

UCSD Latin American studies receives funding for new program on Latin America and Pacific Rim

November 10, 1995

Media Contact: Dolores Davies, (619) 534-5994

UCSD LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES RECEIVES FUNDING

FOR NEW PROGRAM ON LATIN AMERICA AND PACIFIC RIM

The Center for Latin American Studies at the University of California, San Diego has received a grant for \$261,250 from the Ford Foundation to launch a multi-year project involving research, training, and policy analysis on "Latin America and the Pacific Rim."

"Our basic idea is to explore the nature and implications of emerging relationships between the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America," said Peter H. Smith, director of the Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies (CILAS) at UCSD. "We believe that these relationships will play a major role in shaping the international order in the post-Cold War era."

A key goal of the project is to improve levels of understanding between Asia and Latin America within academic, business, and governmental circles.

"Leaders of these two regions need to learn more about each other," Smith added. "This program will contribute to the critical development of human and intellectual resources on both sides of the Pacific."

Over the next two years, the program will bring eight to ten visiting fellows from Latin America and Asia to UCSD on an annual basis. During their residency, the fellows will engage in collaborative research and organize international seminars on themes of common interest. These conferences will result in book-length publications and policy reports.

The first phase of grant-supported activities, scheduled to begin this fall, will focus on regional economic integration. According to Smith, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has provoked a great deal of concern in Japan and other Asian countries. Recent commitments in favor of "free trade" within the Asia-Pacific region and the Western Hemisphere have raised profound questions about the long term compatibility of these economic integration efforts.

A second phase of activities is likely to focus on educational and cultural issues. Research will focus on academic curricula in elementary through higher education, said Smith, as well as on popular images and stereotypes.

"It is important to understand how citizens of Asia and Latin America view one another," explained Smith. "We also need to know what their sources are for this information and on what their perceptions are based."

CILAS coordinates and promotes all Latin American and Iberian teaching, research, and public service activities for faculty and students in all disciplines at UCSD. CILAS's campuswide activities, which include interdisciplinary colloquia, faculty-student projects, publications, library expansion, visiting lecturers, conferences, performances, and film, involve approximately 50 faculty members and 180 academic course offerings.

(November 10, 1995)