

Dean, School of Natural Sciences
University of California Merced

Direct Link: <https://www.AcademicKeys.com/r?job=260417>

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Posted Jul. 30, 2025, set to expire Nov. 22, 2025

Job Title Dean, School of Natural Sciences
Department Natural Sciences
Institution University of California Merced
Merced, California

Date Posted Jul. 30, 2025

Application Deadline 12/28/2025
Position Start Date Available immediately

Job Categories Dean
Professor

Academic Field(s) Natural Sciences
Sciences - General

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Job Description

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Position overview

Position title: Dean, School of Natural Sciences

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Salary range: \$340,000-370,000

Percent time: 100%

Anticipated start: July 1, 2026, or sooner if available

Review timeline: First review of applicants begins September 8, 2025. Open until filled.

Position duration: Permanent

Application Window

Open date: July 23, 2025

Next review date: Monday, Sep 8, 2025 at 11:59pm (Pacific Time)

Apply by this date to ensure full consideration by the committee.

Final date: Sunday, Dec 28, 2025 at 11:59pm (Pacific Time)

Applications will continue to be accepted until this date, but those received after the review date will only be considered if the position has not yet been filled.

Position description

The University of California (UC), Merced invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean of the School of Natural Sciences (SNS). A campus with high ambitions and increasing impact, UC Merced has earned R1, Student Access and Opportunity, and Community Engagement designations by the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education Institutions. It is the only public, land-grant institution currently holding all three designations. The university was recently ranked 26th nationally among public universities by US News and World Report, 1st in the nation for social mobility and 18th overall by the Wall Street Journal, and 1st in the nation among young universities by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

The next SNS Dean will lead this unique school into an exciting new era as it continues to grow, champion inclusive excellence, and distinguish itself within the UC system and among research universities globally. The new SNS Dean will join a thriving learning and scholarly community at a pivotal time, with the opportunity to facilitate its ongoing development and ensure its continued rise. The SNS Dean will need to be a gifted academic leader who will work closely with SNS faculty and staff and the broader campus community to continue developing the school as a magnet for high-

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caliber students from diverse backgrounds, talented faculty and staff, and a respected center for research addressing major global challenges as well as pressing regional needs.

UC Merced and the School of Natural Sciences

Opened to undergraduates in 2005, UC Merced was the first new University of California campus in 40 years, and the first American research university of the twenty-first century. UC Merced now ranks #26 among public universities (#58 overall among national universities) in the top 100 U.S. News & World Report rankings and #5 among public universities (#18 overall among national universities) in the Wall Street Journal America's Best Colleges rankings. We are proud that our campus is recognized as #1 in the nation for social mobility by the Wall Street Journal. In 2025, UC Merced achieved R1 classification by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Since welcoming our inaugural first-year class, UC Merced has grown in enrollment to 9,110 students as of fall 2024.

Declared undergraduate enrollment is divided among SNS (24%), the School of Engineering (SoE) (36%), and the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA) (40%). Sixty-two (62) percent of undergraduates are first-generation college students and 61% are Pell Grant eligible.

Geographically, 99% of UC Merced undergraduates are from California and approximately 30% are from the San Joaquin Valley. An additional 31% of students come from Southern California (including Los Angeles and San Diego) and 34% from the San Francisco Bay Area.

UC Merced is proud to be a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), with 53% of its undergraduates identifying as Hispanic. UC Merced is also proud of its eligibility status as an Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander serving institution and a Minority Serving institution. In 2021, UC Merced was awarded the Seal of Excelencia in recognition of its commitment to the success of Latino students and the HEED Award for Excellence in Diversity in both 2021 and 2023.

With its completion in fall 2020, the 2020 Project campus expansion nearly doubled the campus's physical capacity to support enrollment growth to 10,000 students. The impact of UC Merced's rapid ascent reaches beyond the campus and continues to transform the region economically, academically, and environmentally as we maintain a focus on sustainability, research, inclusive excellence, and community. We lead the UC system in the percentage of students from underrepresented ethnic groups, low-income families, and families whose parents did not attend college. Our graduation rates exceed national expectations. Our undergraduate research participation rate is the highest in the UC system and we are delivering on the promise of expanding access to a UC education with UC Merced accounting for 53% of the Central Valley's growth in UC attendance since 2005.

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UC Merced is becoming well-known nationally for its state-of-the-art facilities and well-established research programs in fields including agricultural technology, biomedical, behavioral and health sciences, climate science, sustainable systems and solutions, theoretical, computational and data sciences, equity, social justice, and policy. Building upon this strong foundation, the Dean will lead the continued evolution of SNS.

SNS has recruited outstanding, award-winning faculty with vibrant and highly productive research programs and many take highly interdisciplinary approaches to both research and teaching. This talent has attracted substantial funding, including many early career awards from leading research agencies, such as NSF, NIH, the Department of Energy, NASA, and the USDA.

Campus Strategic Plan & Goals

UC Merced is uniquely poised to impact a rapidly changing world. To this end, Chancellor Juan Sanchez Munoz led an inaugural long-range comprehensive strategic planning process through thoughtful engagement and refinement by faculty, staff, students, and external community and partners. The strategic plan outlines three mission-driven, intertwined priorities: discovery and the advancement of knowledge, developing future scholars and leaders, and cultivating a culture of dignity and respect for all. The strategic plan reflects UC Merced's ever-deepening commitment to continuous and iterative transformation toward an equitable and sustainable campus and society, to expanding and enriching the campus's educational offerings and research portfolio, and in turn to deepening and diversifying leadership across all fields and the nation as our graduates pursue post-graduate education and employment. The plan includes continued growth in the university's research profile to accelerate the campus's national visibility. The strategic plan also elevates the importance of an inclusive workforce and flexible and sustainable infrastructure that evolves with the research and learning enterprise. The full university strategic plan can be found here: <https://strategicplan.ucmerced.edu>.

Role of the Dean of the School of Natural Sciences

The Dean of the School of Natural Sciences is the chief officer of the School with overall administrative responsibility for an academic unit that currently includes five departments offering eight undergraduate majors and four graduate programs and the Institute for Symbiotic Interactions, Training, and Education in the Face of a Changing Climate (INSITE). The School also hosts the Department of Medical Education as part of the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) PRIME+, a state funded UC Merced, UCSF, UCSF- Fresno initiative to establish a BS to MD physician preparation pathway for the San Joaquin Valley. SNS faculty also play active roles in the Center for Cellular and Biomolecular

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Machines, the Health Sciences Research Institute, and the Sierra Nevada Research Institute. SNS has 100 tenured and tenure-track Senate faculty and 31 non-Senate faculty, 1,940 undergraduate students, and 277 graduate students (277 Ph.D.). As the School's executive lead, representative, and administrator, the Dean provides intellectual and academic leadership for the instructional and research missions of SNS and in doing so works closely with the School's faculty and staff as well as senior leadership across the campus to deliver the School's mission. The Dean supervises the hiring, promotion, and retention of faculty and staff, guides the development and provides oversight of undergraduate and graduate curriculum and degree programs, oversees and promotes the continuous improvement of the School's academic and administrative operations, manages all School resources, and works with campus administration and the Academic Senate on matters of School and campus-wide policy. As part of the Provost's leadership team, the Dean is an active participant in planning the campus' ongoing development. Successful candidates will have demonstrated leadership skills in a full range of activities associated with the academic and research missions of the School.

Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Dean of the School of Natural Sciences

UC Merced has made remarkable progress and merits outstanding leadership to move into its next phase marked by excellence in research, innovation in teaching, and thoughtful growth, guided by excellent leadership and shared governance. As an emerging research university, UC Merced has exceptional freedom to pioneer new models for teaching, research, and service. In leading SNS into its next stage of growth, the Dean will address several key opportunities and challenges, which are detailed below.

Lead the vision and strategy for the School

The next Dean of SNS will provide critical leadership for the School's ongoing development and the continued advancement of its mission. Building from the current Academic Plan, the Dean will advance the School's contributions to achieving the goals outlined in UC Merced's Strategic Plan. As part of this effort, the Dean will continue to develop the school's administrative infrastructure with the goal of achieving ongoing sustainability of its academic and administrative operations. To this work, the Dean will bring a spirit of community and collaboration administrative expertise and change leadership. In collaboration with the faculty and staff, the next Dean will establish the strategic direction for SNS in the coming years.

Recruit, retain, and support talented faculty

Attracting, hiring, and retaining high-caliber faculty will be essential to continuing to grow the School's reputation and the impact of its scholarly and academic output. Beyond facilitating the strategic addition of new faculty, the Dean will promote structures and programs that continue to aid, develop,

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and support existing faculty in their pursuit of excellence in scholarship and instruction, including both disciplinary and interdisciplinary research across the campus. Along with supporting individual achievement, the Dean will strive to further the culture of inclusive excellence that is core to the mission of UC Merced.

Enhance the academic profile and scholarly impact of the School

The Dean will lead the growth of the School's research portfolio and support faculty engagement in research and scholarly activity. In close collaboration with faculty, the Dean will further expand existing research and scholarship programs and identify new opportunities for scholarly research. The Dean will elevate the visibility of the achievements of SNS and its faculty, students, and staff.

Strengthen enrollment and educational impact

SNS will be an important contributor to UC Merced's goal of achieving enrollment growth. In this context, the Dean will bring creativity to collaborations across campus that facilitate the School's undergraduate enrollment growth, focusing on efforts that increase new student enrollment and the retention of existing students. Likewise, working collaboratively with the Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Education, the Dean will consider how best to support and strengthen graduate education. The Dean will also encourage faculty to take a data-informed and forward-facing approach to building new academic programs, undergraduate and graduate, and to reflect on existing programs with the goal of continuous improvement.

SNS's 1,940 undergraduate students form a multi-ethnic student body that is 60% first-generation and 60% Pell eligible. For undergraduate students, opportunities for academic enrichment include involvement in research, student professional organizations, comprehensive student advising, leadership opportunities, and experiential learning, just to name just a few.

As with faculty, inclusive excellence will be a framework the Dean will use to approach enrollment growth for undergraduate and graduate students in SNS. As the most ethnically diverse campus in the UC System, and as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and a Minority-Serving Institution, the campus is a vivid example of how inclusive excellence fosters the best possible environment for learning and scholarship.

Manage the academic enterprise with financial acumen and organizational expertise

As part of SNS's continued development, the Dean will be responsible for analyzing and refining the School's administrative infrastructure to support its ongoing growth and success and for collaborating with the EVC/P leadership team to foster and strengthen a culture of fiscally aligned planning and accountability. The Dean will apply analytical and strategic leadership as well as financial acumen

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while bringing creativity, fiscal resourcefulness, and thoughtfulness to budget challenges while advancing priorities for growth. The Dean will work with the faculty and staff to position them for success in this changing environment. In advancing these efforts, the Dean will sustain a positive team culture across the School that advances the campus' commitment to inclusive excellence.

Advocate for SNS as a unit, both internally and externally

As the leader of the SNS community, the Dean will be a compelling spokesperson for the School. The Dean will build relationships and bridges at UC Merced through working collaboratively with other Deans and administrators. At the university level, the Dean will advocate for investment in infrastructure and initiatives that will amplify the School's and the campus's research and educational missions.

The Dean will work with the Division of External Relations and Strategic Communications to promote SNS externally, creating and maintaining relationships in the region and state, nationally, and globally. This advocacy will raise the profile and prestige of the School, and lead to broadened partnerships for scholarship and learning and to additional financial resources to support the School's mission. The Dean will engage in fundraising efforts for SNS as the advancement infrastructure grows at the campus.

Qualifications

Basic qualifications

Required Skills, Knowledge, Abilities, and Competencies

- A doctorate and a research program in a field compatible with the programs offered within the School of Natural Sciences.
- A distinguished record in teaching, scholarship, and service consistent with the expectations of the rank of a full professor with tenure in the School of Natural Sciences.
- Significant years of increasing responsibility for leading and managing (an) academic area(s) that demonstrate visionary leadership and management and administrative skills.
- Demonstrated leadership skills in a full range of activities associated with the academic, research, and/or scholarly mission of the School.
- Demonstrated ability to create and advance an inclusive environment within a unit.
- Experience fostering interdisciplinary research and education; and understanding of research approaches, including laboratory, field, theoretical, and computational based research.
- Demonstrated skills as a creative and collaborative leader in the creation and evaluation of new

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programs and structures.

- Proven leadership abilities in a complex environment with diverse stakeholders; demonstrated ability to gain support for and advance projects and initiatives through relationship building, motivation, influence, and transparency; strong community and consensus builder to leverage partnerships and resources.
- Expert analytical and strategic thinking skills to understand key institutional drivers.
- Strong management skills, including the ability to lead, assess, and support the professional development of faculty and staff and to motivate department chairs and managers to develop and achieve mission-aligned goals.
- Skilled in organizational management, change management, and development; strong and visionary organizational leadership to foster and sustain cohesion, culture, and effectiveness of the School and the stakeholder community.
- Strong financial acumen and sound budgetary judgment; expertise in resource allocation and management.
- Experience reviewing faculty appointment, tenure, and promotion cases.
- Experience developing relationships with external stakeholders and partners; demonstrated ability and willingness to engage in fundraising efforts and secure external support from a variety of sources.
- Ability to focus on regional and global issues; ability to gain/build knowledge of and focus on the needs of the UC Merced campus and San Joaquin Valley region.
- Demonstrated capacity to be an active listener who can communicate and collaborate effectively with administrators, faculty, students, and staff.
- Understanding of academic checks and balances within an environment of shared governance, as well as how to engage in consultation with faculty and staff.
- Strong diplomatic skills and political acumen.
- High emotional intelligence and excellent interpersonal skills.
- Appreciation for the mission and responsibilities of a university serving a multi-ethnic state and a demonstrated personal and professional commitment to inclusive excellence.

Preferred qualifications

Preferred Skills, Knowledge, Abilities, and Competencies

- Thorough knowledge of general university administrative organization, policies, procedures, and practices including the principle of shared governance.
- Experience engaging academic program review and continuous improvement processes.
- Familiarity with WSCUC or other university-wide accreditation procedures.

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Application Requirements

Document requirements

- Curriculum Vitae - Your most recently updated C.V.
- Cover Letter

Authorization to Release Information Form - As a condition of employment, the finalist will be required to disclose if they are subject to any **final** administrative or judicial decisions within the last seven years determining that they committed any misconduct.

"Misconduct" means any violation of the policies or laws governing conduct at the applicant's previous place of employment, including, but not limited to, violations of policies or laws prohibiting sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other forms of harassment or discrimination, as defined by the employer.

Required Authorization of Information Release may be found [here](#). Please complete, sign, and upload the required Authorization of Information Release to your application.

Reference requirements

- 3-5 required (contact information only)

Apply link: <https://aprecruit.ucmerced.edu/JPF02013>

Help contact: ExecutiveSearch@berkeley.edu

About UC Merced

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Additional links: [UC Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy](#), the [UC Anti-Discrimination Policy](#), and [APM 035: Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination in Employment](#).

The University of California, Merced, is the newest of the University of California system's 10 campuses. Ranked as one of the best public universities in the nation by U.S. News and World Report and recently designated as an R1 institution by Carnegie, UC Merced is committed to innovation and excellence in research. With over 9,000 undergraduate and graduate students (<https://cie.ucmerced.edu/analytics-hub/student-statistics>), UC Merced provides outstanding, inclusive educational opportunities to highly qualified students from the heart of California, the nation, and abroad. The campus has special connections to nearby Yosemite National Park; is on the cutting edge of sustainability in construction and design; and supports the economic development of Central California.

The University of California is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, protected veteran status, or other protected status under state or federal law.

As a University employee, you will be required to comply with all applicable University policies and/or collective bargaining agreements, as may be amended from time to time. Federal, state, or local government directives may impose additional requirements. This includes the [University of California Policy on Vaccination Programs](#).

Job location

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED 5200 N. Lake Road Merced, CA 95343

To apply, please visit: <https://aprecruit.ucmerced.edu/JPF02013>

Contact Information

Please reference Academickeys in your cover letter when applying for or inquiring about this job announcement.

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