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Final Draft of Strategic Academic Plan Nears Completion

After conducting its last two open forums and fielding one final survey to gather faculty feedback, UC Merced's Strategic Academic Planning Committee has moved to the final stage in the preparation of the university's first-ever Strategic Academic Plan. The final draft is scheduled for release to the UC Merced community later this month.

The publication of the final draft will culminate a nearly 16-month-long, campus-wide process to develop a compelling vision of UC Merced's long-term direction and anticipated contribution to the region, state and the world. It will describe undergraduate, graduate and professional programs that build on the 140-year UC legacy of excellence in research, education and service – but with a distinct, 21st century flare.

"UC Merced's first Strategic Academic Plan will be a foundational document that provides a vision for the type of campus we believe we can become," said Chancellor Steve Kang, co-chair of the SAP Planning Committee. "It is not about allocating resources for the present. How we achieve the vision – including resource needs and priorities – will be addressed during the next stage."

The draft plan reaffirms the university's strong commitment to inter- and multi-disciplinary research and instruction as well as to basic research in core disciplines. The current draft features five broadly defined research themes, each addressing a critical societal need that will serve as integrative elements for research and instruction across the campus. It also proposes a number of research institutes and professional schools synergistically linked to the research themes.

Faculty members have been invited to eight open forums between February and November of this year to provide input, make suggestions and provide feedback to various proposals in the developing plan. Numerous surveys also have been conducted. Preliminary recommendations have been posted for faculty review and comment on the dedicated SAP Web site since mid-May.

In addition to the draft SAP document, a companion white paper on academic organizational structure has been widely circulated for faculty comment and is also posted on the SAP Web site. The Planning Committee has decided to focus exclusively on completing the SAP document first and will take up organizational recommendations during the implementation phase.

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