



## 2018–19 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.

For the past year, three main issues have driven our agenda at the center:

- » President Donald Trump's continuous attacks on Mexico, undermined by a successful renegotiation of NAFTA (now T-MEC)
- » The political tsunami that represented the overwhelming victory of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador
- » The crisis at the border and the politicization of the migrant caravans by President Trump to rally his base

### 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 April 2019, we carried out the first gathering of the Advisory Board of the center. It is composed of a diverse group of leaders from the private, public and social sectors in the U.S. and Mexico. Over the course of two days, the new members discussed the principal plans for the center and agreed to create three committees to support development, communication and special events.





## TRACKING THE TRANSFORMATION

The promise of profound changes to Mexico's political, economic and social institutions underpinned Andrés Manuel López Obrador's landslide victory in the 2018 presidential election. Since assuming the reins of government, the new administration has faced a myriad of political and policy challenges, including the migrant caravans, fuel shortages, high levels of insecurity and a complex relationship with the U.S. This new series provides an opportunity for analysis of AMLO's administration.

- » The conference "Mexico's New President: A Populist or a Pragmatist" kicked off the series with speakers from government, civil society and academia.
- » José Antonio Meade participated in the series with a discussion of the new reality in Mexico seen through the lenses of political economy, social policy, diplomacy and politics.
- » Tania Ortiz Mena, the CEO of de IEnova; Enrique Hidalgo, the President of ExxonMobil Ventures Mexico; and GPS Professor David Victor discussed the new realities in the energy sector.



## NEW TRENDS IN MIGRATION

Important changes in migration trends and policies greatly impacted life at the U.S.-Mexico border – and specifically in San Diego and Tijuana – over the last year, placing migration issues at the forefront of our work at the center.

- » The report "Asylum Processing and Waitlists at the U.S.-Mexico Border" provides an overview of the asylum processing system or "metering" at the U.S.-Mexico border. Fieldwork was carried out in eight border cities to provide a snapshot of the current practices in asylum processing and the experiences of asylum seekers. This report was updated in May and August 2019 and produced through a collaboration with the Strauss Center at the University of Texas at Austin and the Migration Policy Centre at the European University Institute.
- » Our students in the Mexican Migration Field Research Program traveled to Tijuana in early 2019 to interview youth with migration experience in schools and migrants in shelters. The students then presented their research findings to senators and assembly members in Sacramento on Mexico Advocacy Day on May 7, 2019.
- » A group of Fellows authored a series of essays, "The Migrant Caravan: From Honduras to Tijuana," to analyze diverse aspects of the caravan of almost 7,000 migrants that arrived in Tijuana in November 2018.
- » In November 2018, we worked with colleagues across UC San Diego to organize a teach-in to explore questions raised by the arrival of the migrant caravan in our community about migration, law and ethics. The discussion focused on opportunities for the region to work collaboratively towards a humane and orderly response to the arrival of the migrants, as well as the role of civil society in ensuring immediate shelter and safety for migrants and access to due process.

**The Migrant Caravan: From Honduras to Tijuana**  
An Analysis by the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Fellows  
(2018-2019)

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## METERING UPDATE

AUGUST 2019



 **ROBERT STRAUSS CENTER**  
FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND LAW  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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

## U.S.-MEXICO SECURITY COOPERATION

In March 2019, USMEX researchers presented a whitepaper titled "U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Report 2018-2024" at the Brookings Institution. The whitepaper was produced by the U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Task Force, which includes scholars, policy experts, and government officials from both countries. The event included opening remarks from Mexican Ambassador to the U.S. Martha Barcena and participation from U.S. civil servants. The report provides an assessment of bilateral collaboration on security issues and proposes a road map to enhance cooperation between the governments of Mexico and the U.S.

## HIGH LEVEL EVENTS

- » Pacific Leadership Fellow Santiago Levy gave a keynote address "The Elusive Quest for Prosperity in Mexico" to discuss the microeconomic policies that have suppressed growth and highlight changes that would allow Mexico to prosper.
- » The quarterly Frontera Friday site visits continued to build connections between leaders from both sides of the border and UC San Diego. One of the events in the series focused on improving management of the Tijuana River Watershed and another on exploring urban agriculture.
- » As part of the GPS 30th Anniversary celebration, the center organized a panel on Mexico's role in the global fight against climate change with Nobel laureate Mario Molina and Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, the UN Special Envoy for the 2019 Climate Summit.
- » The USMEX team accompanied UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla and other campus officials to Mexico City for a series of high level meetings with public and private sector leaders and alumni to increase the university's engagement with Mexico.
- » The center hosted a conference ahead of Baja California's elections to discuss the most important issues for the state. Gustavo de Hoyos, president of COPARMEX, and General Oscar Naranjo, the former Vice President of Colombia, joined as keynote speakers.
- » In collaboration with border universities from the U.S. and Mexico, UC San Diego and USMEX launched the Border Solutions Alliance to address the increasingly complex set of challenges faced by border communities related to health, energy, infrastructure, environment, productivity and the movement of goods and people.
- » The center relaunched the Summer Seminar with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, inviting a group of 31 young professionals and public servants from Mexico to spend two weeks at UC San Diego learning about U.S. political institutions and U.S.-Mexico relations.
- » Our working group on the Tijuana River Watershed convened a high-level meeting to develop a long-term strategy for transboundary water management, leveraging minute 320 of the 1944 U.S.-Mexico Water Treaty. The U.S. Consul General in Tijuana and the Mexican Consul General in San Diego participated, along with commissioners of the International Boundary and Water Commission.





## 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 750, 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 2018-19 cohort include:

- » USMEX welcomed Brian Stevenson of Lakehead University as the first Canada Fulbright Research Chair. During his time at the Center he organized a conference entitled, "From NAFTA to USMCA: The New Deal and What's Missing."
- » Returning fellow Lynn Stephen, Philip H. Knight Chair and distinguished professor of arts and sciences and professor of anthropology at the University of Oregon, served as the president of the Latin American Studies Association.



## CROSS-BORDER COMPETITIVENESS

The center is collaborating with private and public sector partners, as well as other higher education institutions, to engage in research and educational activities that support successful pathways to adulthood for youth in the cross-border region.

- » **The ITijuana Talent Pipeline Project:** This project focuses on three strategies to increase the computer science and data science talent pipeline – motivating students to pursue degrees in STEM, providing professional development for faculty and connecting university students to industry.
- » **Bridges Across Borders – San Diego High Pathway:** This new career pathway will be launched in the fall of 2019 and is designed to help students recognize that a bilingual and bicultural upbringing provides them with unique strengths.
- » **Baja California Seal of Biliteracy:** The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes students for proficiency in speaking, reading and writing in two languages. USMEX worked with officials in Baja California to pilot the program with 40 teachers and 10,000 students.