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"We've really made efforts to make design and art the forefront of our buildings, because with good design comes good quality living," says Javier Cuadros, Vice President of Development for The Related Group. "That is why we are always partnering up with the best designers and the best architects we can find."

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Masterplan

Building Academic Inspiration

A university redevelopment is creating a first-class research institute in California's rural heartland

University California - Merced

DIRECTOR,
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS
Richard Cummings

WEBSITE
merced2020.ucmerced.edu

LOCATION
Merced, California

The University of California, Merced is in the process of reinventing and redefining its campus, transforming it into a truly 21st century learning environment.

The historic \$1.3 billion expansion, called Merced 2020, promises to make the university one of the West Coast's top research hubs. The 1.2 million gross square-foot effort will double the campus's footprint over the next three years.

"UC Merced is a critical component of the university system meeting its mandate to provide access for California's high school students," says Richard Cummings, Director of Strategic Communications for UC Merced. "This comprehensive development program will address housing needs, research needs and infrastructure needs, all at one time."



The Merced 2020 expansion will increase the university's capacity from 7,300 students to 10,000 students. UC Merced will also hire about 140 new faculty members to meet increased demands.

REDEFINING A CAMPUS

The city of Merced sits in the heart of the rural Central Valley, a region famed for its fruit and nut production and strong agricultural heritage. The new influx of students and faculty members will enhance the university's role within the UC system.

According to Cummings, new faculty brought into UC Merced will help the university build on its growing reputation as a significant technology and energy research hub.

"These are faculty members who will be doing research in everything from renewable energy to drone technology to all types of engineering and the social sciences," he says. "The goal is to accelerate the university's academic trajectory as rapidly as possible. Having these facilities, these labs and these amenities will attract undergraduate students and graduate students."

Upon completion of the Merced 2020 development, the campus will have 13 new structures. The capital improvements are part of a larger strategy to enhance UC Merced's overall performance.

"When research universities have strong graduate programs tied to top-rated faculty, they are

THE HVIDT GROUP

The Hvidt Group was an early stage advisor to UC Merced leadership assisting in the definition of the project, the approach, the recruitment of the external team of subject matter experts, the integration of the external team with the internal stakeholders, the transaction structure and the procurement documents. The transaction closed in July 2016 and is currently under construction.



The Hvidt Group

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The Hvidt Group and Higher Education:

The Hvidt Group assists campus leadership simplifies complex development opportunities into manageable pieces. They then mobilized, mentor and motivate teams of highly skilled and talented people into an environment where they collaborate, communicate and commit to define and execute strategies that addressed the issues before them. Their experience demonstrates that the depth of the work done on the front end of a project results in a more efficient procurement and development partner selection and engagement process.

Services:

P3 procurement advisory; project definition, development of "The Story"; transaction structure advisory; management, leadership and coordination of teams of subject matter experts including those from the financial, design, engineering, environmental, legal, construction, operations and maintenance sectors; coordination of internal and external stakeholder engagement; coordination of procurement process; integration of internal and external team members into highly effective team.



"You will find lots of corrugated steel, concrete, glass and stucco," Cummings says. "The designers have used that palate to make this place feel like it's from this region, while still being inspiring and contemplative."

Mixed-use design elements are also present in the Merced 2020 development.

"The ground floors of all of our housing buildings now include classrooms and retail space," Cummings says. "It will be sort of this mixed environment where everyone is always teaching, everyone is always learning and everyone is really engaged in the academic mission."

According to Cummings, UC Merced is the only public university in the United States with LEED® Gold or Platinum certification for every structure on its campus. It has been a key focus throughout the construction of Merced 2020.

"We are continuing our leadership in sustainability through this project," Cummings says.

more likely to move forward in their academic goals," Cummings says.

The local economy is experiencing a substantial boost thanks to the projects happening at UC Merced, as well. And, after construction is complete, the influx of students and faculty will provide a substantial, long-term impact.

"We anticipate about \$1.9 billion of economic impact within the region," Cummings says. "After the program is complete, we anticipate about \$200 million a year in impact from the project."

The benefits that will come from the additional students who will be able to obtain degrees thanks to UC Merced's expansion is a more difficult number to quantify.

"More than 70 percent of our students are the first in their families to attend a four-year university," Cummings says. "When they graduate, they will have acquired skills that are in demand by the job market, which will lead to greater social mobility over the long term."

INSPIRING AND INSPIRED DESIGN

Architecturally, the new buildings on campus will echo the aesthetic of Merced's agricultural community.

Through the public-private partnership model the university is using to develop the new buildings, a private developer, Plenary Properties Merced, is joining with the UC system. As part of its contract, Plenary is also responsible for preventative maintenance and capital renewal on all the new structures over the next few decades.

"Not only are we building the facilities today, but we are also guaranteeing that they will be operating at peak condition for up to 35 years after they are delivered," Cummings says.

This model, and its scale, is unique among higher learning institutions.

"This is a new way for public institutions to begin taking a more holistic approach to their capital facilities," Cummings says. "We are really happy to be a pioneer within this field of higher education."

The public-private partnership employed with the Merced 2020 project could serve as a model for future institutional redevelopment projects throughout the United States.

"I think that it's a reaffirmation of the state of California's commitment to higher education," Cummings says. "It is a path forward for public institutions across the country." ■