Distinctive Institutional Context:

**A Small Research University**

An ethos of discovery, creativity, and rigorous questioning of extant knowledge permeates all aspects of UC Merced. The skills, knowledge and attitudes of a researcher are synonymous with attributes essential for post-graduate success.

**In Merced, California**

Merced is at a crossroads – culturally, socioeconomically, environmentally, geographically, historically -- for addressing problems of local, regional, and global significance.

**With An Undergraduate Student Body Unique in the UC System**

UCM undergraduates are predominantly first generation students from groups under-represented in higher education (e.g., race, ethnicity, family income).

These shape the following.

**Hallmarks of Baccalaureate Degrees at UC Merced**

1. *Depth and breadth in academic and intellectual preparation, consistent with the values of a research university, such that UC Merced graduates*
   a. Demonstrate a strong disciplinary foundation
   b. Engage in interdisciplinary thinking which could include appreciating different approaches to problem solving, informed by an understanding of humanities, arts, STEM, social sciences
   c. Bring a critical, evaluative lens to problems, questions, situations
   d. Employ effective problem-solving skills in multiple settings
   e. Evaluate facts, knowledge and information, applying the varied aspects of information literacy
   f. Know what they know, as well as how they know it, and monitor and guide their own learning
   g. Describe the origins of knowledge, informed by cultural and disciplinary epistemological and ontological assumptions
   h. Demonstrate an inquiry-oriented approach to the world; possess curiosity, employ inquiry, and take appropriate and creative action in response to ambiguity
2. *Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness, such that UC Merced graduates*
   a. Respect and value diversity
   b. Seek and recognize new cultures; join a new community anticipating and engaging in potential cultural differences or intersections
3. *Community engagement and citizenship -- local and global--, such that UC Merced graduates*
   a. Understand what it means to be a member of a community, including an academic community
   b. Contribute to the communities of which they are members
   c. Possess a sense of place, and the ability to determine own place within local community and global context, and affect own community through giving back
   d. Act ethically, including in the realm of environmental stewardship and sustainability
   e. Are responsive to the needs of society – through application of knowledge and research to address problems, challenges, and opportunities
4. *Interpersonal skills necessary to the outcomes identified above, as well as to lead productive lives after graduation, such that UC Merced graduates*
   a. Are proficient in collaboration and teamwork
   b. Possess strong communication skills, oral, written, and visual, academic and professional
   c. Are leaders in their professional and civic lives
   d. Are ethically aware and proficient in ethical reasoning
5. **Self-awareness and intrapersonal skills, such that UC Merced graduates**
   a. Demonstrate initiative, including an entrepreneurial, innovative, pioneering spirit
   b. Respond with resiliency to obstacles and challenges, and learn from failure
   c. Assume responsibility for their own education and develop the skills and attitudes of life-long learners

*The draft of this document was created by participants in the UCM GE Retreat in May, 2014. The draft was distributed to faculty and staff groups in AY 2014-2015 for discussion and suggestions; the revised draft was reviewed by the Academic Senate in 2015.*