

The School of Natural Sciences kicked off Phase I planning with a series of eight facilitated sessions on December 4-6 to collect faculty and staff input on the broad topics of UC Quality Research, UC Quality Academic Programs, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Additionally, we added two School-specific categories, Global and Regional Impact and Staff Experience. One session welcomed all faculty, staff, graduate students, and postdocs. Another session engaged staff, and the remaining six engaged faculty. An online survey was available for those who could not attend these sessions. The sessions were led by experienced facilitators from UC Davis (Laura Ceruti and Tom O'Donnell). Jessica Duffy from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Efficiency was also on-hand to record participant input in real-time.

Summaries of the sessions were shared with the SNS Leadership Council (Department, Graduate Group, and Biology Program Chairs) and Executive Committee prior to a joint meeting on January 15. The focus of that meeting was a facilitated discussion of goals and values. Long-range "goals" were separated from more narrowly defined "objectives" and these goals were discussed and ranked at another meeting of the joint group on January 22. SNS mid-level managers and the SNS staff council reviewed and refined the list of goals in separate facilitated sessions (February 7 and 14, respectively). Revisions to goals based on staff feedback were sent to the SNS Leadership Council (Department, Graduate Group, and Biology Program Chairs) and Executive Committee for consideration and action.

Based on these inputs and discussions, below is a PRELIMINARY DRAFT of SNS long-range goals as of February 28, 2020. These will undergo several more iterations within the School before and after feedback from the larger campus. The full record of SNS activities related to long-range planning can be found at <https://naturalsciences.ucmerced.edu/about/about-school/dean/sns-long-range-planning>

Campus Criteria and Indices

UC Quality Scholarship

UC Quality Scholarly and Creative Activity

- Establish innovative interdisciplinary research, programs, and centers with global recognition.
- Establish a collaborative research-intensive culture.
- Achieve higher recognition of research.

Research and Development Expenditures

- Increase R&D expenditures by achieving scholarship goals listed above.

Research Staff

- Ensure professional success of alumni, including undergraduate and graduate students and post-docs.

UC Quality Academic Programs

UC Quality Education

- Make a positive impact on society.
- Develop students who are critical, inquisitive, and open-minded.
- Increase graduate program ranking and name recognition.

Student Success

- Enhance graduate student training experience.
- Nurture student growth toward diverse and successful career paths.
- Advocate for inclusion and diversity in STEM education.
- Increase retention in STEM Majors.
- Increase undergraduate international exchange opportunities.

Diversity

Breadth in Research and Teaching Programs

- Support diverse research and academic programs.

Diversity of Faculty and Staff

- Improve faculty and staff diversity.
- Maintain and encourage a culture of equity and inclusion.

SNS-specific Criteria and Indices

Global and Regional Impact

- Increase international and regional recognition of faculty.
- Increase the global and regional reputation of educational programs
- Enhance regional and community interactions.
- Communicate achievements to the outside world.

Staff Experience—Improve by creating a culture that fosters:

- Highly satisfied staff trained in innovative technologies who have opportunities for advancement.
- Mutually respectful and productive working environment among staff.
- Mutually respectful and productive working relationship between staff and faculty.
- Staff who can articulate the tangible impact of their work in achieving the vision and mission of the school.
- Managers fully understand the responsibilities of their staff.