

The following message is being sent to all Senate members.

UC SANTA BARBARA

Academic Senate

Divisional Chair's Newsletter

April 29, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

As we reach the midpoint of spring quarter, here are some updates and information that I hope you will find useful.

COVID-19 status update. Campus COVID-19 case numbers have been trending down for the past 2 weeks, after a brief post-spring break surge due in part to the higher transmissibility of the Omicron BA.2 variant. The medical team managing our COVID-19 response reported a positivity rate in our early detection random screening program of 1.1% (17 positive cases out of 1570 tests) last week, with about half being asymptomatic. This week (with data from Monday-Thursday), the rate is 0.5% (6 positive cases out of 1205 tests). The campus is not aware of any cases requiring serious medical attention. Given the recent trends in case numbers, the campus is currently reviewing the use of the campus daily symptom screening survey and its classroom notification policies as we transition to the current phase of the pandemic.

Masks are still strongly recommended in indoor spaces on campus. Our campus COVID-19 case rates are similar to or lower than other UC campuses (including UC San Diego, which continued mandatory indoor masking during spring quarter). However, spring quarter has seen several cases classified by the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department as “clusters” (a cluster is three or more potentially related cases) in sports teams, dormitories, meetings, and a theater performance group.

Housing information. A new [website](#) launched by the EVC's office contains useful information and links regarding faculty housing plans, the waitlist, and financing

options, including the new Zero Interest Program (ZIP) loans for down-payment assistance. The information is summarized in a recent Academic Personnel [newsletter](#).

President Drake's visit. On April 13, President Drake visited UC Santa Barbara and met with several campus constituencies, including Senate leaders. The President spoke about his work to increase the university's state budget allocation, and the need to balance undergraduate and graduate education with research at UC.

Experian benefits. The University of California [announced](#) a two-year extension of credit monitoring and identity theft protection for all members of the UC community affected by the 2021 Accellion data breach. Those already enrolled with Experian do not need to take any action – they will automatically receive a free two-year extension on the one-year anniversary of their initial enrollment. If you have yet to enroll, please email communications@ucop.edu to request credit monitoring and identity protection services.

Pharmacy benefits. Faculty throughout the UC system have reported widespread [problems and delays in accessing their pharmacy benefits](#) via Navitus Health, the new contract provider for some PPO insurance plans since Jan 1, 2022. UC staff are reportedly working with Navitus to address the issues. If you are having problems with Navitus, we invite you to relay them to us at info@senate.ucsb.edu.

Pension decision-making. New employees hired by UC since 2016 have to choose between a defined contribution plan (“Savings”) and a defined benefit plan (“Pension”). The Senate's Task Force on Investment and Retirement (TFIR) conducted a comparative analysis of both options, which offer different advantages to faculty depending on the length of time they expect to be employed by UC. In addition, faculty who initially selected the “Savings” plan may now elect to switch to the “Pension” plan 5-10 years after hiring.

To assist faculty in understanding the financial implications of these important decisions, TFIR has created a modeling tool and a guide to using it. Instructions are posted [here](#), and faculty who are eligible to make these choices are strongly encouraged to consult them.

Open-access issues. Some Open Access (OA) issues have come to light recently that may especially affect scholars in the humanities and social sciences. The University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications (UCOLASC) and the California Digital Library (CDL) are concerned with the problem of third-party

agreements (such as permissions for reproducing images, quotations, and other materials under copyright) that restrict OA choices. For example, you may have received permission from an archive to reproduce an image in a journal article, but with a stipulation that the article cannot be posted in an OA repository.

Because the language of third-party agreements can vary widely, Dr. Katie Fortney, a copyright policy officer at CDL and UCOP, is interested in receiving examples of permissions agreements and contracts. She explains, "We may quote from these in the future when we write about this issue, but we will not reproduce the text of any agreement in its entirety or share the name of the individual who signed or provided the agreement without that person's permission." If you have documents that you are willing to share for this purpose, please send them to UCSB's representative to UCOLASC, Prof. [Karen Lunsford](#), who also chairs UCSB's Council on Research and Instructional Resources (CRIR).

International activities. The university has recommitted to supporting the international engagement of its faculty in light of concerns about 'foreign influence' on sponsored research. An email communication from Joe Incandela, our Vice Chancellor for Research, stated "We are writing to affirm our commitment to protecting our faculty's research endeavors and we welcome recent reports regarding the Justice Department's decision to end the China Initiative, after hearing concerns from the civil rights community that the "China Initiative" fueled a narrative of intolerance and bias." The most important message is that university's support is enabled (and its researchers are protected) by appropriate disclosure, and the Office of Research is committed to helping faculty navigate the changing landscape of disclosure requirements. More information for researchers engaged in foreign/international relationships and activities is available [here](#).

DSP Office. Faculty may be contacted by the Disabled Students Program (DSP) office regarding students with an approved accommodation to learn online based on a disability. Students must seek this accommodation by applying through the DSP office, which will assess the request after receiving the appropriate documentation. Instructors should direct students to the DSP office rather than try to work with students individually. If the request is granted, DSP will work with instructors to find a suitable accommodation that does not materially alter the nature of the course or increase the instructor's workload significantly. Instructors who encounter challenges in this process are encouraged to contact the [Senate](#).

Proposed Climate Memorial. At its meeting of April 13, 2022, the systemwide Academic Assembly voted in favor of a proposed Memorial which "petitions the

Regents for investments in UC's infrastructure that will reduce on-campus fossil fuel combustion by at least 60% of current levels by 2030 and 95% of current levels by 2035." The next step is a systemwide faculty vote, via electronic ballot. In the coming weeks, Senate members will receive a notice containing contextual materials and instructions for voting.

UC Academic Survey of Faculty Life. The systemwide Academic Senate is conducting a new survey to gather input on faculty experiences and perspectives during the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to provide data and context for Senate discussions and presentations to the UC administration, the UC Regents, and the California Legislature. This survey, which follows on from previous versions conducted by the Senate in 2020 and 2019, is distinct from the research survey conducted by UC Berkeley, for which a request was distributed to faculty on April 12. An email with a link to the Senate survey will be distributed to all instructors next week.

Academic Senate awards. Congratulations to all recipients of 2022 Academic Senate Awards for teaching and mentoring! They were honored at the April 21 meeting of the Faculty Legislature:

Distinguished Teaching Awards

Gordon Abra, Continuing Lecturer, Communication and Sociology

Ken Hiltner, Professor, English

Jennifer Y. King, Professor, Geography

Jen Martin, Lecturer PSOE, Environmental Studies

Danielle R. Whitaker, Continuing Lecturer, Teacher Education Program

Vanessa Woods, Lecturer PSOE, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Outstanding Graduate Mentor Awards

Bhaskar Sarkar, Professor, Film and Media Studies

M. Scott Shell, Professor, Chemical Engineering

Jill Darlington Sharkey, Professor, Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards

Stephanie M. Arguera, Education

Trevor Auldrige Reveles, Sociology

Hannah Garibaldi, Film and Media Studies

Janeva Chung, Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology

Congratulations to our two recent winners of the Harold J. Plous award. The 2019-20

Harold J. Plous Award lecture, “Playing for the Planet”, will be delivered by Professor Alenda Chang of the Department of Film and Media Studies on Monday, May 2 at 4:00 p.m. The 2020-21 Harold J. Plous Award lecture, “What Can I Do? A Guide to Climate Action”, will be delivered by Professor Leah Stokes of the Department of Political Science on Monday, May 9 at 4:00 p.m. Both lectures will be in Alumni Hall, Mosher Hall. More information is available [here](#).

The 2022 recipients of the Faculty Diversity Award and the Faculty Research Lecturer Award will be announced at the next meeting of the Faculty Legislature, June 2 (on Zoom). Please join us.

Sincerely,
Susannah Scott
Chair, Santa Barbara Division



Copyright © 2021
The Regents of the University of California.
All Rights Reserved.