

WITH U • FOR U

DFA Employee Newsletter



A message from
Chief Financial Officer &
Vice Chancellor, Mary Lou D. Ortiz

**Managers/Supervisors: Please share this email with DFA campus temporary and contract employees. For those who do not have regular access to emails/laptops/PCs, please print and share this email accordingly.*

Dear DFA employees,

It's been a busy start to the year. Last month, I attended an artificial intelligence lab hosted by Deloitte in Costa Mesa along with a group of DFA colleagues. This lab helped us take an important step forward as we continue thinking about how AI can enhance efficiency, support innovation, and create value for the schools and units we serve.

During the lab, we explored how other universities are applying AI, reviewed real-world case studies, and discussed potential opportunities and guardrails for using these tools within DFA. It was a productive session and an important starting point as we continue shaping our approach to AI across the division.

As we enter our third year of [strategic planning](#), departments are reviewing and refining goals, developing implementation plans, and outlining key deliverables. In a time of constant change, aligning our work and continuing to strengthen a culture of continuous improvement remains central to our success.

That same focus on improvement is reflected in Procurement's project, [UCIBuy+](#), a new system for campus requisitions and purchase orders. UCIBuy+ builds on the current UCIBuy platform and will replace KFS requisitions & purchase orders on April 13, automating manual steps and providing clearer visibility into approvals and compliance. This initiative represents several years of collaboration and planning and will help streamline purchasing processes, improve transparency, and enhance the overall experience for the campus community.

With so much underway, 2026 is shaping up to be a busy and impactful year. I hope you will join us for our virtual [DFA town hall on Wednesday, March 18, from 10 to 11 a.m.](#), where we will share more updates on these efforts and other divisional priorities.

I look forward to seeing you all there!

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Featured Events

UCI Book Drive
[Feb. 2 - March 31](#)

UCI Staff Appreciation Breakfast
[Wed., March 25 | 6:30-9 a.m.](#)



Sincerely,



Mary Lou D. Ortiz
Chief Financial Officer
Vice Chancellor, Finance & Administration



DFA's Vision, Mission, and Values

We are **With U • For U**. We are proud to support the UC Irvine community. Our vision, mission, and values set our direction, guide our decisions, and foster a shared culture. [Learn more](#).



DFA-HR Reminders

Introducing Ask ZotGPT: A New Chatbot from DFA Business Services

We're excited to introduce Ask ZotGPT, the new DFA Business Services chatbot now live on the [Business Services website](#). Built specifically for DFA staff, Ask ZotGPT provides fast and easy answers to questions about payroll, timekeeping, KSAMS, and other Business Services topics.

Available anytime, this self-service tool helps streamline the process of getting answers to everyday questions and supports more efficient workflows across DFA.

Ready, Set, Retire

The [Ready, Set, Retire workshops](#) are designed for faculty and staff who are eligible for retirement. If you have a minimum of five years of UCRP service credit and are eligible for retirement, please join one of the upcoming sessions listed below.

To register, please visit the [UC Learning Center \(UCLC\)](#):

- Wednesday, April 1 | 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. (Zoom & In-Person)
- Friday, May 8 | 1-2:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- Tuesday, Sept. 15 | 12-1:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- Wednesday, Nov. 4 | 2-3:30 p.m. (Zoom)

Article provided by DFA-HR



Continuous Improvement Focus: Procurement Services: RFP Process Updates and Improvements

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

Procurement Services recently completed a CPI project to [update and improve the Request for Proposals \(RFP\) process](#), including new standardized templates, checklists, scoring matrices, and proven sample RFP questions. The outcomes include a 15-20% reduction in RFP publication and evaluation cycle time, improved competition and fairness, and higher stakeholder satisfaction and engagement. For more information or to discuss this project, please contact [Sarosh Siganporia](#).

Procurement Services: RFP Process Updates and Improvements



Problem:

Unclear or overly broad RFP requirements led to inconsistent vendor responses, scope creep, and evaluation challenges. Weak criteria, tight timelines, and limited stakeholder collaboration further compromised proposal quality. Departments also experienced difficulties drafting RFPs due to unfamiliar procurement standards, and heavy documentation and dense compliance requirements.



Goal:

- Streamline the RFP process through simplified and standardized documents to reduce administrative workload.
- Improve stakeholder collaboration to align RFP goals with operational, academic, and budgetary needs.
- Strengthen evaluation and fairness by using weight criteria and increasing diverse vendor pools.



Solution:

A suite of standardized documents was developed to streamline the RFP process, including process timelines, checklists, statements of work aligned with standard purchasing agreement templates, scoring matrices reflecting UC Office of the President requirements, and questionnaire templates with proven sample RFP questions. Sustainability criteria from systemwide SMEs were added to broaden vendor pools.



Result:

- Fully compliant bids that support transparent, defensible supplier selection.
- Standardized process and 15-20% reduction in RFP publication and evaluation cycle time.
- Improved competition and fairness, particularly for certified small businesses.

- Higher stakeholder satisfaction and engagement.

Project Contact: Sarosh Sigamoria, Procurement Services

Our goal is to showcase completed projects from various departments which might benefit or inspire others. Please reach out to WithUForU@uci.edu to help us showcase your project.

TAKE CPI ACTION

Incorporate CPI in your daily activities. Identify a bottleneck, own it, and improve it!
View and download the [DFA CPI flyer](#).



Submit Ideas/Projects

Submit information about a [process improvement project or idea in your department](#).



Browse Existing Projects

Explore [DFA's CPI dashboard](#) for current, proposed or recently completed process improvement projects in our division.



Explore DFA's CPI Toolkit

Explore the [DFA's CPI toolkit](#). Contact us at WithUForU@uci.edu with any questions and suggestions for additional tools.

Article provided by DFA Program Development & Execution



Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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



Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

An [Emergency Action Plan \(EAP\)](#) helps your workplace prepare for a variety of emergencies and is required for all administrative and academic workspaces. Staff should read the EAP for their building before an emergency occurs. Managers are responsible for sharing safety information with faculty, staff, and students; briefing all new personnel upon joining; and posting the EAP in accessible locations.



New Financial Statements Dashboard Now Available

Accounting & Fiscal Services is excited to introduce a new [Financial Statements Dashboard](#), now available in Decision Support. The tool allows users to generate three key financial reports that are prepared in compliance with the UC Systemwide Common Chart of Accounts (CCoA) and adhere to the systemwide presentation of financial statements:

- Statement of Net Position (SNP)
- Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position (SRECNP)
- SRECNP Operating Expenses Footnote

Each report offers a different high-level overview of an organization's financial position. Users can also expand sections in the reports to view how KFS object codes contribute to the line items in the financial statements.

If you would like to try the dashboard, look for the link on ZotPortal in the [KFS Decision Support portlet](#), listed under the General Ledger - Campus Reports heading. For questions, contact the Financial Management Support team at kfs@uci.edu.

Article provided by UC Irvine Accounting & Fiscal Services



UC Irvine EHS Chemical Waste Disposal Event Recap

UC Irvine Environmental Health & Safety hosted a campuswide Chemical Waste Disposal Event in November that collected nearly 38,000 pounds of hazardous waste. The purpose of the event was to reduce chemical quantities that contribute to Maximum Allowable Quantity (MAQ) limits - established

thresholds for the amount of hazardous materials that can be stored in control areas to minimize fire and life safety risk.

Multiple collection sites were located across campus to allow researchers and staff to safely and conveniently drop off unwanted materials. Campus participation was strong, with engagement from academic, research, and campus support units.

Overall, the event helped reduce long-term chemical storage, improved laboratory safety conditions, and strengthened campuswide regulatory compliance, reinforcing UC Irvine's commitment to maintaining a safe and responsible research environment and promoting continued safe practices across campus.

Article provided by UC Irvine Environmental Health & Safety



Sustainability Corner: UCI Takes a Stand Against Single-Use Plastics with New Grant Initiative

UC Irvine Campus Planning & Sustainability was awarded \$3,700 through the UC Single Use Plastics Reduction Grant funded by the Global Climate Leadership Council (GCLC). The grant will help pilot a mobile water refilling station at two major outdoor campus events, including the Staff Appreciation Picnic in August! If you are in-person for events or work, remember to bring a reusable water bottle to refill at one of the many stations across campus!



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: Findings from the UC Irvine Inclusive Excellence Lived Experience Survey

Over the past year, UC Irvine partnered with an independent research team to better understand our community's lived experience across safety, belonging, fairness, well-being, and everyday interactions. Nearly 9,800 students, faculty, and staff shared their perspectives. Key themes from the findings include:

- Many people experience UC Irvine as steady and supportive.
- The national and global climate is felt here, but it does not define daily life for most.
- Some community members are more on alert during intense moments.
- Overall strength does not mean everyone experiences UC Irvine the same way.
- Discrimination is not central for most, but it is present for some.
- There is an appetite for learning and growth, and time is the challenge.

The Lived Experience Survey results are available on the [survey webpage](#).

Learn more about programs and resources available through the [UC Irvine Office of Inclusive Excellence](#).

DFA EMPLOYEE PROFILES



CiJi J Brown
Designated Campus Fire Marshal (Title 24), Environmental Health & Safety

I have been at UC Irvine and in my current position for over three years. I am responsible for plan review and fire inspection of building construction projects for campus buildings and properties.

What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most? What I enjoy most about my career is the continuing education and networking that occurs with code revision cycles and enforcement suggested practices involving fire safety. Continued education allows the fire safety team and partnering colleagues to stay fresh with critical trends within the safety industry.

What do you like most about UCI/department? The ability to work closely with internal team members while coordinating valuable information across multiple UCI departments has proven instrumental in driving both personal and professional growth, strengthening team capacity to meet or exceed campuswide goals.

If you were stuck on an island, what three things would you bring? If I were stuck on an island, I would bring my wife... she would do the rest!

If you were to write a book about yourself, what would you name it? My book's title would be "Effort-ing"

Motto or Personal Mantra: "Faith can only be witnessed by doing."

DFA NEW HIRES

DFA new hires hired between Jan. 1 - March 20, 2026.

DFA Program Development & Execution:

- Madeline Russell
- Rachel Ren

Facilities Management:

- Christopher Daniel Rodriguez
- Damian Gonzalez
- Dylan I. Grish

Police Department:

- Gerardo Angel Adanza Diaz
- Shawn Wang
- Solomon Rockefeller Robinson
- Stephanie Stacey Romero
- Walid Rahyab

Transportation & Distribution Services:

- Norman D. Stirbis
- Robert Riestra Arreola
- Salomon Bañuelos Hurtado
- Victor Cisneros

- Alex Bouskill
- Vivian Trinh

Office of the CFO & Vice Chancellor:

- Lauren P. Valle

UC Irvine Division of Finance & Administration | WAMU-540

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