



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **UC Merced Honors PG&E with Inaugural Vanguard Award**

*School of Engineering credits corporation for outstanding partnership and for enhancing engineering students' experiences*

MERCED, Calif. — UC Merced honored the Pacific Gas and Electric Company with the School of Engineering's inaugural Vanguard Award today with a special ceremony to thank the company for all it has done for engineering students.

"PG&E is honored to receive the inaugural Vanguard Award from UC Merced's School of Engineering," said PG&E President Chris Johns. "More than that, we're proud to contribute to the foundations of this university — a diverse and environmentally minded campus that's shaping the leaders and innovators of tomorrow's energy workforce."

A five-year, \$1 million partnership between PG&E and UC Merced created the PG&E Engineering Service Learning Lab. The lab is the hub for students to work with nonprofit groups designing engineering solutions to the groups' real-life challenges.

### **Quick Facts**

- PG&E is the first recipient of the Vanguard Award from the School of Engineering.
- PG&E and UC Merced have a five-year, \$1 million partnership that has benefitted students and the community.
- The company's gifts have supported numerous student programs and experiences, especially through Engineering Service Learning.

The gift also supports other programs that enhance UC Merced's recruitment and retention of bright and talented engineering students, such as an innovation-and-design program. In that program, students came up with a variety of answers to community-partners' needs, including a new valve used in the intravenous treatment of infant patients in intensive care at Children's Hospital of Central California.

PG&E's support has also been instrumental in advancing student engineering organizations such as the National Society of Black Engineers and a variety of tutoring, mentoring and advising programs.

Johns attended today's ceremony to accept the first award given by the Vanguard group, made up of student presidents from nine engineering student organizations, and presented by School of Engineering Dean Dan Hirleman and Mark Lazarro, president of Vanguard, a senior mechanical engineering student and president of the Merced chapter of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

"PG&E and UC Merced are jointly committed to the vitality of the San Joaquin Valley and the success of its young people," Hirleman said. "The gifts PG&E has given are creating a lasting legacy of education in engineering, science and math that will benefit the Valley for generations to come."

The PG&E Corporation Foundation has provided more than \$80 million in grant support since 2001 for education and to organizations for environmental and general community purposes around the state, but it's the focus the company has had on UC Merced's diverse student population that has earned it today's award.

UC Merced's partnership with PG&E and the company's generosity have created countless opportunities for engineering students to positively impact their communities; helped the university recruit and retain students; and given students hands-on experience in solving real-life challenges for real-life community partners such as hospitals, public TV stations, blood banks, women's shelters, the Grassland Water District, Merced County Office of Education, Habitat for Humanity, Los Banos Wetlands, Center of Vision Enhancement and many others.

"There is no question that these touch-points are critical to the success of underrepresented and first-generation students in engineering," Hirleman said.

“Engineers really can change the world, and PG&E is helping our students see the world of possibilities before them.”

Student organization chapters at UC Merced that have benefitted from PG&E’s generosity since 2007 include

- Engineers for a Sustainable World
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers
- Biomedical Engineering Society
- National Society of Black Engineers
- Society of Automotive Engineers
- Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- Society of Women Engineers

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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.*