

UC VALLEY CONNECTION

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SUMMER 2006/VOL. 6, NO. 3

HIGHLIGHTING THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA'S CONNECTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

QUOTEWORTHY

“We have recruited exceptional teachers and researchers from the world’s leading institutions.”

Keith E. Alley
Executive vice chancellor and provost
UC Merced

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Students return as UC Merced begins its second year

By Brandy Ramos Nikaido | UC Office of the President | Strategic Communications

The University of California, Merced started its second academic year with classes beginning on Aug. 28. While the campus recently received significant press coverage regarding its lower than expected student enrollment, due in part to over enrollment at sister campuses, UC’s newest campus is flourishing in a variety of ways.

As of early August, nearly 600 new undergraduate students had signed-on at UC Merced, bringing the total anticipated student enrollment for the fall semester to an estimated 1,300. About 30 percent of the students are from the Central Valley and approximately 40 percent are the first in their family to attend college. All have met the rigorous eligibility requirements of the University of California system.

Additionally, the number of graduate students is nearly doubling; 42 new grad students are expected to attend this fall,

bringing the total number of graduate students to approximately 80.

In July, UC Merced added 23 new members to its distinguished roster of faculty. The addition of these faculty significantly increases the campus’s teaching and research potential.

“We have recruited exceptional teachers and researchers from the world’s leading institutions,” said UC Merced Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Keith E. Alley. “The breadth of their interests and experience will significantly expand our research capabilities and academic programs through the growth of new courses and majors.”

Active faculty at UC Merced, including administrative faculty, totals 85.

UC Merced also added six new undergraduate majors: applied mathematical sciences; chemical sciences; materials science



UC Merced

and engineering; mechanical engineering; physics; and psychology.

Fundraising at the campus has nearly quadrupled from a year ago. Private donations to UC Merced during 2005-06 totaled \$19.6 million, including a recent \$5 million gift made by UnitedHealth Group.

“Clearly, there is strong support for UC Merced on a variety of levels,” said Dean of Natural Sciences Maria Pallavicini. “The UnitedHealth Group contribution specifically enables us to continue planning for a medical education program at our campus that addresses the health-care needs of California and the Valley’s growing and diverse population.”

Construction also continues at UC’s 10th campus. The Science and Engineering building is open, and the Joseph Edward Gallo Recreation and Wellness Center, featuring cardio and circuit-training equipment, free weights and basketball and volleyball courts, is slated to open this fall.

UC Merced Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, who stepped down Aug. 31 after serving seven years as chancellor but plans to return as a faculty member in fall 2007, is confident the campus is on the right track.

“I have every confidence in the future of this campus,” said Tomlinson-Keasey. “We offer an environment that, because of its size, encourages meaningful interaction with faculty and promotes leadership qualities in our students.

“This is in addition to our stunning faculty and our committed and energetic staff,” she added. “The combination means that students can achieve their dreams.”



Community welcomes UCSF Fresno medical residents

UCSF Fresno medical residents recently received a warm welcome at a social event aimed at giving them a break from work as well as an opportunity to network with local physicians, clinicians and other professionals. The Shakers of Community Medical Foundation and UCSF Fresno faculty member Dr. Steven Parks hosted the Casino Royale-themed event. More than 100 guests attended.

“If The Shakers can help make these residents feel at home, make connections and be introduced to the community, we may help convince even more to remain in the area,” said Parks, chief of surgery at University Medical Center. “Meeting other young leaders in the community will broaden their horizons and allow them to assimilate.”

The San Joaquin Valley has one of the lowest patient-to-doctor ratios in California – 173 physicians per 100,000 people compared with the state average of 285. As the Valley grows, so does its need for doctors.

According to Parks, about 40 percent of residents who train in surgery, internal medicine and pediatrics at UCSF Fresno remain in the San Joaquin Valley to practice after their residency.

UC brings space-age technology to Valley farms

A new scientific discipline – the computer-driven “geospatial technologies” – is helping UC agricultural researchers and farmers better understand and develop solutions to issues involving cropland, pest interactions and disease movement. Geospatial technologies include geographic information systems (GIS), global positioning systems, remote sensing and spatial statistics.

Kris Lynn-Patterson is an academic coordinator for geospatial technologies based at the UC Kearney Research and Extension Center in Parlier. She supports the 25 UC Berkeley, UC Davis and UC Riverside scientists at the center. A number of projects have already yielded useful results.

For example, Lynn-Patterson worked with UC integrated pest management adviser Pete Goodell to understand the migration of lygus bugs through the San Joaquin Valley’s mosaic of diverse crops. It costs farmers nearly \$19 million in yield loss each year when lygus move into cotton. By combining observations made on the ground with GIS mapping technology, Goodell identified areas in the Valley where cotton is most likely to have lygus problems in mid-summer.



UC Center art exhibit features the Sierra Nevada

The latest UC Center, Fresno Community ArtReach exhibit, “The Sierra In Contrast,” which opened Sept. 7 with a public reception, conveys the dramatic beauty of the Sierra Nevada through the different artistic expressions of two Valley women.

Heidi Vetter’s fine art color photographs are striking in their beauty, clarity and detail, and evoke the solitude of the Sierra wilderness. Many of the Oakhurst resident’s photographs, created during a three-month solo journey into the backcountry of the High Sierra, are accompanied by her own poems.

In bold contrast are the vibrant, somewhat abstract paintings by Fresnan Heather Anderson. Anderson paints in acrylic on canvas using large brushstrokes and brilliant colors. With her strong paintings, Anderson, a UC Berkeley alumna, conveys a powerful sense of adventure and the wildness experienced during her many treks into the Sierra backcountry.

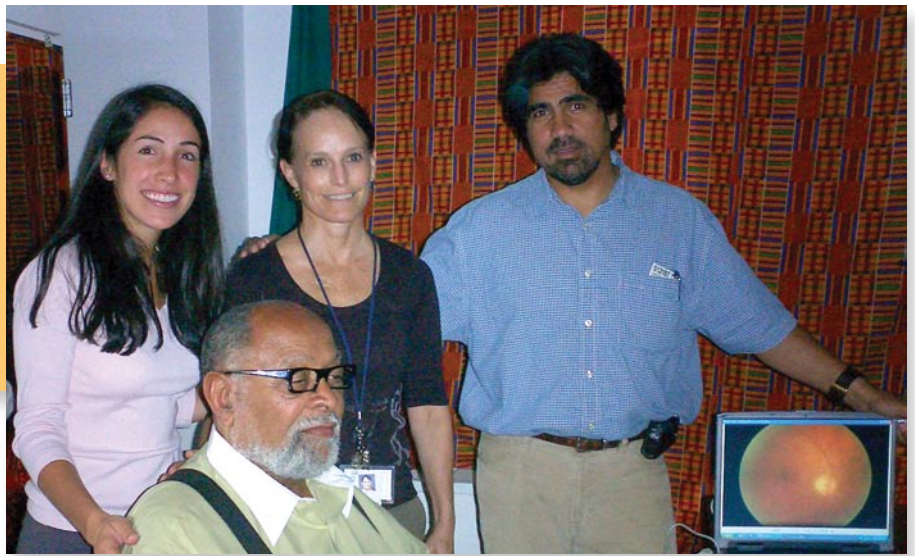
Also on exhibit is raku and wood-fired pottery in organic forms and colors by Geoffrey Spach.

The exhibit runs through Nov. 2 and is open to the public free of charge during UC Center business hours.

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Gathered around a computer image of the Rev. Cecil Williams's retina are, from left, UC Berkeley optometry student Andrea Buitrago, Williams, Glide Health Services medical director Dianne Budd, and UC Berkeley optometry professor Jorge Cuadros. Williams, leader of Glide Memorial Church, was one of 15 patients Cuadros screened for diabetic retinopathy at Glide Health Services in San Francisco this summer.



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UC Berkeley optometrists care for Valley residents

By Liese Greensfelder | UC Berkeley | Office of Public Affairs

Armed with new telemedicine software, optometrists at University of California, Berkeley are working with doctors at community clinics in California, including the Central Valley, to provide eye exams for thousands of low-income diabetic patients.

Latinos – who make up 40 percent of the population in the Central Valley – are expected to be the principal beneficiaries of this pilot project. With a rate of diabetes that is nearly three times as high as that of the general population of the United States, this group is at particularly high risk for diabetic retinopathy, a sight-threatening side effect of the disease, said Jorge Cuadros, the project's director.

Since September 2005, when the project was launched at the Golden Valley Health Center in Merced, 13 clinics have received retinal cameras and an open-source image management program developed at UC Berkeley's School of Optometry for storing and transmitting patient information and diagnostic images. The equipment allows doctors to take high-resolution photos of patients' retinas and send them electronically to optometrists at UC Berkeley for interpretation and diagnosis.

"We're finding sight-threatening retinopathy in about 10 percent of the patients," said Cuadros, a clinical professor of optometry at the school and the driving force behind the project. "Without this new system, most of these patients would have fallen through the cracks. They would have

ended up at an eye-care provider's office once they lost vision in an eye, instead of being diagnosed early on, when preventive measures can still help."

Most low-income residents of the Central Valley go to community clinics for their general health care, but few clinics have the equipment or expertise to screen for vision problems. In 2003, Cuadros decided to address this problem as the research arm of his work toward a Ph.D. in medical informatics.

At the heart of Cuadros's solution are three components: EyePACS, a license-free, Web-based system he developed over the last five years to send, store and display eye-related patient information, images and diagnostic data; his colleagues at UC Berkeley's School of Optometry, who volunteered to read the retinal images sent to them from the clinics; and new legislation, which went into effect July 1, that permits Medical reimbursement for doctors who review dermatology or ophthalmology records that have been sent and stored electronically.

With a \$630,000 grant from The California Endowment through the California Telemedicine and eHealth Center and the California Health Care Foundation, Cuadros equipped the rural clinics in the project and provided training for doctors and clinic staff.

From its start, the project has been paying off. One example is the case of 40-

year-old Michael Cheng Thao, a Merced resident who had been seeing a doctor in town about his headaches. After running various tests, his doctor scheduled an appointment for Thao with a local ophthalmologist for two months later, the first available opening. Meanwhile, at his cousin's suggestion, Thao visited Golden Valley Health Center in May for retinal screening. The image was sent to Cuadros in Berkeley, who reviewed it within the hour. When he noticed that both of Thao's optic nerves were swollen, Cuadros immediately called the clinic: The swelling could be a sign of a life-threatening condition. Three days later, Thao underwent surgery for a non-malignant brain tumor.

About 40 patients a week are being screened at the clinics. But once staff become comfortable with the new equipment and procedures, Cuadros expects that each clinic will screen about 1,000 patients per year. ■

"Without this new system, most of these patients would have fallen through the cracks... instead of being diagnosed early on...."

Jorge Cuadros
UC Berkeley

New UC Score streamlines reporting of test results that determine UC eligibility

Students applying to the University of California for fall 2007 freshman admission will calculate their test scores in a slightly modified way to determine their UC eligibility. Instead of converting ACT test results to equivalent SAT scores, as is done now, applicants will convert their ACT or SAT test results into a new UC Score on a 0-100 scale.

Students will then use their UC Score and high school grade point average (GPA) to determine where they fall on the university's Eligibility Index. The index defines the combination of test scores and grades in required high school courses a student must earn to meet UC's statewide eligibility requirements. (Students can also become UC-eligible by being in the top 4 percent of their graduating class or based on test scores alone.)

An online calculator allowing students to calculate their statewide eligibility using the new UC Score has been posted to the

UC Web site. The university will be communicating the modified approach to high school students, principals and counselors. Students apply for fall 2007 admission during November 2006.

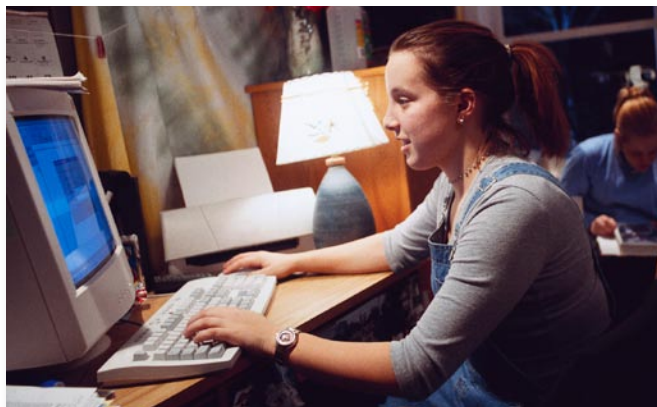
University faculty adopted the new UC Score because it puts scores from all standardized tests on an equal footing.

"No students should worry that their results may be viewed differently because they chose one test over another," said Susan Wilbur, UC director of undergraduate admissions. "This technical change gives a new look to the Eligibility Index, but it will not alter who becomes eligible for UC."

The online calculator can be found at: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/scholarshipreq. Students with limited computer access may download a printed

worksheet at: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/educators/counselors/resources/materials.html.

Students are reminded that the UC Board of Regents in 2004 approved one other change affecting fall 2007 applicants – an increase in the high school GPA required for statewide eligibility. Starting with the fall 2007 entering class, the minimum GPA in high school a-g courses required for statewide eligibility will be 3.0, up from 2.8. ■



Students applying to UC for freshman admission during fall 2007 will now convert ACT and SAT results into a UC score.

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