

Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research (FOBESII)

Achievements, May 2013 – October 2015

- **Educational exchange and joint research and innovation are now at the top of our policy goals.**
- **High Level/Education-Related Visits in 2014-16:** High-level delegations headed by the Governors of California, New Jersey, and Arizona; the Mayors of Los Angeles, Albuquerque, and Houston; educational and trade delegations from Arizona, Colorado, West Virginia, Texas, Minnesota, Michigan, and the City of San Antonio; and Presidents of Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, MIT, the University of California, West Virginia State University, Harvard, and University of Texas at Austin, have all visited Mexico seeking closer education cooperation as a key to economic competitiveness.
- **Over 80 new university partnerships created,** from Chiapas to Washington State, from Baja California to Massachusetts, and many states in between.
- **New U.S. university offices opened in Mexico:** The Universities of Oklahoma and New Mexico have hired representatives in Mexico, and they join the Universities of Arizona, California, the Southern California, and the State Universities of New York, and Colorado and Texas A&M in having permanent staff and facilities in Mexico.
- **U.S. universities establish new study centers/ campus in Mexico:** Arkansas State University is building a campus in the State of Querétaro. Colorado State University's Todos Santos Center, home to an Agricultural and Water Research Center in Baja California Sur, opened last fall. Texas A&M now has a hacienda for students and faculty in San Miguel de Allende to encourage greater cooperation with Mexico. Alliant University and Incarnate Word continue to have full educational activities/degrees in Mexico City.
- **Educational exchange opened to diverse audiences:** Thanks to funding from SEP, Televisa, the U.S. Embassy and Universia, close to 600 Mexican students from five of the bilingual Universidades Tecnológicas spent the fall semesters of 2014 or 2015 at community colleges in the United States, and we hope to expand the number in 2016 with additional funding from SEP. The Embassy worked with ANUIES, ITAM, Stanford, UA and UNM to send close to 30 indigenous Mexican students to summer programs in the United States. The Embassy, in collaboration with ANUIES, launched a summer research program with UT Dallas and continued a bilateral internship program with SUNY for senior staff of academic exchanges offices. Under the ILEP (International Leaders in Education Program), the Department of State funded two Mexican high school teachers on semester exchanges in 2015 and an additional five in 2016. The Department's Gilman Scholarship Program has also been reinstated, and 31 scholars have participated in short-term exchanges in Mexico since Summer 2015.
- **Thanks to additional money from SEP, COMEXUS will sponsor additional grantees within the Proyecta 100,000 initiative** through nine new programs that include summer research

opportunities for undergraduates, diversity grants for underprivileged/indigenous students, English immersion courses, teacher professional development courses, Summer Engineering Programs, a semester abroad for law students, GRE preparation courses and science clubs.

- **Mexican Universities Participate in Student Fairs in the U.S.:** Thanks to innovative work with key US universities and Mexican Consulates, Mexican university student fairs took place in 2015 in El Paso, Austin, Minneapolis, and Northern California. ANUIES and the Embassy have sent over 300 Mexican university rectors to the U.S. over the past two years to engage with American counterparts.
- **Expansion of Fulbright/COMEXUS Exchange:** Our binational Fulbright program is one of the largest programs, not only in the region, but in the world. In fall 2015, 79 new Mexican grantees started their programs in the U.S. Mexico, for its part, received 116 new U.S. grantees and will continue supporting two others in their second year. Thanks to SEP funding, we have 60 English Teaching Assistants in Mexico.
- **Expansion of EducationUSA activities**

In August-September 2015, EducationUSA and COMEXUS, on behalf of the U.S. Embassy and the Mexican Ministry of Foreign affairs organized the second edition of an eight-city U.S. university student fair reaching over 3500 Mexican students and bringing over 50 different U.S. institutions of higher education to South-central Mexico. The second part of this tour will take place in April 2016 taking the U.S HEIs to North-Central Mexico.

In 2015, EducationUSA and COMEXUS worked with the U.S. Embassy to provide basic and advanced training to over 100 academic mobility staff members of Mexican universities and state governments in Veracruz, Sinaloa, Chiapas, Baja California, and Querétaro. We currently have 21 EducationUSA advising centers across Mexico. Additional proposals for establishing new centers are being prepared in Chiapas, Jalisco, Chihuahua, and Veracruz.

Thanks to support of SEP via COMEXUS, 10 new advising positions have been added at academic institutions across the country.

In support of Proyecta 100,000, EducationUSA engaged in Pre-Departure Orientations for approximately 250 Mexican students in different Mexican states. These sessions were provided in person and virtually.

- **Mexican universities are in the lead in the number of 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund Grants.**

The 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund, a dynamic collaboration among the White House, the U.S. Department of State, Partners of the Americas, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, and the private sector, provides competitive grants to Higher Education Institutions in the Western Hemisphere to create new university partnerships that increase academic mobility in the Americas, provide technical and linguistic training, and enhance regional cooperation. Since the inception of the Innovation Fund in January 2014, Mexican Higher Education Institutions have been involved in 24 out of 70 100,000 Strong Innovation Fund grants awarded, representing 33% and a number higher than any country outside the United States. These new university partnerships are contributing to the 100,000 Strong in the Americas goal to increase to 100,000 the number of two-way student exchanges between the United States and other countries in the Western Hemisphere by 2020.

- **Energy Education**

In April 2015, the United States and Mexico held an energy education roundtable that brought together nearly 40 key stakeholders who determined possible areas for cooperation, including sharing best practices in energy education.

In August 2015, we had follow up meetings in Mexico City and Mérida to explore how we can better engage the private sector and to examine ways we can work to increase bilateral academic exchange between the US and Mexico. The Office of Energy Resources in Washington paid for the participation of Houston Community College staff who shared best practices on how to link industry with universities.

- **Internship MOU**

In March 2015, Mexico and the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of the professional internship program between both countries. In May 2015, a delegation of 19 U.S. J-1 internship program sponsors visited Mexico City and Puebla. The group met with 75 Mexican university representatives in Mexico City and another 130 in Puebla.

Recently, U.S. Embassy Mexico created a working group on internships with representatives from the Embassy, COMEXUS, SENER, SRE, the American Chamber of Commerce, Consejo Coordinador Empresarial, Houston Partnership, Enlace Internacional, and U.S. and Mexican academic institutions.

- **Joint Research and Innovation**

Mexico joined 10 other countries to partner on NSF's PIRE (Partnerships for International Research and Education) program. Through PIRE, U.S. and Mexican researchers from University of California-Riverside, Centro de Investigación Científica y Educación Superior de Ensenada (CICESE), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and Instituto Nacional de Astrofísica, Óptica y Electrónica (INAOE), are further developing a transparent cranial implant – the so-called "Windows to the Brain" platform--to replace portions of the skull. This implant would allow for non-invasive neuro procedures, improving our ability to diagnose and treat neurological disorders, such as traumatic brain injury and stroke.

Mexico is also a new partner in NSF's Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide (GROW) program, which will allow young, promising U.S. students to collaborate with researchers in Mexico.

NSF and CONACYT are fostering high-quality, industrially relevant collaborations between universities, research centers, and industry. A workshop was recently held in Mexico to identify researchers and industry that would partner with NSF supported Industry/University Collaborative Research Centers (I/UCRC). Over 60 researchers and industry members participated in the workshop and plans are underway to support Mexican engagement in existing I/UCRCs.

Earlier in the year the partners also expanded collaborations with NSF's Innovation Corps (I-Corps) program through a training workshop. I-Corps is a set of activities and programs that prepares scientists and engineers to extend their focus beyond the laboratory and broaden the impact of select, NSF-funded, basic-research projects. Workshop participants included 15 teams, composed of 60 Mexican scientists, PhD students, engineers and business mentors. Many participants are currently refining their research and/or creating companies to market products. CONACYT has pledged to continue the program with Mexican government funding and plan to have another I-Corps cohort of teams go through the program later this year. The partners are also developing opportunities for collaborations between CONACYT supported centers and NSF's Engineering Research Centers (ERC) program.