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## **Citi Gift a Boost for Parent Support**

*UC Merced's Center for Educational Partnerships receives funding to expand programming in local high schools*

MERCED, Calif. — The University of California, Merced, has announced a \$33,000 donation from Citi to support its Center for Educational Partnership's Parent Empowerment Program — \$10,000 will fund the continued support of high schools in Madera and \$23,000 will be used to start a new program in Stanislaus County at Grace Davis, Modesto and Turlock high schools.

The University of California chose to locate its newest campus in Merced in hopes of increasing the number of San Joaquin Valley students who earn college degrees. In turn, UC Merced created its Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP) with the goal of effecting long-range improvement in the education of Valley students.

"CEP's focus has always been to increase the number of Valley high school students who are academically prepared for the rigors of college upon graduation," said

### **Quick Facts**

- Citi has donated \$33,000 to UC Merced's Center for Educational Partnerships to fund outreach support to parents of local high school students.
- The gift will help the campus continue support in Madera County and will be used to start a new program in Stanislaus County.
- The program helps empower parents so that they clearly understand how to navigate through issues related to higher education.

Orquidea Largo, the center's director. "But we can't achieve that goal without helping students to garner the support of their parents."

Largo is quick to clarify that the problem isn't that Valley parents don't want their students to go to college — it's simply that they don't understand the details involved or how best to show their support. That's where the Parent Empowerment Program comes in.

Established in 2004 through a grant from the California Student Aid Commission and EdFund, the program gives parents the tools necessary to support their students' goals of attending and graduating from four-year universities. Parents attend eight sessions on university matters and have the opportunity to visit college and university campuses throughout the state. The workshops, which are offered to parents in their native languages, explain admissions requirements, the availability of financial assistance and what is expected of students upon enrolling in college.

Over the years, the financial corporation has shown a strong commitment to supporting educational programs that prepare students for college and careers.

"Citi is committed to expanding access to higher education for underserved individuals and families," said Brian Hepburn, managing director and division manager for Citibank's Growth Markets Division. "Education is at the heart of economic empowerment, and through the Center for Educational Partnerships' innovative program more California students will have the opportunity to pursue a college degree."

"This gift means that we will be able to empower even more Valley parents in helping their students succeed in college," Largo said.

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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.*