD, (“Chemoprevention and mechanisms of obesity-promoted pancreatic adenocarcinoma”).

Following a successful application in 2019 for a Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF) Physician Scientist Institutional Award (PI, Deborah Krakow, MD), an Office of Physician Scientist Career Development was established within the DGSOM Dean’s Office in 2020. This office – led by Pejman Azarmina, MD, and reporting to Vice Dean for Research Stephen Smale, PhD – will support medical students, residents, fellows, and junior faculty interested in pursuing research careers. Among the new initiatives is a recently announced BWF Physician Scientist Training program, which will provide financial support to lengthen and deepen the research training of talented clinical fellows.

A gift from the W.M. Keck Foundation led to the establishment of the UCLA W.M. Keck Foundation Junior Faculty Awards Program, which will provide critical support ($250,000 per year for two years) for two biomedical research faculty four-to-six years after...
the start of their independent research program, when additional funding can facilitate successful transition from start-up funds and initial grants to sustained long-term funding. The inaugural recipients of this award, led by DGSOM but open to biomedical research faculty throughout the UCLA campus, were Nanthia Suthana, PhD, in the Department of Neurosurgery, and Jingyi Jessica Li, PhD, in the Department of Statistics, within the UCLA College Division of Physical Sciences.

Research Themes

In December, I announced the creation of a seventh Research Theme in Health Equity and Translational Social Sciences. This Theme, developed jointly by DGSOM and the UCLA health system, is directed by Helena Hansen, MD, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry, and Rochelle Dicker, MD, Professor of Surgery and Anesthesiology, Vice Chair for Surgical Critical Care and Co-Director of the Program for the Advancement of Surgical Equity. This Theme joins our initial six themes – Cancer, Cardiovascular Medicine, Immunity/Inflammation/Infection/Transplantation (I3T), Metabolism, Neuroscience, and Regenerative Medicine – and is directed toward the study and promotion of equitable health care. The new Theme has a dual focus: 1) to foreground health equity in all of UCLA’s research efforts while developing and studying new forms of health care that address social-structural determinants of health, and 2) to foster social sciences as fundamental sciences of medicine.

We also were pleased to welcome Arjun Deb, MD, Professor of Medicine and of Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology, as the new leader of the Cardiovascular Medicine Research Theme. Dr. Deb treats patients with advanced heart disease and studies basic mechanisms regulating wound healing in the heart and other organs. We also thank Steve Bensinger, VMD, PhD, and Owen Witte, MD, who stepped down as director and co-director of the I3T and Regenerative Medicine Research Themes, respectively, for their invaluable leadership of these Themes during their establishment.

The Research Themes continue to provide an important perspective and guidance to DGSOM leadership in broadly defined research areas that are central to our mission. Among other contributions, they oversee an interdisciplinary Theme-organized research space in the CHS South Tower, coordinate seminar and research-in-progress series for their communities, and help encourage thematic team sciences through the DGSOM Seed Grant Program.

In 2020, six new team-science awards were provided $150,000 each, including:

1. Improving prenatal planning and postnatal care in severe congenital heart disease: Yalda Afshar, MD, PhD, Peng Hu, PhD, Glen Van Arsdell, MD.

2. Reprogramming host lipid metabolism as a new therapeutic approach for necrotizing fasciitis Steve Bensinger, VMD, PhD, Philip Scumpia, MD, PhD, Andrea Hevener, PhD, Karen Reue, PhD, and Jeffery F. Miller, PhD.

3. Profiling and selective targeting of mitochondrial metabolism in therapy-resistant tumors: David Shackelford, PhD, Carla Koehler, PhD, and Begoña Diaz, PhD.

4. Mapping the ontogeny of prefrontal circuits: Role of neuron-glia interactions and early life experience: Laura DeNardo, PhD, Lindsay De Biase, PhD, Dan Geschwind, MD, PhD, and Peyman Golshani, MD, PhD.

5. Integrating functional and bioinformatic analysis of genetic variants of uncertain significance in ion channel transporters for precision medicine: Riccardo Olcese, PhD, T. Niroshi Senaratne, PhD, Sulagna Saitta, MD, PhD, and Michela Ottolia, PhD.

6. Developing a gene therapeutic strategy for cystic fibrosis: Brigitte Gomperts, MD, Donald Kohn, MD, Steven Jonas, MD, PhD, Eric Hamberger, MD, and Patricia Eshaghian, MD.
CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

UCLA Clinical and Translational Science Institute

The UCLA Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) is a hub for biomedical education, training and research, providing the necessary infrastructure that brings UCLA innovations and resources to bear on the greatest health needs of Los Angeles while serving as a model for the nation. Under the leadership of Steven Dubinett, MD, the CTSI provided critical support this year for research across the translational spectrum, which includes essential COVID-19-related research.

COVID-19 infrastructure

With DGSOM leadership, the CTSI helped establish a governance structure for COVID-19 research at UCLA, including a scientific and feasibility prioritization committee and task forces for implementing clinical research, biospecimen use, basic science research, high-containment use, and health data oversight. The task forces leveraged the CTSI’s infrastructure and expertise in regulatory knowledge and study activation (Arash Naeim, MD), clinical research (Noah Federman, MD), population health (Moira Inkelas, PhD, MPH), precision health (Paul Boutros, PhD, Dan Geschwind, MD, PhD, and Clara Lajonchere, PhD), research cores (Chris Denny, MD), and biostatistics, epidemiology and study design (David Elashoff, PhD). An outstanding administrative team from the CTSI and the Office of Clinical Research, led by Dr. Naeim, facilitated this work through its various units, including the Office of Regulatory Affairs, Clinical Trials Contracts and Strategic Relations, Financial Coverage and Activation, FDA Affairs, Clinical Research Information Systems (clinical research informatics and analytics), Research Quality, Clinical Research Coordination Services and Education, and the Embedded Clinical Research and Innovation Unit (innovative recruitment).

Clinical research

The CTSI, in collaboration with the Office of Clinical Research’s study activation team, mobilized COVID-19 therapeutic trials in fewer than two weeks as compared to the usual three months for a clinical trial. This work helped provide UCLA patients with investigational treatments at the forefront of medical science. The CTSI and the UCLA health system partnered with electrical, plumbing, and environmental support services to build pods for outpatient clinical trials. The pod-style structures made it possible for symptomatic outpatients to participate in convalescent plasma trials and the NIH ACTIV-2 monoclonal antibody trials. Through its mobile nurse unit, the CTSI’s Clinical and Translational Research Center provided study support for clinical trials of novel therapeutics for hospitalized COVID-19 patients at multiple inpatient clinical trials. As of mid-October, the CTSI – guided by the COVID-19 Clinical Research Task Force, led by Drs. Naeim and Currier – supported more than 70 COVID-19 studies, including coordination assistance, infusion oversight, phlebotomy services, COVID-19 screening, and biostatistics and informatics guidance.

Community engagement

The UCLA CTSI received a $4.1 million NIH Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) award (“STOP COVID-19 CA”) to lead a statewide coalition to assess the impact of COVID-19 in at-risk communities. The 11 academic institutions in the coalition include UC Davis, UC Irvine, UC Merced, UC Riverside, UC San Diego and UC San Francisco,
as well as Stanford, USC and Scripps Research Institute. Led by Arleen Brown, MD, PhD, and Keith Norris, MD, PhD, the coalition is identifying barriers and challenges to inclusive vaccine development and vaccination in local multi-ethnic communities. In Los Angeles, for example, investigators will assess racial and ethnic attitudes that might prevent high-risk veterans from accepting a potential vaccine. They will then develop targeted messaging to encourage vaccination.

In another important partnership, the CTSI is working with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to design, implement and assess a contact-tracing program that will allow schools to reopen safely. Data collected by the CTSI’s Moira Inkelas, PhD, Alex Bui, PhD, and their collaborators will benefit LAUSD’s 700,000 students and 75,000 employees, providing a roadmap by which other school districts across the country can open safely.

**Grant application support**

The CTSI Grants Submission Unit (GSU), which is co-funded by the UCLA Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and DGSOM, provides administrative support for complex grant submissions. In 2020, investigators assisted by GSU received a total of $115 million in new funding. Awards included a $7.2-million Research Facility Construction Grant for a 13,000-square-foot Human Gene and Cell Therapy Facility that will enable UCLA to continue leading the development and clinical evaluation of novel therapeutics for severe medical conditions. GSU also facilitated the $78-million, five-year renewal of the long-standing UCLA HIV/AIDS Adult Therapeutics Clinical Trials Network Leadership and Operations Center, which has been conducting a broad program of ethical and high-quality clinical, behavioral and prevention research to promote the health of people living with, or at risk for acquiring, HIV and other infectious diseases.

With its grant studios, the CTSI Special Populations Consultation Service helped jump-start research involving children, older adults, and populations experiencing health disparities. As reported in the *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, success rates among the 42 studios were 28 percent for R grants and 57 percent for K grants. The service is led by Peter Szilagyi, MD, MPH, and Catherine Sarkisian, MD, MSPH.

**Innovative translational science**

The CTSI’s infrastructure supported a number of accomplishments and innovations, including a new gene-therapy production methodology developed by KL2 scholar Steven Jonas, MD, PhD, and colleagues; new insights into lung cancer prevention and treatment by Brigitte Gomperts, MD, and colleagues; and advances in immunotherapy for melanoma by KL2 scholar Anusha Kalbasi, MD, and colleagues. With co-funding from the CTSI, the UCLA Food Allergy Center awarded its first seed grants to Maureen Su, MD, for the study of epigenetic regulation of food allergies, and Andre Nel, MD, PhD, for the development of a platform to induce immune tolerance in peanut allergy. As part of this unique collaboration, and in keeping with the CTSI’s commitment to community engagement, both CTSI faculty experts and parents of patients conducted these grant reviews.

**UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center**

The UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center (JCCC) is one of only 51 cancer centers designated as comprehensive by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). NCI reserves this highest designation for cancer centers that meet rigorous standards for state-of-the-art research in areas that include fundamental studies, translational and clinical research, community outreach and engagement, and education and training. These activities lead to the development of new and better approaches to preventing, diagnosing and treating cancer.
Discoveries and advances

Over the last year, investigators at the UCLA JCCC led studies that resulted in three new approvals by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Edward Garon, MD, led the U.S. arm of a large international study of erlotinib plus ramicuriumab to treat lung cancer. Richard Finn, MD, led a study of atezolizumab with bevacizumab to treat unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma, resulting in the first new front-line treatment for liver cancer in more than a decade. Johannes Czernin, MD, and Jeremie Calais, MD, and colleagues at UCLA and UCSF led trials of a powerful new technology, Prostate Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA) PET imaging as an approach to detecting prostate cancer cells throughout the body. To date, UCLA JCCC-led research has contributed to 14 FDA-approved cancer therapies since 2014.

UCLA researchers also played a significant role in the development of additional FDA-approved therapies for treating cancer. John Timmerman, MD, was part of a study for a new CAR T-cell therapy called brexucabtagene autoleucel that treats relapsed or refractory mantle cell lymphoma. UCLA Health is one of the first health systems to offer this new treatment. Dr. Garon was part of a study testing the drug capmatinib for use in non-small-cell lung cancer targeting abnormalities in the MET gene. Jonathan Goldman, MD, was part of a study that led to the approval of durvalumab along with standard-of-care chemotherapy to treat extensive stage small-cell lung cancer. Sara Hurvitz, MD, helped lead a study of the drug sacituzumab govticen to treat “triple-negative” breast cancer.

In addition, a study led by Dennis Slamon, MD, PhD, found that adding ribociclib to standard hormone therapy significantly improves overall survival in postmenopausal women with advanced hormone-receptor positive/HER2-negative breast cancer, one of the most common subtypes of this disease. The findings, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, also show the combination treatment is beneficial at the time of diagnosis and should become a first-line option for this specific subset.

In the arena of cancer evolution, an international team of researchers led by Paul Boutros, PhD, created a new way to estimate how fast an individual cancer is changing. The team created their framework by using an open-source software, which makes big data sets easily accessible to the public for analyses. A paper detailing their method is published in the journal of Nature Biotechnology.

Also in 2020, research by UCLA and UCSF nuclear medicine teams led to the FDA’s approval of a new imaging technique for prostate cancer that locates cancer lesions in the pelvic area and other parts of the body to which the tumors have migrated. Known as prostate-specific membrane antigen PET imaging, or PSMA PET, the technique uses positron emission tomography in conjunction with a PET-sensitive drug that is highly effective in detecting prostate cancer throughout the body so that it can be better and more selectively treated. The PSMA PET scan also identifies cancer that is often missed by current standard-of-care imaging techniques. The UCLA research team was led by nuclear medicine faculty from the molecular and medical pharmacology department’s Ahmanson Translational Theranostics Division. They worked in collaboration with the departments of urology, radiation oncology and radiology, along with support from DGSOM, the UCLA JCCC and the Prostate Cancer Foundation. UCLA and UCSF are now the only two medical centers in the U.S. that can offer PSMA PET to the public.

Funding and awards

The past year has been one of rapid growth and exciting discoveries for the UCLA JCCC. In spring and fall 2019, the NCI reviewed the UCLA JCCC five-year cancer center support grant (CCSG) application via formal written and in-person evaluations. This extensive review was led by the NCI Cancer Centers Program and conducted by leaders of peer cancer centers from across the country. As a result of the review, the UCLA JCCC received its highest score in more than 40 years. This higher score secured approximately $1 million in additional funding from the NCI each year for the next five years.

In addition, the NCI awarded UCLA $8.7 million to fund its prostate cancer research program to advance diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of the disease as part of its Specialized Program of Research Excellence, or SPORE, grant. Guido Eibl, MD, and a team of researchers were awarded a $5.75-million grant from the NCI to study the correlation between obesity, inflammation and pancreatic cancer. Yvonne Chen, PhD, received a $3.2-million grant from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine to create a more effective CAR T-cell therapy for multiple myeloma, a blood cancer that affects antibody-producing white blood cells.

Looking toward the future, the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, led by Michael Teitell, MD, PhD, will continue implementing its 2019-2024 strategic plan in collaboration with key stakeholders and leaders from the DGSOM, UCLA health system, and the UCLA campus at large. In pursuit of this plan’s goals, the UCLA JCCC joined the National Comprehensive Cancer Network in April 2020 and prepared for an application to the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer accreditation.

The UCLA JCCC also established key working groups to improve palliative care and survivorship services for all cancer patients while increasing research opportunities in these areas. The Center also launched a robust cancer genomics/immunogenetics initiative, and streamlined cancer patient clinical research navigation services.

UCLA Institute for Precision Health

The UCLA Institute for Precision Health continues to serve as a nexus for interdisciplinary collaboration across the DGSOM, UCLA health system and the university. Led by Director Daniel Geschwind, MD, PhD, and Deputy Director Clara Lajonchere, PhD, the IPH has made
substantial progress on several signature programs in the last year, as outlined below.

California Center for Rare Diseases at UCLA

Since the launch of the California Center for Rare Diseases in 2019, the team has elevated UCLA’s leadership in precision genomic medicine. CCRD leveraged funding NIH from the Undiagnosed Disease Network, and director Stan Nelson, MD, led an NIH application to become a Center for Mendelian Genomics. The Center also launched a new website for patients and researchers, and, with donor funding, are developing patient/physician-facing programs that strive to discover genetic causes, provide compassionate care and innovative treatments, offer clinical trials aimed at ameliorating or curing disorders, and conduct education and advocacy.

Some clinics are already implementing the intelligent repurposing of targeted pathway drugs based on the individual genetic diagnosis in a specific patient. In other areas, we are empowering more powerful clinical trials with enhancement of translational research work. This is a testament to extraordinary local and national rare disease leadership, which could provide clear market differentiation for UCLA Health.

The UCLA Center for SMART Health

The UCLA Center for SMART Health also had an active year. The center provided key support for an innovative collaboration between Apple, Inc. and the UCLA Depression Grand Challenge. The initiative utilizes novel recruitment techniques – leveraging the patient portal, automated voice outreach and social media – to build digital phenotypes for participants’ mental health.

The Center for SMART Health has also advanced several COVID-19-related projects, including a national survey investigating COVID-19 behaviors and potential vaccine messaging, a statewide survey examining risk perception and the effect of COVID-19 on breast cancer screening, and a pilot using wearable and Bluetooth-enabled sensors to monitor COVID-positive patients and at-risk post-exposure patients. These studies benefited from funding acquired through the COVID-19 Oversight Research Committee and the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute’s “WISDOM during COVID” enhancement.

On the computational front, the Center for SMART Health worked with the Faculty Practice Group to establish a predictive algorithm for re-admission, which may become the first in CareConnect to be validated and implemented across the UC system. The team also supported a UCLA Biodesign study that used sensors to assess post-operative knee motion, as well as an Undergraduate Bioengineering Capstone Program study that examined the use of gaming to diagnose the early stages of dementia.

Most recently, the Center for SMART Health sponsored a retreat to explore technology innovation and data science opportunities and helped Bioengineering create a COVID-19 seminar series for the fall quarter.

The ATLAS Project

ATLAS is the umbrella under which the UCLA Institute for Precision Health organizes and leverages UCLA Health patient consent and biobanking information. The data is obtained through the universal consent process developed in partnership with the UCLA CTSI.

To date, ATLAS has enrolled 46,721 patients in the biobank and has genotyped close to 30,000 patient samples. The rapid consent of patients across UCLA Health has attracted industry partners in pharma and biotech. In August 2020, UCLA Health entered into a partnership with the Regeneron Genetics Center to generate whole-exome sequencing data for all patients in the ATLAS biobank. This initiative is set to become one of the largest and most comprehensive in the nation and is a key step in bringing genomic medicine to patients across California. All patients who participate in this research may choose to opt in or out of receiving results that could directly impact their clinical care. Information and specimens used in the research are de-identified to protect patient privacy and confidentiality. Actionable results, which are verified by a UCLA CLIA-
certified laboratory, will only be returned to patients who want them. An estimated two-to-three percent of tested patients may have a result with immediate clinical implications.

To ensure inclusion of the diverse populations we serve, the universal consent process was expanded this year to offer translations in Persian, Arabic, Korean and Mandarin. A pediatric video is currently undergoing testing. Given the struggles that clinics have faced with COVID-19, the Institute for Precision Health pivoted from in-clinic consents using iPads to mobile consents. Starting in November 2020, the universal consent link was distributed via text-based appointment reminders. The Institute is also working with our marketing and communications colleagues to launch an educational campaign to further increase awareness and reach.

COVID-19 genomics pipeline

In March 2020, the Institute for Precision Health leveraged existing investments in ATLAS, including the critical infrastructure developed to support remnant biospecimen collection and biobanking, to rapidly initiate COVID-19 research. This infrastructure allowed Dr. Geschwind and his colleagues Manish Butte, MD, PhD, and Bogdan Pasaniuc, PhD, to lead a program with the five other UC Health system campuses to collect and analyze the genetic data of hundreds of COVID-19 patients from diverse backgrounds. Using computational and statistical methods, they are working to identify the genetic factors associated with protection from and susceptibility to the virus, as well as the factors that are linked with the infection’s most devastating symptoms. Through ATLAS, remnant DNA from COVID-positive inpatients was processed and sent to project partners at Uniformed Services for whole-genome sequencing. Leveraging relationships with Helix and Illumina, the team obtained free and specially priced genomes and genome sequencing. To handle the computationally intensive analysis of the data, the team secured a $600,000 credit from Microsoft to support this effort in the Azure cloud.

Mobilizing the electronic health record for research

To provide researchers across our campus with tools and resources for a variety of cutting-edge and innovative research projects, the Institute for Precision Health led a partnership with CTSI, DGIT and Office of Health Informatics and Analytics (OHIA) to develop secure HIPAA-compliant, cloud-based environments for the access, storage and analysis of clinical and genetic/genomic data. A governance structure will create an equitable and transparent mechanism for project prioritization across the enterprise. Drs. Clara Lajonchere, Dan Geschwind, Alex Bui, Chris Denny, Paul Boutros and Bogdan Pasaniuc have been working closely with leaders to prioritize projects and advocate for resources that can benefit the entire research community.

Our Precision Health team is also building models to determine risk for breast cancer and other diseases like depression, pediatric asthma, and rheumatoid arthritis. Using these models, doctors can recommend early behavioral changes that may help prevent illness and disease.

Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Program

This fall, DGSOM launched its new Master of Science in Genetic Counseling training program and welcomed an inaugural class of 10 outstanding students. The program joins the ranks of 49 accredited national genetic training programs, and is one of only six in the state of California. Given the ethno-cultural diversity of Los Angeles, the program, which resides in the UCLA Department of Human Genetics, offers trainees an ideal setting for our trainees to explore the complex factors underlying health care disparities in health care. By leveraging UCLA’s strengths in research and clinical genetics in conjunction with a commitment to serving patients and their families, the Master of
Science in Genetic Counseling Program exemplifies the transformative synergy of biomedical research and clinical care.

**UC Health Sequencing Consortium**

In spring of 2018, at the request of Vice Chancellor Mazziotta, Drs. Dan Geschwind and Paul Boutros developed a plan for genome sequencing across UC Health. They established a committee of UC leaders, which delivered a white paper to the Vice Chancellors and at the UC Health meeting in Fall 2019. Continuing to meet virtually, the involved campuses leveraged the nascent structure and cross-campus relationships derived from this committee to drive their COVID-19 host genomics work. Such collaborations expand access to the population available for genetic testing and provide unprecedented opportunity for discovery and leadership.

**Precision Medicine Advisory Committee**

In February 2020, the Newsom Administration created a California Precision Medicine Advisory Council to provide high-level guidance to the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. Dr. Clara Lajonchere was nominated by her peers to chair the Committee, continuing the key advisory position UCLA solidified when I served on the committee under Governor Brown’s administration. Learn more about the Committee’s work [here](#).

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**Innovation and entrepreneurship**

The DGSOM has continued collaborating with the UCLA Technology Development Group (TDG), led by Amir Naiberg, Associate Vice Chancellor for Intellectual Property and Industry Sponsored Research and CEO and President of the UCLA Technology Development Corporation.

While the annual [UCLA Innovation Fund](#) is still open, the competition will likely grant support to several UCLA projects in the areas of therapeutics and devices. Selection of projects involves a scientific review, coordinated by Judy Gasson, PhD, senior advisor for research and innovation at DGSOM, and an intellectual property/business review by TDG.

The DGSOM was planning its third annual UCLA Biomedical and Life Science Innovation Day, renamed LABEST, when the coronavirus shutdown occurred. Led by Mark Wisniewski, PhD, senior director of biopharma at UCLA TDG, the group decided to provide virtual content throughout the remainder of the year. Highlights include “PI Spotlights,” which feature prominent innovators, as well as panel webinars on topics including the coronavirus and bioconvergence in LA County. Dr. Wisniewski, in partnership with DGSOM, is planning the virtual LABEST event for the week of May 24, 2021. A steering committee, consisting of representatives from UCLA, USC, Caltech, City of Hope and our leading LABEST sponsors, will work together to craft a unique experience that drives interaction and collaboration while showcasing resources available in L.A.

DGSOM and UCLA TDG also hosted Postdoc/Grad Student Accelerator and Career Enrichment (PACE), a new program that aims to provide postdocs and graduate students exposure to numerous career opportunities in Los Angeles County. Panelists, many from LABEST sponsor organizations, represented law firms, biopharma, intellectual property law, venture capital, consulting, and search and evaluation.

In June, UCLA TDG formed a partnership with Autobahn Labs, which seeks to provide both funding (Samsara Capital) and in-kind drug development expertise (Evotech) for projects at an earlier stage than those funded through traditional venture capital. The projects are limited to therapeutics addressing an unmet medical need. Not surprisingly, many of the projects arise in the laboratories of DGSOM researchers.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COVID-19 highlights

Over the past year, UCLA faculty, staff and trainees have mobilized a range of community initiatives that have helped promote equity and minimize the long-term health and socioeconomic impacts caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Faculty and staff from our Department of Family Medicine were called upon by the City of Los Angeles to help provide medical oversight and services at newly converted recreation centers for the unsheltered. Together with county officials and hospitals and the Venice Family Clinic, UCLA has supported more than a dozen sites across the greater Los Angeles area.

The UCLA Department of Computational Medicine and a cross-disciplinary team of UCLA experts from a range of fields, including engineering, data science, clinical medicine, epidemiology, and public health, launched Stop COVID-19 Together, a web-based app that will enable the public to help fight the spread of the coronavirus. The new system – featured in The New York Times – aggregates users’ responses to identify find ways we can reduce the spread of the virus and try to protect our health system from becoming overloaded.

On a statewide level, UCLA coordinated a multi-stage effort across California to provide critical resources for diverse and underserved communities. To promote access to mental health support, UCLA faculty and fellows from psychiatry, public health, and the National Clinician Scholars Program supported the California Department of Health Care Services and the Mental Health Oversight and Accountability Commission in the development of online resources for diverse populations.

Locally, faculty from our geriatrics division and the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System worked alongside our LA partners to evaluate our aging services safety net and determine service modifications that will better support under-resourced seniors.

Our medical students have also been at the forefront of community service efforts. As child care facilities closed in response to the pandemic and frontline health care workers faced mounting challenges, DGSOM students Rose Paneno, Mona Deng and Elyse Conley founded LA COVID Volunteers (LACV), an independent non-profit organization. Volunteers support frontline health care workers impacted by the pandemic with child care, PPE and other services. LACV developed a network of more than 950 volunteers, including students from multiple universities and volunteers from the greater Los Angeles community. They served 99 families with child care needs, provided numerous hours of online tutoring and grocery runs, facilitated a cloth mask-making initiative to provide masks to those experiencing homelessness, and donated more than 1,600 cloth masks to community clinics. More recently, LACV developed a Food Corp branch, which has been partnering with many local organizations to distribute food to community members experiencing food insecurity as well as to health care workers at LA County hospital sites.

The LACV PPE team also facilitated the construction of 58,000 face shields, providing 80 percent of them to the UCLA health system and 20 percent to local and global partners. The team donated more than 14,000 N95 masks, 8,000 KN90 masks, and 1,100 surgical masks to community clinics and county hospitals. The altruism continues to grow as volunteers develop new ways of meeting community needs, both locally and globally, while inspiring support from the DGSOM community.

DGSOM/UCLA Health Community Engagement Program

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the DGSOM/UCLA Health Community Engagement Program has been working with the UCLA Health Office of Community to ensure that services dedicated to
the community remain objective and focused, especially as the current landscape continues to affect our community members’ health and well-being. The team, under the leadership of Carol Mangione, MD, MSPH, prioritized building trust and maintaining relationships while reassessing original strategies through a lens of innovation and continuity. They also altered their approach to conducting and evaluating engagement methods. Though many activities became virtual, the team also planned broader engagement strategies to include those with limited accessibility.

Now in its eighth consecutive year, the DGSOM/UCLA Health Community Engagement Program remains focused on support for service learning, research and education, and workforce development projects dedicated to improving and expanding opportunities for our most vulnerable community members. After witnessing critical shortages in the frontline professions during the pandemic, the annual Turner-UCLA Allied Health Internship Program, offered in partnership with Lauren and Bobby Turner, began offering program alumni (as well as direct referrals from community partners at Heart of Los Angeles and Brotherhood Crusades) enrollment in an Emergency Medical Technician Program at UCLA Prehospital Care. Students participated in monthly service projects, including a philanthropy project at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank where students packaged more than 3,000 boxes of essential supplies and food for local communities.

The Allied Healthcare Careers Program partnered with LAUSD’s Linked Learning Program to offer administrators and faculty in health care pathways at LAUSD a closer look at how health care clinicians have been adjusting to COVID-19. Cecilia Canales, MD, from the Department of Anesthesiology at UCLA served as a panelist and provided insight into the prioritization of patient and clinician safety. In lieu of in-person outreach, online panels outlined strategies to best engage youth through a virtual platform.

In support of the UCLA Health Office of Community’s efforts to strengthen the partnership with the Los Angeles Lakers Foundation, the DGSOM/UCLA Health Community Engagement team represented UCLA Health at two polling centers at local high schools the weekend before Election Day. Crenshaw High School and Salesian High School were among the two sites where the Los Angeles Lakers sponsored activities to engage the community. This marked the first time that sports teams have partnered with the Los Angeles County Registrar’s Office to sponsor polling sites to encourage members of the community to vote.

During the height of the pandemic, DGSOM students rallied to volunteer at various community events. Joyce Lee, a second-year medical student at DGSOM, spearheaded efforts with the community engagement team to host a virtual fundraiser where proceeds benefited a local community organization, School on Wheels. During a one-day virtual auction, students and staff raised $350 and received $200 worth of equipment donations. Joyce is one of many members of DGSOM at the forefront of service during this pandemic, demonstrating commitment, creative thinking, dedication and compassion. Below you’ll find project highlights from ongoing community outreach efforts.

Mobile Clinic Project

The engagement efforts at Mobile Clinic Project (MCP) remain steady, even with COVID-19 impacts and closures. From June 2019 to March 2020, the Mobile Clinic Project has seen 398 clients. The project, directed by Denise Garvey, MD, relies on a volunteer student group of 39 undergraduates, 12 committee chairs, four undergraduate student coordinators, and four MD coordinators who cultivate support among their fellow MDs.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mobile Clinic Project team donated fabric masks, hygiene kits, clothing, and water bottles to community partners. In collaboration with stakeholders, including student leadership, DGSOM faculty, clinicians and the Hollywood Food Coalition, the team also developed new clinical protocols.

The clinic reopened in September 2020 with limited capacity, adhering to Los Angeles County safety protocols and practicing physical distancing to minimize risk to patients and providers. Now a clinical volunteer site for the DGSOM Early Authentic Clinical
Experience (EACE) program, the Mobile Clinic Project is one of many projects that have established a mutually trusting relationship with the community.

“During the height of the pandemic, DGSOM students rallied to volunteer at various community events.”

UCLA Stein Eye Institute Mobile Eye Clinic

In the last year, the UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic (UMEC) program, directed by Anne L. Coleman, MD, PhD, served 7,435 children and adults, diagnosed 872 ocular abnormalities, and made 264 trips throughout Los Angeles County to bring eye care to those who need it most. The children served by this program now enjoy good vision, a better quality of life, improved social interactions, and enhanced educational attainment. Through the adult program, the UMEC team has provided exams for those who lack access to adequate vision care because of cost, inadequate transportation, or insurance coverage challenges.

COVID-19 led to UMEC clinic cancellations from March through August. However, with the rapidly mounting number of unemployed, uninsured, and at-risk individuals and families in need of vision care and eyeglasses in Los Angeles, a protocol was developed and approved by UCLA Health that allows UMEC to offer limited clinics in the community while adhering to clinical guidelines set by the county.

UMEC goes out to clinics for underserved and undertreated adults three days each week, and in November, in collaboration with the Mobile Clinic Project and DGSOM medical students, resumed night clinics to help more people experiencing homelessness receive free eye exams and eyeglasses.

Family Medicine Bridging the Gap Pipeline Program

The UCLA Family Medicine Bridging the Gap Pipeline Program also pivoted to the virtual sphere at the start of the pandemic. Typically, Bridging the Gap operates as an in-person outreach program where UCLA Family Medicine residents provide basic medical education and mentorship to local high schools and underrepresented communities. This year, the program transitioned to hosting virtual sessions to engage the students in new ways, reaching more than 300 students. This program offers increased opportunities for students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in health care.

UCLA Health Talent Acquisition

Recruiting a diverse workforce remains a top priority for ensuring our organization leverages the best possible talent to deliver on our mission. Most recently, senior recruiter Kristin DiMirez, under the direction of Robin Ludewig, senior director of talent acquisition, cultivated connections with underrepresented communities who have not had a chance to learn about career opportunities in health care. During the pandemic, the team organized monthly virtual panels where subject matter experts from various UCLA Health departments discussed opportunities in health care with high school and post-secondary school students. Ranging from entry-level employees to managers, these subject matter experts demonstrated the diversity of opportunity in our health care workforce.

UCLA Health Office of Community

The Office of Community at UCLA Health, led by Becky Mancuso-Winding, has been a wonderful addition to the UCLA Health community. The UCLA Health Office of Community organizes monthly events and activities to engage staff, faculty and students in wellness events and outreach opportunities. In their collaborative work with DGSOM, the Office of Community engages a diverse group of partners in improving the health and lives of the broader community.

In partnership with the Lakers and Dodgers Foundations, UCLA Health’s drive-through events during the pandemic provided more than 16,000 families in underserved local communities and housing projects with access to groceries, clothing, hand sanitizers, masks, and school supplies and athletic equipment for distance learning.

The Office of Community team and UCLA Health International Services also supported victims of the Beirut explosion through UCLA Operation Beirut. Led by DGSOM faculty members Drs. Faysal Saab and Neveen El-Farra, staff prepared an air cargo shipment of critical emergency medical supplies to Lebanon.

Wellness efforts remained a priority with annual organization-wide walks, including a virtual Heart and Stroke Walk that exceeded its $53,930 fundraising goal. With more than 33 teams and 215 virtual walkers, the Heart and Stroke Walk was a testament to the incredible dedication and generosity of UCLA staff, even amidst a global pandemic and the unplanned shift to virtual activities.
CULTURE

Our organizational culture is of paramount importance to me as Dean – I believe that culture is integrally intertwined with our ability to achieve our mission. This section of the report comprises three areas: the Anti-racism Roadmap, Cultural North Star, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Looking ahead to 2021 and beyond, these three efforts will work together to improve our organizational culture through great alignment. At present, each program has distinct leadership focused on making substantive progress in each area. At the same time, progress in each area is dependent on coordination and alignment, and as such, success requires collaboration and partnership across programs, working together to create a culture that is fully inclusive and that benefits from the excellence and experience of a diverse workforce and community.

Anti-racism Roadmap

This year, we launched the DGSOM Anti-racism Roadmap, intentionally designed as a co-created path to advancing racial justice and equity at the school. Dr. Clarence Braddock has stepped up to serve as the Executive Director of the Anti-racism Roadmap. In partnership with many passionate and committed members of our community, and working closely with the DGSOM Office of Equity and Diversity Inclusion and the newly formed UCLA health system Office of Health Equity and Diversity Inclusion, Dr. Braddock has led us through the process of establishing and rolling out immediate actions and long-term focus areas aimed at combatting structural racism at DGSOM.

Here are some examples of early actions:

- An initial investment of an additional $5 million over the next three years to support programs advancing racial equity.
- A policy change to the requirements of faculty search committee composition such that committees must now include 33 percent women or Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) faculty, with at least 25 percent BIPOC.
- The appointment of Lindsay Wells, MD, and Shamsher Samra, MD, MPH, as the inaugural Structural Racism & Health Equity Theme Chairs for the MD curriculum. They will collaboratively with our entire education team to ensure a robust focus on anti-racism, structural and social determinants of health and health equity throughout all four years of the medical school curriculum.
- The Behavior Wellness Center increased availability of clinicians of color with experience in trauma-informed care, including a BIPOC psychiatrist and a full-time BIPOC therapist.
- A data transparency initiative to promote
accountability with respect to the racial and ethnic composition of our community and leaders.

• A monthly leadership dialogue series to allow our leadership team to hear and act upon the DGSOM community’s ideas, concerns and proposed solutions to racial inequity.

• The establishment of a Racial Justice & Equity task force focused on interventions to address racism specifically within our staff population.

• The launch of our 7th Research Theme: Health Equity and Translational Social Science, led by Helena Hansen, MD, PhD, and Rochelle Dicker, MD.

• The Health Equity Hub in CHS was dedicated as a 24/7 safe space for all health sciences students.

These actions, commitments and priorities are our first steps as an organization in planning, developing and implementing anti-racist practices at DGSOM. Strategies and actions across all areas are being co-created in close collaboration with many formal and informal entities, including the UCLA health system’s Office of Health Equity and Diversity Inclusion, the DGSOM Faculty Equity and Diversity Inclusion Committee, the BLNA Faculty Collective and our entire DGSOM community of trainees, staff and faculty.

In December, Julian McNeil, MSEd, joined DGSOM as the Anti-racism Program Manager to help lead these efforts. Julian is an accomplished change-management consultant, school leader, and classroom teacher with 15 years of experience facilitating organizational and individual learning. In this new role, Julian will be instrumental in driving positive change at DGSOM.

This is the beginning of our work to transform DGSOM into an anti-racism organization. It will take commitment, collaboration and time to make our school equitable. Thank you to all of those who are actively engaged in this work.

Cultural North Star

The Cultural North Star (CNS) is an aspirational set of principles to help us build an inclusive, mission-driven culture by mapping our decisions, actions and interactions to a shared framework. Launched in May 2019 after an 18-month research and development process that included listening to over 1,000 DGSOM staff, trainee and faculty voices, the Cultural North Star has continued to grow and evolve this year.

Shifting from the initial launch phase, which focused on awareness and recognition, the Cultural North Star is now being integrated into DGSOM’s organizational practices and policies to facilitate accountability. For example, we have updated staff performance evaluations to include CNS attributes, utilized CNS in the recruitment, hiring and onboarding process, and are working toward including CNS principles in the faculty promotion process.

This year, we launched a portal for Reporting and Support Resources, in collaboration with the DGSOM Anti-Racism Roadmap. While UCLA has a robust

“Our organizational culture is integrally intertwined with our ability to achieve our mission.”

2020 Cultural North Star Award winner Carol Mangione, MD, Division Chief of General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research and Professor of Medicine and Public Health.
system of resources for those in need of guidance, counseling or resolution services, we heard many voices at DGSOM expression confusion regarding how to access and engage with these resources. Members of our community may use this webpage to navigate the different options available to them, which range from confidential counseling and anonymous reporting to mental health support and emergency services.

The **Cultural North Star recognition program** continues to gain momentum. Thousands of members of our organization have used this tool to celebrate each other’s contributions. Offering positive recognition is a simple but transformative act. As one UCLA Anderson School of Management professor shared with us, it is important, when making cultural change, to “shine a light where the problem isn’t.”

Carol Mangione, MD, MPH, the Division Chief of General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research and Professor of Medicine and Public Health, was selected as the recipient of the **2020 DGSOM Cultural North Star Award**. The annual Cultural North Star Award is designed to recognize an individual who has gone above and beyond to exemplify DGSOM’s **Cultural North Star values** in their work, actions or interactions. This year, there were 43 worthy and phenomenal nominees. Thank you to all of the nominators for taking the time to recognize and celebrate the contributions of so many incredible members of our school. A panel of nine reviewers made up of Cultural North Star Steering Committee members and Cultural North Star Ambassadors (including students, staff and faculty) scored all 43 nominees based on a Cultural North Star rubric. As always, the nominations were blinded for review, meaning that identifying characteristics – such as names and pronouns – were redacted. Dr. Mangione’s nomination received the highest cumulative score.

Looking ahead, the Cultural North Star will be further aligned with the Anti-racism roadmap in order to drive equity at DGSOM. Both of these initiatives will continue to transform our organization’s policies, practices and norms. Cultural transformation at a large and matrixed organization like DGSOM requires time, dedication and the engagement of every member of the organization. Thank you to all members of DGSOM who bring these values to life.

### Equity and Diversity Inclusion

Equity and Diversity Inclusion (EDI) at DGSOM is led by Senior Associate Dean Lynn Gordon, MD, PhD, and Assistant Deans Kathleen Brown, MD, and Daniel Kozman, MD, MPH. This past year has been unprecedented in our lifetimes; the multiple pandemics of illness, health inequities in terms of who becomes ill and who succumbs to COVID-19, and greater exposure of the racial injustices in our society led all of us at DGSOM to reconsider our goals and understand the urgency for impactful change. EDI activities span the learning environment (students, trainees and faculty) and dovetail with new initiatives within DGSOM, such as the Anti-Racism Roadmap, and in the health system, which initiated a search for its inaugural chief diversity officer and committed to a new emphasis on health equity, diversity and inclusion.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and remote meetings, EDI continues to advance all four of their mission areas. Over the past year, they have worked to respond more rapidly to needs and concerns while enhancing access to and availability of EDI services for the DGSOM community. Highlights of this work include:

- **Change in EDI leadership:** EDI appointed a new Assistant Dean of EDI, Dr. Daniel Kozman, who brings a wealth of knowledge, passion, and dedication to this role.

- **Department EDI efforts:** In early 2020, the team completed the first department EDI survey and responded by providing a best-practices document and proposing specific changes for
each department. This included a review of quantitative data and qualitative reflections on current and proposed activities. All departments were asked to identify local leadership for EDI efforts, and most departments initiated their own departmental EDI committees whose focus areas include climate and culture as well as recruitment and retention. EDI has provided updates on EDI activities and educational topics for many departments through grand rounds and other forums during this past year.

• **Medical school curriculum:** In response to significant national events, the EDI team partnered with DGSOM Curricular Affairs to refine the first week of medical school, “Introduction to the Profession,” to focus on the theme of Racial Justice and Health Equity.

• **Medical student EDI leadership:** In addition to quarterly meetings with the student leaders of EDI affinity groups, EDI leadership meets monthly with elected EDI representatives – two individuals from each medical school class – to coordinate efforts and highlight areas for concentration and change.

• **Mentoring across the continuum:** EDI leaders helped amplify planned efforts by resident leaders to enhance mentorship for medical students. In addition to aiding the development of a mentoring questionnaire for residents and students, EDI developed a process by which faculty were given an opportunity to self-identify interests in order to receive targeted information about networking or mentoring opportunities.

• **Graduate medical education:** EDI continues collaborating with graduate medical education (GME) programs to ensure a diverse and inclusive community for all trainees. Christina Harris, MD, newly appointed Assistant DIO for EDI, serves as the faculty lead advisor for the resident-led GME-EDI group, which held its second annual DGSOM “Road to Residency Program” virtually for medical students. The program exposes medical students to different residency programs at UCLA and connects students with leadership from various departments and with residents and faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

• **EDI in basic sciences:** The EDI team provides ongoing support for the Scientific Excellence through Diversity Lecture Series (SEDS). This general research seminar series brings successful professionals in biomedical, life and physical science fields to UCLA to present their research and discuss how they have succeeded in their careers and contributed to increasing diversity in science. The EDI team is also working with other DGSOM leaders to explore the pandemic-related stresses affecting trainees in STEM.

• **Opportunities for faculty:** Over the past year, EDI continued supporting and creating opportunities for faculty networking and development. Collaborating with Vice Dean for Faculty Jonathan Hiatt, MD, the team continued the Junior Faculty Lecture Series and also worked with Sarah Kilpatrick, MD, to continue the joint DGSOM Cedars Sinai Women’s UCLA Faculty Leadership Academy. In addition, the team helped the Women in Science and Doctors of Medicine (WiSDoM) group at DGSOM develop strategies for achieving equity.

• **EDI Faculty Committee:** The EDI Faculty Committee provides guidance and recommendations on EDI efforts at DGSOM. This committee, which includes leaders of department-specific EDI efforts, developed departmental EDI guidelines and, in partnership with the Anti-Racism Roadmap, initiated a Restorative Justice Pilot Program for DGSOM.

• **EDI education:** The team, which already provides faculty search-committee training and updates to search committees who are evaluating candidates for leadership positions, recognized that additional training and education was critical to truly achieve an equitable and inclusive DGSOM. To that end, they engaged a company that is training 200 of DGSOM’s faculty and staff who are instrumental in creating programs in education, research, and clinical care. The initial training will likely conclude before March 1, 2021, tentatively followed by a train-the-trainers program available for all faculty.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a transition in the DGSOM EDI Office. The end of 2020 marked the retirement of Senior Associate Dean Lynn Gordon, the founding director of the DGSOM EDI Office. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Gordon for her leadership over the past 11 years in advancing EDI in the DGSOM, and also very grateful that she will be returning in a recall role to continue to lead specific EDI projects. We are conducting a national search to appoint a Vice Dean for Justice, Equity and Diversity Inclusion (JEDI), a new position that will have a critical role in setting the organizational strategy and vision for justice, equity, diversity, inclusion and climate for the DGSOM.
FINAL REFLECTIONS

This year’s challenges brought with them unprecedented burden, stress, and pain. We are now living in perhaps one of the most uncertain times in memory, and I not only understand but also share your feelings of anxiety, fatigue and grief.

Yet amid the pain of this challenging year, I’ve also found in our community uplifting stores of optimism, commitment, and fortitude. This year has opened our hearts to new voices, new perspectives, and new ways of thinking that feed our missions and make our work stronger. This year has inspired all of us at DGSOM to embrace the urgency and necessity to push for impactful organizational and societal change.

I have every confidence that your resilience and compassion will continue leading us into a future you have already started building, a future that has seen the shrinking of health disparities, the dismantling of structural racism, and the healing of a world devastated by a novel virus.

At this harrowing moment in history, I find both solace and hope in our DGSOM community, a community that opens the doors of science and medicine for all, that develops cures for each and every individual, and that each day actively seeks out the transformations necessary to heal humankind.

To our next chapter,

Kelsey Martin, MD, PhD
Dean, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA
Gerald S. Levey Chair
Professor, Biological Chemistry
Professor, Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences
Our community’s response to an unprecedented pandemic and social injustice have exemplified the unifying power of our shared values: to do what’s right, make things better and be kind.”