The Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies (USMEX) 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 more than 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 country. It signifies our commitment to the relationship with Mexico and the binational border region.

On Oct. 30, 2015, the daylong symposium engaged business leaders, civil society, scholars and policymakers in discussions on Mexico’s progress. Sessions covered topics ranging from recapturing the “Mexico Moment” to the progress and pitfalls of structural reforms and the transformation of civil society. The event included a gala dinner at the new Cross Border Xpress binational airport terminal, keynote addresses and three panel discussions, where leaders from both sides of the border discussed the country’s future direction.

Visit [usmex.ucsd.edu/mmf](http://usmex.ucsd.edu/mmf) to view session videos from 2015 and previous years.

“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
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 Díaz-Cayeros  
Stanford University

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 reelection. 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.

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 twofold: 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 firsthand 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:

- 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.
“JOBS WITHOUT BORDERS: EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRY CONCENTRATIONS, AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE CALIBAJA 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 policymakers, 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.

THREE CALIFORNIAS 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. It enhances California’s ties to its neighboring states of Baja California and Baja California Sur in Mexico.

MEXICAN MIGRATION FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT

Migration from Mexico to the U.S. and return migration back to Mexico has created a sizeable cohort of students whose education takes place on both sides of the border. These students are especially well-suited to participate in the binational economy because of their cross-border cultural fluency, and supporting their educational success should be a major regional workforce development priority. However, the flow of young people back and forth across the border can derail the educational trajectories of individual students who are not able to adapt to the pressures caused by migration. Research findings will offer policy solutions for policymakers in California and Baja California to respond to the specific needs of the shared student population.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Cross-border Production Sharing
A map of binational industry clusters dynamics using sales and purchases between sectors to quantify the value, jobs and exports created through cross-border supply chains and production processes 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.

“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.

2016–17 FELLOWS

Emilio de Antuñano, Department of History, University of Chicago
Yin-Zu Chen, Department of Sociology, National Taipei University
Alfredo Corchado, Mexico City Bureau Chief, The Dallas Morning News
Daniel Ervin, Department of Geography, UC Santa Barbara
Salvador Espinosa, Department of Public Affairs, San Diego State University
Gustavo Fondevila, Department of Political Science, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas
Kiri Hagerman, Department of Anthropology, UC San Diego
Kyle Haines, Department Political Science, UC San Diego
Imke Harbers, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam
Georgia Hartman, Department of Anthropology, UC Irvine
Jane Lilly Lopez, Department of Sociology, UC San Diego
Ricardo Massa Roldan, EGADE Business School, Tecnologico de Monterrey
Jessica McCurley, Department of Psychology, UC San Diego
Alina Mendez, Department of History, UC San Diego
Raquel Pacheco, Department of Anthropology, UC San Diego
Thomas Passananti, Department of History, San Diego State University
Ulices Piña, Department of History, UC San Diego
Luis Sanchez-Lopez, Department of History, UC San Diego
Christophe Sohn, Department of Urban Planning, Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research

“The USMEX fellowship provided me the space and time to complete my dissertation and to be part of a group of scholars committed to thinking about citizenship, justice and our collective future.”
— Romeo Guzman
2015–16 Fellow

“Being a fellow at USMEX has given me the opportunity to complete my dissertation in an interdisciplinary space and to engage in discussions with a dynamic network of fellows and scholars across UC San Diego. This experience has enriched my writing and encouraged me to expand my work to reach a wider range of audiences in Mexico and the U.S.”
— Claudia Chavez
2015–16 Fellow