From a Distance
The coronavirus left familiar landmarks like Wilson Plaza unusually empty, but Bruin resilience keeps us full of hope. Powerful images and words tell the story.
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UCLAEXTENSION.EDU

FEATURES

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For the cover and photo essay “A Quiet Place” (page 22), L.A.-based photographer ADAM AMENGUAL went on a visual scavenger hunt, wandering around the UCLA campus for 10 hours — and walking about 10 miles. “I feel very lucky to be given the opportunity to document the UCLA campus at such a unique time in history,” he says of the photo shoot. Amengual, who enjoys surfing and meditation, has contributed to GQ, The Hollywood Reporter, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

During the pandemic, JOHN KEATLEY started to create portraits using FaceTime. He used this method for “All Things [Not] Being Equal” (page 44). “When the quarantine happened, someone said to me, ‘Get ready to not create,’ which didn’t sit well with me,” Keatley says. “With all the videoconference calls, I wondered if there was a path forward. I’m surprised by how enjoyable shooting through FaceTime has been, and what I thought were constraints have ended up flourishing into creative freedom.”

As a development marketing copywriter for UCLA, ARIEL OKAMOTO explores how the generosity of alumni and friends enables the breadth and depth of the university’s education, research, and local and global outreach. When writing about the community’s and UCLA’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic in “Objects of Necessity” (page 52), she observed that collaborative spirit in action. In her free time, Okamoto enjoys volunteering with her church and local human service agencies.

As the coronavirus pandemic began to sweep the country, so did feelings of xenophobia. In response, writer KATY PARK ’18 quickly pivoted her story about Vice Chancellor Jerry Kang’s first five years leading the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (“All Things [Not] Being Equal,” page 44) to reflect the shifting reality. “One of the things that stayed with me during my conversations with Jerry was the need to give each other grace,” Park says. “And trust that we’re all trying our best to figure things out.”

Raised in France and Italy, L.A.-based photographer ANAÏS WADE shot the photographs for this issue’s “Objects of Necessity” (page 52), which describes as “a documentation of how objects can be a vehicle for memory, especially when experiencing historical times such as the COVID-19 pandemic.” A collection of her essays and poems were published in the book The Blue of Summer. Wade’s clients include Kithlik magazine, Levi’s, The New York Times and The North Face.

JESSICA WOLF has worked in communications and media relations at UCLA for a decade. When writing “A World Changed, a World the Same” (page 30), she felt “pride of the attention and intention that has always and will always emanate from this institution to mitigate inequity and be a vehicle of progress.” Before joining UCLA, Wolf was an entertainment business reporter, covering consumer electronics, home entertainment software and the digital revolution of the 2000s.
IT’S BEEN A HARD TIME for our nation and our campus. In the midst of a pandemic that had already upended our lives, the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery reminded us of unhealed racial wounds and how much we all have to do to truly achieve justice for all. In addition to our existing equity efforts, some of which you can read about in this issue, rest assured that we will do even more to make sure our community treats all with dignity.

When I think about how Bruins have responded to COVID-19, I am humbled by the courage and resilience of our community.

Our students have adjusted to new ways of learning and forming community. Professors have pivoted and developed innovative ways of restructuring classes. Our faculty have been principled voices analyzing the racially and economically disparate impact of COVID-19 and how the pandemic is both revealing and exacerbating long-standing inequality. Multiple campus departments have produced masks and other personal protective equipment. And in April, we announced our partnership with Beyoncé’s BeyGOOD initiative to distribute online mental health resources and cutting-edge cognitive behavioral approaches to help people manage the stress caused by this pandemic.

Even as the UCLA campus may be relatively quiet, the UCLA spirit is as strong and vital as ever. As we focus on the needs of today, we are also trying to contemplate the needs of tomorrow.

This pandemic will have a long-lasting physical, economic and emotional impact on our society and will reshape many of our assumptions and institutions.

How our nation delivers health care, sustains social relationships, builds communal organizations and structures its economy will all require imagination and vision, as we move forward together and adapt to the unknown. But adapt we will, just as we have in the past.

While we can’t know the future, I do think we can learn from the past. One of the lessons of history is that even while painful, trauma, at times, can lead to transformation.

The Great Depression of the 20th century was devastating for American families and businesses, but the economic innovations we adopted in response gave us the modern Social Security system and important, though imperfect, protections for workers’ rights.

In the depths of the Cold War, the Soviet Union’s Sputnik 1 satellite struck fear into the hearts of millions of Americans as it circled overhead. But the space race — and the moon mission it invigorated — created not only beneficial technologies, but also knowledge and even mathematics that were entirely new to human history.

I mention these not to give the anodyne hope of shallow silver linings. We cannot hide from the real pain of COVID-19 or our ongoing racial divisions. At the same time, we must believe that if we pay close attention to the lessons we are learning through these hard experiences, if we have the humility to learn from our errors and the confidence that we can get better, then we can shape our future in ways that will help make our society more prepared, resilient, more compassionate and more just.

This is not an inevitable outcome, of course. It will depend on us making wise choices, informed by the best information and our most cherished values. That is the challenge that lies ahead. And it is the challenge to which UCLA is committed.

“We can shape the recovery in ways that will help make our society more prepared, resilient, compassionate and just.”

Strong UCLA Spirit

During the pandemic and the trauma of racist killings, Bruins have shown compassion, courage and resilience.

By UCLA Chancellor Gene Block

AT ISSUE

PHOTO

TED CATANZARO ’84

ADAPTABILITY

WITH

IRIS FIRSTENBERG, PhD

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HAPPINESS

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WELLNESS

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NINA SHAPIRO, MD
Share information. 
Share resources. 
Share comfort. 
Share kindness. 
Share gratitude. 
Share strength.

Together we are Bruin strong.

#BruinStrong
Anxieties Over Automation

Technological marvels often bring technological anxieties, especially when new advances threaten to affect the labor market.

Today, people worry about robotics and artificial intelligence, as automation has claimed hundreds of thousands of jobs in the United States in the past 20 years. And experts predict that such technologies will massively decrease blue- and white-collar employment in the coming decades.

However, Ramesh Srinivasan, a professor of information studies at the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, sees great opportunity. He’s advocating for a digital bill of rights — policies that include forward-thinking ideas about work and automation. These concepts go with the flow of technological progress and emerging trends, while also cultivating a fairer society.

“Changes in technology move far more rapidly than social and political planning,” says Srinivasan, who recently published Beyond the Valley: How Innovators Around the World Are Overcoming Inequality and Creating the Technologies of Tomorrow. “It’s important that we are ahead of the curve with solutions to ensure that everybody in our society is protected.”

Thinking creatively about the jobs of the future is one starting point. From Srinivasan’s point of view, certain types of automation will require — or at least should have — human supervision. Auditing systems (where humans monitor machine performance) is an area that is only going to grow and grow,” he says. “This means people who can be the interface between the engineering world and the real world that we live in.”

For example, truck drivers could train self-driving transport vehicles. Journalists could oversee news algorithms on Facebook. This approach also has the potential to make society more equitable, whereas unsupervised tech threatens the opposite.

Artificial intelligence is gaining a foothold in areas that can have a substantial and potentially grave influence on people’s lives, such as determining who gets employment, housing or loans. Some machines map out where police patrol. Workers could help ensure that algorithms — which often are shown to inherit human bias — will work fairly. Srinivasan also suggests protecting those in flexible but vulnerable internet-enabled jobs: Why not arrange things so that the workers become co-owners of the company itself?

“This model could be (applied to) everything from eBay to Uber (so that) workers have greater equity in the business,” he says. “It’s all about who gets access to the pie that’s created through these technological transformations.”

Meanwhile, demographics alone suggest there is room for significant growth in caregiving, which isn’t susceptible to automation. As baby boomers, the second-largest living generation, proceed into their elder years, the demand for caretakers is expected to increase.

As for the possible effects of the coronavirus, Srinivasan asserts in an op-ed that “employment guarantees and basic income are critical for the sustainability of not just workers, but the numerous businesses that need the assistance of the state and federal government to keep afloat and, most importantly, to provide more, not less, jobs on the other side of this pandemic.”

For now, it’s important to remember that technology is not a negative in and of itself. “It’s not about ‘automation good’ or ‘automation bad,’” Srinivasan says. “We need to get automation right.”

— Wayne Lewis
WORKING FROM HOME HAS ITS UPSIDES, but it’s not all conference calls in pajamas. Without the daily physical and social activity found in the workplace, it’s easy for the body and mind to become inactive, even unhealthy.

But staying on the move at home is easier than you might think. With tips and resources from health-minded Bruins, you can start a new favorite habit today.

“The most important thing is that you create a schedule: Use a timer. Use an alarm, so that you don’t find yourself sitting on the couch working for hours,” says Elisa Terry ‘94, associate director of fitness and wellness at UCLA Recreation.

The next step is to choose your activities. “Work for 25 minutes, and then move for 5 minutes,” Terry recommends. “Then you just rinse and repeat. The movement can be anything, from taking a little walk to doing little exercises to washing your hands.”

Terry also recommends scheduling a strenuous workout at least three times a week. Break a sweat by doing exercises in repetitions of 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50. For example, 10 mountain climbers, 10 squats and 10 jumping jacks. Then, do 20 of each, and so on.

One final tip: Mix in mindfulness meditation. It’s transformational on its own and a great way to cool down after exercise. — Zone Cassidy

**SOUP TALK**
A UCLA recipe proves a cold soup can be warming in tough times.

BY THE END OF APRIL, 85% of Americans were living under some form of stay-at-home orders due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many have been taking the opportunity to cook family meals at home with two newfound luxuries — time and togetherness — that normal circumstances don’t often allow.

According to Google Trends, the most-sought-after recipe worldwide since March 1st has been for banana bread. Six of the top 10 recipe searches were for baked goods. Google searches for “bread” reached an all-time high in late March, and Nielsen data revealed that sales of baking yeast were up 457% from last year to the week ending March 28, as Americans rushed to stock up for home baking. Grocery stores have been struggling to keep items like baking powder and flour in stock as consumption has skyrocketed.

But as temperatures rise during the summer, home cooks following safer-at-home guidelines might look for other recipes — delicious, budget-friendly and simple ones using ingredients you can easily find in your pantry and fridge, or easily procure at the grocery store. Rather than standing in front of a hot stove or oven, quarantine bakers might find comfort in preparing cooler dishes.

Enter UCLA Senior Executive Chef Joseph Martin and his tomato gazpacho recipe. In a spring quarter defined by remote learning, UCLA Dining Services served 2,400 meals a day on campus, in contrast to the 32,000 it dishes time and togetherness — that normal circumstances don’t often allow.

Remember: The crabmeat or avocado garnish is optional, so feel free to add others — like chopped bell peppers — to suit your tastes.

And don’t worry if you’re preparing this dish for just one or two. While the recipe serves four to five, this gazpacho tends to get better and better as it sits in the fridge. It should keep for three days, so feel free to save yourself a bowl or two for later. — Delan Bruce

**INSIDE TIPS FOR STAYING FIT**
The Bruin Health Improvement Program’s Instagram (@ship_ucla) offers a variety of workout videos that you can do at home.

Part of UCLA Recreation’s FitWell Program, UCLA MoveMail emails videos that will get you moving. To subscribe, visit: fitwell.recreation.ucla.edu/programs/fitness-resources#MoveMail

The UCLA Mindful app offers guided meditations, led by the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center’s Diana Winston. For more information, visit: uclahealth.org/manc/mindful-meditation

The Hammer Museum at UCLA’s Mindful Awareness Meditation sessions are held every Thursday from 12:30 to 1 p.m. via Zoom. For more information, visit: hammer.ucla.edu/programs/events/2014/05/mindful-awareness-meditation

**MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS**
A rock solid plank is the foundation of the mountain climber. The movement of the legs is an attempt to disrupt the plank, but don’t allow it. To ascend, bend your hips and knees as if you were sitting into a chair. Keep your thighs flat and feet in line with one another, and don’t let your knees bend past your ankles. Maintain a good neutral posture and keep your torso tall. To ascend, drive through your feet to straighten your legs and stand tall. Squat your glutes at the top.

**SQUATS**
Stand with your feet hip or shoulder width apart. Turn your toes out slightly — about 15 degrees. To descend, bend your hips and knees and as if you were sitting into a chair. Keep your thighs flat and feet in line with one another, and don’t let your knees bend past your ankles. Maintain a good neutral posture and keep your torso tall. To ascend, drive through your feet to straighten your legs and stand tall. Squat your glutes at the top.

**JUMPING JACKS**
Start in an athletic standing position, keeping your hips and knees soft. From a neutral position, lightly jump your feet apart (approximately 12 to 18 inches) and simultaneously move your arms back to up over your head. Lightly jump your feet back together, and move your arms back to your sides. Do so until you don’t care if you jump out. Keep your knees in line with your feet and hands. Land softly. Low impact version: Tap your right foot out to the side and raise your right arm overhead. Repeat on the other side.

**TOMATO GAZPACHO**
SERVINGS: 4 to 5

INGREDIENTS
4½ cups ripe tomatoes (11 Roma tomatoes or 6 large beefsteak or heirloom tomatoes), chopped
14 cups English cucumbers, peeled, seeded, chopped
5 tablespoons red onion, chopped
6 tablespoons red bell peppers, seeded, chopped
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon koshi salt
½ tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon cumin
2½ ounces fresh basil

GARNISH (OPTIONAL)
5 ounces crabmeat, or to liking
5 ounces diced avocado, or to liking

DIRECTIONS
Put the tomatoes, cucumbers, red onion and bell peppers in a blender and puree until liquid. Add olive oil and red wine vinegar to the tomato mixture and season with salt, sugar and cumin. Pour the tomato mixture into a sealable container, add the fresh basil, cover and refrigerate for 12 hours.

Then use the blender to puree the tomato mixture with the basil, and pour it through a fine-mesh strainer. Drizzle in additional olive oil, and then repeat the puree.

Garnish with crabmeat or avocado — or both. Serve cold.

**FORGET THE WORKOUT, HERE’S THE WORK-IN**
The Bruin Health Improvement Program shares three exercises that you can try in your living room.

**MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS**

**SQUATS**

**JUMPING JACKS**

**TOMATO GAZPACHO**

**SOUP TALK**

**INSIDE TIPS FOR STAYING FIT**

**MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS**

**SQUATS**

**JUMPING JACKS**

**TOMATO GAZPACHO**

**SOUP TALK**

**INSIDE TIPS FOR STAYING FIT**

**MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS**

**SQUATS**

**JUMPING JACKS**

**TOMATO GAZPACHO**
Those in the study who took time away from work — when their women were 50 or older, they took memory-performance tests with Alzheimer’s disease in the United States are women. The reason seemed obvious: Women outlive men in this country by an average of five years, and advancing age is the biggest risk factor for Alzheimer’s and other dementias. But research by Elizabeth Rose Mayeda, an epidemiologist in the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, suggests other factors also might be involved.

Mayeda, with colleagues from UC San Francisco and Boston College, found that women who participated in paid work during early adulthood and middle age experienced a slower rate of memory decline later in life when women didn’t. Memory loss is among the first signs of dementia.

A Mayeda group analyzed data from the Health and Retirement Study, in which more than 6,000 women born between 1935 and 1956 reported their work history and marital and parental status between the ages of 16 and 50. When the women were 50 or older, they took memory-performance tests every two years. The group found that among married mothers, the average memory performance for those between ages 60 and 70 who had never engaged in paid employment declined at a 6.1% faster rate than those who had.

The good news is that the study suggests women don’t have to work the entire period from ages 16 to 50 to reap the rewards. Those in the study who took time away from work — when their children were young, for example — showed similar trajectories to those who didn’t. The same might apply to other interruptions in paid work — like unemployment during the coronavirus pandemic.

Mayeda says other research suggests that high levels of mental stimulation and social engagement help keep the mind sharp. She believes her findings underscore the potential value of policies that support women who choose employment: equal pay for and affordable child care.

Craske and the DGC have published a self-care toolkit to help people struggling with the irritability, anxiety, sadness and fear associated with the COVID-19 crisis, available on the STAND Together website.

There’s a new initiative in partnership with BeyGOOD, the philanthropic arm of Parkwood Entertainment. Craske has been refining the DGC’s online therapy tools, making them more specific. Those developments have helped shape the pandemic-specific STAND Together website, where new materials and topics offering hope and advice are posted weekly. On the website, Craske calmly shares the “five Cs” that can help ease COVID-19 anxiety:

• Stay connected with family, friends and colleagues.
• Focus on what you can control, like your health and wellness.
• Stay calm. Meditate or try breathing exercises.
• Cut down on the news.
• Care for yourself and others. Show kindness.

Long-term impact

According to BeyGOOD, the pandemic has disproportionately affected the economically disadvantaged and communities of color. And its threat to mental health has fallen dramatically.

 Relationships are also being tested as people create new norms at home. Craske says that families are in an unpredict- able and has left us feeling [like we are] without control,” Craske says. “We don’t know what’s going to happen — to our lives, families or jobs.”

She adds, “There are a lot of health care workers with post-traumatic stress disorder. (For some, it may not manifest for months. “It’s a perfect storm of general anxiety and shame, and levels of depression are going to increase down the road. Depres- sion is state of resignation, failure, that so often follows anxiety. That sense of ‘I’ve lost opportunities I’ll never get back.’”

Anecdotally, Craske has seen several disturbing trends, such as a rise in drinking at home, which can be less self-regulated than in public with friends. For some, drinking could lead to other problems. For instance, alcohol plays a part in the increase in domestic abuse, which has risen while other crimes in America have fallen dramatically.

And its threat to mental health is crucial. The UCLA Mental Health Tracker, part of the original STAND program, asks users a few questions each week and generates useful feedback. “Everybody should be checking in on their mental health in the same way they keep an eye on their physical well-being, like checking your blood pressure,” Craske says. “And it will be criti- cal over the next few months.”

The COVID-19 Care Package is available on ucla.edu/stand-together — John Horlow
Breaking Barriers

Gymnast-turned-stunt-performer Sadiqua Bynum ’16 got off on the wrong foot at UCLA — she arrived on campus nursing a torn Achilles tendon. But soon she got past the injury. By her senior year, Bynum, a three-time All-American, ranked eighth nationally in the floor exercise category, wowing judges with straight-backed double backflips.

Mentored after graduation by stuntwoman Natalie Padilla ’08 (Wonder Women), Bynum has regularly nailed the landing, working on dozens of projects, including Black Panther and HBO superhero series Watchmen. She also starred in Cadilla’s “No Barriers” commercial, playing a fierce lady in red who crashes through a window and chases down a luxury car. “When you’re doing action, you really have to keep your eyes open,” Bynum says from her home in Atlanta.

You majored in sociology at UCLA. Did you envision a career in stunt work?

I thought I might get into social work or personal training, but when I graduated, I started coaching gymnastics at a kids program run by my UCLA coach Randy Lane. He suggested I look into stunt work, and I realized I was good at it. My parents had trouble keeping me still, and my neighbor was kind of weird, but I feel like the way [Wonder Women creator] Damon Lindelof explains (racism) on this platform encourages people to be more open to understanding that not everything is what it seems.

What kind of learning curve did you experience, going from gymnastic routines to death-defying stunts?

Most of the time, when you work with other actresses, they want to do their own stunts — which can get a little annoying, because they’ll overwhelm their movements or won’t do them the way they’re supposed to be done. What’s nice is that I was there to support her.

As a teen gymnast, you have said that you were offered the only Black girl in competition. Similarly, the entertainment industry employs relatively few female action heroes. How do you deal with this lack of diversity?

It has been kind of an up and down. With stunts, I think it starts with [how] the scripts are written, so that the Black characters — especially women — aren’t just getting hit once, and then falling or running through a field and hiding behind a building or whatever. We’re able to do so much more, but there haven’t been that many Black stuntwomen in this industry who have been able to perform at that level, just because there haven’t been the opportunities.

You started gymnastics at a very young age — when you were just 2 years old. My parents had trouble keeping me still, because I was always running around and jumping on the couch and stuff. Our neighbor across the street was a gymnastics coach at this recreation center, so I went there, progressed really fast and got into a club gym that was focused just on gymnastics.

You had energy to burn! What was it about gymnastics that resonated with you?

I’m a very competitive person, and gymnastics allowed me to do that in a healthy way. If some girl did a routine a certain way, I’d be like, “I’m going to do it better.” And also, I just like performing. My favorite event was always floor, because I felt like I could really express myself that way and be as powerful as I wanted to be. Several colleges offered you a full athletic scholarship, but you and your family paid for your first two years at UCLA before you received a scholarship.

Your mom and I took a junior year road trip to visit those other schools, and I’d notice there was no diversity. I felt weird. I didn’t feel at home. UCLA automatically felt welcoming — just seeing the campus and meeting the coaches and the girls on the team.

A quote from Gandhi is tattooed on your arm. What does that quote mean to you?

It says, “Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.” I got the tattoo my freshman year, because I’d torn my Achilles [tendon] and came to UCLA with an injury. At the time, gymnastics defined who I was, and since I wasn’t able to compete, it was a really low time. But then I realized that quote and got inspired by the idea that you can push yourself through any situation if you keep your mind focused on your goal. Indomitable will — nobody can take that away from you. It was an important moment for me when I realized that even though I’m not doing gymnastics on this team right now, I still feel like I’m meant to be here.

By Hugh Hart

UCLA automatically felt welcoming — just seeing the campus and meeting the coaches and the girls on the team.

“UCLA automatically felt welcoming — just seeing the campus and meeting the coaches and the girls on the team.”
Ananya Roy, director of the Institute on Inequality and Democracy, works with community organizations and social movements to address societal challenges.

By Cheng Cheng Yat

“IT WAS NICE TO HEAR PEOPLE TALK IN SANE WAYS ABOUT POLICY,” Ananya Roy — a professor of urban planning and social welfare at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs — says about a Democratic presidential debate. As the director of the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA, Roy strongly believes that progressive public policy can lead to real societal change. Her work focuses on how research and critical thought can solve problems in L.A. and around the world.

What makes the Institute on Inequality and Democracy unique among other organizations? One of the key things we’ve done is to think about some of the most pressing social challenges at the moment. That means that we not only analyze these problems, but we like to think about research and action that can address them. I think what makes us different as an institute is that we do our work in solidarity with community organizations and social movements that are on the front lines of struggle. We believe that academic research has a role to play in addressing these challenges, and we build strong partnerships with communities, organizations and movements.

What are the institute’s key areas of focus? We’re focused on four: housing justice, predatory financialization, policing and incarceration, and sanctuary spaces. Cities like L.A. have seen an incredible increase in housing precarity. Our work is about the policy frameworks that can actually enact housing justice. We also believe that housing precarity is tied up with the ways in which communities of color are policed, excluded and exploited, so we do a lot of work on mass incarceration and policing.

The issue of housing justice is directly related to homelessness, which continues to increase in L.A. County. And this is such a critical area right now, because the homeless are so vulnerable to the spread of coronavirus. The coronavirus crisis is showing that there’s an urgent and immediate need to provide services to the unhoused population. When announcing the safer-at-home order in California, Gov. Gavin Newsom said he’s going to start thinking about how hotels and motels can be used to shelter the unhoused. But all of that has been very slow and meager. And the numbers keep growing.

We have a crisis of human life at the moment. There are over 1,000 unhoused people dying every day on the streets of L.A. The average life expectancy of an unhoused woman in L.A. today is 48 years, and 51 years for an unhoused man. If we had those numbers about any other country in the world, we would be launching some major human rights campaign. This is unacceptable. A lot of the work we do is with public interest attorneys, looking at municipal ordinances that criminalize the homeless. Some reports show that the city of L.A. spent about $30 million last year on homeless sweeps, which are about destroying the belongings of the homeless. We’re making it even more difficult for them to get out of homelessness. It’s totally inhumane.

L.A.’s housing crisis is attributed to several factors: the lack of affordable housing, the ever-increasing cost of living and stagnant wages. How can the city solve this crisis? The whole model of affordable housing in California is broken. Basically, the model is, you build a lot of market-rate housing, and then you build a few units of affordable housing. And you hope that it all trickles down. That is not the way we can solve this housing crisis. And this is where public housing really matters. It also really matters to have the protections in place to keep people in their homes. Our research demonstrates that it’s important to prevent families from becoming homeless. We think about how we can reduce evictions, expand rent stabilization and expand tenant protections.

We also need to think about other models of housing. Community land trusts are one example, where the families are able to own their homes, but the land itself is owned in perpetuity by a nonprofit, so the land is taken off the market. It makes home ownership much more accessible. And it also means that it’s sort of a buzzword against gentrification and displacement.

Gov. Newsom has put a moratorium on evictions to help keep people in their homes during the coronavirus pandemic. But is that enough? That moratorium on eviction is crucial, but the ability of people to pay rent is not going to shift a few weeks from now. The impact of this is going to be long-term. This crisis is exposing the structural inequalities in the U.S., but it’s more than that. It’s about unprotected workers who are going to go while they’re sick [because they] have no paid sick leave, unhoused communities being left to fend for themselves or people worried about paying rent.

As a society, we created these structural insecurities for people, particularly for working-class communities. If there’s anything to be optimistic about, perhaps things will not continue as normal, because they were never normal for communities that have been facing this kind of crisis. The U.S. is the world’s richest country and perhaps the world’s only rich failed state. I think what we’re seeing is the need for massive public investment in basic lifesaving infrastructure as a protection for working-class and middle-class communities.

All of the issues you focus on have tremendous challenges. How do you remain hopeful and optimistic for a more just and democratic future? My students give me so much optimism. They’re extraordinary. The University of California system gives me tremendous optimism. This is why I have chosen to stay in the UC system for my entire academic career. I believe the public university is one of the most important systems of socioeconomic mobility and social justice that we have. The fact that we have so many first-generation students — from families and communities that are struggling — gives me hope and optimism.

L.A. is a city of inequality, but it’s also a city of social movement. And these movements have been doing this work for years. It shows how creative and thoughtful community activists are and can be in the face of everyday crises. If they can be optimistic, we have no reason not to be. We have to think about how the work we do can support that optimism and hope for a more just future.

How did your interest in these issues come about? I grew up in Kolkata, India, in a middle-class household that would be seen as very progressive. I was always taught to think critically about poverty and inequality. I left India and moved to the U.S. on my own at the age of 18 on a scholarship. My experiences of immigration is dramatically different from asylum-seeking immigrants, who live under conditions of tremendous precarity. It shapes the current moment of who is secure and who is not. I recognize that I’ve had tremendous privilege. Therefore, it’s my responsibility to use that privilege to do the research and scholarship that’s possible at UCLA.

“We have to think about how the work we do can support that optimism and hope for a more just future.”

Progressive Problem Solver
How to Manage Home Work

A better work-life balance that’s more efficient — what could go wrong?

By Dan Gordon ’85

WHEN COVID-19 LED TO PHYSICAL DISTANCING orders in March, millions of Americans became remote workers. For Christopher Tang, a distinguished professor at the UCLA Anderson School of Management, the script was all too familiar. In 2003, Tang was dean of the business school at the National University of Singapore when the university went into lockdown mode in response to the SARS epidemic. It was then that he had to adapt to a new reality: remote learning.

But the work-at-home life isn’t without challenges. The increased flexibility of your schedule also means the lure of nonwork activities, the potential to overdo it and allow work to blend into evenings and weekends. There’s also the absence of chitchat with co-workers, which can result in you feeling socially isolated — or, depending on your household, there could be the disruptive demands of pets, children or other family members. And for workers whose jobs rely on constant interactions with managers and team members, even state-of-the-art remote communication tools can’t always measure up to physical proximity.

But Tang views remote work as far more viable today, across many business sectors, than it was in the past. To successfully make the leap, he recommends the following:

Set a Pattern
Successful remote workers establish a daily routine and environment that places them in the right mindset. “You need to treat working from home as if you’re going in to work,” Tang says. Ideally, that means setting up a proper office (not too cozy, he advises). It means a morning routine of showering, getting out of your pajamas and donning professional attire — even if the only one likely to see you is a pet or two. The routine also incorporates a workout, meditation or simply a lingering cup of coffee during which you set the day’s priorities, all the better. The idea, Tang says, is to establish a mental separation between personal time and work time.

Keep Regular Hours
Having the flexibility to go to the grocery store or gym during nonpeak times is one of the great perks of the work-from-home life, but Tang cautions against slipping into a schedule that becomes random and haphazard. “Keeping regular work hours is important, even at home,” he says. It’s OK to take advantage of the flexibility to set hours that maximize your productivity or meet your scheduling needs. For example, if you’re more of a morning person, or need to be done by the time the kids get home from school, then start and end the workday early — if your job allows. But Tang recommends mostly adhering to the same hours, with regularly timed lunch and coffee breaks.

Find Quiet Time
If you have family at home, and especially if that includes young children, you might need to establish some boundaries. “It’s important to communicate that even though Mom or Dad is at home, they are still working,” Tang says. Ideally, your office is in a separate room with a door that can close, but not everyone has that luxury. If parents have an important call or need to focus on a project, they can keep children occupied with a quiet activity, such as a jigsaw puzzle.

Speak Up
Technology has taken us far, but it can’t fully capture the body language, tone of voice and other nuances of in-person interactions. To compensate, Tang says, remote workers need to err on the side of overcommunication. Whether with other team members, a client or a supervisor, be sure to give frequent updates and check-ins, seek clarifications, ask questions and raise concerns. As much as possible, use voice and video rather than text and email, particularly on matters where there is a potential for disagreement or conflict. Tang notes that it’s also important to have open lines of communication so that employees don’t feel constrained from bouncing work ideas off one another. Videoconferencing requires different rules of engagement than face-to-face meetings, balancing camaraderie and clarity.

Gather Around the (Virtual) Watercooler
It’s vital to keep the communication channels open with colleagues — not just for work-related matters, but also for building the camaraderie that can be critical to the success of your organization’s mission and your overall job satisfaction. Find ways to replicate the casual watercooler and coffee-break conversations that keep you connected. If you work with other remote employees, Tang suggests socializing with them by taking breaks and lunch hours via phone or videoconferencing. If you have an interoffice instant messaging platform, such as Slack, set up a channel or room devoted to nonwork conversations.

Seek Social Connections Outside of Work
For many, a major downside to working from home is the social isolation. The absence of daily contact with co-workers necessitates proactive measures to cultivate other social outlets, Tang says. That’s where one of the biggest upsides to the work-from-home life comes in.

“View the time you save by not having to commute as an opportunity to virtually reconnect with friends, family and former colleagues,” he suggests. “Keep in mind that there are other people doing the same thing. And they might feel lonely at times, so we need to make an effort to reach out to keep up our social network.”

Be Well
Paying attention to your own wellness — both mental and physical — remains as important as ever. To do this while working remotely comes with challenges and opportunities. For instance, if you like to snack, set limits and remind yourself that just because there’s ample food nearby, such actions carry a price. It’s also helpful to step away from the workspace for short periods to break up the day, give your eyes and brain a rest, and keep the blood circulating. “As a remote employee, spending time away from the physical work environment can provide a different perspective on the company and your colleagues,” Tang says.
EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED. As we go to press with this issue, we know that the world will be coping with the COVID-19 pandemic for some time. Our world has never seen anything like it. Rapidly spreading and mysterious, with a vaccine still elusive, the coronavirus continues to confound the best minds in the world. Like universities around the globe, UCLA and its faculty, staff and students are in the thick of it, as administrators work to keep everyone safe while maintaining university operations.

We at UCLA Magazine left the Wilshire-Glendon office on Friday, March 13, which was a few days after Chancellor Gene Block announced UCLA’s transition to remote learning. On March 18, we quickly sent photographer Adam Amengual to see what he could find on our suddenly deserted campus.

You will see some of the images he captured on the following pages, including solo walkers on a near-empty campus and bare shelves at the UCLA Store as people stocked up on supplies. At first, we were conflicted: Do we show students in masks or not? Do we show people hugging? Celebrating, even though most of the Class of 2020 wouldn’t be able to — at least not for a while?

We know UCLA researchers are among those working on vaccines, testing and treatments, but more time and study is needed. Ideas and action are under way for sure, including a pilot Seed Grant program that the UCLA AIDS Institute is running. It makes sense. The umbrella institute will speed up the grant process, says Jerome Zack, co-director of the UCLA AIDS Institute, helping to provide funding to think tanks and helping investigators work together to understand and trounce this thing.

Then, in “A World Changed, a World the Same” on page 30, you’ll read about how students, faculty and staff are coping — inspiring examples of the way our community has rallied to support one another — as this crisis continues to expose deep-seated vulnerabilities in our culture and economy. We round it out with a personal essay from a nurse who recently graduated from the UCLA School of Nursing.

And I’ll admit to some little things that brought me bits of comfort and joy in recent weeks: Being able to easily make a left turn on Sepulveda Boulevard. Taking a virtual class with my pal and aerobics queen Molly Fox (and seeing her for the first time in 30 years). More time with people I love. When I gather around my laptop and phone for Zoom meetings, classes and happy hours, it feels like the families who listened together to Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “fireside chats” during the Great Depression. Seeing my colleagues (and all the newscasters) at home is kind of nice, too.

We wanted to show you how Bruins adjust, pivot and invent. To give you some inspiration, some hope and a bit of a record of our days during this exceptional time. What resources are out there as we dig even deeper and longer into our altered life — on page 12, “Look After Yourself, Mentally” discusses how UCLA’s existing Depression Grand Challenge (DGC) will address our long-term mental and emotional health needs after the pandemic is over through its STAND Together initiative. We can also excitedly share that the STAND Together project — based on programs created by DGC — was launched in partnership with Beyoncé’s BeyGOOD initiative.

Experts advise that we acknowledge the grief we’re feeling for the things and people we’ve lost: loved ones, our sense of security and spontaneity. Also, the grief of our nation as we mourn those killed by the racist disregard for Black life. Take a moment to feel the sadness, maybe ask others what they are mourning and what they need from you.

Be safe, be well and together we will get through this. — Peg Moline
HOSPITAL HELPERS

The Emergency Medicine Research Associates — based in the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA’s Department of Emergency Medicine — publicized volunteer opportunities at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. The student-run, faculty-supported clinical research program gives undergraduate students the chance to assist with screening, consenting and enrolling patients in clinical trials and observational studies.

SOLO RIDER

Following UCLA’s March 10 transition to online instruction, students and faculty began to leave campus and head home. As a result, Janss Steps, a normally busy thoroughfare on campus, became unusually quiet.
A QUIET PLACE

WALKING ALONE

A student walked through an eerily empty campus near the Court of Sciences.

NO FOUNTAIN ACCESS

Though fewer students were out and about, a water fountain on the Hill was wrapped in plastic and blocked off to prevent possible contamination.
SAFETY AT THE UCLA STORE
Gloves and sanitizer — hallmarks of the COVID-19 era — were present at the UCLA Store’s cash register.

LAPTOP CHECKOUT
Students rushed to check out loaner laptops before the slowdown in campus operations.

ONE LAST BOX
Paper products, like this last box of facial tissues, flew off the shelves at the UCLA Store.
MASKING ADAPTABILITY
While reserving N95 masks for health care workers, Bruins smartly pivoted to wearing a wide variety of face coverings every day.

SPACE TO STUDY
The reading room at Powell Library is normally filled with industrious students. But this year, pages were left unturned as most shifted to working remotely.

TAKING A BREATH
Medical staff found a green haven at the UCLA Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden, which provided a quiet space for them to catch up with family and friends.
IN AN EFFORT to stem the tide of COVID-19, state and national policies have enforced safe physical distancing. But these measures quickly brought into sharp relief the deep vulnerabilities and inequities that already existed in our economy and culture — the effects of which will reverberate long after the virus’s most pressing threat has passed.

But the ways in which communities have rallied to address and mitigate those vulnerabilities and inequities will also reverberate. And as a result, our creativity will be enhanced, and our commitment to one another will be strengthened. At UCLA, that sense of community in the face of inequity emerged early.

As soon as UCLA realized the need to shift to remote teaching, Patricia Turner, senior dean of the UCLA College of Letters and Science, recognized that many students would lack the basic technology to thrive in such a scenario. She immediately pledged her entire $90,000 discretionary fund — raised during the Centennial Campaign for UCLA — to ensure students in need were able to acquire the technology required for remote learning. Grants for laptops and Wi-Fi access were given on a first-come, first-served basis. Other deans and department heads also committed support from their own discretionary funds, and the Bruin Tech Award was launched. Ina Sotomayor, UCLA’s financial aid director, immediately agreed to support the effort by overseeing the application and vetting process, ensuring that the most eligible students received the funding.

“That money was set aside for unorthodox situations, to help when a student looks like they are going to fall between the cracks — sort of a rainy day fund,” Turner says. “Well, it’s raining. I couldn’t think of a better use for it.”

And contrary to what outside perceptions might be, Turner knew there would be a lot of students who would need help. “UCLA does have a financially vulnerable student population,” she says. “Obviously, they are smart as a whip because they were admitted, but with lower-income students, there is always a risk we will lose them in the spring quarter. To let Wi-Fi access or the lack of a laptop be the deal breaker this year — we couldn’t let that happen.”

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UCLA launched a fundraising campaign around the Bruin Tech Award, and alumni showed up on the first day of the campaign. As of April 15, more than $200,000 had been raised from 1,069 donors, in increments as small as $8.

“We’ve heard from a lot of donors about how grateful they are to have a chance to help.” Turner says. “There is a story behind almost every gift. People are writing on the website’s donor wall and dedicating their gift to a specific teacher or department, some UCLA entity that was instrumental in that giver’s life. It’s very moving.”

Turner hopes the generosity that provided the much-needed discretionary funds will extend beyond this crisis, with donors helping to refill the coffers.

Alumni gather to support well-being

In addition to helping students and faculty during the COVID-19 crisis, UCLA Alumni Affairs is also committed to supporting the worldwide network of Bruins through events and connections. Shortly after safer-at-home policies went into effect, the UCLA Alumni Association organized a mindfulness webinar, which more than 500 alumni attended. Due to its success, the webinar has become an ongoing series.

“I was stunned at the turnout,” says Kristine Werlinich, senior director of regional communities and Future Bruin Initiatives. “The feedback has been great. We were happy to be able to provide something like this and to be able to do it so quickly. Our alumni are proud to be associated with UCLA and are so consistently generous.”

The Alumni Association is also focused on sharing its career-networking portal UCLA ONE, helping Bruins find work during challenging economic times.

Amid the shockwaves of COVID-19, there’s an immediate need for mental health solutions, and UCLA is uniquely suited to rise to that challenge, especially during a time of global anxiety, stress and distress.

The Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC) has been researching and teaching about mindfulness and meditation for more than 14 years. Last year, it launched UCLA Mindful, a free meditation app. There are also guided meditations at uclahealth.org/marc. In addition, MARC quickly transitioned its free lunchtime meditation sessions at the Hammer Museum at UCLA to a virtual environment — they’re now available as a podcast and a live event online.

By Jessica Wolf

UCLA RISES TO THE CHALLENGE WITH HUMANITY, CREATIVITY AND STRONG COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.
Love sparks involvement
UCALM alumni and professional basketball player Kevin Love, an outspoken advocate for the dialogue and research around anxiety and depression, was one of the first celebrities to offer financial support for some of the hardest-hit parts of campus in the video game world — Minecraft.

And we might be better for this
With millions of people working, learning, creating, sharing and connecting from home, environmental scientists and activists are keenly observing the effects of mass changes in human behavior. Just three weeks into L.A.’s extensive restrictions on movement, a study on air quality revealed that the city had some of the cleanest air in the world. But UCLA environmental experts are also aware that these changes are temporary. After all, the ability to work online isn’t necessarily widespread.

With web-based services like Zoom, Houseparty, Google Hangouts and similar platforms giving the spotlight in the wake of COVID-19, it’s easy to get excited about revamping popular support for net neutrality laws. But that notion isn’t simple, says John Villasenor, professor of electrical engineering, law, public policy and management at UCLA Samueli School of Engineering.

The current situation has underscored how vital internet access is, he says. “Everyone deserves good internet access. That said, it’s also important to not lose sight of the inequities in the role it plays. For a computer programmer, internet access can make it seamless to work from home. But for someone whose job is stockpiling shelves in a food distribution warehouse, there’s simply no option to work from home, regardless of how good their internet service might be.

A critical element of our ability to create effective and lasting solutions to the virus is cooperation, which comes part and parcel with kindness, says Daniel Fessler, director of the UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute.

Even in the wake of anxiety, uncertainty, and very real security and privacy challenges, the shift to virtual operations for a campus as massive as UCLA has also brought an unsurprising influx of creativity. ‘’It’s an important time for our center.’’ says Fessler, whose employers have not provided enough phone headsets for workers who were effectively risking their own lives during the height of the spread of the virus.

Around the same time, a group of parents from China whose children are attending UCLA started a grassroots fundraising campaign for UCLA Health. The philosophy was their way of saying thank you to the university for taking care of their family members.

Social media accounts began to show video footage of Northerners cheering from their windows and balconies at night. With half the campus in the video game world Minecraft, to hold on to long-held traditions is crucial in unprecedented times.

A VIEW FROM THE FRONT LINES

Heroes on the Front Lines

Kate Gieschen ’20, who graduated from the UCLA School of Nursing in June, reveals how she and other young health professionals have dealt with the coronavirus pandemic.

—I TURNED 22 ON APRIL 9. I live in Westwood. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, all my roommates had left. But one of my best friends, who lived next door, moved in with me. She works on the same hospital floor as me, so we have similar exposure levels. We hung out, watched New Girl and had a dance party in the living room. I guess you do what you can do.

This was not what I expected when I was preparing to graduate [on June 13]. So much of this has been heart-wrenching. There have been really happy days and really sad days.

When the news started getting crazy, I was in my public health rotation, visiting different areas around Los Angeles, like Skid Row. I loved being at UCLA because of the diversity of people we met.

When the pandemic started, I was not in an acute care setting, so it did not sink in. But I had read the Red Zone by Richard Preston (about Ebola and other viruses), and I was paying attention to the news. So I knew it could get bad.

I’m from a family of doctors in Davis, Calif. When I was in eighth grade, I had to go to the hospital, which was when I realized how important nurses are. I loved my doctors, but they were only there for minutes. The nurses, who were there for 12 hours a day, made the difference.

They are trained to run toward danger, to care for people. But then they are told they can’t go into a room because they don’t have the right mask — it must be so challenging, the total cognitive dissonance.

I have been frustrated on behalf of the people whose employers have not provided enough protective clothing. It’s not the fault of one person or organization, but it makes me think very carefully about where I will end up working.

One of the things that has really upset me is the idea of people who are dying alone. I just can’t imagine a patient going through everything and then not being able to be with their family at the end.

I don’t think I have felt more scared for myself at any point, but I have felt really scared for others, because their immune systems are compromised.

And I have worried a little bit about my future — like my twin brother, who is on the pre-med track at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo — but they have been all right.

At the hospital, I worry every time someone walks into a room — like, what if the person is carrying something? You just can’t know that stuff. But everyone is doing the best they can, working long hours.

When you wear the N95 masks for long periods, they really cut you into two. Even a surgical armpit rash. You get all overheated. And nurses are known for their ingenuity and have been finding creative solutions. I got some headbands and kind of a cloth for my mask.

The nurses who teach and work with me are so patient, so strong. They have always been badasses, but now the world knows it.

I hope that the people who get groceries for their elderly neighbor will carry on visiting them. I hope we can hold on to the positivity we’ve shared.

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HEROES ON THE FRONT LINES

KEVIN CONSUEGRA, R.N.
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT
AT RONALD REAGAN UCLA MEDICAL CENTER

“Now more than ever, in a world of confusion and uncertainty, I strive to be a force for good in my practice and for my patients. All of my family is on the East Coast in the midst of this pandemic. I hope the care I provide has a ripple effect that is felt by my family over there.”

VANESSA FRANCO, M.D., PH.D.
EMERGENCY MEDICINE AND SPORTS MEDICINE PHYSICIAN AT RONALD REAGAN UCLA MEDICAL CENTER AND UCLA MEDICAL CENTER, SANTA MONICA

“COVID has forced us to adapt quickly to what seems like an ever-changing world,” she says. "Having watched Frozen 2 with my kids numerous times, I try to live by Anna’s mantra and just ‘do the next right thing.’”

NATASHA WHEATON, M.D.
ASSISTANT CLINICAL PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE AT RONALD REAGAN UCLA MEDICAL CENTER

Wheaton is the mother of two boys, 4 and 6, and actually made it through a mild case of COVID-19. “Though this has been an incredibly challenging time for all,” she says, “I feel truly privileged to be a physician and honored to be able to serve our community.”
A new style of partnerships changes lives on the vast continent.

By John Harlow

Illustration by Andrea Ucini
BY THE END of this century, 1 in 4 people in the world could be African, says Thomas Smith, a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UCLA, quoting United Nations data. He believes this massive demographic shift will prompt countries to rethink partnerships with Africa, a youth-dominated continent that’s larger than the United States, China, India and most of Europe combined.

And UCLA is ahead of the game, as hundreds of Bruin students, scientists, doctors and administrators work hand in hand with local colleagues across the 54 incredibly varied countries that make up Africa today. Unlike past “parachute doctors” — who would jump into a crisis, often perform heroically and then go home — UCLA people are deeply embedded in African communities, helping to prevent the next medical, economic or environmental calamity.

In January 2020, Chancellor Gene Block and his team of UCLA administrators attended the Diversity in Higher Education Colloquium in Bloemfontein, South Africa — co-hosted by the University of the Free State in South Africa, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and UCLA — to promote diversity and equality in global education. They met tireless and passionate advocates for change, many of whom work through malaria and deprivations unthinkable to many colleagues.

It’s not hyperbole to suggest that their roles are vital to the future of the world. “UCLA’s partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa have been incredibly successful in helping tackle regional issues to improve the quality of life,” Block said upon his return. “It is important for UCLA, as a public research university, both to share our expertise and to learn from and collaborate with colleagues around the world for the advancement of society.”

It’s a paradigm shift away from previous efforts to help Africa through “aid with strings” packages or infrastructure investments that have bred monstrous civil wars and ugly kleptocracies. Smith, who has been working in Cameroon for three decades, agrees that there are still widespread corruption and brutal struggles, which create mass displacements — 750,000 people were driven from their homes in Burkina Faso last year. But there are also extraordinary reasons for optimism. These include the global legacy of South Africa’s Nelson Mandela and the promise of peaceful nations such as Ivory Coast, whose gross domestic product has nearly doubled over the past decade, challenging gloomy stereotypes.

Among a wave of fresh-thinking UCLA scholars who might have never expected to be working in Africa, three inspirational leaders spoke with UCLA Magazine.

Unexpected Journeys

Smith started out as an evolutionary biologist chasing an unusual finch, which led him to the jungles of Cameroon in West Africa. Anne Rimoin M.P.H. ’96, a professor of epidemiology at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, might have become a Hollywood lawyer if the Peace Corps had not offered her a position to track 30-inch-long worms in West Africa. And Sundeep Gupta was an epidemic intelligence officer working at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta before UCLA and Malawi came calling.

From Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, it’s 600 miles of rough road and river south to Rimoin’s bare-bones offices in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). And it’s another 1,500 miles south to Gupta’s desk at the Partners in Hope offices in Malawi. The UCLA trio face very different challenges, but they’re united in their deep commitment to working with African partners.

When Smith got started, he recalls, “I was in Central Africa studying a fascinating species [of bird] called the black-bellied seedcracker, which shows unique variations in the size of its bill. I went to the rainforests in Central Africa, where my passion for biodiversity, sustainability and people was reinforced.

“In those days, I was living in a tent. But decades later [in 2015], we developed the Congo Basin Institute [CBI] to host scholars studying topics ranging from the rainforest’s enormous capacity to sequester carbon to zoontic [species-jumping] diseases such as Ebola.” Located in Cameroon, the CBI is UCLA’s first affiliate.

Smith adds: “In 2013, my colleagues and I discovered that the swine flu, which was first
identified in Mexico, had taken a U-turn. It had moved from people back to swine, and no one — including the World Health Organization — knew it had reached Africa. Swine are the mining vessels for influenza. This is how new pandemics start — there are no borders anymore."

Smith saw something like the coronavirus coming. He remembers a prescient research paper from 13 years ago that referred to "the presence of a large reservoir of SARS-CoV-like viruses in horseshoe bats that, together with the culture of eating exotic mammals in southern China, is a time bomb."

Smith adds, "Even more than China, Central Africa is ground zero for infectious diseases that spill over from animals to humans. These include the ones we know — Ebola and SIV [the origin of HIV/AIDS] — but many we don't. It turns out there are varieties of coronavirus circulating in African bats. Motivated by the current pandemic of SARS-CoV-2, our lab has launched a new study to assess the risk of these potentially dangerous, yet undescribed coronaviruses — both now and under future climate change."

Losing and Learning Skills
As an investigator, Smith works closely with the Baka people, seminomadic hunter-gatherers who intimately know the rainforests of Cameroon and Gabon. He pays tribute to his friend Augustin Siec, a Baka chief who could hear a rustle in the canopy and identify not only the species of the animal but also its gender and role in the forest's ecology.

Smith has been worried that the younger among the 30,000-strong Baka community — under pressure from urban officials to settle in villages — have been losing this indigenous knowledge. But the CBI, which employs Baka research assistants, has created opportunities for them to relearn the skills of the "professors of the forest," including herbal medicines that could unlock future cures for diseases. Siec's recent death from misdiagnosed tuberculosis reminds Smith that health projects across Africa still have a long way to go.

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It’s incredible and hopeful, but we still have to raise more funds to protect those workers on the front line,” Rimoin says, with her characteristic blend of enthusiasm and practicality.

The sources of many such outbreaks have been traced back to “wet markets,” where trapped wild animals are sold as food — as in Wuhan, China, which was ground zero for the COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s complicated,” Rimoin says. “Wet markets are built into the culture, and the people need the protein in areas where it’s difficult to find alternatives.”

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“Right from the start, I was not interested in Wuhan, China, which was ground zero for the COVID-19 pandemic. ‘It’s complicated,’ Rimoin says. ‘It’s trapped wild animals are sold as food — as in Wuhan, China, which was ground zero for the COVID-19 pandemic. ‘It’s complicated,’ Rimoin says. ‘Wet markets are built into the culture, and the people need the protein in areas where it’s difficult to find alternatives.’

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**Malawi Miracle**

Gupta takes a low-key approach to his clinical work in the AIDS wards in Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi — one of the Central African countries most severely weakened by the HIV pandemic. He says that what he has witnessed over the past decade is a miracle of modern medicine and thinking about flexible approaches to diseases.

In 2000, Perry Jansen, a doctor who had completed his residency at UCLA in 1994, established the nonprofit Partners in Hope, Malawi, to bring antiretroviral drugs to the country. At that time, the life expectancy at birth was 45 years; today, it’s 64 and rising. The number of HIV treatment clinics has increased from one to around 20, with UCLA contributing funding and personnel on the ground. So far, around 200 UCLA students and staff have worked in Malawi.

Gupta wears many hats. He is an epidemiologist, a family physician, an assistant professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and programs director at Partners in Hope. “You go where the need is greatest,” says Gupta, speaking from Lilongwe. He says the stable UCLA presence in Malawi is key, allowing recently arrived doctors, such as Faysal Saab ‘07, M.D. ’12, to focus on improving medical practices, using both textbook theory and evidence-based medicine.

One diagnostic issue was that many young men were embarrassed to go to an HIV clinic. But UCLA doctors introduced self-testing kits, and this experimental switch increased the number of Malawians who got tested for and diagnosed with HIV. Ten years ago, 100,000 Malawians were undergoing treatment; today it’s around 830,000. There are still problems, but for many observers, it’s an emotional revitalization of a nation.

There are as many positions of interest for Bruins in Africa as there are countries spanning the continent. It’s not about what Westerners think should happen, but about what works for the Africans themselves, Smith says.

“So what is UCLA’s role in Africa? “There is an incredible awareness of the university, earning respect with its research from South Africa and Mozambique to the Congo Basin,” Rimoin says. “The way we practice global health is much more collaborative than in the past. It’s been decolonized, as we have helped nations develop their own health infrastructures. We have made a promise to be here, to maintain funding, and the Africans are learning to trust that. Our first priority is to not let Africa down. ”
“Just because you have the right to do something doesn’t mean it’s the right thing to do,” says Jerry Kang, vice chancellor of UCLA’s Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

As the coronavirus pandemic has exposed feelings of xenophobia and highlighted societal inequities, UCLA’s Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Vice-Chancellor Jerry Kang are working to find solutions.

By Patty Park ’91 | Photos by John Keatley

ALL THINGS

not

BEING

EQUAL
that profession.

In some ways, our entire society’s attitude toward diversity and inclusion has radically changed since 2015,” Kang says. He cites how in fall 2015, after a summer of bloodshed, Black Lives Matter became a civil rights movement; in fall 2016, there was an unexpected presidential election result; and in fall 2017, the #MeToo movement was in full stride.

In addition to overseeing the rapid growth of the Discrimination Prevention Office and the Title IX Office, Kang devoted diversity and inclusion work to the next level, establishing new systems of investigating faculty, implementing bold new sexual harassment policies and exploring new ways to hold people accountable.

ALL EYES ON US

In the past, especially when it came to sexual
freedom of speech and the connection between words and violence.

“At the center of every profiling argument and justification is the claim [that it is] accurate, and thus a rational response,” he said at the seminar. As hands went up, the class unpacked hard questions together. Why was it OK to call the Spanish flu by that name, but not OK to call this the China flu? Do words incite people to physical violence? Are people just being too sensitive?

“I think it’s important for people to recognize that just because you have the right to do something doesn’t mean it’s the right thing to do,” Kang argued. “And in some ways, it’s deep immaturity and insufficient humanity to say simply, ‘Because I can, I will.’ We can do better, and I think once people get reminded, almost everyone does.” It’s a reminder he shares with the campus community, which has faced challenges with students and faculty using names or labels for the virus that stoke anxiety among Asian Americans.

THE OBVIOUS BROUGHT TO LIGHT

While COVID-19 itself doesn’t discriminate, the pandemic has shed light on the boundaries that exist at the intersection of health disparities and socioeconomic status, as communities of color across this country have been disproportionately affected. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s national report on the coronavirus, Black people account for about 30% of COVID-19 cases, despite being about 12% of the nation’s population. (The CDC acknowledged that race data were missing from 75% of the cases it examined.) Kang says this should not come as a surprise, because comorbidities associated with the virus are not evenly distributed throughout the population, due to the systemic roots of health disparities and the reality of racial bias in medicine. Another important way that racism affects health is through hypervigilance, according to Chandra Ford, associate professor of community health sciences at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and director of the Center for the Study of Racism, Social Justice & Health. “To remain on guard against threats of social discrimination, rude treatment or violence for extended periods of time is to keep the body in a state of chronic stress,” Ford says.

Kang adds, “What COVID-19 has done is put a stark punctuation mark on things that many already knew.” He notes that people are seeing for the reality of racial bias in medicine.

DONNING THE MASK

Kang wears many hats: administrator, academic, lawyer and father, just to name a few. But when asked how COVID-19-related racism makes him feel on a personal level, he answers, “It’s heartbreaking.” When Kang donned a mask for a plane ride — a short time before the CDC recommended wearing face

UCLA has given me a better understanding of my own identity.”

— KAUMRON EIDGAHY

DATA, NOT GOOD INTENTIONS

Another brainchild of Kang’s is BruinX, the data-driven, evidence-based research arm of EDI that operates like a campus think tank. It formalizes protocols that don’t just rely on well-intentioned people to make good decisions regarding diversity hires. All search committees now must be trained using evidence-based information. Also, EDI’s implicit bias videos have been viewed more than 200,000 times and are recommended by more than 55 institutions. And BruinX dashboards provide data-driven campus demographics, and a BruinXperience app captures students’ real-time feelings about inclusion.

EARS ON THE GROUND

Josh Tran ’12, who identifies as a queer first-generation Vietnamese American, has been part of the EDI Student Advisory Board (SAB) since it was established in 2016, when he was an undergrad. Now a law student, Tran especially appreciated the live chats that Kang held to address controversial topics, such as police brutality against African Americans and First Amendment issues. “There needs to be an even more intentional channel to make sure marginalized students feel visible, appreciated and empowered,” he says. “This stuff takes time, and what VC Kang has done in terms of sowing the seeds is really important.”

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Kaumron Eidgahy

As a resident assistant junior Kaumron Eidgahy helped students with the transition to remote learning while simultaneously making sure his summer break and rescheduling his

investigation statistics and sometimes even details, including penalties, are now published on EDI’s website under Public Accountability.

“I think it’s important for people to recognize that what used to be good enough won’t be good enough going forward,” Kang says. “Powerful people who might misbehave will see there are consequences that are being shared publicly.”

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“Equity looks like going into the dining hall and not feeling like everyone is staring at you. It means getting into UCLA and feeling like you belong there.”

—ISAIAH NJOKU ’19

A crisis exacerbates racism, triggers fear and often brings out the worst in people, says Kang. Yet he remains optimistic, partly because of what he sees within the UCLA community. When Zoom classes were disrupted by racist remarks, the Office of EDI found that the perpetrators were random outsiders. And though there have been cases of individuals using racist or insensitive language, Kang says UCLA is bound by the First Amendment, so not every offensive remark is investigated or recorded.

“My general sense is that the overwhelming majority of Bruins have come together and realized what a hard time this is,” Kang says. “I think what we’ll find is that the only way we’ll muddle through to the other side is by the grace and kindness of strangers. Think about the first responders and health care providers who are different genders and different races, different classes of people who have sacrificed their lives in some ways to make sure that we are well. The only way to respond to this virus is for all of us to recognize a certain kind of common fragility in our humanity.”

UCLA MATTERS

Kang believes that in order to understand how COVID-19 is affecting us, we need the full richness of smarts across all disciplines. We need to explore not just the science, but also the importance of names and their connections to violence, which sociologists, media scholars and lawyers are examining now. We need to think about human behavior and how we respond to the safer-at-home orders. “I like the fact that I’m part of UCLA as we struggle through this global challenge,” he says, circling back to the students and the questions that are always on his mind. “Most people are wondering what happens in the fall,” Kang says. “If we have a fork in the road and have a choice look different if we privilege a genuinely hard decision to make, then I’m constantly asking: Does the choice look different if we privilege the perspective of the people who are the least well-off? What is the best thing we can do as a university to promote our basic values of equity, diversity and inclusion?”

A LONG JOURNEY

“I’ve experienced discrimination, prejudice and bigotry my entire life,” says Isaiah Njoku ’19, who identifies as African American, Nigerian (second generation), straight and cisgender. At UCLA, Njoku experienced sinister racism, known as microaggressions, such as not being offered a flyer on Bruin Walk or being assumed to be an athlete. As chair of the Afrikan Student Union, he worked with the EDI office to improve the experience of Black Bruins at the university. The recent opening of the Black Community Center is a step in the right direction, Njoku says. “However, the journey toward equity is a continual battle.”

Because the EDI office was created for the specific mission of holding faculty accountable, much of Kang’s focus has been behind the scenes, building policies and procedures. Daily Bruin articles tell the story of students who feel unheard and an office that has worked hard but is sometimes accused of forgetting a key constituency: the students. As groups such as students with disabilities feel overlooked and request funding for more accessibility projects, he understands their frustrations. Conversations about anti-Semitism and religious sensitivities, especially in light of difficult debates about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, also demand thoughtful attention.

Students who question whether the university cares enough about their particular concerns would have appreciated more direct interaction with me and my office,” Kang says. “I want to own that it was challenging.”

“VC Kang has built an office that is unlike anything I’ve ever experienced before,” says Johnathan Perkins, special assistant to the vice chancellor for EDI, as well as an attorney and an expert on diversity issues. The breadth of matters that come through the office is enormous, he says, but we can always do better. “The problems are infinite, and there is an infinite amount of solutions and adjustments to get to a more equitable place. We need to come at this from a place of love and care for one another.”

The task of leading UCLA’s efforts to get to a more equitable place will now be taken up by a new head of EDI, as Kang returns to the UCLA School of Law faculty full time. That task will be given new urgency by the national outcry for racial justice in the wake of the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery. No doubt, Kang will have some good advice for his successor.

Moving forward, Kang says, trust is the fundamental key. “We need to give each other the benefit of the doubt that we all belong here. We are all trying in good faith to figure things out,” he says.
Objects of Necessity

With generous and swift donations, the community responds to UCLA — and UCLA responds to the community — during the COVID-19 crisis.

By Ariel Okamoto
Photos by Anaïs Wade

Necessity #1: N95 Masks
We took these for granted not so long ago. While health care workers require the official N95 masks, which have been difficult to come by, we are all wearing face coverings now. Generous donations to COVID-19 funds have helped provide masks for students, staff and health care workers.
THE COVID-19 CRISIS has left no community untouched — including UCLA. But it also has brought out the best in Bruins, who have pooled time, talent and treasure to meet the challenge.

Philanthropy on the Front Line
Within a month of launching COVID-19 appeals, UCLA received more than 1,500 cash gifts and hundreds of offers of personal protective equipment (PPE), food and care items for health care workers. The resources have helped UCLA Health expand capacity and adapt operations to ensure that high-risk cases are tested and treated. Support continues to come in from all across the philanthropic spectrum, from foundations and corporations to local businesses and personal fundraising campaigns. The efforts of UCLA students, alumni and community members — including children and youth — have supplied health care workers with PPE, groceries and gift cards. As hospitals across the country experienced PPE shortages, a team drawn from UCLA Health, UCLA Library’s Lux Lab, UCLA Samueli School of Engineering and UCLA School of Dentistry developed a reusable face shield that can be produced using 3D printers, which were purchased with the help of generous donors. Donations also enabled UCLA scholars to pivot their research to shared priorities. Faculty and administrators have expedited clinical trials for treatments, and others have been examining risks among specific populations. Engineering, data science, clinical medicine and epidemiology experts have created an app to track virus spread by survey, enhancing care capacity management. And public health faculty have advised local leadership, spoken with media and educated the public.

“Based on these early experiences, I believe the way we do research beyond this COVID-19 crisis will profoundly change,” says Kelsey Martin, dean of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. “We’re seeing even more shared social

Necessity #2: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
PPE includes not just masks, but also gloves and disposable gowns that help keep health care workers and their families safe. As the COVID-19 virus continues to spread globally, so will demand for PPE. But support keeps coming in from the UCLA community, local businesses, foundations and personal fundraising campaigns.

Necessity #3: Personal Hygiene Products
After the initial panic-buying, basics like toilet paper and paper towels are starting to show up on store shelves again. Generous donations to UCLA’s Economic Crisis Response Fund have helped thousands of vulnerable students — who might still be on campus — make it through.
Support for Students
On the learning front, the pandemic changed the educational experience for UCLA students. Classes moved to remote platforms, student jobs in residence halls and cafeterias were temporarily suspended and vulnerable family members were in need of care. Philanthropy has filled some of the financial gaps created by the COVID-19 crisis.

In the month following the shift to remote learning in March, 300 donors gave more than $190,000 to UCLA’s Economic Crisis Response Fund — and the numbers have continued to grow through supporters’ generosity. The fund has covered basic needs — such as food, rent, hygiene products and medical care — for thousands of students. At the same time, students have been maintaining their education through virtual means. To aid in the transition and the need for equipment, a new Bruin Tech Fund supplied undergraduates with essential technology, from laptops and tablets to Wi-Fi hot spots.

Patricia Turner, senior dean of the UCLA College of Letters and Science and vice provost of undergraduate education, initiated the new fund using discretionary support received during the recent Centennial Campaign. The Bruin Tech Fund also garnered commitments from across campus, including the Geffen School of Medicine and UCLA Anderson School of Management, which don’t enroll undergraduates. In all, 12 campus units contributed $745,000.

“I’m so proud to be part of a community that looks out for everyone,” Turner says. “We hope that these contributions from departments and donors alike encourage others to support our dedicated students during a tumultuous time.”

Other efforts, including discretionary funding from the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, have bolstered student services through the Community Programs Office Food Closet, Counseling and Psychological Services, and Dashew Center for Responsibility and Shared Information, and it’s a better way of doing science.”

Using Everyone’s Gifts for Good
Surviving — and thriving — in such times takes giving of all kinds, including contributions past and present. With everyone on board, UCLA has been able to share its resources with the local, national and global community.

In one instance, researchers identified greater economic risk from COVID-19 in Los Angeles’ Latino and Asian American communities, informing future recovery plans. The report was co-sponsored by the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs’ Latino Policy and Politics Initiative, which launched during the Centennial Campaign. At the UCLA School of Law, experts have compiled legal resources on COVID-19, while moving mock trial competitions online for students nationwide.

Daniel Fessler, director of the UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute, shared his thoughts in an oral essay titled “A Global Lifeboat: Evolution and Kindness in the Time of Coronavirus.” Also donor-supported, UCLA’s Center for the Art of Performance captured the vocals of South Africa’s Ladysmith Black Mambazo in Royce Hall for a unique virtual viewing, and the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture is sharing artistic photos and videos to feed spirits worldwide.

Closer to home, the UCLA Community School in Koreatown is feeding hungry families. Enhanced by philanthropy, the site is a go-to resource for local residents — it’s designated as one of 68 Grab and Go Food Centers for Los Angeles Unified School District students and their families during the COVID-19 crisis.

In times like these, everyone is called to contribute. Together, UCLA’s health care providers, researchers, students, faculty, partners, alumni and donors continue to answer the call.“

Necessity #5: Food
Grab and Go Food Centers, including the one at UCLA Community School in Koreatown, are helping to feed hungry students and their families. UCLA also distributes food and resources funded by donations to its Community Programs Office Food Closet and other campus groups.
As Bruins have followed Los Angeles’ safer-at-home order, UCLA has continued to offer arts and culture, entertainment and sports — virtually. From interactive online discussions to digital programming, there are plenty of options to keep you engaged from your computer or mobile device.

Hammer Museum at UCLA

Even though the Hammer Museum is temporarily closed, you can still enjoy events and exhibits remotely. The museum has uploaded hundreds of videos to its YouTube channel (youtube.com/user/hammermuseum), including its recent online events. Also, there are lunchtime art talks, film screenings and discussions — all online. In addition, the Hammer has expanded its digital archive, which includes UCLA Arts in the Hammer Museum, a collection of more than 1,000 works by artists who have taught or studied at UCLA.

Info: hammer.ucla.edu

UCLA’s Center for the Art of Performance

Although CAP UCLA has suspended the rest of its 2019–2020 season, some of its performances are available online. This includes the March 16 concert with South African choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, which was held just a few days before Los Angeles’ safer-at-home order went into effect. Instead of canceling the show, it was livestreamed and is archived on YouTube (youtube.com/user/acecap).

There’s also Palermo Palermo, a dance performance that presents a postwar view of the Italian city. It was scheduled to take place in April, but the Pina Bausch Foundation has made it available online: pinabausch.org/en/editions/film/palermo-palermo. It will be livestreamed on Zoom, will be dedicated to renewal and successful aging, which is no longer the loss of possibility but a new stage of opportunity.

Info: cap.ucla.edu

UCLA Film & Television Archive

The Archive has launched the Safer at Home Cinema series, which provides a curated list of films and TV shows that Bruins can stream from their living rooms. The lists are centered on specific themes, such as “desert island films” — three movies you would take with you if you were a castaway on an island. Plus, the Archive’s website provides access to an extensive library of footage you can watch online. The Archive’s recent restoration of 1933 film Mystery of the Wax Museum is available online: cinema.ucla.edu.

Info: cinema.ucla.edu

Pac-12 Networks

Missing Bruins sports action? Catch classic Pac-12 matchups and replays from the 2019–20 season on TV or online via Pac-12 Networks. You’ll find everything from men’s basketball and football to women’s beach volleyball and gymnastics.

Info: pac-12.com/networks

UCLA Athletics’ behind-the-scenes docuseries looks at the 2020–21 season on and off the court. Hosted by UCLA Head Coach Chris Waller ’91, who replaced coaching legend Valorie Kondos Field. Released every two to three weeks, the episodes follow the gymnasts from their first preseason practice to their challenging meets.


Alumni Career Programs

In a time of physical distancing and virtual communication, stay informed and offer support by connecting with Bruins across town or around the globe from the comfort of home. From UCLA ONE to Bruin Career Insights, you can sharpen your professional toolkit with career resources for alumni.

Info: alumni.ucla.edu/alumni-career-engagement

SUMMER 2020

New Bruin Send-offs

Every fall, thousands of new students begin classes at UCLA. But the first steps of their lifelong journey as Bruins occur much earlier than the first day of school. Throughout each summer, alumni networks around the world host New Bruin send-offs to welcome incoming students and families to UCLA. These casual and celebratory events showcase the reach and strength of the UCLA community, provide a space for students and parents to ask questions, and give alumni an opportunity to give back to their alma mater in a fun way, through speaking about their experience as students. New Bruin send-offs, which take place between July and September, range from backyard gatherings to potlucks in community parks.

Students and parents were still socializing when they left [the send-off],” says Meg Wilson J.D. ’11, president of the Sacramento Alumni Network. “They were chatting and exchanging social media. Students stayed huddled together throughout — the parents had to pull them away to leave!”

What began in 2013 as 10 Send-offs in California has grown to more than 60 events in all corners of the globe, from Seattle to Shanghai and Boston to Bangkok. These events are not only regionally based, but they’re also hosted by diversity and affinity alumni networks, including the Lambda Alumni Association for the LGBTQ+ community, the First Gen Alumni Network and the Latino Alumni Association, just to name a few.

With a community as large as UCLA’s, it can be intimidating for an incoming student to find their bearings and acclimate to campus. Being able to make connections with other incoming students from their home communities before even setting foot on campus can help ease the transition for many students. For parents and family members, connecting with other parents and families at these events is a great opportunity to share tips and help ease the anxieties of sending a student off to college.

Note: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year UCLA staff and alumni volunteers will welcome students and families to UCLA through virtual New Bruin Send-off experiences.

For more information about New Bruin Send-offs, visit alumni.ucla.edu/send-offs.
Tribute in Blue

On April 16, Powell Library and Royce Hall were bathed in Bruin blue to show appreciation for health care workers, first responders and all other essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspired by the #LightItBlue campaign, the #LightUCLABlue tribute took place every Thursday for weeks, shining a blue light on those UCLA landmarks and Covel Commons. All across the U.S., cities, businesses and institutions have been lit up in blue to honor the heroes who make it possible for us to stay safer at home and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. — Delan Bruce