The Story of the Library

Although UC Merced is the newest of the ten UC campuses, the UC Merced Library provides our students, faculty, and staff with information resources that equal or exceed those available on our older UC sister campuses. Through both its participation in the California Digital Library and its own efforts, UC Merced Library provides access to the following information resources:

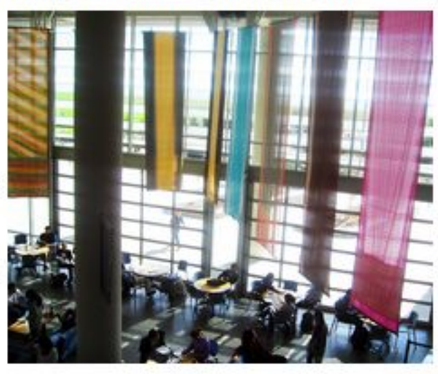
UC Merced Library Information Resources by Format	Number
Print books	93,000
E-books (electronic full text)	632,000
Periodicals (electronic full text)	56,000
Government documents (U.S. Federal Depository)	92,000
Non-Print Media	1,250
Databases (one database can index 100K+ items)	300
Online Statistical Files	4.500
Supplemental Course Resources (digital reserves)	320
Digital finding aids - special & archival collections	9,000
Digital archival resources (pages)	50,000
Digital images	181,818
UC Library Shared Collection (print volumes)	36,000,000
UC Library digitized print books	1,675,000
UC Library eScholarship repository (faculty papers)	25,739
(The above numbers are current as of FY 2010-2011.)	

Providing print and online collections is one way in which the UC Merced Library supports the teaching and research needs of UC Merced. Just as important are the instructional and research-assistance services provided by the Library. From July 2009 to June 2010, UC Merced librarians taught 177 class or group sessions that involved the participation of 5,002 members of the UC Merced community, primarily students. UC Merced librarians frequently provide individual research assistance to students, faculty, and staff via email, Web pages, text messaging, chat services, and face-to-face consultations. In 2009 the Library began offering 24-7 reference assistance thought it participation a nationwide web-chat-based reference service. While the Library's ultimate aim is to make access to its information resources so intuitive that no instruction or assistance is necessary, until that time the Library will provide accessible human instructors and guides to help our users negotiate the vast universe of information resources.

An important part of the Library's vision is the development of digital collections with an emphasis on materials that are pertinent to, or the product of, research conducted by faculty at UC Merced. Instead of purchasing physical objects to go into a limited-access special-collections room, the Library has applied its command of technology along with its intellectual capital to digitizing information resources and making them freely available to the world via the World Wide Web. As one example of this vision turned to reality, the Library used a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services to create hundreds of digitized images of unique works of Japanese art belonging to the Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art at the **Clark Center** in Hanford, California. High quality **images of these artworks**, enhanced with searchable metadata, are available to anyone with an internet connection. Another example is the Library's collaboration with the **Malki Museum** in Banning, CA to digitize the complete run of the ***Journal of California Anthropology***, the only journal entirely devoted to California anthropology, and make it freely available through the California Digital Library's **eScholarship Repository**.

Although the UC Merced Library is heavily invested in the ephemeral realm of online information, the role of the library as physical space has not been abandoned in the least. The physical UC Merced Library is located in the Kolligian Library building, principally on the second-through-fourth floors of the building's East Wing as well as on the first-through-fourth floors of the "Lantern," the architecturally distinctive core of the Kolligian Library building. We see the physical library of the Twenty-First Century as a space that must be flexible enough to serve a variety of emerging, somewhat unpredictable needs and believe that the Kolligian Library building is just such a space.

In some ways, contemporary library space is analogous to public lands. On public lands some people want to mine, some raise cattle, some ride off-road motorbikes, and some backpack in a roadless wilderness. In the library, some people want to socialize, some participate in group study, some hold club meetings, and some study in total silence. On both public lands and inside libraries everyone cannot do everything in the same place at the same time, but managers of lands and libraries can judiciously designate certain areas for certain uses with the goal of meeting the needs of as many people as possible.



Thus when you enter the Ed and Jeanne Kashian Floor located on the first floor of the Kolligian Library Lantern, the ambiance is more student union than library. There is noise, socializing, snacking, sleeping, and even some studying—all going on all at once. As you move up to the second floor of the Lantern, the building begins to look more like a traditional library. There is a service desk where students check out books or, just as often, laptop computers. (During fiscal year 2007-2008, the library racked up 46,462 laptop checkouts, a sum which translates into 26 laptop check outs per UC Merced student.) Entering the second floor of the East Wing, you see bookstacks, traditional library tables, clusters of soft seating, and group study rooms.

Because there is both wireless and wired network access throughout the building, you will see students scattered about using laptop computers (either their own or checked out from the Library), sometimes studying individually, sometimes in small groups. The popular group study rooms have comfortable office-style furniture, whiteboards, and are equipped with large-screen displays. By plugging a laptop into a large-screen display, a group of students can easily collaborate on course-related projects. The third and fourth floors of the East Wing are very similar to the second floor, though the floors tend to be quieter the higher up you go. The third floor of the Lantern is home to an informal reading room furnished mostly with soft seating and enhanced by great views in three directions. This reading room is supplied with approximately 100 popular magazines intended for recreational reading. The fourth floor of the Lantern is home to the McFadden-Willis Reading Room, a very traditional, almost clubby library reading room that is a refuge of silence and contemplation on the UC Merced campus.

Only the passage of time will tell to what extent the UC Merced Library has achieved its goal of leading research libraries into the new century. It is likely that the record will be one of success mixed with failure, as predicting the future is a difficult game at best. Still, it seems only right that the library of the first research university of the Twenty-First Century should, like the young campus it serves, start with its eye on the future instead of the past, taking the risky path of leading the way instead of the safer one of following behind. To have to goal not of being what research libraries are, but of what they will be.

Library Photographs

View pictures of the Library spaces via this **short video**. (<1 minute)

News Article

"First LEED-certified campus naturally puts users first"
A customer story on the University of California, Merced by Steelcase Inc. View the **PDF** for the complete story with photographs.

Special Friends

Read more on those **individuals** who have been influential in shaping the Kolligian Library.

Ask a Librarian

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