

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE OPEN COVID PLEDGE

WHEREAS, UCLA is a public research institution that receives worldwide support and over a billion dollars in research funding, UCLA should promote health equity on a global scale while accelerating product development and removing barriers to access;

WHEREAS, the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is comprised of several teams that share responsibility for realizing EDI's mission to uphold dignity for all, thus including those that would benefit from inclusive and equitable access to intellectual property related to COVID-19 treatment and technologies;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 research at UCLA spans across seven basic science departments and fourteen clinical departments with \$7.8 million dollars funded and 380 registered projects across UCLA Health, suggesting that beneficial and life-saving research related to the pandemic is to be expected in the foreseeable future¹;

WHEREAS, the clinical and research strengths of UCLA Health and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA position the university to make a transformative and enduring impact on this global pandemic, as mentioned by UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine¹;

WHEREAS, UCLA has underperformed in Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM) Report Card 2020 which measures the university's commitment to equitable biomedical research and licensing practices, scoring an overall grade of D-, even during a global pandemic²;

WHEREAS, open access not only allows for increased dissemination and application of scientific advances in developing nations, but also encourages more diverse scientific collaboration, response, and critique -- all critical for achievement of global health equity;

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WHEREAS, the UC system signed an open access agreement with Elsevier, with President Michael Drake noting that the agreement was a landmark achievement for "open, equitable access to information," emphasizing the importance of sharing scientific knowledge especially during a global pandemic that requires international collaboration³;

WHEREAS, the Open COVID Pledge makes intellectual property available free of charge for use in ending the COVID-19 pandemic and minimizing the impact of disease⁴;

¹ <https://medschool.ucla.edu/coronavirus-information/research>

² <https://globalhealthgrades.org/>

³ <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/uc-news-uc-secures-landmark-open-access-deal-world-s-largest-scientific-publisher>

⁴ <https://opencovidpledge.org>

WHEREAS, intellectual property restrictions represent a primary reason for artificial vaccine scarcity and delays in the distribution of COVID-19 technologies to low and middle-income countries, many of whom are currently projected to obtain vaccines only in 2022;

WHEREAS, the Open COVID pledge exemplifies UCLA's primary purpose as a research university, which is the creation, dissemination, preservation and application of knowledge for the betterment of our global society ^{4,5};

WHEREAS, the WHO COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) corresponds with UCLA's stated value for open access to information, as it calls on the global community to voluntarily share knowledge, intellectual property and data to accelerate product development while facilitating equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 technologies ^{5,6};

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that UCLA should join the global movement for a People's Vaccine and take two concrete steps toward equitable access to COVID-19 related scientific knowledge: signing the Open COVID Pledge (OCP) and contributing to the World Health Organization's (WHO) COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP);

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that by signing the OCP and contributing to C-TAP, UCLA has the chance to make history again: to become a leader -- within the UC and across world -- in the fight for a free and equitable vaccine; to speed the distribution of life-saving technologies; and to further the cause of open access that UC championed with its praiseworthy Elsevier agreement;

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the UCLA Undergraduate Student Association supports the Open Covid Pledge and the World Health Organization's COVID-19 Technology Access Pool;

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the UCLA Undergraduate Student Association calls upon and demands that Chancellor Gene Block and Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences John Mazziota sign onto the Open Covid Pledge.²

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⁴ <https://opencovidpledge.org>

⁵ <https://www.ucla.edu/about/mission-and-values>

⁶ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/covid-19-technology-access-pool>