

Volume 1



1.1 PURPOSE OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the University of California (UC or the University) procedures for implementing CEQA, UC Merced is required, after completion of a draft environmental impact report (EIR), to consult with and obtain comments from public agencies that have legal jurisdiction with respect to the proposed project, and to provide the general public with opportunities to comment on the Draft EIR. UC Merced is also required to respond to significant environmental issues raised in the review and consultation process. This Final EIR has been prepared to respond to agency and public comments received on the Draft EIR for the UC Merced Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) and the development of the Phase 1 Campus. The Draft EIR was issued for public review on August 13, 2001. The public review period lasted from August 13 through October 4, 2001. UC Merced held a public meeting on September 13, 2001, to receive verbal comments on the Draft EIR. A court reporter prepared a transcript of the meeting.

This document and the Draft EIR constitute the Final EIR. The Draft EIR is hereby incorporated by this reference. Copies of the Draft EIR and additional copies of the Final EIR are available for review during normal business hours at the UC Merced Planning Office, 2507 Heritage Drive, Building 1230, Atwater, or can be requested in hard copy or CD-ROM format by contacting the UC Merced Planning Office. The documents are also posted on the County of Merced webpage at www.ucmercedplanning.net.

The Draft and Final EIRs include extensive references to the UC Merced Site Selection EIR (SSEIR) and 2001 Comprehensive Alternatives Analysis (CAA). As allowed under Section 15150 of the CEQA Guidelines and as stated in the Draft EIR, UC Merced is incorporating by reference portions of the 1994 SSEIR (State Clearinghouse 94022033). Copies of the SSEIR and the 2001 CAA are available for inspection and review during normal business hours at the UC Merced Planning Office listed above.

The Regents of the University of California will certify the UC Merced Final EIR prior to approving the project. Other agencies may also use this EIR in their review and approval process.

1.2 FORMAT OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Final EIR is organized into three volumes. Volume 1 comprises five sections. This section provides general information relevant to the understanding and use of this document. Section 2 presents the index to comments received on the Draft EIR and where responses to those comments can be found in this Final EIR. Section 3 presents changes to the proposed LRDP and other project refinements. Section 4 presents the responses to comments received on the Draft EIR, which are organized by resource area. Section 5 provides a list of people who contributed to the preparation of this document, including UC Merced planning personnel, technical specialists and consultants, the production team, and other key individuals who assisted in the preparation and review of the Final EIR. Volume 2 comprises two sections. Section 6 presents a revised summary of impacts and mitigation measures, and Section 7 contains all changes to the text of the Draft EIR based on internal review and public and agency comments. Volume 3 presents the comment letters received on the Draft EIR and transcripts of the public meeting for the project.