

UCSD Program for Graduate Studies in Microfinance and Telecom Development Aims to Help Rural Mexico

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As part of American government efforts to help rural Mexico further develop telecommunications infrastructure, and to enhance mechanisms for financing small business in rural Mexico, seven scholarships have been created for students to attend the University of California, San Diego Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, as well as to participate in summer fieldwork in rural Mexico and engage in research at the UCSD Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.

The program, funded in the amount of \$300,000 by the United States Agency for International Development and a U.S. higher education entity known as the Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation in Development, aims to build a cadre of highly skilled professionals drawn from students currently enrolled in university programs at The Center for Economics Research and Teaching in Mexico City and the Center for Scientific Investigation and Higher Education of Ensenada.

In announcing the new program, UCSD Professor Christopher Woodruff, who is the project director, said, "This partnership will bring top Mexican university students to UCSD's innovative IR/PS graduate school and to the advanced research center at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. Their presence will enhance the student body here and offer broadening horizons for the visiting students." Professor Woodruff, himself a global authority on microfinance, added, "We will all learn much more about the crucial issues of microfinance and telecommunications which play such an important role in rural development."

The project will focus on ways of transferring advanced U. S. technology and skills, including those from San Diego communications technology leader, Qualcomm, Inc., to rural development in Mexico. Qualcomm will contribute more than \$100,000 in funding to support the project's field work. The remainder of the effort's total budget of \$725,000 will come from the two Mexican universities and from UCSD.

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