The Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies is based at UC San Diego’s School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) and is a policy research institute. Since 1979, it has been a go-to source for serious academic research on Mexico and U.S.-Mexico relations, informing the creation, implementation and evaluation of public policy.

The Center produces academic publications on democratization, migration and development and has a 36-year old residential fellowship program that has welcomed over 650 fellows. In addition, the Center provides a forum for thought leaders from academia, government, the private sector and civil society to discuss public policy issues, and hosts seminars, workshops and conferences throughout the year.

MEXICO MOVING FORWARD 2015: RECAPTURING THE MEXICO MOMENT

The Center’s annual symposium highlights the transformational power of Mexicans who are committed to the future of their county. It signifies our commitment to the relationship with Mexico and the binational border region.

On Oct. 30, 2015, the daylong symposium will engage business leaders, civil society, scholars and policymakers in discussions on Mexico’s progress. Sessions will cover topics ranging from recapturing the “Mexico Moment” to the progress and pitfalls of structural reforms and the transformation of civil society. The event will include a gala dinner, keynote addresses and three panel discussion, where leaders from both sides of the border discuss the country’s future direction.

Visit usmex.ucsd.edu/mmf for complete coverage.

“We created Mexico Moving Forward as a convening of scholars and leaders to undertake an open dialogue based on serious reflection and thought. We believe that the university environment is the perfect incubator, and UC San Diego has had a long tradition of fostering policy-relevant research on Mexico.” — Peter Cowhey, GPS Dean
GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN MEXICO

This data-gathering and analysis effort focuses on key transitions in politics, poverty and health shaping Mexican society. A major outcome of the project is the categorization and reclassification of all death certificates (1998 – 2012). This data provides individual level cause of death, and demographic and geographic information that is then made interoperable with other data on the social determinants of health. The purpose is two-fold: to provide a citizen-based approach in looking at local health outcomes and a platform for further research. Information is made available to the public through:

- Interactive maps, data visualizations and narratives on economic growth, democratization, and health outcomes and infrastructure
- Scorecards on access to health services and health outcomes
- Downloadable data sets on health outcomes
- Metadata on available cartography via text and shape files

PRESIDENTIAL SURVEYS

The Center is the repository for surveys conducted during the administration of Mexican President Felipe Calderon (2006 – 2012). These surveys provide a first-hand look at public opinion during the Calderon administration, which influenced the crafting of the government’s communications and, ultimately, many decisions made by the Office of the Presidency. It is the most complete high-frequency survey series that measures political, social and economic attitudes over this six-year period.

We are curating the surveys to make available three categories of ready-to-use, cumulative data available:

- Nationally representative samples that measure issues like presidential approval, economic perceptions and the outlook on security
- Thematic files of surveys that allow for a deeper study of attitudes on specific topics like energy reform
- Subnational files of surveys at the state and municipal level

Data files will be released along with a working-paper series and dynamic maps for seamless visualization.

REFORM IN MEXICO

The “Pacto por México” proposed a wide-ranging and ambitious package of almost 100 major legislative reforms, most of which have been passed in some form by Mexico’s congress since the beginning of 2013. This legislation includes education, energy, security, transparency, social security, fiscal, electoral and telecommunications reform.

Tracking the progress of legislation is crucial given the breadth of the reform agenda and the newly introduced ability of congressional representatives to seek re-election. In collaboration with other researchers in the U.S. and Mexico, we are tracking congressional roll calls on each piece of legislation related to the reform agenda. This data will be available in early 2015 through a user-friendly interface that provides data by issue and representative, and allows users to explore geographic voting patterns through interactive maps.

“We want to create a clearing house where data is readily available, as we need to empower citizens to be able to demand response from their health providers.”

— Alberto Diaz-Cayeros
Stanford University
THREE CALIFORNIA INITIATIVE

The initiative consists of applied research and policy forums that address the critical need for reliable information and analysis, constructive dialogue and well-informed public policy decisions in our binational region, and enhance California’s ties to its neighboring states of Baja California and Baja California Sur in Mexico.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Cross-border Industries
An effort to map binational industry clusters using sales and purchases between sectors is close to completion. This work leverages the “Jobs Without Borders” report (see above).

Governance Handbook
We are developing the first web-based governance handbook for the tri-state region, linking governments and businesses on both sides of the border.

Border Wait-time Study
Leveraging an existing mobile app created by the Qualcomm Institute to estimate wait times at border crossings, we are creating a scorecard for ports of entry and personalized dashboards for users. Real-time data on border waits can support infrastructure and staffing improvements to minimize negative environmental and economic impacts.

Frontera Fridays
Our quarterly site visits connect leaders from both sides of the border to UC San Diego and serve as a platform for learning, networking and discussing opportunities to strengthen our binational region.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

As part of a joint project with the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase, we are undertaking research on foreign direct investment and exports in the binational region, using establishment-level data on employment by industry and foreign headquarter location. Our work will inform the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation’s global engagement strategy, leveraging the region’s distinctive assets: its cross-border, Pacific-region geographic location as well as expertise in life sciences and advanced manufacturing. This strategy will outline economic development priorities and practices to not only increase our metropolitan area’s global connections but also its access to capital, innovation, technology and new markets.

“JOBS WITHOUT BORDERS: EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRY CONCENTRATIONS, AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE CALI BAJA REGION”

Results from a research collaboration between the Center and the Colegio de la Frontera Norte studying employment and industries in San Diego and Imperial counties as well as Baja California — which together make up the CaliBaja region — provide evidence of the region’s importance as a hub for advanced manufacturing. Using employment concentrations within the region to calculate location quotients, this study identifies industries in CaliBaja with a comparative advantage and a high export capacity.

Which industries in the CaliBaja region have emerged as leaders in their area of production? How might policy makers, industry leaders, educators and planners work to strengthen the region’s capacity in these industries? This study is a first step to help answer these questions.

“The complexity and dynamism of cross-border labor pools, supply chains and markets is frequently underestimated. Creating a fact-base on the binational economy is crucial to promoting continued development in our region.”
— Melissa Floca
USMEX Interim Director

“I am blessed to have been given an appointment at the University of California here in San Diego to continue this work with the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. I hope all of you will join us — continuing in that cause — to build a better relationship and a closer relationship that works for all of us.”
— Denise Moreno Ducheny
USMEX Senior Policy Advisor

Former State Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny recently received special recognition from the Mexican government, in part for her commitment to the binational region. Ducheny was given the government’s “Premio Ohtli,” the highest honor bestowed on an individual for service to Mexicans living abroad.
FELLOWS PROGRAM

USMEX has one of the largest residential fellowship programs in the U.S. for multidisciplinary research on Mexico. Each year we bring together fellows from the social sciences and related fields to engage with our students, faculty and the San Diego community.

2015 – 2016 FELLOWS

Jaime Arredondo Sanchez Lira, Division of Global Public Health, UC San Diego
Alejandro Brugues, Department of Economics, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte
Jose Luis Burgos, Division of Global Public Health, UC San Diego
Claudia Chavez Arguelles, Department of Anthropology, the University of Texas at Austin
Salvador Espinosa, Department of Public Affairs, San Diego State University
Noe Fuentes, Department of Economics, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte
Laura Gutierrez, Department of History, UC San Diego
Romeo Guzman, Department of History, Columbia University
Imke Harbers, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Tania Islas Weinstein, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago
Anthony Jerry, Department of Anthropology, UC San Diego
Lucia Martinez Moctezuma, Department of Education, Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos
Jose Monjaraz Sandoval, Department of Economics and International Relations, Universidad Autonoma de Baja California
Victoria Ojeda, Division of Global Public Health, UC San Diego
Magnus Pharao Hansen, Department of Anthropology, Brown University
Ulices Pina, Department of History, UC San Diego
Rocio Rivera Barradas, Department of International Relations/Comparative Politics, University of Miami
Rosalba Rodriguez Ceron, Department of Economics and International Relations, Universidad Autonoma de Baja California
Alejandro Tortolero Villaseñor, Department of History, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa
Deborah Watkins, Department of Economics, UC San Diego

Profiles can be viewed on our website

“USMEX played a pivotal role in my career as an emerging scholar, and gave me the invaluable space, time and energy to complete my dissertation and secure a postdoctoral position.”
— Jennifer Reynolds-Kaye
2013 – 2014 Fellow

“As a young Mexican scholar, the USMEX fellowship gave me the opportunity to engage in discussions on a wide range of topics relating to Mexico with others doing cutting-edge research in their respective areas. I also had access to the amazing wealth of information the Center has about Mexico and its impressive network of former fellows.”
— Alexander Ruiz Euler
2013 – 2014 Fellow