



UC MERCED CAMPUS REPORT FOR CUCSA – November 2004

UC Merced Seeks First Undergraduate Student Applications

Opening Day of Classes on New Campus Site Set for September 6, 2005

UC Merced is seeking applications from prospective freshman and transfer students who wish to be the first to enroll at the new University of California campus opening next year. Students are strongly encouraged to submit the University of California's Application for Undergraduate Admissions and Scholarships during the priority application filing period, which runs from Nov. 1 through Nov. 30 for Fall 2005. UC Merced's fall semester officially begins on Aug. 29, 2005, with the first day of instruction set for Sept. 6, 2005.

"UC Merced represents a unique opportunity for students," says Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey. "Our first class will help shape the university, founding and leading campus activities and programs. Simultaneously, they will have unprecedented, personalized access to world-renowned scholars." With a special mission to serve the students in the San Joaquin Valley - defined as the region from Stockton to Bakersfield and including Sierra Nevada foothill communities - UC Merced also will expand access to the University of California for UC-eligible students throughout California.

"During the first year, we will admit all freshmen applicants who have achieved UC's Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) designation," says Encarnación Ruíz, UC Merced's Director of Admissions and Relations with Schools and Colleges. ELC students are those who have been recognized by the University of California as being in the top 4 percent of their graduating class. "Serving transfer students also is a priority at UC Merced," Ruíz adds. "As a new campus, we're in a good position to assist UC in fulfilling its commitment to offer admission to all eligible applicants."

For students interested in graduate-level study, UC Merced will offer master's degree and doctorate programs during the 2005-06 academic year. Applications for graduate admission will be accepted only for Fall 2005 and must be submitted by February 1, 2005. In its inaugural year, the 10th UC campus will give students a choice of degree programs with undergraduate and graduate -level concentrations in approximately 20 disciplines. Initial academic programs will be offered through the Schools of Engineering; Natural Sciences; and Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. The number of courses, majors and degree programs is expected to expand rapidly as additional faculty members are brought on board and enrollment grows to a Phase I target of 5,000 students by the 2008-09 academic year. Opening with about 1,000 students, UC Merced will serve approximately 600 freshmen, 300 transfer students and 100 graduate students. About one-third to one-half of the freshman class is expected to come from high schools around the San Joaquin Valley. UC Merced admissions officers have also seen strong interest from other regions of the state, including the Los Angeles basin and the San Francisco Bay area.

Engineering Service Learning Program Offers Hands-on Education, Benefits Area Nonprofits

Engineering, by definition, is science applied to solve practical problems and improve people's lives. Faculty members at the University of California, Merced, are building engineering programs with a built-in, hands-on element to prepare students to practice real engineering. The Engineering Service Learning Program brings teams of undergraduate students together with nonprofit organizations in the community. The students determine, analyze and then meet each organization's engineering needs using the same process they will follow in their professional careers. The program has previously been established at Purdue University, but UC Merced is the first school to bring it to the western United States.

"The service learning program is an integral part of engineering education at UC Merced," said Dean of Engineering Jeff Wright. "This program will instill in our students stronger engineering design skills, extensive leadership and management experiences, and remarkable professional relationships. Most important, it will help keep our students engaged and focused on their educational goals." Every service learning team will have a faculty member to help them make needed connections and guide them through the client service process, and the first team was no exception. Assistant professor Valerie Leppert mentored the pioneering team. "Service learning also reaches out to women and minority students by helping show the real, beneficial results engineering can produce. We're optimistic that it will help us build a strong, diverse program at UCM."

Newest "Dream Team" Adds Breadth to Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Nine new faculty members, in academic disciplines from economics to philosophy to theater, have joined the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts at the University of California, Merced, in recent months. Shawn Kantor, Manuel Martín-Rodríguez, Teenie Matlock, Ruth Mostern, Dunya Ramicova, Belinda Reyes, Cristián Ricci, J. Arthur Woodward and Jeffrey Yoshimi all started work at UC Merced between July and September 2004.

Before the arrival of these professors, the faculty of the school consisted only of Dean Kenji Hakuta, historian Gregg Herken and psychologist William Shadish. The Schools of Engineering and Natural Sciences had already hired a strong complement of faculty, so this round of hiring brought needed balance to the 10th UC campus early in its development. The total number of full-time professors now on board in all three schools at UC Merced is 27.

"Hiring this group of scholars is a significant accomplishment that has consumed a major portion of our time over the last year," says Hakuta. "We reviewed hundreds of applications and are pleased to have found excellent professors at every level whose research fits with our goal of building a solid, diverse offering of coursework and research opportunities at UC Merced. They are a dream team."

Although focused in some broad groups of interest such as Spanish languages and literatures, Central Valley economic and social development, and digital humanities, the research interests of the new faculty members vary widely:

- Professor Shawn Kantor was previously a professor of economics at the University of Arizona. He researches political economy, law and economics; United States economic history; economic development; and public economics.
- Professor Manuel Martín-Rodríguez will continue his work in Chicana/o and Latina/o language, literature and culture, which he previously pursued at Texas A&M University.
- Assistant Professor Teenie Matlock researches cognitive science, psycholinguistics, spatial cognition, metaphor, semantics and gesture. She comes to UC Merced from a research position at Stanford.
- Assistant Professor Ruth Mostern's professional interests include geo-referencing and digital mapping of historical and cultural phenomena, specifically those of Middle Period China. She was previously with the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative at UC Berkeley.
- Professor Dunya Ramicova is an Emmy-award winning costume designer for theatre, opera, ballet, dance, film and television. Her interests also include the history of costume design, history of clothing and fashion, drawing and watercolor painting. She joins UC Merced from UCLA.
- Assistant Professor Belinda Reyes studies demography, immigration, immigration policy, immigrant adaptation, race and ethnicity, urban economics, and social and economic progress of race/ethnic minorities. She was previously with the Public Policy Institute of California.
- Assistant Professor Cristián Ricci specializes in 19th- and 20th-century Spanish and Portuguese literature. He joins UC Merced from Whittier College in Southern California.
- Professor J. Arthur Woodward is a psychologist who works in experimental design, statistical genetics, applied statistics and psychometrics. He comes to UC Merced from UCLA, where he chaired the Psychology Department.
- Assistant Professor Jeffrey Yoshimi studies philosophy of mind, philosophy of cognitive science, phenomenology (especially Husserl) and neural networks. He was previously a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, San Diego.

The new faculty members plan to pursue their research and help build the interdisciplinary research institutes at UC Merced, including the World Cultures Institute, which will promote understanding of the peoples of California as to place and location, nature and society, culture and identity, and cultural understandings of scientific issues. In addition, their research hopes to address the social, economic and human development issues of the Central Valley, and to play a major role in public policy.