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The Fairy Shrimp Chronicles: An Informal History of the Founding of UC Merced

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The Fairy Shrimp Chronicles



An Informal History of the Founding
of UC Merced

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The Fairy Shrimp Chronicles

Dedicated to UC Merced's Class of 2009

"In a sense, we've been waiting for you all your lives."
--Karen Merritt, "the Den Mother of UC Merced"

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So...Where is Merced?

Almost every student at UC Merced has had some variation of the same experience: You meet somebody who lives outside the Central Valley (“CV” for short). They ask: “So, where do you go to school.” “UC Merced,” you answer. “Oh.” Long pause. “So...where is Merced?”

The purpose of this chapter is to answer that question. But, before we get to Merced, let’s put the question in context. Namely, where—and what—is the Central Valley?

So...What is this Place?

The Great Central Valley of California is actually two valleys—the Sacramento and the San Joaquin—that stretch nearly 400 miles between the cities of Redding in the north and Bakersfield in the south. The “CV” covers nearly 42,000 square miles, making it approximately the same size as the state of Tennessee.¹

The weather of the Valley varies greatly across the state. While much of the CV receives little rainfall, some portions could be more accurately referred to as desert. Average rainfall at the northern end of the Valley, at Redding, is 38 inches of precipitation, while Bakersfield in the south receives only six inches a year. Typically, the winters are wet and cold, and summers are dry and hot. The mountains that bracket the Valley create its weather: storms from the Pacific Ocean are funneled into the Valley, and rain falls on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada. This moisture is either stored in the form of snowpack or runs down into the Valley through any one of the rivers that ends up on the Valley floor.

The mountains also serve as natural barriers. In the winter, cold air is trapped in the CV, resulting in the thick fog that often blankets the region. This is the infamous “tule fog,” named for the river tules, or reeds, which

once covered the CV's marshlands. During the summer, the mountains can also block the escape of car exhaust and other pollutants, which means that air quality in the Valley is sometimes ranked among the worst in the U.S. (The American Lung Association currently ranks Merced as the 23rd most unhealthy metropolitan area in the United States, with the other Valley communities of Visalia, Fresno, and Bakersfield in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place, respectively.)



North view of old barn from Merced Site

Valley geography is the product of millions of years of geological activity. The Central Valley was at one time a great inland sea. The ocean gradually retreated about 145 million years ago, roughly the same time that the southern Coast Range of mountains were pushed up by tectonic forces. These forces also eventually created vast pools of oil deep under the south Valley floor. The rivers of the Sierra form the natural ecological zones of the Valley, and bring life to the rolling hills and flat grasslands.

The Valley was once home to large herds of migrating pronghorn antelope, mule and black tail deer, and tule elk. These herds were hunted by roaming packs of wolves, which kept the wildlife numbers in balance. As humans moved in, however, many native animal populations were either hunted to extinction or forced out of the region. Grizzly bears, once common in the area, were exterminated to make way for herds of domestic cattle and sheep. These newly-introduced animals overgrazed the land and have contributed to the Valley's current environmental problems.

The Central Valley was once home to the largest lake west of the Mississippi River. Fed by the Kern, Kaweah, Tule, and Kings rivers, Tulare

Lake covered 700 square miles and was the vital epicenter of plant and animal life in the arid southern region of the valley. Tulare Lake had virtually vanished by the end of the nineteenth century, as the rivers that fed it were damned or diverted, and the lake itself was drained to make more land available for cultivation.

The native grasses and wildflowers which once carpeted the Valley in springtime have now receded into small pockets on the fringes of CV. Likewise, much of the Valley's native grasses have been replaced by invasive species, which found their way here through the importation of non-native plants and animals. John Muir once described the San Joaquin valley as "the floweriest piece of world I ever walked, one vast level, even flower-bed, a sheet of flowers, a smooth sea ruffled a little by the tree fringing of the river and here and there of smaller cross streams from the mountains."

Another defining geographical phenomenon of the Valley is the seasonal reoccurrence of so-called vernal pools. Vernal pools are created when rainwater accumulates during the winter months in natural depressions, where impermeable hardpan soil is close to the surface. Vernal pools are the site of explosive plant and animal life until early summer, when the water dries up. The natural isolation of these vernal pools has created rare species of animals and plants, some of them unique to a single pool.

This is the place that UC Merced calls home. It is the natural environment that has shaped the campus, and will continue to influence its future development.

Before we get to how a University of California campus got here, however, it would be helpful to know something more about the people of the Central Valley.

The best way to quickly introduce anyone to an unfamiliar region, aside from a physical tour, of course, is through demographic and economic data, i.e. census information. Governments use this data to make policy decisions. For our purposes, however, what follows is a brief glimpse, a snapshot, of life in California's Central Valley. In order to give some context to this data—for those outside the "CV"—we'll compare it to more familiar regions of California, meaning the Bay Area and the Los Angeles metro area.

So... Who Lives Here?

To begin with, the Central Valley is, and has been for many years, one of the state's fastest growing regions. Between 1975 and 2005, each of the eight counties that comprise the Valley grew at a much faster rate

than California as a whole. The growth figures ranged from 92 percent in Tulare County to an astonishing 193 percent in Madera County, both substantially higher than the statewide average of 71 percent.² This level of increased growth is expected by state planners to continue for many years.

Merced County has a current population of about 277,000 people. By 2020, projections place that figure at just over 360,000. The Valley as a whole is expected to grow from the present four million to just under five million by 2020. So the entire region's population is expected to grow by nearly one quarter in the next decade.³ However, in sheer numbers, the Valley will continue to be outnumbered by the more densely developed and urban coast.



UC Merced from a distance

While most of the Valley's population lives in rural areas, the last decade has been one primarily of city growth. The five largest cities in the Valley now contain over a third of the region's total population, representing a significant recent trend toward urbanization.⁴ Still, the area remains predominately rural, demonstrated by the fact that more than 28 percent of people live in unincorporated areas. This is well above the statewide average of 17.8 percent. Ethnically, the Central Valley is, like the rest of California, extremely diverse. A veritable cornucopia of nationalities and races call this place home. As in California as a whole, Anglos make up a numerically dominant but declining majority. According to the 2000 federal census, the number of Valley citizens who identified themselves as "White" was below the statewide average of 59.5 percent in five of the Valley's eight counties. The number of residents who identified themselves as "Black or African-American" was also lower than the state average of 6.7 percent. A similar

trend can be seen among citizens who self-identified as “Asians,” with only one county in the San Joaquin valley exceeding the statewide average of 10.9 percent. However, the percentage of Valley citizens who identified themselves as “Hispanic or Latino of any race” exceeded 32.4 percent, the California average, in six of the eight counties. In fact, five counties have percentages that exceed 40 percent, with the highest being Tulare County at more than 50 percent.

Interestingly enough, the Central Valley also greatly exceeded the state average for people identifying themselves as “Some other race,” possibly representing greater, though unrecorded, diversity among the population here.⁵ Projections indicate that, as in the rest of California, the “Hispanic” population will continue to grow as a percentage of the region’s total, eventually coming to surpass “Whites” as the numerically dominant group.

So... What Do We Know?

Despite the area’s impressive growth, the Central Valley continues to lag behind much of the state in social services, including education and healthcare. The high school graduation rate in the Valley has been lower than the state average for more than a decade. As of 2002, the graduation rate was approximately 87 percent for the state and just over 84 percent in the Valley. Only three of the CV’s eight counties exceeded the state average, with the highest being San Joaquin County at 90.8 percent and the lowest Fresno County, with 80.8 percent of high schoolers graduating. During this same period, the Valley remained consistently behind the average for the Bay Area of nearly 91 percent.

The high school graduation rate is an important indicator for education not only because it measures past scholastic performance, but because it is also a good way of measuring educational potential (a student who graduates high school is more likely to attend college.) But another indicator of education potential is the number of high school graduates who are eligible to attend either a California State University (CSU) campus, or the University of California. This means the number of student who have completed high school courses required for admission to either CSU or UC.

In the Central Valley, this number has remained constant at about 29 percent over the last decade, or consistently below the California (and Los Angeles) average of 34 percent, and considerably worse than the Bay Area average of 42 percent. In the CV, Madera County had the highest percentage at 31 percent, and Kern County the lowest at 20 percent.⁶ The

fact that Valley high schoolers are so much more unprepared for college than their coastal counterparts is a contributing factor to the lower number of college admissions from the region, and demonstrates a real need for greater resources dedicated to higher education throughout the Valley.

CV graduation rates from college reflect the same dismal statistics. The Valley lags behind the state in both university enrollment and the awarding of Bachelors degrees and professional degrees. In 2002, only 2.8 percent of Valley high school graduates attended UC, or substantially lower than the statewide average of nearly 8 percent.⁷ In part, this is due to the fact that there are fewer opportunities for higher education in the Valley when compared to the coast.

In the Central Valley there are currently only four public universities: 3 CSU campuses and, since 2005, UC Merced. By way of contrast, the San Francisco Bay Area alone boasts two UC and five CSU campuses—a fact which reflects not only the greater population of that region, but also the real inequalities that exist in the availability of secondary education throughout California.

This sorry state of affairs is reflected, as well, in the percentage of residents who hold college degrees. In 2000, more than 26 percent of California's adult population (those age 25 or up) had a Bachelors degree or higher. By comparison, the highest percentage of college-degree holding residents in the Valley was 17.6 percent, in Fresno County. This number drops to 10.4 percent in Kings County. The fact that the Valley consistently falls behind the state in educational indicators across the board was one of the most compelling reasons for locating the 10th UC in Merced, where more than 30 percent of the adult population is without a high-school diploma or an equivalency degree.

So...How Do We Feel?

Another area where the Central Valley lags behind our coastal cousins and the state is health care. Since doctors, nurses, and nearly everyone else involved in health care require advanced training that comes from higher education, the Valley's lack of a college-educated population has also negatively impacted life here. The problem in the CV is reflected in the number of primary care physicians, who are a patient's usual doctor. Primary care physicians are especially important because they are responsible for the early detection, prevention, and treatment of many common illnesses. A dearth of such doctors means that many people do not seek medical treatment, or are necessarily forced to go to hospital emergency rooms for

common ills. The state-wide average for primary care physicians is 67 per 100,000 residents (64 doctors per 100,000 residents in the Los Angeles metro area, and 83 per 100,000 in the San Francisco Bay Area). In the Central Valley the average is 58 doctors per 100,000 people.

Despite having fewer physicians, the Central Valley actually has a more pressing need for health care, due to the CV's greater incidence of diabetes-related death and significantly higher rates of asthma, across all ages and ethnicities.⁸ To remedy this disparity, UC Merced has recently proposed the construction of an on-campus medical school, a facility that will hopefully train a new generation of doctors for the Valley.

So...How Do We Make a Living?

One of the CV's advantages is that it is California's center of agricultural production. Whereas the Valley contains only 10 percent of the state's population, it accounts for nearly 50 percent of California's agricultural sales. Nationally, the value of the Valley's agricultural products exceeds that of any other single state, and amounts to six percent of the entire nation's total.⁹ Nearly 60 percent of the CV's land area is devoted to agriculture.

In dollar amounts, agricultural revenue in the Central Valley amounted to nearly \$27 billion in 2008. Just under 20 percent of Valley workers derive their employment from agriculture—either directly, as farm laborers, or indirectly, as providers of services such as food processing.¹⁰ The Valley's dominance in agriculture is a relatively recent development and reflects, in part, the increasingly industrialization of the rest of California. Until 1949, Los Angeles county was the leading agricultural county in California.¹¹ Today, of the 4.5 million workers in the Los Angeles region, fewer than two-tenths of one percent are employed in agriculture.

This focus on agriculture has some advantages for the region. Notably, demand remains stable even in poor economic conditions (people still need to eat!). But there are also important drawbacks to the CV's dependence on agriculture. Planting and harvesting is seasonal work, meaning that labor is required for only part of the year. This contributes to chronically high unemployment in the region. In 2004, when statewide unemployment was at 6.2 percent, every country in the Valley exceeded that average, with San Joaquin County at nearly 8 percent, and Tulare County topping the list at 11.7 percent.

Additionally, agriculture-based employment traditionally pays less than industrial jobs. Combined with chronic unemployment, this means

that Valley residents overall earn less and have a higher poverty rate than coastal Californians. Per capita income in the Central Valley was just slightly above \$20,000 in 2002, or a third less than the statewide average of nearly \$30,000, and less than half the income of the average San Francisco resident of about \$50,000 a year.¹² Similarly, whereas the state poverty rate is slightly over 15 percent, that is below the numbers for all eight Valley counties, and dramatically under the seasonal 40 percent rate seen in Fresno, Madera, Merced, and Tulare counties. To simplify, almost 40 percent of the population in half of the Valley's counties, including Merced, currently earn wages under the poverty line at some point during the year.

In recent years, Valley leaders have actively sought economic diversification and achieved some success. The CV's location in the geographical center of California has meant its development as a hub for intrastate shipping and commerce. The Valley's tremendous population growth has also spurred the construction industry in the region, which has, however, experienced severe cutbacks during the last few years, due to conditions in the nation's financial markets. A research university like UC Merced is likely to attract new businesses and create new jobs in engineering, biotechnology, and medicine, potentially creating a new economic base in the Valley. For the short term, however, no industry is likely to grow large enough to challenge the dominant place that agriculture occupies in the CV.

So... What About Merced?

The community of Merced is, in many ways, a microcosm of the Central Valley—with the same opportunities, problems, and potential of other towns in the CV, but, since 2005, with one major difference: it has a University of California campus.

As will become clear in subsequent chapters, literally dozens of sites were originally considered as possible locations for the tenth UC campus. Each location would have uniquely influenced the development, construction, and growth of the institution. UC Mendota, for example, would not have been the same as UC Merced, even with the exact same faculty, administrators, and students.

Since the community of Merced has had a unique relationship with the University of California, one that greatly impacted the new campus, an appreciation of what UC Merced has become requires some knowledge of the town the University is named for.

Whereas much of the Central Valley floor is flat and uniform,

located as the CV is between the coastal mountains to the west and the Sierra Nevada to the east, the university campus is located on a 900-acre parcel at the edge of the Sierra foothills, about six miles northeast of the city of Merced. On a clear day, usually in the late fall or early winter, the snow-capped Sierra peaks are clearly visible. The city of Merced has a permanent resident population of about 78,000, a number that is growing rapidly because of the university, which has approximately 2800 students and 90 full-time faculty as of this writing.

Merced, like much of the Valley, has a history closely tied to agriculture. Unlike much of the CV, however, the land surrounding the city is not well-suited to intensive agriculture. Rather, the open, grass-covered fields stretching into the foothills are ideal grazing land, and have been home to many large cattle ranches over the years. In fact, the land UC Merced sits on was once a cattle ranch that was later converted into an educational trust (see the sidebar on the Virginia-Smith Trust).

In summer time, the low hills are sere-colored, covered with dormant grasses that reflect the bright sun that shines (mostly!) throughout the season. In spring, following the winter rains, the landscape is colored a verdant, vibrant green. The winter rains also bring about the rejuvenation of so-called vernal pools and their associated wildlife. The pools usually dry up in the early summer (for more on the vernal pools and their "wildlife," see the sidebar on the Fairy Shrimp).

The relatively close proximity of the Sierra—about 90 minutes driving time from Merced—inspired the city slogan: "Gateway to Yosemite." Indeed, Merced has a long association with the national park, as the terminus for goods that were shipped down the Merced River, and as the source of supplies for miners and others in the mountains. Today, few resources flow out of Yosemite, but a continuous flood of people stream into the park, especially in the summer.

Merced sits at the crossroads of several major highways, the most important being the north-south artery, Highway 99, which runs the length of the Valley. Travel time to Los Angeles is on the order of five hours, whereas the commute to the San Francisco Bay Area is considerably shorter, around 2-3 hours.

Ethnically, the city is predominately Hispanic (41.5%) but also has a large Anglo (37.3%) and Asian (11.1%) population. The relatively large percentage of Asian-American residents in Merced, compared to the rest of the Valley, is due to the influx of Hmong from the hill country of Laos.

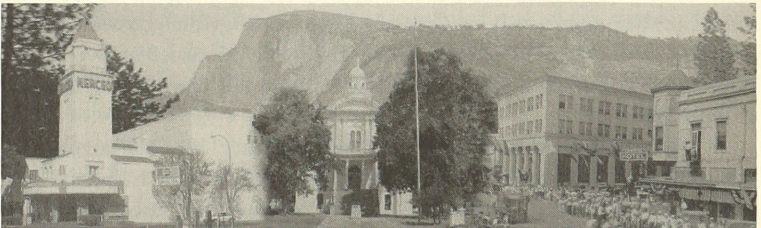
With the end of the Vietnam War in the mid-1970s, the Hmong—who were allied with the U.S. war effort—fled to America, and Merced, to escape communist retribution.

Because of immigration, the population Merced is, on average, younger than the rest of the state: 27.3 percent of California's population is under 18, as opposed to 34.5 percent in Merced.¹³ It is anticipated that a high number of young people will directly benefit from the proximity of UC Merced.

The Merced economy is typical of the average American city of the same size. The largest number of employees work in the service sector, which includes restaurants and retail sales. However, because of the dominant role of agriculture in the Central Valley, many jobs are also related to growing food and food processing. The single largest employer in Merced County is Foster Farms. While the arrival of the University of California in 2003 has added a new economic engine for the region, the poverty rate in Merced county today remains nonetheless at nearly 30 percent.

So... What's It All Mean?

The Central Valley of California is a land of great natural beauty. Its rich soil and Mediterranean climate make the CV one of the most fertile agricultural regions in the world, earning it the nickname, "America's breadbasket." While it continues to be the fastest growing portion of the state, the Valley continues to lag behind the rest of California in education, health care, employment opportunities, and quality of life. The University of California decided to locate its tenth campus, and the first research university of the 21st century, in the Central Valley in the hope and expectation that UC Merced will eventually help to redress this imbalance in what has long been advertised as the "golden state."



Gone With the Wind (and Other Tales of Woe)

Emily Wentworth

Apart from the many joys of a startup campus, the wind, the rain, the fog, and the burning sun left an indelible impression upon us pioneers of olde. Yes, we traversed the rainy bridge and stormed the windy meadows to advance as academics, intellectuals, scientists, and businesspeople. Our earliest education as pilgrims in a new land started with the computer game, “The Oregon Trail” in elementary school, where we bought bison and fixed broken-down covered wagons in the harshest of climates. Perhaps we felt prepared and a little overconfident before that first weekend of blistering heat in the dorms, and maybe we were perplexed at the fog, but it is now a staple of a UC Merced student to continuously curse the heavens for such intense weather.

On September 6, 2005, the first day of instruction at UC Merced, the temperature high was reported by the National Weather Service as 93 degrees. On August 26, 2008, the temperature high was reported as 94 degrees. It is fitting to point out that during the summer, the weather has mostly always been consistently hot and irritating. One of the main complaints of students who have traveled from such cool and breezy places as the Bay Area and Southern California is that the sun is terribly cruel to the San Joaquin Valley. Walking up that slight incline from the parking lot to the library and beyond is a torturous task for those who A) do not like exercise and/or B) do not like heat. I have often tried to hold conversations with people over my cell phone while trudging up the “hill” and was repeatedly asked if I was alright, or if I had asthma. No, I would say. It’s just this mountain of death.

Though I was raised in the central valley, my life had been largely taken up by sitting on my rump watching Dr. Phil or reading self-help books. The weather was not a constant hindrance on my life. I had never had to catch a class in 100 degree weather, racing up a hill with a backpack carrying a laptop while talking to my mom about how I hadn't yet received my financial aid. Then, after having arrived at the top of the hill, having to make it to the classroom building. Then, having to walk up the flights of stairs up to the lecture room. And then, having to wipe away the sweat and fan myself down with a piece of paper before I showed my hideous self to my fellow students.

Just as the weather starts to cool down in late September, early October, we all become bombarded with wind. Having to make it up that sidewalk from the parking lot to the COB becomes an unbelievable chore when fighting the demonic forces behind the gusts that knock at our feet, begging us to trip and fall. It was as if the wind itself was an anti-educational energy that stifled a person from entering the academic Mecca that was less than half a mile away. *Be gone, cruel winds!* I would say to myself. *You do not frighten me!*

I remember at one point when I was working for UCM Catering, I had to enter our van to pull out some food from the back. The wind was pushing against me pretty hard as I went into the van to get the things I needed. I left the van doors open, and as I exited, the door hit me square in the face. After that trauma, another one followed. As I was leaving with the food, the wind blew all of the napkins and plastic cutlery onto the ground, and I was forced to chase after the cart I had placed the food on after I had already chased after the napkins and forks. It took all of my energy and stamina not to crawl up in a ball and rock myself back and forth in a corner.

Oh, but it gets worse, dear reader. There is the tyrant that is the rain. The first year, treacherous rain had been coming down hard for what seemed like an eternity as the campus gutters were flooding. We were all woken up one night with an order: move your cars or they will be destroyed. So, quite a few people had to pull themselves out of bed to address this most serious issue, only to realize the next day that no damage could have been caused anyway. One student, Brenda Morris, remembered a sunny day when she walked up the hill wearing shorts and a t-shirt. Upon exiting her 50-minute class, rain was pouring down as a

flash flood had hit the campus.

But the rain was frightening to a lot of people. My roommate and I were poring over our study material one night and as our window curtain was open, we saw lightning from beyond Little Lake. My roommate, Heena, and I marveled at the sky, intrigued that there was lightning without rain. Yet when the thunder rolled in, Heena was terrified. I kept telling her that we would be fine and that the thunder was much less harmful than the lightning. She chose to stick her head under a pillow and wait until the thunder and lightning subsided. The next day, there was a beautiful rainbow that appeared beyond the library after the rain had stopped.

With heavy rain comes heavy fog. Tule fog is a San Joaquin nightmare--causing terrible car crashes every winter and leaving many confused, like Arthur Huynh, a senior whose trek up the hill ended with him walking down the hill. I remember in my Writing 10 class in Fall 2005 reading Highway 99, and the professor, Anne Zanzucchi, talking about the infamous Tule fog. As the class was held in a room in the third floor of the library, one morning we could see a dense layer of fog just beneath us as we looked out the large window facing Lake Yosemite. It was a strange sight to behold, and one I never forgot.



A Sight to Behold: Merced Fog

As the fog limited one's sight, it seemed to encourage one's imagination. I remember the days when Heena and I would make up stories about the dead golfer who was angered by the fact that UC Merced was built on sacred golf course land. In our minds, he would stalk the grounds of the campus, waiting to hit someone over the head with a golf club. Pretty dumb, I know, but one night as Heena and I were walking up the hill out of boredom, we could hear the strangest noises coming from the pastures. Sounding like the cries of wolves in the night, we tried to rationalize it by saying that the sounds had to be some pranksters by the bridge, shrouded in fog, making sounds to scare us. However, having been spooked by talk of ghosts, we rushed back to our dorms to escape any kind of impending doom. Recently, I have heard from a fellow classmate that there had been coyotes wandering in the student parking lots freshman year when it was really foggy, and that they could see the animals' shadows from the parking lights and could hear them howling.

No matter how one feels about the fog, or the wind, the rain, and the sun, one thing remains certain--that UC Merced is definitely a campus of the valley. And just as the pioneers of the Oregon Trail set out against the harshest weather imaginable, we made that trek to UC Merced, and hopefully our traditions of simultaneously hating and loving the weather of Merced will continue on for the next generation of pilgrims.

Chapter Two

The 'Master' and His Plan

Much the same way that the pioneers of the Gold Rush flocked to early California over the months spanning 1848 and 1849, so, too, the student pioneers of the University of California came to Merced in 2005. Like their 19th Century counterparts, they came from various regions, backgrounds, and life experiences. The pioneers of UC Merced trickled in slowly at first, later arriving in droves. May 16, 2009, marks the culmination of their journey, when the students of the UCM's first four-year class receive their diplomas.

"Déjà vu"

In a larger sense, the journey itself began long before students flocked to Merced. While the campus did not spring forth from the Earth like Superman's lair, it did take an almost super-human effort by many people to bring the project to fruition. The story of the creation of the tenth University of California campus can be described as a constant tug-of-war between vision and budget woes, imagination and environmental issues, ideals and reality. Like many mythical heroes, the people behind UC Merced encountered opposition at every turn. While some obstacles were minor, others were significant and steadfast, including individuals who adamantly opposed the creation of the campus, or at least its location in Merced.

Many times the founding figures could surely have sympathized with King Sisyphus. While the inaugural chancellor, Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, may not have been literally rolling a rock up a hill, she probably felt that the task she had set herself was also likely to prove never-ending. Chancellor

“TK,” as she became affectionately known, would later observe that, while there were many complex issues that she and her staff would face while building UC Merced, almost all of them were political in nature—whether it was securing necessary funding in a time of lean budgets, or overcoming the firm belief of critics that a University of California campus did not belong in the Central Valley. The founding administration, she recalls, was constantly called upon to prove itself.

For those who had been associated with the creation of previous UC campuses, there was a profound sense of *déjà vu* in the building of UC Merced. Some invoked divine intervention or the law of karma to explain how Merced was the choice for the long-planned tenth UC campus. Chris Adams, an architect and urban planner who served on the UC site selection task force, recalled how the Merced site seemed similar to an aerial photograph of the fledgling UCLA campus, which his mother had attended. In the photo, the new Westwood campus stands alone and apart in the midst of vacant grasslands: “There are only these three buildings and then nothing else.”

Dan Aldrich, another UC administrator who would plan a key role in the origins of the Merced campus, and whose father had had been the founding chancellor at UC Irvine, recalls a similar experience. His father had driven the family to the future site of UC Irvine from the family’s home, in Berkeley. Looking over the barren locale, Dan’s father asked: “So, what do you think about moving here?” The younger Dan replied simply, “Do what you want. But I am going to Davis in the fall.” His sister’s response was to burst into tears. As Dan Jr. recalled, Merced closely resembled the original Irvine site, in that: “There just wasn’t anything there.”

Almost 35 years later, when he stood next to the weathered barn that stands on a hilltop above the current Merced campus, Dan Jr. was struck by another keen sense of “*déjà vu*”—and by the realization that, if you build it, they will come.

“A little hamlet called Berkeley...”

The University of California began its life in 1868, at a little hamlet called Berkeley, just a few miles across the Bay from San Francisco. UC was founded, in part, because of a law passed by Civil War-era legislators. The Morrill Act of 1861, signed into law by President Lincoln in 1862, provided for land within each state to be set aside for institutions of higher learning. These “land grant institutions” would form the foundation for many of America’s greatest educational entities. This was the start of what

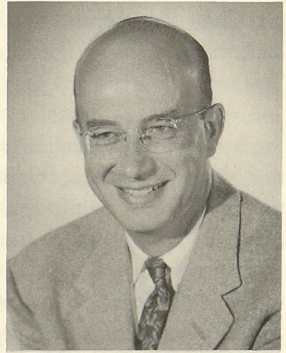
would become the country's so-called top tier public education and research facilities.

From 1868 on, as the population of California grew, so did the need for education. Following Berkeley, new University of California campuses would spring to life. The UC Davis campus—the “University Farm,” as it was originally known, because of its emphasis upon agriculture—opened in 1908. The campuses gradually moved southward, along with population growth in the state.

In 1919, the dedication of the University of California, Los Angeles, or UCLA, created an anchor for higher education in the southern part of the state. UC Riverside opened in 1954. Because of the postwar Baby Boom, the University also began to plan by the mid-1950s to open three new campuses within the next 10 years. Indeed, only a decade later, in 1965, UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and UC Santa Cruz joined the state's higher education line-up.

Clark Kerr's Master Plan

It may be truthfully said that the first research university of the 21st century came about largely because of one individual: Clark Kerr. For six years, between 1952 and 1958, Kerr was the first chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley. The position of chancellor had been created in 1952 in an effort to reorganize the University of California system. Chancellors would handle the day-to-day running of each campus, and report to the University's president. Previously, the University president had been in charge of all the campuses, and everything regarding administration was run from Berkeley.



Clark Kerr

By the end of 1958, when Kerr became the twelfth president of the University of California system, he already had a vision: He saw a great need to expand the possibilities for higher education in the state. The following year, President Kerr, along with California Governor Pat Brown, developed what became known as the state's Master Plan for Higher Education. The Master Plan would eventually dictate the future growth not only of the state's educational infrastructure, but likewise its academic philosophy. Thus, the Plan laid out a future for the University of California, the California State

University system, and California's community colleges, with the single intent to make college more accessible for what was already predicted to be a burgeoning population of high-school graduates.

Kerr envisioned the University of California to be the "top tier" research institution in the state, while the more numerous California State University campuses would educate the bulk of high school graduates, and the even more numerous community colleges would provide both vocational training and the first two years of a four-year University degree. Thus, it was anticipated that a large number of community college grads would transfer in their junior year to a UC campus.

Originally, the Master Plan envisioned opening four more campuses. Three were actually built: UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and UC Santa Cruz, all of which opened in 1965. The fourth campus, tentatively dubbed UC San Joaquin, since it was planned for an as-yet-undetermined location in the Central Valley, was tabled as the state's economy entered a downturn. While interest in and the need for a UC in the Central Valley did not go away, it would not be until 1983, and a new University of California president, that the idea of a UC campus in the Central Valley was brought back to the table.

The Dark Ages

From the late 1960's until the early 1980s, a dark cloud had settled over the UC system. This era was characterized by reduced state budgets, political attacks on the University, and daily struggles within the halls of academe just to hold on to the gains that had been made. The UC Board of Regents, tasked with the overall administration of the University of California, carried on a contentious battle with the University's president. At one point, the California governor, an ex officio member of the Regents, nearly came to physical blows with a fellow Regent over an issue of University policy.

Like other, subsequent battles between the state and the University, however, calmer heads eventually prevailed. However, no amount of mediation could prevent a change at the top. Elected California's governor in 1966, one of Ronald Reagan's campaign promises had been to "clean up the mess at Berkeley," referring to the ongoing student protests on that campus. At one point, the newly-installed governor of California also reportedly suggested that the University save money by closing the library on every campus but Berkeley and UCLA. University librarians worried that Reagan's famous adage—"If you've seen one redwood tree, you've seen

them all”—might be applied to books next.

Shortly after he took office, Reagan fired Clark Kerr as University president. Kerr had been a campus radical in his youth, and was once even blacklisted by the FBI. Both sides of the political spectrum—conservatives and liberals—criticized Kerr's treatment of the students who joined Berkeley's Free Speech Movement in 1965, and staged protests on that campus. Some thought that Kerr had been too easy on the students by not expelling them, whereas the FSM protesters felt that Kerr had refused to listen to anything they had to say. Kerr himself later liked to joke that he went out the way he came in—namely, “fired with enthusiasm.”

Later that same year, economist Charles Hitch became the thirteenth president of the University of California. “Charlie” Hitch had previously worked at RAND, the famous think tank in southern California, where he had pioneered a kind of quantitative cost-benefit analysis dubbed “Hitchcraft.”



Charles Hitch

preserving one of the best of all universities during one of the worst of all possible times.”¹

Hitch would face many struggles during his presidency. During his term, the state tried to rein in the University's independence, which was guaranteed by the California Constitution. Using his mastery of budget and economics, Hitch protected the university as best he could. Rather than trying to add another campus to the system, however, he thought it best to hold on to what the University already had. As Clark Kerr would later say: “Charlie was superb. He had the determination, the endurance, and the integrity. His great victory was in

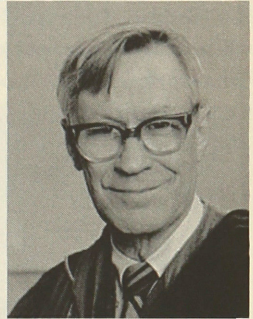
The Saxon Years

By 1975, there was a new occupant in the Office of the President: David S. Saxon. Saxon, originally from St. Paul, Minnesota, earned both a B.S. and a Ph.D in physics from M.I.T. After teaching in Boston for a few years, he joined the UCLA faculty as an assistant professor in physics. Saxon, who specialized in the fields of theoretical nuclear physics and quantum mechanics, assumed chairmanship of the UCLA physics department in 1963, winning the Distinguished Teaching Award four years later.

Like Clark Kerr, Saxon had refused to sign the infamous state loyalty oath during the early Cold War. Like Charles Hitch, he also wanted to maintain the reputation for academic excellence of the University of California. However, recession continued to hobble higher education institutions nationwide. In California itself, a taxpayer revolt resulted in the passage of Proposition 13, which drastically cut property taxes and, with it, put new limits on education funding.

Saxon's vehement opposition to Sacramento's demands that the University cut costs caused him to tangle often with then-Governor Jerry Brown. But Saxon responded to budget constraints by stepping up private fund-raising. He gave smaller campuses seed money to establish fund-raising programs that remain essential to their operation today. He even contributed personally to the cause, making a generous gift to a different UC campus. One year, he made a \$10,000 personal donation to a campus library.

His tireless work on behalf of the University eventually won over earlier foes. "I had a chance to work with David Saxon from the day we appointed him president of the University of California," observed former Governor Brown shortly after David Saxon's death in December of 2005. "I remember him as a tireless fighter for the independence and well-being of the University."



David Saxon

Enter "the Duke"

Just as the Dark Ages ended with the Renaissance in Europe, so the fortunes of the University of California changed with the political landscape in the early 1980s. In 1982, the people of California voted in a new governor, George "Duke" Deukmejian, who promised both to restore the economic health of the state and to support the University of California. A new University president, David P. Gardner, likewise rose to that position following a period of lackluster economic growth, pinched budgets, and political unrest on campus. During the 1970s, UC professors' salaries had fallen behind those of comparable institutions, and construction of new buildings on all nine campuses had almost slowed to a halt.

David Gardner wanted to leave his mark on the world, as well as on the University. A long-time UC administrator, who once worked with Gardner, recalled that the new University president was bothered by the fact that two

previous holders of that office—Robert Sproul and Clark Kerr—had had their pictures on the cover of *Time* magazine, whereas Gardner himself had yet to grace the cover of *Time*.

But this same staffer believed that Gardner's unfulfilled ambition was also a spur to the long-deferred dream of a 10th UC campus. At the time, the population of the state was growing dramatically, by up to 750,000 people a year. Taking a page out of Kerr's Master Plan book, Gardner envisioned building three new campuses over the next decade. One would be set to open in 1998, one in 1999, and the final one would open at the dawn of the new millennium, 2000. The three new campuses would also be spread geographically across California, with at least one in the Central Valley. As the official history of the University of California observes, Gardner's ambition matched his vision:

In 1983, David Gardner seized upon an improving economy and the sympathies of a new governor to help reverse a long period of declining state investment in the University of California. With this financial foundation forcefully pursued, he then demonstrated a startling ability to manage the Board of Regents while creating a sense of shared purpose among the chancellors, a group that included a number of very strong personalities.

The official history might also have noted that Gardner was fortunate to have a good relationship with Governor Deukmejian. Although they were never close personally, Deukmejian and Gardner had great professional respect for one another. During his term as governor, "the Duke" took California from a \$1.5 billion deficit to a billion-dollar budget surplus.

There were some flaws in Gardner's plan, however. The need to fund the University's retirement system, and strict limits upon the use of private endowment money, temporarily stood in the way of any new campuses. By the late 1980's, moreover, yet another kink appeared in the plan.

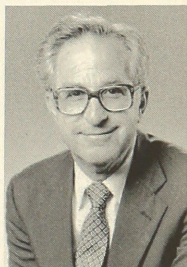
This issue revolved around the question of what and who constituted an "under-represented" student population in California. At the time, favor in the admissions process, especially at such popular campuses as Berkeley, was accorded to students belonging to ethnic groups historically under-represented at UC. Gardner's plan envisioned a carefully-crafted process that would set enrollment targets for under-represented students at existing campuses, and a different target for the new campuses. Thus, the campus proposed for the Central Valley would aim to pull students from that region. The newest UC would be a so-called Hispanic-serving institution,

and, as such, would assist an under-represented student population enter the University of California.

By the end of the decade of the 1980s, changing economic conditions had scaled Gardner's original plan of three new campuses back to just one. In 1988, the University Regents gave the president permission to begin the planning phase for a tenth UC campus.

Already by the early 1990s, however, Gardner's ambitious plan seemed to be falling apart. Gardner resigned from the presidency following the death of his wife in 1992. Ironically, Gardner's replacement, Jack Peltason, would encounter the same tumultuous economic times that had beset David Saxon. Beset by budget cuts, the University Regents in 1993 suspended the site selection process that they had approved just a few years earlier. Once again, the official University of California history:

By the time Jack Peltason entered the presidency in 1993, the realities of a major recession, one of the worst since the economic downturn of the Great Depression, meant that huge cuts were made to all of public higher education and California's already beleaguered schools. The university faced an approximately 25 percent cut over a four-year period in its state budget...²



Jack Peltason

In other words, plans for the tenth campus of the University of California were, once again, forced to the sidelines because of an economy in crisis.

Chapter Three

How Does the Dark Horse Win the Race?

It is, as they say, always darkest before the dawn. Even as the state and the University had almost given up on the idea of a 10th UC campus, a hard-working group of volunteers in the Central Valley—well, Merced—were not only determined that there would be a brand-new research university in California, but that it would be in their home town. This is the story of the role that the community played in the origins of UC Merced.

“The Letter that Started It All...”

The road to choosing Merced as the site for the tenth UC campus would be a long, rocky, and surprisingly indirect one. But, in retrospect, it might be said that it all began with a letter. Even before the Regents’ had officially authorized planning for a tenth campus in 1988, word was leaking out to influential members of central California communities that some action would soon be forthcoming. Despite the on-going economic recession and the lack of a public commitment to a new campus, there were people who were trying to keep the dream of one new campus alive.

Arguably, it all started in 1987, with a conversation in Santa Cruz over a neighborhood back fence. Dan Aldrich, the son of UC Irvine’s founding chancellor, was then an administrator at the UC Santa Cruz campus, and had heard rumors of a future UC being built in the Central Valley. Dan’s friend and neighbor, Keith Shaffer, had played a leading role in bringing the campus to Santa Cruz in 1965, and was described by some as a “mover and a shaker” in the Santa Cruz community. Dan surreptitiously shared his secret knowledge with Keith, aware of the Schaffers’ roots in and continued affiliation with Merced. Thus, the family name rings a bell to

just about any Mercedian: there is a Shaffer Road in Merced County, as well as a Shaffer Building in downtown Merced.

In their conversation over the back fence, Keith had asked Dan what it would take to get a tenth campus in the Central Valley. Dan ticked off on the fingers of one hand the following points:

1. Get one land owner to deal with; UC will not want to deal with multiple landowners.
2. You will need a big piece of land, approximately 2000 acres at a minimum, since that is the size of the last three UCs opened in 1965.
3. You definitely need water: "Where will it come from how are you going to use it?"
4. You must be close to major transportation: People need to get there, faculty and students will need to access it. If you put it away from everything, neither the faculty nor the students will go there.
5. The local community will need to embrace the idea from the start. Without the community, it will not happen: Get them to pre-commit to a site; raise money, doing things to support setting up funding. Do anything you can to make the site more "attractive" to the Regents.

Schaffer told Dan that he knew of some land that might be available. With that encouragement, Aldrich next talked with another colleague at UC, J. Terry Jones, then-Vice Chancellor for University Advancement at the University's system-wide office in Berkeley. In early August, 1987, Jones agreed to send a letter to William B. Baker, the University's Vice President for Budget and University Relations, advising Baker that there might be land for the tenth campus available in Merced. Baker had also heard rumors of available land in the Central Valley for a new campus. Jones's missive would become known in UC Merced history as "the Letter that Started It All." It reads:

August 3, 1987

Dear Bill:

A group of citizens in Merced are interested in exploring a gift of 2000 acres of land to the University. My contacts for these preliminary discussions are Mr. and Mrs. Keith Schaffer, residents of Santa Cruz and longtime supporters of UCSC. The land is part of the Smith Estate. Current leasing of the property provides funding for educational purposes, as provided by the Smith Trust agreement.

Last spring, I spoke with assistant Vice President Ed Crawford about this Merced situation. He encouraged me to maintain communication because such a generous offer may be of interest to the University in the future. The group's primary goal appears to be attracting a new campus to Merced. However, we could explore alternatives such as a research experimenting station for agriculture or holding the property for preservation.

I understand that the Regents have not directed the President's Office to plan for a new campus. I am certain that this will be a discussion topic at some point in the near future.

The Merced group has pulled the property off the market for two years, in anticipation of discussions with the University. I seek from your office direction as to how to proceed from this point.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

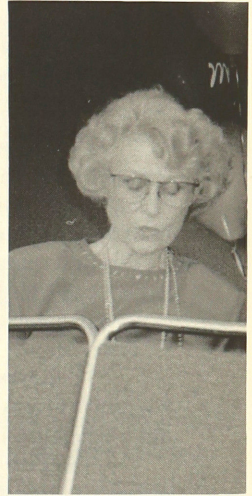
J. Terry Jones

"The UC Merced Committee"

Keith Schaffer may not have told Dan Aldrich, but there was, in fact, another key connection that Keith had to Merced, who would become a kind of secret weapon: a diminutive fireball with flaming red hair named Betty Lou George.

Betty Lou was a member of the Merced County Board of Education at the time and had been a long-time teacher in the area. Betty Lou was also a trustee of the Virginia Smith Estate. She would eventually become known as "UC Merced's godmother."

The property once owned by Merced resident Virginia Smith had been placed in an educational trust upon her death, to benefit Merced high school graduates. (For details, see the sidebar on the Virginia Smith Trust.) By 1987, the Trust consisted of over 7000 acres in a single parcel, some five miles northeast of the city of Merced. Earlier in the decade, the parcel had been sold to a Bay Area-based land company that reportedly planned to plant apple orchards on the property. Discovering, belatedly, that poor drainage made the land unsuitable for apple trees, the company failed to pay taxes on the property and it wound up in the hands, once again, of the Merced Board of Education.



Betty Lou George

Keith Schaffer persuaded Betty Lou George that the education board should hold off selling the Smith estate in the event that the University chose it as the site for the tenth campus. As it turns out, Betty Lou was also a member of the so-called Base Community Council, a group of local citizens who served as liaison with the military leadership of Castle Air Force Base, located in nearby Atwater. At the next meeting of the council, Betty Lou shared her secret knowledge with another leader in the Merced community, Ken Riggs. Riggs was the founder and owner of Riggs Ambulance Service, which had grown into a statewide, multimillion-dollar business by the late 1980s.

Ken, in turned, mentioned the possibility of UC coming to Merced to two local politicians, Congressman Tony Coelho and Supervisor "Dub" Davenport, as well as to another community mover-and-shaker: Bob Carpenter, who was partner in a large insurance firm in Merced.

Carpenter wasted no time in pulling together a diverse group of

people from the community who shared a common vision of improving educational opportunities in the Central Valley. The other thing they had in common was a knack for knowing how to get things done. The group included architects, engineers, and lawyers, as well as representatives from city and county governments. “For lack of imagination” Carpenter remembered, “we decided to call it the UC Merced Committee.” The committee’s single objective was clear: “To convince the University of California that Merced was the place to build the tenth campus.”

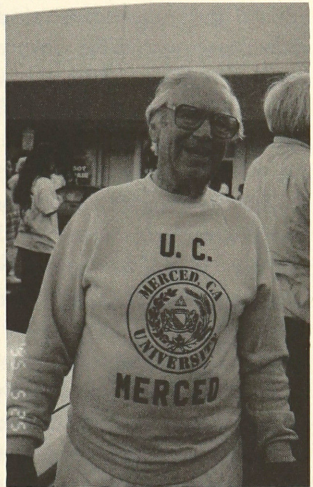
A salesman by trade, Bob Carpenter knew that he was potentially facing the biggest sale of his life. Word had meanwhile leaked out that the University was looking for a site to build the tenth campus. Bob remembered hearing of cities from Redding to Palm Springs which were quietly lobbying to have the campus built near them. (Congressman Sonny Bono was reportedly seen wearing a “Palm Springs Tenth Campus” T-shirt.)

As word spread at Merced that the Smith Trust land was a possibility for the next UC campus, some negative voices began to be heard. Conservative members of the Merced Farm Bureau voiced concern about losing valuable farmland to a growing—and notoriously liberal—University. But the possibilities, at least for the immediate present, outweighed the liabilities.

“This is a once in a lifetime opportunity,”

Bob recalled telling the UC Merced Committee. Thus, locating a UC campus in Merced would bring needed economic growth for the area, as well as provide a unique educational opportunity for children of the Central Valley. It was, he said, “probably the biggest single thing that will ever happen to Merced.”

The Committee decided that its next target should be the Regents. Carpenter and his group wanted to tell their story directly to the University’s top officials and the president. But neither he nor others on the committee knew how to take that next big step.



Ken Riggs

Enter the Site Selection Committee

In 1989, following the Regents’ authorization decision, President

Gardner had appointed a Site Selection Task Force to examine possible locations for the new UC campus. The purpose of the Task Force was to take the president's scaled-down version of Clark Kerr's Master Plan and make it reality. The original nine-member Task Force consisted of UC Chancellors from various campuses, Regents, and Senior Vice Presidents of the University. Along with the Task Force, an executive committee was also created from the numerous divisions in the UC Office of the President. The executive committee would be responsible for dealing with external consultants, doing the initial site assessment, and preparing reports for the full Task Force.

The membership of the site selection executive committee was drawn from within the wide world of the University of California. Some were assigned the task by the president of the University; others volunteered. But all held impressive credentials, and each brought a particular skill, or expertise, to the job.

Rebecca De Kalb, a skilled real-estate attorney, was made chair of the Site Selection Executive Committee. Another member, Gary De Weese, an assistant treasurer at the University, likewise specialized in real estate transactions. Gary, too, was impressed that UC's Office of the President had been "able to bring together such a divergent group of individuals, spanning so many fields."

Roger Samuelsen was the Director of the Natural Reserve System from the state's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Along with Gary, Roger would work on interacting with the landowner of the finalist sites. Samuelsen would also draft the executive committee's recommendations to the University president and the Regents. Originally hired by Clark Kerr to assist in the search for the three new campuses planned for the late 1960's, Roger promptly found himself out of a job after only three weeks, when Kerr was fired by Governor Reagan. Twenty years later, upon learning that David Gardner was reopening the search for a new campus, Roger quickly volunteered: "I had attempted to start my career searching for the tenth campus, so I thought why not end it that way?"

Jack Zimmermann, Director of Planning and Design, was put in charge of the all-important Environmental Impact Report for the new campus. Christopher Adams, the University's Director of Long Range Physical Planning, was made responsible for looking into issues like land use and transportation, and interacting with local county planning committees. Jesse Shaw served as a link between the Site Selection Executive Committee and Vice President for University Relations Bill Baker. Shaw analyzed and

reported on California water laws and their effects on the potential campus. Ronald Kolb, Director of Communications, would be the University's press spokesman throughout the site selection process.

Trudis "Trudy" Heinecke, Director of Capital Planning, had previously worked on developing UC Irvine. Heinecke would also sponsor a string of seminars for potential planners of the tenth campus, encouraging innovative ideas on how to build a new college with sustainability and environmental stewardship in mind. Jan Behrsin, from the Office of the General Counsel, provided legal advice and counsel throughout.

Finally, Karen Merritt, Director of Academic Planning from the UC Office of Academic Affairs, was the liaison with a group of "faculty consultants," drawn from various UC campuses. Karen was responsible for initial academic planning, and would later be known by the founding faculty of the fledging tenth campus as "UC Merced's den mother."

Despite their different roles, and personalities, the members of the Site Selection Executive Committee came to think of themselves as a "family." Like most families, there would at times be spirited disagreements. But the inevitable fights between individuals would eventually be overcome by the one thing that united them all: serving the best interests of the University.

"Consultants?... We are the consultants!"

Almost nothing these days can be accomplished without consultants—who are famously the people who borrow your watch to tell you what time it is. The site selection for the tenth campus would be no exception. Initially, the work of establishing site selection criteria was outsourced to a consulting firm owned by the Bechtel Corporation, one of the largest contractors in the world. (The company's motto is "Bechtel Builds." But, evidently, Bechtel Also Consults.)

The Bechtel Corporation has a long history with UC. It's founder, Steve Bechtel, was a Berkeley graduate. Bechtel's consultants devised a methodology by which the initial search would focus upon sites that met the minimum space requirements for a campus, and then compare those sites against additional criteria, aiming at a "short list" of approximately eight possible sites.

The nine additional criteria were as follows: *Transportation*, including proximity to airports and planned or existing public transit. *Demographic* factors, including adequate population and employment opportunities. *Housing and land availability*, although the cost of land was not considered a key determinant. *Geotechnical* factors, including

seismology—susceptibility to earthquakes—and topography. *Site appeal*, such as land use control and visual appeal. *Public support and availability of growth policy; environmental factors; site availability;* and lastly, *planned or funded utility capacity* to support the campus.

Finding an ideal location for a new UC was not an easy or simple task. As well, new criteria for selection would emerge as sites were considered. No site could be considered a perfect location. Finally, some of the criteria and the sites might suit the consultants, but not the University



Gary De Weese, Chris Adams, Karen Merritt, and Roger Samuelson at UC Merced 2008 of California.

With that, the executive committee soon determined that they could do the site selection as well, or better, than the consultants, and for far less money. Moreover, it was senseless for them to gather data about academic requirements, finances, and other details unique to UC, and then give it to the consultants just so the latter could give it back in a report. Finally, the site selection team decided that Bechtel's list of criteria was so large and varied as to encompass almost all of California, and hence eliminated virtually no potential sites. Interestingly enough, according to the consultants' criteria, no community within the Central Valley could

support a new campus.

The Bird Watchers

The process that the executive staff ultimately used to rate sites was a purely analytical one, for the goal—as Roger Samuelson recalled it—was “to make sure that we gave the Regents the best information possible, without the taint of our personal bias.” Slowly, the first few sites were crossed off.

That left the team with no fewer than 86 potential sites in front of them. Out of these, only one would host the new UC. The team decided to divide into two groups to gather information and assign scores to the various sites. A few more locations were quickly discarded, for having a nearby feed lot or asphalt plant.

While the original UC search was intended to include almost all of California, it very quickly focused specifically upon the Central Valley. As Chris Adams remembered: “It really always had to be in the Central Valley. That was the original plan in the sixties and that was the only way it would be now.”

In the final analysis, the site selection process was primarily a matter of acquiring real estate. The team thus set out to find towns in the Central Valley that could host a campus of about 2000 acres.

Another reason the process was focused upon real estate was President Gardner’s keen understanding of California’s political process. He knew that any UC project that reached the state’s politicians prior to a selection would likely end in a quagmire. Every constituency would roll out the red carpet to woo UC. The decision would then be dragged into committee after committee at Sacramento, the state capital, making it impossible to complete an objective search for the new campus. For that reason, the search for a new campus had to be kept secret from the public and “under the radar.”

Chris Adams and Karen Merritt were tasked with looking into sites in the Fresno area, including the so-called Academy site. In order to remain incognito, the two told curious locals that they were avid bird watchers, which explained the binoculars and cameras—or so they hoped. The duo even carried a guide book to California birds as part of their clandestine “cover.” On only one occasion did they arouse the suspicions of a land owner—who promptly kicked them off her property. By means of such subterfuge, the original 86 sites would be pared down to just 20 before the public became aware of the project.

One of the early decisions the executive committee made was that the next UC campus would not focus upon agriculture. The tenth UC

would be a so-called general campus, with the same number and type of academic offerings as Berkeley or UCLA, at least eventually. The decision not to have another “Ag” campus, like Davis, was also motivated in part by the desire not to urbanize prime agricultural land in the state, which was already being lost to development at a rapid pace. Thus, the site that was finally chosen should not be considered suitable for growing things. Although the executive committee could not know it at the time, that single criterion would have ironic, and unexpected, consequences.

“Welcome to UC Fresno”

When the site selection team had narrowed the list of candidates down to a score of possibilities, the decision was made to make the search for the tenth campus public. Photographers were brought in by the University to take pictures. At this point, too, experts were hired to analyze the different sites. One prospective campus, for example, had an amazing landscape with beautiful rolling hills that stretched to the horizon. However, a geophysicist promptly informed the committee that the reason this landscape had such beautiful rolling hills was because it rested on a major earthquake fault. Because of the experts, more and more sites began to drop from the list.

Because of the media attention, the team had also attracted a local newspaper reporter, who trailed them during all of their visits. Most of the remaining sites were so remote that the executive committee would park their cars at a central spot and then be given a walking tour by members of the local community. This determined reporter, however, left his car at the site itself with the windows rolled down. He returned from the tour to find his car surrounded by dairy cows, which had thoroughly licked the upholstery through the open windows. It was the last time this reporter bothered the committee.

Now that the news of the tenth campus was public, communities that wanted it in their neighborhood rolled out the red carpet. During one visit to a site in Tulare County, the committee was welcomed by excited locals, who thrust glasses of fresh-squeezed orange juice at them as they drove through town. One site selector speculated that rose petals would be strewn in their path at the next site. Sure enough, in their visit to Fresno, the committee was greeted at City Hall by an ethnically diverse group of elementary school students holding up hand-drawn signs—“Welcome to UC Fresno”—as well as by mini-skirted cheer leaders and a high school brass band.

The twenty sites were soon narrowed to eight. As Gardner had predicted, local politicians as well as community members began vying for the opportunity to host a new UC campus. By now, too, the entire Site Selection Task Force and the Regents themselves were touring potential sites.

Merced, which was included in the final eight, was determined not to be caught napping. The executive committee had gotten in the habit of stopping at a local downtown coffee shop after visiting the land belonging to the Virginia Smith Trust. During one visit, Bob Carpenter had the coffee shop waitresses dress in blue-and-gold uniforms that had been specially made for the occasion. It was such things that the site selection committee remembered.

By 1994, the eight semi-finalists were narrowed down to three finalists: the Academy site in Fresno, the Table Top mountain site in Madera, and the Lake Yosemite site in Merced. Each site had its own advantages and liabilities; none was perfect. The executive committee began making its rounds now with the Regents in tow, in order to make the final decision.

“It Looked Like the Surface of Mars...”

Like Merced, Fresno had a lot of vocal supporters for putting the UC in its neighborhood. Indeed, initially it seemed that the Academy site would win the competition hands down—at least such was the opinion in Fresno. But when the Environmental Impact Report on the Academy site was completed, in 1994, it showed that the area had once hosted a Native American settlement and burial grounds. This news spread fast among the region’s Native American tribes—helped along, some believe, by delighted locals at the competing sites. Tribal activists vowed that UC would not be allowed to build its campus at the place where their ancestors were buried.

Ironically, the Site Selection Task Force itself was not allowed access to one of the final sites during their visit. The Table Mountain site, outside Madera, was located on land that had once been a pistachio grove. As word spread of the University’s potential interest in the land, negotiations between the University and a local farmer who owned part of the property grew tense. In order to see the Table Mountain site, the Task Force and the Regents had to stand on an adjacent hilltop and look at the property with binoculars. Hosted by another rancher, who supported the sale, the executive committee later recalled with a smile how the plans for a new UC campus were laid out before the Regents on the pink felt of the

host's pool table.

The recalcitrant landowner was not the only obstacle in the way of choosing the Table Mountain site. Chris Adams remembers meeting Madera's city planner in his office, a converted jail cell with a single window located high on the wall. Alternately, when the planner's office was not available, Chris met with town officials in the local library, squeezing into kiddie chairs in the children's book section. The setting could not help but make him wonder whether Madera would be able to host the first research university of the 21st century.

But there were also more serious and substantive issues working against the Table Mountain site.

It was widely rumored that Madera had no way of getting water to the Table Mountain site. Indeed, the *Los Angeles Times* had just run a lengthy, front-page article about Madera's lack of water before the Task Force's visit. Although the University had given the town a year to come up with a plan to provide water to the site of the proposed campus, no such plan had been forthcoming.

Compared to both the Academy and the Table Mountain sites, Merced's Yosemite Lake site had little going for it beyond the name.

"The only vegetation was a lone eucalyptus tree by the barn," remembered Chris Adams of the Task Force's visit to Merced. "You could not see the Sierras that day."

"Overall it was a rather unimpressive visit; one that struck none of the site selection task force as a particularly attractive site, at least not visually," agreed Roger Samuelson. The fact that it had recently rained, and that some of the vehicles headed out to the Lake Yosemite site became mired in mud on the day of the Regents' visit, hardly seemed an auspicious omen.

Indeed, the first photographs of the Merced site that the Regents saw had been taken on a foggy day in January. To make things worse, the exposure was wrong, giving the pictures a distinctly green hue. One task force member was more direct than either Adams or Samuelson. "It looked like the surface of Mars," he remembered.

Moreover, one potentially fatal problem with the Merced site had already been identified: noise. The Lake Yosemite site was almost directly underneath the flight path taken by the huge B-52 bombers then based at Castle. Bob Carpenter had worked hard to downplay the effects of Castle and the planes that flew there regularly. When an audio engineer that the University had hired came to the site to check on noise levels, Carpenter

assured the expert in his best salesman voice that the B-52's rarely flew over the site, and that jet noise would not interfere with studying at the University's tenth campus. At that very moment, a B-52 flew overhead, drowning out Carpenter's voice. (As luck would have it, Castle Air Force Base was closed in 1995, and the B-52s fly there no more.)

Despite all these drawbacks, some on the Site Selection Task Force were able to see the Merced's site true potential. For one thing, the site was located at the base of the foothills that stretched to the Sierra, which gave it an impressive view of the snow-covered mountains in winter. The proximity to Yosemite National Park—ninety minutes away—was also a bonus feature. At least some members of the Task Force, and some Regents, returned home impressed with what they had seen.

The Postcard Campaign and the Regents' Decision

With the Academy site all but eliminated, the race remained between the two finalists, Merced and Madera. The Merced site had one significant advantage over its rival. This was the fact that the land would be gifted to the University by the Virginia Smith Trust, whereas the Madera site would have to be purchased and was comprised of three separate chunks of land: a small parcel on the northern end of Table Mountain, a mid-sized parcel owned by an old-time California family, and a large parcel, in the hands of a Bay Area real estate developer.

Although the University could always obtain purchase rights to the property under eminent domain—a power given to it by the state Constitution—the process promised to be, like California history itself, tumultuous. At the time the Regents were approaching their decision, moreover, negotiations between the University and the three property owners had not yet arrived at a final deal.

Unlike Madera, moreover, Merced had spent over a million dollars and enlisted the aid of the county's water district to develop a plan that guaranteed water for the new campus at the Lake Yosemite site.

But perhaps most important was the support that the Merced site received from the city's leaders, the community, and local politicians. The UC Merced Committee had purchased thousands of blank postcards and given them to elementary school children, asking that each write a short message, explaining in his or her own words why the next University of California campus should be in Merced.

The executive committee, as planned, made no specific recommendation to the Task Force or the Regents regarding the site for the

tenth campus. Their final report contained only facts about the land, the availability of water, and details on other key criteria for the selection. After the executive committee's presentations, the nine-member Site Selection Task Force had voted. Each Task Force member provided reasons for voting the way that he or she did. In the end, the Madera site was chosen over Merced by a vote of five to four.

The Task Force, however, had no authority to make the decision. Their recommendations were only meant to be advisory to the UC president, Jack Peltason, who, in turn, answered to the Regents.

When the Regents gathered in the dining hall of UCSC's Stevenson College on May 18-19, 1995, they discovered mailbags full of postcards from Merced school children, as well as an enthusiastic delegation of Merced residents, who had driven to Santa Cruz for the occasion. Merced's representatives at the meeting made a "glowing and informed presentation," thought one member of the site selection's executive committee.

However, a local environmental group, which opposed putting the tenth campus at the Lake Yosemite site, countered that the Merced boosters had oversold their case. Specifically, they challenged the claim that sufficient water would be available for the campus, an issue that plainly benefitted Lake Yosemite over Table Mountain.

When asked about the water issue, Madera's representatives paused and stumbled, and finally conceded that they had no guarantee that sufficient water would be available for a Table Mountain campus.

To executive committee member Gary De Weese, the deciding moment came, however, when he was asked about the relative cost of the two sites. De Weese stood up and announced that the Merced site was free, while the Madera site would probably cost the state between \$30 million and \$40 million. Gary believes that the two sites had been equal until then, but that the availability of free land decisively tipped the scales in favor of Merced.

Others on the executive committee, however, maintain that the combination of community support, and a water plan that was both certain and flexible, gave Merced the decisive edge. One Regent, for example, reportedly complained that there were too many "iffy things" about the Table Mountain site. Bill Baker, who said he had planned to speak in favor of the Madera site, claims that he finally decided not to advocate Table Mountain, since he believed the land issue would make Merced the favorite.

Ultimately, the Regents chose Merced as the site for the tenth campus by a 14-to-5 vote.

As with all important historical controversies, it is perhaps impossible to say exactly why Merced won out over all its competitors. Was it free land, available water, the enthusiasm of its supporters—or perhaps some combination of the three? As British novelist Virginia Woolf once observed, “When a subject is highly controversial... one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one’s audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker.”

Such, ultimately, was the case with the choice of UC Merced.



Bob Carpenter celebrating the selection of Merced for the tenth UC Campus

Chapter Four

The Tenth Campus Stalls Before it Starts

To many Californians, the Regents' vote to locate the tenth campus at Merced was a cause for celebration. For others, however, it only marked the beginning of a second, even more arduous journey.

The hangover that followed the party, they remembered, was, in effect: "We have a site. But now what do we do with it?" Thus, once that the site was chosen, the money still had to be found to build the tenth campus, and statewide political support had to be won for the project. Two individuals would turn out to be key players in both the financial and the political struggle—Carol Tomlinson-Keasey and Dennis Cardoza.

Cardoza's 'Landslide'

At the time of the site selection vote, Merced counted members of both major political parties among its supporters, from the city to the nation's capital. UC Merced's boosters included local politicians like Democratic Congressman Gary Condit, who represented the local district from 1989 through 2003. Democrat Dennis Cardoza was also a Merced booster, first as a city councilman and community activist, then at the state level from 1996-2002, and nationally beginning in 2003. Both Condit and Cardoza recognized the importance of locating the University in the community, and the economic benefit that would come with it.

The 1996 election promised to be highly contested in California. That year, Dennis Cardoza entered the race for the California Assembly against his Republican opponent, Tom Berryhill. One of the issues in

the campaign became the future of the UC Merced campus. Dennis had been a popular city councilman but he faced an uphill battle. Cardoza later remembered how the then-Speaker of the House, a Republican, “hemmed and hawed and wouldn’t give an answer” when asked whether he endorsed funding for the proposed UC campus in Merced. “Support for the UC in the community was so strong, that this single event probably cost [the Republicans] the election,” Cardoza believes. Dennis went on to win the election by 86 votes, earning him the nickname “Landslide Cardoza” from fellow legislators.

With his election to the state Assembly, Cardoza became one of the most public advocates for the new University. His future success, or failure, was now joined with that of the UC Merced campus.

We Are the Tenth Campus!

When Carol Tomlinson-Keasey first heard of David Gardner’s push for a tenth campus of the University of California, she gave it little thought. “TK,” a psychology professor, was then focused upon her duties as Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at UC Riverside. Indeed, the chancellor of UCR, when originally told of Gardner’s plans, had reportedly declared: “We are the 10th campus, and we will absorb the growth!”

By the time of the Regents’ vote in 1995, however, a new chancellor at Riverside recognized that UCR was already approaching its capacity, and no longer needed the students who would otherwise go to UC Merced.

It was also in 1995 that Richard C. Atkinson became the seventeenth President of the University of California. Among Atkinson’s staff was Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, whom he had meanwhile appointed the system-wide Vice Provost of Academic Initiatives. As Tomlinson-Keasey later described the new president: “He was a great man. He had a good idea about once every twenty minutes. The thing about his ‘good ideas,’ though, was that they all required [faculty] approval, and many of them required a long time to go from idea that was being incubated to actual idea that had been realized.”

Atkinson was also beginning to receive appeals from community leaders and political representatives of the Central Valley—all wondering what was happening with “their” campus. In response, TK remembers, the president turned to her: “Carol,” he said, “I am getting a lot of pressure from the Central Valley folks but there is no money to support it. So you figure out what we ought to do and take care of it...” And with that, so far as the Office of the President was concerned, UC Merced was now the

responsibility of Carol Tomlinson-Keasey.

"It's Never Going to Happen, Kid"

While there was now a mandate to build the university, it didn't seem to be a priority for anyone, except perhaps the Merced community. Although the Office of the President acknowledged the growing need for UC Merced, as evidenced by President Atkinson's appointment of a Special Committee on the Tenth Campus, there was, as yet, no progress in that direction. Thus, the campus vied with many other projects for support from state officials.

In Sacramento, Dennis Cardoza vowed that the Merced campus would not fall between the cracks, as it were. Initially, he found few allies in the state Assembly. One senior politico in the capital, echoing the advice given to him by others, reportedly told Dennis: "If you really try hard for this it's going to show that you're ineffective because you'll never ever get it, and it will make you look bad, and you'll never get re-elected because of it. So quit while you're ahead!"

Undeterred, Cardoza vowed to do everything he could to squeeze money for the campus from his fellow legislators—even if it meant standing in their way. Literally.

Thus, Cardoza needed support first from the state Senate's Education Committee. That committee's chairman had thus far proven adept at ignoring Dennis's repeated phone calls. Utilizing the resourcefulness that would later earn him a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, Cardoza confronted the chairman on the floor of the Senate and asked him to add \$55 million to an upcoming bond issue for UC Merced. "It's never going to happen, kid," was the chairman's instant response. With that, he turned and walked away.

For the next two and one half hours, Cardoza stood silently at the chairman's desk in the Senate, while the latter lobbied other senators over various projects. When he finally got back to his desk, the chairman wearily asked Cardoza if he was ever going to give this up—to which Cardoza happily replied, "Not on your life."

"Alright, kid, you've got your money," said the chairman. (In the end, nearly \$200 million was added to the bond issue, of which \$55 million was to go to UC Merced.) The bond was approved by voters in the November 1998 election. Henceforth, Cardoza said, he took "it's not going to happen" as proof that "it's definitely going to happen."

“The Only Words I Want to Hear...”

By now, Dennis Cardoza wasn't UC Merced's only friend and ally in Sacramento. Following the 1998 election, the new Speaker of the Assembly, Democrat and fellow San Joaquin Valley native, Cruz Bustamante, joined Assemblyman Cardoza in boosting Merced at the state capital.

Bustamante and Cardoza needed to find the money for the final Environmental Impact Report for the campus. But they were receiving little support from the UC administration, which was preoccupied with funding the existing campuses in a time of lean budgets. President Atkinson was keenly aware of the difficulty of persuading the Board of Regents to authorize millions of dollars for a campus that had yet to be built.

At one point, Bustamante claims that he cornered a recalcitrant senior UC administrator visiting his Sacramento office and, looking the official directly in the eye, told him: “The only words I want to hear out of your mouth are, ‘I Support UC Merced.’” When the requested words were not forthcoming, Bustamante said he asked the UC honcho to leave, but the latter refused. “Eventually I had to call security and have him thrown out of the Capitol Building,” Cruz claims.

Fortunately for UC Merced, by this time Dennis Cardoza chaired the Education Committee, which controls the budget of the University of California. According to Bustamante, Cardoza threatened to cut the president's own personal budget until Atkinson and the Office of the President got behind UC Merced. Carol TK believes that it was Atkinson's plan all along to get the legislators to take responsibility for funding UC Merced, so that he would not be forced to cut budgets for the other campuses.

In the end, Cardoza and Bustamante got the money for UC Merced's EIR—after reportedly holding the entire state budget hostage until he got the necessary \$5 million. In addition, California's legislators agreed to create a separate line item in the state budget for UC Merced, so that the financial needs of the tenth campus would not impact the other nine until 2010.

Carol Tomlinson-Keasey credits Dennis Cardoza with “saving the campus many times,” although Cardoza himself insists that his two allies, Carol TK and Bustamante, really deserve the credit. Specifically, TK praises President Atkinson's shrewd negotiations and Cruz Bustamante's political influence for the “heroics” which saved the campus. As one Mercedian later noted, “It seemed like local representatives were ready to go to bat—and even willing to use a bat—to get what was necessary to make Merced happen.”

TK Takes on Sacramento

Even with funding for the EIR approved, the tenth campus faced further hurdles. By 1998, the state remained in the midst of a major budget crunch, with the UC budget being reduced that year by \$50 million. Perhaps not surprisingly, the existing UC campuses were protesting any special treatment for UC Merced. Moreover, as Carol Tomlinson-Keasey pointed out, having a separate line item in the state budget was a double-edged sword. Thus, it meant that she had to personally plead before state legislators for money, whereas the other campuses had a UC spokesperson to lobby for them.

Castling about for allies in the state capital, TK looked upon the legislature's Democratic leadership as the logical first choice, since they had long been supporters of higher education in California. However, in these tough times, the Democrats as a whole proved less than enthusiastic. Likewise, the Hispanic caucus was another likely ally, given statewide demographics and, especially, the ethnic makeup of the Central Valley. However, even with all twenty-five members of the caucus voting in its favor, UCM would remain far below what it needed to win the budget battles. Remembered TK: "In those early days you could count all the assemblymen and assemblywomen and senators from the Central Valley—that and a dollar would get you a cup of coffee for UC Merced... There just weren't enough voices in the Central Valley to get anyone to give money to UC Merced."

But, eventually, TK's constant lobbying, as well as the importuning of Bustamante and Cardoza, began to pay off at the Capitol. Valley legislators like Tony Coehlo, Dick Montieth, and Gary Condit joined the cause. "They understood what a research university is and what it means to the community," TK recalled. As she often told the legislators, every dollar they gave to the University of California would in turn create three dollars worth of jobs, infrastructure, and education for the state. By contrast, she pointed out, the state prison system "takes 10% of the state budget and doesn't return anything."

But some legislators asked why they should pay for sending two thousand students to the Central Valley when they could just as easily send them to UC Berkeley. The truth, she replied, was that Berkeley and the other eight campuses could only absorb so much growth—they were, in planning terms, already "built out." Moreover, giving money to Berkeley would not benefit the children of the Central Valley, or provide the spark that the Valley needed to jump start its economy.

"You Are Going to Have to Put up With...Craziness"

Of the many stories to come out of the fights in Sacramento over UC Merced, perhaps none is quite as colorful as Carol TK's efforts to win the support of Senator John Burton. Burton was then the President pro tempore of the California Senate, and had been representing his district in Sacramento since 1974. The San Francisco *Chronicle* once described him as "visceral, irascible, occasionally avuncular and routinely profane." But the paper also noted: "He gets his fingers in everything, and not much happens that Burton doesn't sanction."

As it turns out, John Burton was also one of the most vocal opponents of UC Merced, which he sometimes referred to as "the boondoggle in the Central Valley."

In an effort to get Burton's support, or at least temper his opposition to the campus, Carol TK enlisted the support of UC Regent Richard Blum. Dick Blum moved in the same circles as John Burton, so Carol asked him to take John to breakfast to explain why UC Merced was needed. Afterwards, Blum reportedly told TK, "You know, that breakfast cost me \$2300." That, at least, was the sum that Regent Blum had had to donate to John's favorite charity to get the senator to listen to his pitch. "Burton was playing this tit-for-tat game all along," Carol TK believes. "In the papers he would say how horrible this UC Merced thing was, but in private he was using it to drag money and support out for his causes."

After Blum, Carol sent Burton's way another big financial contributor to the Democrats, this time from Stockton. According to TK, the latter reportedly told John: "Hey, cut it out about UC Merced, will ya. We really need this campus." When the donor reported back on the visit to Carol, he assured her: "You are going to have to put up with this craziness, but in the end it will be alright." Still, Carol remembers, Burton continued to use the press and other media, "saying everything crazy about UC Merced, which was hurtful because people really listened to him."

Next, Carol sent UC Regent Sherry Lansing to Burton. Sherry was no ordinary Regent. At the time she was running a major Hollywood studio. She was also, TK recalls:

A very nice lady—very powerful. John Burton has an eye for the ladies...Sherry took him to lunch in LA...Flies him somewhere on her plane...They are at the restaurant...She introduces John to Charlize Theron... Sherry is talking about the Central Valley...and trying to make my case and

John is practically panting out loud.

Carol had other people from all over the state talk to Burton. She figured that if she put enough people on him, he would have to cave: “How could you resist?” The state Superintendent of Education, another mutual friend, met with John and came to see Carol afterward. Like the others before him, the message was simple: “Well, Carol, you are going to have to put up with this a little longer, but in the end it will be okay.”

To TK, John Burton’s opposition to the tenth campus was all just part of a calculated political game:

He never intended specifically to vote against the tenth campus. He didn’t necessarily intend to vote for it either; he was just playing a game to get as much for his social programs as he could. He was just playing this massive game with the livelihood of UC Merced...I felt this was not a game, it was about real kids, real lives, and real opportunities. He was so sexist, and use terrible language, intimidated you and made you blush the whole time you were in his presence.

In the end, however, John Burton voted for UC Merced.

“Why Did We Pick This Site?”

By mid-April, 1998, planning for UC Merced was sufficiently far advanced that the Regents felt it was time to visit the site in person and hear from the local community. The Regents were treated to a tour of downtown Merced, followed by a trip to the land gifted to the University by the Virginia Smith Trust.

At the Smith property, the Regents and UC officials divided into smaller groups for informal briefings and were given an opportunity to peer through makeshift “telescopes,” made from PVC pipe by Chris Adams, now one of the campus planners. The boundaries of the proposed campus site were marked by brightly-colored helium balloons, with the majestic Sierra Nevada in the background. The famous barn and its lone eucalyptus tree were also visible in the foreground.

One Regent later recalled the site visit to Merced as the highlight of her time serving on the Board: “It was incredibly exciting to stand on the grassy hilltop and envision a world-class research university coming to the Central Valley. The commitment to UC Merced and to the people of the

Central Valley has been outstanding.”

Roger Samuelson, however, recalls that a subsequent site visit by President Atkinson and several VIP's went less well. Rain had been peppering the valley in the days prior to the visit and had not let up when Roger suggested that the group head toward the barn and “go as far as we could and then stop.” The drive through the mud “took forever,” he remembers. Among the miserable faces in the caravan was President Atkinson's, whose sour visage spoke the words the president did not need to say: “Why did we pick this site? What the hell are we doing here?”

What's In a Name?

Among the many details yet to be decided about the tenth campus was what to call it. Historically, every UC campus had been named after the nearest town or city. However, several Regents were opposed to Merced as the name of the tenth campus. Among the critics was Bill Baker, who “believed it was critical to call the campus UC San Joaquin, in order to convey the important message that the campus was for the citizens of the entire Central Valley, not just the tiny town of Merced.”

As with every other aspect of the tenth campus, choosing a name became controversial. Much in the way that UCLA evokes southern California and UC Berkeley evokes the Bay Area, some suggested that UC Yosemite would be a powerful brand name for the new campus. Others, however, perhaps concerned with truth-in-advertising, pointed out that Yosemite was at least an hour and a half away. The original campus site, Lake Yosemite, was named for a reservoir next to the Virginia Smith property, which is fed by the Merced River. In a compromise, these advocates suggested UC Lake Yosemite. Among the other candidates was UC Central Valley. (Mercedians knew from long experience that those outside the Valley found “San Joaquin” difficult to spell or even pronounce.)

As the controversy over naming the new campus raged, one long-time UC observer, Chris Adams, was inspired to verse:

In days so long passed
They can hardly be seen
The Regents decreed:
It's “UC San Joaquin”

But others have decried
A name that no one thinks
Has any relevance at all.
In fact, it stinks.

Our eager hosts cry
"UC Merced"!
Bill Baker says
"Over my body, when dead."

Our brave provost has tested
"UC at Lake Yosemite."
A name that so far
Has incurred no one's enmity.

One may ask however,
Once all have seen the lake,
If it's sufficient
As a campus namesake.

A solution's in reach
From a development stance.
He or she who pays the piper
Calls the dance.

Telescopes and clinics
Museums and business schools,
We've sold 'em all while making up
A set of naming rules.

A campus for some bucks.
The idea salivates.
What about.....drum roll please
"UC Bill Gates"?

Or barring consensus, and
no dollars received
How about aesthetics
UC~Lone Tree

Despite our attempts
No desiderata
Could we all agree
UC-Sierra Nevada?

In the end, President Atkinson decided upon UC Merced. As he said in making the formal announcement, the name would honor the people of Merced who had been “steadfast in their advocacy and support of the new campus.” Dennis Cardoza agreed: “It just had to be UC Merced.”



The Life and Legacy of Virginia Smith

Llonel Onsurez

Virginia Smith's long and colorful life began on July 14, 1903 in Merced California. Born to Elmer and Ursula Smith, a devout Catholic couple, Virginia was the second and last child to be born to the Smith family. Her brother Cyril Eugene Smith, her senior by three years, proved to be a ready friend for Virginia throughout her childhood. Their close familial relationship, fostered while raised in the quaint atmosphere of Merced, lasted the duo throughout their lives as the two embarked on their own worldly adventures.

The Smiths were characterized as being a very close knit family, which enjoyed activities and excursion together. Ursula Smith, Virginia's mother and a native of San Francisco, moved her family back to the city by the bay to escape the scorching heat of the central valley during the summer months. While in San Francisco the family enjoyed attending the theatre, the opera, and doing other activities which were not readily available to residents of small-town Merced. Mary Harter, a close friend of both Virginia and the family described the family as one which "led lives in two cities." Virginia attended grammar and middle school in Merced; however her parents chose

to send her to her mother's alma mater, the Dominican Convent, in San Rafael, California for both high school and college. Virginia spent her years there as a boarder, and it was while attending high school, that she became good friends with fellow Dominican attendee Mary Harter. Virginia, or "Gingi" as Harter and other close friends called her, often invited her High School friends down to the Smith ranch in Merced during winter and Easter break.

Cyril Smith, upon graduation from the old Merced High located on "M" street, attended the University of California in Berkeley. With both of their children attending schools in the Bay Area, Elmer and Ursula Smith spent increasing amounts of time living in San Francisco in an effort to make visiting with the children more convenient. Mary Harter spoke of how Elmer Smith would often take the trip north to the school in San Rafael, pick Gingi and herself up and take them back to San Francisco for lunch ¹. After Elmer Smith death on January 19, 1924, Ursula Smith decided to make San Francisco the families' permanent residence. The home in Merced, (currently the law offices of Morse, Morse, and Morse at 760 20th St on Courthouse Square) was sold, but the family retained the current Cyril and Virginia Smith trust property in the Merced foothills. Virginia was so fond of the house in Merced that she kept all of the furniture, silver, and china used in the home in storage; never parting with any of it until her death. Stewardship of the land was given to Eldridge Lane, a close family friend, who managed the business aspects of the ranch. It was Lane who handled the lease agreements with the Cook Cattle Company among other duties.

After completing his undergraduate degree in history, Cyril Smith continued on in graduate studies at Berkeley. When the time came for Cyril to travel abroad to conduct research in France at the École de Chartres, Virginia decided to give up her college studies and together with their mother Ursula, the family moved to Paris². Mary Harter recalled how her family joined the Smiths in France for several weeks, and how together they explored the medieval towns and castles which dotted the countryside. After a couple of years Cyril Smith completed his research, and the family moved back to San Francisco. There, Virginia, her mother Ursula, and her unmarried aunt Mimi, took up residence. Cyril completed his doctoral degree and began a college professorial career which led him to various teaching positions across the country. In 1934 he began teaching at Marquette, a Jesuit University in Milwaukee Wisconsin where he stayed on the faculty for thirty-three years. Every summer, while the University was on break, Cyril

and Virginia would undertake expeditions throughout the world to places across Europe, Australia, and to other exotic locales. Virginia was an avid traveler, fearlessly venturing to Australia multiple times by herself. Though San Francisco was a thriving cultural mecca, Virginia was not fond of high society pastimes such as the Opera or Symphony, rather opting instead to spend her free time watching baseball games, dancing, or caring for her mother and aunt³. Virginia was also a consummate entertainer, hosting her friends in her Hyde street apartment on many occasions. During World War Two, Virginia volunteered in the Blood Donor Service of the American Red Cross, sometimes spending twelve hour days fully absorbed in her work for the war effort.

In 1967 Cyril Smith retired from Marquette and returned to San Francisco. His health deteriorated in the period shortly thereafter. He was confined to the Hill Haven Nursing home where Virginia visited him daily until his death on October 11, 1969⁴. Cyril Smith set up his will to create an educational land trust from the portion of the ranch estate he inherited from his father Elmer. The trust would fund scholarships for local students and graduate student travel expenses at Marquette University. His decision to create the trust inspired Virginia to follow suit. Jane Murray, the daughter of Mary Harter and also a friend of both of the Smiths, recalled that Virginia and Cyril “always felt that their home was really Merced and their wealth came from Merced and they wanted to return it to Merced⁵.” When Virginia fell ill in 1971, she also organized her will to set up a trust to fund scholarships for students from the city of Merced. Mary Harter reflected on Virginia Smiths last Birthday on July 14, 1971; “She had us all come down and have a birthday luncheon...it was terrific. We all went through and said goodbye to her.” Virginia Smith died later that same day. The land trust which was created with her death has now come to be the site of the tenth University of California Campus, UC Merced. When asked if Virginia would appreciate a library on campus possibly being named in her honor, Mary Harter replied, “Name the library for Cyril, and the football stadium for Virginia⁶.”

Chapter Five

What the Hell is a Fairy Shrimp?

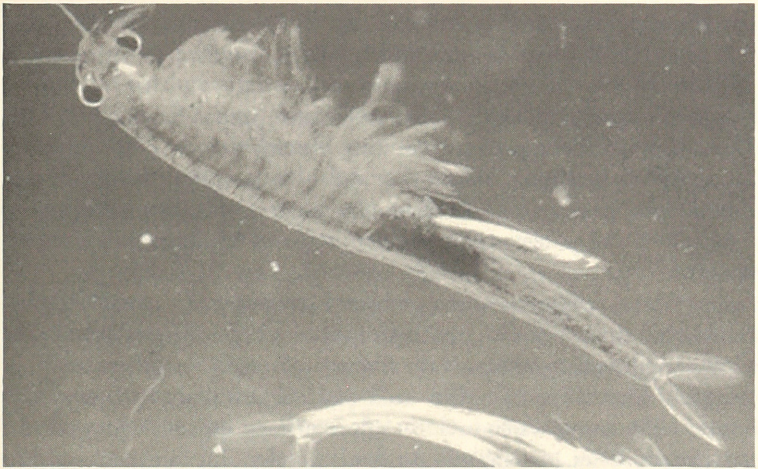
As 1998 came to a close, things seemed to be looking up for UC Merced. The politicians in Sacramento were, if not necessarily enthusiastic supporters of the new campus, at least reconciled to its existence. What was presumed to be the last obstacle to UCM's existence, the Environmental Impact Report, was nearing completion. Money had been committed from the state coffers, and Carol TK had become the unofficial cheerleader for the project. The campus, once stalled, finally seemed to be hitting on all cylinders.

But, if things are darkest before the dawn, sometimes the rising of the sun is only an apparition: a false dawn. Trouble was about to raise its ugly little head...and its tiny tentacles.

"To Live Lightly on the Land..."

The land for the tenth campus was chosen specifically because it met all of the criteria set by the site selection committee, which included "favorable topography" and "environmental factors"—meaning the campus and its occupants were expected, as the saying goes, "to live lightly on the land."

The fact that the Virginia Smith Trust property was arid rangeland capped with clay hardpan, and hence unsuitable for conventional agriculture, made it seemingly the perfect site for a campus that was intended from the



Fairy Shrimp

start to be environmentally friendly. Indeed, Merced's goal was to be the first UC campus to receive LEED certification, awarded by the U.S. Department of Energy and the Green Building Council for "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design," resulting in environmental sustainability. (For more on the greening of UCM, see the LEED sidebar.)

However, it turns out that these same soils made the Smith property also an ideal breeding ground for a particular type of critter: the so-called Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp. A close relative of "sea monkeys"—the little creatures that little tykes send away for, and that parents eventually wind up flushing down the toilet—the eggs of the inch-long *lindneriella occidentalis* hatch in the early spring, when shallow depressions in the Valley floor fill with rainwater, thus becoming "vernal pools." The VPFS has a lifespan of only sixteen days, during which it procreates ("...rapid reproduction," as the biologists say) and lays the eggs that become the next generation. Unlike their more common ancestors, which have black eyes, the Central Valley fairy shrimp have red eyes (maybe from studying too much? Or maybe all that procreating...?) The fairy shrimp has to hurry so, because the vernal pools that are its home dry up during the summer.

While the University of California had long been aware of the 1973 Endangered Species Act and its potential impact upon the state, it was only in 1997 that the fairy shrimp had been added to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's list of endangered species. (Actually, the Vernal Pools Fairy Shrimp is listed as a "threatened" species, the level just below

“endangered.” For more on the VPFS, see the Fairy Shrimp sidebar.)

In 1998, however, the little fairy shrimp came to the attention of UC Merced planners—with a vengeance—when the completed EIR showed that the campus site was a kind of fairy shrimp heaven. The minutes of the Regents’ April 1998 meeting, concerning Merced, record: “The University is required to have more information about the natural environment as it proceeds, to seriously consider alternative patterns of development, and to have formal and public review processes to focus on these environmental concerns.”

Various solutions to the problem were proposed. Keith Schaffer, the Merced native who had played an early role in getting a campus in the Central Valley, discretely asked the foreman of a well-known construction company how they dealt with such suddenly-emergent environmental issues. The answer came back that the company usually “relocated” the threatened species, preferably in the dead of night. The foreman suggested that Schaffer borrow a bulldozer and make his own “vernal pool” off the campus site. But there were, as Keith knew, already too many pools, and far too many fairy shrimp.



Congressman Gary Condit with Carol TK

Congressman Gary Condit had an even more ingenuous idea: he suggested that the University simply declare the vernal pools “cow wallows”—since many such depressions in the ground were presumably made by bovines, rolling around on their backs—and be done with it.

But the belated discovery of the endangered fairy shrimp had also

given new life to opponents in the Valley, who had opposed the campus from the start. UCM's critics began to come out of the woodwork, as it were.

Foremost among them were conservationists and environmental advocates who viewed the new campus as a threat not only to the fairy shrimp, but to other native species in the Valley. As Gary Condit noted, these groups were "for the most part, professional and courteous, but very stern about their goals."

At their head was Lydia Miller, director of the San Joaquin Raptor Rescue Society, which worried about the long-term environmental impact that UC Merced would have upon the Central Valley, which, in addition to the Vernal Pools Fairy Shrimp, is home to a dozen other threatened or endangered species of animals and plants. Miller charged that the University of California routinely acted as though it believed it was above and beyond the law (a charge, incidentally, not unique to her and the Raptor Rescue Society, but shared by many in the communities neighboring UC campuses, and a legacy of the University's privileged status in the state Constitution.)

The fairy shrimp issue not only put planning the new campus on indefinite hold, but confronted the University of California with the specter of having to defend itself against endless and expensive lawsuits, as well as facing public protests by outraged environmentalists.

Once again, however, cooler heads ultimately prevailed. UC decided to relocate the campus from the original site—where the famous barn and lone tree stood—to land on the southern edge of the Virginia Smith Trust, adjacent to a private golf course that had meanwhile gone out of business. As part of the compromise, the University also agreed to set aside some of the original, fairy-shrimp-rich land of the original site as an environmental easement protected from future development, and agreed to reduce the "footprint" of the campus.

The end result was that the "fighting" fairy shrimp delayed the construction of the campus for more than a year, and forced it to move more than a mile away from the original site. Not bad for an inch-long creature that lives for only sixteen days!

Enter the Red Team

With the fairy shrimp problem disposed of, or at least so the University hoped, UC Merced was once again on track to move forward. 1999 would turn out to be a pivot year. Not only did UCM gain a vital and powerful new ally that January, California's new governor, Gray Davis, but

it had, at last, a founding chancellor.

Arguably, Carol Tomlinson-Keasey had been the *de facto* acting chancellor of the campus-to-be for over a year, because of her work as chair of the Regents' Special Committee on UC Merced. But she was not made the inaugural chancellor *de jure* until President Atkinson and the Regents appointed her to that role in July 1999. As the official Founding Chancellor of UC Merced, Carol TK would be responsible for hiring UCM's senior administrators, including the all-important executive vice chancellor and provost, who, in turn, would oversee the hiring of the first deans and the faculty.

The job of founding chancellor, Carol later recalled, "was nothing like I expected the position to be. I thought I would hire the faculty, get them going, and supervise the building of the campus. What I ended up doing was fighting for dollars in Sacramento—seemingly every single minute."

Perhaps the first surprise came from the office of the newly-installed governor. Barely had he arrived in that office when Gray Davis—possibly already mindful of the growing political clout of the Central Valley, and hence its importance to his prospects for reelection—publicly announced in Fresno that he planned to push the scheduled opening date for UC Merced ahead a full year, to September 2004.

Although Davis' plan caught Carol TK by surprise, the governor agreed to create a so-called Red Team—a designation usually given by the



Some of the Red Team members at the opening of UC Merced 2005

military to projects that receive a high priority—to shepherd UC Merced to an early opening. Executive Order D-12-99 created the team, which would be headed by Carol TK and Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamante. The team also hired a coordinator for the project.

In order to prepare the way for the accelerated opening of the UCM campus, the Red Team decided to establish several regional centers—in Fresno, Bakersfield, and Modesto—that could accommodate the first students if the main buildings were not yet ready. Finally, the team opened a local office and a kind of recruiting station at Merced College.

To show his support for the future UCM, Governor Davis later visited the campus site in the company of UC Regent Leo Kolligian, a Central Valley native who had long been a booster of the Merced campus, and Vice President Al Gore, who had meanwhile announced that he would



Al Gore holding up a UC Merced sweater in support of the new campus

be a candidate in the 2000 presidential election. At the UC Fresno Center, Gore spoke with local high school students who were taking part in a University-sponsored program to help design the buildings for the new

campus.

With the University's Long-Range Development Plan (LRDP) and a county University Community Plan in place—both based upon the so-called University Community Concept, which envisioned housing for students, faculty, and administrators, as well as small businesses and stores in close proximity to the campus—the stage was set for the first construction.

Ground breaking for the new campus site began on October 25, 2002. Governor Davis, Regent Kolligian, and Founding Chancellor Carol TK took turns digging in the hard earth with a gold-plated shovel made



Humble Starts

especially for the occasion. (The shovel is now in the Special Collections archive of Kolligian Library.)

The hiring of the founding faculty and administrators was begun at the same time as the start of construction on campus. In addition to the recruiting office opened at Merced College, space was rented in a vacant professional building on Merced's Olive Street, including a suite of rooms described by one visitor as "looking like an old dentist office." Fortunately for UCM, the closing of Castle Air Force Base in 1995 had not only silenced the noisy jets that had threatened to disturb the idyllic quiet of the new University, but made available the former base headquarters as temporary quarters for TK and her staff.

Prospective UCM faculty were surprised to be directed to nearby Atwater and a huge sign welcoming them to the headquarters of a strategic

bombing wing when they arrived for job interviews. Soon, a hastily-erected, blue-and-gold placard at the base entrance heralded the temporary home of UC Merced.

Among the first hired was a former engineering professor and dean from Ohio State, who had previously taught at MIT, the University of Texas, and Berkeley: David Ashley. As executive vice chancellor and provost, Ashley would handle the day-to-day responsibilities of running the campus while Carol TK was doing what UC chancellors do most, and best:



Dennis Cardoza (center) with many of the founding faculty and Deans

lobbying for money in Sacramento, and raising funds among corporate donors. Because of the University's long-held policy of "shared governance," wherein the faculty is responsible for curriculum and the administration for supporting the faculty, Ashley would be the face of UC Merced for most of those seeking teaching positions at the new campus.

Once the word had gone out, from the UC press office, that the "first research university of the 21st century" was about to open in California, applications began to flood into the tiny mailroom at Castle. A photograph posted on the newly-created UC Merced website showed a smiling Executive Vice Chancellor David Ashley standing next to mail carts piled chest-high with some of the 10,000 applications received for the 100 or so anticipated faculty openings at the school. In order to help with those interviews, senior faculty and administrators were recruited from the other nine campuses to form a UC Merced Task Force. The task force would not only take over the job of interviewing prospective professors and deans, but also took the first stab at academic planning.

While the final decisions on the future academic structure of the

University were left up to Carol TK and David Ashley, task force members proposed that the new campus have three schools—one each for engineering, for the natural sciences, and for a novel amalgam of the remaining disciplines, christened the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts, or SSHA for short. The campus would also be host to two new institutes, which, it was hoped, would have a special appeal for the Central Valley: the Sierra Nevada Research Institute and the World Cultures Institute.

Planning for the future classes to be offered to UCM students on opening day was a particularly daunting task. When one would-be recruit to the UC Merced Task Force innocently asked, “Why don’t you use Berkeley’s curriculum instead of trying to create your own?,” it was pointed out that Merced would only have three or four majors when it opened, compared to nearly three hundred at Berkeley. Merced’s classes, moreover, would be taught by a relative handful of faculty, not Berkeley’s enormous professorate.

Next to be hired were the deans and remaining vice chancellors. Lindsay Desrochers, the vice chancellor for administration, came to the campus from Portland State University. She would oversee planning for the construction of the first buildings on campus. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Jane Lawrence had a long record of experience with other start-up campuses, most recently in Vermont. Dean of Natural Sciences Maria



Leo Kolligian signing a piece of the library

Pallavicini was lured from her faculty position at UC San Francisco, the University's medical campus, where she did stem cell research. Jeff Wright, the new dean of the School of Engineering, specialized in bio-engineering, looking at ways to adapt nature's solutions to humankind's problems. The SSHA dean was the last of the three to be hired. Psychologist Kenji Hakuta left a chaired professorship at Stanford to become a UC Merced pioneer.



CORE Planning Committee

Anybody Here Know Any Vampires?

As the new campus began gathering steam, with the governor's endorsement and presidential candidates visiting the site, others began to join the parade. The surest and most tangible sign of support, of course, then as now, was money. Since time began, institutions like hospitals and universities have found that it easiest to find donors when so-called naming rights come with the money.

One of the first to step up to the plate was the Gallo family, famous in the Valley as producers of both wine and cheese. The "wine Gallos," Ernest and Julio, offered a substantial endowment toward a future management school, with the University to provide matching funds. The "cheese Gallo," Joseph, endowed the campus with a wellness center and gym. Fearful that an Olympic-sized swimming pool might make the new UC look too country club-like in the eyes of many Valley residents, Chancellor TK pointedly refrained from seeking funds for that particular addition to the campus plan.

In honor of the Fresno native who had been one of UC Merced's foremost boosters, and defenders, on the Board of Regents, the campus named its library after Leo Kolligian and his wife, Dottie. Contributions from a local heart surgeon went to pay, in part, for what would be the largest classroom at UC Merced, the Lakireddy auditorium, home to the freshman Core course.

Financial donations from other wealthy Valley residents would make Merced, ironically, one of the best-endowed UC campuses when it came to faculty chairs, even though the smallest in faculty numbers. A successful purveyor of frozen food thoughtfully provided funds for a chair in Economics. But at least one of the endowments raised eyebrows when it was announced by Provost Ashley at a meeting of the UC Merced Task Force: an author who had written a popular book on Dracula left money in his estate to endow a chair in vampire studies. (The SSHA dean eventually redefined the faculty position as early American literature, demonstrating both original thinking and his sense of humor.)

All Hail the Merced...Marmots?

Barely had the name of the campus been finally decided, when suggestions for the official UC Merced mascot were being sent to Chancellor TK. Historically, the choice of a college mascot has had a lot to do with what marketing specialists call branding—not only are the qualities associated with the mascot suppose to carry over to the campus, but that identity distinguishes one campus from another. (Ask the students at UC Santa Cruz, who rejected the chancellor's choice, the Sea Lions, for the Banana Slug. Despite early skeptics, the subsequent sale of sweatshirts and other slug-related paraphernalia have had UCSC alumni laughing all the way to the bank.)

From the start, the search for a mascot was hamstrung by UC regulations and political correctness, which specified that the creature could not be of a specific gender, ethnicity, or—in some cases—profession. Thus, raiders, pirates, and buccaneers were ruled out as unbecoming a scholarly community. By the same token, monsters like Trojans, giants, or minotaurs, even though mythical, were excluded. Obviously, any mascot that might give offense to a particular group—for example, a brave, chief, or Indian—was similarly verboten. More by process of elimination than imagination was the list of candidates finally narrowed down to some pretty innocuous animals, once Carol had vetoed both “the fog” and the fairy shrimp.

Ultimately, TK decided to make the choice of UCM's mascot a contest among those who would presumably be future students on campus.



In the year 2000, children from elementary schools throughout California were invited to submit ideas. The winner would be awarded a full, four-year scholarship to attend UC Merced. Of the thousands of entries received, the most popular suggestion turned out to be the bobcat. Since twenty-nine students had chosen the same animal, a lottery was held to determine the winner. Liza Lopez, a fifth-grader from the Central Valley town of Livingston, won the prize. (Indeed, Liza enrolled

Possible UC Merced mascot the Marmot

at UCM as a freshman eight years later, and plans to graduate in UCM's Class of 2012.) Symbolically adopting a bobcat cub, named "Boomer," from the local zoo, Chancellor TK shortly thereafter pronounced the Golden Bobcat the official mascot of UC Merced.

As at UCSC, however, a small and disaffected—but determined and vocal—group of UCM students has continued to wage a quiet guerrilla campaign aimed at renaming the UCM mascot. A student-run referendum in 2005 narrowly favored the Golden Bobcat over the Fighting Fairy Shrimp. Stay tuned. As with all things in History, time will tell.

Fiat Lux...or Turn Out the Lights?

Naming the campus mascot was not the only, nor the most important issue facing the founding chancellor at the dawn of the new millennium, of course. As so often in the history of California, a sudden economic downturn put a damper on the future prospects of the Merced campus. Like the perils of Pauline, UC Merced seemed to lurch from crisis to crisis. This time, however, it remained unclear whether there would be a dashing hero to pull Pauline/Merced from the railroad tracks before the speeding locomotive arrived.

Ironically, the problem was a lack of energy—literally. Mismanagement of the supplier network that provided power to the statewide electrical grid, coupled with market manipulation by companies



Governor Schwarzenegger visits UC Merced campus for a tour

like the Enron Corporation, had resulted in a dramatic rise in energy costs and “rolling blackouts” across California. Soaring utility costs were taking a toll on businesses, family income, and ultimately state revenue and budgets by 2001-2002. By the following year, those economic costs had become a political liability for one of UCM’s most stalwart supporters: Governor Gray Davis. As a result, the governor’s popularity in the state had plummeted.

In October, 2003, Davis was removed from office in a special recall election, and replaced the following month by a new Republican governor—Arnold Schwarzenegger, a former bodybuilder and Mr. Universe, who had meanwhile transformed himself into a skilled and gifted politician.

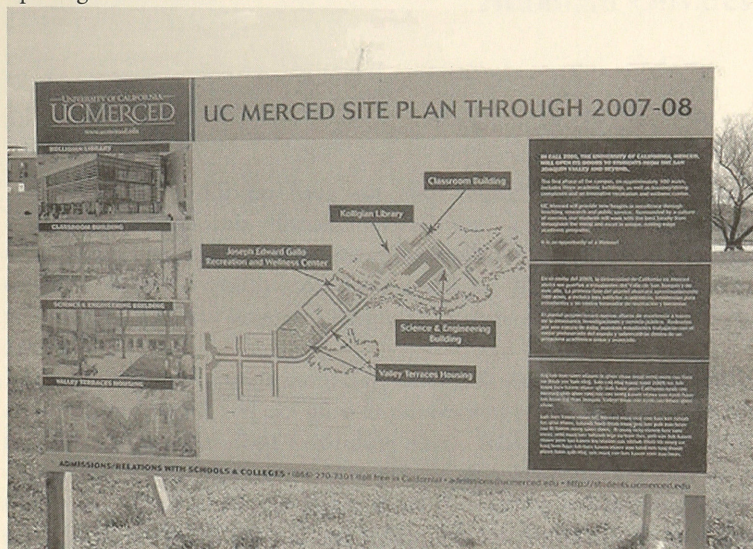
Besides Gray Davis, another casualty of the recall election was Davis’ plan to open UC Merced a year early, in 2004.

While there was, Carol TK remembers, initially “an emotional letdown at the news,” in retrospect the postponement seemed a gift in disguise, in that it gave the chancellor, her administration, and the founding faculty another twelve months to complete construction on the campus and prepare classes for the thousand-plus students expected on opening day.

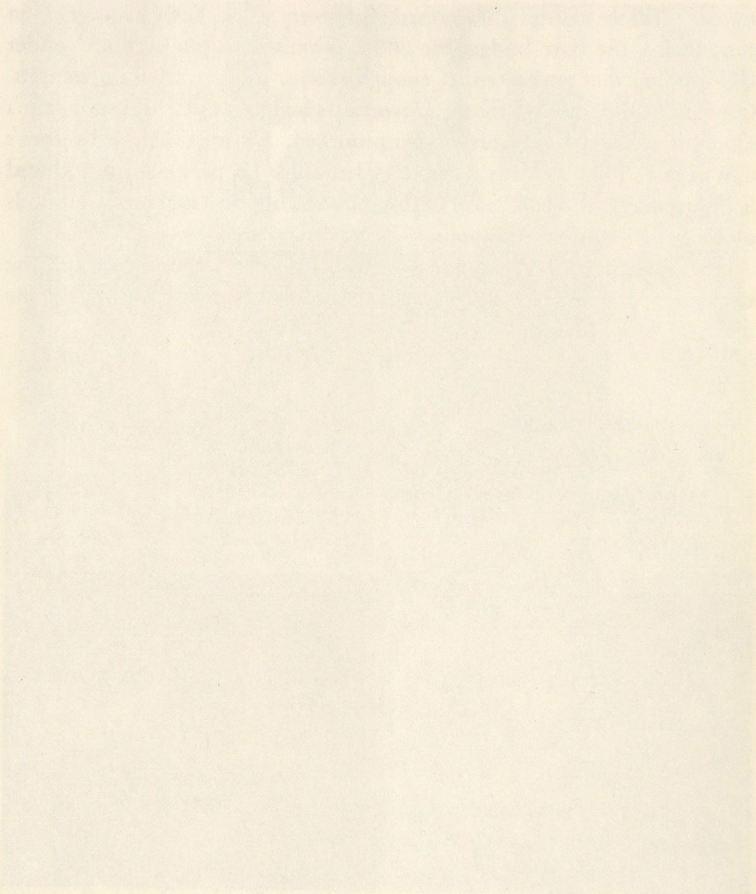
Still, there were concerns that a Republican governor might prove less sympathetic to the University of California than his Democratic predecessor—more like Ronald Reagan than Pat or Jerry Brown, in other

words. Those worries diminished, however, when Schwarzenegger, in announcing the state budget for 2004, promised to put a “floor” under UC funding that guaranteed it enough money to open the new campus. Conversely, the “ceiling” for the University’s budget would rise as the state’s economy recovered, Schwarzenegger promised. During the new governor’s visit in early 2005, a clearly delighted Chancellor TK personally introduced Schwarzenegger to a handful of freshly-hired faculty and staff on the grounds of the nearly-completed campus.

Pauline had been rescued, as usual, at the last minute, and the tracks were now clear for a juggernaut that could no longer be stopped: the opening of UC Merced.



Sign of the future map of UC merced



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Small Creature, Big Impact

Abraham Olivares

The Fairy Shrimp have not only caused headaches for many University of California officials, but cost time and money for campus relocation efforts. Almost every time an issue with UC Merced is mentioned, the Fairy Shrimp is usually accompanied with it. With all this controversy surrounding this tiny animal, I have often wondered what exactly a fairy shrimp is.

Fairy Shrimp are scientifically known as *linderiella occidentalis* or *branchinecta lindahli* and can grow anywhere between 10-44 mm long (½ to 1 ½ in.). Despite their misleading name, Fairy Shrimp are not small crustaceans with wings; instead they swim upside down and live only for a few weeks. These small crustaceans spend their entire lives in vernal pools and can be found in the Central Valley and certain vernal pools in the Coast Ranges. It is these small animals' presence which makes a body of water a vernal pool. "Vernal pools are contained basin depressions which lack a permanent above ground outlet"¹. These areas fill with water during rainy seasons and in the Northeast, are covered with ice during the winter months². By late summer, a vernal pool is generally dry. Fairy Shrimp have also been found in various roadside puddles, scrapes and ditches, and in several railroad toe-drain pools³. A variety of animals from amphibians such as mole salamanders and reptiles like the wood frog to a range of invertebrates reside in vernal pools. *Linderiella occidnetalis* is the most common of California's vernal pool Fairy Shrimps and the only species that

has red eyes. All other species have black eyes⁴.

Adult fairy shrimp have stalked compound eyes, two sets of antennae, and 11 pairs of leaf-like swimming legs⁵. They are usually an orange-reddish color, but can range from transparent gray-white to blue or green, dependent on the contents of the food supply. Fairy shrimp can move around in three distinct ways: resting at the bottom of the vernal pools, darting rapidly, or drifting slowly. They can change their speed of motion by changing the angle of the outermost part of their legs, known as expedites. Male Fairy Shrimp have an enlarged second antenna which is used to hold the female shrimp during mating season. Female Fairy Shrimp usually outnumber males and have an external pouch on their abdomen which is used to carry her eggs. The female carries fertilized eggs externally in its pouch for several days before releasing them. The number of eggs a female Fairy Shrimp produces in an egg case varies from 10 to 150 and she can produce several egg cases during a lifetime.

Females drop an egg case which remains on the bottom of the vernal pool once it dries. These eggs pass through a cycle of drying and freezing and then hatch another year when the water returns to the pool. Eggs hatch in late winter/early spring and adults can be found in the vernal pools in spring⁶. Fairy shrimp hatch as nauplius, which is the first stage or larva of crustacean development. Nauplii consist only of a head and a telson, the end part of a crustacean's body. The young nauplius develops in a series of instars which is a developmental stage between molts of an immature fairy shrimp⁷. Each instar stage involves molting the exoskeleton to grow more segments until they reach 20 segments like that of an adult Fairy Shrimp.

The developmental process can vary depending on what time of year it is. Young Fairy Shrimp which have hatched from the winter eggs develop more slowly than those that have hatched from summer eggs due to the amount of water in the pool or the arrival of predators. Fairy Shrimp complete their life cycle in 16 days which allows for rapid reproduction⁸. Winter eggs can be carried from pool to pool by traveling animals or in the case that a vernal pool completely dries out; the eggs can be picked up by the wind and blown into other pools. For reasons currently unknown to scientists, Fairy Shrimp may be abundant for several consecutive years in a single vernal pool and absent the next.

Fairy Shrimp feed off of bacteria, algae, protozoa, rotifers, and detritus which they obtain by sucking water through filters and eat the particles they strain out of the water found in vernal pools. In addition to their own eating habits, Fairy Shrimp are a main food source for many

animals. Tadpole shrimp, backswimmers, aquatic beetles, aquatic insect larvae, tadpoles, toads, salamanders, killdeer, and ducks all feed on Fairy Shrimp⁹.

Fairy shrimp became listed as a Federally endangered species in 1997¹⁰ and a Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon was finalized in 1998 which emphasizes that vernal pools are “not independent of one another but rather a part of a vernal pool complex and that individual pools should be treated as sub-populations.” Further, the primary goal of the Recovery Plan is to “secure existing vernal pools and their watersheds from further loss and degradation in a configuration that maintains habitat function and species viability”¹¹. In other words, construction and agriculture cannot build or cultivate the land in which a vernal pool is located. These crustaceans are threatened by extinction due to loss of its vernal pool habitat through urban development and new agriculture. The Chaparral Midvalley Fairy Shrimp Recovery Plan states that “urban expansion in eastern Merced County poses a threat to many Midvalley Fairy Shrimp populations.” The document further states that “the primary threat in Merced County is the construction of the University of California, Merced campus.”

It is amazing how an animal so tiny with such a short life-span can have such a big impact on our University.

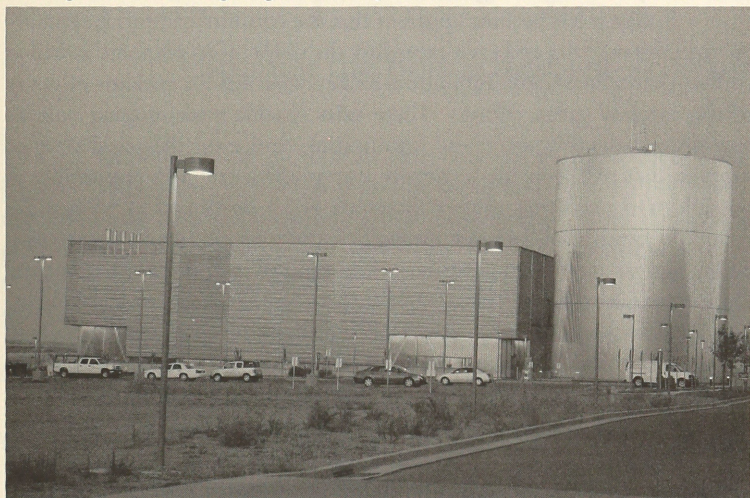
Green, Functional, Beautiful

Justine Issavi

Over the last decade the issue of Global Warming has become a fixture among the mainstream hot topics. It is largely discussed on both the public and the private scale, and although there exist differing opinions about the causes of this climate change, the change itself is undisputed, along with the disconcerting knowledge that the resources that have been used to feed our growing energy needs are not only finite but also near extinction. As a student in the 21st century I have taken personal responsibility to do what I can to reduce my impact on the environment. I have also developed certain expectations of others to also do the same; therefore it is with particular pride that I write about UC Merced's green initiative in its physical building as well as its long-term plans and policies. In the category of being environmentally responsible, UC Merced has not only met the challenges and expectations but surpassed them greatly and in doing so has set a higher standard for other campuses to follow. UC Merced's green campus and green effort in general, have contributed to the campus' solid standing as one of the most environmentally friendly campuses in the United States. This has attracted and fascinated a number of students and scholars. It was one of the reasons for my choice of attending the school and I believe it will remain a large part of UC Merced's lasting legacy.

Although difficult, the task of building a major research university in the 21st century offers numerous opportunities to create a campus based on knowledge gained from the building of previous campuses, and therefore the new campus will naturally be superior at least in some senses to previous campuses. For example, the last three University of California campuses were

built during the sixties when sustainability and environmental awareness were not as high priority or researched as they are now. Furthermore, many environmental protection laws that are implemented today were practically non-existent. The combination of past experiences, new knowledge, and the vision of those involved in its construction, all helped University of California, Merced, the youngest and most recently built UC, create a distinct and lasting character for itself with the attention and the importance it has granted to being a “green” campus.



Central Plant

UC Merced’s Environmental Stewardship Program goes back not only to the university’s first chancellor and administrators, but also to those who were active in planning the physical campus, as well as those who helped shape the character of the campus years before. From the very beginning, the campus has tried to reduce its impact on the environment, as is apparent by the change from the original site on the Virginia and Cyril Smith Trust lands onto the already developed golf course a few miles away (this move helped save a large portion of the habitat of the now infamous Fairy Shrimp). Trudis Heinecke, who was the Director of Capital Planning for the campus, carried out a string of seminars presenting ground-breaking ideas on environmental stewardship and building a campus that became a part of its surroundings instead of dominating and essentially destroying it. Some of the members of the Executive Site Selection Committee have dubbed the decision making process of picking the campus site as a “500

year decision”, a decision that will have a continuing impact for many years to come. The same can certainly be said for the decisions concerning the physical planning of the campus and the example it will undoubtedly set as the first major research university built in the 21st century, and for the general development in the Central Valley. Thus the importance of sustainability and energy efficiency need not be stressed any further. The reality is that the campus needs to meet the requirements of its present users while at the same time preserving enough resources for the needs of its future users.

Today, it has become apparent that the youthful campus is certainly on-track for meeting and even exceeding the vision of its planners as well as its first chancellor, Carol Tomlinson-Keasey who was an initiator of many of the campus’ green efforts. There exist specific wide-ranging policies regarding air quality, water use, commuting, and even the purchasing of supplies that will help the university run as efficiently and responsibly as possible, and numerous more policies are being developed to address the issues the campus will face as it expands. Other specific and comprehensive policy actions have been adopted by the campus’ Capital Developmental Department, as well as the Planning, Design, and Construction Department. The former stresses the importance and necessity of energy efficiency and sustainability while the latter uses the LEED silver certification program in order for UC Merced to become the first university whose every building will have a LEED silver certification or higher. The LEED, short for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design scale, is a multi-tiered program utilized by the U.S. Green Building Council that measures and awards performance of structures in over 60 points. Silver is the third highest rating, with gold being the second, and platinum being the highest possible rating. UC Merced is currently the school with the most buildings with silver or higher LEED certification with four buildings in California. The Classroom and Office Building is gold certified, the Central Plant is gold certified, Valley Terraces are silver certified, and finally, the Kolligian Library is also gold certified (numerous other buildings are in the process of certification). On a national level, UC Merced is trailing only Harvard with five total LEED certified buildings. So although UC Merced has yet to match the status earned by universities that have existed for centuries, it has surpassed many of them in one very important aspect, and that is the very high standard it has set in regards to stewardship, sustainability, and environmental responsibility.

The Story of the UC Bobcat

Boomer the Bobcat and Jeff Wheeler

I am Boomer of the Bobcat clan. The golden grasslands of the Central Valley are my home and it is from these lands that my portion of the world gets its name. California, the Golden State, is my open-aired place of abode. It is where my sire roamed and where my mother taught my siblings and me to hunt rabbits by the old Smith barn. I am no ordinary creature. My brethren are one of many known to scientists as “*Lynx rufus californicus*.” I am something different yet still alike. Mine is a place of honor and prestige—I am the UC Merced Golden Bobcat.

Often I sit near the fountain lake that was the centerpiece of the old golf course and reflect on my journey. A university mascot is an emotionally mighty and powerful thing. I can inspire pride, desire, and passion—for or against. I am the symbol that rallies the imagined yet real community. But I detract from my goal here. I need not talk of what a mascot is but the full story of how I, Boomer of the Bobcat clan became Boomer the UCM Golden Bobcat.

One day I was a litter mate, the next, a contender for the title of UC Mascot. The proceedings of the Special Committee on UC Merced were easily followed through the panes of glass. We weren't allowed inside, being the animals that we were, but we could hear the battle raging inside. Like the earlier debates over what to call the “10th Campus”, the discussion regarding the mascot was contentious. The fluorescent lights in the room provided light for the people but not illumination to the problem. Great minds wrangled over the issue. Brows furrowed. Tempers flared. Mascots in the 21st century could no longer be anything the people wanted them to be. There were new rules in the choosing of one. The mascot could not be offensive lest the choice alienate potential students or worse, their parents.

It could not represent illegality, therefore no pirate or buccaneer or raider. It could not be a warrior or a brave or a chief. It could not be male specific because one cannot offend women nor equally be feminine otherwise risk offending the men. The only sensible thing was determined to let the mascot be an animal, one easily representative of both sexes.



Bobcat found on campus

The tall human suggested a marmot, which made Pete, my marmot friend, very happy. That was a nice change because normally Pete is such a bore. His family had a long history of...well...history and Pete loved to tell us all about it. His great-uncle Phil was of some notoriety back East. Others suggested the Hawks. I don't see much of the hawks these days—at least not on the ground. All they do is fly around and around. Perhaps if they had attended some meetings they might have had a better chance. Cow Tippers was also suggested (I think by someone who had tipped one too many). I think they even considered the Black-Tailed Hare until I ate him. It was even suggested that the mascot be a Fairy Shrimp, which makes little sense to me. All they do is swim upside-down in a pond for a few months every year and go dormant the rest of the time. If they were bigger I would eat them too. In the end the decision was made by the human they call Carol TK to have young students from local grade schools submit suggestions. I like Carol. She has fiery red hair just like some of the bobcats and a stern, fiery personality to match (I don't think she would like to be known as Carol Rufus TK though even though the name suits her hair.).

The call was placed to the local students who responded like a

Lynx—striking and pouncing on the task. Of all the entries, twenty-nine students suggested the Bobcat—more than any other animal. Like I always told mother, the Bobcat need only fear man and no other mammal. We have long out-competed the cougar and the coyote for the same habitat and we out-competed all others in this endeavor. Of the twenty-nine who chose the bobcat, one was awarded the pleasure of recognition for the achievement and hopefully some day she will be an UC Merced student.

Not long after the name was chosen, I was called on to be the face for my species. Mother was so proud. Soon my crimson-tinted brown coat and black spots were dyed a golden yellow (Not too good for hiding in the grass but great for pictures). I was given a wonderful deep blue covering the humans called a “shirt”. With it my life as *Lynx rufus californicus* was replaced by one as a Golden Bobcat.

Life was not all shirts and giggles though. It soon became apparent that not all of the incoming students were happy with the choice Carol TK had made. Two such students, in the spirit of late Twentieth Century University of California, launched a protest. It seems they had issues because the mascot had been chosen by someone other than the pioneer students. The two objectors filed an official protest by way of a proposition on the ballot to the current students of UC Merced. In an attempt return the power of choice to the hands of the students; they, in a very Bobcat way, adapted their objection to the system in which they operated. Unfortunately for them the vote came out in my favor.

Now as I watch the water rings emanate from the fountain before me. I see how my life, like all things begins at a point and radiates outward as life continues. I was not to be replaced like the UC Santa Cruz Seal who lost out to a Banana Slug, something Carol TK feared would happen here. She need not worry. The Central Valley is too dry for Banana Slugs.

Chapter Six

Tabula Rasa

The term *tabula rasa* (Latin for “blank slate”) refers to the belief that an individual’s knowledge is progressively built up from his or her experiences and perceptions of the world. When we are born, our minds are “blank”.

A blank slate is exactly what UC Merced was in its early days. There were staff and faculty to be hired, facilities to be built, majors and curriculum to be established. Those charged with getting the campus started had what was once a golf course to work with, and not much else. Getting the tenth University of California campus from an idea to reality would prove to be a trial-by-fire in nearly every sense of the term.

Hitting the Ground Running: Early Academic Planning

Even when the number of UCM faculty and staff could be counted on one’s fingers and toes, establishing school bylaws, majors, course curriculum, and hiring the founding faculty were all urgent priorities.

Well before the first steel supports for the buildings had been put in place, UC Merced was already struggling to form its identity. Specifically, curriculum and the principles behind general education needed to be established. E-mail correspondence dating back as early as 1999, between UC staff and Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, dealt with these very issues.

Creating a quality experience for students on campus was of supreme importance. It was believed by those involved in the early stages of academic planning that students would gain the most from their university experience if they felt that they were receiving personal attention from the faculty and

staff. With that in mind, many early administrators and professors favored a “college” system.¹

Simply put, a “college” system has the goal of providing the student with a more intimate educational experience than can be provided by a more traditional “monolithic” school.² This is accomplished by maintaining a relatively low student-to-faculty ratio. In the case of UC Merced, e-mail correspondence indicated a belief that this ratio would be on the order of 18 or 19 to one.³ More colleges would be added at UCM as enrollment grew, in order to maintain this ratio. Under the college template, faculty would be split into multidisciplinary segments (or “departments”). This would serve the dual purpose of improving communication between faculty, as well as making the professors more accessible to students. The individual colleges at UC San Diego were to be the model for such a structure.⁴

The reasoning behind this approach was laid out in a list of five fundamental goals for academic planning, which UC staff members and Chancellor Carol TK discussed, via email, well before the campus opened. The first of these stated that students should feel that the “faculty and administration care about their success.” The remaining goals essentially served as corollaries to this first one. Thus, the second goal stated that faculty should be organized in such a way as to facilitate open interaction between students and faculty members. Third: the faculty structure should be arranged in a manner that encourages and emphasizes participation and innovation with regard to general education. Fourth: The need for diversity among the faculty must be taken into account in order for the campus to run smoothly. Fifth, and finally: The academic structure of UC Merced should be able to adapt easily and evolve, as the size of the campus increases.

General Education

Along with the college system, UC Merced would create an identity for itself by its unique emphasis upon general education, which would be complimentary to the college system.

General education, or “GE,” is one of three components of an undergraduate education at the University of California. Thus, GE is intended to introduce students to a wide array of topics within different fields of study. These include the humanities, the social sciences, natural sciences, arts, and technology.

The second component is in-depth education in the major. Typically,

this entails a student taking both lower and upper-division courses in a specific discipline. For example, History majors are required to take lower-division lecture or survey courses in American or World history, as well as upper-division courses that focus more narrowly on a particular topic, such as Anglo-American relations in the 20th-century.

The third component of undergraduate education at UC is electives, which can be somewhat similar to general education courses. Electives may be part of a student's major, or entirely outside the major, or they may go towards the completion of a minor.

Those involved with early academic planning at UCM wished to make general education a more integral part of the undergraduate experience than is the case at most universities. This was, for example, the intent behind the creation of the freshman Core course.

Hiring the Founding Faculty

In order for all the pressing issues of creating a university to be dealt with, there first had to be people to address them. Many of the so-called founding faculty were hired between 2003 and 2004. The stories behind their hiring are nearly as diverse as the faculty members themselves.

Many prospective faculty had heard about UC Merced through job listings in academic journals. Others learned through friends. Some even read about UC Merced online. Once they learned that UC Merced was hiring, interested faculty sent in applications. Some did so at the urging of mentors. Others were enthusiastic about the prospect of teaching at a new university simply because it offered not only a change of scenery, but a chance for adventure and innovation. Some applied even knowing that it meant leaving a secure job and, in some cases, a very prominent academic institution. Once their applications were submitted, the faculty members waited...and waited. In some instances, the wait was almost as long as a year, before they received a response, so busy were UCM staff in answering the applications.

Next came the interview process. Some of the candidates found the process itself to be an education. One young prospect remembered being interviewed by a freshly-hired dean. He and the dean had just concluded a rather lively discussion when the candidate announced that he had to leave for his next appointment, with the provost. As he got up to leave, the dean placed his hand on the candidate's shoulder, and whispered: "Professor [blank], before you see the provost, you might want to zip up your fly."

He got the job anyway. In fact, this professor later credited the incident with getting him hired. He was so sure that he had blown it with the dean that there was no pressure when he met with the provost, who was plainly impressed by the candidate.

The informal atmosphere of a new, nontraditional, and as-yet-unfinished campus obviously lured a certain type of individual to come to Merced. Cupid was apparently present at one interview, since it was there that one UCM professor met his future wife.

The Guiding Principles

The arrival of the faculty brought a new sense of urgency, as opening day loomed closer. That urgency carried over into the need to build and refine UC Merced's academic programs. One of the main results of this effort was to be the "Eight Guiding Principles of Education," adopted by the founding faculty at a weekend retreat called by the deans. The guiding principles were to be the ideals upon which the curriculum for all three Schools would be based. They were also meant to be the standards against which the learning experience at UC Merced would be measured.

The principles are:

1. Scientific literacy: to have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools.
2. Decision-making: to appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and to know how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem-solving.
3. Communication: to convey information to and communicate and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other modes of communication.
4. Self and Society: to understand and value diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethnically and culturally rich setting.
5. Ethics and Responsibility: to follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable

living and environmental and societal responsibility.

6. Leadership and Teamwork: to work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others.
7. Aesthetic Understanding and Creativity: to appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression, including literature and the arts.
8. Development of Personal Potential: to be responsible for achieving the full promise of their abilities, including psychological and physical well being.

One faculty member who was involved in creating the principles later commented that their eventual importance was not realized at the time. Another professor noted that he and his colleagues had had a rather limited knowledge of UC regulations regarding curriculum requirements when the guiding principles were drafted. There was a very steep learning curve, he noted. Like much else that went on at UCM in those days, he admitted, curriculum development was “largely a process of making it up as you went along.”

The “Bible Camp”

The faculty also decided, early on, that the undergraduate experience at UC Merced would possess a number of unique characteristics. These included, but were not limited to: writing-intensive courses; a senior thesis in some majors, like History; and a two-semester Core course required of all freshmen.

The writing-intensive nature of UCM courses and the senior research thesis were expected to be of great benefit to the students, both during their academic career at UC Merced and in their pursuit of a career after graduation. In the case of the History senior thesis, the student picked a research topic and pursued it under the supervision of a faculty member. When completed, the thesis would be a tangible representation of the work the student had done at UC Merced, which he or she could show proudly to friends and family, and also to prospective employers or graduate schools. Then, there was the Core course. It was intended to be the defining

characteristic of the general education experience at UC Merced. Thus, the Core course was to be unique within the UC system in that it would be taught by faculty members representing a broad spectrum of academic specialties—the humanities, the social sciences, natural sciences, and even engineering. As one of its creators announced, it would also “carry a lot of water,” in that it was designed to meet an array of UC general education requirements, especially with regard to writing. The course would be taught by a broad array of faculty, including senior professors, on a rotating basis. As the official description of the course had it: “The Core course was intended to be an introduction to all the disciplines of the University.”

The course was originally designed by a committee of six senior faculty, two from each of the three UCM Schools: Engineering, Natural Sciences, and the School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts. The Core Course Planning Committee ultimately decided to break the course into six topical modules. Module one began with the origins of the universe and the “Big Bang” theory; module six ended with a look into the future. The course was also unique at UC in that it was split between the students’ freshman and junior years. Core 1 would be taken the first semester of a student’s first year at UCM. The idea was that the student would then return to the topic that he or she had learned about in Core 1 during their junior year. In Core 100, students would form groups and work on solving specific problems that were related to one or more of the modules introduced in Core 1.

The idea behind Core 1 was that many students in their freshman year would not have a declared major, or an idea of what career path they might wish to follow. By introducing them to different disciplines, the class would help those students pick a major, and an eventual career. In the second part of the course, Core 100, students would use what they had learned in Core 1.

The Core Course Planning Committee met on a weekly basis at UCM’s temporary headquarters at Castle Air Force Base, starting in early 2004. Discussions among the faculty representing such different disciplines were, remembered one, “often quite lively...and spirited.” Passionate debates and disagreements were not unusual. This professor recalled that every committee member, save one, would eventually “storm out” of meetings in a fit of frustration. Some did so multiple times, with regularity. It was, nonetheless, “an exciting time,” he argues, and the end result was general agreement on the design of the course.

The official name of the Core course would be, “The World At Home.” The rationale behind the name was actually quite simple: the course would look at issues within the Central Valley that represented broader issues and problems in the world at large. The name was picked during a meeting of founding faculty and administrators at a symposium on general education held at the University of North Carolina in 2003. Since a number of faculty from religious schools also attended the symposium, the UCM team came to refer to the gathering as the “Bible camp.”

Like the emphasis upon writing-intensive courses, much of the initial UCM curriculum reflected the prior experiences of the founding faculty at other UC campuses. Thus, the idea behind the senior thesis was borrowed from one UCM professor’s experience as a History major at UC Santa Cruz in the late 1960s. Likewise, the inspiration for the Core course came from UC San Diego. Rather than “re-inventing the wheel,” noted one veteran of the Core Course Planning Committee, he and his colleagues focused upon adopting the “best practices” at other UCs when it came to designing UC Merced’s curriculum.

“There Was Pretty Much Nothing Here.” Student Visits to Campus

By late 2004 and early 2005, many prospective UCM students began to visit the campus. Unfortunately for them, the campus had yet to open. This meant that many of the future Class of 2009 were only able to view the campus from behind a chain-link fence built near the current main entrance to the campus.

One student later recalled his first impression of UCM: “I had come with my parents to Merced from San Jose, which, based on my initial impression of Merced, was apparently some sort of super-metropolis by comparison.” The now-familiar musk of turkey farms and dairies had percolated in his nostrils as he and his family neared Merced. They had arrived early in the afternoon at a network of trailers at the temporary UCM office on the campus of Merced College. They had knocked and waited patiently outside one particular trailer, which had a UC Merced sign placed prominently over an awning. When the door finally opened, they were greeted by an innocent-looking young woman, who sat them at a folding table in the trailer with pamphlets placed neatly at the center.

“For the next forty-five minutes,” this student recalls, “we listened to the woman give her presentation, describing all of the great things UC

Merced would offer to me as a student which could not be matched by any other institution. She made grandiose statements about untouched dorms and all of the other great features of UC Merced. I found myself blankly staring at the brochures, as I just wanted to see the campus for myself.”

His unspoken wish was soon granted. He and his parents headed back out to their car, and followed the woman to campus. To his dismay, however, they arrived at the campus site only to encounter the chain-link fence, an outhouse, and a large muddy ditch with sections of large cement piping within. Their guide kindly informed them that they would not be allowed to actually venture onto campus, because of safety hazards due to construction: “I didn’t care what the reason was, because I knew that I would have to decide whether or not I would choose to attend this campus without having the chance to walk in the dorms, see the library, or buy a stuffed bobcat at the campus store to commemorate the journey. All I was able to see from behind the fence were the unfinished facades of the dorm buildings.”

At this point, their guide wished them good day, and headed back to Merced College to await the arrival of the next family. The prospective recruit was less than enthusiastic with how his trip to Merced had turned out: “After soaking in the sights of the campus for a few more minutes, I had my mom take some sarcastic pictures of me standing and shrugging next to the outhouse.” The family then piled into their car and began the journey back to San Jose: “I had nothing to show for my experience but a UC Merced t-shirt, which was too large for my lanky frame, and some brochures.”

Like many members of the founding class, this student had to decide whether to attend UC Merced without actually stepping foot on the campus. For those pioneers, the guiding sentiment was perhaps best expressed by a student who, upon visiting the campus for the first time, recalled thinking to herself: “It’s still not built, but I’m coming here.”

For these students, and many others in their situation, there were a few things about the campus that persuaded them to join the founding freshman class. When asked, most stated that they believed that the accessibility of the faculty, the small classes, and simply the opportunity to be part of the first freshman class were some of their most important reasons for choosing to attend UC Merced.

One of the last chances that many students would have to experience what the campus had to offer them before they sent in their intention-to-

register forms was an orientation meeting called Bobcat Day.

“Are We There Yet?”

Bobcat Day was held in the spring of 2005 at Lake Yosemite, adjacent to the campus site. In a way, the day was a sort of an “open house” for UCM, in which prospective students and their families were able to meet faculty members and get a brief tour of the dorms, after a brief shuttle by bus from the lake. “They had a stage set up with chairs and a coffee table, and some of the professors spoke there,” recalled one student. There was also a picture booth in which prospective students could have their picture taken holding a UC Merced pennant, and food was provided. This was to be the last event of this nature before students attended freshman orientation. For many, it was also their first glimpse of the campus.

In the summer of 2005, there was a required freshman orientation, the first of multiple student orientation days. At these events, students registered for classes and got the chance to meet some of their fellow students during a series of social activities which helped all get acquainted. Thus, there were many “ice breaker” games, where students participated in small groups of from five to twenty. As one student later recalled: “They even had a little raffle. They gave away prizes like a plastic water bottle, and even totally random stuff, like a putter with a miniature putting green.” Members of the local press were also on hand to interview students about their experiences. Boxed lunches were served to students and parents.

Impressions of the orientation meetings were mixed, but some students had particularly fond memories of the experience. One recalled that he enjoyed the opportunity to meet his fellow students and to “get a feel for the people who’d be going there with me.”

The end of August, 2005, marked the beginning of a long-anticipated yet tentative journey into the unknown. The preparations by faculty, staff, and students were now in the past. All now anxiously awaited the official opening of the campus.

I Ain't Afraid of no Ghost

Kimberly Wilder

Ask many of the students who spent time in the fourth floor reading room back in 2005 and many of them will tell you the same thing; "That room is haunted." Library workers would often go in pairs to do nightly head counts, or building sweeps. Many of the night shift workers will tell similar tales.

"That room is creepy at night," a former library employee used to say. "I was in there by myself once, and I swear to you I heard the strangest whistling sound. I swear on my life, I wasn't alone in the room, but there was no one else there. It made the hair on the back of my neck stand up. I don't go in there alone if I don't have to."

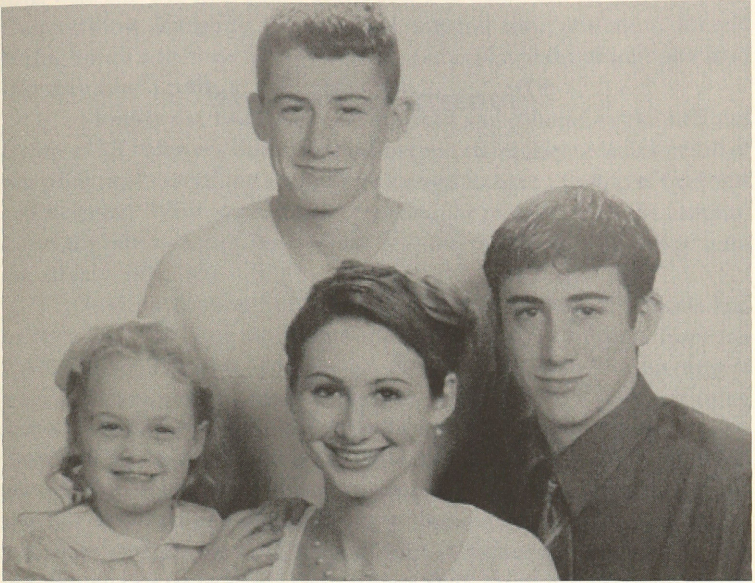


Despite these feelings, there is nothing scary about this room during daylight hours, in fact it is one of, if not the most beautiful room in the library. The room is paneled in beautiful finished wood with plenty of windows that allow not only light, but also a stunning view of the campus, Lake Yosemite, and the farmland next to campus. The room is furnished with beautiful mahogany tables and chairs as well as soft, forest green leather couches. There is a quiet, calm feel to the room that many of the more academically minded students tend to gravitate to, making the room virtually silent all day long.

For me though, the silence is not creepy, but comforting, and I have a feeling that is exactly the way that Dr. Christine McFadden-Cormin wanted it. In 2003 she donated \$250,000 to the school in order to enhance the library. There is a large sign in the center of the room that announces that it is to be known as the McFadden-Willis Reading Room, but it is not the sign that is the most important feature of the room. It is the portrait tucked away in the corner of the room showing four, beautiful and vibrant children; children who no longer get the chance to leave their mark on the world.

At the center of the picture is Melanie Wills, the oldest of the four children. She is classically beautiful with shiny brown hair, and a smile that lights up a room. She has a natural grace about her that comes through in the picture, best attributed to her many years as a ballet dancer. On her right is her brother, Stanley. Stanley has a rugged handsome look to him, which fits his love of the outdoors. He was an avid huntsman, and cared deeply for his two dogs. Above Melanie is Stuart, an amazing soccer player, and all around good guy. He bears a striking resemblance to his older brother, and, like his older brother had a great sense of humor and a large group of friends. On Melanie's left is little Michelle McFadden. She was only five when the picture was taken, but already she was a deeply caring girl. She would often found in her mother's veterinary clinic caring for and tending to her own patients, Beanie Babies of all kinds with various ills and ailments. As it says on a website dedicated to her and her siblings, "she brought sunshine wherever she went."

Sadly, for many of the students of U.C Merced, that picture will be as close as they come to ever meeting the McFadden-Willis children. On March 26, 2002 Dr. McFadden's ex-husband entered her house while she was out on a walk and murdered her four children before taking his own life. Although for a time she entertained thoughts of suicide and held a lot of



anger and hatred towards her ex-husband, she has since then harnessed those feelings and put them to good use. She started the Melanie, Stanley, Stuart and Michelle Foundation, which gives scholarships to kids who display traits that the four were known for, most notably their amazing friendship skills, and makes things like the reading room possible. Dr. McFadden has a clear vision for the room, and it is not one that gives students the creeps at night. As she told the school in February of 2003, "I envision the reading room as a contemplative space where one can both reflect and be transformed through words," said McFadden, a graduate of the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. "It is also a wonderful room to view the surrounding landscape and for some, the place where they will begin their connection with the San Joaquin Valley. I believe each of my children would have been drawn to this special room and that my choice will honor and serve them well."

So if you ever find yourself alone in the McFadden Room, as it has now become known to most students, and you feel like you might not be alone, do not fear; it is most likely one of the children, there to keep you company.

Chapter Seven

“Pioneers! O Pioneers!”

“O you youth, Western youths,/ So impatient, full of action...” So wrote Walt Whitman in his famous poem, “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” Whitman describes a pioneer as a youth impatient for action, full of pride and friendship, as someone ready to step forward and challenge the new day. On Sunday, September 3, 2005, nearly a hundred and fifty years after Whitman wrote that poem, the pioneers of UC Merced arrived on campus, in much the same spirit.

When the campus opened, it had just over 800 students, or fewer than the projected one thousand freshmen that had been the original goal. Likewise, there were only 55 faculty, not the even one hundred originally planned—the result of more last-minute state budget cutbacks. Nonetheless, the classes available to those students on opening day represented 14 undergraduate and five graduate degree programs. For the first time in forty years, the University of California had a new campus, and the Central Valley had its first real research university. “Fresh and strong the world we seize...Pioneers, O pioneers!”

Move-in Day

The students who arrived on that sunny September day would be the first to enter the semi-finished UCM campus, the first to live in the dorms, the first to sit in new classrooms (or, actually, the Library, as it turned out), and the first to create new clubs and organizations. The founding students rose to the challenge of preparing the university for those who would follow in their footsteps.

As noted, there were as yet no classrooms, the walls of the residence

halls were still wet with paint, and cranes and bulldozers were everywhere. Despite those hardships, the students engaged their professors, formed lasting bonds with their fellow founders, and explored the strange new land that they would come to call home.

Move-in day had long been imagined and planned by the staff and faculty of UC Merced. Barely finished in time, the residence halls smelled of wet paint, and everything about them seemed to have a feeling of freshness and newness. Most students had travelled far to make it to the campus. For many, move-in day was the first time they had been able to step onto the actual campus site.

Students coming from the Bay Area and southern California had to start their trek that day before the sun came up. Students from the Central Valley did not travel as far, but the experience of arriving on campus was no less emotional. Many remember the journey as being both tiring and stressful. One student, for example, recalled fighting with his brother about the best route to take to Merced. Upon reflection, he thought that the fight probably stemmed from the anticipation of already missing one another. Nerves ran high as families prepared to say goodbye to children and siblings, and as the students prepared to begin a new phase of their life in a very new place. When the students finally arrived on campus, it was with feelings of both relief and new anxiety. While the trip to Merced was over, the trials of the day were just beginning.

The campus was bustling with activity, as both staff and the new arrivals ran about trying to find out what they needed to do. Once they pulled into the parking lot, students were separated from their families. Parents were directed to begin unloading the car, as students headed to the housing office to get keys, and made their way to the residence hall that would be "home." Overall, the rooms were nice—after all, no one had lived in them yet.

A typical suite consisted of two or three bedrooms, with two people to each room. There was a shared common area and a shared bathroom. As time progressed, there would be issues with not enough hot water and too many mice. But, for most, with that initial step into the suite everything seemed fine. Yet these students now faced a new challenge—meeting the individuals they would be living with for an entire year.

Many students recall that first meeting with their new roommate as being awkward. One knew nothing about them, about their personality or where they came from, but one was supposed to share a very intimate space with them for what seemed like a long time. The names of and contact

information for future roommates had been sent out over the summer. Some students had already contacted their roommates online. But, for most, move-in day was the first time they would meet.

One student recalled his mother requiring him take a picture with his new roommate. Although he and the roommate would grow to become great friends, that picture stands as a testament to the nervous energy of the day. Looking at the photo now, it is apparent that they were uncomfortable with each other. Others students have similar stories. Moving is stressful, leaving your family is taxing, and it is almost surreal to be meeting people during that time. In the end it was like you were leaving one family and meeting a new one; a family that you would be living with in the months to come.

Following the move into their rooms, and meeting their suitemates, students and their families were directed to the dining quad, where a free lunch was being served. This was the students' first taste of dining commons food, and they would later become intimately acquainted with the "DC." The lunch, BBQ chicken and a variety of side dishes, was okay, and it probably pleased many parents to know that their children would be fed well. As the year progressed, students would pass many hours in the dining commons with friends.

After lunch, students had to pick up the matching white shirts that they would be wearing for the opening ceremonies. The shirts were



Freshmen and their parents moving in snacks, computers, and toilet paper into new dorms.

cotton polos with a logo on the chest which proclaimed that the wearer was a member of UC Merced's founding class. Size selection of these shirts was limited, and for some who didn't get there early in the day the shirt they ended up with was not the most well-fitting of garments. One female student, who arrived late, wound up with an XXL, although she normally wore size small. Rather than be upset or discouraged, she simply fashioned her shirt into a dress for convocation. Such an innovative spirit would



Poster made to greet the new residents of the Valley Terraces

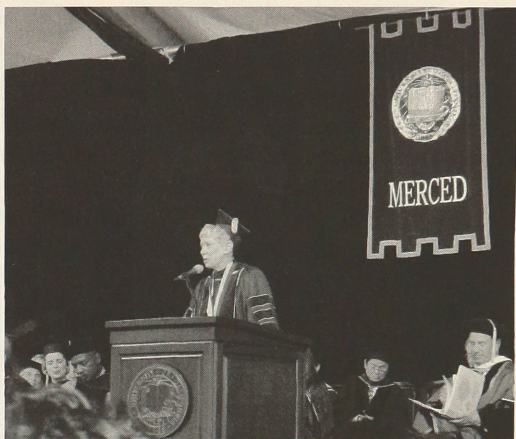
come in handy in the months to come. O Pioneers!

After lunch and unpacking, it came time for the families to leave. As one student remembered, "My parents threw my stuff out, ate some lunch with me, and left."

The founding students would now have to stand on their own, some for the first time. Two days hence, on September 5, they would participate in the opening ceremonies for the brand new university. On September 6, the first classes began. The founding students went to bed that first night, full of anticipation for what was to come.

Opening Ceremonies

On opening day, the founding students and faculty marched up Scholar's Lane across a cement bridge and into a huge white tent, where University officials waited to welcome them. Up a newly-paved road which



had yet to be lined with trees and grass, the founders walked past the library, the classroom building, and the science and engineering building—all still under construction. The tent had been set up in an area that would eventually become known as the Quad, but on that day was nothing more than another patch of un-landscaped dirt. Although the campus was incomplete, it was still an exciting day, full of hope and expectation. It was touching for those who had been involved planning of the tenth campus to finally see their dreams realized. The buildings may not have been done, and there may have been more dirt than grass, but the students and faculty were there, and that's what mattered. Every journey has to start somewhere, and the official journey of UCM began on opening day.

Students had awakened early in their new rooms to prepare for the day. They dressed in their matching white shirts and then all headed to the staging area. One student recalls that the scene as surreal: "It was kind of weird. I mean they had us all dressed up in the same stuff." The students were told to assemble on the dirt behind the dining commons. (Today, there is an expanded dining commons and a new residence hall on the spot.) Milling around, students drank from free water bottles that had been labeled especially for the day. Parents took pictures of their children and the new roommates, and the assembled local media snapped pictures as well.

Like the students, the founding faculty was also out in full force, and dressed head-to-toe in academic regalia. Their gowns reflected the various institutions that had conferred their graduate degrees. Physics

professor Christopher Viney hailed from Cambridge, so his regalia included an unusual floppy hat. Assistant Vice Chancellor Jane Lawrence's robe from the University of Maryland was bright red. Those who had graduated from other UC campuses wore blue and gold. The brightly-colored gowns added dash to the otherwise barren landscape of the campus.

Opening day was emotional for the faculty as well. Many had been working for the previous two years to prepare for the arrival of students. They, and the students, were aware that the coming of the University signified big changes for Merced, and the Central Valley. All who hiked up Scholars Lane that day could feel the weight of history upon their shoulders. They were now responsible for the first research university of the 21st century, and the first new UC campus to be built in 40 years. What they did would be remembered by those who followed them.

The opening ceremonies began with a welcome from Chancellor TK. Then Charles Ogletree, a professor at Harvard Law School, greeted all with a moving keynote address. Ogletree, born and raised in Merced, focused in his speech upon the opportunity and the burden shared by the founders to raise educational standards in the Valley. Also in attendance were the former governor of California, Gray Davis, UC President Robert Dynes, and many of the Regents. The overall atmosphere of the event was one of hope and anticipation.

Following a speech by the chancellor, the students, faculty, and guests walked back down Scholars Lane, where many were stopped en route by the local press, in search of stories on the day. Many of the founders were featured on television news programs that night. The opening of UCM made it into the national news as well. It had been a long day, and tomorrow began the first day of classes.

"I Hate Ties!"

On Tuesday morning, September 6, some classes started with a bank of news cameras whirring in the back of the room. While they knew they were part of something historic, UCM freshmen also had the butterflies-in-the-stomach traditional to any student entering a college classroom for the first time. When later asked about that first day, one student said that he was less concerned with the history of the moment than with finding his classrooms and making a good impression on his professors. He was right to be concerned about finding the classroom. For the most part, classes were held either in the Kolligian Library or in the California Room, a large auditorium adjacent to the residence hall complex.

Having classes in the Library meant finding the right staircase—all but one was closed, due to construction—and dodging hard-hatted workers bustling about the site. Some of the larger classes were held out in an open area on the Library second floor, with temporary partitions demarking the “lecture hall.” Today, book stacks are on the second floor, but on September 6th there stood only rows of tables, facing two large projection screens. UC Santa Cruz had opened with its first students living in trailers and classrooms in the gym. UC Merced followed in that tradition, holding its first classes wherever space could be found.

Professors were perhaps just as excited and nervous as their students on the first day of classes. Many would document the day with cameras of their own. Assistant Professor Jeff Yoshimi took pictures of the students in his Philosophy 1 class. Professor Gregg Herken found himself accidentally



Assistant Professor Sean Malloy History 16's first day of class

locked in a staircase just minutes before his first class was scheduled to begin—a kindly construction worker responded to his frantic pounding on the stuck door.

Assistant Professor of History Sean Malloy chose to entertain his students on the first day. In order to cut the tension, and to show his students that he was somebody they could relate to, he walked into the classroom wearing dress slacks, a button-down shirt, and a tie. But after surveying the class in silence for a moment, he proceeded to tear off his tie, which turned out to be a clip-on, shouting: “I hate ties! Never again will you see me wear one. I wear one the first day of every year, and then that’s

it. You'll never see me with one on again." His students all laughed, and then relaxed, comfortable in the new casual environment he had created.

The freshman Core course also officially began at UCM on the first day of classes. The course had been in the planning phases for a long time. It consisted of lectures and discussion groups during most of the week, and on Friday afternoons there would be a special event—with a guest speaker, a play, or a musical performance that was somehow related to the topic that had discussed during the week. The Core course was designed to introduce students to all of the various disciplines the university had to offer, as a common freshman experience. It was the brainchild of a group of senior faculty members, and on that first day they were anxious to see the class get underway.

To inaugurate the class, Chancellor TK herself stood at the podium in the California Room and welcomed the first freshmen to take the course. After the chancellor's brief speech, the room erupted in applause. Professor Viney, one of the Core course planners, recalls that the media were also there in force, and that it was a surreal feeling, as he followed the chancellor to the podium, to explain to the students—and the cameras—what the course was supposed to be about. History Professor Herken, another Core planner, remembers that just moments before the students arrived the Core faculty were still trying to get the microphone and the overhead projector to work. It seems that no one could find the remote control for the projector.

As the year progressed, there would be different opinions on whether Core had lived up to the very high expectations which attended its birth. In brief, the verdict on the Core course is still out. Some students love it, while others find it pointless and even incoherent. On that first day, however, Core was exciting. It was a new type of course, being offered at a new university. And it was by far the star on the first day of classes. After all, no other course was opened by the chancellor!

In the weeks and months to come there would be many more milestones, peppered with great memories and fun times. As students and faculty got to know each other, bonds would form and grow, with all sharing in the difficulties, and triumphs, of that first year.

"I Could Do Whatever the Heck I Wanted"

As the first few weeks passed, students gradually became used to college life, and naturally began to seek out entertainment. Many had come from big cities, and coming to a small town like Merced was a bit of

a culture shock. Thus, it is about six miles from campus to the outskirts of the city. A student craving action in this small town had to drive to it. But not all students had cars. Many used the Cat Tracks bus, a free transportation service for all students, to get to and from town. The buses run on natural gas, and are part of UC Merced's effort to be "green".

Once they in town, students found movie theaters, a shopping mall, and a variety of ethnic restaurants. One student recalls that the shopping, however, was not what she was used to at home. She commented that she and her friends referred to the Merced Mall as the "Small," both because of its size and its limited options. Merced's attractions were not always enough to entertain a bunch of college students away from their parents for the first time.

While some students complained that there was nothing to do, others took the initiative and created things to do. At a brand new university like UCM, there were no preexisting clubs or organizations, so the pioneer Class of 2009 was free to start whatever they wanted. Many stepped up to the challenge, founding groups like the Jewish Student Union and the Business Society as places for students to come together and get involved. Many other clubs were started during that first year as well.

The founding students also set out to create a unified student government. All year long, a dedicated group of students would work to create a constitution. By the end of the spring semester, 2006, students would vote on ratifying that constitution, and electing the first officers of the Associated Students of UC Merced.

When not in class, or participating in some club activity, students found other ways to entertain themselves in the residence halls. One student brought a set of ninja stars with him from home. He thought they would be a conversation starter with his new roommate. His roommate was indeed impressed, and one day the two boys, bored sitting in their room, decided to try the ninja stars out. At first they threw them at a stack of books, and later set up a target on the wall, in front of a corkboard. The stars soon went through the board, destroying it and much of the wall behind it. The pair decided to just go ahead and throw them straight at the wall from then on. At the end of the year the boys were charged by the housing office for the damage. But both agree that the cost was worth the entertainment the ninja stars provided.

Other students turned to more a traditional form of college diversion: parties. The first year of UCM saw a fair share of social gatherings, to



Students have class where rows of books now stand in Koilligan Library

celebrate birthdays, holidays, or maybe just because it was Thursday. Some students simply enjoyed hanging out in their suites, watching movies with friends. One group was so impressed with a particular movie that they created nicknames for one another based upon the characters in the film. Four years later, they still occasionally get together, and they always call each other by their nicknames when they do.

"Fred"

Every campus has its own memorable characters, whether faculty member or student, and UCM was no exception. Many stories from the first year revolve around one individual, who, for our purposes, we will call "Fred." "Fred" stood about average height and would often wear a suit (except when he appeared in the dining commons in his bathrobe.) Mutton chops accented an expressive face.

Virtually all on campus seemed to know "Fred," encountering him in class, in the dining commons, or just when he stopped them on the sidewalk to chat. "Fred" was even known to many of the families of the founding students, either by reputation, or because of his outgoing, gregarious nature. Sadly, "Fred" is no longer a student at UC Merced. (In fact, he didn't make it past the first year.) But, even so, the legend remains, and to this day students still tell stories about "Fred." When asked if she remembered him, one student exclaimed, "Who doesn't?"

A former classmate recalls an encounter with "Fred" in the laundry room. This student was alone, folding his clothes, when suddenly the

door flew open and in stepped “Fred,” dressed in full scuba gear. “Fred” promptly jumped up onto one of the tables in the room and pretended to swim through a pile of laundry. After doing this for awhile, “Fred” silently hopped down and left.

Another student caught a ride home with “Fred” on the first Thanksgiving break. Before they left Merced, “Fred” insisted that they stop at the grocery store, where he bought two six-packs of Canada Dry ginger ale. By the time they reached Los Angeles, “Fred” had drunk all twelve cans. The trip down was also a harrowing one, since “Fred” was not the best driver.

A female student recalls being asked out on a date by “Fred.” The date turned out to be the midnight premiere of the 4th movie in the *Harry Potter* series. Too nice to decline, she agreed to meet “Fred” there, but upon her arrival found him too busy entertaining the waiting crowd with magic tricks to bother with her.

Merced is a small town, and there is not always a lot to do. The Class of 2009 will miss “Fred.”

Notes from the Lecture Hall

The classroom also provided entertainment for the students. For one thing, professors engaged them in ways that they had never been challenged in high school. Odd classroom spaces and occasional projector malfunctions allowed students and faculty to come together to create a unique and even intimate learning environment. The casual setting—carpenters pounding nails, the screeching of saws, the whines of power drills—fostered an atmosphere of informality, which students—and many faculty—used to advantage. Indeed, the students’ high degree of commitment inspired the professors to do their best. Many of the latter were struggling to put together courses they had never taught before. But they felt a responsibility to make those courses as good as they could be. If their students could put up with hardships, so could they.

The first class that Sean Malloy taught at UC Merced was History 16. The topic was early American history, and ranged from Native American settlements to the Civil War—a time period that is not Professor Malloy’s area of expertise, since he studies modern American history. Often he was learning along with his students, putting together his lectures the night before he had to give them.

One night in particular he struggled with the topic he was to present the following day in class. Although he stayed up until 4 am, this night he

failed to put together a complete lecture. He went to class the next day disheartened, knowing that he would have to tell his students that he had not prepared a proper lecture. He began with the notes he had, about fifteen minutes' worth, when the fire alarm sounded. Actually, this was a fairly frequent event on campus, as the alarm system was often accidentally tripped by the construction crews. But on this day the fire alarm seemed to be a sign from God. Professor Malloy lined his class up and led them out of the Library to the safety. He encouraged them to go slowly, reminding that it was better to be careful than to hurry. He got his students outside, hoping that the interruption would last a long time. Sure enough, the drill was a long one, and the students were not let back in the building until there was about only five minutes remaining of class time. Professor Malloy told his students to gather their things and leave, as the fire alarm had been very disruptive, and he was not going to try to give the rest of his "lecture" in five minutes.

The small size of the first classes also allowed students to form close relationships with the faculty who taught them. At larger institutions, like Berkeley, they would have been just faces in the crowd. But at UC Merced the professors knew your name and were genuinely interested in your education.

Physics professor Christopher Viney grew up in South Africa and was educated in England at Oxford and Cambridge. In America, he finds the concept of general education at UC Merced amazing. One of the first classes he taught was ICP, Integrated Calculus and Physics. The textbook for this class is big and thick, since it covers both disciplines. Professor Viney recalls that one day he was standing in front of his class in the library, lecturing, when suddenly there was a loud thud from the back of the classroom. His immediate fear was that someone in the back had fallen asleep and their head had hit the desk in front of them. However, when he turned around to look, his students seemed perfectly still and he saw no signs of disorder. He finished his lecture.

At the end of class, a group of students came forward. They confessed that they had made the loud noise. A wasp had been buzzing around, and when it finally landed they dropped their book on it to kill it. They held the dead wasp up as proof. Knowing that Professor Viney was interested in bizarre science, they asked him if there was anything he could discover about the wasp. Looking the insect over, the professor remarked that its body had an unusual shape. This initial observation turned into a research project for one of his students. As of this writing, she is a graduate student

working in Professor Viney's lab, and has reported on her wasp project at several professional conferences. At a larger university, this simply would not have happened.

At UCM, professors and students learn together.

True Life at UC Merced

But this is not to say that all was sunshine and happiness that first year. Resources were limited, and almost everyone was overworked. Faculty, junior as well as senior, sat on countless hiring and planning committees. While at large universities, untenured faculty members may serve on one or two committees, at UC Merced they often found themselves on as many as a dozen, which pulled time away from both their research and the classroom. The effects of this overwork became most apparent in the second half of the first year, at the School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts.

The SSHA faculty were particularly unhappy about what they felt were unequal resource allocation and hiring practices. Thus, historians wanted to hire another historian, economists wanted another economist, and the lone artist on campus hoped for a colleague. Everyone wanted their discipline to grow, and some individuals took offense when one discipline was given more faculty slots or funding than another. These frustrations came out at SSHA faculty meetings. In one instance, the senior faculty decided to take voting privileges on new hires away from the junior faculty. At many universities, junior faculty do not have the right to vote on hiring new faculty, but at SSHA they had had that privilege from the beginning. This decision to take away the vote from untenured faculty vote led to a boycott. The junior faculty refused to take part in personnel matters, including meeting with prospective new hires.

At the same time, a revolt by some SSHA faculty led to the ouster of the School dean, Kenji Hakuta. Kenji had come to UC Merced from Stanford in order to participate in something new and to give back to his profession. As a psychologist specializing in childhood education, he was intrigued by the relationship the new university would have with the Central Valley, and hoped to help in building a relationship between the school and the town. Increasingly, however, he felt more like a mediator among disgruntled faculty members than an innovator at a new university. At the end of the first year, Dean Hakuta announced that he would leave UC Merced and return to a teaching post at Stanford.

Kenji was not the only one to leave UC Merced unexpectedly.

Indeed, the end of the first academic year saw the departure of the highest ranking officials at UC Merced—Chancellor Carol TK and Executive Vice Chancellor David Ashley. Having barely gotten on its feet and taken the first few hesitant steps, the new University already seemed to stumble.

Move-In Day

Katie Hatfield

Saturday September 3, 2005, was a milestone in the history of UC Merced. On that day families from all over the state descended upon the new campus. The campus was finally opening, and on September 3rd the members of the founding class moved into the residence halls. In the days that followed there would be ceremonies, press conferences, and general pomp and circumstance, but that day in particular will stand out in my mind as the true beginning of my four year journey at UC Merced.

The anticipation leading up to the event was almost debilitating. It seemed to me that I had been waiting to come to UC Merced my whole life. Growing up in the Central Valley, I had been hearing about the new UC for years. When it came time to apply to colleges I knew UC Merced was the choice for me. After all of the build up knowing that I was going to UC Merced, and then knowing that I would soon be able to step foot on campus it, was almost impossible for me to survive the waiting.

Finally the big day arrived. For many the day began early. Students coming from Southern California and the Bay Area arose before the light of day to drive to Merced. Personally, being from the Central Valley, my day began not nearly as early as some of my fellow founders. I remember more than anything our drive to the campus. Though not long for me, it was still an emotional trip. Through my mind ran many thoughts. *Would I like my roommate? What would the food in the dining commons be like? Would I make friends?* As my parents and I drew nearer to campus we began to see other vehicles loaded to the brim heading in the same direction. Once we pulled onto Bellevue it was a constant stream of traffic. Like a caravan of nomads

we rolled forward towards our common destination.

When my parents and I arrived on campus we were directed into the resident parking lot. Volunteers instructed my parents to begin unloading the car, and I was sent to the housing office to retrieve my key. That solitary trek from the car to the office still stands out in my mind. For the first time I saw my fellow classmates as we simultaneously we left our parents behind and began the first leg of our journey at UC Merced. Together, but separately, wrapped up in our own thoughts, my classmates and I wove our way amongst the halls towards the housing office. In the office area we students were given our keys and pointed towards our rooms. After securing my key I headed back to the parking lot to find my parents.

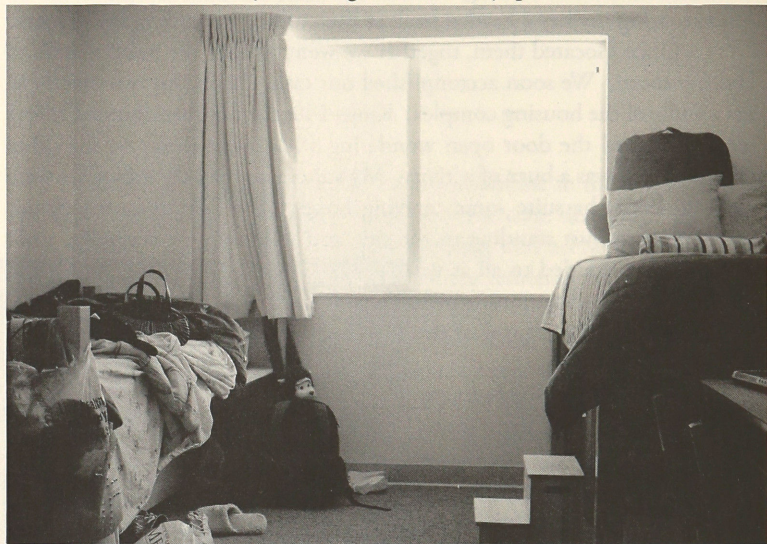
Once I located them, together we went off into the maze of halls to find my room. We soon accomplished our task. My room was exactly in the middle of the housing complex. Kings 140: the numbers loomed before me as I pushed the door open wondering what awaited me on the other side. Inside it was a buzz of activity. My suitemates and their families were moving about the suite some carrying boxes, others shouting directions, and still others just standing to the side and watching the activities. My parents and I nodded to all as we turned to go into my room, which was the first on the left, off of the living room.

I turned the knob to my bedroom door, and there stood before me a blank slate. Brand new everything never before slept in or touched by another human being. My roommate hadn't arrived yet, so I got to choose which side of the room I wanted. This proved to be a difficult task. After all, this would be my side of the room for an entire year. Initially I had my parents put my things on the right side, then I changed my mind and had them move them to the left, then I changed my mind again and had them change them back to the right side. After the third



transfer of my belongings my father announced that there would be no more moving of things and I would live on the right side of the room whether I liked it or not. When we were done unpacking my parents left to go to a meeting being held for families in the California Room. I ventured out into the suite on my own to try and meet some of my suitemates. I soon had met three. Both of those who lived at the end of the hall were there, and one of the ones that lived across the hall was there. They seemed nice enough, but at the same time it was awkward; we were to live together for an entire year yet we knew nothing about one another.

When the family meeting was over my parents came back and



Typical dorm room

together we went to the dining quad to eat lunch. Then that was it, after lunch they hugged me, said goodbye, and left. For the first time in my life I was alone in a place where I knew no one. The anonymity was both thrilling and frightening. The rest of the day my suitemates and I just lazed around in our common area getting to know one another. Soon the awkwardness began to subside and a feeling of ease took its place. We went to dinner as a group, and after that we all went to our first hall meeting with our RAs. All of this occurred, and still my roommate had not arrived. I was beginning to think that I might not have one. Then at 10pm the door to our suite opened, and I met for the first time the girl I would spend an entire year

sleeping across the room from. She seemed nice, and I was satisfied with the day's conclusion.

Move-In 2005 was a day where dreams were realized. For all of those who had been involved in the planning of the university and dreamed of the day when students would come, we were here. For students who had worked hard to make it to college, they had finally arrived. For me it stands out as the day I began my four amazing years at UC Merced.

The Luck of the Draw

Renata Santillan

I still have the paper that arrived at my door; with the UC letter head. It was the only hint I had to what the next year of my life would be like. It had the directions to my new life. Tulare Hall, room 104, room A and the most important piece of information was above my new address. Stuck on with a label printed separately was her name, Celina Chun. I thought about her and what she would be like. I thought of the worst and the best, but I knew that the only thing for sure we had in common right then was that we had the same address.

Arriving on the dusty dry town of Merced I was late for move-in day. I missed the exit and my parent's car had made it there before me. I was instructed by several bright eager people with matching shirts that I was to check-in and get my keys first. I ran past everyone and straight for Tulare Hall. Somehow amongst many large box carrying people I found suite 104. I opened the unlocked door and there right in front of eyes, leaning against the side of the hallway was my new roommate. She was happy to see and informed again of my lateness. She was shorter than me, had thick long black hair, and noticeably long eye lashes to complement her smile. The first few days were awkward with our parents hovering over while we unpacked and beamed at us together hoping that the other was not a wild one to corrupt their child. We had RA's forcing our friendship with ice cream socials and ice breakers, a word starting with the first letter of your name and then your name. I can't remember what I said but she said Celestial Celina.

Somewhere between waking up together and eating together every day, we had become close friends. We ventured out together and met several new friends. We went on road trips, got into plenty of trouble and listened to our favorite playlist before we went to sleep.



The girls of Tulare 104

Our suitemates were just as welcoming Karen, Kacy, Erika, and Anita. We gathered into each other's rooms to steal snacks and watch whatever we were addicted to at the time. One night we started drawing pictures to line our living room ceiling, we were laughing so much that it attracted the attention of RA's who thought for sure they would find us all in a drunken stupor. But Celina and I might have been the most ridiculous of the bunch. We brought home kittens we had to save and random people we met in the DC that wanted to watch an MTV reality show with us while we ate. And of course we had nicknames for each other, she called me 'Nata' and I called her "Pookie."

I didn't realize it then but we were all so lucky. Through the exploration of other dorms it was clear which suitemates got along with each other and which ones didn't. Doors to bedrooms remained closed and there were no decorations in the hallways or living rooms. There was no sign that the people who roomed them lived there let alone spent time together. It's true, I was lucky. Celina Chun and I might have gotten into a disagreement that led us to not talk to each other for a month or longer but, we eventually forgave each other.

If I hadn't gotten along with Celina my freshman year could have been drastically different. It would have been much lonelier. I would

have missed my home a lot more. There are several horror stories of roommates that didn't meet the expectations. The awful hand fate dealt them would be their burden for the longest two semesters of their lives. There were roommates who never left the room to give the other one a moment of privacy or those who made other friends and were never around. Roommates that were too messy or too loud, or opened the window drapes at 6am every morning. It would have been a horrible feeling to hate the place you live, the first home outside of the one with your family. This experience would feel like a terrible foreshadow of the next four years in college. And although our other suitemates had their own battles similar to those with their roommates, I believe that together as a whole we made it out the best. A core group of us are still friends now and have lived together again or are next door neighbors. Karen O' Connor and I have never separated and still live together to this day. We were all very lucky to have gotten along as well as we did because it helped us make it through one our most challenging year. Some of us may have not wanted to be here but we wanted to be with each other. We supported each other in plays and school events we tried to start. Celina called the Chowchilla court house for me when I got my first speeding ticket and thought we could handle it without tell my parents. We did a lot for one another and even though we might not be as close to some of us now I won't ever forget the girls of Tulare 104.

When it was time for us to leave the dorms we left a piece of legacy in our dorm. We all signed the bottom of our hall countertop. Every year I go down to our old dorm, sometimes with Kacy , Karen, or Celina, and ask the next 6 roommates to sign with a marker their names underneath the countertop in the hallway. And every year I see our names written together and it reminds me of my favorite year at UC Merced.

We were some of the lucky ones.

Dairy Duel

Andrew Pianka

The fall of 2005 at UC Merced was a time of new experiences for many of those who called the campus dorms home. For many of us, this marked the first time that we had been away from home for any extended period of time. We didn't have our parents to answer to. As a result, we were—within reason—free to spend our time as we pleased. This new-found freedom usually resulted in such harmless activities as campus-wide water balloon fights, or running around the dorms wearing towels as capes. However, sometimes boredom got the best of us, and the activities were not so innocuous in nature.

This story began with the internet. In the midst of our usual random browsing, someone in our clique came across a picture of students at an unnamed college campus participating in what is known as a “Gallon of Milk Challenge”. The premise of the challenge was quite simple: participants would pit their reputations and their stomachs against each other in a battle of wills by trying to drink a full gallon of milk and keeping it down; all within an hour. The winner was determined either by who could drink more, or who could keep it down the longest. From what we had seen, the latter was usually the deciding factor.

Naturally, we thought it would be hilarious if a few of us were to take on this most noble of challenges. This led to many grandiose statements of will power and milk-drinking prowess. Enter Scott Parker and Matthew Siordia. The friendly exchanges of words between these two eventually escalated to the point that a challenge was deemed necessary.



Matthew Siordia and Scott Parker

Once it was determined that these two were to partake in a “Gallon of Milk Challenge”, there were some logistical issues that needed to be addressed. First, Matt looked up the official rules for milk chugging on the internet. The basic rules of the challenge have already been addressed. Next came the milk selection. The two competing parties deliberated and eventually agreed that 2% milk would be a wise choice for such an activity. This whole milk selection process perplexed me, as I’m sure they both knew that, no matter what kind of milk they drank, the results would undoubtedly be the same. But, alas, I wasn’t going to be the one drinking the milk.

The next logistical hurdles were addressed with no conflict at all. It was deemed that the grass quad in front of the dining commons would be the best location for the event. It allowed for passers by to enjoy the action as they came to eat. Plus, there were plenty of garbage cans and patches of grass conveniently located nearby, should the participants need to rapidly empty the soon-to-be milky contents of their stomachs. As for the time when the event was to occur, they agreed that late in the evening would be the most ideal time for consuming unhealthy quantities of milk for no good reason.

With all of the gritty details having been laid out, it was time for the challenge to actually take place. The two competitors came dressed to compete. Scott donned sandals, gym shorts, an oil-stained t-shirt, and

topped it off with a straw beach hat. Matthew was dressed to impress in sneakers, Dickies shorts and a slightly baggy, navy blue t-shirt. With our large group of friends encircling them, they grabbed their respective jugs of milk. The timer was started, and they were off to the races.

The competition started off somewhat slowly, as the two competitors were scoping out each other's paces, so as not to fall behind the other. The pace was sluggish, yet constant. One quarter, then half of the competitors' jugs were soon empty. It was at this point that the pace began to slow, as the two competitors' dismay could plainly be seen on their faces. Each sip became more difficult than the one that had preceded it. This was not going to end well for either competitor.

They had now each consumed roughly three quarters of the contents of their milk jugs. Two things had become abundantly clear at this point. First, we had come to the collective realization that neither competitor would be able to consume the entire gallon of milk. Secondly, it was clear that neither of them would be able to hold down what they had already consumed. Victory would come to the competitor that could hold onto the milky contents of their stomachs longer. It was now a waiting game, and we wouldn't have to wait long.

Matthew's eyes were slightly glazed over, and his complexion had taken on a rather pale hue. His stomach was not agreeing with him. He positioned himself nicely over the opening of a nearby trash can and, moments later, the contest was over. Scott had won! He celebrated by promptly releasing the milky contents of his own stomach in a nearby trash can. His efforts were soon rewarded with a round of hearty congratulations, as Matthew faced light-hearted, yet unrelenting ridicule.

Though this story may sound vile, stupid, or even dangerous, it was carried out in harmless fashion. Both competitors are alive and well and neither has developed any dairy-related phobias. This is also an accurate representation of the ways by which we, as freshmen of UC Merced, chose to occasionally pass the time when boredom got the best of us.

Chapter Eight

Greater Expectations

When the students who will graduate in spring, 2009, decided to enroll at UC Merced, they knew they were taking a chance. As a start-up UC, the campus had minimal recognition. Many students had never even heard of Merced before. But, after the first year at UCM, those students had gotten to know the town, the campus, the faculty, and their fellow scholars. Not all stayed. Yet those who remained could say that they had left their mark on the place.

First curtain...

In May, 2005, UC Merced held its first graduation ceremony. Two students received their Bachelors of Arts degree, and a Master of Arts degree was conferred upon UCM's first graduate student. The two undergraduates had transferred into UCM as juniors from nearby community colleges. They had struggled along with the freshmen "newbies." One even took a private, independent study course from the dean of SSHA so that she would have enough units to graduate. These three would be the first to venture forth into the world and claim UC Merced as their alma mater.

Fencers and Boxers

UCM's second year would see many changes. The founding chancellor had resigned, along with the provost, another vice chancellor, and the dean of SSHA. There was no single, obvious reason for the departures. Carol TK announced that she had accomplished what she set

out to do, having shepherded the campus during the past seven years, from concept to reality. But there were also rumors that TK had not gotten along with the new UC president, Robert Dynes, who, the rumor went, had not fully supported Carol's pleas in Sacramento for more money to go to the fledging campus. (Dynes himself would be gone from the Office of the President only a year later, following Regent criticism of the compensation the president had approved for senior UC administrators.) Many at UCM, faculty and student alike, had expected that Chancellor TK would stay to see the first four-year class off at graduation, however.

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost David Ashley also left at the end of 2006, to take a new job as president of the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Vice Chancellor for Administration Lindsay Desrochers went back to her previous job at Portland State University. Similarly, SSHA Dean Kenji Hakuta returned to a teaching post at Stanford. Not surprisingly, many at UCM were left to wonder, was their brand new campus in fact a sinking ship?

The second year was also witness to another disappointment. Student enrollment numbers for 2006 were well below projections. The blush, it seemed, was off the UCM rose. Ironically, students living in the dorms had been notified near the end of the first year that they might have to move off campus, in order to make room for the incoming freshman. Juan Flores, a senior, remembered attending a meeting on campus on how to find off-campus housing: "After the first year, when we practically got kicked out," Flores said he decided to move off campus, along with much of UC Merced's founding class. As it turned out, the small number of newly-arriving freshmen would actually cause some dorms to close, since there was now more on-campus housing than needed.

The faculty also encountered disappointment. The politics involved in hiring colleagues and creating a curriculum seemed to be taking its toll on the whole school. Many faculty found it "frustrating" that they had been asked to create a department without the number of professors necessary to complete the task. One graduate student in SSHA recalled that Kenji Hakuta's sudden resignation had also created a depressing situation at the School. Her feeling was that Kenji could have helped SSHA grow in the right direction, so it was hard to see him go.

Dean Hakuta himself was more philosophical, describing the reasons behind his leaving with a sports analogy. Noting that boxers did not like their performances to be critiqued and analyzed by fencers, for example, Kenji explained that the SSHA faculty were naturally protective of

their prerogatives, feeling that a psychology professor, for instance, had no right dictating what a literature professor should do in his or her class. In such disputes, Kenji said he had been unwilling to side with one group over another. Under such pressures, Hakuta noted, the “novelty” of starting a new campus had also “worn off.”

Several faculty members felt that the change from the first year to the second was distinct. One professor felt that while his first year was “amazing,” the conflicts within SSHA were “too much to take.” Another young professor said that at times he would ask himself why he was at this university. Looking out his third-floor office window, noting the number of cows that dotted the landscape beyond the Science and Engineering Building, he said he could see how other faculty, and students, might also question their decision to come to UC Merced. It was hardly a bustling university within those initial two years, and there was a sense of isolation that was different from other UC campuses and large research universities.

The high “burnout rate” among senior administration at UC Merced was, thankfully, not matched by departures of the founding faculty. During the first two years, only a pair of professors would leave UCM—one to take a different job and be closer to her husband, and the other a senior professor who retired after teaching for more than thirty years at various UCs. Nonetheless, the long hours involved in preparing new classes, hiring new faculty, and attending countless administrative meetings—all burdens typically spread over a much larger number of professors at established campuses—put a special strain on UCM’s founding faculty, tenured and untenured. The fact that they stayed to build a research university is a testament to their talent, and to their resolve.

Some students, too, began to have doubts about staying at UCM after that first year. They explored the possibility of transferring to other schools or UC campuses as sophomores or juniors. Senior Juan Flores, for example, began to consider journalism as a career option in his second year, but UC Merced did not have a journalism major. He considered his options and was ultimately dissuaded from leaving. But several students did leave in their junior year, for various reasons—the desire to be closer to home, the need for a specific major, or the prestige that came with a degree from a more established university. On the other hand, some who decided to stay at UCM had actually come to the university with the idea of transferring out after the second year.

The second year was not only problematic in terms of keeping people at the university—there was one issue that bothered everyone equally:

the lengthy hike up and down the infamous Scholars Lane “hill” from the remote parking lot at the entrance of the school to the academic core of campus. There was no alternative when the tram was out of operation (see the sidebar on the Tram.) The small machine that would struggle up the hill carrying a large load of people in the first year was nowhere to be seen in the second. But trudging up the hill in the rain became just one more reason for grouching about our underfunded “upstart startup” of a UC.

New Hope, New Beginnings

On the bright side, the raw and unfinished nature of the campus forced students to be creative. That ingenuity and creativity did not cease even after life began to improve at UCM. The opening of the Joseph Gallo recreation center in the fall of 2006 improved student moods with exercise—and also kept them from gaining weight on account of that fattening dining commons food. The new gym, filled with state-of-the-art exercise equipment, was an instant hit among the students, who can be seen daily through the windows of the Gallo center, sweating away on the treadmills.



Volleyball and other sports teams formed following the opening of the new gym

Things also began to improve academically. Many new courses and majors, in History, Literature, Economics, and Cognitive Science, were added during the fall and spring semesters, 2006. Also that fall, a consultant was hired by the campus to begin planning for a future medical school, and faculty in the School of Natural Sciences received a major grant

for stem cell research.

Replacements were soon found for the positions of chancellor and SSHA dean. An engineer from Stanford, Hans Bjornsson, became interim dean of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts in April 2006. Steve Kang, a computer science professor and former dean of the Baskin School of Engineering at UC Santa Cruz, became UCM's second chancellor the following January.

Hans Bjornsson had previously done some early consulting work for SSHA on founding a management school at UC Merced, and that first interaction kept him in touch with the campus in subsequent years. Bjornsson recalls Tomlinson-Keasey's initial phone call, asking him just to pay a "short visit" to UCM. While there, Bjornsson was persuaded to sign the contract that made him acting dean of SSHA. Intending to stay for only a few months, Hans remained as "interim" dean almost three years later.

Although he hails from Sweden, Bjornsson's transition to Merced went smoothly, and his musical interests made him a regular at a jazz club in town. In addition to being dean, Hans has also become a professor—teaching a management course to what he says are some of the most "motivated" students he has ever known.

As a result of the early disputes within SSHA, the School in 2006 divided into three different faculty groups—Humanities & World Cultures, Policy & Decision Sciences, and Psychology. The division into *de facto* "departments" has resolved many of the early disputes among and between the SSHA faculty, and things are now running more smoothly, in what one SSHA professor describes as a "more peaceful environment."

Turning Points

If UCM's first year was an exciting start in building a new university, and the second turned out to be a little disheartening, the third year would be remembered as a turning point. With higher enrollment, an extra set of residence halls opened, and more stability in SSHA, many felt that the university had surmounted previous obstacles to real growth. Faculty as well as students breathed a collective sigh of relief upon returning to campus in late August, 2007.

By the start of the fall semester, the campus population had received a huge boost with the addition of 837 new students and fourteen new faculty. As well, financial donations to UCM by outside donors had nearly doubled from the previous year. There was a general feeling of excitement

throughout the campus once again.

The Merced community had also begun to open up more to the students who roamed its streets, one student claims. Describing the earlier attitude as “standoffish,” he observed that the townspeople seemed more eager to hear about the progress of the university and were becoming noticeably proud of the school.



Pilipino American Alliance celebrates the first Pilipino Cultural Night inviting students and the community to watch in the auditorium

While UCM now had higher numbers, it still had the feel of an intimate “college” campus. But with larger class sizes, UC Merced was beginning more and more to look like a real research university and less like a small startup, or, as some had said, a private school version of a research university.

The third year, as well, saw a dramatic increase in the number of juniors transferring to UCM from California State University campuses and community colleges. Pioneers in their own right, these students would graduate with the founding freshman, in the Class of 2009. One transfer student, an older gentleman, remembered how, when he visited the campus with his thirteen-year-old daughter, faculty and staff believed his daughter to be the prospective student. He and his daughter “got a kick out of” the mix-up. He also noted that, although there were only a few classes for

certain majors, students “were able to change the system by asking for it to be changed”—that is, by designing their own courses with willing faculty. The campus, he remarked, was “starting to look like a college campus,” with signs on the walls advertising upcoming events, and even protesters outside the library’s Lantern cafe.

A Bittersweet Symphony

As positive as these changes were, they came at a certain cost. As one founding professor noted, when he walked around campus during his first couple of years at UCM, he knew everybody. By the third year he silently wondered of every passing face: “Now, who the hell are you?” The silent, solitary university was fast becoming a busy academic community. The changes were visible all over campus: an expanded dining commons, a new Management and Social Sciences building under construction, plans for a new medical school, and, most of all, more people.

There were other changes noted by the students, faculty, and staff. As faculty numbers increased, so did the bureaucracy. Previously, a professor could just knock on a colleague’s door and resolve some curriculum issue on the spot. Increasingly, there were rules and regulations that complicated the process—and new committees that now had to be consulted. The days of offices in trailers, filled with scholars from all different disciplines working together, would soon be a thing of the past.

Tram

Luannie Colina

At first glance, the tram almost looks like a caterpillar as it crawls up and down the hill in a steady pace. Though I have always felt that it lacks aesthetic appeal, it seems to have found a comfortable place in UC Merced's environs. Even as the weather in Merced changes, it dresses up for the occasion as well. So when the Merced winter comes, which is all fog and rain with hurricane-like winds, the tram is suited up with plastic flaps to protect the passenger. And this new seasonal addition does not make the tram look any more appealing. I am divided as to how I feel about the tram—and looks have nothing to do with it. Here's a transportation that is emblematic of UC Merced's go-green principle with its no emission and battery-powered machine. When the university opened, the tram was there as well, a kind of amenity or feature of the newly opened university. In my first two years, I was definitely one of those who would gripe and cuss at having missed the tram when it was just a breath's away from where I parked my car. I must admit that whenever I am late to class, tired, and backpack-weary, the tram has been a source of salvation. On a less practical side, I have always found the tram to be a kind of watering-hole for students and staff alike. The tram was my way of catching up with friends who I normally do not get to see or interact as much as I would like to simply because I do not have classes with them. The five-minute drive up the hill is surprisingly quiet sufficient to catch up on the latest news, gossip, and complaints. And if it is not the catching-up-with-friends part that is interesting, it is the fact that one can listen in on other people's conversation. I do not eavesdrop on

people's conversation (believe me, I'd rather not know or hear anything), however, it is quite difficult not to overhear their conversation when they are either right in front or behind you. Then again, many of the topics of people's conversations on the tram are insignificant anyways, at least to me. Hence, I do not feel like I know something that other people do not know. I am sure that others who do ride the tram are keenly aware that by being on it, they are giving up private space. I get a sense of how other people's days are coming along whether it be that sigh of relief as they hop on board for the tram's takeoff heading to the parking lot, or that disgruntled student talking to a friend about how they deserve an A on that paper instead of a B.



Tram stop at the top of "the hill."

The tram strikes my interest in so many ways because within its four-year lifetime, it has at more than one point, been a source of minor contention. One of these contentions revolved around the tram's suspension due, in large part, to the costs of maintaining the tram. Since the tram is battery-powered, it takes time and energy to charge its battery. The response, although it was not a huge uproar, was convincing enough to bring it back. One of the arguments laid out was that of convenience. The sentiment was that when students are running late, the tram can save the students minutes from being late. Another argument put forth was Merced's weather—that is, Merced's weather tend to be on the extremes of either being scorching

hot or ultra-cold with strong winds. However, the counter-argument was that overreliance to the tram made students lazy, and it was further argued that if the students did not want to be late, they should make it a point to be early. The issue, however, was resolved by returning the tram back to its regular operation. However, there was another issue that put the tram back on the school paper, and this time the concern was about health. A health initiative at school, called Peer Health Educators, had pointed to the tram as a factor for the lack of exercise and sense of health in the campus. The idea is that the tram, although it may not directly cause students and staff alike to be unhealthy, perpetuates the lazy-mentality. Moreover, the same counter-arguments that have been used before have resurfaced. The fact that students rely on the tram on the basis of averting lateness just does not seem to be good enough of a reason to keep it running. In addition, they have keenly pointed out that other UC's that are way much bigger than UCM do not even have a tram or anything of the like. The tram issue might not have rocked the young university in the way major issues normally do, but it served as a small talk for what was then a very quiet university.

Of the many changes and evolutions that UC Merced has undergone, perhaps it is the tram that outlasted such changes (although not to disregard its two-week cessation before it got revived). The tram was around when the first class used the library as classrooms, it outlasted the use of the exit stairs, it existed long before the new dorms (Sierra Terraces), the COB building, and the new parking lot could be used. In addition, it is the only vehicle—if we do not count bicycles—that has the privilege to run on Scholar's Lane. It has served as an avenue of employment for students because it operates on an eight-to-five a week schedule. It has even extended its reach to a second tram stop right by the new parking lot. Perhaps it is not fair to compare all these other factors that accompany university-building with the tram, but one can wonder how long the tram would last in UC Merced before it becomes obsolete. Would UC Merced have a place for the tram in the coming years? Or would they phase it out as part of the growth process of the university? And if it does get phased out, would there be any emboldened student willing to argue for its resurrection?

Chapter 9

UCM 2.0: Looking Forward, Looking Back

Even as the founding Class of 2009 prepared to graduate, the future freshman of UCM's Class of 2013 were anxiously awaiting the acceptance letter that would admit them to UC Merced. Others on campus—administrators, faculty, and staff—were likewise busy crafting budgets, preparing new classes, and generally spiffing things up (for example, repairing the holes in the walls left by would-be ninjas). All this is in anticipation of the students who will arrive in the fall. Thus, as some at UC Merced looked back to the past, others looked forward, toward the future.

An End and a Beginning

On May 16, 2009, UC Merced's Class of 2009 graduates. More than four hundred eager students are looking forward to it. They are about to be shot out into a different and strange world—some to graduate and professional schools, some to new careers, and some probably to wind up, at least temporarily, on their parents' couches. But what they all take with them is a unique experience, earned at a brand new university.

As one UCM professor recently noted, the founding class will have something that graduates of other universities do not: lessons learned through overcoming the obstacles inherent at a startup campus; close relationships that developed with faculty and fellow students over the past four years; and a new appreciation for the needs of the underserved, in the Central Valley and elsewhere.

In 2008, *Forbes* magazine listed Merced as dead last in the state of California in terms of the percentage of the adult population holding college degrees. That statistic is about to change for the better, when nearly 500

UC Merced seniors pick up diplomas this May. The graduates of UCM's inaugural four-year class can be proud of the fact that they, perhaps just as much as those who wore hardhats and wielded jackhammers, have also played a role in building this campus.

Like graduating seniors everywhere, UC Merced's pioneers will remember good times and the bad: the day that a freshman in a gorilla suit ran down the aisle of the auditorium during a Core course lecture, the antics of "Fred," or maybe just the day that they made the decision to switch their major from Earth Systems Science to Literature.

Overall, it has been one long, strange but exhilarating ride, and it has changed the people who arrived here four years ago, just as much as they have changed the place itself. As one senior recently observed, what makes his class special is a matter of attitude: "We don't have much, but we sure use what we have."

So, you know, it's not all bad...

For a campus that was initially derided as a "boondoggle" (*n.* "work of little or no value done merely to keep or look busy") by its opponents, UC Merced has already come a long way. But, especially for those planning the future of the campus, there is still a long way to go—and some not-insignificant obstacles in the way.

While most in the Merced community were elated about the prospects of a new university, there were—and are—some doubters.

The staunchest critics of the campus from the outset have been Merced's environmental activists, including Lydia Miller, head of the San Joaquin Raptor Rescue Society, and Carol Witham, creator of the website www.vernalpools.com. Miller and Witham remain concerned with the long-term environmental impact of the university, especially as it makes plans to grow.

Even as campus boosters had celebrated opening day, Lydia Miller told a reporter from the local newspaper, the Merced *Sun-Star*, on September 3, 2005: "If it hadn't been for the public, the UC would not have mitigated. They had no intention of complying with state, federal, or local mandates."¹

Miller and her allies stand by their long-held conviction that the university should never have been built in Merced.²

Despite UCM's avowed commitment to sustainability and "living light on the land," and even its LEED certification, the community's environmental watchdogs remain skeptics. Now, as before, one of the

unresolved issues hanging in the balance remains the fate of the Vernal Pools Fairy Shrimp.

University planning for future growth is centered on how to expand the campus, with all the amenities that students and faculty need and want, while avoiding the vernal pool habitat.

For some in the community who oppose UCM's planned expansion, however, the real problem is partly one of perception: they view the university's arrival in Merced as having been stealthy and trespasser-like. To them, the university conveniently plopped down in Merced's backyard without any regard for or permission from its citizens. This perception has become an important factor in what remains their vigorous scrutiny of the campus Long-Range Development Plan (LRDP).

The planned expansion of the campus has also met with opposition from the local agricultural community, particularly since future expansion might compromise fertile farmland. Speaking on behalf of the Merced Farm Bureau, Diana Pedrozo, its executive director, explained the Bureau's position: "We supported the campus in its original [rangeland] location. We supported it where it had to move, and we supported it going up and around the lake..."³ However, she and the Farm Bureau believe that the university *has* to work within a limited space, since it is surrounded by prime agricultural land. While the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers originally approve the university's expansion plans, those plans are now under review.

To complicate the situation further, the university's intended expansion will put the campus at the edge of Merced's city limits. As a result, the city fears that expansion will create a massive sprawl.

Finally, UCM's critics point out that, while the university utilizes the city's water and sewer resources, it pays little in the way of local taxes, and operates as an isolated and independent entity. (The tax-exempt and independent status guaranteed the University of California in the state Constitution likewise remains a source of conflict with other communities that host UC campuses, including Santa Cruz.)

On a personal level, Pedrozo and the Farm Bureau believe that the county, the city of Merced, and the university can work together for the common good of the community. Thus, their relationship with the campus has not been exclusively one of conflict. Diana still recalls how UC Merced joined her and the community in successfully protesting a proposed race track for the town, to be built by a developer with a shady history. As she remembers telling her colleagues on that occasion: "So, you know, it's not all bad."⁴

“It’s those type of issues...”

In addition to arousing suspicion and opposition from environment and agricultural activists in the community, UC Merced has also raised fears that the university will eventually change the political landscape of the town. Many of the townspeople were (and are) adamant about keeping Merced a predominantly rural and conservative place, and not letting it turn into another Berkeley or Santa Cruz. Once again, those fears surfaced as early as opening day. The September 3, 2005, issue of the Merced *Sun-Star* featured an article titled, “Will Local Politics be Pulled Left?” In the piece, conservative radio talk show host, Steve Hartman, warned Merced citizens that, with the university in their backyard, Merced might just turn out to be like Santa Cruz—a liberal’s paradise. To avoid such a fate, Hartman warned: “It is imperative for the local people to keep control. If the citizens of Merced allow the university within the city limits they are ultimately going to lose control of their city, that’s just the way it is.”⁵ Farm Bureau head Diana Pedrozo expressed a similar fear: “A university, whether it be a state university or a University of California, changes the complexity of the community.”⁶

But not all see the prospect of change as necessarily bad. Another article to appear in the *Sun-Star* on opening day compared Merced to Chico, the site of a California State University campus. As the article noted, both are Valley towns with similar weather, a small-town atmosphere, and even the same bobcat mascot. But CSU Chico, the reporter pointed out, also has a well-earned reputation as a “party” school.

Indeed, concern that UCM will eventually turn out to be another Chico motivated Merced City Councilman Bill Spriggs to issue a warning similar to Hartman’s: “It’s those type of issues we need to get a handle on,” Spriggs declared. “There are things we need to learn from those who came before us, like the Chicos and the Davises.”⁷

Kathleen Crookham, a Merced County Supervisor in 2005, recalled receiving a telephone call from a man who had just learned that the house across the street from him had been purchased by the university for the chancellor. The man was nearly hysterical, Crookham remembers, about the potential rowdiness and noise “by university kids causing a commotion.”⁸ (For the record, the Merced police have yet to respond to a complaint about wild parties at the chancellor’s house.)

Perhaps the dominant feeling in the community about the university’s arrival, however, was an attitude of wait-and-see. This, at least,

was the sentiment expressed to the *Sun-Star's* reporter by Transcounty Title Company owner Bill Ayers, who said: "A lot of us are going to try to keep the community the way it is until we die off. That's not to say the university isn't going to improve things. We wouldn't have worked so hard to bring it here if we didn't think it would."⁹

"These guys are straight out of Berkeley"

Ironically, the worst fears of some conservative Mercedians seemed about to be realized just a year after the campus opened. One particular clash with the community occurred in 2006, when Jim Abbate, a local businessman, expressed outrage at two community activists whose spouses held academic and administrative posts at the university. At issue was a proposed Wal-Mart distribution center in southeast Merced, which the activists opposed for environmental and other reasons. Abbate told a *Sun-Star* reporter: "These guys are straight out of Berkeley. They've hardly spent any time in the Valley and they're going to come here and tell us how our city should be run. It's pathetic." Going further, Abbate suggested that, in the future, professors and their spouses should perhaps be screened first by the university before they were hired, to make sure that they were a good match for the town.¹⁰

Finally, as the national economic downturn began to have a particularly severe impact on Merced by early 2008, there would be another element added to the town-gown relationship—namely, who bears responsibility for the bust of Merced's housing bubble? Although the bursting of that bubble would be a nationwide phenomenon, many attributed rampant real estate speculation in Merced to the arrival of the university. Indeed, even before the campus opened, the urge to cash in on what most assumed would be a land-rush business in student rentals had led to a frenzy of house buying in Merced. (To be sure, on UCM's opening day, three different real estate companies ran ads in the *Sun-Star* welcoming the arrival of the university.)

The result, as the *Wall Street Journal* reported, was that by July, 2005, Merced had become "the least affordable community in the nation."¹¹ As it turned out, the promise of a blossoming university town was not only too good a lure for real estate investors, but too good to be true. Rabid home-buying by out-of-towners would lead to complaints that the coming of the university had brought people, mostly from the Bay Area, who were only looking to earn fast cash. As locals saw it, these new investors were not really invested in the community. Merced City Councilman Jim Sanders

told the *Sun-Star*: “To me, it’s a crisis. What it has done has turned our new residential neighborhoods into run-down areas of town.”¹²

By August, 2008, the New York *Times* would report that three out of four recent home sales in Merced had resulted in foreclosure. The *Times* article warned: “As Merced goes, so might go much of the nation.”¹³

In UCM’s defense, although the university was hailed at the time as an engine for economic growth, no one said that the benefits would be immediate. Indeed, most now predict that it will take from 15 to 20 years before the full effect of having a UC in Merced is felt in the local economy.

Until then, there are those who remain optimistic about the long-term impact of the university upon Merced, and the Central Valley. Community activists like David Hetland and Linda Lopez, and community organizer Nick Robinson, believe that the university will ultimately be a valuable resource for the town and the Valley. As evidence, they point to growing student interest and engagement in the community. Hetland notes that other UC campuses, particularly UC Santa Cruz, were initially resisted by the locals, who, however, eventually came around to support the school. He views the infusion of different values and attitudes by the university as a “healthy thing,” although he is aware that the change may be painful for some people. These individuals have faith that UCM will indeed be an eventual engine of growth, since, for better or worse, the university is going to be around for a long time.¹⁴

Whether Merced will turn out to be more like Santa Cruz /Berkeley or Davis/Chico remains an open question. As of this writing, the town-gown relationship has been on a rocky road. Merced’s problems—including poor air quality, housing foreclosures, and chronic unemployment—seem like the chorus of a long, sad, and repetitive song. The hope of all is that the university will play a major, future role in helping to solve those problems. The university—the elephant in the room—surely plans to try.

Eyes on the Future, Feet on the Ground

UC Merced was conceived as a research university that would have as near to zero net impact upon the environment as possible. As UCM’s Long-Range Development Plan (LRDP) moves towards 2013, the completion date for Phase One of the construction process, the commitment to “live lightly on the land” is still foremost on the minds of campus planners—who now include community leaders and environmental activists, as well as University of California officials.

Thirteen main goals are listed in the 2009 version of the Long Range Development Plan for UC Merced. Among them is a desire for the campus to be a model of environmental stewardship. The intent of the plan is to create an academic environment conducive to student learning, while attracting high-quality faculty, yet still having little negative impact upon the environment.

As UCM transitions from the smallest of the University of California campuses into a full-fledged college community in a rural setting, the purpose of the LRDP is to prepare for future student housing, infrastructure support, and recreational needs. Ultimately, the four phases of the UC Merced LRDP are meant to ensure integration with the local community, but also reflect “the San Joaquin Valley’s heritage and landscape.”

Phase One, the current phase, includes construction on the existing 104-acre campus that should be completed by 2013. Among the projects currently underway, where almost daily progress is visible, are a new Social Sciences and Management Building, an Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC), the third phase of student housing, and a second Science and Engineering Building. All are intended to be ready in time for the 5,000 full-time students projected for 2013, about half of whom are expected to be on-campus residents.

Phase Two will incorporate a new Health Sciences building, which is key to the proposed new medical school. Future projects in the second phase will also include the expansion of existing buildings to accommodate growth, as well as addition of a Graduate School of Education, an Environmental Health and Safety building, and an Energy Center. Non-state-funded projects envision new parking lots and parking structures, additional student housing, as well as a student union building, aquatic center, and multi-purpose recreation field. A so-called Stem Cell Foundry is anticipated for the former Castle Air Force site. Finally, a new Main Street, heading south from the existing Quadrangle and passing through the so-called Gateway District (the former main entrance), will be one of many “managed access” roads to service the expanding campus.

In Phase Three, a second major boulevard will connect the current campus to the proposed University Community, which will be built at the southeast corner of the original Virginia Smith Trust property.

When Phase Four, or “build out,” is completed, in 2030, the UC Merced campus will occupy approximately 815 acres, divided into four main areas: the Gateway District, the North Campus, Central Campus West, and Central Campus East. The university by that time will have a complement

of 25,000 students, along with supporting faculty, administration, and staff. Approximately half of the student population is expected to live on campus.

The University Community abutting the campus will, in that phase, encompass future high school and elementary school districts, to accommodate the children of people affiliated with UC Merced. The campus itself is expected to be primarily closed to private vehicles by that time, with visitors restricted to managed-access streets. Movement to and around campus will be via hybrid community transit as well as by environmentally-friendly campus shuttles. Hiking trails, pedestrian walkways, and extensive bike paths will crisscross the landscape.

The hope is also that, by 2030, a statewide high-speed rail system will further cut the environmental impact of transportation—allowing students to commute to campus, get to their classes, and cruise into town without ever being in a carbon-emitting vehicle.

Fiat Lux

What began a half-century ago as a vision in the mind of Clark Kerr has become reality. In the process, the tenth UC campus has transformed the little town of Merced into a prospective educational hub not only for the Central Valley, but all of California. It has only been through the dedicated effort of many men and women—professors, political leaders, townspeople, and, not least, students—that Kerr's vision would be realized, in the spirit of the University of California's motto: *Fiat Lux*.

Let there be light.

Letter from the Chancellor to the Class of 2009

What the Fairy Shrimp Knows Life lessons from one of nature's most resilient species

Dear Students,

As the semester winds down, I know you brim with new concepts in your storehouse of knowledge. My desire is to also help increase your core of wisdom.

You probably have heard that big things come in little packages. Let me share a few pointers from the nearly invisible fairy shrimp that live in vernal pools surrounding UC Merced. Within their half-inch, transparent bodies, fairy shrimp hold secrets to survival in a quick-change environment – secrets that point us toward a life of success.

Filter what you internalize

Fairy shrimp exhibit curious table manners. They eat with their feet – all 11 pairs. (You would, too, if all you had were feet.) But as those feet work the water, they also filter what fairy shrimp ingest. (On the menu: algae, bacteria and ciliates.)

People need filters for what we accept as good and true. These filters are the critical thinking skills we develop in college.

Pop culture bombards us with what society considers beautiful, wealthy and popular. Miss the mark and you are in danger of self-loathing. Celebrity worship makes lives of scandal and excess seem humdrum. Like fairy shrimp, we can swim in muddy waters, but as beings of higher intelligence, we must rely on our critical thinking skills to filter out what is harmful, useless and demeaning to our humanity.

Vary your approach

When we hear “head-on,” we think of car collisions. Forceful encounters between people feel like head-on collisions, with as much smoke and smoldering afterward.

Fairy shrimp have perfected the non-confrontational approach: they swim upside down, wiggling legs industriously to get from point A to B. To the casual observer this appears ill-advised, as they don't seem to look where they're going. Despite this, there have been no reports of head-on collisions

among our tiny teachers.

If you've had little success with a charging-bull style, perhaps it's time to modify it. How about trying a peace-making tone, one that conveys a willingness to give a little to get something in return? You may persuade (by surprise) more people to meet you halfway.

I believe it is this win-win approach that will bring us success with UC Merced's revised permit application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to expand the campus from the current 105 to 810 acres. Our revised plan proposes a campus smaller by 100 acres to meet the Corp's goal to preserve wetlands (home to fairy shrimp and other endangered species). We hope that the Corp will grant the permit by spring 2009.

Diversify your offerings

In business, we broaden our products and services to grow our customer base. In higher education, diversity enriches everyone in the campus community.

Among fairy shrimp, as with other species, genetic diversity ensures survival. One type of fairy shrimp is wiped out by disease; another resists it. Genes from different shrimp populations intermix when eggs (properly called "cysts") spread via wind, water or birds.

UC Merced has had early success with its three schools—Engineering, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. We now press forward with plans to establish a School of Medicine and a School of Management to diversify our offerings and ensure that we stay relevant over the long term to the needs of the Central Valley and the state.

What holds true for this institution holds true for the individual. Over the course of a lifetime, many of you will engage in several careers, not just in your major in college. Diversifying according to your talents and interests opens doors and gives the world more chances to benefit from your unique abilities. I hope you will take this to heart.

Know when to wait and when to act

Most amazing about fairy shrimp is how adaptable their eggs can be. Some settle at the bottom of the vernal pool and dry out with the pool. They hatch in the spring when the pool fills up. But some eggs have hatched in a laboratory after 15 years. That's like sleeping through three presidential administrations and much of the fourth.

It is prudent to know when to bide your time and when the iron is hot enough to strike. At what point does decisiveness cross over into

impulsiveness? When does always looking before you leap cause you to miss the train that has left the station? These are the questions you will wrestle with as you grow into later adulthood and take on leadership roles – whether as head of the family, head of the company or head of state.

If you take away just one lesson from fairy shrimp, I suggest this: You can learn from everyone, especially from nature, and even from what people often overlook. You can face down adversaries, and gain wisdom from them. You may fail, yet can learn from your failures. You may lose a battle, but never lose the lesson, and move on.

I hope you have a wonderful summer, and I wish great beginnings to our new alumni.

Warmly,

Steve Kang
Chancellor

Notes and Photo Credits

Chapter 1

- ⁱ “Central Valley (California),” Google.com.
- ⁱⁱ Population Projections for the State of California, County by County, Great Valley Center, May 2004, Modesto, CA.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.
- ^{iv} Kenneth Umbach, *The San Joaquin Valley: Land, People, and Economy*, Calif. State Library, Nov. 2005, Sacramento, CA, p. 5.
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- ^{vi} *Assessing the Region via Indicators: Education and Youth Preparedness*, Great Valley Center, Feb. 2004, Modesto, CA, p. 33.
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- ^{xi} Umbach, *The San Joaquin Valley: Selected Statistics...*, p. 16.
- ^{xii} Ibid., p. 23.

^{xiii} Dataplace, Merced, CA. [Http://www.dataplace.org/area_overview/Merced,%20CA](http://www.dataplace.org/area_overview/Merced,%20CA)
Chapter 2

ⁱ(http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/~ucalhist/general_history/overview/presidents/index2.html#hitch)

ⁱⁱ Stephen A. Arditti, “Director of State Governmental Relations, 1984-Present,” an oral history conducted in 1997 by Carole Hicke in *The University of California Office of the President and Its Constituencies, 1983-1995, Volume I: The Office of the President*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley,

2002, page 7.

Chapter 6

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- iii "Task Force Comments on a College Concept for UC Merced," Assembly of the Senate Academic Council, 2/11/2000.
- iv "Creating an Educational Culture: General Education at UC Merced: A Discussion Paper," 6/9/2000.

Chapter 9

- ¹ Ashton, Adam. "Years of hard work pay off." Merced Sun-Star, September 3, 2005 issue.
- ² Lydia Miller interview. December 9, 2008.
- ³ Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo interview. December 5, 2008.
- ⁴ Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo interview. December 5, 2008.
- ⁵ Chircop, David. "Will local politics be pulled left?" Merced Sun-Star, September 3, 2005 issue.
- ⁶ Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo interview. December 5, 2008.
- ⁷ Ahumada, Rosalio. "Chico, Merced compare well." Merced Sun-Star, September 3, 2005 issue.
- ⁸ Kathleen Crookham interview
- ⁹ Chircop, David. "Will local politics be pulled left?" Merced Sun-Star, September 3, 2005 issue.
- ¹⁰ Chircop, David. "Loose Lips: Academic freedom be damned." Merced Sun-Star, March 7, 2006 issue.
- ¹¹ Chircop, David. "Investors snapping up homes." Merced Sun-Star, September 3, 2005 issue.
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¹³ Streitfeld, David. "In the Central Valley, the Ruins of the Housing Bust." *New York Times*, August 23, 2008 issue.

¹⁴ David Hetland interview. November 12, 2008

Picture Credits

Cover Photo- Designed by Robin Issavi January 2009.

Group Photo- Courtesy of Skyler Greene January 2009.

Chapter 1

The snowy Sierras and the Barn. Photo courtesy of Larry Salinas.

View of the campus from a distance. Photo courtesy of Larry Salinas.

Merced Courthouse. Picture courtesy of Merced Courthouse Museum.

Gone With the Wind (and Other Tales of Woe)

Cows in the infamous Tule Fog. Photo courtesy of Katie Hatfield.

Chapter 2

Clark Kerr. Photo courtesy of the Regents of the University of California

David Saxon. Photo courtesy of the Regents of the University of California

Chapter 3

Betty Lou George, Virginia Smith Trustee, May 1995. Photo courtesy of Skip George.

Ken Riggs, Committee member and early supporter of Merced as the first campus. Photo courtesy of Skip George, May 1995.

Gary De Weese and group, photo courtesy of Gregg Herken, December 2008.

Bob Carpenter and then Mayor Richard Bernasconi, photo courtesy of Skip George, May 1995.

The Life and Legacy of Virginia Smith

Virginia Smith, photo courtesy of the Virginia Smith Trust.

Chapter 5

Fairy Shrimp. Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2004

Former Congressmen Gary Condit and Carol Tomlinson-Keasey. Photo by Larry Salinas.

Gray Davis and members of the Red Team. Photo by Larry Salinas, September 2005.

Al Gore and future U.C. Merced Bobcats. Photo by Larry Salinas.

Dennis Cardoza and the founding faculty. Photo courtesy of www.house.gov/cardoza
Leo Kolligian, photo courtesy of Larry Salinas.

U.C. Merced Marmot, drawing courtesy of Chris Adams

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger visits the campus, photo courtesy of Hans Marsen.

Green, Functional, Beautiful

U.C. Merced Central Plant. Photo courtesy of www.wikipedia.org *The Story of the U.C. Bobcat*

Bobcat. Photo courtesy of Larry Salinas

Chapter 6

I Ain't Afraid of no Ghosts

McFadden-Willis Reading Room. Photo courtesy of Kimberly Wilder, February 2009

McFadden-Willis children. Photo courtesy of Matthew Lyons, February 2009

Chapter 7

Move-in day, photo courtesy of Larry Salinas, September 2005.

Dorm welcome sign, photo courtesy of Larry Salinas, September 2005

Then Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, photo courtesy of Kimberly Wilder, September 2005.

History 16, photo courtesy of Sean Malloy, September 2005.

Library classroom, photo courtesy of Jeff Yoshimi

Move-In Day

Katie Hatfield moving into her dorm in Merced, photo courtesy of Katie Hatfield, September 2005.

Typical dorm room, photo courtesy of Katie Hatfield.

The Luck of the Draw

Girls of Tulare 104, photo courtesy of Renata Santillan.

Dairy Duel

photo by Stephanie Chan

Chapter 8

Volleyball team in the Gallo Gym

PAA celebrates culutral night success. Renee Vargas October 2008

UC Merced Chronology

Courtesy of Roger Samuelson

- 1988** President Gardner presented report to UC Regents on long-range enrollment planning, including projections that, with growth of some 60,000 expected by 2020, all but 20,000 could be accommodated on existing nine campuses.

UC Regents authorized planning for up to three additional campuses based on projections of long-range enrollment demand.

- 1989** President Gardner appointed Site Selection Task Force composed of three Regents, two Chancellors, two Senior Vice Presidents, Vice President for Budget and University Relations, and Chair of the Academic Council to advise him on selection of new campus sites. General Counsel was appointed an ex-officio member of Task Force.

President also appointed executive staff to Task Force drawn from senior managers of the Office of the President and Office of the Treasurer and representative of variety of disciplines appropriate to the assignment.

UC Regents approved site evaluation criteria and methodology.

Applying criteria and methodology, University and consultants identified potential sites both by finding sites independently and by accepting suggestions from interested parties.

- 1990** UC Regents directed focus on planning for a campus in central region of the state and approved eight preferred sites for further study.

Executive staff visited over 85 sites throughout central region and prepared preliminary reports on each of them.

On the basis of these reports, Task Force designated 20 of these sites as "candidate sites".

Under direction of the Executive staff, technical consultants in a number of disciplines were hired to investigate further the “candidate sites”.

Based upon an evaluation of this work, the Task Force designated eight “preferred sites” for further study and the Executive staff opened discussions with owners about site acquisition.

Task Force visited each of the eight preferred sites and held public meetings in Modesto and Fresno to receive comment from interested parties. Factors used to evaluate the “preferred sites” included transportation, demographics, housing, geotechnical, site appeal, public support, environmental, site availability, and utilities.

- 1991** UC Regents approved three sites for further study (Lake Yosemite in Merced County, Table Mountain in Madera County and Academy in Fresno County, the labels reflecting nearby landmarks.)

Because of concerns about future state support for the University’s budget, site selection slowed during the remainder of 1991 but work to evaluate the potential of each site for development and to identify possible physical constraints continued.

- 1992** Task Force again toured Academy and Lake Yosemite sites and observed the Table Mountain site from nearby vantage point. Representatives of the local site committees and local governments briefed the Task Force on plans for the sites and surrounding areas.

- 1993** Faced with increasingly bleak news about continuing and future state support for the University’s budget, UC Regents agreed to suspend the site selection process.

Subsequently, UC Regents approved the President’s recommendation that site selection process be resumed if funding for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) were made available.

State appropriated \$1.5 million “for the purpose of preparing environmental studies and environmental impact reports related

to their selection of a site for a new campus in the Central Valley region of California”.

University selected an EIR consultant and commenced preparation of EIR.

1994 The Regents approved eight factors as the basis for selection the final site: (1) Environmental Issues, (2) Program Issues Related to Location, (3) Community Profile, (4) Community Support, (5) Aesthetic Character of the Site, (6) Costs of Site Development, (7) Status of Site Availability, and (8) Status of Obtaining an Adequate Water Supply.

1995 After detailed study of the eight factors in relation to the three sites, and volumes of public testimony at open hearings, President Peltason upon advice of the Task Force recommended the UC Regents consider only the Table Mountain and Lake Yosemite sites.

UC Regents certified the final EIR for site selection and selected the Lake Yosemite site in Merced as the tenth campus site. The action was subject to criteria that included the right to acquire approximately 2,000 contiguous acres, at any time prior to June 30, 2007, at nominal or no cost and on terms and conditions acceptable to the President.

1996 UC signed option agreement with Virginia Smith Trust to acquire 2,000 acres for the campus from a 2,550-acre “University Area” on the 7,000-acre trust property.

President Atkinson appointed an academic planning committee, with representatives from the California State University and the California Community College systems, to develop a preliminary academic plan for the tenth campus.

1997 UC Regional Office at Merced College is established.

UC Center in Fresno is established.

State appropriated \$4.9 million for planning the tenth campus and establishing new academic programs in the San Joaquin Valley.

UC Regents established Special Committee on the Tenth Campus.

UC Regents authorized continued planning for development of the campus.

UC submitted Letter of Intent to Expand (to establish the tenth campus) to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC).

President Atkinson designated "UC Merced" as the working title for the campus.

1998 Merced County Board of Supervisors approved Guidance Package outlining the planning program for future urban development of the area encompassing the 2,000-acre campus site and 8,300 adjacent acres earmarked for a new University Community.

UC, County of Merced, Virginia Smith Trust, Cyril Smith Trust, City of Merced and Merced Irrigation District initiated a collaborative concept planning process for the University Community.

Carol Tomlinson-Keasey appointed senior associate to President Atkinson for UC Merced to lead planning and development of the campus.

UC Regents held its first meeting in Merced and visited campus site.

State appropriated \$9.9 million to continue planning for UC Merced and development of academic programs in the San Joaquin Valley and \$1.5 million to develop distributed learning sites in the Valley.

Merced College, CSU Stanislaus and UC developed plans for a Tri-College Center to provide instructional space on the Merced College campus to be opened in early 1999.

State Legislature approved bond issue to be placed on the November 1998 ballot which would provide initial capital funding for construction of UC Merced.

Voters approved Prop. 1A -- a \$9.2 billion bond issue with \$55 million to be used for initial UC Merced development and construction.

Two planning fairs held to gather input by the public at large on the planning strategy proposed for the University Community, which will surround the actual UC Merced campus.

1999 Third planning fair held to present University Community Development Concept.

University began advertising for a Chancellor to be named by July 1999

UC Extension courses presented by Riverside, Davis and Berkeley campuses begin at Tri-College Center located on the Merced College campus.

UC Merced and Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a partnership for research and education which will support programs of the Sierra Nevada Research Institute and K-12 academic outreach to students and teachers.

University Community Concept Report published, outlining the vision and development principles for the campus and private development, based on the collaborative planning effort undertaken by UC, the County of Merced, the Virginia Smith Trust, the Cyril Smith Trust, the City of Merced, and the Merced Irrigation District.

Campus Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) and County University Community Plan efforts were initiated, based on the University Community Concept.

State Budget included continuing annual appropriation of \$9.9 million for planning the UC Merced campus and academic program development in the San Joaquin Valley, and \$400,000 to support the County of Merced's planning efforts associated with the University Community.

Carol Tomlinson-Keasey appointed as founding UC Merced Chancellor.

James Erickson appointed as UC Merced Vice Chancellor for University Advancement.

First allocation of Prop 1-A funds for planning, designing and constructing the campus presented to The Regents for 2000-2001 budget.

Joint, detailed on-site biological studies for the campus and University Community completed by UC and the County of Merced.

UC and County of Merced reach agreement on a joint statement of principles regarding a conservation planning and permitting program in eastern Merced County that will support development of the campus and the University Community.

Interviews

Interviews

Person	Date Interviewed
Christopher Adams	September 23, 2008
Jessica Anderson	November 3, 2008
Hans Bjornsson	October 21, 2008
Dennis Cardoza	October 15, 2008
Robert Carpenter	October 5, 2008
Michelle Comer	October 2, 2008
Stephanie Corpuz	October 17, 2008
Kathleen Crookham	November 17, 2008
Gary DeWeese	September 23, 2008
Juan Flores	September 19, 2008
Henry Forman	November 10, 2008
Jan Goggans	October 9, 2008
William Grokek	October 14, 2008
Kenji Hakuta	November 10, 2008
Trudis Heinecke	September 23, 2008
Evan Heit	November 6, 2008
Gregg Herken	October 22, 2008
David Hetland	November 12, 2008
Arthur Huynit	September 29, 2008
Alicia James	November 13, 2008
Shawn Kantor	October 28, 2008
Anne Kelley	October 24, 2008
David Kelley	October 23, 2008
Arnold Kim	October 14, 2008
Jane Lawrence	October 8, 2008
Linda Lopez	November 14, 2008
Sean Malloy	October 7, 2008
Teenie Matlock	November 10, 2008
Karen Merritt	September 23, 2008
Lydia Miller	December 9, 2008
R. Bruce Miller	October 21, 2008
Brenda Morris	September 9, 2008
Rodney Nickens Jr.	October 6, 2008
Kristi Imberi-Olivares	October 30, 2008
Maria Pallavicini	October 28, 2008
Scott Parker	September 17, 2008
Dunya Ramicova	October 30, 2008
Nick Robinson	October 17, 2008

Roger Samuelsen	September 23, 2008
Hadil Shehadeh	October 15, 2008
William Shadish	October 10, 2008
Matt Siordia	September 25, 2008
Jared Stanley	October 16, 2008
Ralph Temple Jr.	December 5, 2008
Daniel Titcher	September 16, 2008
Christopher Viney	October 8, 2008
Diana Westmoreland	December 5, 2008
Jeff Wheeler	October 31, 2008
Roger Wood	November 21, 2008
Jeff Wright	October 20, 2008
Jeff Yoshimi	October 7, 2008



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The Fairy Shrimp Chronicles

“It took awhile, and it wasn’t easy.” If every University of California campus had a motto, that might be UC Merced’s. The same was true of this book.

The inspiration behind *The Fairy Shrimp Chronicles* was *Solomon’s House*, a slim volume about the origins of the UC Santa Cruz campus, written by my fellow students in UCSC’s pioneer Class of 1969. Having been a “founding student” at UCSC, who later became a founding faculty member at UC Merced, my idea was to direct a similar project at UCM, forty years later. This book is the result.

It was written by seniors in UC Merced’s first four-year graduating class, the pioneer Class of 2009. The eleven student-authors are all History majors or Writing Program minors, who volunteered to write an Honors thesis under my supervision that would document the history of the founding of UC Merced.

The students who wrote the book also researched it. While it should be emphasized that this is not an “official” history, the authors consulted University of California planning documents, read previous histories of other UC campuses, and interviewed dozens of individuals connected with the founding of UC Merced, including political and community leaders, senior University administrators, the founding faculty, and, of course, their fellow students. While the end result will surely not be free of errors—of omission and otherwise—a sincere and honest effort has been made to make it accurate and balanced.

One of the phrases that the students-authors heard repeatedly from interviewees, regarding the founding of UC Merced, was, “...and the stars lined up.” In a sense, the stars lined up not only to create the first research university of the 21st century in California’s Central Valley, but to produce this book.

Fiat Lux.



Professor Gregg Herken, Founding Faculty
School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts
UC Merced