

San Diego Dialogue Receives Major Grant from Merck to Help Integrate Life Science Regions in California and Mexico

UC San Diego Initiative to Connect Investors, Scientists and Researchers Across International Borders; Launches January 2007

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In an effort to link health and life science research and enterprise between California and Mexico, Merck & Co. Inc, a global pharmaceutical company, is funding a \$250,000 initiative with the San Diego Dialogue, a public policy research center of UC San Diego. The project is designed to build sustainable binational relationships among researchers, scientists and investors for the purposes of stimulating and nurturing the lifecycle of innovation from research to commercialization. It is an important component of Chancellor Marye Anne Fox's efforts to build closer ties between UC San Diego and partners in Mexico.

"The funding from Merck will be used to build the critical knowledge, relationships and resources that are needed to create viable global partnerships," said Dr. Mary Walshok, co-founder of the San Diego Dialogue and Associate Vice Chancellor of Public Programs at UC San Diego. "Many international encounters tend to be one-time introductions. This initiative will go beyond networking to help participants acquire specific partnering skills and sensitivities such as identifying realistic criteria for risk and return in global markets, and understanding the business culture and policy environment of one another's countries."

The partnership with Merck comes as a result of the Borderless Innovation report which was published by the San Diego Dialogue in early 2006. One of the recommendations of the report was to expand existing and new crossborder education and research linkages. The Dialogue will work with Global CONNECT, a fellow UCSD organization committed to building international technology-based enterprises. Together the organizations will focus on forging linkages between San Diego and the Mexican regions of Monterrey, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, and Mexico City.

"There is enormous potential to build a globally-competitive cluster of life science innovation between the two countries," said Clemens Caicedo, Senior Director of Strategic Alliances at Merck. "Merck is committed to catalyzing a process which may aid the future discovery, development, and manufacturing of medicines to address the world's unmet medical needs."

The launch of the binational project will take place in January 2007. Planned activities include executive seminars, roundtables, and regional asset mapping. At the end of a 15-month period, a group of promising Mexican companies will be introduced to the life science leadership of California in a forum to be held in La Jolla. To learn more about San Diego Dialogue, visit sandiegodialogue.org; to learn more about Global CONNECT visit globalconnect.org

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