

September 29, 2021

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Dear Co-Chairs of ARCS Foundation University Relations Committee:

1. Request

On behalf of ARCS Northern California Chapter (ARCS NCC), I am honored to present our Chapter's request for approval of the University of California, Merced (UC Merced or UCM) to become our newest partner university. We also request that the three departments put forward by UC Merced, Environmental Systems, Physics, and Cognitive and Information Sciences, be approved for funding.

Our request for approval for UC Merced is supported by a majority of the active membership as required by ARCS Foundation University Relations Manual, section F. 2.2 Approval Forms, subsection 2, Approval Form B:

Request for approval requires a majority vote of the Chapter's active membership.

Pursuant to our Chapter's By-Laws and in compliance with California law governing non-profit organizations, ballots were sent and received by electronic mail during the voting period September 15, 2021 to 11:59 p.m. PDT September 24, 2021. Out of 146 members who comprise the active membership, 105 members voted in favor and 2 members voted against. Our members overwhelmingly approve of adding UC Merced as a partner as does our Board, which was unanimous in its support.

The three departments were voted on individually by the ARCS NCC University Relations Assessment Committee and the ARCS NCC Board. The department on Form B, Environmental Systems, received unanimous support from both the Assessment Committee and the Board. Physics and Cognitive and Information Sciences only had one opposing vote each all told. Again, there was overwhelming support for adding these three departments.

2. Background

Since its founding 16 years ago in 2005, UC Merced has been on a constant upward trajectory and has experienced a meteoric rise, all reflecting the vision, the resources and the support of the Regents of the University of California, the governing body of arguably the best public university system in the United States. As is set forth in more detail in the attached documents, UC Merced has emerged as a leading STEM research university ranking 93rd of all U.S. universities in the recently released US News and World Report 2022 rankings and No. 38 of U.S. public universities. One of the more interesting rankings is that of *Times Higher Education Young University Rankings*. It ranked UC Merced as No. 3 among United States universities younger than 50 years. Of particular interest is that the top two (George Mason University and Rush University) are about to "age out" of being "young" universities as each became independent or was founded in 1972 whereas UC Merced is a mere 16 years "young."

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While UC Merced is deserving of becoming an ARCS partner based on its academics and research alone, it brings to ARCS and to our chapter an added benefit: it has the most diverse student body of any University of California campus; 73% of its undergraduate students are first in their family to go to college as are 48% of its graduate students; and 53% of its students are Hispanic.

Bruce Alberts, the former President of the National Academy of Science, commented on this aspect of UC Merced, following his 2017 official site visit to evaluate its biology sciences program. In addition to being impressed overall with the caliber of the faculty and the program, he wrote:

We commended the faculty for their dedication to serving first-generation students, and for getting them into research experiences early in their education trajectory. Especially today, when increasing the diversity of those who do science has suddenly become a major goal of the entire US scientific community, UC Merced stands out in my mind for its focus on this important issue.

By adding UC Merced as a partner, ARCS NCC has the rare opportunity to support a new and diverse cohort of qualified scholars who will be part of the changing face of science in America.

3. Attachments

Please see the attached documents:

- a. Timeline — ARCS NCC / UC Merced
- b. ARCS Foundation University Relations Approval Form B—UC Merced and the Environmental Systems Graduate Group
- c. ARCS Foundation University Relations Approval Form A—Physics Graduate Group
- d. ARCS Foundation University Relations Approval Form A—Cognitive and Information Sciences Department
- e. UC Merced: Application to become an ARCS Partner University & Summary Information for the University and the Three Departments
- f. Application of UC Merced to become a Partner University with ARCS - Highlights at your Fingertips & FAQs

In addition, please use this link to participate in the March 2021 Virtual Campus Visit to UC Merced:

<https://youtu.be/weVCgHhD1Jg>

4. Conclusion

ARCS NCC is extremely energized about this opportunity and is excited about the prospect of being part of UC Merced's journey in academic and research excellence. We urge the ARCS Foundation University Relations Committee and the ARCS Foundation Board to approve UC Merced as an ARCS partner and to approve the three departments for funding.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Callander
President, ARCS NCC