

# GATTACA UCSF: Genetics All Together – Towards A Connected Community At UCSF

2023 Community Wellbeing  
Grant

Division of Medical Genetics  
(DMG) Wellness Committee

## Overview

Genetics at UCSF is very dispersed across different units and locations. Since the start of the pandemic, the hybrid (majority remote) nature of our work has further highlighted the need for opportunities to build community. Even within units, it can be difficult to build cohesion and a strong sense of belonging, and this is magnified across the silos. Through the GATTACA UCSF initiative, the DMG led opportunities to support wellness, inclusivity and community-building with and across the various genetics silos, including cancer, prenatal and cardiovascular genetics, the genomics labs and the Master's in Genetic Counseling program.

## Data Snapshot

- 187 individuals across UCSF genetics units received email invitations to GATTACA UCSF events
- 93 individuals across genetics units participated in GATTACA UCSF in some way – 64 attended at least 1 event
- 76 participants completed a wellness survey to receive a Wellness Kit
- Attendees reported that the Social (93%) and Environmental (64%) wellness pillars were most impacted by GATTACA UCSF events
- 86% of attendees reported that they were able to meet at least one new person in the genetics community
- 95% of attendees reported an increased sense of inclusion/belonging after the initiative

## Resources



## Project Details

GATTACA UCSF offered a series of strategically planned events to highlight and support wellbeing and DEIA values across genetics at UCSF, aimed at impacting all pillars of wellness. All events promoted team- and community-building. A Kick-off Meet 'n Greet lunch at SPARK Social at Mission Bay was paired with a Wellness Kit giveaway, providing take-home self-care products, a plant and embroidery activity to improve mental and physical health, and promote a healthy community and environment. A series of 3 Financial Literacy Workshops, held in-person and over Zoom, brought the expertise of a financial educator to support improved economic life. The Angel Island Tour Through Time event with scavenger hunt offered a self-guided tour of Angel Island State Park for participants to reflect on the history of diversity in the Bay Area, confront the continuing issues of racism towards AAPI and other communities in the present day, and explore a greater purpose of achieving DEIA within our community and globally. The catered Grand Finale Picnic at Tilden Regional Park offered a final opportunity to interact with each other and with dozens of animals in a Traveling Reptile Show. Interacting with animals improves mental health, stress levels and emotional regulation, and learning about reptiles and ecology helped to reflect on our place and purpose in the global environment.

## Project Challenges

- Small DMG committee helming the GATTACA UCSF initiative
- Tight timeline to organize multiple events
- Difficult to keep email distribution lists up-to-date to include all current members of all genetics units
- Difficult to accommodate all units'/individuals' preferences for scheduling of events

## Lessons Learned

The UCSF genetics community expressed excitement and gratitude to have opportunities to build cohesion, break down barriers between silos, get to know each other, and support wellness and wellbeing. Building on the successes and lessons learned from GATTACA UCSF, future community-wide wellbeing initiatives should be organized by a committee comprised of members across multiple genetics units to optimize scheduling of events and ensure email distribution lists are current. Enhanced programmatic planning to include more interactive activities during events would encourage further social engagement and community-building.

