Dear DGSOM community,

As we enter our fifth week of transitional activities related to COVID-19 and safer-at-home directives, I am continually inspired by the creative and meaningful connections forged by our medical school staff, faculty, trainees and students. Across our research and education enterprise, DGIT has activated and refined crucial support services that have enabled us to work, learn, research and teach safely and collaboratively. Thanks to these efforts, and those of numerous staff and faculty partners across our organization, our DGSOM community transcends the boundaries of our physical spaces in new and modern ways. Virtual town halls have brought thousands of us together from all corners of our school. Milestone events, such as Match Day and Second Look, have adapted to virtual formats that – for the first time – allowed us to meet our trainees wherever they may be. Even broader community events and resources, such as interventions for children and families affected by the pandemic, are being reimagined by UCLA experts in newly accessible ways.

No matter where we’re located – at home, on campus, or in our labs, clinics or hospitals – our recent circumstances have revealed the strength and resilience of our community bond, as well as its power to uplift us during trying times. Thank you for your remarkable optimism and flexibility, and for your continued commitment to our mission and each other.

With deep pride and gratitude,

Kelsey Martin, MD, PhD
Dean, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

For the latest COVID-19 information and resources pertaining to medical school staff, faculty, students and trainees, please see my ninth biweekly “COVID-19 Update” below. You will find general updates toward the top, followed by area-specific updates, support resources and “how you can help” at the bottom.
GENERAL UPDATES

Mental health and well-being: Yesterday, UCLA and the Semel Healthy Campus Initiative Center at UCLA outlined a number of new resources and tips for maintaining your health and well-being during this difficult time. Highlights include:

- **Establish a routine.** Try to establish some normalcy and a regular sleep-wake cycle while working, learning or teaching from home. Eat, sleep, work and exercise at regular times each day if possible. Get outside every day and catch some fresh air and sunshine, while maintaining a safe distance from others.

- **Check in with each other.** Faculty and staff can designate a few minutes of class or meeting time to check in with their students/teams and have students/colleagues check in with each other. Ask someone how they are coping with the safer at home orders. Share how you are coping and listen to their experiences with empathy — put yourself in their shoes.

- **Monitor screen time.** Balance your time online with other activities such as cooking, art, making or playing music, reading books, calling friends or family, writing poetry, cleaning and organizing, and getting outside to walk, run or bike. Check out [tips for keeping busy and connected](#) and [ideas for at-home activities](#).

- **Take frequent, regular breaks.** Set a reminder every hour for a two- to three-minute micro-break: Stand up, stretch and walk around. Movement is important for relaxing muscles and increasing blood flow to reduce fatigue and stress. Give your eyes a break, too, with the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

- **Apply healthy ergonomic principles.** A comfortable workstation improves efficiency and reduces physical and mental stress. [UCLA telecommute tips](#) are available to guide you through the setup process. UCLA is holding [ergonomics Q&A sessions](#) via Zoom each Monday through Thursday from 10 to 11 am for students, staff and faculty.

- **Reach out on your own behalf.** If you are experiencing any disruption in basic needs for food, housing, phone service, or physical or mental health service, [find resources](#) to help. This is a time of enormous and sudden change, so feelings of anxiety, sadness, disappointment, lack of concentration or motivation are normal and expected.

- **Relieve stress with meditation.** UCLA’s Mindful Awareness Center offers [free guided meditations](#) in English and Spanish.

- **Listen to UCLA LiveWell podcast’s new special series** on how we can maintain all dimensions of our health during the pandemic.
• Check out the [UCLA Recreation website](#) for virtual classes and ways to stay fit.

• **Browse smartly.** Try to avoid news and information overload and fatigue by balancing news sources. If you find yourself checking the news multiple times a day, take a break and do something else.

**AREA-SPECIFIC UPDATES**

**EDUCATION (students & trainees)**

**MD students**

• **Upcoming virtual town halls:** The next MS1 virtual town hall will take place April 21 at 5 pm. The MS2 town hall will be on April 15 at 3 pm. For MS4s, the next virtual town hall is April 24 at 4 pm. LOA students are welcome to attend any of the town halls. The recently held MS3 town hall will be posted to the website soon. Please continue to share your questions with us via Qualtrics.

• **For the latest information by class year, including on clerkships, graduation requirements, curriculum and more,** [click here](#).

• Regular communications from Curricular, Educational and Student Affairs, as well as other information pertaining to students, are updated daily at medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/md-students. Students should also stay informed by reading any curriculum-update emails distributed by Ashley Siemer, director of curricular affairs.

• **Contacts:** For curriculum questions, please contact Ashley Siemer. For event questions, please contact Brandon Susselman. For support and other questions, please contact your Assistant Dean. For additional support, please reach out to the Behavioral Wellness Center.

**GME trainees**

• **There is new clinical guidance from the Infectious Disease COVID-19 Team,** including on diagnostic testing and treatment. [Read full guidance](#).

• **Universal COVID-19 testing** is now in place for all ED admissions and for all pre-operative and pre-procedure elective cases.

• **Bright Horizons contract for house staff:** Access to SitterCity is available now at no cost; back-up care will be available effective April 15, as well as limited-time access to “crisis care” (April 15 – 30 minimum, up to $100/day reimbursed for cost of care up to 10 uses).
• **Surge planning:** As previously stated, at this point we do not have plans to redeploy residents to services that are not covered as part of their program’s curriculum.

• **Affiliate-specific updates:**
  - **Olive View-UCLA Medical Center:** Cafeteria hours have been extended to 7 pm. Concerns about food options are being addressed.
  - **VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System:** COVID-19 testing for all admissions through the ED and for pre-op patients is being implemented. Scrubs should be available by the end of this week. There is a **new face mask policy** at the VA.

• **Education:** The American Board of Medical Specialties and Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education have issued a joint statement on **Physician Training During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic**.

• **PPE:** Please stay up to date with the latest self and **PPE** information and protocols and reach out to GME with any concerns or suggestions.

• **Clinical psychology interns and postdoctoral fellows** should follow the guidance from their respective training programs in the Department of Psychiatry and the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior.

• **Resources for mental health and well-being** (available virtually): [medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/wellness-resources](medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/wellness-resources)

• **To view the latest information pertinent to you**, visit [medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/graduate-medical-education](medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/graduate-medical-education).

**PhD trainees**

• **To stay up to date with information pertinent to you**, visit [medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/phd-trainees](medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/phd-trainees) and the Graduate Programs for Bioscience website.

• **Contacts:** If you have specific concerns or questions related to your training situation or program requirements, please reach out to your Program/Home Area Director or Greg Payne, GPB Director.

• **Access wellness resources virtually through** the Behavioral Wellness Center and/or [UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)](https://www.uclahealth.org/counseling-and-psychological-services).

**Postdoctoral scholars**

• **Contacts:** If you have specific concerns or questions related to your training situation or work requirements, please reach out to your mentor. If your mentor is out of reach or you need to escalate a concern above your mentor, please contact Greg Payne or Lynn.
Talton. If you have further concerns or if issues arise, contact Graduate Division at postdoc@grad.ucla.edu or 310-825-3819 and you will be connected with the appropriate resource.

- **To stay up to date with information pertinent to you**, visit the research lab and educational area sections of the website.

- **Access wellness resources virtually through** the Staff and Faculty Counseling Center.

- **Clinical psychology postdoctoral fellows** should follow the guidance from their respective training programs in the Department of Psychiatry and the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior.

**RESEARCH**

- **New funding opportunity:** “Fast Funding for COVID-19 Science” is offering $12M in funding to scientists at academic institutions currently working on a COVID-19 related project. Researchers may apply for a Fast Grant of $10,000 to $500,000. Decisions are made in under 48 hours. For additional funding opportunities, visit our COVID-19 website.

- **To stay up to date with information pertinent to you**, visit medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/researchers.

- **Individual concerns or questions**: Route to your PIs, program/home area directors, division chiefs, department chairs, and then CAOs; they can then provide responses and/or escalate questions to the Dean’s Office.

- **Additional resources:**
  - COVID-19 Researching Funding Opportunities
  - Message from Vice Chancellor for Research at UCLA
  - COVID-19 information for clinical research (CTSI)
  - Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP)

**FACULTY**

- **View Friday’s virtual faculty town hall** here.

- **For emotional or mental-health support for you or your team**, see our Wellness Resources page.

- **To stay up to date with information pertinent to you**, visit ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/faculty.
• **Contacts:** Individual concerns or questions should be routed to your division chiefs/department chairs/CAOs; they can provide responses and/or escalate questions to the Dean’s Office. Academic personnel matters that cannot be answered in departments should be sent to DGSOM Academic Affairs.

• **UCLA Health providers** can find information and resources on the [UCLA Health COVID-19 website](#). Please stay up to date with the latest self-care and PPE information and protocols.

**STAFF**

• **Communication survey:** The purpose of these biweekly emails – and our [website](#) – is to provide regular, high-level updates and resources pertaining to DGSOM’s adapting operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as how they may impact you. If certain information is not readily available – or perhaps under-communicated – [please take a moment to share what information you would like us to address](#) in our future COVID-19 communications. Our DGSOM COVID-19 Communications team will collect and address the most frequently mentioned topics and report back to you here. As a reminder, your supervisor, CAO and/or department chair is also an important source of information.

• **Hiring pause:**
  o In accordance with [new campus protocols on hiring](#), the DGSOM has enacted a hiring pause for all staff-level research, education and administrative positions in an effort to adapt to new financial constraints stemming from the COVID-19 outbreak. Effective immediately, this means all staff-level positions will be placed on hold and subject to review.

  o Department CAOs and Chairs have received additional information, including on potential applications for exemptions. If you have any questions, please speak with your CAO.

  o Additional guidance will be provided by the UCLA health system regarding clinical positions.

• **Redeployment opportunities at DGSOM:** In coordination with the UCLA Health Command Center, DGSOM is working to facilitate redeployment opportunities for medical school staff who are seeking additional work and would like to be considered for opportunities to fill different functions during the COVID-19 outbreak and campus closure. Managers have received additional information on enrollment. If you have any questions, please speak with your manager, HR and/or department administrator.

• **Health care workers required to perform essential functions onsite** should use the following link to access child and senior care resources contracted through UCLA Health: [brighthorizons.com/uclahealth](#)
To review the latest information pertaining to you, visit medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/staff and the “Support Services” section of our COVID-19 website.

**SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Child and senior care resources**
Health care workers required to perform essential functions onsite can access child and senior care resources contracted through UCLA Health and Bright Horizons.

- Eligible staff and faculty: brighthorizons.com/uclahealth
- Residents: brighthorizons.com/ucmed

**Overnight accommodations**
To ensure your and your families’ safety, we are providing overnight accommodations to those caring for patients on our designated COVID-19 units. Contact the Command Center at (310) 267-7115 for accommodations.

**Wellness**
Virtual wellness services are available for staff, faculty, trainees and students. The UCLA Staff and Faculty Counseling Center is available to provide emotional support to UCLA staff and health care workers, as well to their immediate family members or significant others. To schedule a time to talk over the phone, please call 310-794-0245. A new COVID-19 Mental Health Workgroup also offers facilitated group and individual check-ins, grief support, training, and materials for trauma-informed peer support for those on the COVID-19 frontlines. Learn more >>

**Facilities**
If you are required to work on campus and you notice any suspicious activity, please alert the appropriate security or law enforcement personnel. Learn more >>

**Cultural North Star: The values that guide us**
Resources and more information >>

**Equity and diversity inclusion during the COVID-19 pandemic**
Information and resources, including how you can address bias and prejudice, are available online. Contact DGSONEDI@mednet.ucla.edu with any questions or concerns. In addition, UCLA students and faculty who experience a bias incident should report it by completing a UCLA Incident of Bias Reporting Form.

**DGIT**
DGIT offers a virtual helpdesk via zoom Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm. Learn more >>

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

- Take the [Stop COVID-19 Together survey](#), a new web-based app that will enable the public to help fight the spread of the coronavirus.
• Recognize your peers or colleagues for their contributions by submitting a digital Cultural North Star card.

• Donate blood. The UCLA Blood & Platelet Center is experiencing a shortage of donated blood. Across its donation sites and blood drives in Westwood, Santa Monica and Ackerman Union, the Center has implemented numerous safety measures to protect donors and staff during the COVID-19 outbreak. Find a donation site // Make an appointment // Learn more

• Volunteer to support our frontline health care teams: org (website is not managed by or associated with UCLA or the DGSOM).

• UCLA Health employees can help keep everyone safe by participating in the UCLA Health symptom-tracking survey. Start by signing up here.

• Consider a donation to UCLA Health’s new COVID-19 Coronavirus Patient Care Fund and the COVID-19 Coronavirus Research and Education Fund. Details on each are available online, as are additional opportunities to support UCLA Health’s COVID-19 response efforts.

• If your research lab has Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to spare, consider a donation. Learn more>>

Please check DGSOM’s COVID-19 website and the UCLA Health Coronavirus Information website frequently to make sure you have the latest information.