



CDU Points of Distinction – 2020

History

- Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science was the first medical school in the United States named after an African-American.
- The University's namesake, Charles R. Drew, MD, was an African American surgeon and researcher, who pioneered the nation's first large scale blood bank and trained a generation of African American physicians at Howard University. (Full bio [here.](#))
- The University has a rich legacy of connection to civil rights pioneers, including visits and talks by Winnie Mandela, Rosa Parks, Andrew Young and Coretta Scott King, who remarked, "With deep appreciation for your efforts toward the realization of my husband's dream."
- Dr. Joseph Alexander, Chairman of the Department of Surgery at CDU in 1971, led a team of doctors at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., to perform the Army's first kidney transplant operation.
- David Satcher, MD, PhD, MPH, the first African American man to be appointed U.S. Surgeon General and the first African American to head the CDC, was the first Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at CDU, as well as Acting Executive Dean (President) of CDU from 1977-1979.
- Patricia Bath, MD, one of the first African Americans in the United States to complete a residency in Ophthalmology and the inventor of the Laserphaco Probe, a device which enabled less painful and more precise treatment of cataracts, was appointed as assistant professor of surgery at CDU in 1974
- Rosalyn P. Sterling Scott, MD, the first African American woman to be trained in thoracic surgery, and the first African American woman to be granted membership in the Society of University Surgeons, was appointed as assistant professor of Surgery at CDU in 1983.
- Ezra Davidson, MD, was the first African American president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. He served as professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, chairing the department from 1971-96, and then served as associate dean, Primary Care, from 1997-2007.
- Notable former board members:
 - Ralph Bunche, the first African American to win the Nobel Peace Prize (1950), for his work mediating a peace agreement between Arabs and Jews in Palestine after WW II.
 - Claude Hudson, African American dentist and lawyer; co-founder of the NAACP.
 - Dr. Roger O. Egeberg, former dean of USC Medical School, top health official in Nixon administration and General Douglas MacArthur's personal physician.
- CDU started the first Physician Assistant program approved in the state of California in 1974. It was called the "MEDEX Physician Assistant Program of the Charles R. Drew Postgraduate Medical School."
- CDU was the first academic institution to be a grantee agency for a Head Start Program, the HHS program that promotes and supports development of school readiness of children ages birth to five from low-income families.

Community

- CDU was one of the originators of the “Community Faculty” concept, bringing community researchers and health equity advocates into the education process, which broadens the experience and knowledge base of the University’s instruction, curriculum and research.
- In partnership with the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission, CDU founded the nation’s first broad-scale deployment of telemedicine to an inner-city community in 1996. The unprecedented Telemedicine Program worked to bridge the healthcare delivery gap for residents in medically underserved areas by allowing doctors at CDU to examine patients who lived miles away in urban public housing communities without ever leaving their offices.
- The University has been a leader in providing HIV/AIDS prevention and services to Los Angeles County.
 - In 1984, Dr. Wilbert Jordan started the AIDS Clinic at King-Drew Medical Center, now known as the Oasis Clinic, which has expanded over the years to include satellite clinics and a full service five-day-a-week clinic. Dr. Jordan received an NAACP Humanitarian Award on May 19, 2016.
 - The CDU HIV Mobile Testing Project has provided over 60,000 individuals throughout Los Angeles County with HIV screenings and counseling since its establishment in 1991.

International

- The University’s International Programs Department provides technical assistance with health education, policy development, care delivery, health systems strengthening and research in these countries: Angola, Rwanda, Jamaica, Belize, Kenya, Philippines, Ghana, Zaire, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Uganda, Peru, Nigeria, Egypt, Cameroon and Peru.

Research

- CDU’s Urban Health Institute is a one-of-a-kind medical research department that increases opportunities for biomedical and behavioral research and its translation into high-quality clinical outcomes, improved community health, and progressive health policy to reduce health disparities in underserved communities worldwide.

Other

- CDU is the only Title III B Historically Black Graduate Institution in the Western United States (west of Texas).
- *The Power to Heal*, an hour-long public television documentary on the struggle to secure equal and adequate access to healthcare for all Americans, was narrated by actor Danny Glover at CDU in 2017. The film tells the story of how a new national program Medicare, was used to mount a dramatic, coordinated effort to desegregate thousands of hospitals across the country in a matter of months.