Dear Prospective Applicant,

The Campus Planning and Community Resources team at UC Davis is seeking a Campus Planner to help shape the future of the UC Davis campus. The Campus Planner will work directly with the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Campus Planning and Community Resources.

UC Davis is the largest University of California campus encompassing over 5300 acres. The campus is widely known for its academic expertise in the agricultural and environmental sciences, life sciences, engineering, medicine, veterinary medicine as well as the social sciences and humanities. UC Davis is an acknowledged leader in sustainable planning and development.

The campus planning function at UC Davis works best when its people develop a deep understanding of the unique culture of the place:

1) First and foremost, the campus is a different kind of urban environment. The American college campus is our country’s most singular contribution to the pantheon of great urban places across the globe. University campuses have a distinct mission and have evolved into unique enterprises. Research universities exist to advance knowledge and to further the growth and development of people. For those interested in ‘place-making’, the campus environment has a strong and lasting impact on generations of young people as they transition to young adults—their experiences of the campus become part of their life story. Universities are here for the long haul, and as such, planning decisions must be made in the context of long term consequences, and not just respond to short term pressures. Physical planning decisions on a university campus are guided by the imperative to create interaction among diverse people engaged in diverse activities, and the development pattern of a university reflects this drive for interaction and collaboration. So the first ingredient for success is the ability to understand the uniqueness of this university enterprise, and how it differs from other physical environments.

2) Second, success in campus planning requires the skills and abilities to understand THIS particular campus environment, its cultural and environmental histories and forces for change. The UC Davis campus is expansive, expressive of the extraordinary range of disciplines and of the land-based heritage of the place. Students have created a culture of participation and co-creation. Students own and run the local bus system, the largest food venue on campus, a sizeable organic farm, and produce an annual open-house event that can draw 100,000 people to campus. The Sacramento valley environment is flat and warm, perfect for the bicycling culture that dominates the physical design of the campus and the city. The sun is there to be captured, water is precious, big canopy trees are essential, open spaces and bikeways are full of people. And there is an ‘openness’ and welcoming culture expressive of the place itself—room to grow, space to experiment, encouragement to create.
3) Finally, the campus planning role requires the ability to understand diverse audiences with diverse needs and synthesize those needs to create new outcomes. The campus planner needs to have ‘the listening gene’ and be energized by working in an environment where new aspirations are constantly being layered into the planning process. In every plan and every project, we seek multiple ‘wins’ for many people and for the overall health of the environment and future of the campus. The successful campus planner has the ability to bring new ideas to the table and enjoy sharing the authorship.

Sincerely,

Robert Segar
Assistant Vice Chancellor
Campus Planning & Community Resources