Memorandum

To: Roger Bales, Ph.D. Interim Director SNRI

From: Steve Kang, Chancellor

Subject: Establishment of Sierra Nevada Research Institute as an Organized Research Unit

Date: December 17, 2007

The Divisional Council of the UC Merced Academic Senate has provided a strong endorsement for the formation of the Sierra Nevada Research Institute as UC Merced’s first Organized Research Unit. I am pleased to add my support for this action and would like to be among the first to congratulate you and your colleagues for their commitment to employing the power of the University of California research prowess to help the sustainability of California’s Great Central Valley. This memo serves as the formal notification that the Sierra Nevada Research Institute (SNRI) has been formally recognized as an Organized Research Units (ORU) at UC Merced.

Over the past five years SNRI has developed a substantial and growing reputation, both locally and throughout the State, as a major force in dealing with the myriad of environmental problems that impact the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the San Joaquin Valley and other habitats. Through their research efforts, faculty affiliated with SNRI have already built a reputation for excellence that has brought many accolades to our young campus. Although this research is done locally, it has broad importance both to California as well as many other locations throughout the world. SNRI’s commitment to a broad interdisciplinary approach will provide for the long-term vitality of the research carried out by members of the ORU.

In accord with the Academic Senate’s recommendation, I will empanel the Vice Chancellor for Research and the Provost to begin a process that will examine the possibility of rebasing the SNRI budget in accord with the indirect cost return model that they recommend. Given the multiplicity of needs for and commitments on these dollars, this will most likely be a gradual transition from the current State funding. Certainly, as our financial situation improves, we will be able to make the transition to a revenue based model of funding for SNRI that should help serve the needs of the ORU.
I look forward to the continued development of the Sierra Nevada Research Institute and am hopeful that it will provide a model that can be emulated by other areas of the campus.

cc: Keith Alley, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
    Sam Traina, Interim Vice Chancellor for Research
    Shawn Kantor, Chair Academic Senate
    Anne Kelley, Chair, Research and Grad Council