



### **Opportunity and Challenge Profile**

Search for the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management  
University of California, Merced  
Merced, CA

The University of California (UC) Merced, the youngest campus in the world-renowned University of California system, seeks an experienced and innovative strategist to serve as their inaugural Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management (Vice Chancellor). This is a remarkable moment in the history of UC Merced, as the campus recently completed a \$1.3 billion, 13-building expansion project ([Merced 2020 Project](#)) and has set a goal to reach 15,000 students by the early to mid-2030s. Reporting directly to the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor will have the tremendous opportunity to build a state-of-the-art enrollment management office that will foster growth and support the University's ambitious [Strategic Plan](#). They will be encouraged to be innovative and to engage in strategic risk-taking to craft and implement a vision for the recruitment, enrollment, retention, and success of a highly diverse student body and to competitively position UC Merced nationally and internationally for its next distinguished chapter of growth.

Opened to undergraduates in 2005, UC Merced was the first new UC campus in 40 years and the first American research university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. UC Merced was established purposefully to uplift educational, health, societal, environmental, and economic outcomes, and to build civic capacity in an underserved region. Drawing from the community and cultural wealth of its diverse, predominantly first-generation students, UC Merced seeks to promote excellence through equity and justice and honors a broad representation of backgrounds on the campus. UC Merced takes pride in its outstanding faculty and their highly prestigious research awards and scholarly publications. Their total contracts and grants multi-year budget exceeded \$300 million since the university's inception. In FY21, research expenditures were \$45.9M. UC Merced's approximately 300 ladder-rank faculty members have a wide range of interdisciplinary research interests and have won numerous awards.

After only a decade, UC Merced experienced a significant milestone, appearing in the U.S News & World Report rankings for the first time in 2017. UC Merced now ranks #28 among public universities and #60 overall among national universities, and #4 for creating social mobility and remains the youngest university in the top 100. UC Merced achieved R2 status (“doctoral-granting university with higher research activity,” per the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education) in record time, with plans to achieve R1 status very soon. Additionally, the campus has previously earned Carnegie’s prestigious Classification for Community Engagement and the Seal of Excelencia, a testament to its deep commitment to serving the Central Valley and a diverse student body. Since welcoming its first freshman class, UC Merced has grown in enrollment to approximately 8,400 undergraduate and 775 graduate students in its three schools: School of Engineering, School of Natural Sciences, and School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. More than 99% of undergraduates are from California. The campus has embarked on a plan to develop 20 new mid- to large-enrollment majors over the next few years, and it is already seeing the fruits of those efforts in spring 2024 application numbers.

Reporting to the Chancellor, and as a key member of the leadership team, the Vice Chancellor will have the opportunity to build an enrollment management office and identity for this young campus to become a destination of choice for an increasing number of prospective students within California and beyond. The Vice Chancellor will strategically utilize data and predictive analytics to increase the visibility of UC Merced and broadly enhance student matriculation and success efforts, especially working closely with the EVC/Provost, deans, and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. To be successful, the Vice Chancellor will bring a depth of experience that guides critical campus decision-making and continues to foster a culture of enrollment management as a university-wide responsibility. The Vice Chancellor will provide high-level strategy while leading a strong and dedicated team to address the following opportunities and challenges:

- Craft a compelling enrollment strategy that propels UC Merced’s growth agenda;
- Expand UC Merced’s visibility and appeal regionally, across California, nationally, and internationally;
- Cultivate an Enrollment Management team and infrastructure for excellence; and
- Work collaboratively in support of university-wide retention and student success efforts.

Isaacson, Miller, the national executive search firm, has been retained to support UC Merced in this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

### **The University of California, Merced**

UC Merced was founded as part of an effort to increase access to the UC system for California’s top achievers, enhance the UC’s presence within the rapidly growing San Joaquin Valley, and strengthen and diversify the economy of one of the world’s most productive agricultural regions by locating a major research university in the Valley. Following a careful and competitive selection process, the UC Board of Regents chose the site in eastern Merced County as the location for the 10th campus of the University of

California. Faculty members began to arrive in 2003, with the first graduate courses beginning in the fall of 2004, and the campus celebrated its official grand opening and the arrival of the first class of undergraduate students on September 5, 2005. Since UC Merced's doors opened, the UC system has continued to invest in the newest campus, most recently with significant financial support for the Merced 2020 Project campus expansion. A high level of disciplinary and interdisciplinary research by faculty and a strong graduate student presence on campus nourishes undergraduate learning. Much of this research focuses on problems of grave concern to California's Central Valley, thereby building a foundation for students to explore the ways that academic disciplines understand and grapple with society's problems.

The impact of UC Merced's rapid ascent reaches beyond its campus and continues to transform the region academically, economically, and environmentally. In its teaching and research, UC Merced maintains a focus on sustainability, diversity, and community. It leads the UC system in the percentage of students from underrepresented ethnic groups, low-income families, and families whose parents did not attend college and has been designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education. UC Merced is becoming well-known nationally for its state-of-the-art facilities and extensive growth plan, its talented and diverse student body, and its already well-established research programs in fields such as agricultural technology, biomedical and behavioral health sciences, climate sciences and sustainable environmental systems, inequality and social justice, and cognitive, computational and data sciences. UC Merced undergraduates experience education inside and outside the classroom, applying what they learn through undergraduate research, service learning, and leadership development. As apprentice scholars, graduate students build their understanding of and ability to conduct independent research in their chosen field as the groundwork for entering professional life. Lifelong learners continue to hone their knowledge and workplace skills.

Medical training recently launched this last fall at UC Merced. They welcomed their inaugural class of the San Joaquin Valley PRIME+ BS to MD pathway. Students in the pathway will complete their Bachelor of Science at UC Merced over four years, and then complete their Doctor of Medicine degree at UC Merced and UC San Francisco's Fresno campus over four years. UC Merced is accredited by the Licensing Committee on Medical Education to deliver medical education as a branch campus of the UCSF School of Medicine. UC Merced is committed to training diverse future health professionals prepared to serve their communities and promote health in the San Joaquin Valley.

Juan Sánchez Muñoz, UC Merced's fourth chancellor, began serving in May 2020. He launched UC Merced's first-ever comprehensive campaign, now halfway to its 2030 goal of \$200 million, and oversaw creation of its first Strategic Plan and a university rebranding. Enrollment has risen every year since 2020, has been ranked by national organizations. He has driven a project to increase the number of undergraduate program offerings, and to expand aggressive brand and admissions marketing throughout the region. Muñoz has also served on the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' Commission on Access, Diversity and Excellence, and is currently on the board of directors of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and the American Council on Education. He is a graduate of the Academy for Innovative Higher Education Leadership offered jointly by Arizona State and Georgetown Universities,

ACE's Spectrum Executive Leadership Program, Harvard University's Institute for Management and Leadership, UC Berkeley's Executive Leadership Academy and the University of Texas Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Policy's Governor's Executive Development Program.

The Chancellor understands the importance of positioning the chief enrollment officer for success, and he recently elevated the AVC for Enrollment Management role, previously housed under the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, to an inaugural Vice Chancellor position. The Office of International Affairs has also been moved from the EVC/Provost's portfolio into this Vice Chancellor's oversight, with a dotted line to the EVC/Provost, to integrate international recruitment and student support objectives into university-wide enrollment goals. Financial Aid and Scholarships also maintains a dotted line to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, and graduate enrollment is under the Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Education, who will work closely with this Vice Chancellor and deans to achieve enrollment goals.

To view UC Merced's enrollment growth, visit: <https://cie.ucmerced.edu/overall-enrollment-totals>.

### **Role of the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management**

The Vice Chancellor serves on the Chancellor's Cabinet and is a strategic and dynamic leader responsible for planning and leading broad-based initiatives that recruit, admit, and enroll an academically strong, diverse, and talented cohort of new first year, transfer, and international students. The Vice Chancellor will be responsible for bringing world-class enrollment management practices to ensure a holistic student experience, from application to graduation, in support of the University's Strategic Plan. This will involve overseeing the quality and integrity, resource acquisition and allocation, effective development of marketing and communication materials, and assessment of initiatives and activities. Further, the Vice Chancellor is accountable for meeting annual campus outreach objectives and enrollment targets with predictive analytics that will enhance the diversity of the student body, including historically underrepresented students, and the prominence of UC Merced nationally and internationally, while also managing expectations. The Vice Chancellor will work closely with the EVC/Provost, the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to integrate student success efforts and meet enrollment objectives for domestic and international students, and to a somewhat lesser extent with the Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Education and the Dean of Extension for assisting in the recruitment of other student populations.

The Vice Chancellor provides leadership, vision, and direction for a complex set of departments, including Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid & Scholarships, Enrollment Marketing & Communications, Registrar, Office of International Affairs, Students First Center, and Enrollment Management Systems & Analytics. The Vice Chancellor manages a team of 96 total employees, including 7 direct reports, an operating budget of approximately \$18M, and a total budget, including student financial aid scholarships, in excess of \$82M.

The Vice Chancellor will also collaborate with various campus and external organizations and stakeholders. This position has a high degree of public and legal accountability and coordinates and interacts with the University of California Office of the President, Community College Leadership, K-12 Leadership, Campus Deans and Associate Deans, Academic Senate representatives, and Directors of Administrative and Academic units.

The Vice Chancellor confers with and advises the Chancellor, serves on the Enrollment Steering Committee, represents UC Merced at system-wide enrollment meetings, and participates in various other campus, system-wide, and national committees. The admissions selection criteria and other policies related to admission and financial aid are set by an Academic Senate committee and this position is an ex-officio member of their Admission and Financial Aid Committee (AFAC), serving in an advisory capacity.

### **Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Vice Chancellor**

The Vice Chancellor will join UC Merced at a time of great opportunity as the university is in a period of rapid institutional growth and expanding academic programming. The University requires a robust, integrated enrollment function that will attract, yield, and ensure the success of an increasing number of students, especially students from historically underrepresented backgrounds and those who are the first in their families to attend college, to fulfill their mission and values. By serving in this inaugural role, the Vice Chancellor will have the opportunity to address the following:

#### ***Craft a compelling enrollment strategy that propels UC Merced growth agenda***

The Vice Chancellor will be charged with developing a comprehensive and creative enrollment plan that establishes short and long-term strategies for success, ensuring robust recruitment, yield, marketing, financial aid, and student success activities in alignment with the Strategic Plan. The Vice Chancellor will work closely with the Cabinet, especially the new EVC/Provost, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, Academic Senate, and deans, to identify areas for innovation and enrollment growth, bridging communications between faculty and enrollment marketing and examining divisional enrollment targets consistent with the mission, goals, and departmental strengths of the University in the context of anticipated market needs. The Vice Chancellor will work closely with campus partners to architect a robust campus enrollment office that can accurately examine, analyze, and forecast UC Merced's incoming and ongoing enrollment with appropriate data, make recommendations to the Chancellor, and implement changes tailored to attract first year, transfer, and international students. With success, the Vice Chancellor will assist in effectively advertising new and existing majors and foster a culture of university-wide responsibility for and active engagement in reaching enrollment objectives.

The Vice Chancellor will also work closely with the other UC chief enrollment officers and the University of California Office of the President around how best to leverage policies and protocols to support strategic growth and further distinguish UC Merced from the other campuses. Relying on a comprehensive understanding of market trends and prospective student development, the Vice Chancellor will ensure

the appropriate mix of in-state, out-of-state, and international first year and transfer students that honors the UC commitment of educating California while enhancing the socioeconomic, multicultural, and international diversity of UC Merced.

***Expand UC Merced's visibility and appeal regionally, across California, nationally, and internationally***

The Vice Chancellor will have the opportunity to create an ambitious and innovative recruitment strategy that will expand their reach and raise the university's profile as a destination of choice beyond the Central Valley. The Vice Chancellor will coordinate the development of effective enrollment and marketing strategies that communicate a distinctive identity for UC Merced, promote the strengths of each school, as well as the university as a whole, and articulate a compelling message for why prospective students should attend UC Merced over its competition. This will involve actively engaging constituents across the academic enterprise to craft their stories and promote awareness of the university's many attributes nationally and internationally.

The Vice Chancellor will also evaluate, augment, and adapt admissions recruitment strategies regularly to ensure UC Merced is disbursing resources efficiently and effectively. This will include a deep analysis and adaptation of their national strategy, creating and building an international recruitment strategy, nurturing current pipeline and educational programs, fostering new, mutually beneficial partnerships in California and beyond, and working closely with the Academic Senate to help ensure the matriculation of a talented and diverse student body. Participation in national and international forums, including professional associations and conferences, will be expected to highlight UC Merced's impressive story and to share up-to-date knowledge about trends and best practices in higher education recruitment and enrollment strategies.

***Cultivate an Enrollment Management team and infrastructure for excellence***

This newly elevated Vice Chancellor role will focus on strategy while effectively integrating a diverse collection of offices of talented and passionate staff around a common goal of improved enrollment management efforts. While many units already work together on a daily basis, they are eager for further integration through strategic visioning and planning. Upon arrival, the Vice Chancellor will determine how best to support current needs and plan for the appropriate infrastructure and resources necessary to support future enrollment growth, a greater emphasis on retention for enrollment management, and continued exemplary customer service. Recognizing current and likely future challenges, such as the "demographic cliff," the Vice Chancellor will provide leadership that rests on careful assessment of data, knowledge of trends and best practices in the field, and a willingness to think creatively about how best to reach institutional goals. The Vice Chancellor will be expected to advocate for additional resources through the use of data and benchmarking as enrollment grows. The Vice Chancellor will encourage professional development, information sharing, innovation, and best practices to build, mentor, nurture, and lead a strong and nimble team in a competitive market. This will entail informal and formalized professional development opportunities, spearheading and supporting additional training and guidance

where needed. The Vice Chancellor will be a bridge-builder, connecting EM units to other units across campus to promote collaborative enrollment efforts and the resources necessary to be successful, including technology and data analytics for an efficient, effective, and cohesive EM office.

***Work collaboratively in support of university-wide retention and student success efforts***

As the chief enrollment officer, the Vice Chancellor will also serve as a key catalyst and convener across campus for the success of a talented and diverse student body. The Vice Chancellor will promote UC Merced's culture of care for students, starting from a smooth handoff to the offices involved with orientation, to providing seamless support in financial aid, advising, and other forms of holistic and academic support. This will require working closely with the EVC/Provost and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to broaden, enhance, and coordinate efforts, including support for international students and other programming within the Office of International Affairs, including encouraging study abroad and faculty-led research exchange opportunities. The Vice Chancellor will facilitate dialogue around barriers to student success, and work creatively with faculty, staff, and other administrators to find solutions while also encouraging creativity and new ideas across the University. This will also include working closely with the Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Education for achieving overall enrollment objectives. In addition, the Vice Chancellor will work collaboratively to effectively plan and budget for changes in enrollment and financial aid by communicating strategic enrollment decisions broadly and forecasting the resources necessary to accomplish their goals.

**Qualifications and Characteristics**

The successful candidate will be an innovative and collaborative enrollment management leader with a distinctive record of achievement, including expertise in designing, implementing, and managing broad enrollment strategies. Additionally, candidates will possess the following minimum, and many of the preferred, qualifications and personal characteristics:

**Minimum Qualifications**

- Master's Degree or higher, and 8 years or more of university admissions or enrollment management experience (including 5 years or more of supervisor/manager experience) at an institution of comparable size and complexity.
- Interpersonal skills, public relations experience, and political acumen to interact effectively with the media, to represent the campus at regional, UC-wide, and statewide levels, and to work collaboratively and inclusively with a variety of diverse audiences and constituencies.
- Experience in fiscal management, human resource management, policy development, strategic planning, supervision, conflict management, data-driven decision-making, and organizational problem-solving.
- Experience leading organizational planning and management strategy meetings, providing a broad perspective, and thinking strategically with experience balancing policy and practice.



- Experience with highly selective undergraduate admissions recruitment, operations and programs.
- Experience with technology and systems to identify and articulate the technology needs of the organization.
- Ability to solicit constructive input from and develop eventual consensus among groups and constituencies with differing priorities and perspectives; strong background in facilitating and cultivating collaborations among campus groups and departments; and experience designing and implementing creative solutions to problems.

#### Preferred Qualifications

- Experience designing and championing innovative programs that increase diversity and address barriers that adversely impact low-income, first-generation, and students of color.
- Experience developing transfer receptive pathways and increasing transfer student success in collaboration with community colleges.
- Experience establishing partnerships with retention and student success programs to effectively support students.
- Experience in a higher education environment with strong shared governance and a dual focus on research and teaching.
- Knowledge of the critical functions and federal, state and UC systemwide policies related to HSI and Minority-Serving Institution status, Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid and Scholarships and University Registrar.

#### Compensation and Location

The University of California, Merced is required to provide a reasonable estimate of the compensation range for this role. This range takes into account the wide range of factors that are considered in making compensation decisions including but not limited to experience, skills, knowledge, abilities, education, licensure and certifications, and other business and organizational needs. It is not typical for an individual to be offered a salary at or near the top of the range for a position. Salary offers are determined based on final candidate qualifications and experience. The full salary range for this position is \$144,500 - \$292,100. The budgeted salary range that the University reasonably expects to pay for this position is \$250,000 - \$290,000.

The UC Merced Campus is located three miles from downtown Merced, California, about an hour north of Fresno, two hours south of Sacramento, and two hours southeast of the San Francisco Bay Area and Silicon Valley. As the county seat, the city of Merced is a highly diverse and youthful city that is home to theaters, galleries, museums, numerous restaurants, and frequent cultural events. The campus is located adjacent to Lake Yosemite, an ideal setting for swimming, walking, barbecues, or other activities. Merced is known as the "Gateway to Yosemite," and it is common for students to take the ninety-minute trip to



Yosemite National Park to hike, snowboard, rock climb, and camp overnight. To learn more about Merced, please see <http://www.cityofmerced.org>.

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters and statements of contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-california-merced/vice-chancellor-enrollment-management>.

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