



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 18, 2012

CONTACT:

Lorena Anderson, University Communications

Office: 209-228-4406 | Cell: 209-201-6255 | Email: landerson4@ucmerced.edu

UC Merced Caps Successful Year with an Eye on the Future

Campus shows healthy growth, a wide reach into the San Joaquin Valley through investment and increased college-going rates, and a global view toward problem-solving

MERCED, Calif. — Though UC Merced looked back this year to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the campus's groundbreaking, signs of what the future will hold continue to come into focus.

Those signs include cutting-edge research moving forward in the San Joaquin Valley – the state's fastest growing region – and around the world, the growing campus, and the ever-strengthening bond between the campus and the community.

"This has been an exciting year, with many notable achievements and a milestone – the 10th anniversary of the campus's groundbreaking," said UC Merced Chancellor Dorothy Leland. "UC Merced continues to see significant growth in its campus community, including high-achieving new students and stellar new faculty, and we look forward to the positive impact the university will have on the Valley for decades to come."

Quick Facts

- UC Merced's achievements this year include millions in grant funds for research, as well as CAREER awards for its excellent faculty.
- The campus honored the 10th anniversary of its groundbreaking this fall with Founders Day celebrations.
- The campus and the community continue to enjoy a healthy working relationship, including the campus's community service, which can be seen in many corners of the San Joaquin Valley.

Research contributions

UC Merced faculty and students continue making inroads into some of the region's and the world's biggest problems, from disease to climate change. Cancer, diabetes, the state's water resources, soil health, diversity of life in the Earth's oceans, computer fraud, solar energy capabilities, archaeology and Native American artifacts – these are just a few of the subjects UC Merced's faculty researchers have been looking into.

UC Merced researchers received prestigious honors and grants for their work this year, too. For example, Mónica Medina, a natural sciences professor, won a Fulbright Scholar grant to conduct research at the Observatoire Océanologique de Banyuls research station in France during the 2012-13 academic year.

Additionally, a \$2 million anonymous gift will help scholars conduct interdisciplinary research, engaging the public and addressing issues critical to the San Joaquin Valley and California through the UC Merced Center for the Humanities.

The National Science Foundation also contributed to critical research this year, funding work on climate change, water resources and biological diversity.

Professors Michael Dawson and Michael Beman won a \$1.4 million grant to study how changes in the environment affect the diversity of marine life. Water experts with the Sierra Nevada Research Institute, including Professor Thomas Harmon, received \$1.5 million from the NSF to synthesize data about the San Joaquin River and how climate change affects the timing and number of flows from the snowmelt at higher elevations and, in turn, the state's entire water supply and its users, including thousands of Valley farmers.

The NSF also honored some of UC Merced's younger faculty members with early-career development awards for computer scientists Ming-Hsuan Yang and Shawn Newsam.

Campus and community

Together, the campus and the Merced community celebrated the anniversary of the campus's groundbreaking in 2002 with Founders Day events and festivities that drew the public to campus and took the campus into downtown Merced.

UC Merced continues to work on improving the rate of San Joaquin Valley college-goers and graduates through partnerships, such as one with Fresno Unified School District that's helping students graduate from high school and get into college.

A record 160,939 students applied to the UC system, including a 9.5 percent increase in applications from students in the San Joaquin Valley region, a testament to the work UC

Merced's Center for Educational Partnerships is doing to increase the college-going rate in the Valley.

The campus continues interacting with the community in many ways. The annual Vital and Alice Pellissier Family Distinguished Speaker Series was held downtown. Students in the School of Engineering are engaged in community-service projects. For the holidays, campus clubs and organizations are holding food drives.

Campus growth

UC Merced received more than 15,000 applications for Fall 2012, up nearly 10 percent from 2011, and graduated its largest group of students yet – nearly doubling last year's graduating class of 428 students. Nearly 2,000 people have earned degrees from UC Merced as of this year.

Other signs that the campus is growing: The addition of three new NAIA-sanctioned sports teams and specifically recruited athletes to fill those rosters. The new women's volleyball, basketball and soccer teams came online this fall, while more men's sports will be added in the spring, including soccer and volleyball.

That will bring the campus total to eight NAIA teams.

In addition, evidence of growth can be seen all around, from the Science and Engineering Building 2 that's scheduled to open in 2014 and a new housing building that should be open for Fall 2013, to the new Student Services Building (a section of which should be ready for Fall 2013) and the completed Student Activities and Athletics Center, an expansion of the Joseph Edward Gallo Recreation and Wellness Center.



The construction projects will add nearly 270,000 gross square feet in the next two years, which will increase the campus's physical space by about 25 percent. Many construction contracts were awarded to regional companies.

The campus is also looking into the long-term future as it considers how it will grow in the coming decade. UC Merced retained the Urban Land Institute to help determine the most cost-effective and best alternatives on and off campus for accommodating the near-term projected enrollment of 10,000 students – and a growing staff and faculty – in the next eight to 10 years.

###

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.