Bright Past, Brilliant Future.

Shine brighter
The extraordinary faculty, students, and staff who arrived on the rolling hills of the expansive Irvine Ranch had a pioneering spirit. They were committed to creating one of “the truly great centers of higher learning in the land.” But rather than copy their way to the top, they embraced a spirit of innovation and experimentation that would not be possible at more established institutions.

Whether they were organizing a new campus or choosing a mascot, our founders understood that they would make the biggest difference by thinking differently.

They exceeded everyone’s highest expectations.

There is tremendous pride in what we have accomplished in our first 50 years. But we know we have more to do: strengthen our contributions in research, education, and service; accelerate our ascendency among globally preeminent research universities; and marshal our passions, skills, and ingenuity to further improve people’s lives. There is no interest in resting on our laurels or imagining merely incremental improvements. Our bright past is but a prologue.

UCI was born 50 years ago to advance an audacious goal: improve society through globally preeminent research, life-enhancing discoveries, and a world-class education for the most talented people regardless of background.

“We reach new heights of excellence and social impact by maintaining our culture of innovation and embracing the power of different.”

As we set out to write the story of our next half-century, we will take ongoing inspiration from our trailblazing founders. We reach new heights of excellence and social impact by maintaining our culture of innovation and embracing the power of “different.” Such a mindset is especially important given that the models of support and expansion that served us well during our first 50 years no longer apply. We must be bold and creative in both our academic planning and our financial planning.
The future chapters of our history are rooted in continued growth with excellence. A vibrant and expanding institution—one that invests in new programs and people—is able to attract talented and diverse faculty and students in areas of strategic importance and societal need, with an eye toward making an even stronger difference in the world. Our growth will allow exploration of the vast frontiers of knowledge, from the world’s grandest challenges to the heart of regional imperatives. We will expand our capacity for high-impact research and leverage our excellence in creative expression, building on the strengths of our existing schools and departments while cutting across traditional structures.

Our relative youth and continued growth better prepare us for the evolving passions of a new generation. Our peers with established, longer histories were organized at a time when the landscape of inquiry and discovery was different. As the future of higher education transforms the nature of research and scholarship, we believe that our youthful flexibility presents a strategic advantage.

The students of this new generation—undergraduate, graduate, professional—will benefit from our rising national reputation and thriving campus life. We will continue to ensure that their educational experiences enrich their minds and spirits, enable them to achieve at the highest level of their potential, and open up the best opportunities for them to pursue their goals and have a positive impact on society. We will become even more of a first-choice university for the most talented and ambitious students, regardless of background, complementing our outstanding academic environment with a culture of fun, championship athletic programs, and extracurricular activities that embody the unique Anteater spirit.

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Our vision of preeminence will remain unshakably democratic, and our commitment to inclusive excellence will be systematic and pervasive. Diversity of experience and thought is a precondition for productive deliberation, an essential component of our fundamental scholarly and research mission. But more than that, when we ensure access for and inclusion of people of all backgrounds and life stories, we make meaningful our shared commitment to a true opportunity society, in which the pathways to success must be open to everyone.

This ambitious strategic vision sets out a bold road map for growth and expansion, while being mindful of the need to develop new models of financial sustainability. It builds on UCI’s strengths to make our university even better. It was developed with extensive participation by the university community, reflecting our fundamental commitment to shared governance, and honors the spirit of all those who contributed to our culture of innovation and excellence. It intends to meet the expectations of those who participate in the life of this great institution, based on four strategic pillars:

- **Growth That Makes a Difference:** Expanding Our Capacity to Improve Lives
- **First in Class:** Elevating the Student Experience to Prepare Future Leaders
- **Great Partners:** Making Regional and Global Connections That Enhance Our Mission and Serve the People
- **New Paths for Our Brilliant Future:** Forging Best Practices to Power the Coming Century

With this plan, we have a clear direction into the foreseeable future, even while particular strategies and metrics will be periodically reviewed and adapted to changing circumstances and new information. But the fundamental premise is immutable, echoing the moment of our founding:

We will mobilize knowledge to serve the people, and we will educate the best and brightest regardless of background.
In UCI’s short existence, its scholars have made groundbreaking contributions in many areas of research—contributions that have changed both how we look at the world and how we act in the world. Professor F. Sherwood Rowland’s Nobel Prize-winning exploration of the dangers of chlorofluorocarbon use, which ultimately led to the worldwide ban on CFCs and inspired national and global scientific inquiry into the effects of mankind’s actions on our living planet, is one example of UCI’s research leadership. The challenges facing our region and our world are many and complex. UCI must expand in strategic areas to meet societal needs and the evolving interests of our students.

GOALS

• Expand the number and impact of UCI faculty
• Increase research expenditures to over $500 million annually
• Expand the quality and impact of UCI Health
• Create appropriate programs and structures to facilitate interdisciplinary, problem-based scholarship and teaching, especially for convergence science

• Develop, support, and promote new comprehensive research initiatives that shed light on social problems and address regional and global grand challenges
• Make pervasive the place of art, culture, creative expression, and humanistic inquiry within our research and education missions
PILLAR 2

FIRST IN CLASS:
Elevating the Student Experience to Prepare Future Leaders

Our students are at the very heart of everything we do. As a comprehensive research university, the knowledge we create in all disciplines impacts our students’ scholastic, co-curricular, and career development experiences. Undergraduates learn about and participate in research in their courses and in independent studies. Graduate students contribute even more broadly by supporting faculty research, conducting their own groundbreaking studies, and mentoring undergraduates. We will continue to strive to be a sought-after destination for the most talented and ambitious students—reflecting all backgrounds and life experiences—who see that UCI is where they can reach their full potential and do their best work. We will embrace innovations in pedagogy that improve the quality of learning and provide the support necessary to ensure outstanding outcomes for all students. Their experiences inside and outside the classroom will connect them to the UCI community for life, enrich their minds and spirits, prepare them for productive lives, and empower them to make the strongest possible contributions to our world.

GOALS

- Expand the student body and make UCI a first-choice campus for students
- Foster excellence in teaching and learning
- Utilize modern technological tools to create the most effective learning environments
- Integrate student life with educational experiences
- Ensure that UCI’s educational opportunities are an engine for social mobility, impact, and positive innovation
- Build on the success of UCI’s Campuswide Honors Program by considering a new honors college
A core mission of UCI is service to the community. Effective service requires deeply inclusive community engagement—the exchange of information, ideas, and resources—to benefit both the university and the community. This engagement broadens our intellectual capital and leverages our social capital, allowing us to provide leadership in and solutions to diverse societal issues such as resource management, technology, healthcare, education, and social inequality. UCI, already aligned with the world’s leading research universities and recognized for addressing matters of great importance, embraces engagement through its excellent teaching, translational research, alumni participation, community outreach, and creative activity. We are committed to accomplishing much more. By lifting engagement up to a new level, meeting people where they are and valuing their expertise, we will serve as a model for the nation.

**GOALS**

- Build an engagement culture
- Create a powerful Anteater-for-life ethos that promotes ideal and sustained student and alumni participation
- Become a stronger partner with community organizations
- Partner with Orange County to develop a national model for how to live responsibly and well in the 21st century
- More broadly communicate and translate UCI’s discoveries and innovations
NEW PATHS FOR OUR BRILLIANT FUTURE:
Forging Best Practices to Power the Coming Century

In the 50 years since UCI’s founding, public policy toward higher education has gradually changed. Significant decreases in state support have led to a new financial reality for the UC system. In order to accomplish our goals in this new environment and realize the ambitious vision outlined above, UCI needs to ensure its strong financial footing, mobilize community support, promote staff engagement with our mission, and develop creative plans to establish an infrastructure that will support us moving forward.

GOALS

- Develop a sustainable financial plan
- Make fundraising a central feature of our academic planning and leadership culture
- Bolster and position staff to more effectively support the academic mission
- Expand, build, and maintain an excellent physical infrastructure
- Ensure a high-quality, ubiquitous, secure, and robust information technology infrastructure

We are proud of our bright past. Together we will forge our brilliant future.

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