



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
2147 MURPHY HALL, BOX 951405
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1405

November 19, 2020

Dear Chair White and Members of the UCLA Academic Senate Executive Board,

Thank you for your October 21 letter detailing concerns with UCLA's asymptomatic COVID-19 testing policy and the campus's testing infrastructure. I apologize for my delay in responding to your message. Doing what we can to protect the health and safety of our community – and, notably, our frontline workers – is absolutely essential, and I greatly appreciate the Senate's attention to these issues.

In regard to your concern about asymptomatic testing for UCLA Health faculty and staff, while we have not mandated asymptomatic testing within the health system, we are currently planning for a change in testing policy that will allow UCLA Health employees who wish to be screened for COVID-19 to be tested whenever they so desire. Our aim is to have this new voluntary testing policy in place in December. Of course, any UCLA Health employees who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms or who come into close contact with someone with the virus are immediately referred to a UCLA Health testing site for testing as well.

UCLA Health's decision not to require broad asymptomatic testing was made because of significant differences between the clinical and campus environments. Entry to UCLA Health buildings is controlled, and employees already operate under strict health guidelines that include symptom screening, required use of medical-grade personal protective equipment and intensive mandatory disinfection procedures. UCLA Health Vice Chancellor Mazziotta and President Spisso have been and continue to be advised by experts in infectious disease prevention who have concluded that the existing protocols preclude the need for required asymptomatic testing. UCLA Health's testing policy is consistent with guidelines established by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and aligns with the protocols in place at our peer health systems here and across the country.

In regard to your call for additional COVID-19 testing sites and more robust testing infrastructure on campus, I am pleased to report that we recently opened a new outdoor testing site at Switzer Plaza, which is currently seeing about 300 visitors per day but has a capacity of 1,000 per day. This site joins our existing testing facilities in the Grand Horizon Ballroom in Covell Commons and Collins Court in the John Wooden Center, as well as a COVID-19 Mobile Testing Bus whose location changes throughout the week. We are also in the final stages of establishing an additional site to accommodate employees with late night shifts during the week. My hope is that this range of convenient testing options alleviates your concerns, though Ashe Center staff would be happy to discuss any specific issues you may have.

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Again, thank you for your thoughts on these urgent issues, and please do not hesitate to reach out if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gene", with a stylized, cursive script.

Gene D. Block
Chancellor

cc: Michael Beck, Administrative Vice Chancellor
Emily Carter, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate