UC Merced Campus Profile
Accountability Framework: 2009
(Published April 2009)

About UC Merced

UC Merced, as the 10th campus in the University of California System, is the first new American research university in the 21st century and the first UC in 40 years. Just under four years old, having opened in Fall 2005,[1] this student-centered research university expands access to a UC education to historically underserved populations across the State, including those in the San Joaquin Valley where the campus is located. Six of the 11 counties in the Valley experienced increases in the college-going rates of public high school graduates to UC campuses between 2004 (the year before UC Merced opened) to 2007.[2] For Merced County public high schools, the rate more than doubled (from 2% to 5%).

Taking advantage of its proximity to the Sierra foothills and Yosemite National Park, the campus has developed a unique partnership with the National Park Service, Yosemite National Park and Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Park. This partnership offers unrivaled experiences for faculty, students and park personnel to foster important research that impacts the Sierra and the San Joaquin Valley and, through programs like the Yosemite Leadership Program, to guide students to become better stewards of the natural environment.

UC Merced faculty offer academic programs and provide research opportunities that promote in students the excitement of discovery and investigation. With a 15 to 1 Student-to-Faculty ratio (Fall 2008) and small class sizes (more than 58% of the classes are under 30 students; more than 75% under 50 students), UC Merced has all the advantages of a small, highly-selective liberal arts college along with the resources and educational stimulation of a world-class research university.

Growing fast

Like sister UC campuses established many years ago (e.g. UC Berkeley, UCLA and UC Irvine), UC Merced was placed in the rural outskirts of a city, with the expectation that the campus will gradually become integrated with the surrounding community. The campus' pioneering class consisted of 838 undergraduates (706 freshmen and 132 transfers) and 37 graduate students.[3] Three years later (Fall 2008), the student population had more than tripled (from 875 to 2,718). Freshman applicants to UC Merced grew by over 35% (from 14,078 to 19,116), while transfer applicants increased by almost 22% (from 1,797 to 2,185).[4] The campus opened with nine undergraduate degree programs and, by Fall 2008, more than doubled its offerings to 18. Long-range enrollment projections estimate that fall enrollments will exceed 5,000 by 2012 and 10,000 by 2020. In addition to its original three schools (Engineering, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts), the campus' future will include professional education schools, such as management and medicine, which are in the early planning stages.

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[1] The campus actually opened in Fall 2004 with 13 graduate students who had come with the 65 founding faculty from other universities.
[2] Data obtained from the California Postsecondary Education Commission: http://www.cpec.ca.gov/StudentData/CaCGRTrendOptions.asp
[3] By contrast, UC Berkeley opened in 1868 with 40 students and 10 faculty. UCLA started in 1919 with only 2-year programs (260 junior college students and 1,078 students in a teachers training program) before adding the 3rd and 4th years in 1924.
[4] Of the three UC campuses that started in 1965, only UC Santa Cruz increased enrollments faster (by 400%) in the first three years; UC Irvine and UC San Diego increased by over 200%.

Achievements in first few years

From the beginning, the Regents expected the campus to use the most advanced techniques in energy and resource conservation. UC Merced's commitment to environmental sustainability is reflected in its distinction as the first campus in the country with an expressed goal to achieve campus-wide LEED[5] certification. As of April 1, 2009 the campus has one Silver and four Gold LEED-certified buildings, with an additional two building certifications pending for existing buildings. The new 2009 Campus Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) sets new standards for sustainability and environmental stewardship by raising the bar on UC Merced's previously stated goal of achieving LEED Silver certification for all buildings on campus. The new LEED goal is a minimum of Gold for future projects. In addition, the 2009 LRDP adds a new "triple-net-zero" goal for the university: to consume no offsite or nonrenewable energy, to produce no net carbon emissions, and to produce no landfill waste by 2020. The campus also commits itself to minimizing water consumption and exploring the feasibility of achieving water neutrality. As a "green" campus, UC Merced is leading the way in environmental stewardship and research to preserve the natural resources.

UC Merced Enrollment Growth

	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008
Total Enrollment	875	1,286	1,871	2,718
Undergraduate Enrollment	838	1,210	1,750	2,534
Graduate Enrollment	37	76	121	184
Freshman Applications	14,078	14,097	15,094	19,116
First-Time Freshman Enrollment	706	398	669	925
Transfer Applications	1,797	1,825	1,825	2,185
New Transfer Enrollments	132	102	116	139
Full-Time Faculty	61	94	118	162
Part-Time Faculty	4	25	30	40

During the first two years, UC Merced went through a comprehensive WASC accreditation review and was granted candidacy in June 2007. The Initial Accreditation process is underway, with a decision target date of Spring 2011.

In addition to the accumulation of over $61 million in grants and contracts awarded to UC Merced faculty, several faculty members have received highly competitive national awards: one Young Faculty Award from the Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), two Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), and the Crashaw Prize (an international poetry award). Already in UC Merced's short history, students also have competed and won prestigious national and State awards, including three Strauss Foundation Awards and one Truman Scholar.

[5] Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a program of the U.S. Green Building Council that rates structures on various aspects of environmental performance.

Undergraduate Access & Preparation

First-time freshmen

UC Merced draws its freshman cohorts from the State's UC-eligible applicants (top 12.5% of the high school graduates) as well as UC-qualified applicants from other states and countries.

Fall 2008 freshmen averaged 1043 on the SAT (Critical Reading and Math), almost 30 points higher than the average for the State (1014). Their average high school GPA was 3.4 (middle 50% was 3.14-3.65).[6] This freshman class had nine Regents Scholars. The prestigious Regents Scholarships are awarded to students based solely on their academic and personal achievements.

Part of UC Merced's mission is to increase access to a four-year college education, especially UC education, to the previously underserved high school graduate population in the San Joaquin Valley. In Fall 2008, 30% of the freshman class came from the San Joaquin Valley, compared to 26% in Fall 2005. More than half of the class (52.9%) were first-generation college students.[7] The campus admits a higher percentage of first-generation college freshmen than any other UC campus. Similarly, compared to the other UC campuses, Merced's freshman class is more likely to come from low-income families (42% in Fall 2008 received Pell Grants[8]). Many of these students also come to UC Merced as second-language learners. For about 17% of the new freshmen in 2008, English was not their first language. Their success, however, is critical to the future of the Valley and the State of California. UC Merced's support services include mid-semester grades and academic success workshops, general and major advising, tutoring, peer mentoring, as well as career and psychological counseling. First-year retention rates (Fall 2005-Fall 2007 cohorts) for first-generation college students averaged about 79%, compared to about 83% for freshmen from families with at least one parent who graduated from a 4-year college.

Freshman Characteristics

	Fall 2008
Total	925
Average SAT (Critical Reasoning & Math)	1043
Average HS GPA	3.42
% First-Generation College	52.9%
% First Language Non-English	16.9%
% Low Income (Pell Grant Recipient)	42.0%
% Female	46.7%
% Ethnicity	
African-American	7.2%
Asian-American	32.5%
Hispanic	32.1%
Native American	0.4%
White	22.5%
International	1.4%
Unknown	3.8%
% California Residents	97.8%
% Live in Campus Housing	81.7%

[6] To meet the UC System Scholarship requirement, students must attain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in A-G courses (15 units of required subject course work in History/Social Science, English, Mathematics, Laboratory Science, Language other than English, Visual and Performing Arts, and College-Preparatory Electives).
[7] Neither parent graduated from a four-year college.
[8] Federal Pell Grants are awarded to families with low incomes and are based on formula that includes family income, other assets, and household size. Generally, students with family incomes up to $55,000 may be eligible, although most Pell awards go to students with family incomes below $20,000.

Transfers

Junior level transfers from California community colleges come with 60 semester units of college credit and at least a 2.4 GPA, as well as all other course transfer and grade requirements. The average prior-college GPA for the 139 new transfer students in Fall 2008 was 3.03. Two of the Fall 2008 transfers received the distinguished Regents Scholarships. Most transfers (86.3%) came from California Community Colleges (CCCs) and, like the new freshmen, many were first-generation college students (43.9%), low-income (43%) and, for about 16% of them, English was not their first language.

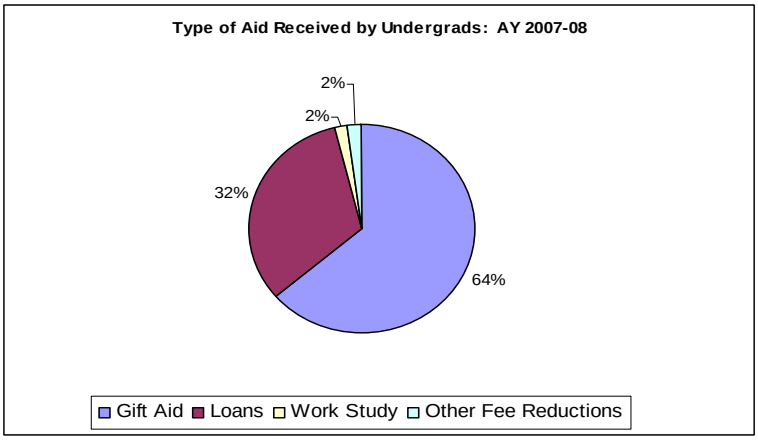
Transfer Student Characteristics

	Fall 2008
Total	139
Average Prior College GPA	3.03
% First-Generation College	43.9%
% First Language Non-English	15.8%
% Low Income (Pell Grant Recipient)	43.0%
% Female	42.4%
% Ethnicity	
African-American	2.9%
Asian-American	24.5%
Hispanic	28.8%
Native American	1.4%
White	31.7%
International	3.6%
Unknown	7.2%
% California Residents	92.8%
% Live in Campus Housing	30.2%
% From California Community Colleges	86.3%

On average, about 84% of the upper-division CCC transfers were retained after one year; almost 44% graduated within two years and 67% within three years. UC Merced transfer student support services include the Transfer Student Association, the Student Transfer Outreach Mentor Program (STOMP), the Student Ambassador Program, and a transfer student wiki where information is shared about student life and the transfer student experience at Merced and other campuses.

Undergraduate Affordability

The goal of UC Merced's financial aid program is to remove financial barriers and help ensure that every eligible student has the opportunity to pursue his/her educational objectives. In Fall 2007, 61% of Merced full-time undergraduates received need-based scholarship or grant aid, averaging $10,828. Of the financial aid dollars dispersed to undergraduates in 2007-08, 64% were gift aid (grants and scholarships), 32% were loans, 2% work study, and 2% other fee reductions/waivers.



Undergraduate Student Profile

UC Merced draws undergraduate students from across the State: 31% from the San Joaquin Valley, 30% from the San Francisco Bay Area, 27% from Southern California, 10% from other parts of the State. Out-of-state and international students make up a small (2%) but growing portion of the undergraduate population. The undergraduate student body is very diverse, with no ethnic majority: 33% Asian, 30% Hispanic, 24% White, 6.5% African-American, 6.5% Other (including Native American, International, and Unknown). Counter to the trend at most other four-year colleges in California and in the nation, UC Merced has more male undergraduates (new and continuing) than female. Almost half of the undergraduate programs offered are STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs representing more than 50% of the declared undergraduate majors.

Undergraduate Student Success

While UC Merced already has awarded 139 bachelor's degrees through Summer 2008 (mostly to transfer students), May 16, 2009 will mark the four-year graduation high point for UC Merced's pioneering class of first-time freshmen. This event will be a very important milestone for the campus as well as these hard-working students. As this report goes to print, some students already have been accepted into graduate and professional programs; others have plans to work or travel. In a system-wide survey (UCUES) conducted in Spring 2008, 30% of UC Merced seniors indicated that they intended to pursue a doctoral degree after graduation. This was higher than any other UC campus. The system-wide average was 23%. In addition, 25% said they intend to pursue medical or other health professional degrees and 10% planned to get law degrees. Results from a survey of undergraduate alumni this past year revealed that 43% already have enrolled in graduate degree programs: 28% master's, 14% doctoral.

Undergraduate Student Profile

	Fall 2008
Total	2,534
% First-Generation College[1]	50.4%
% First Language Non-English	17.2%
% Low Income (Pell Grant Recipient)	41.0%
% Female	46.7%
% Ethnicity	
African-American	6.5%
Asian-American	33.0%
Hispanic	30.1%
Native American	0.7%
White	24.1%
International	1.2%
Unknown	4.5%
% California Residents	98.3%
% San Joaquin Valley	31.1%
% Live in Campus Housing	44.2%
% Full-time	99.6%

Undergraduate Student Experience

UC Merced participates in the UC Education Abroad Program (EAP), which gives undergraduates the opportunity to study in countries such as Israel, China, Spain, the United Kingdom, and more. At least 29 students have studied abroad (for a semester or a summer) in the last two years. Besides these international opportunities, Merced undergraduates also have taken advantage of special domestic programs. The UCDC academic program gives students the opportunity to continue their studies at the UC Washington Center while interning in Washington D.C. Similarly, the UC Sacramento program includes rigorous coursework as well as intern and research experience in the State Capitol. At least 13 Merced students have participated in these internship programs so far.

Undergraduate Student Experience: Seniors Spring 2008 UCUES[1]	UC Merced	UC System
Would choose to attend this institution again	86%	84%
Were satisfied with their overall academic experience	88%	85%
Were satisfied with the value of their education for the price they paid	75%	74%
Reported that their campus had a strong commitment to undergraduate education	87%	86%
Were satisfied with advising by faculty on academic matters	87%	81%
Talked with an instructor outside of class about course material	85%	63%
Worked with a faculty member on a campus activity other than coursework	49%	29%
Enrolled in at least one independent research course	62%	49%
Assisted faculty with research or a creative activity	68%	53%

[1]University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey

With 100 campus clubs and organizations, students find rewarding activities and opportunities for leadership experience as well as for expanding friendships. Merced seniors who responded to the UCUES survey in Spring 2008 were just as satisfied, or more so, with their campus as UC seniors system-wide. UC Merced seniors clearly had more direct interaction with faculty members than their counterparts at other UC campuses. They were more likely to have talked with an instructor outside of class about course material (85% vs. 63%) and to have worked with a faculty member on a campus activity other than coursework (49% vs. 29%). Merced seniors, compared to seniors system-wide, enrolled at much higher rates in at least one independent research course (62% vs. 49%), and were more likely to have assisted faculty with research or a creative activity (68% vs. 53%).

In Their Own Words

Responding to being asked how their experience at UC Merced prepared them for their future endeavors, seniors graduating in Spring 2009 reinforced the common themes related to working closely with faculty and being able to work on meaningful research projects as an undergraduate:[9]

- "I have had the opportunity to work on a few projects that would not have been possible at a larger university….. I don't think I would have had the opportunity to be writing a book during my undergraduate career anywhere else" (referring to "The Fairy Shrimp Chronicles").
- "I learned the value of hard work and being a leader," another senior said.
- Another expressed appreciation for "the importance of working within an interdisciplinary group, the value of efficient teamwork and the ability to develop my interest in biomedical research."
- "UC Merced allows its students more access to research positions and internships than its larger counterparts."
- Still another mentioned that he "helped found the local chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers…, participated in a rewarding service-learning program," ….and, "more importantly, I made connections here by doing research, mentoring lower classmen and learning from great teachers and advisors."

Graduate Student Profile

Graduate applications to UC Merced have increased almost five-fold, from 72 in Fall 2005 to 339 in Fall 2008. The median GRE score for enrolled graduate students is 1230. Over three-quarters of the graduate students are in STEM fields. Almost 85% are pursuing doctoral degrees. They represent diverse backgrounds with over 35% coming from other countries. Like the undergraduates, there is no ethnic majority: 1.1% African-American, 8.7% Asian-American, 12% Hispanic, 28.8% White; 35.3% Internationals, and 14.1% Other/Unknown. From FY2005-06 through Summer 2008 the campus awarded seven master's degrees and, in Summer 2008, Merced's first doctoral degree.

[9] (http://commencement.ucmerced.edu/2.asp?uc=1&lvl2=133&contentid=152)

Graduate Student Characteristics	Fall 2008
Total	184
Median GRE (Verbal & Quantitative)	1230
% Master's students	15.2%
% Doctoral Students	84.8%
% Female	37.0%
% Ethnicity	
African-American	1.1%
Asian-American	8.7%
Hispanic	12.0%
Native American	0.0%
White	28.8%
International	35.3%
Unknown	14.1%

Faculty

Total full-time instructional faculty at UC Merced has nearly tripled since the campus opened in Fall 2005. Part-time instructional faculty also increased, but at a slower rate than full-time faculty in recent years. 80% of the FT faculty (including lecturers) have PhDs or equivalent degrees. Females comprised almost 40% of the FT faculty in Fall 2008; minorities (Asian-American, Hispanic and Native American) comprised 28%. For the size of its faculty, it is remarkable and impressive that already two PECASE awards were granted to UC Merced faculty (one each in the last two years). By comparison, in 2006, 11 were awarded to faculty in the entire UC system.

UC Merced Faculty and Instruction	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008
Total Full-Time Instructional Faculty	61	94	118	170
% Male	57%	66%	66%	62%
% Female	43%	34%	34%	38%
% Ethnicity				
African-American	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian-American	8%	11%	11%	14%
Hispanic	13%	13%	12%	12%
Native American	2%	2%	2%	2%
White	70%	61%	59%	61%
International	7%	14%	14%	8%
Unknown	0%	0%	3%	4%
Total Part-Time Instructional Faculty	4	25	30	32
% Male	100%	60%	53%	44%
% Female	0%	40%	47%	56%
% Ethnicity				
African-American	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian-American	25%	24%	10%	16%
Hispanic	0%	8%	10%	3%
Native American	0%	4%	3%	0%
White	75%	56%	73%	69%
International	0%	4%	3%	3%
Unknown	0%	4%	0%	9%
Student-Faculty Ratio[1]	12 to 1	14 to 1	14 to 1	15 to 1

[1]FTE students to FTE faculty, using the CDS definition (FT plus 1/3 PT)

Note: Faculty includes ladder rank & lecturers

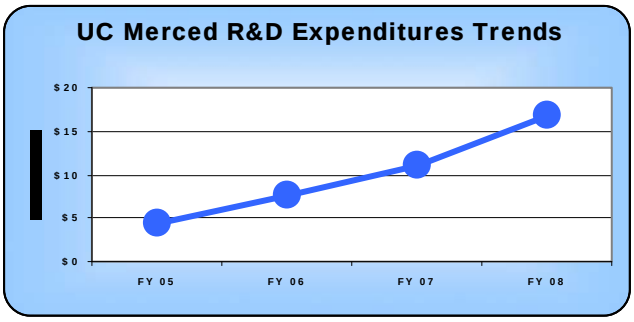
Research

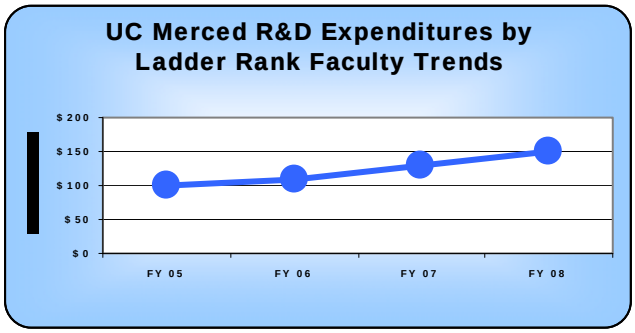
UC Merced's 162 full-time faculty members have a wide range of interdisciplinary research interests beginning with the campus' signature research centers:

- the Sierra Nevada Research Institute,
- the Merced Energy Research Institute,
- and the Biomedical Sciences Research Institute.

Faculty expertise includes hydrology, solar power technologies, stem cell biology, infectious disease, biodiversity and global climate change, air and water quality, and population health. Partnerships with other UC campuses and with entities such as Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks and Yosemite National Park enhance education and research at UC Merced.

Total Research and Development (R&D) expenditures increased almost four-fold from fiscal year 2005 through 2008 (from $4.5 million to almost $17 million). R&D per ladder-rank faculty increased from almost $100,000 to over $150,000 in this short period of time.





Resources and Philanthropy

Total revenues for UC Merced in 2007-08 were over $100 million, up by 53% over the first year (2005-06) and 40% over 2006-07. Almost $26 million were spent in 2007-08 on instructional and academic support ($13,567 per FTE student), representing over 27% of the overall expenditures. Expenditures specifically devoted to Student Services and Financial Aid represented 16% of the total. This is nearly twice those totaled for 2005-06. Research expenditures totaled over $10 million, or 11% of the total expenditures, compared to 9% for 2005-06.

UC Merced has 18 endowed chairs and professorships, eight of which already are fully funded. At the close of fiscal year 2007-08, Merced's endowment was valued at over $24.6 million. Almost two-thirds (65.4%) of the endowment is targeted to departmental support, about a fifth (20.2%) to student support and instruction, and the remaining (14.4%) to campus improvement and other purposes.

Vision for the Future

From the beginning, the UC Regents and campus founders envisioned UC Merced to be a campus that would blend world-class graduate and undergraduate education with basic and applied research, the process of discovery, and an entrepreneurial spirit. Building on that concept, the first Strategic Academic Vision describes a campus that expands its interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs in natural sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities, and arts with strong professional programs, creatively interweaving teaching and research interests that will benefit students in so many ways and positively impact the social welfare of the State and beyond.