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## **Campus Research Investment Hits New High**

*UC Merced spent more than \$15.8 million on research in 2011-12, while faculty members were awarded more than \$22 million in grants*

MERCED, Calif. — Research is the hallmark of the University of California, which develops more patents than any other university in the nation. And as the system’s newest campus, UC Merced is continuing to conduct cutting-edge research.

According to numbers released today (Oct. 11) by the campus’s Business and Financial Services, research expenditures – the money spent on UC Merced research, including graduate aide, along with supplies and equipment for research projects — have surpassed \$15.8 million in fiscal year 2011-12, marking an increase over the \$15 million spent the prior year. Since July 2000, UC Merced has spent more than \$90 million on research.

“Representing the money spent on current projects and being funneled back into the economy, expenditures are the most relevant measure of a research university’s production,” UC Merced Vice Chancellor for Research Sam Traina said. “The numbers provide concrete evidence that our faculty and staff are conducting a vast amount of groundbreaking research, which is no small task in a sluggish economy.”

### **Quick Facts**

- Research expenditures at UC Merced surpassed \$15.8 million in the 2011-12 fiscal year, an increase over the prior year.
- Research awards received in 2011-12 totaled about \$22 million.
- About 49 percent of the grants and contracts awarded to the campus came from the federal government, 25 percent were funded by the state of California and private foundations accounted for about 8 percent.

Though a critical metric of university productivity, expenditures are only half of the equation. The other half is made up of the research awards that fund those expenditures. UC Merced faculty have held steady over the past few years, pulling in about \$22 million annually, with a high of \$22.8 million in 2008-09.

The \$22 million received this past year include some notable awards:

- Two CAREER Awards — the National Science Foundation’s faculty early career development award — received by UC Merced professors [Shawn Newsam](#) and [Ming-Hsuan Yang](#).
- \$2 million from the National Science Foundation to [continue](#) the [Sierra Nevada Research Institute’s](#) (SNRI) development of wireless sensor networks measuring snowpack depth and other water-cycle factors.
- \$2.6 million from the National Institutes of Health to [study](#) tobacco programs at the state and local level with researchers at UC San Francisco.
- A Fulbright Scholar [grant](#) to Professor [Mónica Medina](#), who will conduct research in France on algae that share a codependent relationship with tropical coral reefs.

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The impact of these awards runs deeper than just the dollars and cents provided to buy equipment and pay salaries. For instance, SNRI’s sensor network could give state water managers the ability to better predict snowmelt runoff, the source of much of the state’s water supply. And figuring out the most effective tobacco-control programs could save the state money by ensuring taxpayer dollars aren’t wasted on initiatives that don’t work.

“These awards represent an investment in our students, who benefit from participating in the research experience,” Traina said. “UC Merced professors aren’t just educators or researchers. They are visionaries who take pride in mentoring the next generation of global leaders. And that is priceless.”

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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.*