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July 30, 2003

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## **STATE BUDGET CALLS FOR UC MERCED TO DELAY FULL OPENING OF CAMPUS TO 2005 ACADEMIC YEAR**

### **Construction, Faculty Hiring Proceeding**

MERCED, CA – The full opening of the University of California, Merced -- previously planned to serve 1,000 students in fall 2004 -- will be delayed as part of the budget accord reached today by the California state legislature. The budget awaits signature by Governor Gray Davis.

The fiscal '03/'04 budget calls for \$17.3 million in operational and one-time funds for UC Merced to continue creation of the physical and academic infrastructure of the new campus. However, this allocation is \$4 million less than had been requested by the Governor and \$7.3 million less than requested by the University in its annual budget request.

The budget language approved by the legislature includes the statement: "It is the intent of the Legislature that the \$4 million reduction made to this item pursuant to the 2003 Budget Act be for the purpose of delaying the opening of the UC Merced campus until 2005."

UC Merced Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey today said: "We thank the Legislature and the Governor for their support of the UC Merced project. Although we are disappointed by the delay, we are still moving forward to create the academic programs and student services needed to serve students in fall 2005. We will be looking to the Legislature to provide the resources in the next budget year to allow us to continue our mission."

Tomlinson-Keasey said that, given the delay, UC Merced will not serve undergraduate students in fall 2004. The University has a previous commitment to 120 transfer students participating in a special concurrent admissions program with Modesto Junior College, Merced College, and Fresno City College. The Chancellor said the University would work individually with these students to assist them in achieving their educational goals.

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Regarding graduate students, Tomlinson-Keasey said that UC Merced would accept graduate students in fall 2004, emulating UC San Diego, which in the 1960s started with graduate students only. Most of these students are doctoral candidates who will transfer as their faculty mentors join the UC Merced faculty. Faculty recruitment will continue this year toward the hiring of additional faculty in 2004-05 and 2005-06, said Tomlinson-Keasey. Sixty full-time faculty members must be on board by fall 2005 to serve the 1,000 students anticipated to be on campus at opening.

Meanwhile, construction of the new campus -- the 10<sup>th</sup> of the UC system -- is continuing, as the bulk of the \$280 million capital program was secured through lease revenue bond funding in 2001-02.

The construction will provide a much-needed economic stimulus to the San Joaquin Valley Region. Standard state estimates of economic activity indicate the project will create about 500 on-site construction jobs, 500 construction supply and support positions, and 500 jobs in the service industry.

“As we create the new campus, we will continue the tradition of excellence of the other UC campuses,” said Tomlinson-Keasey. “We are founding an academic institution that will serve generations of future Californians, and enhance access to the UC system. In addition, UC Merced will help transform the San Joaquin Valley.”

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