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Applications continue to surge at UC Merced

Campus leaders are pleased with diversity.

By JAMIE OPPENHEIM

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More than 12,000 students applied to UC Merced last year for fall 2010 -- a record for the five-year-old university.

A majority of the applicants, 10,594, were for incoming freshmen, and 1,772 were transfer students.

This year's pool was 21 percent larger than last year's numbers.

In terms of student diversity, UC Merced made the highest gains of any of the other nine UC campuses.

The number of Latino freshman applicants jumped from last year's numbers by 16 percent, the highest percentage increase of all the UC campuses.

UC Merced Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Kevin Browne said the school was pleased with the size, quality and diversity of the students who applied.

"It's compelling evidence that more and more students want the life-transforming UC academic experience in a welcoming, innovative environment that they can personally influence -- one that's unique to UC Merced," Browne said.

Over the past two years, the UC system experienced a 10 percent jump in the number of students applying from the Northern Central Valley, which includes Madera, Stanislaus, Merced and San Joaquin counties.

Applications from Northern Central Valley students to all 10 UC campuses rose by 51 percent, and as of 2009, admission to a UC campus grew to 47 percent for these students.

More than half of UC Merced applicants come from families considered low-income by the state. More than 50 percent are also the first in their families to attend college -- a percentage that is unmatched by any other UC campus.

Browne said the lack of money shouldn't stand in the way of a student attending a UC school.

"Financial aid is available and UC's new Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan will cover your systemwide fees if you are a California resident whose family earns less than \$70,000 a year."

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