



THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

Overview – Spring 2008

The University of California, Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, along the shores of Lake Yosemite in Merced County as the 10th campus in the UC system and the first new American research university of the 21st century. There are three schools, nearly 20 undergraduate majors, nine graduate program emphases, more than 90 full-time faculty members and dozens of lecturers now serving students on campus, teaching more than 200 different courses at UC Merced this spring.

In August 2004, a dozen students enrolled in graduate studies off campus. Just more than three years later, the number of graduate students has grown to 120, including students from Bolivia, China, Colombia, England, Germany, India, Japan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Nepal, New Zealand, Russia, Spain, Taiwan and Turkey.

As of fall 2007, the campus serves about 1,870 of California's brightest young people. Initial application data for fall 2008 (more than 10,000 applications) points to anticipated vigorous growth, with a goal of 2,500 enrolled students in fall 2008.

Addressing a need

UC Merced is the first new UC campus in 40 years. It was authorized by the California Legislature in 1988 to address the higher-education needs of the state's fastest-growing region, the San Joaquin Valley (pop. 3.5 million), and to provide added capacity for the UC system as a whole. High school graduates from the Valley have historically enrolled in the UC system at about half the rate of graduates from other major parts of the state. The presence of a new campus in the heart of the Valley is helping to close that gap and inspire the educational dreams of young people in this underserved region for generations to come.

The UC Merced project has enjoyed strong bipartisan support throughout its history. Conceived under Gov. George Deukmejian in 1988, the campus was then sited under Gov. Pete Wilson in 1995. Groundbreaking took place in 2002 under Gov. Gray Davis, and the campus opened in 2005 under Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. To date, the state has

invested more than \$500 million in construction and development of the 2,000-acre site. The university is expected to accommodate as many as 25,000 students when the campus grows to full capacity in about three decades.

A strategic investment

In addition to its educational mission, UC Merced is an important strategic investment in California's future economy. The new campus serves as an engine of economic growth throughout the San Joaquin Valley, where unemployment and poverty rates substantially exceed California averages. Ongoing campus construction has supported thousands of jobs, stimulating new business development and pumping millions of dollars into the local economy each year. In addition, faculty research initiatives and administrative projects have brought in more than \$36 million in grants and contracts since 2003, primarily from federal agencies. Last fiscal year alone, researchers attracted \$12 million in grants – the highest amount in a single year since the campus opened – and spent more than \$7 million on salaries and supplies, contributing greatly to the area's economy.

Funded primarily through state revenue bonds, construction continues on campus. The library, classroom building, science and engineering building, and campus infrastructure are already serving staff, faculty, students and visitors. Among the campus's new buildings, groundbreaking is slated to happen in Spring 2008 on the Social Sciences and Management Building that will house the planned Ernest & Julio Gallo School of Management as well as faculty from the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. Plans are also being developed for a second Science and Engineering building that is scheduled to open in fall 2012.

Dining facilities and a 586-bed student-housing complex, which are not funded by the state, started serving students when UC Merced opened in 2005, another student housing complex opened last summer, and another facility is scheduled to open in this spring. The student recreation and wellness center opened in Fall 2006 and provides exercise facilities, regulation indoor sports courts, an innovative wilderness desk and a student health center. The campus now has seven intramural sports teams and is planning to start at least four more this academic year.

Building design and construction at UC Merced emphasize the most advanced techniques in energy and resource conservation and employ cutting-edge "green" building practices that reflect the university's broad commitment to environmental sustainability. As part of this process, university officials – through a special collaboration with the Packard Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the Nature Conservancy and the State of California – have set aside 25,000 acres of grassland habitat for permanent conservation.

Staffing and outreach

UC Merced employs more than 800 faculty and staff members, including more than 90 leading scholars who serve as the core faculty. Under the direction of Chancellor Steve Kang, who began his duties as the campus' second chancellor on March 1, 2007, the team engages in a variety of complex tasks necessary to the early growth of a major university. These tasks include creating additional, innovative academic programs and curricula; conducting cutting-edge research; recruiting additional UC-quality faculty from around the world; strengthening the student services infrastructure; and securing private and corporate gifts to help fund student scholarships and support university development.

To strengthen connections with students and educators throughout the San Joaquin Valley, the campus operates educational outreach centers in Fresno and Bakersfield. These centers offer dozens of professional-development programs for K-12 teachers and administrators and interact with students at each of the 144 high schools in the Valley.

Many academic and staff-sponsored programs also include outreach components. For example, the Science and Math Initiative sends UC Merced students into local schools to present science and math lessons, and the UC Merced Police Department Mentoring Program facilitates volunteers to help local elementary school students with homework and positive recreation choices.

Academic focus

UC Merced opened with three schools: Engineering; Natural Sciences; and Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. An ever-broadening list of academic majors and programs serves students from all backgrounds and prepares them for a wide variety of careers.

Undergraduate majors

- applied mathematical sciences
- bioengineering
- biological sciences
- chemical sciences
- cognitive science
- computer science and engineering
- earth systems science
- economics
- environmental engineering
- history
- literature and cultures
- management
- materials science and engineering
- mechanical engineering
- physics
- political science
- psychology

Graduate programs

- applied mathematical sciences
- AMSE: physical sciences and materials engineering
- biological engineering and small-scale technologies
- computer and information systems
- environmental systems
- mechanical engineering and applied mechanics
- quantitative and systems biology
- social and cognitive sciences
- world cultures and history

Special research institutes created at the university include the Sierra Nevada Research Institute and the Biomedical Sciences Research Institute. Other research institutes are being planned by the faculty. In addition, startup funding has been received for the UC Merced Center for Computational Biology and other cooperative research laboratory facilities in environmental analysis, genomics and imaging.

UC Merced has entered into collaborative partnerships with the National Park Service, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium and the Great Valley Center.

The campus has also established memoranda of understanding with universities in Korea, Mexico, China and India and expects to increase international partnerships and education abroad opportunities in the future in order to help students prepare to thrive in the global economy of the 21st century.

Philanthropic support

To help launch the new university, enrich student life and provide scholarship funds for students in need, leading private and corporate philanthropists have pledged more than \$60 million in donations since its inception. Leadership gifts include \$13 million from the Packard Foundation, \$2 million from the Hewlett Foundation, \$5 million from Ernest and Julio Gallo and \$5 million from United Healthcare.

In addition, UC Merced has secured a \$600,000 award and two \$1.1 million renewable grants from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

