

UC San Diego Launches Innovative Partnership with Mexico

Four Major New Initiatives Highlight UCSD International Report

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In announcing a bold agenda for partnership and cooperation with Mexico, Marye Anne Fox, chancellor of the University of California, San Diego, today unveiled initiatives to improve the quality of life for citizens of the United States and Mexico.

"This partnership with Mexico represents vital collaboration, interdisciplinary excellence, and innovations that will benefit all of our citizens," said Chancellor Fox. "Our new initiatives bring together leaders from education, business, government, non-profit organizations and civil society to address issues that deeply affect our health and welfare."

Under the broad title of "UCSD Partnership with Mexico," the first four initiatives focus on:

- Improving air quality in both nations by focusing on the Baja-San Diego region;
- Building a technology corridor on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border;
- Improving prospects for all members of Mexican society through innovative economic policies; and
- Deepening understanding and identifying additional partnership programs, beginning with a full-time UCSD representative in Mexico City.

Taking a long-term perspective on the partnership, Chancellor Fox said, "These first initiatives create a platform for future projects in coming years, providing a dynamic environment on which to build without locking into a rigid master plan."

The new UCSD-Mexico initiatives were announced at the Tijuana Cultural Center during a day-long visit by Chancellor Fox which included meetings with university rectors, discussion sessions with business, political and cultural leaders and a tour, with briefings, on UCSD and other projects at the Tijuana General Hospital.

"These partnerships respond to the challenge outlined by Chancellor Fox in her inaugural address calling for strengthening our international agenda," said Peter Cowhey, dean of the UCSD Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies. "To realize this vision, we have proposed ambitious goals, but they are all within reach, because we will draw upon the efforts of world-class researchers and scholars from throughout UCSD, working closely with truly exceptional counterparts in the academic, government, non-profit and business sectors of Mexico, our closest neighbor."

Changing the quality of life by improving air quality

The first partnership program will build on the success of an air-quality research effort underway in Mexico City, headed by Mario Molina, a UCSD professor of chemistry and biochemistry, who received the 1995 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Molina's research has led to new insights into how major cities around the world can mitigate their air pollution problems.

The project will involve participation from researchers in numerous disciplines across the UCSD campus, including Scripps Institution of Oceanography, where Molina is a faculty member, UCSD's School of Medicine, Jacobs School of Engineering, Rady School of Management and the divisions of Physical Sciences and Social Sciences. The scholars hope initially to focus on characterizing the air quality of the Mexicali-Imperial Valley region and have already begun a dialogue on cross-border air-quality issues with researchers from both countries at a gathering held at UCSD's Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.

Already in place is UCSD Extension's "Crossborder Innovation and Competitiveness Initiative," dedicated to exploring how the Baja California-San Diego region can become more globally competitive in key science and technology sectors. UCSD Extension is developing a proposal for a \$20 million program combining "hands-on" support for business activities with advanced research and non-degree executive education. This initiative should strengthen the biotech industry in San Diego by building complementary assets such as production facilities in Baja. This initiative will fund crucial preparatory work that is vital to bringing this ambitious plan to fruition.

Improving economic prospects for Mexico

A consensus has developed among Mexican policymakers that only by restructuring the economy can the country increase its global competitiveness and prospects for all citizens. UCSD's Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, the Department of Economics and the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies have a renowned group of experts on the Mexican economy and on the effects of U.S. and Asian policies on Mexico. The "Economic Strategies" project will begin with a high-profile international conference that will examine Mexico's financial infrastructure and will take on such tasks as identifying barriers to entrepreneurship and several other elements of our partner nation's economy. UCSD researchers will act as facilitators for discussions with Mexican leaders, who will then form conclusions and make decisions on new policies.

"Economic restructuring in Mexico can have a profoundly beneficial effect on the American economy as well," said Christopher Woodruff, an economist and director of UCSD's Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.

Major increase of UCSD presence in Mexico

Finally, the partnership will substantially increase UCSD's relationships and involvement throughout Mexico beginning with the assignment of a full-time professional staff member located at the newly established University of California headquarters in Mexico City, Casa de California. The staff person will have a deep understanding of programs at UCSD and at Mexican think tanks, non-profits, businesses and governmental organizations. Through this initiative the representative will seek new and continuing opportunities for exchange and cooperation, and will be in place in the coming months.

A group of advisors for the UCSD-Mexico Partnership was also announced today. Named "Founders," the group has already contributed sufficient funds for required initial budgets for each of the four initiatives. Initial members of the Founders include prominent academic and business leaders Aaron Feldman, John Moores and Richard Atkinson.

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