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CONTACT:

Brenda Ortiz, University Communications

Office: 209-228-4203 | Cell: 209-628-8263 | Email: [bortiz@ucmerced.edu](mailto:bortiz@ucmerced.edu)

## UC Merced Receives National Award for Educational Programming

*Campus honored for utilizing new, effective and innovative systems to evaluate and demonstrate student outcomes*

MERCED, Calif. — The University of California, Merced, has been awarded the 2012 Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Award for Outstanding Institutional Practice in Student Learning Outcomes.

“The CHEA award affirms UC Merced’s mission as a student-centered research university by formally recognizing the exceptional commitment of faculty, administrators and staff to the shared goal of advancing our students’ academic success,” said Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Keith Alley.

“The concept of learning outcomes is embedded in the campus’ culture, and it’s an honor for UC Merced to receive this national recognition.”

Since the campus opened its doors in 2005, it has remained focused on establishing student learning outcomes across all undergraduate programs, along with annual assessment plans and an infrastructure to encourage and monitor periodic assessment.

### Quick Facts

- UC Merced received a national award from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
- The campus was selected for demonstrating its capacity to address the challenges of student learning outcomes while providing increasing accountability.
- UC Merced is one of three institutions selected from 47 applications submitted nationwide.

In its application, UC Merced said it has benefited from the creation of a Senate-Administration Council on Assessment that oversees continuing attention to program assessment, including co-curricular and administrative programs. Program-based Faculty Assessment Organizers have led to evidence-based improvements in instruction.

Undergraduates participate in the assessment process through an innovative program — Students Assessing Teaching and Learning. Additionally, graduate students are employed through a grant-funded program to conduct classroom or program assessment and disseminate results.

The CHEA Award was established in 2005 to recognize institutions that have been exceptional in developing and applying evidence of student learning outcomes to improve higher education quality and accountability. Rather than just providing a record of what students have been taught, student learning outcomes establish what students should be able to do as a result of instruction.

A committee selected from higher education institutions, accrediting organizations and the public judged the entries on the basis of four award criteria: articulation and evidence of outcomes; success with regard to outcomes; information to the public about outcomes; and use of outcomes for educational improvement.

CHEA received 47 applications for this year's award and recognized UC Merced, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and Rio Salado College in Arizona.

"The award committee was strongly impressed with the strength and creativity of the work of these institutions," CHEA President Judith Eaton said. "They provide excellent examples of effective approaches to the use of student learning outcomes."

The awards will be presented at the 2012 CHEA Annual Conference on Jan. 24 in Washington, D.C.

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*UC Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, as the 10th campus in the University of California system and the first American research university of the 21st century. The campus significantly expands access to the UC system for students throughout the state, with a special mission to increase*

*college-going rates among students in the San Joaquin Valley. It also serves as a major base of advanced research and as a stimulus to economic growth and diversification throughout the region. Situated near Yosemite National Park, the university is expected to grow rapidly, topping out at about 25,000 students within 30 years.*