Much Anticipated News re: 404 Permit

Chancellor Kang <chancellor@ucmerced.edu> **Thu, Apr 30, 2009 at 10:13 AM**

April 30, 2009

Dear Faculty and Staff Members:

As our campus prepares for one of the most exciting days in our four-year history, I am very pleased to share some much-anticipated news about our future.

I have been informed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that the federal permit we need to move forward with long-term development of our campus and associated university community has been granted. The permit is effective immediately and is not subject to further review.

As I've noted in previous messages, receipt of this permit, which is required because a small portion of our total planned development involves federally protected wetlands, is fundamental to our long-term vision for this campus. We have worked tirelessly for nine years to reach this goal. I can't think of anything more gratifying on the eve of our first full graduation than to learn that the path ahead finally has been cleared.

The effort required to earn this decision has been extraordinary. Our team engaged in numerous productive meetings with the Corps and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which share jurisdiction over federally protected wetlands, as well as with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game. In addition, campus officials met many times with a wide range of constituents, from environmental and agricultural groups to community, business and civic leaders. The reconfigured footprint we announced in 2007 was a direct result of these collaborative discussions – a difficult but essential step that helped expedite the permitting process without affecting the overall scope or mission of the university.

Today, these extraordinary efforts were rewarded. I am thrilled that we can now move confidently ahead with full-scale development, as described in our 2009 Long-Range Development Plan, with renewed momentum and enthusiasm.

I would like to thank and congratulate the entire team of campus planners, under the direction of Thomas Lollini, associate vice chancellor for physical planning, design and construction, for their outstanding efforts in recasting the campus design. I also would like to acknowledge the work of Janet Young, associate chancellor, and Brad Samuelson, environmental affairs director, who have expertly spearheaded this project. Finally, John Garamendi, Jr., vice chancellor for university relations, and Larry Salinas, associate vice chancellor for government affairs, have been vital liaisons with community and civic leaders and our elected officials at the local, state and federal levels.

The imagination, commitment, perseverance and hard work of the entire team have made this a truly great day for UC Merced. Please join me in applauding all of them for their exceptional contribution to the university.

Steve Kang,
Chancellor