

STAYING CONNECTED DURING COVID-19

The University of Chicago strives to create a campus where people of different backgrounds and perspectives feel valued and where their ideas and contributions can flourish. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in challenges to our efforts to create a diverse and inclusive community, as it is difficult maintaining and improving community when we are physically separated from one another. That's why it's essential for campus leaders to consider how to help all members of the UChicago community feel supported and included as we adjust to new ways of staying connected.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Diversity & Inclusion



The University's [diversity and inclusion framework](#) helps local units assess and improve efforts related to diversity and inclusion. This compilation of resources and recommendations from across the University is particularly relevant to our current situation. While it is not intended to be a comprehensive guide, we hope it is a useful tool as you continue working to strengthen and support individuals, teams, and community members during this time.

OUR INSTITUTION RELIES ON A FOUR-PRONGED STRATEGY FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:



INFRASTRUCTURE

Establish core communications, policies, procedures, and roles so positive changes can be made and sustained.

1. Communicate with clarity and empathy to increase understanding and gain trust.

Review these expert tips:

- [10 Ways to Communicate with Empathy and Authority in Times of Crisis \(Duarte\)](#)
- [A Leader's Guide: Communicating with Teams, Stakeholders, and Communities During COVID-19 \(McKinsey\)](#)

Share authentic stories and experiences from around campus and within your own unit:

- [UChicago Community Finds New Ways to Learn Together](#)

2. Stay informed to obtain and share current updates.

Reference and share the following UChicago resources:

- [UChicago Forward website](#)
- [UChicago Coronavirus Updates website](#)
- [UChicago Medicine Coronavirus Information and Resources website](#)
- [UChicago News website](#)

Reference and share these resources from local, national, and international agencies and organizations:

- [Chicago Coronavirus Response Center](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- [Illinois Department of Public Health](#)
- [Chicago Department of Public Health](#)

- [Coronavirus Disease Updates](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Travel Advisories](#)

3. Agree on tech platforms to support remote collaboration and productivity for all.

The University supports a number of commonly used digital tools:

- [UChicago Collaboration Tools](#)

Consider additional complementary digital tools, such as:

- [Slack](#)
- [MURAL](#)
- [Miro](#)

4. Plan for flexibility when creating systems and protocols to increase opportunities for participation.

- Consider asynchronous workflows to accommodate availability and bandwidth requirements.
- Review and adjust priorities on a regular basis to adapt to new information, needs, and outcomes.
- Schedule Zoom meetings thoughtfully.
- Consider the use of the recording setting during Zoom discussions and its effect on comfort level.
 - [Review Zoom's privacy policy.](#)

CLIMATE

Create an environment and build a community where all members have a sense of belonging and can fully participate in the life of the University.

1. Increase awareness of health disparities and discrimination that have been documented during the pandemic to better understand what some people in your community may be experiencing.

Learn about racial disparities in relation to COVID-19.

- [How Coronavirus Is Exposing Our Racial Disparities \(with Monica Peek\)](#)
- [How Coronavirus Could Impact Futures of Students Entering High School, College](#)

Get informed about the increase in the number of harassing behaviors experienced by Asian Americans.

- [Asian Americans Feel The Bite Of Prejudice During The COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Find out about resources related to DACA.

- [Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#)

Learn more about the University's policy for addressing complaints of discrimination and discriminatory harassment, and reporting bias.

- [Discrimination & Discriminatory Harassment FAQs](#)
- [Bias Education & Support Team \(BEST\)](#)

2. Open new lines of communication to learn how people within your unit are doing and what type of support they need.

- Use surveys, interviews, and discussions with faculty, students, and staff to identify common needs and provide a way for people to feel heard.
- Host regular opportunities for dialogue and create optional check-ins as an agenda item during meetings.
- Connect students with campus resources to meet their basic needs.
 - Grad students can contact the Dean on Call: 773.834.HELP (4357) and/or [Student Support Services](#).

- Undergraduate students can contact the [Center for College Student Success](#).

- Students can apply for grants through [UChicago Crowdfunding's Emergency Fund](#), a College Council student committee that connects students with resources and provides emergency financial aid.

3. Support people's mental and physical health.

Disseminate information from UChicago Medicine.

- [Coronavirus and Mental Health: How to Cope with Stress and Fear During Quarantine](#)

Promote programming and support services for students.

- [Student Health and Counseling Services](#)

Encourage people to take breaks.

- [Why Time Outdoors is Crucial to Your Health, Even During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

Access additional campus and community mental health resources.

- [Mental Health Resources Guide](#)

4. Combat isolation and loneliness by connecting people to new and existing social networks and programming.

Direct community members to University Resource Groups that provide safe, welcoming environments around race, ethnicity, gender, levels of ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation/gender identity, and other important personal attributes.

- [Resource Groups](#)

Consider virtual events.

- [UChicago Virtual Events](#)

Create optional occasions to bring people together for fun and socialization.

PEOPLE

Commit to long-term diverse hiring practices by participating in ongoing learning and training.

1. Hone recruitment skills by learning about the importance of building a diverse community and best practices for inclusive recruiting of students, staff, and faculty.

Participate in search trainings to create a diverse candidate pool and improve recruitment of faculty, staff, and graduate students.

- [Search Trainings](#)

Review and share faculty search support materials and videos with hiring teams:

- [Faculty Search Support Materials](#)

Connect with Talent Acquisition in Human Resources for additional guidance on how to recruit a diverse and excellent staff:

- [Talent Acquisition Offerings](#)

2. Offer pathways and resources to make access and growth possible for groups that are underrepresented in the academy.

Encourage and support faculty members' participation in programs offered by National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD):

- [NCFDD](#)
- [Write Now Summer Session](#) (login required; free to UChicago faculty and staff)

Connect with offices providing accommodations for students, staff, and faculty with disabilities:

- [Student Disability Services \(SDS\)](#)
- [Employee Labor Relations \(ELR\)](#) (for staff)
- [Office of Access and Equity \(OAE\)](#) (for faculty)

3. Consider how to support people's scholarly progress and productivity.

Encourage individuals to join existing productivity groups—or support them in creating their own.

- [NCFDD](#) (for faculty)

Promote UChicago's Virtual Childcare and Tutoring program to faculty members.

- Contact Liv Leader, Director of the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Relocation, for additional information: lleader@uchicago.edu.

4. Educate students on the current economic situation, along with funding and job opportunities.

Share updates from UChicagoGRAD and other University sources:

- [Key Economic Facts About COVID-19](#)

COMMUNITY



Build and sustain local and global relationships among our University, our city, and our networks.

1. Learn about steps the University and its Medical Center are taking to support the South Side community.

Reference and share the following resources:

- [UChicago Medicine](#)
- [Urban Health Initiative](#)
- [Community Support](#)
- [Office of Civic Engagement](#)

2. Create and promote opportunities for members of the University community to contribute to people in need and the organizations serving them.

Share volunteer and donation recommendations:

- [Office of Civic Engagement](#)
- [The Chicago Maroon](#)

Encourage people to join a relevant social media group:

- [UChicago Mutual Aid](#)

3. Support local, minority, and women-owned businesses.

Encourage people to share recommendations from the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation:

- [COVID-19: Small Business Resources](#)

Be aware of the CARES Act to inform small businesses about economic assistance:

- [The CARES Act Works for All Americans \(U.S. Department of the Treasury\)](#)

Use and share Chicago's Shop in Place website:

- [Shop in Place](#)

4. Stay connected to the global community.

Get regular newsletter updates on the global impact of COVID-19.

- [Global Health NOW \(Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Digital update \(World Health Organization\)](#)
- [COVID-19 and Migration \(Columbia University\)](#)

Consider donating to an organization providing global support to people impacted by COVID-19.

- [UNICEF](#)
- [COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund \(World Health Organization\)](#)