



2017–18 HIGHLIGHTS



CENTER FOR U.S.-MEXICAN STUDIES
UC San Diego School of Global Policy & Strategy

The Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies (USMEX), based at the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), was founded in 1980 to study Mexico and the full range of issues affecting economic, social and political relations between Mexico and the U.S.

Spearheading the university's engagement with Mexico, USMEX is a go-to source for rigorous academic research that can be applied to the creation, implementation and evaluation of public policy. The center is privileged with the unique opportunity to engage in research on Mexico, Mexicans in the U.S., and the U.S.-Mexico relationship from its location on the border.

MISSION

We contribute to the ongoing integration process between the U.S. and Mexico by providing a forum for thought leaders to engage in public dialogue; training and supporting a vibrant community of innovative scholars and practitioners; and undertaking cutting-edge research to guide policy decisions.

VISION

Our intellectual leadership improves the quality of life for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans; deepens the economic integration between the two countries; and supports the development of a dynamic cadre of leaders dedicated to the consolidation of the U.S.-Mexico relationship.



In September 2017, the center officially welcomed Rafael Fernández de Castro as its new director. He served as foreign policy adviser to President Felipe Calderón as an expert on bilateral relations between Mexico and the U.S. He is founder and former chair of the Department of International Studies at Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) in Mexico City. In addition to center director, Fernández de Castro is a professor at GPS.



USMEX TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

- » Arturo Chiquito joined the team to support the USMEX director with research and special programming.
- » UCMEXUS-CONACYT post-doctoral fellow Betsabé Román conducted research on children returning to U.S. schools and communities from Mexico.
- » Post-doctoral fellow Charlotte Gonzalez-Abraham carried out research evaluating the resilience of Mexican farming systems to climate change.
- » Post-doctoral fellow Cecilia Farfán-Méndez focused on drug trafficking organizations and serves as one of the coordinators for the U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Taskforce.
- » Research assistant and GPS student Savitri Arvey received a Tinker Field Research Grant to conduct fieldwork in Nogales, Tijuana and Mexico City on subnational policies for deportees.
- » Melissa Floca was inducted into Paseo de la Fama – Tijuana Innovadora.



UNIVERSITY
OF
CALIFORNIA

Mexico
Initiative

NAFTA and the Future of the U.S.-Mexico Relationship

A collection of thought pieces
October 2017

TRADE AND
COMPETITIVENESS
IN NORTH AMERICA

A FOCUS ON THE
CALI BAJA MEGA-REGION

CROSS-BORDER RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING

- » UC President Janet Napolitano hosted a forum in September 2017 that gathered prominent thought leaders to discuss the impact of NAFTA and the path forward. The center commissioned a series of thought pieces by UC faculty for the forum titled “NAFTA and the Future of the U.S.-Mexico Relationship.”
- » USMEX created a cross-border network of journalists in partnership with Newsweek en español and held workshops and specialized briefings with award winning journalists including Joshua Partlow, Eduardo Porter and Julia Preston.
- » World Trade Center San Diego and the center produced a report that contextualizes binational trade and production in the age of NAFTA. A key finding shows that the Cali Baja Mega-Region exports \$24.3B worth of goods and services internationally.
- » The Mexican Migration Field Research Program continued its research on education and migration. In May 2018, students visited Sacramento to highlight results of recent surveys and share a policy brief focused on the needs of binational youth. This work is part of a larger collaboration — The Students We Share — supported by the UC Mexico Initiative.
- » USMEX researchers are now playing a leading role in the San Diego-Tijuana Earthquake Scenario, engaging local stakeholders on both sides of the border in scenario planning related to a magnitude 6.9 earthquake on the Rose Canyon fault.

THE U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONSHIP

- » Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs Luis Videgaray inaugurated the center's Distinguished Annual Lecture on U.S.-Mexico Relations in March 2018. He discussed the need to work together on issues of trade, drug trafficking, migration and water contamination along the border. At the luncheon hosted by the center, fellows presented policy recommendations based on their research to the Secretary.
- » Mexico's 2018 elections provided an opportunity to bring candidates to the region to discuss top campaign issues as part of a series titled "Reflexion Mexico." In conjunction with Tijuana Innovadora, the center hosted talks with Mexican presidential candidates Margarita Zavala and Jose Antonio Meade.
- » The center organized a conference in March 2018 to analyze the party platforms of the main political coalitions and hosted a visit from Lorenzo Cordova, head of the Instituto Nacional Electoral, in November 2017.
- » In February 2018, in partnership with Justice in Mexico at the University of San Diego, the center organized a conference titled "Rethinking the War on Drugs and U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation" to discuss the war on drugs and security cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico. As a result, the U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Taskforce was launched. The taskforce brings together a group of respected experts and opinion makers from Mexico and the United States to offer concrete policy recommendations to Mexico's new congressional leaders and presidential administration elected in July 2018, as well as the new cohort of U.S. legislators to be elected in November 2018.
- » In May 2018, the center inaugurated an art exhibition of works on loan from the Gilberto Cardenas Collection of Latino Art, the largest private collection of Latino art in the world. USMEX director Rafael Fernández de Castro and Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Becky Petitt affirmed their commitment to making UC San Diego a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Maria Echaveste, former advisor to President Bill Clinton, joined us as the keynote speaker at the event.
- » The Center hosted a luncheon with Mexico's Interior Minister, Alfonso Navarrete Prida, to discuss issues of migration and security. Community members offered perspectives on the challenges faced at the border.



FELLOWS PROGRAM

Each year, the center invites scholars to campus from a wide range of disciplines as part of its residential fellows program. The former fellows, now numbering over 700, are the core of the center's intellectual community and hold prominent positions in academia, government, civil society and the private sector. Highlights from the 2017-18 cohort include:

- » USMEX welcomed our first Fulbright-Garcia Robles Mexico Studies Chair, COLMEX Professor Alejandra Trejo-Nieto.
- » Fellows presented their research at the Wednesday seminars as well as local institutions such as COLEF and UABC.
- » Conferences and workshops organized by the fellows around their areas of expertise included "Criminal and Political Violence in Mexico and Central America" in partnership with the Center for Latin American Studies at Stanford University and "Challenges for Dreamers in Trump's America".



BUILDING THE BORDER COMMUNITY

- » The Border Legislative Academy brought together legislators from the ten U.S.-Mexico border states to participate in professional development training and build cross-border relationships.
- » The Border Mayors Association Binational Summit provided an opportunity for mayors from both sides of the border to discuss shared local issues of trade, public health, environment and border infrastructure.
- » USMEX launched an exciting new initiative with Baja universities and the UC San Diego ENLACE program to jump start the STEM talent pipeline in the region and better align talent development to industry needs.
- » The quarterly Frontera Fridays site visits continued to build connections between leaders from both sides of the border and UC San Diego by serving as a platform for learning, networking and discussion about what makes the binational region unique – visits included advanced manufacturing facilities, art and cultural institutions.