

Fox, Davis take action on closer ties

UC MEXUS last year joined the governor of California and UC in presenting Mexico's new president, Vicente Fox, with a series of binational educational agreements – a gesture that confirmed the improved relations between the state and its neighbor.

During Fox's two-day California visit, he and Gov. Gray Davis met at UCLA to officially inaugurate a broadband Internet2 link between UC and Mexico's major universities and endorse new agreements between UC and Mexican institutions.

"This historic visit reflects the flourishing interdependence of California and Mexico," Davis said, noting that Mexico has overtaken Japan as the state's No. 1 trading partner and that a third of the state's population traces its roots to Mexico. "We share a continent. But we also share a commitment to expanding economic and educational opportunities for our people," he said. "Increasingly, we are two people with one future. *Dos pueblos, un futuro.*"

Fox's commitment to technological partnership prompted the UCLA gathering during a day already packed with meetings with migrant workers in Fresno, first lady Laura Bush in San Fernando, and major speeches on immigration before the Town Hall Los Angeles and the U.S. Hispanic Chamber.

Earlier, members of UC and major Mexican institutes of higher education met to finalize new and revamped agreements for joint research and education.



Mexican President Vicente Fox visited UCLA with California Governor Gray Davis last year to launch an Internet2 connection and ratify accords between UC and Mexican institutes of higher education.

UC MEXUS and Jaime Parada Avila, the new director of CONACYT also announced joint support for two focused research areas: high-speed Internet use for binational education and research, and projects on the Colorado River Delta and Upper Gulf of California.

New agreements also were ratified with:

- *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*
- *Universidad Autónoma Chapingo*
- *Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada (CICESE)*
- *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS)*

UC revealed plans for a Mexico City facility and joined with CONACYT to announce formation of a UC-Mexico Commission on Education, Science and Technology, which UC MEXUS will administer.

The item that drew most attention, however, was a demonstration of a new broadband Internet2 link between UC and Mexico's institutions of higher education that will give Mexican academics access to the vast resources of the system in the United States and worldwide. Internet2 was created to develop advanced applications and networking for research and education. It connects more than 180 universities in the United States to its backbone network, Abilene, which supports high-quality audio and video transfer without the intrusion of the so-called commodity Internet.

"Internet2 will allow people on both sides of the border to harness the power of those ideas," Davis said. "With Internet2, students, teachers and high-tech innovators on both sides of the border will be able to share information faster and more effectively than ever."

Researchers may use the link for distance education programs, to facilitate medical and laboratory research exchange, distance manipulation of research equipment, and modeling for engineering or agricultural projects. The link will allow the two countries to share such resources as digital archives and libraries.

The Mexican arm of the project – the *Corporación Universitaria para el Desarrollo de Internet (CUDI)*, connects 42 Mexican universities in a research and education network. CUDI hooks up with the California higher education institution network, CalREN-2. The two systems link at a point between Tijuana and the San

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Diego Supercomputer Center and became operational in November 2000.

Both sides of the pipeline are pleased with the partnership.

"We can do much more with the same resources," said Carlos Casasús, director general for CUDI. "The quality of teaching and research can be enhanced dramatically. (Educators will) gain a better under-

standing of each other."

Although the network had been launched the previous year, the UCLA inauguration in 2001 signaled that the project had top level approval.

CONACYT and UC MEXUS last year ran a special call for projects that would make use of this new link. Nine were selected for funding.

The proposals included distance learning, binational teaching and creation of

new systems and networks for high-level research.

"It was a chance to draw attention to this new connection and to encourage creativity in its use for research and education," said Andrea Kaus, UC MEXUS grants program officer.

"The work of the recipients of these grants will act as a catalyst to other researchers and educators."