

Self-Guided Walking Tour of UCM's Hidden Treasures

Prepared for Staff Appreciation Week 2023

Welcome to you, the rugged individualist who selected this tour. You are invited to follow the route in order, switch things up, or visit only the treasures you want to see. It's up to you!

Route Summary

Stop 1: Large Periodic Table

Detour A: The Ground Is Not the Ground!

Stop 2: Raven's Nest

Detour B: Coyote Gourds

Stop 3: Owl's Nest & Owlets

Stop 4: Bobcat Tracks

Detour C: Class Mural

Stop 5: East Indian Palace Doors

Stop 6: The Frog that Died for UCM

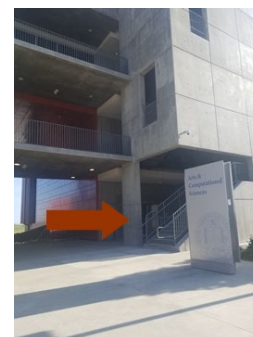
Stop 7: Yosemite in Stained Glass



Route Details

Stop 1: Large Periodic Table

Eleven years ago, a local chemistry teacher purchased two elements encapsulated in acrylic cubes: Gold and Iridium. Tickled by the purchase, he gradually added to his collection until at last, eleven years later, it was complete: he had box filled with 118 - 5.0 cm³ cubes representing the known 118 elements in the modern periodic table! To share his joy, he put the cubes in a display case and offered the collection to UC Merced, where it was installed shortly before COVID and is enjoyed by visitors to the Chemistry Department. Take the elevator or the stairs to the second floor of ACS. The Chemistry entrance is right there. Enter and turn to the right, where you'll find it on a wall.



Detour A: The Ground Is Not the Ground!

After you exit the Arts & Computational Sciences Building (ACS), keep to the right edge of the academic quad with the palo verde trees and approach the railing you see ahead to your right near the entrance of the Biomedical Sciences & Physics (BSP) Building. Peer straight down over the railing, and you will discover that what seemed like solid ground with trees behind you is actually the roof of a large underground loading dock for multiple buildings!

Stop 2: Raven's Nest

After you cross the Fairfield Canal, you'll see Science and Engineering 2 ahead of you. Turn right after crossing the bridge and walk along the canal. On top of one of the third-floor window shades, facing the canal, you should notice a large nest of sticks. That is where a resident pair of ravens has built a nest. Last year they had four chicks. Listen for the parents' caws as they warn you not to get too close!



Detour B: Coyote Gourds

Passing the raven's nest, the yellow balls you see along the bank of the canal just before it turns right are either coyote gourd or buffalo gourd (*Cucurbita palmata* or *foetidissima*). They are native to California and a source of hot debate among some campus staff as to which type they are. They were edible when fresh but are not edible at this point.

Stop 3: Owl's Nest

This is the second year that a pair of great horned owls has raised two offspring above a window of the Social Sciences & Management Building, facing SE1. They don't seem to mind all the humans watching them from below. The owlets are nearly adult now that it's May, so owl sightings near the nest and SSM are random. They are often on the metal shades above the SSM lab windows or on the SE1 windowsills, facing SSM.

Stop 4: Bobcat Tracks

The UC Merced mascot, the Golden Bobcat, is native to the area. Bobcats are occasionally seen on campus, especially around sunset and when there are fewer students about. As campus was being built and cement poured, animals occasionally walked through the construction site. As you see here, one bobcat left its paw prints behind – prints that few people notice!

Detour C: Class Mural

Designed and painted by local artist Patti Pratt, this mural is a gift from the Class of 2021. The theme is "Perseverance. Resilience. Hope." Perseverance is represented by the geometric shapes and lines, resilience by the drought-resistant lantana flowers, and hope by the rays of light shining through the cracked pavement background.

Stop 5: East Indian Palace Doors

These large, beautiful, handcrafted doors by SSM 116 were donated by local retired doctor and realtor Joe Barkett and installed in early 2007. They were originally located on a wall of Kolligian Library where the Lantern espresso machines now start your morning. The doors are made of teak and inlaid with over 1,000 mother-of-pearl flowers that look metallic from a distance. Wow!

Stop 6: The Frog that Died for UCM

The Sierran Treefrog, also called the Sierran Chorus Frog, is a very small frog with a dark stripe through each eye. They are native to this area. On the ground before you is an indentation in the Scholars Lane cement where a frog apparently jumped into the wet cement and remained.

Stop 7: Yosemite in Stained Glass

If you can't make the two-hour drive to Yosemite from here, you can view the glory of the park in a very large stained-glass mural on the north side of the third floor of Kolligian Library. Each of the four 8'x14' panels depicts a season in the park. This beautiful installation was created by artist Bill Poulson in his studio in Arnold, CA, over a period of decades, with the first panel completed in 1989 and located for a time in Yosemite Lodge at the Falls, in Yosemite National Park. The final panel was installed in fall, 2022. Look for special inclusions, such as thin geode slices, tiny painted trees, and our campus mascot – a bobcat.

We hope you have enjoyed your tour and discovered something new!