Welcome to UC Merced
Welcome to the University of California, Merced and to the Graduate Division! This is the beginning of a truly new and exciting time in your educational career, and I am pleased that you will be joining us in Fall 2011.

As a newly admitted graduate student at the 10th campus of the University of California system, you will work closely with world-class faculty, impact our research and scholarly programs, and help to build the campus spirit, culture and traditions. In essence you will help to lay the strong foundations of UC Merced as the campus grows into a world-class research university.

To assist you as you prepare to begin your graduate studies, this reference guide provides some essential information about what you will need to do before the beginning of the semester. Our website at graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu contains links to information and resources you will need throughout your graduate studies.

As an advocate for graduate students, Graduate Division is here to support you in your academic career. We look forward to meeting you in August at orientation. Should you have questions about orientation or your admission to UC Merced, please feel free to contact us at 209-228-4723.

Sincerely,

SAMUEL J. TRAINA
Dean, Division of Graduate Studies
Q: When is orientation?
A: Graduate and Research Orientation Week or GROW begins Thursday, August 18, 2011. For more information visit gradlife.ucmerced.edu.

Q: What do I need to do first?
A: For an easy to follow checklist of important things to do, please visit gradlife.ucmerced.edu/orientation/checklist.

Q: Is there additional paperwork that I must complete before arriving to campus?
A: You must submit your Statement of Intent to Register (SIR), Statement of Legal Residence, Complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or immigrants only) and submit your final transcripts (if applicable) before arriving to campus. For additional information on each item, visit: gradlife.ucmerced.edu/orientation/checklist.

Q: How do I register?
A: You will register for classes during GROW after consulting with your faculty advisor. You can register online by logging on to the UC Merced Portal at my.ucmerced.edu and selecting the "My Registration" link on the right hand side. Contact your faculty advisor for help with course requirements.

Q: How do I apply for employment?
A: You can apply for a teaching assistantship or additional employment at UC Merced by selecting the “Employment” link from the main website http://www.ucmerced.edu. For a list of teaching assistantship positions visit jobs.ucmerced.edu/n/academic/listings.jsf?seriesId=5.

Q: How do I get financial aid?
A: Complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid by visiting http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/ (U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or immigrants only).

Q: I’m an international student. Is there anything else I must do?
A: Yes. For detailed information, please visit iss.ucmerced.edu.

Q: How do I find housing?
A: UC Merced does not currently offer on-campus housing for graduate students. For a list of off-campus housing resources please visit gradlife.ucmerced.edu.

Q: I won't have a car, how do I get to campus and around town?
A: UC Merced's Transportation and Parking Services will provide you with transportation options. For information visit taps.ucmerced.edu.

Q: Will I have health insurance?
A: Yes. For detailed information on Graduate student health insurance please visit: health.ucmerced.edu/insurance/graduate-student-info.

Q: What's it like to live in Merced?
A: Visit gradlife.ucmerced.edu for a listing of community information.

Q: How can I meet other graduate students?
A: Find out ways to get involved both on and off campus by visiting gradlife.ucmerced.edu/get-involved.
Orientation

Graduate and Research Orientation Week (GROW) provides a number of orientations that will be helpful to you as you begin your graduate studies at UC Merced. GROW begins on Thursday, August 18, 2011 and ends on Wednesday, August 24, 2011.

- All incoming graduate students are required to report on Thursday, August 18 at 9:00 a.m. for semester preparation.
- Fall 2011 semester instruction begins Thursday, August 25, 2011.
- All new students are required to participate in all orientations included in the GROW schedule.
- Micro-teaching and International Student Orientation are for international students only.

GROW Schedule:

**Thursday, August 18 at 9 a.m. | Graduate Division Orientation:**
Graduate Division Orientation is Thursday, August 18, 2011. During orientation you will have the opportunity to meet with faculty, graduate students and staff members, while learning about and familiarizing yourself with various student services available to graduate students.

**Thursday, August 18 at 2 p.m. | Graduate Group Orientation:**
Graduate Group Orientation will introduce you to the faculty, staff and fellow graduate students you will be working with throughout your academic career.

**Friday, August 19 and Tuesday, August 23 | International Student Micro-Teaching:**
Any international graduate student whose first language is not English must demonstrate proficiency in English before assuming teaching responsibilities. International teaching assistants (ITAs) will participate in an on-campus micro-teaching that takes approximately 30 minutes. Arrangements should be made with the coordinator of the English Language Institute or with the graduate group coordinator of your school.

**Friday, August 19 at 1 p.m. | International Student Orientation:**
International Student Orientation is mandatory for all new international students in F-1 visa status. Continuing international students interested in hearing F-1 visa regulations once more are welcome to join.

**Friday, August 19 at 3 p.m. | School of Natural Sciences Orientation:**
The School of Natural Sciences Orientation is mandatory for students in the Applied Math, Physics-Chemistry, and Quantitative and Systems Biology groups. This meeting will provide an overview of the School’s business procedures, introduce key roles and responsibilities within the School, and clarify the steps that graduate students need to take for success during their first semester.

**Monday, August 22 at 8 a.m. | Teaching Assistant Orientation:**
Each year, the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence sponsors an orientation for all Teaching Assistants. TA orientation will introduce you to your role as a teaching assistant and its importance in your academic and professional career. You will learn from experienced TAs and gain insight and knowledge on how to be successful as both student and teacher.
Tuesday, August 23 at 8 a.m. | Natural Sciences Supplemental Teaching Assistant Orientation:

Graduate students who will be working as Teaching Assistants in selected disciplines (including but not limited to Chemistry, Math, and Physics) are required to attend a mandatory discipline-specific orientation meeting. Individuals who are required to attend will be notified separately.

Wednesday, August 24 at 8:30 a.m. | Graduate Student Services Orientation:

Graduate Student Services hosts a day of orientation during GROW. You are required to attend all sessions, excluding the TA union workshop which is optional. If you do not attend any of the sessions you will be required to attend the missed session during the Fall 2011 semester.

UC Merced Portal

The UC Merced Portal is the primary website for UC Merced students. All student services (admission, registration, financial aid, etc.) are accessed by logging onto the UC Merced Portal. It is designed to provide fast, authenticated access to the applications and resources used most often by students.

Creating your UC Merced Portal ID

You must create your UCMNetID (also known as UCMNetID) before you can access any student services (admission, registration, financial aid, etc.). In order to do so, please visit my.ucmerced.edu and click on the “First Time Users (applicants)” link to establish your UCMNetID. If you encounter a technical issue you can contact the IT Help Desk via email at helpdesk@ucmerced.edu or call 209-228-HELP (4357).

When establishing your UCMNetID, you will need to supply the login ID you created when you applied online for graduate admission. If you do not have your admission login ID, contact Graduate Division at 209-228-4723.

Contact Information

Your contact information is very important to us. Before your UC Merced email address is activated, all information will be sent to the email address you listed on your graduate admission application.

It is important that you submit updated information to us as soon as possible so we have your most current contact information.

Mail will be sent to the address you provided on your application until you update your information. Students may update their address information by logging onto the UC Merced portal and accessing “MyStudentRecord” and selecting “Personal Information.” Alternatively, students may submit an Address Change form to change your contact information to the Office of the Registrar. The Change of Address Change form is provided at registrar.ucmerced.edu/resources/forms.

International students are requested NOT to change their addresses information online. All international students must contact the Office of International Affairs to update their address information. The Office of International Affairs is located on the first floor of the Kolligian Library, KL 101.

Email Address

Your UC Merced email address will be used as the primary tool for communication with you as a UC Merced student. Please check this email address often throughout the academic year.
Advising

Once admitted you will be assigned a faculty advisor who will assist you in important matters such as choosing classes, registration and arriving on campus. If you have yet to speak with your faculty advisor, please contact your Graduate Group Coordinator:

**School of Natural Science**
CARRIE KING
cking7@ucmerced.edu
209-228-4673

**School of Engineering**
TOMIKO HALE
thale2@ucmerced.edu
209-228-4586

**School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts**
MITCH YLARREGUI
mylarregui@ucmerced.edu
209-228-4105

California Residency – Statement of Legal Residence

All newly admitted students MUST complete the online Statement of Legal Residence questionnaire. You must complete and submit the questionnaire no later than June 15, 2011 to be eligible to enroll in classes. You can access this questionnaire via the MyUCMerced Portal (my.ucmerced.edu). The questionnaire is listed under the “My Checklist” section. Any questions regarding residency requirements can be directed to Angelica Guillen, Residency Deputy, via email at aguillen3@ucmerced.edu or by phone at 209-228-2734.

Registration and Enrollment

As a graduate student, you do not register during summer break. You will register for courses after meeting with your faculty advisor during GROW. You will be unable to register for courses unless you’ve created your UCMNetID.

**Fees:** Registration fees are due on Wednesday, August 17, 2011. Students whose registration fees are not paid and who are not enrolled in at least one course by Tuesday, August 16, 2011 will be subject to a $50 late registration fee. Fees and other university charges are accessible through the UC Merced Portal (my.ucmerced.edu), under the “MyBill” link. Registration functions are accessible through the “My Registration” link on my.ucmerced.edu. Questions? Contact the Office of the Registrar at registrar@ucmerced.edu or 209-228-2734.

**Add/Drop Courses:** You can add or drop courses prior to the deadlines specified by the Office of the Registrar. Forms are available on registrar.ucmerced.edu.

International Students

Almost every international student planning to attend UC Merced will require an F-1 visa to enter the United States. UC Merced's Office of International Affairs (OIA) will send you information about the visa application process and will issue you a Form I-20 that you will need when apply for non-immigrant student visa at a U.S. Consulate or Embassy. For students already in the U.S. on a non-immigrant visa type, contact OIA for instructions on transferring or changing your visa status.

With the F-1 visa, you are permitted to enter the United States up to 30 days before your program start date – the program start date is Thursday, August 18, 2011 for the Fall 2011 semester. Please make an appointment to check in at the International Center in the Kolligian Library room 101 when you arrive at UC Merced. You must also attend the mandatory International Student Orientation on Friday, August 19 during GROW week.

For information and assistance, contact International Student Advisor Suki Nawaz at 209-228-4736 or by email her at snawaz@ucmerced.edu.
International Students – Microteaching

Most international graduate students will have completed a form of English fluency evaluation before arriving in Merced – either by completing the TOEFL iBT Speaking section or the Versant for English test. All arriving students will also participate in an interview and, if needed, a microteaching event with language professionals from the English Language Institute.

In addition to this evaluation of English fluency, all international graduate students will participate in an orientation to the U.S. educational structure, and UC Merced’s culture and student population, in particular. This orientation will provide graduate students with a clear understanding of the comparisons and contrasts that exist between their own educational backgrounds (and pedagogical expectations), and those of the UC Merced undergraduates. Before arriving on the campus of UC Merced, international graduate students will receive specific information about the interview and orientation dates, as well as any deadlines and procedures they must meet for language testing.

For information on Microteaching contact Belinda Braunstein at 209-228-4762 or by email at bbraunstein@ucmerced.edu.

Final Transcripts

If your admission letter stated submission of final transcripts or additional information was needed, you are granted one semester to submit these documents. Failure to do so will cause a hold to be placed on your records and your continued status as a graduate student could be affected. Official transcripts should be mailed to 5200 N Lake Rd, Merced, CA 95343, attention Graduate Division.

Employment

To apply for a Teaching Assistantship please visit jobs.ucmerced.edu/n/academic/choose_series.jsf. You will find TA positions listed under the “Academic Student Employee” link. All applications must be received online. Contact your faculty advisor for position details. For additional campus employment check out the Human Resources website at www.ucmerced.edu/jobs.

Financial Aid

Graduate students who are U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or immigrants are required to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Several types of need-based financial support may be made available to you. The funding agreement made in your letter of offer will not affect your award eligibility through FAFSA. An Offer of Financial Assistance will be available electronically as soon as your file has gone through the awarding process. A postcard will be mailed to you when your awards are ready to view online, or you may simply visit the above web site on a regular basis to check for updated information.

How to View Your Award Information: To view your award information electronically, go to my.ucmerced.edu and login to the “My Financial Aid” section of the UC Merced Portal. In the “My Financial Aid” section, click “My Requirements” to review and satisfy all outstanding requirements and to view and accept or decline awards online. Please note that the Offer of Financial Assistance is based on the information submitted on the FAFSA. If for any reason the information submitted on the FAFSA is not correct, your offer of financial assistance will be revised.
**External Fellowships Scholarships and Awards:** Outside financial assistance may effect your financial aid package. Please notify the office of Financial Aid of any external fellowships, scholarships and/or awards you expect to receive. All sources of institutional and outside assistance must be reported and coordinated in accordance with federal, state and institutional guidelines. If those sources are reported to UC Merced after the initial offer is made, a reduction of UC Merced or other funds may result. A revised offer may be necessary upon receipt of additional information. For more information about financing your program log onto the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships website at financialaid.ucmerced.edu or email at finaid@ucmerced.edu or call at 209-228-4243.

**Graduate Student Health Insurance (GSHIP)**

All graduate students are automatically enrolled and billed for health, dental and vision insurance. Learn about your plan benefits at http://health.ucmerced.edu. A waiver of insurance will be granted to any student who has comparable insurance. You may access the Waiver Application form online beginning May 10, 2010 through the UC Merced Portal page at my.ucmerced.edu. You must have your UCMNetID to complete the application. Waivers must be completed no later than 11:59 p.m. on August 8, 2011. Contact Greg Spurgeon at 209-228-2273 or health@ucmerced.edu for questions.

**Graduate Student Association (GSA)**

The Graduate Student Association represents the graduate student body of the University of California, Merced. GSA members work on graduate student issues. Members establish communication and cooperation bridges between UC Merced administration and graduate students. GSA members are graduate students of UC Merced and officers are elected by graduate students every year during the fall semester. GSA functions as an independent association from the UC Merced undergraduate government, also known as the Associated Students. For more information about GSA, please visit gradlife.ucmerced.edu/grad-student-association.

**Cat Card**

The Cat Card is the official UC Merced identification card. All students, faculty, and staff affiliated with the university are required to carry the CatCard for identification. The CatCard features a digitized photo, SmartChip, and magnetic stripe.

There will be time allocated during Graduate Division Orientation to obtain your CatCard.

To obtain your CatCard please visit the CatCard office, located on the first floor of the Kolligian Library building, room 119. You must bring a government or state issued photograph identification such as a driver’s license, state identification card, or passport.

**Off-Campus Housing**

UC Merced does not currently provide on-campus housing for graduate students. The UC Merced campus is located northeast of Merced. When searching for housing, use the UC Merced address for proximity of location: 5200 Lake Road, Merced, CA 95343.

However, there are many off-campus housing options in the community. Students can choose from a wide variety of options including condos, houses, room rentals, and apartments.

For a list of off-campus housing options, please visit gradlife.ucmerced.edu.

**Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS)**

TAPS provides on-campus parking permits, operates the CatTracks Shuttle and coordinates carpool programs. The CatTracks Shuttle provides daily shuttle service between the main campus and Castle Research Facilities. Regular service to The Villages apartments, the Merced Mall, and other popular venues, such as, Millennium Sports Club and local movie theaters is provided on the shuttle’s downtown route as well.

Parking permits are required if parking on campus. You may purchase a parking permit online at epay.ucmerced.edu. You will be asked to enter your UCMNetID and password you created. For more information about transportation and parking permit rates for students, please visit Transportation and Parking Services at taps.ucmerced.edu.
In addition, Merced’s county bus transit system, “The Bus” offers both regularly scheduled fixed routes and dial-a-ride transit services throughout all of Merced County. For more information visit taps.ucmerced.edu.

Although transportation from surrounding airports to UC Merced is not available, students can use Greyhound bus or Amtrak rail services from the Fresno Yosemite International Airport, located one hour south, or the San Francisco International Airport, located two hours west of the City of Merced. For more information visit taps.ucmerced.edu and click on the “Alternative Transportation” link.

**Living in Merced**

From the cultural diversity of the San Joaquin Valley to the ecological diversity of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Yosemite National Park, living in Merced offers access to a range of opportunities. There are a number of natural, cultural and recreational resources within a 1-4 hour drive of the campus. Windsurfing, hiking, major sports events, ski slopes, beaches, giant sequoias and even subterranean gardens are all within driving distance. Visit www.ucmerced.edu/community for a listing of attractions.

**Having Fun**

Campus recreation: The UC Merced Campus Recreation program is the location for fun, fitness and friendship on campus. Through its five programming areas, Campus Recreation provides opportunities for recreational and competitive sports, group and individual fitness opportunities, great adventures in the outdoors, outdoor education programs and free recreation. There’s something for everyone in Campus Recreation; all of the programs and services offered are developed for all skill and ability levels, so you can find the right program for you!

The Joseph Edward Gallo Recreation & Wellness Center is home to Campus Recreation and to the Student Health Center. In the recreation center, you’ll find a group exercise room for activities such as aerobics, Pilates and yoga. There is also a large exercise room full of cardio equipment, free weights and circuit training equipment. Distributed cardio equipment around the facility allows you to enjoy the campus views as you work out, and the “cardio theatre” system allows you to enjoy television while you exercise. In the NCAA basketball sized gymnasium, you can play basketball, volleyball and badminton. Lockers and showers are also available.

**Intramural Sports**

Intramural Sports offer a great way to have fun and meet new people. The intramural program has a wide variety of activities from traditional teams, such as flag football, volleyball, basketball and soccer to some non-traditional sports such as dodge ball, kickball and horseshoes.

Intramural Sports has options for people of all skill and competitive levels. Our leagues are structured into men’s, women’s and coed leagues, and in most sports we offer different leagues based upon competitive/skill levels. Best of all, you don’t have to spend all your time in practice! You can play intramural sports with as little as a one hour per week commitment.

**Questions**

If you have further questions about your transition to UC Merced, please contact Graduate Division at graddiv@ucmerced.edu or call 209-228-4723. You may also contact Graduate Student Services at gradlife@ucmerced.edu or call 209-228-4621.