

EVCP Expresso ? February 2021

Dear Colleagues,

On February 1, 1960, Ezell Blair Jr., David Richmond, Franklin McCain, and Joseph McNeil, the Greensboro Four ^[1], began an act of nonviolent protest against a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, that would last four days and grow to 300 supporters. During Black History Month 2021, which begins today, let's reflect on the brave individuals who dedicated their lives to making our country equitable and free of discrimination, and those who have suffered at the hands of racism. The Office of Diversity and Outreach offers many opportunities ^[2], including a link to the dance performance "Unearth Birmingham" ^[3], in memory of Addie May Collins, Carol Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, and Carole Rosamond Robertson, the African American children who were killed in the horrific 16th Street Baptist Church bombing (and one of the most enduring memories of our pilgrimage to Alabama ^[4] last year). It's four stirring minutes you will not forget.

This month we also look to making inroads on our battle with COVID-19 and its emerging variants. With the inauguration of President Joe Biden and California's own Vice President Kamala Harris, and their all-out effort to seriously tackle all aspects of the pandemic, I am more optimistic of our chances to gain control.

As President Biden reminds us, even with all the other political turmoil, the pandemic continues to affect everyone's life and still demands our immediate attention. So, with this month marking its one-year anniversary, I am writing about some of the ways UCSF is addressing problems caused by COVID-19:

- Supporting Caregivers: Recommendations from UCSF's Child and Dependent Care Task Force
- Rallying for Relief: Funds help UCSF community members struggling with pandemic fallout
- COVID-19 Vaccine: The rollout begins!

Also, I encourage faculty and managers to provide release time for their staff employees to attend the 2021 UCSF Virtual Staff Resource Days on February 5, 12, and 19, focusing on the themes of professional development, wellness, and community. Visit the website ^[5] to learn more and see the preliminary agenda. Additional details and Zoom links will be posted soon and can be found on the UCSF Events Calendar by searching using the hashtag #SRD2021 ^[6].

How will you participate in Black History Month? UC President Michael Drake posted this video in celebration of the profound contributions and achievements of Black Americans ^[7] benefitting our country and the world. Let me know at ExecutiveViceChancellor@ucsf.edu ^[8].

With best wishes for the Lunar New Year,

Dan

Supporting Caregivers: Recommendations from UCSF's Child and Dependent Care Task Force

Within the first few weeks of COVID-19 protocols, we began to hear accounts of people struggling to care for children or other loved ones while still trying to do their jobs. I wrote last July ^[9] about the Child and Dependent Care Task Force that Chancellor Sam Hawgood appointed, and I'm glad to report that the task force has made several strong recommendations, some of which UCSF has already implemented as we try to respond to this tremendous need as quickly as possible.

This summer, the task force conducted a survey to assess the community's needs. Nearly 2,400 people responded – nearly 80 percent of them women, revealing where the caregiving burden most often falls. While 78 percent had children living at home, 16 percent had care responsibilities for a parent or other senior family member.

Respondents, on the whole, experienced a dramatic increase in both the hours they spent on caregiving as well as in child or dependent care expenses. Their caregiving responsibilities had an adverse impact on their ability to concentrate, work schedule, and job productivity, resulting in concerns about their careers and finances. Nearly 60 percent said they are likely to work fewer hours, and 37 percent are likely to consider a different job or career altogether.

Due to the great urgency of the situation, proposals were presented several times to the Chancellor's Executive Team ^[10] (CET) over the course of the task force. "People need resources and financial relief," says Elizabeth Ozer, a professor of Pediatrics, director of the UCSF Faculty Equity Program, chair of the UC Systemwide Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, and a co-chair of the task force. "We worked hard to impart the magnitude of the crisis as a very real threat to UCSF's mission that needs to be treated as such."

The CET gave the green light to a number of the proposals, including launching an on-site emergency summer camp and partnering with the YMCA to launch learning camps ^[11] specifically for UCSF families, giving parents some relief when so many other camps and schools were closed or not meeting in person. "The survey results revealed a huge percentage of people whose care responsibilities significantly disrupted their work between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. showing the disruption that distance learning caused for parents of school-aged children," says Laura Ishkanian, director of Family Services, who co-chaired the task force. "That's why the emergency summer camp and YMCA learning camp were so critical."

The task force also advocated for the COVID-19 relief funding, which you can read more about in the next story. Because of the crucial need for financial relief for staff and learners — often due to added costs for childcare — the task force made this its top priority. It has also disseminated up-to-date information on options for child and dependent care on the COVID-19 Child and Dependent Care Resources page ^[12], launched a decision tool ^[13] to support UCSF community members in balancing work and childcare needs, and created guides for the UCSF community on the best way to take leave in the case of a gap in childcare.

Some recommendations will not move forward at this point, and others remain in progress. Case in point, UCSF offers back-up childcare, and the task force proposed expanding that option to members of the UCSF community who do not currently have access to this resource. For now, that proposal was deemed too expensive, but we plan to revisit it after the pandemic. However, we have a lot of expertise at UCSF on many relevant remaining topics, from caregiving for children to reopening schools safely to identifying safe childcare programs. A related recommendation that we did fund was developing a centralized place to pull these resources together. New materials for parents will be soon available on the UCSF coronavirus website ^[14] under PARENTS and on the UCSF California Childcare Health Program (CCHP) website ^[15]. CCHP staff are developing information sheets and infographics on how to provide safe environments for children in childcare programs or schools during the pandemic.

Also, the task force recommended expansion of programs to support research funding for faculty. This includes new funding mechanisms, such as the Faculty Resource Fund that was launched in late fall, initiatives to support early career faculty, and taking into account child/dependent care responsibilities in the awarding of bridge funding, a program to support a faculty member to continue their research when there's a gap in grant support. "Bridge funding is one established mechanism, and we need to implement others," Elizabeth says. "For many faculty, child/dependent care responsibilities directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted their ability to continue research productivity and submit grants."

You can read about the task force ^[16] online, where you can learn about these and other recommendations.

"The theme that's important to emphasize is that UCSF showed incredible responsiveness, flexibility, and leadership support. These things were done quickly," Elizabeth noted, "and done in ways the University often has not been able to do in the past."

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Rallying for Relief: Funds help UCSF community members struggling with pandemic fallout

With all the changes to our lives that the pandemic has wrought, many people are feeling the impact financially. Perhaps a spouse, partner, or roommate lost their job. Maybe they're no longer able to take public transportation to work and now have added costs of driving, tolls, parking, even car ownership.

UCSF recognized the pain and wanted to help, and thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors and many of you, we established the UCSF COVID-19 Relief Program ^[17] for staff and learners in September. Our initial announcement stated that any UCSF employee who makes less than \$75,000 per year could apply for a maximum of \$1,000, tax-free. These are criteria used for grants to reimburse people for expenses incurred in the qualified federal disaster.

The first round opened in September and within 17 days, over 2,000 people applied. "We had to pause applications to make sure we had enough funds and to ensure that there was equity in the distribution," says Stephanie Mackler, chief of staff of Finance and Administration. The massive response and need could not be ignored, and UCSF leadership decided to open a second round in December as the pandemic continued. Donors contributed more funds, and we raised about \$300,000 from alumni, staff, and faculty and as a result we awarded another \$2 million. We also expanded the pool to people making \$95,000 or less, as we could see from the applications that the need clearly existed. The second round opened December 7 and closed quickly on December 11, again because of so much demand.

We know \$1000 is not enough to make up for a lost income, for example, but we hope it alleviates some of the burden. In the first round, we were able to help over 1,800 people. In the second round, we gave grants to 3,000 people. As the pandemic gets close to the one-year mark, we will see if there is still a need for support, and we're hoping to come up with more funds for a possible third round.

Many of the applications were heartbreaking. Front-line workers spoke of no longer being able to take BART or Muni to work, and seeing their commute costs skyrocket from \$2.75 one-way to the cost of an Uber, Lyft, or taxi — or the expense of driving plus parking. Some must drive farther to find childcare, because their original facility closed. And others need to hire someone to be with their child, since many schools are not offering in-person education.

We were very fortunate to have a donor who recognizes the challenges our front-line workers are up against during this time. "A lot of people are donating to COVID research," Stephanie says. "There are so many really worthy causes — finding vaccines, getting them out, doing research to understand the coronavirus better. At the same time, to have someone understand the needs of the people who make UCSF work on a daily basis and has helped us support those people felt really good." Stephanie gives a shout out to the folks on the IT and Human Resources teams who made this possible, working quickly to launch the application platform and distribute the funds. Stephanie also serves on the Child and Dependent Care Task Force (see first story), which recommended and pushed for the program.

Donors from the Foundation Board's Student and Faculty Committee also contributed to supporting faculty and staff during the COVID pandemic. Catherine Lucey, vice dean for Education and executive vice dean for the School of Medicine, worked to establish two different funds.

The first, the Faculty/Staff Morale Grants ^[18], provided support to expand the COPE program ^[19] in the Department of Psychiatry as well as supplied funds for faculty and staff groups

across the campus to develop activities that supported group cohesion and morale during the pandemic's disruption of our workplaces. Groups of 10-50 people applied for funds to support ideas such as virtual social and learning activities and anti-racism work. Over 7,500 people benefited from this donor-sponsored initiative.

The second, the UCSF Faculty Resource Fund, was launched to address acute financial challenges faced by faculty due to pandemic-related caregiving burdens. The goal was to sustain faculty academic productivity especially in light of pandemic-related caregiving burdens that disproportionately affect women and exacerbate known gender inequities. Faculty who were experiencing significant stressors related to pandemic-associated disruption to work-home balance could apply for awards of \$500-\$5000 to support solutions that allowed greater ease in advancing their work, such as hiring grant writers or copy editors. Independent investigators who faced pandemic-related reductions in their ability to fund their research programs could apply for awards of up to \$25,000 to sustain their research productivity and research workforce. In the end, 73 applications were submitted. Of those, 55 were awarded, with 7 Professors, 18 Associate Professors, and 30 Assistant Professors receiving funding for a total distribution of \$781,507.

Dr. Lucey commented, "I am grateful to our donors who immediately recognized the challenges that the pandemic was placing on our talented faculty and staff. They gave us carte blanche to spend their contributions in a manner that would provide the greatest support to the most people. In turn, we designed a distribution strategy based on what our UCSF colleagues told us they wanted. We are delighted to have provided some relief to many people working so hard under such challenging conditions."

We are still raising money for the UCSF COVID-19 Relief Program through the COVID-19 Qualified Disaster Relief Fund. If you are able to give and would like to contribute, the form is [online](#) [20].

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COVID-19 Vaccine: The rollout begins!

Before COVID-19, the fastest journey to an approved vaccine was four years – for mumps, discovered by Dr. Maurice Hilleman...in 1967. Check out this Radiolab installment, "The Great Vaccinator" [21]. It's a great listen for piqued curiosities.

Fast forward to January 2020 and faster to December 2020! The world is reeling from the impacts of COVID-19. Waves of infection surge, the economy plummets, and worst?people continue to die at alarming rates. Scientists work day in and day out for the "eureka" moment of a successful vaccine, and within one year, two are approved for emergency distribution.

On December 11, Chancellor Sam Hawgood and UCSF Health President and CEO Mark Laret wrote the UCSF community that approval of the first vaccine was imminent and preparations at UCSF were underway. Similar news was being reported across the nation. Our first shipment arrived on December 16, and by year's end, we had administered 6,300 vaccines ^[22] ? representing the first prioritized workers with the highest risk of exposure to COVID-19. I had the wonderful experience of helping to administer the vaccine over the holidays, and you can be sure that hope and anticipation were running high!

But it hasn't been without a host of challenges, which health care organizations across the country have been experiencing. Concerns about how distribution is being prioritized, supply issues, multiple communications, as well as uncertainty and distrust about the vaccine itself are topmost.

On the January 22, 2021 COVID-19 Town Hall, Vice Chancellor Renee Navarro spoke about the importance of acknowledging the lack of trust in light of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Indigenous, and people of color. (Watch online ^[23] and advance to 9:25 minutes). Historical reasons are a key factor in vaccine hesitancy and, as an institution dedicated to discovery and health, we need to validate the traumatic experiences of our colleagues and patients, and as care givers take a trauma-informed approach as we reach out to all communities ? providing additional information, taking the time to answer questions, and addressing concerns. Indeed, we must not forget the U.S. history of medical exploitation and exclusion within clinical trials of Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Renee and other faculty members are partnering with the Black Caucus, Black Caucus Oakland, Chicax Latinx Campus Association, and Latinx Center of Excellence to engage and ensure that communities most affected receive the information they need to make fully informed decisions. The Black Caucus-Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland will be working with senior leaders and the hospital's DEI Council to acknowledge, understand, and validate the real fears and anxieties of Black staff and community members related to vaccine distribution.

Renee reported that according to the CDC, the first two messenger RNA vaccines authorized by the FDA for emergency use ? from Pfizer and Moderna ? were tested in a diverse group of people. About 30% of U.S. participants were Latinx, African American, or Native American. About half were older adults. There were no significant safety concerns identified in these or any other groups. I'll have more in a future issue about the need to ensure representation and accurate race reporting in clinical trials, and historic health care inequities experienced by people of color.

I am proud that UCSF is collaborating with partners across the city and state to make sure that the most vulnerable people have access to COVID-19 vaccines, and we can optimize our supplies in the best interest of public health. We are coordinating with the City and County of San Francisco, Dignity Health, and One Medical to provide drive-through vaccinations at City College for our patients, starting with those aged 75 and over. Eventually, with increased vaccine availability, this site will scale up to provide 3,000 vaccines a day. Importantly, we are joining other health systems to help vaccinate patient-facing health care workers who live or work in San Francisco but are not affiliated with a major health system.

Here's more of what I know about the overall vaccine rollout:

As with other institutions nationwide, UCSF Health is experiencing insufficient and unpredictable vaccine supplies.

- We're operating with a few days' worth of vaccines at a time and little clarity on if or when our next doses will arrive.
- UCSF is working as quickly as possible, given vaccine availability and changing information, to expand our vaccination program.
- Interdisciplinary teams are meeting daily to evaluate our current vaccine supplies and make real-time decisions about the next group of people to whom we can offer vaccinations.
- The current vaccines require two doses and most supplies are designated for one of those doses. We need to ensure second doses are available to all who receive the first

[24].

As you know, we started by prioritizing COVID-19 vaccinations based on individuals at highest risk of exposure because of their work. As this first phase nears completion, we're now moving on to strike a balance between our patients who are at highest risk of severe illness based on age, and members of the UCSF community who have been engaged in on-site work throughout the pandemic. Having been involved in these discussions for many weeks now, I can assure you that these decisions are hardly straightforward, and the team is really trying to implement plans that are as fair and equitable as possible. Also, as you can imagine, since we announced preparations our call centers and email account have been challenged to respond to the immense volume of calls and messages.

While we are as eager as you to come out of this tumultuous time as soon as possible, please understand that we're in the throes of a historic pandemic and an equally historic rollout of a vaccine that was achieved in less than a year. The situation is evolving quickly and is heavily dependent on supply, and the best way to stay informed is to visit the UCSF COVID-19 Vaccine Information Hub [25] and to stay as healthy as possible ? continue to wash your hands, practice physical distancing, and mask up!

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Dan's Tip of the Month



The best work in literature is always done by those who do not depend on it for their daily bread and the highest form of literature, Poetry, brings no wealth to the singer.
? Oscar Wilde

I enjoy poetry as a sublime and powerful medium that evokes emotions and images that reach deep into individual and collective souls. We witnessed its power through the luminous Amanda Gorman on Inauguration Day, and during this period of juxtapositions and uncertainty, reading poetry can provide a gentle respite and inspire hope. You can start with the U.S. Poet Laureates ^[26], but I encourage you to discover the amazing community of emerging poets, many published through the Academy of American Poets' Poem-a-Day series ^[27] and some in our midst. I was recently transported by the poem "How to Live in Southern California" ^[28], written and recited by poet and UCSF colleague Shelley Wong, recently selected to be published in *The Best American Poetry 2021* ^[29] anthology.

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- [1] <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/lessons-worth-learning-moment-greensboro-four-sat-down-lunch-counter-180974087/>
- [2] <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/-Matter--Is-the-Minimum--January-2021.html?soid=1119190584390&aid=clw7X9SC9lc>
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