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Jan. 18, 2013

CONTACT:

Brenda Ortiz, UC Merced University Communications

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

## Undergraduate Applications to UC Merced Surge 14 Percent

*More than 17,000 applied to fill about 1,600 undergraduate spots and graduate student applications increased 41 percent, reflecting immense demand for a UC Merced education*

MERCED, Calif. — In the face of [declining high school attendance](#) in California, more students than ever are showing strong interest in attending the University of California, Merced.

Undergraduate applications for Fall 2013 reached 17,191 — a 14.2 percent jump over last year — according to [admissions data](#) released today by the UC Office of the President. Graduate-student applications were 41 percent ahead of last year's total, based on preliminary data.

“Student applications for admission continue to grow sharply,” said Chancellor Dorothy Leland. “This is a testament to the stunning achievements of faculty and staff in making UC Merced a campus of choice.”

### Undergraduate demand

Freshman applicants totaled 14,966, which represents 16.6 percent more than Fall 2012, the largest growth in the system at 16 percent. . Transfer applications remained steady with 2,225 this year compared to 2,216 last year.

California students continue to make up the vast majority of UC Merced's undergraduate applicants at about 94 percent.

### Quick Facts

- Undergraduate applications for Fall 2013 at UC Merced surpassed 17,000 — a 14.2 percent increase.
- Enrollment for 2013-14 is expected to reach 6,000, an increase of 300 new students.
- For the third consecutive year, growth in applications to UC Merced has surpassed the UC system, which increased 8.6 percent.

“Our focus remains to create opportunity and access for California residents, and we are pleased by the outstanding results we’ve garnered from our efforts,” Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management J. Michael Thompson said. “We have 10 applications for every seat available, demonstrating that we are increasingly attractive to students and their families.”

Freshman and transfer applications from the San Joaquin Valley increased 27 percent while the greater Los Angeles area and the San Francisco Bay Area rose 18.5 percent and 6.2 percent, respectively.

Even though the campus continues to see strong growth in freshman applications, space constraints will limit the projected enrollment increase to about 300 additional students, for a total student body of 6,000 next school year. As announced last year, the campus is moderating undergraduate enrollment growth to keep pace with construction of new classrooms, laboratories and housing.

The university’s near-term enrollment goal is 10,000 students within the next 10 years.

### **Graduate boost**

Based on applications received to date, the 2013-14 graduate-student pool rose from 256 in 2012 to 362, increasing by 41 percent.

The university has entered a stage of development where its faculty and research have begun to build a reputation for excellence in the academic community, said Chris Kello, the acting dean for the campus's graduate division.

“The personal attention UC Merced has become known for is even more impressive at the graduate level,” he said. “Students are discovering that our graduate programs offer opportunities for innovation with which larger schools cannot compete.”

### **Creating opportunities**

Undergraduate admissions representatives have already begun the process of evaluating the field of qualified applicants.

Leslie Miranda, a first-generation student who is one of the select 1,495 freshmen that enrolled last fall, cited close interaction with faculty members as her reason for selecting the campus.

“I knew I would have an opportunity to create and contribute something unique to this school, and (UC Merced) would give me the ability to be involved in research relatively quickly compared to other schools,” said Miranda, a biological sciences major from Watsonville. “The professors are great and the people are always eager to help. You don’t feel left out even though you’re a new member to the community.”

UC Merced is continuing its trend of attracting and supporting the largest percentage of first-generation, low-income and minority students within the University of California system.

This year, the campus leads the system in applicants who come from low-income households, 55.9 percent, and whose parents didn't receive a four-year degree, 59.4 percent.

Applications to the UC system as a whole were up 8.6 percent over last year with 174,767 high school seniors and transfer students showing interest. This number includes a 10 percent increase in applications from students in the Central Valley region. UC Merced has a special mission to increase the college-going rate through programs such as the Center for Educational Partnerships.

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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.*