

Our University

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESIDENT FOR THE UC COMMUNITY



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This printer-friendly version of "Our University" from the UC Office of the President is intended to be posted in order to be accessible to members of the UC community without easy access to a computer at work. The web version is available at www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/ouruniversity/11_07.

From fields to families: UC's efforts in food safety science

When an outbreak of E. coli related to raw spinach consumption killed three people and sickened more than 200 in 2006, UC researchers mobilized. Their efforts helped to identify the strain of bacteria and trace the origins of the contamination to a San Benito County farm.

As an outcome of that incident, the Center for Produce Safety opened at UC Davis in April with support from food industry leaders, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and UC's Agriculture and Natural Resources division. Located within the UC Davis Western Institute for Food Safety and Security, the center plays a vital role in ensuring the safety of the state's produce supply.

With agriculture revenue of more than \$31 billion a year, California is the nation's No. 1 food producer and exporter and the fifth-largest food supplier in the world. More than 150 countries around the globe rely on California agricultural products.

The Center for Produce Safety, through its partnership with produce producers and state agriculture and health agencies, is doing its part to support California's farmers. The center's mission includes initiatives for new research as well as field-level training and outreach to supplement industry safety programs already in place.

In addition to tackling natural sources of contamination, the Western Institute for Food Safety and Security created an agroterrorism training program. Certified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the curriculum trains workers in the dangers of intentional contamination of agricultural products in processing plants, restaurants, hospital and school food services, and groceries.

UC's legions of cooperative extension advisors, microbiologists, veterinary medicine specialists and other food safety experts are laying a strong scientific foundation on which to build sound regulatory policy and industry best practices.

At stake is the health of consumers, the food industry and the environment. Here is a look at some of the UC efforts in produce safety.

Salinas Valley center home to pest detectives

Steven Koike, University of California Cooperative Extension farm advisor in plant pathology
<http://ucanr.org/delivers>

In the UC Cooperative Extension's Monterey County headquarters, farm advisors, working with university researchers, provide practical, field-oriented assistance to local producers.

The facility has a fully equipped microbiology lab used for detecting and diagnosing plant pathogenic fungi, bacteria, viruses and nematodes. Due to the urgency of the food safety situation, farm advisor Steven Koike has been focusing the lab's efforts to work on E. coli.

"Specifically, we are trying to develop information on where E. coli is coming from, how it moves around and how it survives in the field," says Koike.

Contamination rare. The task remains challenging with so many possible sources of contamination including livestock, wildlife, humans, irrigation water and even birds and insects. Yet, in the big picture, Koike says, the amount of contaminated produce that makes its way to consumers is small compared with the millions of pounds of food safely brought to market.

"In fact, very little of the produce has such concerns and the industry is doing a good job," Koike says. "Of course, given the occasional outbreak, industry is called upon to do better."

Consumers need to realize that "zero risk" is not realistic, he says. Produce, grown outside under natural conditions, will never be entirely free of the risk to exposure to E. coli and other organisms.

Detecting agroterrorism. Koike's lab is also part of the National Plant Diagnostic Network. Created in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the network focuses on detecting and identifying plant pathogens deliberately introduced in an act of bioterrorism.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, the network includes five regional hubs based at land grant universities. The Western regional hub is located at UC Davis under the direction of plant pathology professor Rick Bostick. The Western consortium encompasses universities and state departments of agriculture throughout the West as well as U.S. territories in the Pacific.

Buffers separate cows from crops

Rob Atwill, interim director, Western Institute for Food Safety and Security, professor of Environmental Animal Health and Medical Ecology, UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine
<http://wifss.ucdavis.edu>

The Western Institute for Food Safety and Security, based at UC Davis, provides both research and outreach for consumers and food producers. Collaborating with U.S. and state departments of health and agriculture, other universities, and government agencies, the institute examines all stages of food production and works with producers to provide sound scientific basis for food-handling policies and best practices.

"UC has consistently provided critical input to the food industry," says Rob Atwill, interim institute director. "We'll continue to work with the industry to identify what's working and not working in the field. We'll be busy for years."

Spacing out. One of Atwill's ongoing research projects is testing the effectiveness of grassland buffer zones between fields of food crops and pastures where cattle roam. His studies have found that a zone of grasses even 3 to 6 feet wide under certain conditions will reduce the spread of E. coli and other harmful bacteria from livestock feces.

The soil acts as a filtration medium to curb the spread of bacteria from water runoff. Studies haven't yet found a specific variety of grasses more effective than another, but the trick, Atwill says, is to have a well-maintained buffer where the soil isn't compacted and water can drain through it rather than run off the surface.

"The buffer is made to help the ranchers," says Atwill. "The buffers are not a cure-all. To really promote food safety requires a variety of strategies."

Cows aren't the sole carrier of harmful pathogens. Birds, flies, wildlife, humans and dogs also can contaminate crops.

"I think we need to be unbiased," says Atwill, a doctor of veterinary medicine. "Wildlife as a vector for food-borne illness is underappreciated."

Changes in consumer buying habits have increased the risk for potential spreading of contamination. Before the advent of convenient, packaged loose greens, people bought lettuce and spinach in bunches or heads. If contamination with E. coli happened in the field, removing the outer leaves usually removed the problem.

Trade-offs. The produce companies are motivated to secure the safety of their products, and consumers are demanding it. But on the policy side, Atwill says there are issues worth debating.

"How safe do we want our food to be?" he says. "Safety will come at a cost."

Erecting 8-foot-high fences across the rural landscape and trapping large numbers of wild animals will change the environment.

"Is that the landscape we want?" Atwill asks. "Or do we accept some illness each year to have open spaces?"

UC delivers before and after the harvest

Trevor Suslow, extension research specialist, Postharvest Quality and Safety, UC Davis Department of Plant Sciences

<http://ucgaps.ucdavis.edu>

UC's food safety mission extends from farm to consumer. Each step of the food production and delivery cycle delivers its own challenges. Cooperative Extension specialist Trevor Suslow focuses on post-harvest microbiology and maintaining produce quality through transportation and distribution.

"From the moment of harvest, it's a race to the consumer," Suslow says. "With fresh produce you really are racing the clock."

Testing testing. The 2006 E. coli outbreak in fresh spinach triggered intense emphasis on produce testing to prevent contaminated products from reaching consumer dinner tables. The level of testing has grown dramatically over the last year, Suslow says. But to make sure the freshest produce gets to market quickly, producers can't hold fruits and vegetables in a warehouse for extended periods. Most fresh produce has about a 10-hour testing window, he says. UC researchers are evaluating rapid testing methods to determine the best practices for quick and careful screening.

On the hunt. Much of the university's food safety research and education efforts involves prevention tactics. Once fresh produce is contaminated, it's difficult to remove the pathogens.

"We still don't have a clear handle on how contamination arises," says Suslow. "There is no guaranteed 'kill' step."

Efforts continue throughout the UC system to identify potential sources of food-borne sickness. Working closely with field advisors, campus researchers help isolate contamination sources, ruling out some suspects and intensifying the hunt for yet undetected risks.

"We from the university are addressing irrigation water in the Salinas and Central Coast areas and trying to see if it's a source of contamination," says Suslow.

So far, no association has been found between irrigation water and contamination, he says. During the studies, university researchers were able to suggest methods and frequency for sampling the water so growers can

monitor water quality.

With a nationwide emphasis on food safety, Suslow would like to see more funding backing up the research and monitoring efforts.

"Given what many people are calling for in improvements in our food supply, government is going to have to allocate more resources to regulatory agencies," says Suslow.

SYSTEMWIDE NEWS

UC's piece of the prize

Scientists throughout UC and its affiliated national labs contributed to the work of the U.N. climate change panel that shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore.

Dozens of UC global warming experts have participated in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports over the last two decades. Those included Richard Somerville of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego, who was a lead author of the fourth international report issued in February. Others from Scripps included professors Lynne Talley, V. Ramanathan, Jeff Severinghaus and Nobel Laureate Mario Molina.

More than 40 staff members from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Program for Climate Model Diagnosis and Intercomparison have made major contributions to all four of the panel's reports, from the first assessment report in 1990 to the 2007 report.

From UC Berkeley, researchers included Inez Fung, William D. Collins, Norm Miller and Dan Kammen. Fung and Kammen are co-directors of UC Berkeley's Institute of the Environment. Collins and Fung are also part of the Earth Sciences Division of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Other Berkeley Lab scientists who contributed to the global warming report include Mark Levine, Surabi Menon, Evan Mills, Lynn Price, Jayant Sathaye and Ernst Worrell of the Environmental Energy Technologies Division.

UC Irvine participating climate scientists included Donald Blake, Michael Goulden, Gudrun Magnúsdóttir, Michael Prather, James Randerson, Soroosh Sorooshian, Susan Trumbore, Stan Tyler, Jin-Yi Yu and Charlie Zender. Charles Kolstad, the Bren Professor of Environmental Economics at UC Santa Barbara, was a report author and doctoral student Nicholas Burger a contributor. In addition, UC Santa Barbara economics professor Stephen J. DeCanio was a co-lead author of a chapter of an IPCC report published in 2000.

Green and cool: UC honored for sustainability

Sierra magazine has named the University of California system one of America's Top 10 "coolest" schools for its efforts to stop global warming. UC ranked No. 4 on the Sierra Club magazine's inaugural listing of the nation's greenest campuses, which hit newsstands today (Oct. 25).

UC was the highest-ranked public university – and the only California institution – on the list, which was led by Oberlin College. Harvard University was second and Warren Wilson College was third.

"The University of California system is honored that Sierra Magazine has recognized the significant impact that our sustainability policy is making," said Matthew St. Clair, UC's systemwide sustainability manager. "Our sustainability policy has been a model for other universities, and each of our 10 campuses shares their strengths with one another to improve the university's environmental practices across the board."

UC's sustainability policy officially began covering green building design and clean energy standards in 2004. It expanded in 2006 to include sustainable transportation practices and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. This

year, climate protection practices, green building renovations, sustainable operations and maintenance, waste reduction, and environmentally preferable purchasing were added to UC's menu of green business strategies.

Sierra magazine highlighted several actions UC has taken to make itself greener:

- The UC system has pledged to generate 10 megawatts of renewable power (enough to power about 7,500 homes) by 2014, increase use of low- to zero-emission vehicles by 50 percent by 2010, and achieve zero waste by 2020 at its 10 campuses;
- UC Davis has improved its agricultural sustainability and conducted environmental educational outreach to local junior high school students;
- UCLA has fought pollution-producing gridlock with its bicycle master plan;
- UC Merced has received kudos for its green building; and
- UC Berkeley has a certified organic kitchen at one of its dining halls and a new major in society and the environment.

"When such a large and important educational institution takes such significant, systemic steps toward addressing global warming it can't help but influence the thinking of many tens of thousands of students," said Bob Sipchen, the magazine's editor-in-chief. "If students carry these strong environmental values back to their communities and into their careers, UC's initiative will reverberate globally."

Indeed, UC students have played a key role in promoting green initiatives. For example, UC Santa Cruz student Tommaso Boggia, who graduated in June, led the effort for the campus to buy green energy by passing a student fee to pay for the purchase. As a result, UC Santa Cruz purchases renewable energy credits equivalent to 100 percent of its electricity consumption and was recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as the sixth-largest "green power" purchaser among campuses nationwide.

"When students wanted organic foods in the dining halls, they worked with the staff and the community to make it happen," Boggia said. "When students demanded climate change action, they were able to turn their campus into the sixth-largest university clean power purchaser in the nation. The best thing is that we are not alone – collaborative efforts throughout California are ensuring a systemwide transition to sustainable practices."

In April, UC Irvine rolled out a shuttle bus that runs on fuel made from soybeans, an alternative transportation project that students helped fund. Also, the campus signed the first contract in Orange County with Flexcar and hosts a hydrogen fueling station. Members of the Green Campus Program created a model green dorm room.

"UC Irvine is rapidly becoming more conscious of green issues. We're really making progress," said Courtney Gill, a senior neurobiology major and president of the Green Campus Program. "The Flexcar program and the biodiesel buses were big steps for UCI. We can only hope that other campuses around the nation will follow in our footsteps."

"What makes the UC system so special is that the drive to be green comes from the top (policy/leadership), down (student body) and also bottom up," said Bhavik Joshi, a graduate student at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business who organizes a student-led research group that focuses on renewable energy. "This recognition will accelerate innovation and adoption of clean technology as it will attract more talent (faculty and students) from around the world."

Green efforts at other UC campuses include:

- UC Riverside encourages carpooling and mass transit, has the largest alternative fuel vehicle fleet in the UC system, and pursues countless individual research projects on air pollution and alternative fuels. Dining Services uses citrus grown on campus in sauces, marinades and garnishes and fresh juices; and recycles its cooking oil to be made into biodiesel.

-- UC Santa Barbara has a policy that all new buildings must achieve the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver certification and has agreed to renovate 25 existing buildings over five years and improve operational practices to certify them through the LEED for Existing Buildings program. The campus, which has won several awards for its energy-efficiency efforts, hosted the sixth annual UC/CSU/CCC Sustainability Conference in June that attracted more than 850 participants.

-- UC San Diego, noted for its use of biofuel vehicles and energy-efficient design of newer buildings, was the first university in the state to be recognized by the California Climate Action Registry as a "Climate Action Leader." The "Triton Bike" program, which turns abandoned bicycles into a transportation alternative for students, faculty and staff, was recognized by the U.S. EPA and Department of Transportation for making the campus one of the "Best Workplaces for Commuters."

-- UC San Francisco has incorporated green building designs at its new campus at Mission Bay and has an active recycling program ranging from paper, bottles and cans to batteries and pipette tip boxes.

Sierra magazine has a circulation of 1.2 million readers, and is the national magazine of the Sierra Club, the nation's oldest and largest grassroots environmental group.

Widely recognized as the best public research university system in the world, the University of California includes more than 214,000 students, 170,000 faculty and staff, and an \$18 billion annual budget. UC offers programs in more than 150 disciplines -- many of which are ranked among the top 10 nationally. UC's five medical centers support the clinical teaching programs of the University's medical and health sciences schools and handle more than 3 million patient visits each year. The UC system is also involved in managing three U.S. Department of Energy national laboratories at Berkeley, Livermore and Los Alamos.

IT accessibility efforts under way

A systemwide movement is under way to create a policy for making UC's electronic resources accessible to people with disabilities.

Since 2006, campus and Office of the President personnel in IT and disabled student services have been working to develop a universitywide policy to guide the way UC presents material on its Web sites.

As more information and class resources are provided online, it is essential to have that material available to everyone including those with vision and hearing disabilities, said Yvonne Tevis, executive assistant from the OP Information Resources and Communications department.

"I started getting queries about what we should do to implement accessibility standards," said Tevis. "The campus people were asking for some kind of guidance."

The IT accessibility initiative has its origins in a 2001 letter then-UC President Richard Atkinson sent to the chancellors affirming the university's commitment to accessibility. In that letter he called for "unfettered access to the benefits created by the new technologies."

With that commitment in mind, IR&C with assistance from a group of campus and UCOP personnel developed draft policy and guidelines that establish principles for accessibility and direct UC to use technical standards found in Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 508 is becoming widely accepted as a general community standard for IT accessibility. The standards require that Web pages be designed in ways that allow assistive technology devices, commonly called screen readers, to read the page content to the user.

In addition to proposing policy, the group working on IT accessibility is exploring options for providing resources that will help campuses implement standards. They developed a Web site with helpful design tips and links to additional information and also are exploring useful tools, such as software that tests Web sites for accessibility.

Advances in technology have opened up worlds of information to the disabled, said Tevis, but if that technology isn't accessible then the advances have just set up new barriers. Any efforts to enhance access benefit not only the disabled but society as well.

"The Web brings all this information to the disabled, and with screen readers and other assistive technology, they can more easily access that information and contribute their skills and talents to the community," she said.

More people are using assistive technology and the need is growing as the population ages.

At UC Berkeley, assistive technology specialist Lucy Greco, works with about 300 to 400 students a year, evaluating their disabilities, determining if there is a technology that will aid their learning experience and helping them find funding to purchase it. The most common disabilities she encounters are learning disabilities such as attention deficit disorders and dyslexia, functional disabilities such as paraplegia, quadriplegia and repetitive use injuries as well as low-vision and blindness.

Improving Web site accessibility helps all users, she said, not just those with disabilities. A volunteer Berkeley campus group, including someone who is color blind, one with learning disabilities and an expert coder, do free Web site accessibility evaluations for campus departments and programs. Greco is hoping that once the systemwide policy is in place, that kind of work will get more funding.

"Having a policy will give me so much more fuel and ammunition to promote this," she said. "At Berkeley it's already happening, but a systemwide policy will give the efforts so much more momentum."

The UC guidelines propose a phased timeline for implementing the policy. Campuses have provided initial feedback about the draft policy and guidelines, which will be revised in response to campus concerns and then presented to the Academic Senate and the chancellors for formal review and consideration.

"It's about creating an inclusive environment," said Patrick Burke, a coordinator from UCLA's Disabilities and Computing Program who has been involved in the accessibility effort. "It's the World Wide Web and the public face of the university should be accessible to the world. For somebody not to be able to find out what the university is doing or not be able to apply just because the (Web site) coding was not done correctly to me is a big problem."

StatFinder puts admissions data at your fingertips

Accessing admissions data at the University of California just got a whole lot easier, thanks to a new interactive Web tool launched by UC officials today (Oct. 30).

StatFinder, available at <http://statfinder.ucop.edu>, is a first-of-its-kind Web site for a public university that will allow anyone to access and search a wealth of admissions data with a few simple clicks of a mouse.

For example, upon full build-out, the parents of a prospective student in the Central Valley will be able to see how many people from their community have been admitted to a UC campus in recent years. A legislator will be able to learn more about the diversity of admitted students from different parts of the state. A high school counselor will be able to give students information about the number of "a-g" and honors courses completed by graduates who were admitted to UC.

With today's launch of UC StatFinder, UC becomes the first public university in the nation to provide comprehensive application and admissions data with an online dynamic query tool that allows users to create tables based on various characteristics and variables.

"As a public trust, the University has a unique responsibility to be open about its admissions process and its outcomes. UC StatFinder helps us live up to that responsibility by providing an unprecedented amount of data," said Susan Wilbur, UC's director of undergraduate admissions. "It is also responsive to the demand that the higher education community be more transparent and accountable to its many constituents."

Reporters, parents, counselors, policy makers and others interested in this information will be able to access existing Web-based tables, and generate and download their own based on the criteria that best fit their needs. They will also be able to manipulate the data, break it down universitywide or by campus, and make their own calculations by downloading the tables into Excel spreadsheets.

"StatFinder represents the use of technological innovation to open another window onto the admissions process at the University of California," said UC Regent John J. Moores, who strongly advocated for the project. "This new tool will help anyone interested in admissions data – from parents of prospective students to legislators in Sacramento – to get a deeper and more customized perspective on UC students and the accessibility of a UC education."

In collaboration with MPR Associates and IT Innovative Solutions, the two firms that worked with UC in developing the Web site, the full scope of UC StatFinder will be brought online in a series of steps over a period of three years. Starting today, users will have at their fingertips undergraduate admissions data from three separate years – fall 1995, fall 2000 and fall 2005.

In two months, undergraduate admissions data from 1994 to 2006 – including pre-admission academic, demographic, high school and community college information – will be available online. Also, additional UC admissions data elements and tables showing key statistics for national comparison universities will be incorporated.

By mid-2008, statistics on the performance of enrolled students will be added, including among others, graduation and retention rates, time-to-degree, UC GPAs, and majors. Users also will be able to perform more refined searches along more variables with the introduction of criteria such as prior schools, participation in the Eligibility in the Local Context program (ELC), first language spoken and majors/disciplines.

The final phase of UC StatFinder will be extremely useful for parents, students and counselors as statistics on admissions and success at UC will be reported for individual California high schools and community colleges.

To view StatFinder: <http://statfinder.ucop.edu>

UCOP restructuring effort continues

The initiative to improve administrative efficiency and effectiveness within UC's Office of the President has moved to its second phase, with a focused look at specific restructuring opportunities.

The effort, launched in April, began with a five-month independent review by the Monitor Group. The consultants concluded in their September report to the Regents that underperformance in key areas has led to a "broad lack of confidence" on the part of the Regents and the campuses.

"Talented people are held back by the processes and systems they inherited – solving these underlying problems holds the promise of not only cutting costs and improving efficiency, but also unlocking the talent of the people working across the university," the report said.

Provost and Executive Vice President Wyatt R. Hume in his capacity as chief operating officer has established work groups to focus on improvements in several key areas, among them UC's budget process, in an effort to make it more open and transparent; capital projects and planning; human resources; external relations; and the appropriate role for the Office of the President. The work groups are expected to return with findings and recommendations early next year.

In the meantime, Hume is moving forward to identify and capture immediate savings. This includes a recently announced control on filling any current vacancies.

Read more about the restructuring efforts at www.universityofcalifornia.edu/future

Labor relations update

The University of California has twelve systemwide bargaining units, representing over 60,000 UC employees. Below is some information regarding current or recently concluded negotiations between UC and its unions.

Academic Student Employees (AGSE/UAW)

UC reached agreement with the UAW on a new contract for ASEs on Oct. 1, effective through Sept. 30, 2009. The contract includes the following:

- 10 percent in wage increases over two years, assuming sufficient funding;
- Waivers for rising mandatory fees paid by graduate students; and
- New University-paid "family-friendly" leave provisions for teaching assistants, including a child care cost reimbursement program.

Lecturers (UC-AFT)

UC reached agreement with the AFT on a new contract for university lecturers on Oct. 4. The contract, which expires on July 31, 2010, includes the following:

- Employees in Unit 18 shall receive an average increase of approximately 5 percent over the next three years, including special salary adjustments for lecturers based on salary level and length of service; and
- Workload maximums for full-time Unit 18 employees in writing programs and foreign language departments.

Nurses (CNA)

UC and CNA are at impasse and mediation will begin as soon as possible. During the bargaining sessions, UC proposed:

- Market-competitive wages for nurses.
- The same high quality health care benefits enjoyed by all UC employees.
- No substantive changes in the retirement program.
- A flexible program for paid time off.

As has been reported in the news recently, CNA has called strikes at several non-UC hospitals in California. UC has stated that any strikes before the completion of the entire bargaining process, including mediation and fact-finding with a state-appointed neutral third party, are presumptively illegal. In fact, CNA was legally barred by court order from conducting such a strike against UC hospitals during 2005 contract negotiations, and the Public Employment Relations Board, the state agency governing public sector labor matters, also issued a complaint against CNA. A final ruling on this matter is expected soon.

Patient Care Technical Employees (AFSCME)

UC has been bargaining with AFSCME on a new contract for patient care technical employees since August. For bargaining updates, please visit <http://www.ucpatientcaretechs.com/>.

Service Employees (AFSCME)

UC began negotiations with AFSCME on a new contract for service employees in October. The current contract expires on Jan. 31, 2008.

Dietitian offers survival strategies for holidays

NOTE TO EDITORS: Video and photo available at http://today.uci.edu/news/release_detail.asp?key=1693

IRVINE -- As director of the UC Irvine Weight Management Program, Linda Gigliotti sees what the holidays can do to people. But the new year doesn't have to dawn with new pounds. Instead, plan and execute a strategy that limits time at the buffet and dinner tables without sacrificing the good will and good times.

Although it's tempting to view the time between Halloween and Super Bowl Sunday as the "National Eating Season," Gigliotti believes activity and mindful food and beverage choices can keep off those holiday pounds.

The key, she said, is ingesting calories wisely. Increased calorie intake leads to weight gain, and everyone has a calorie "budget" they need to follow to keep off extra pounds.

"You need to ask yourself, 'What do I want to spend my calories on?'" Gigliotti said. "Decide what is really important to you. I enjoy stuffing at Thanksgiving because I rarely have it at other times of the year. But to compensate I will decide to not have rolls or mashed potatoes, for example, because I can have those at other times."

Exercise, she added, puts more calories into your account, giving you more to spend on food choices. "Anything that you can do to move your body through space counts," she said. "So when you are at the mall shopping, take a brisk walk around the mall before shopping. Take your family and friends for a stroll through the neighborhood to look at the decorations. Make it part of your holiday celebration."

Gigliotti offers some tips to help negotiate holiday parties without busting your calorie budget:

- Arrive satisfied: Fill up on high-fiber, high-volume foods like vegetables or fruits before you go to a party. And if need be, bring a low calorie-low fat food to the party, like a vegetable tray. "But don't dip those veggies in dressing," she warned. "You can pile up the calories that way while thinking you're doing well."
- Move away from the buffet: People tend to congregate around food. But after serving yourself, move to the other side of the room. "Circulate. Focus on the people, not the food," she said. "Another trick is to switch hands. Hold your drink with your right hand if you are right-handed. It will make grabbing food a bit more difficult."
- Do a napkin test: After picking up an appetizer, read the napkin on which it sits. Check for grease spots. "If the spot is large, you might want to make a different selection next time," she said.
- Drink slim: Alcoholic drinks, besides being filled with empty calories, tend to break down the resolve to limit eating. "Save the bubbly till midnight," she said. "A good strategy is to keep a low-calorie beverage in your hand and drink two glasses of water for every alcoholic beverage that you have."
- "If you do overeat, don't get discouraged," Gigliotti concluded. "Compensate by reducing your calorie intake for a few days later that week to balance the extra calories. Remember the big picture: Celebrations are not all about the food. It's about sharing special times with friends and family."

Gigliotti is a registered dietitian with a master's degree in nutrition education. Her expertise is in weight management and lifestyle modification, working with clients to make choices to manage their health. She is a Certified Diabetes Educator and has received certification from the American Dietetic Association in both Adult and Childhood/Adolescent Weight Management. For more information on the Weight Management Program, see www.weight.uci.edu.

About the University of California, Irvine: The University of California, Irvine is a top-ranked university dedicated to research, scholarship and community service. Founded in 1965, UCI is among the fastest-growing University of California campuses, with more than 27,000 undergraduate and graduate students and about 1,800 faculty members. The second-largest employer in dynamic Orange County, UCI contributes an annual economic impact of \$3.7 billion. For more UCI news, visit www.today.uci.edu.

Television: UCI has a broadcast studio available for live or taped interviews. For more information, visit www.today.uci.edu/broadcast.

News Radio: UCI maintains on campus an ISDN line for conducting interviews with its faculty and experts. The use of this line is available free-of-charge to radio news programs/stations who wish to interview UCI faculty and experts. Use of the ISDN line is subject to availability and approval by the university.

UCI maintains an online directory of faculty available as experts to the media. To access, visit www.today.uci.edu/experts. For UCI breaking news, visit www.zotwire.uci.edu.

UC credit rating upgraded

Moody's Investors Service has upgraded the University of California's general revenue bond rating to "Aa1" with a positive outlook from "Aa2." This is the second-highest debt rating an institution can receive and places UC in the top 10 of all public universities that Moody's rates.

General revenue bonds finance the University's core operations, such as research and instruction.

In its report, Moody's cited the University's strong financial performance, a renewed focus on operational efficiencies and the impact of a variety of new financial strategies that have had a material impact on improving UC costs.

"UC's financial performance remains strong," stated Moody's, specifically citing UC's "stable operating performance," a balance sheet that is "healthy and improving further," and the University's continuing focus on "long-term strategic planning, accountability, [and] transparency."

The credit rating agency also upgraded five of eight other UC ratings, including its pooled medical center revenue. UC's five medical centers collectively represent the third-largest system of publicly owned hospitals in the nation. Other research facility and limited project revenue bonds were also upgraded.

These strong credit ratings enable the University to reduce costs by borrowing at lower interest rates and at more favorable terms.

"This upgrade reflects strong confidence in the University's financial management," said Katherine N. Lapp, UC executive vice president for business operations. "While UC is undergoing dramatic structural reforms in a variety of different areas, Moody's recognizes it is doing so from a position of fundamental financial strength. The University has implemented a more strategic approach to its debt structure."

Moody's cited a number of other factors contributing to UC's strong financial position. Among them:

The University's current debt service remains at only 3.6% of its operating budget. Even in the face of growing borrowing needs, including \$1 billion in projects already approved by the Board of Regents, Moody's noted UC's "prudent approach" to reviewing debt capacity, engaging external studies on debt capacity and treating debt capacity as an asset that should be deployed carefully.

"While we do expect debt levels to grow," said the agency, "we believe the University can comfortably absorb its future debt and capital plans."

In regard to state budget support, Moody's noted that the University has made significant progress "in building consensus around University funding levels and the importance of the University System to the state's economy." It further observed that UC is in a good position to weather budget downturns because of its diversified mix of revenues and a demonstrated ability to grow financial resources through "improved performance, investment returns and philanthropy."

The credit rating service also acknowledged the University's "renewed focus" on operational efficiencies and other strategic initiatives that have helped to lower costs and strengthen overall financial performance.

Moody's added that UC's "premier position in teaching, research and clinical care, along with a clear role in the state's higher education system as the research intensive institution" are also vital components to its credit strength.

For the full credit ratings report: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/2007/moodysupgrade1007.pdf

Top 10 Credit Ratings among Public Universities

University of Michigan (Aaa)
University of Texas (Aaa)
University of Virginia (Aaa)
University of California (Aa1)
Indiana University (Aa1)
Purdue University (Aa1)
Texas A & M University (Aa1)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Aa1)
University of Washington (Aa1)

53 UC researchers elected AAAS fellows

Fifty-three University of California researchers have been elected fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general scientific society in this year's annual election. Nine UC campuses and all three of its affiliated national laboratories are represented in this year's election. The UC-affiliated fellows constitute more than 10 percent of the 471 new association fellows.

With this latest election, there are approximately 580 UC researchers who are fellows of the association. Chosen by their peers, association fellows are recognized for their distinguished efforts to advance science and its applications in a wide variety of fields, including agriculture, biological sciences, education, engineering, medical sciences, psychology and social sciences. Fellows have made significant contributions in areas such as research, teaching, technology or administration.

New fellows will be recognized on Feb. 16, 2008, at the AAAS annual meeting in Boston.

"These elections demonstrate once again the critical contributions that University of California researchers are making to scientific discovery for the benefit of Californians and people around the world," said UC President Robert C. Dynes. "We are tremendously proud of their accomplishments."

The newly elected fellows affiliated with the University of California are:

UC Berkeley

- Robert L. Fischer, professor plant and microbial biology
- Stephen P. Hinshaw, professor and chair of psychology
- Nicholas P. Jewell, professor of biostatistics and statistics
- Judith Klinman, professor of chemistry
- Mimi A.R. Koehl, professor of integrative biology
- Richard B. Norgaard, professor of energy and resources group
- Kevin Padian, professor and curator of integrative biology

- David A. Patterson, professor of computer science
- Thomas M. Powell, professor of integrative biology
- Randy W. Schekman, professor of cell and developmental biology

UC Davis

- Gang-yu Liu, professor of chemistry
- Bruno Nachtergaele, professor and chair of mathematics
- Peter J. Richerson, professor on environmental science and policy
- David M. Rocke, professor of public health sciences
- Thomas W. Scott, professor and vice chair of entomology

UC Irvine

- Donald R. Blake, professor of chemistry
- Robert M. Corn, professor of chemistry
- Christine M. Gall, professor of neurobiology and behavior
- Jean-Luc Gaudiot, professor and chair of electrical engineering and computer science
- Michael T. Goodrich, professor of computer science, associate dean of faculty development
- Scott D. Rychnovsky, professor of chemistry
- Suzanne B. Sandmeyer, professor of biological chemistry
- Athan J. Shaka, professor of chemistry

UCLA

- Burton Clark, professor emeritus of higher education
- Steven G. Clarke, professor chemistry and biochemistry
- Miguel A. Garcia-Garibay, professor of chemistry and biochemistry
- Carl A. Maida, adjunct professor of public health and community dentistry

UC Riverside

- Alexander A. Balandin, professor of electrical engineering
- J. Ole Becker, cooperative extension specialist; nematologist

- Anil B. Deolalikar, professor of economics
- Larissa F. Dobrzhinetskaya, adjunct professor of Earth sciences
- Mary Gauvain, professor of psychology
- David D. Lo, distinguished professor of biomedical sciences
- John Y.-J. Shyy, professor of biomedical sciences
- Richard Stouthamer, professor of entomology
- Ellen A. Wartella, professor of psychology

UC San Diego

- Steven P. Briggs, professor of biological sciences
- Naomi Oreskes, professor of history and science studies
- Palmer Taylor, professor and dean of pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences
- Jason X.-J. Yuan, professor of medicine

UC San Francisco

- Steven D. Rosen, professor and vice chair of anatomy

UC Santa Barbara

- Guillermo C. Bazan, professor of chemistry and biochemistry
- Barbara Herr Harthorn, associate professor of women's studies; director of the Center for Nanotechnology in Society
- Ken C. Macdonald, professor of marine geophysics and Earth science
- John M. Melack, professor of ecology, evolution and marine biology; associate dean of the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management
- Jeffrey D. Richman, professor of physics

UC Santa Cruz

- Sandra M. Faber, professor and chair of astronomy and astrophysics
- Jin Z. Zhang, professor of chemistry

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

- Hendrik Bluhm, staff scientist, chemical sciences division

-- Benedict Feinberg, deputy director, Advanced Light Source

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

-- Tomás Díaz de la Rubia, associate director, chemistry, materials, Earth and life sciences

Los Alamos National Laboratory

-- Thomas J. Bowles, laboratory researcher

-- Richard L. Martin, laboratory researcher

Founded in 1848, the American Association for the Advancement of Science encompasses more than 262 societies and academies of science and serves 10 million people. The association aims to make progress in science throughout the world and seeks to increase public awareness in areas of science and technology. AAAS, the publisher of the journal *Science*, also strives to foster communication among scientists and enhance international cooperation in scientific innovation.

Widely recognized as the best public research university system in the world, the University of California includes more than 214,000 students, 170,000 faculty and staff, and an \$18 billion annual budget. UC offers programs in more than 150 disciplines -- many of which are ranked among the top 10 nationally. UC's five medical centers support the clinical teaching programs of the University's medical and health sciences schools and handle more than 3 million patient visits each year. The UC system is also involved in managing the three U.S. Department of Energy national laboratories at Berkeley, Livermore and Los Alamos.

For more information about the University of California: www.universityofcalifornia.edu

Additional contacts:

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Six at UC receive White House science awards

Six researchers affiliated with the University of California are among this year's 58 recipients of the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers.

The awards, announced today (Nov. 1), are the nation's highest honor given by the White House to researchers at the outset of their professional scientific careers.

"We take great pride in the University of California scholars who have been recognized by these awards," said UC President Robert C. Dynes. "They are making valuable contributions to scientific discovery in an exciting range of fields, and we look forward with great anticipation to their continued accomplishments."

UC received more awards than any other institution. The UC-affiliated winners are:

UCLA

-- Edward Kohler, assistant professor of computer science

-- Yi Tang, assistant professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering

UC Merced

-- Shawn Newsam, assistant professor of engineering

UC San Diego

-- Katerina Akassoglou, assistant professor of pharmacology

-- Brian Keating, assistant professor of physics

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

-- Len Pennacchio, senior staff scientist in the genomics division, genetic analysis program head of Joint Genome Institute

Established in 1996, the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers honors the most promising researchers in the nation within their fields. Nine federal departments and agencies annually nominate scientists and engineers who are at the start of their independent careers and whose work shows exceptional promise for leadership at the frontiers of scientific knowledge. Participating agencies award these talented scientists and engineers with up to five years of funding to further their research in support of critical government missions.

Widely recognized as the best public research university system in the world, the University of California includes more than 214,000 students, 170,000 faculty and staff, and an \$18 billion annual budget. UC offers programs in more than 150 disciplines -- many of which are ranked among the top 10 nationally. UC's five medical centers support the clinical teaching programs of the University's medical and health sciences schools and handle more than 3 million patient visits each year. The UC system is also involved in managing three U.S. Department of Energy national laboratories at Berkeley, Livermore and Los Alamos.

Get your daily UC news at: <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news>

FEATURED CAMPUS: UCLA

Med centers team up with donor to heal deep scars of war

Doctors at UCLA Medical Center and a philanthropist who serves on the hospital's advisory board are helping to heal wounded American soldiers through a unique partnership with a military medical facility in San Antonio, Texas.

"Operation Mend," a collaborative project between UCLA Medical Center and Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC), provides reconstructive plastic surgery for U.S. military personnel wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. The project is the brainchild of philanthropist Ronald A. Katz, whose Katz Family Foundation is funding all non-covered costs, including travel and housing, for soldiers and their families during treatment.

The first soldier to participate in Operation Mend — U.S. Marine Cpl. Aaron P. Mankin, 25 — has already begun a series of facial reconstructive surgeries at UCLA. The combat correspondent was injured in Iraq in May 2005, his face badly scarred by injuries resulting when an improvised explosive device went off, burning more than 25% of his body.

Mankin was taken to BAMC within 48 hours of being wounded, and for the next two and a half years he endured multiple surgeries, including skin grafts and other lifesaving operations. Last month he arrived at UCLA, where a medical team led by Timothy Miller, professor and chief of plastic surgery, has already begun the process to reconstruct the young soldier's face. Mankin underwent the second stage of reconstructive surgery on Oct. 2.

"That UCLA and others have opened their arms, and opened their eyes, to the fact that we are here, and the way they have treated me and my family gives me great hope," Mankin said. "Not just what to expect for myself, but what to expect for the service members to follow."

Mankin and his wife, Marine Lance Cpl. Diana Mankin, and their 8-month-old daughter, Maddie, are based at BAMC but are staying at UCLA Tiverton House while Mankin undergoes surgery.

The idea for this unique pilot program began last November when Katz saw Mankin being interviewed on CNN. "I saw Aaron's face, and I thought it would really be wonderful if something could be done," Katz said. Three months later, Katz attended the opening of the Center for the Intrepid at BAMC and saw many other soldiers with facial disfigurements. "I committed myself at that point in time that we were going to do whatever we could to make Aaron and others who suffered that same type of problem better," he said.

Katz approached Gerald S. Levey, UCLA's vice chancellor of medical sciences and dean of the Geffen School of Medicine, who immediately got on board. Within six months, Operation Mend was born.

Mankin has been a very popular patient, and at a press conference Oct. 1 he received a special gift from his case manager, UCLA clinical nurse specialist Patti Taylor. A member of Patches Fabrics, a community group in Reseda that creates "quilts of valor" for wounded soldiers, Taylor presented Mankin with a colorful quilt made of fabric covered in American flags.

More soldiers are already scheduled to follow Mankin to UCLA as part of Operation Mend. "I knew of the spectacular, world-class capabilities of UCLA's plastic surgery team, and I thought, if we could only avail these kids of that kind of superb capability, it would be a change in their lives," Katz said. "It's going to change Aaron's life. It's going to change these others. And it's such a joy to see it happen."

DYNES' DESK

Dynes' Desk is a way for anyone to email a comment, idea, or suggestion to President Dynes. While he is not able to respond personally in most instances, President Dynes does read each email submitted. In each edition of "Our University," he will respond to a sampling of Dynes' Desk submissions. Write to President Dynes at <http://universityofcalifornia.edu/president/desk.html> or at 1111 Franklin Street, Oakland, California 94607-5200.

Comment

Thank you for your leadership of the University of California over the past four years. While I am saddened to lose you as our leader, it is with much appreciation and gratitude that I write to thank you for the tireless efforts you put forth for all UC students, faculty, and staff during your tenure as president. You had to handle so many very public and complex issues that faced UC over the past few years, and you not only navigated us through those tough waters, but you continued to move us forward striving for continued excellence.

Bob Dynes

Thank you for your kind words, but more importantly for your partnership and dedication to the university. Yes, these have been, and continue to be, challenging times for us all, but together we will work through them. And even though I am stepping down as president, I will continue to play an active role within the UC community, just in a different way. It's important for everyone to remember the big picture – that UC is a remarkable institution, unmatched in the world, and that every single member of the UC family plays an important role in UC's contributions to society.

Write to President Dynes at <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/president/desk.html>.

PEOPLE

Academic Senate chair leads with passion

Michael Brown, elected Academic Senate chair in September, began his UC career more than 30 years ago as a student at the Irvine campus.

The son of a U.S. Air Force serviceman and a licensed vocational nurse, Brown was born at the old Parks military base outside Pleasanton and largely grew up in San Bernardino. He credits his parents for instilling a love for education in him.

"My dad called himself a fugitive from reform school," Brown said. "He didn't have a high school education. He enlisted, lying about his age, and, when he got out of the service, he went to a business college. My parents believed in education and made sure all their children went to a four-year college."

The Brown children all earned their educations at public institutions. One brother and a sister graduated from UC San Diego and UCLA respectively, and another brother from the University of Kansas. Brown earned a bachelor's in psychology at UC Irvine and master's and doctorate degrees in counseling psychology at Southern Illinois University – Carbondale. In 1993, after teaching at Ball State and Wayne State universities, Brown joined the faculty at UC Santa Barbara's Graduate School of Education in the Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology Program, now a department.

He is a fellow in the American Psychological Association and focuses on research issues related to career counseling for ethnic and racial minorities.

Brown has a long track record of service on department, campus and systemwide committees including a 16-month term as vice chair of the Academic Senate.

"Michael Brown epitomizes the word ebullient," said William Drummond, journalism professor and chair of the UC Berkeley division of the Academic Senate. "That means he has an energetic and almost effervescent personality, and it's affecting everyone around him."

Drummond describes Brown as down to earth and willing to ask for advice. Academic Senate meetings are filled with raucous laughter thanks to Brown's sense of humor, Drummond said, and there's a great sense of teamwork.

"Michael wants to educate kids," said Drummond. "I think that's the wellspring from which this ebullience springs."

Brown himself sees tremendous challenges ahead for the University of California. Here he answers questions about the future of our university and the faculty's role in shaping it.

Q: What issues are facing the Academic Senate?

A: There are huge challenges in terms of our public standing with respect to the budget and our public mission. The faculty has expressed great concerns about salary uncompetitiveness, not just for faculty but also for staff and our graduate students. We're also concerned about the stratification of our campuses and the corporatization of them, largely as a consequence of an eroding level of public support.

The faculty has expressed a view that there's a great need to better state our case to the general public and to be responsive to what the public expects of us.

I would like to think this would be solved in the next day or two, but these challenges require a concerted and sustained effort.

Q: How does the faculty fit into this effort?

A: Whatever UC is, it's because of its faculty. They are the ones closest to our mission of teaching, research and

public service that actually happens in our classrooms, labs and clinics.

The plate is full of things to do. The challenges are great but UC is a great institution. I think it speaks highly of the greatness of the university that we have great challenges to meet.

Q: What are some of these challenges?

A: There are the restructuring efforts of the Regents and the Office of the President to show we're handling our resources correctly. Faculty want to make sure with all the shuffling and reorganizing that we can still effectively maintain our institution. Some functions may devolve to the campuses. We want to make sure that what comes to the campuses comes with resources to handle it.

The faculty has a huge stake in the choice of the next institutional leader. This person needs to inspire and generate the confidence of the university faculty, students and staff and the international community. UC has a global reputation. We think that person will be critically important in efforts to address the effect our state's fiscal woes have on the university.

Q: What can individual faculty members do?

A: These are important times for faculty to step up. We stabilize this institution. We call it to a sense of community. We are here not just for ourselves but for our students. We teach the students. We motivate, we inspire, we do all those things and we need to do it more because we are so greatly challenged. Help where you can and don't think any task is too small. Maybe we can turn this thing around.

The challenges we face have not quite affected our classes yet – but the eroding forces are there. We need to stave that off. We can't let that happen. We need to pull together to fight for the ideals that make this university.

Q: What motivates you?

A: What UC represents to me and so many others is hope – hope to better oneself and better the community and to make a contribution beyond your own life and family. Anyone with chutzpah and hard work can take this wonderful university education and rise to make great contributions not just to their own life but also to the world.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Federal and state funding for academic science and engineering R&D failed to keep up with inflation in fiscal year 2006, according to the National Science Foundation.
- Five University of California campuses were among the top 20 universities in science and engineering research spending: UCLA (No. 3), UC San Francisco (No. 5), UC San Diego (No. 7), UC Davis (No. 16) and UC Berkeley (No.19).
- In non-science research, UCLA made the top 20 list at No. 11 and UC Santa Cruz at No. 20.

What would you like to read about the UC system in future editions of “Our University”? Send your feedback and story suggestions to donna.hemmila@ucop.edu. Produced by Strategic Communications, University Affairs, UC Office of the President.