

# Sample News Article

NPR-style news article related to Higher Education

Title: UC Initiatives to Improve Degree Attainment for Central Valley Residents

Despite the growth in higher education opportunities in the Central Valley, a disparity remains between degree holders in the Valley versus other parts of the state. According to a [report](#) by the Public Policy Institute of California, many Central Valley residents over the age of 25 do not have a bachelor's degree or higher, falling short of the statewide average of 32%. For example, Merced county has an average of 13.8%, Fresno county has an average of 21.2%, and Tulare county has an average of 14.6%.

Most students at UC Merced originate from areas in Southern California, according to the school's own [demographic tool](#). There is no data that traces how many of these students stay in the Central Valley after attaining their degree, and how many return or move to other parts of the state and/or out of state.

One way that the UC system is inadvertently addressing this issue is by creating a more accessible pipeline from Central Valley community colleges to UC Merced, as outlined in their [UC 2030 Capacity Plan](#). The report touches on the lower “education attainment levels and per capita income” of Central Valley residents. The report projects enrollment growth as a means to increase “economic impact opportunities” within the region.

Other plans to grow educational opportunities can be seen with the Merced Promise, a guarantee program for high school students within Merced Unified School District; as well as the UCSF and UCM pathway program in which participating students would get their BS from UCM, then complete about four years of clinical training at UCM and UCSF Fresno. The goal of the latter program is to “increase doctors trained in the San Joaquin Valley.”

Programs like the community college to UC pipeline, Merced Promise, and UCSF and UCM medical pathway program are work-in-progress initiatives that aim to increase enrollment in the UC system with the subsequent side-effect of improving educational and professional opportunities for Central Valley residents.