



Staff Biographies

Robert Segar, Planning Director

Bob is Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Planning and Environmental Stewardship at UC Davis. He has led UC Davis through a dramatic physical transformation. Bob is known for his lead role in planning the UC Davis “front door” along Interstate 80, anchored by the Buehler Alumni Center, the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, the Graduate School of Management at Gallagher Hall, the Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science, the Manetti Shrem Museum and the Welcome Center/Conference Center/Hyatt Hotel, as well as public landscapes including the teaching vineyard, Vanderhoef Quad and improvements to the UC Davis Arboretum. Working with arboretum leadership, he has helped reinvent the campus landscape as a sustainable public garden that provides meaningful learning and leadership opportunities to students and community members.

Robert graduated from Stanford University with a B.A. in urban studies and has a Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Michigan.

Sonja Colbert, Chief of Staff

Sonja serves as Business and Technology Services Executive Director in the Offices of the Chancellor and Provost (OCP). OCP consists of approximately thirty departments, such as Academic Affairs, Undergraduate Education, Mondavi, and Enrollment Management. In her role, Sonja oversees finance, business, human resources, and information technology groups in support of the strategic and operational objectives of the departments and OCP as a whole. Sonja joined UC Davis in 2006 and has held a variety of positions, including Operations Manager and Fiscal Officer.

For Aggie Square, Sonja is responsible for project management, operations, and assisting with the overall business plans.

Before joining UC Davis, Sonja worked in the private sector as a finance and business executive. She holds a B.S. in Accounting from CSU Sacramento and MBA from UC Davis Graduate School of Management. She is also a graduate of the UC Coro Systemwide Leadership Collaborative. In 2018, she received a UC award for her systemwide leadership impact. In her spare time, Sonja serves on the board and volunteers for several community organizations.

Matt Dulcich, Director of Environmental Planning / Government Relations Manager

Matt Dulcich is the Local Government Relations Manager for UC Davis focusing on land use, transportation, housing, planning, and environmental issues. He has a dual role for UC Davis serving as both the Director of Environmental Planning within the campus planning office and as the Local Government Relations Manager for the Government and Community Relations unit within the Office of the Chancellor.

For Government and Community Relations, Matt represents the campus on local government committees and boards such as the City of Davis Core Area Specific Plan committee and serving presently as the UC Davis board member to the Yolo County Transportation District and to the Yolo Habitat Conservancy.

Matt provides strategic direction to guide campus strategy and advocacy for key campus issues and serves as a resource for elected officials and municipal leaders seeking campus support and collaboration for community planning issues.

For campus planning, Matt provides expert leadership to ensure compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and all facets of environmental planning for the UC Davis campus, the UC Davis Health campus, and off-campus locations. In addition, Matt leads the CEQA strategy and compliance for the research and extension center sites managed throughout California by the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

James Kovach, Chief Innovation Officer

Dr. James Kovach serves as Director, Entrepreneurism and Innovation at the University of California Davis Health, where he supports physician training in entrepreneurship; and industry outreach to support translational science.

Dr. Kovach received his medical degree with distinction from the University of Kentucky while simultaneously playing in the National Football League. Following his NFL career, he attended law school at Stanford University and practiced corporate law in Palo Alto California.

Previously, he has directed the Technology Transfer Program at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, served as Chief Operating Officer of Athersys, Inc. (NASDAQ: ATHX), a leading public biotechnology company developing stem cell therapeutics, and served as President of the Buck Institute for Age Research, an independent research institute dedicated exclusively to research on aging and age-associated disease.

Dr. Kovach played 7 years in the National Football League as a middle linebacker for the New Orleans Saints and San Francisco 49ers. He is a member of the Southeastern Conference Legends Athletic Hall of Fame; and a member of the COSIDA Academic All-American Hall of Fame.

Mary Mumper, Project Coordinator

Mary Mumper serves as administrative assistant for the Office of Entrepreneurship and Industry Alliances at the University of California, Davis Health. She previously served in Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr's administration, in various positions including executive assistant in the Governor's Washington D.C. office from 2017 to 2018, executive assistant to the Appointments Secretary from 2016 to 2017, and administrative assistant in the Appointments Unit from 2015 to 2016. Mary earned her Bachelors of Science degree in criminal justice, from California State University, Sacramento in 2015.

Mark Romney, Chief Strategy Officer

Mark Romney joined the University of California, Davis in 1991 and currently serves as the Director of Research Development & Industry Alliances for UC Davis Health (comprised of the Medical Center, School of Medicine and School of Nursing and Practice Management Board). Mark has over 27 years of leadership experience in higher education master planning, with an emphasis in research and industry planning and development initiatives. Mark is often called on by UC Davis schools and colleges to advise on master planning and programming of research facilities. Mark also serves as the primary negotiator and facilitator for industry partner colocations on the Sacramento campus providing the vital connection point between university administrators and corporate executives.

Mark is a highly sought after thought leader in the field of public, private and university partnerships. He is invited to share his expertise across the nation and internationally presenting at conferences including San Francisco's Bay-Bio, AURP Bio-Parks (2017), Urban Land Institute (ULI), U.S. Embassy in Beijing China on topics such as Managing Risk/Leveraging Opportunities, The Rise of Medical Centers as "Innovation Districts." Mark also served as host and closing speaker at the U.S. Department of Commerce SelectUSA Advance Tour Event (2017) hosting scientific collaboration discussions and providing the keynote presentation of the proposed UC Davis Aggie Square to the U.S. Embassy, Beijing Commercial Services officers and a delegation of senior representatives from over 25 Chinese life sciences, real estate development and real estate investment companies. The SelectUSA Investment Summit is the highest-profile event dedicated to promoting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the United States, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Commercial Services Division.

Mabel Salon, Interim Lead Government and Community Relations

Mabel Salon is the Interim Lead of Government and Community Relations for UC Davis. She oversees the Government and Community Relations program which serves as the official voice of UC Davis to local, state and federal government officials and provides leadership and coordination in sustaining and expanding state and federal support for the campus, and in building community understanding, support and advocacy on behalf of UC Davis.

In addition to her interim role, she serves as the Director of Community Relations and Local Government Relations for UC Davis. She directs a comprehensive community and local government relations program for UC Davis that raises public awareness, understanding and support for the campus and its mission of research, teaching and public service. She is responsible for expanding the visibility and presence of UC Davis in the eight-county region surrounding the campus, with primary outreach in Yolo, Solano and Sacramento counties, and strategic involvement in Placer, El Dorado, Nevada, Sutter and Yuba counties.

Mabel's guidance and leadership help the university foster positive relationships with a diverse array of external constituents. Outreach efforts extend to local, state and federal governments, business leaders, civic and community non-profit organizations, the arts and education communities, economic development groups and community opinion leaders.

She helps secure the university's reputation as a regional asset, economic catalyst, good neighbor and responsible corporate citizen, primarily through sponsorship roles in select annual community events, committee memberships and active board member appointments. Mabel currently serves on the board of directors for the American Red Cross, the Davis Chamber of Commerce, the Davis Downtown Business Association, and the Sacramento Asian Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the CEO Council executive committee for the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities.

Prior service includes membership on the board of directors for Visit Sacramento (the Sacramento Convention and Visitors Bureau), the Woodland Chamber of Commerce, the Woodland Opera House, the United Way Yolo County Leadership Council, the Northern California World Trade Center, the Arts & Business Council of Sacramento, and the Sacramento Theater Company. She also served as an Honorary Commander at Travis Air Force Base. She is a graduate of the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program and served for two years as co-chair for the program.

She is a recipient of the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year Award and an American Leadership Forum Senior Fellow.

In 2008, Mabel received a Chancellor's appointment to serve as Program Director for the UC Davis Centennial with direct responsibility for the biggest impact events of the Centennial year. Mabel's community relations expertise and political work at UC Davis stem from years of service as a staff member for Congressman Vic Fazio.

Mabel holds a bachelor's degree in political science and public service from UC Davis.

Joel Swift, Facilities Planning and Development Director

Joel is a California Licensed Architect with thirty-five years of experience in architectural design, construction, project management and administration for healthcare, research institutions and local government. As the Director of Facilities Planning and Development at UC Davis Health,

his current projects include \$400M of capital projects and \$1.5B in planning of acute care, outpatient care, biomedical research and office needs for the academic medical center and health system.

David Wescott, Associate Director of Communications

David serves as communications lead for Aggie Square. Prior to joining UC Davis in October 2018, David was director of marketing and communications at UNC Children's in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He also served as interim senior director for marketing and communications at the Medical Foundation of North Carolina, the philanthropic arm of UNC Hospitals and the UNC School of Medicine. In 2015, David founded Wescott Strategic Communications, an independent company specializing in crisis communications and stakeholder engagement. David spent 12 years at global public affairs firm APCO Worldwide, where he was Vice President/Director, Digital Strategy.

David has also served as an aide to a United States Senator, an executive director of a business advocacy organization, and a lead administrator of a pediatrics department in an academic medical center.

David served as an instructor for the Institute for Public Relations Leadership Forum for three consecutive years. He is a contributor to the *PR News Media Training Guidebook*. His work has been published in *PR News*, *The Firm Voice*, Public Relations Society of America's *The Strategist*, and PRSA's *Public Relations Tactics*.

Laura Niznik Williams, Interim Director UC Davis Health Government and Community Relations

Laura Niznik Williams is the interim Director, Government and Community Relations at UC Davis Health. For the past 10 years, she has managed UC Davis Health's collaborative partnerships, federal and local government relations, allied health care workforce development, employee volunteerism, neighborhood relations, and health promotion/community outreach. In addition, she managed the health systems community health needs assessment and community benefit efforts for nine years. She has an extensive background in nonprofit association management, health care magazine publishing, public relations, marketing, and government and community relations.

Laura manages the UC Davis Health Community Advisory Committee and serves on a variety of boards including the California Hospital Association Workforce Committee and the Stockton Boulevard Partnership. She often volunteers her time in the community as a Girl Scout Troop Leader and as a former Chair for Community Link Capitol Region.

Laura holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies and a minor in Journalism from California State University, Sacramento.