



Alumni News

Annual Fall UC Alumni Banquet Set

UC Merced Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey will be the featured speaker at the fourth annual Fall UC Alumni Banquet in Atwater on Friday, Nov. 30. State Senator Jim Costa will be honored for his efforts on behalf of the University of California in the San Joaquin Valley at the event, sponsored by the San Joaquin Valley UC Alumni Network. In addition, the Valley UC Alumni of the Year will be recognized. For more details, please call (209) 724-4401.

Fresno Mayor Addresses UC Alumni

Valley alumni reconnected with UC and fellow alums at Partnering for Progress, an all-UC mixer that featured Fresno Mayor Alan Autry at Campagna restaurant in Fresno Sept. 20. Sponsored by the San Joaquin Valley UC Alumni Network and Alumni Associations of the University of California, the event sold out with nearly 70 alumni and friends attending. UC Alumni Affairs Director James Stofan provided background on the AAUC and its activities, and California Assembly Member Sarah Reyes also addressed the gathering.

All of the speakers expressed support for UC Merced and stressed the important role that UC alumni can play in the region, particularly in helping to ensure that today's generation of Valley students have access to quality educational opportunities.

Campagna was selected as the location for the event because of its eclectic American cuisine and ties to UC. The restaurant is co-owned by a UC Santa Barbara alumna.

UC Merced Writing Project Serves Area Educators

By Sheryl Lichtig Wyan, UC Merced,
Office of Communications

Writing is essential to learning. Based on this fundamental principle, the UC Merced Writing Project focuses on teachers and school administrators in its mission to improve writing and learning in local schools.

A collaborative effort of the University of California, Merced and Merced County school districts, the Writing Project serves kindergarten through college-level teachers via professional development programs. Designed to meet the individual needs of schools and districts, the programs share the common goals of enhancing skills and confidence in writing along with introducing effective approaches to teaching writing.

The UC Merced Writing Project has served more than 360 teachers and 58 schools since it began in October 2000, according to director Pauline Sahakian.



The UC Merced Writing Project shares best practices for teaching reading and writing with Valley educators.

One result: an expanding network of local educators conducting Writing Project programs for a growing circle of teachers and administrators.

"The Writing Project teaches that writing is a process and you have to teach the process. There is no simple,

[to third page](#)

UC Takes Role in Response to Terrorist Threats

UC Office of the President, University and
External Relations

In keeping with the University of California's mission of research, teaching and public service, UC researchers were at work on scientific and policy research related to the threat of terrorism even before the tragic events of Sept. 11. Now, in response to an executive order issued by Gov. Gray Davis, the University of California has taken a leadership role on the State Strategic Committee on Terrorism. The committee is responsible for developing recommendations on the preparedness and public health response to biological and chemical threats.

Michael V. Drake, UC vice president for health affairs, is serving as co-chair of the Subcommittee on the Protection of Public Health, which also includes four UC faculty members.

UC representatives are also expected to serve on subcommittees focusing on food and agriculture, transportation, infrastructure, cyberterrorism, chemical, radiation, and public information and early warning.

In addition, UC researchers are at work on a wide range of scientific, technological and policy advances to help protect the United States against possible future terrorist attacks. These areas of study include the detection of biological and chemical terrorism agents and countermeasures; protection of telecommunications, power and air traffic control infrastructures; structural engineering and retrofitting of target buildings; technology to improve security at airports and other public places; cybersecurity; and medical and psychiatric assistance.

[to second page](#)



What's New in the Valley

UC Participates in College Nights Throughout the San Joaquin Valley

Representatives from University of California campuses participated in College Nights throughout the Valley during September and October. College Nights offered students and parents the opportunity to speak with college representatives as well as attend sessions on college admissions and financial aid, among other topics. Prior to the evening events, some local community colleges hosted a Transfer Day on campus. College Nights were held in Visalia, Bakersfield, Fresno, Lemoore, Stockton, Modesto and Merced. All were free to the public.

UC Davis Family Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant (FNP/PA) Program Starts Fall Quarter in Fresno

The UC Davis FNP/PA Program educates health practitioners who will provide primary care in underserved regions and to underrepresented populations in California. The Fresno teaching center, at the UC Center, Fresno, enrolls students from Central California. Graduates receive certificates as FNPs, PAs or both after 24 months.

The program began its fall 2001 quarter Sept. 24 with about 50 students. A practice event was held Oct. 9 at the center to help students refine their pediatric physical exam skills. Children of friends and relatives participated in the fun, educational and informal practice exams.

UC Davis also offers a master's in nursing program in conjunction with California State University, Sacramento, which offers courses via distance learning to allow students in the Fresno area to complete their master's degree.

UCSF Fresno Doctor's Academy Receives Award

The Doctor's Academy at Sunnyside High School in Fresno will receive a 2001 Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association on Dec. 1. The prestigious award program honors exemplary K-12 programs. Sponsored by UCSF Fresno and the Latino Center for Medical Education Research, the Doctor's Academy seeks to increase the number of disadvantaged and underrepresented students who go on to become competitive applicants to graduate health profession schools. Now in its third year, the Doctor's Academy enrolls about 35 high school freshmen annually. Students participate in accelerated classes with an emphasis on math, science and writing, enrichment programs, visits to graduate health professions schools, tutorial sessions, and other support services and counseling.

UC Merced Sponsors Annual Science Workshop

UC Merced, UC Berkeley Lawrence Hall of Science and the Yosemite Institute will offer the third annual hands-on science workshop for fourth- through sixth-grade teachers in Yosemite National Park Dec. 2-5. A follow-up session will be held in Merced on Jan. 18. Teachers will learn the current best practices and strategies for teaching hands-on science while exploring the park.

CONTACT INFORMATION

UC ValleyConnection is published quarterly by the University of California, Office of the President, University & External Relations, San Joaquin Valley office, UC Center, 550 E. Shaw Ave., Ste. 212, Fresno, CA 93710, (559) 241-7510, fax (559) 241-7516. For more information, please e-mail the editor at brandy.nikaido@ucop.edu or call the number listed above.

Newest and Oldest UC Campuses Team Up to Help California Students

By Sheryl Lichtig Wyan, UC Merced, Office of Communications

A new technology venture between University of California campuses in Berkeley and Merced is underway this year to make the content of UC Berkeley lower-division computer science courses available online for the first time. The effort is expected to help Merced graduate its first computer science class only two years after the 10th UC campus is slated to open in the San Joaquin Valley.

The project is being developed by the new Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS), a partnership of four UC campuses — Merced, Davis and Santa Cruz, with UC Berkeley taking the lead. The center received its initial state funding this summer from Gov. Gray Davis and the state Legislature.

CITRIS is one of four California Institutes for Science and Innovation at UC selected last year by the governor and his advisory team of scientists and industry leaders. Each institute will receive \$100 million in state funding over a four-year period, supported with additional funds from industry and private donations. Among the 13 corporate sponsors of CITRIS are Intel Corp., Microsoft Corp., Nortel Networks Corp. and Sun Microsystems.

The funding will allow Berkeley, the UC system's oldest campus, and Merced, its newest, to team up and research best practices in online teaching and course creation, while at the same time producing courses that will serve the needs of the San Joaquin Valley community as UC Merced gears up for instruction.

The availability of UC Berkeley's computer science courses at San Joaquin Valley community colleges will play a valuable role in helping students prepare for transfer to UC Merced, which will have a strong emphasis on recruiting community college transfer students.

Additional information about the Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society is available at www.citris.berkeley.edu and <http://www.ucop.edu/california-institutes/welcome.html>.

continued from front page **UC Responds to Terrorist Threats**

In the Valley, the UC Davis California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory System, with sites in Fresno, Turlock and Tulare, protects our food supply and public health by continually monitoring farm animals to ensure their health, the quality of related food products and prevent disease transmission.

"Many biological terrorist weapons such as anthrax are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted from animals to humans," explains Robert B. Moeller Jr., a UC Davis veterinary pathologist based in Tulare. "Therefore it is likely that we may detect them in animal populations before humans."

Veterinary pathologists with the CAHFS Laboratory System routinely test animals for zoonotic diseases, foreign-animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, exotic Newcastle disease and food safety-related diseases like salmonella.

By sharing its expertise, the University of California is helping safeguard California residents from the threat of terrorism.

UC Center Features “What Freedom Means to Me,” a Collection of Children’s Art

By Jeanie Smith, UC Office of the President, University and External Relations

The UC Center, Fresno’s winter Community ArtReach exhibit will feature the work of local children. “What Freedom Means to Me,” a collection of watercolor paintings by fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students at Thomas Elementary School in Fresno, will be on display at the center from Dec. 6 through mid-February 2002. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, Dec. 6, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. The artists, their parents and the public are invited.

Students whose teachers recently participated in a professional development program sponsored by UC Merced created the paintings. The innovative program, produced jointly with the Central Valley California Arts Project, incorporated each of the four art disciplines (music, dance, theatre and visual arts). Local teachers who are experts in their disciplines taught the workshops.

Participating teachers took their newly acquired art knowledge back into their classrooms where students were asked to create a watercolor painting interpreting the theme of freedom and its personal meaning. More than 150



Fresno students created watercolor paintings after their teachers received training in the visual arts.

students created paintings.

A certificate of recognition and T-shirt from UC Merced will be presented to the students whose artwork is to be displayed. One student artist from each class and one artist overall will receive additional awards.

“The Children’s Community ArtReach project is a perfect example of the university and local schools working together to enhance the experience of K-12 students through teacher training and unique, hands-on classroom projects,” said Diana Ralls, UC Merced’s K-12 program coordinator.

UC Merced, UC Office of the President, UC Santa Cruz, and State Center Consortium sponsored the exhibit with support from Thomas Elementary School, Allard’s Art & Office Supply and Morris & Co. Fine Arts.

continued from front page **Writing Project**

single way to teach writing,” said Sahakian. “We really promote inquiry-based instruction among professionals and ask questions such as why a particular technique was effective or how to improve a technique.”

Among the programs conducted during the past year were an in-service series for teachers on California’s fourth- and seventh-grade Writing Assessment, a week-long California Professional Development Institute in Reading and Writing for middle school and high school teachers, and an intensive five-week Summer Invitational Institute. Financial compensation and, for the first time, UC Merced credit are provided to educators who complete certain programs.

For programs such as the invitational summer institute, teachers must meet certain requirements. Other programs are open to all educators. One such program, an ongoing Saturday outreach series continuing through April 2002, is accepting new participants. The sessions are free.

For further information, please contact Pauline Sahakian at (209) 381-6561 or (559) 222-6916, or at pauline.sahakian@ucop.edu.

UCCE Studies Cultivation of Medicinal Herbs

By Jeannette Warnert, UC Office of the President, Agriculture and Natural Resources

University of California Cooperative Extension is working with volunteers in Tuolumne County to turn the growing interest in medicinal herbs into an economic opportunity for local residents.

The county’s marginal soils, prolific deer and expensive water have limited agricultural production options for owners of the numerous five- to 200-acre home sites, according to UC Cooperative Extension program representative Mary Innes. However, several common medicinal herbs grow naturally on the county’s picturesque hillsides, including elderberry, horehound, milk thistle, mugwort, mullein, and yerba santa. Under cultivation, Innes predicted, the plants would grow like weeds.

In the first year of a two-year study, all six naturally occurring herbs and two varieties of echinacea were studied in 58 small plots scattered around Tuolumne County. Milk thistle appeared most

promising. The prickly shrub, which grows up to six feet tall, is common on local roadsides. An extract from the seeds is thought to be an effective treatment for liver disorders and an antidote for mushroom poisoning. Innes found there are local herbalists who are interested in purchasing high-quality, organically grown milk thistle.

“There is a glut of milk thistle on the wholesale market,” Innes said, “but much of it comes from overseas and might be contaminated with pesticides.”

The second year of the Tuolumne County trial, Innes and the volunteers focused their research on one acre of milk thistle. The plant was difficult to germinate in the spring and, despite its naturalized status, did better with irrigation. Hand harvesting proved to be prickly business. Removing seeds by hand was tedious and difficult, yielding just three ounces an hour. Ultimately, the

volunteers used an experimental combine from UC Davis to harvest. When the dried flowers were tumbled in a concrete mixer with blocks of wood and stones for 20 minutes, 65 percent of the seeds were released.

The UC Cooperative Extension trials demonstrated that medicinal herb cultivation is possible on a commercial scale in Tuolumne County. However, landowners interested in farming herbs should carefully study production, processing and marketing before making an economic commitment, Innes said.

Through its Cooperative Extension County Offices, the University of California takes scientific discoveries, tests them in the field, then adapts and shares the results with farmers and area residents. Much of the Valley’s agricultural success can be traced back to the university’s research and extension programs.

UC Valley Connection
 University of California
 Office of the President
 University & External Relations
 UC Center
 550 E. Shaw Ave., Suite 212
 Fresno, CA 93710
[www.ucnewswire.org](http://ucnewswire.org)
<http://ucnewswire.org>
 Para noticias e información de la UC en
 español, favor de visitar al
www.ucnewswire.org/spanish.html



UCSF Fresno Welcomes the School of Pharmacy

By Cara Peracchi Douglas, UCSF Fresno

The University of California, San Francisco Fresno Medical Education Program (UCSF Fresno) welcomes the UCSF School of Pharmacy to Fresno. Responding to the severe shortage of pharmacists in the Central Valley, plans are underway to establish a program to train pharmacists in Fresno. As a first step, Valley native Mitra Assemi, PharmD, has been appointed as director of the UCSF Fresno Pharmacy Education Program.

"We are fortunate to have Mitra head up this exceptional program," said Deborah Stewart, MD, associate dean for UCSF Fresno. "By offering a local training program, we will be better prepared to deliver a pipeline of pharmacists to our community. Since UCSF Fresno's residency program retains 50 percent of its physicians, it is expected that this program will have similar results."

Currently, the UCSF School of Pharmacy is the only public pharmacy graduate school in the state. UCSF School of Pharmacy maintains five clerkship sites statewide including San Francisco, South San Francisco, San Diego, Sacramento and Los Angeles. Fresno will be the sixth site.

The School of Pharmacy program is a four-year doctorate program. As a part of their training, students complete required advanced pharmacy practice experiences, or clerkships.

The school will admit six incoming students in the first year with plans to grow the program to 20 in the next five to 10 years.

"I am thrilled to return to the Valley to start this vital clerkship program," said Assemi. "We will welcome our first students in May 2002."

Fall 2002 UC Applications Due

The application-filing period for Valley high school seniors and community college students interested in applying to a UC campus for fall 2002 is Nov. 1–30. For application materials and assistance, please contact the UC Merced Office of Relations with Schools at (559) 241-7474.

UC Moves Into New Bakersfield Center

Last September, representatives from UC Merced's Office of Academic Programs and its Office of Relations with Schools as well as UC Santa Barbara's Early Academic Outreach Department moved into the new UC Center at 2000 K Street in Bakersfield. UC Merced had temporarily established a center at the Kern County Superintendent of Schools building in Oct. 2000 until the new building was ready.

Through the center, the University of California is expanding educational opportunities for residents in the southern San Joaquin Valley by offering summer courses for UC students, teacher training, school partnerships, professional development programs, student outreach and public policy forums. The



new center will also feature videoconferencing capabilities and a computer lab, providing a vital link to UC Merced. In addition, the new site will foster collaboration with other area organizations and educational institutions.