

UC San Diego Lecturer Wins Urban Land Institute Awards for Border Work

Award Recognizes Cross-Border Sustainability Efforts to Maintain Integrity of Southern California Wetlands

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Jim Gogek

Oscar Romo, a lecturer in the Urban Studies and Planning Program at UC San Diego, was honored with an award at the 4th Annual Urban Land Institute Smart Growth Awards for Excellence for his work with students in the barrios of the Tijuana River watershed.

The 2008 Smart Growth for Excellence Award recognizes community and science based development approaches that are environmentally sensitive, economically viable, community-oriented, and sustainable. Romo was recognized for his innovative approach to translate science into policy making, his commitment to promote environmentally sustainable and bi-national ground breaking projects trying to maintain the integrity of the of Southern California wetlands. He also received recognition for the numerous workshops he has conducted with UC San Diego students in Los Laureles Canyon in Tijuana.

Romo and his students in the Urban Studies and Planning Program at UC San Diego are working to protect the Tijuana River estuary just north of the border through innovative urban planning strategies in canyon barrios just south of the border. They work with Tijuana residents who live in the crowded canyons with no paved streets, sewage or water. Romo and his students are paving streets in the canyons, among other projects to reduce polluted runoff into the estuary.

Romo was the only recipient of two awards from a selective list of nominees within the San Diego County area -- for the Cross Border for Smart Growth category and Visionary category award for the Pervious Pavers Project, a volunteer program to pave streets in Los Laureles Canyon in Tijuana.

Urban Land Institute is a worldwide organization which has been present for 70 years and holds an international membership of 37,000. It has been widely recognized as the top advocate for encouraging and fostering high standards of land use planning and real estate development. The Smart Growth Awards of Excellence is sponsored through the ULI San Diego/Tijuana District Council.

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