

***Building An On-Ramp
To The Research Pathway***

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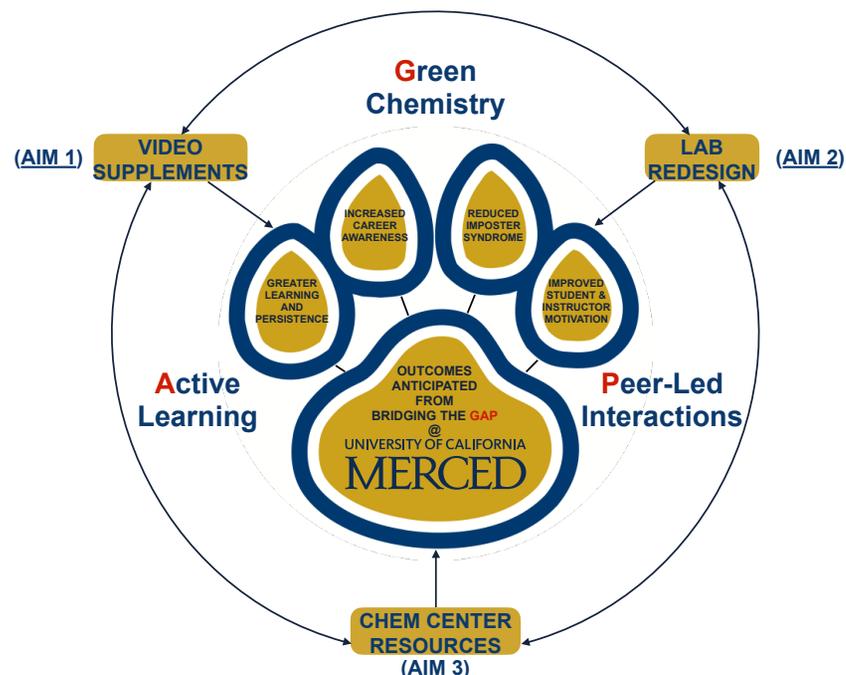
Broadening Participation in Research Pathways

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- **Two projects**

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 - NSF funded project on improving the undergraduate chemistry experience
 - Spark seminar introducing the research university

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
MERCED

General Education

Spark Seminars

The Spark Seminars introduce students to life at a research university. They ask students to focus on the nature of inquiry by exploring a particular topic over the course of the semester, engaging with campus and local resources, generating research questions, and presenting original ideas in writing and other forms of communication.

SPARK 001 – 45
What is a Research University?
Fall 2021

Course Description: What is a "Research University"? Former UC President Clark Kerr once wrote that the American research university is "... a series of individual entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance about parking." In a way that's true, but there must be more to it! This Spark seminar will explore the role research universities have played in education, scholarship, and service. The course will specifically study UC Merced's unique and young history as the first new American research university of the 21st century and aim to understand what that moniker truly means. What are its promises? What are its responsibilities? Students will engage in a discourse exploring these questions as a research problem seeking to propose how UC Merced should develop so as to distinguish the 21st century research university from its 20th century ancestor. What should we expect of UC Merced in the next decade and what will it take to get there?

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. develop questions that will help articulate challenges facing the modern American research university by participating in course readings, panel presentations, and related class discussions;
2. demonstrate an understanding of the role and necessity of the tensions that exist between competing interests and missions of the American research university;
3. demonstrate an appreciation for the opportunities and challenges the American research university has as a driver of knowledge discovery, engine for social mobility, and force for community engagement;
4. demonstrate an understanding of the University's commitment to diversity, in all forms, and the role such a commitment serves in enhancing the University mission; and
5. demonstrate an understanding of the University's contributions to the public good by examining and describing the role of the University as an engine of progress and community partner.

Opportunity and Resource Ecosystem



- **Faculty Led Research**
- **UROC & SURI**
- **REUs**
- **Research Centers**

- **Living/Learning Communities**
- **Career Services**
- **Leadership Center**
- **Student Success Centers**

Practical Course Objectives

- **Offer an enhanced orientation experience**
- **Exercise writing skills**
- **Practice disagreeing without being disagreeable**
- **Breakdown barriers between students and the institution**
- **Contextualize their place in the University**

Outcomes and Outlook

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- “I loved the topic overall, it helped me learn way more about universities as a whole.”
- “Coming into this course I didn’t know what to expect, but I have learned a lot more about what it means to be attending a research university.”
- **“I will be honest...this was the only course that would fit my schedule. At first I had the mindset that it would be boring and that I wouldn’t have fun. I was completely wrong. ... Throughout the course I was never disappointed or bored because everything helps me learn something new.”**

Alumni Experience

- **Dr. Jordan Galloway**

- Ph.D., Class of 2020
- NSF-GRFP
- GEM Fellow
- Postdoc at Sandia N.L.
- Booz | Allen | Hamilton



- **Dr. Ana Arteaga**

- B.S., Class of 2015
- Ph.D. from Oregon State U
- GEM Fellow
- Linus Pauling Fellow, PNNL

