

Mexico Initiative Strategic Plan¹

October 12, 2014

The Freeman Spogli Institute has launched the Mexico Initiative to bring together, highlight and advance Mexico-related research, teaching and outreach at Stanford University. The initiative will provide support for faculty conducting research on and in Mexico, for seminars and conferences focusing on current issues related to Mexico, and or student teaching opportunities on campus and experiential learning in the field. The program proposed in this strategic plan seeks to establish new robust partnerships and collaboration with institutes of higher learning, Stanford alumni and affiliates in Mexico, and to build a vibrant network of scholars interested in Mexico here at Stanford.

I. Motivation.

Beyond the traditional issues of security, migration and trade, Mexico has a monumental human and developmental significance for California and the U.S. An increasing flow of the best Mexican scientists and engineers will find employment in the U.S., just as the cultural ties between both countries will express themselves in the food we eat, the music we listen to, the films we watch, the literature we read and the range of artistic expressions we share. And the developmental challenges Mexico faces — poverty, violence, ill health and deficient education — will continue to spill over the border with impacts well beyond Mexico.

Stanford is strategically poised to serve as the most visible and influential U.S. higher education institution in partnership with Mexico for its future development. In doing so, the university will not only reap the benefits from increased scholarly collaboration and cultural exchanges, but will also enhance the experiential learning opportunities of a student body deeply engaged in international affairs and broaden the diversity of campus life. Stanford has a long tradition of scholarly engagement with Mexico, both through the steady flow of students attending programs in all seven schools and the research pursuits of the faculty focused on important issues of Mexico and Mexican origin in the U.S.

Despite the scope and substance of faculty engagement, Stanford's visibility in the area of Mexico is not commensurate with our global standing. The Stanford brand is well-known in Mexico and among the Mexican community in the U.S., but there is little understanding of groundbreaking scholarship that sets the university apart. A Stanford degree has great value, but Mexican stakeholders, policy makers and the public at large lack a full understanding about the university's global prominence in research innovation and its longstanding contribution to knowledge generation, teaching and training, and development of some of the world's most important technologies. Mexico-related opportunities have not been sufficiently coordinated and leveraged by the university to engage students and faculty more broadly on campus. As internationalization continues and evolves at Stanford, with important investments in both Asia and Africa, Latin America and Mexico — arguably the most natural entry point into the region — is an important, yet mostly overlooked international target of opportunity.

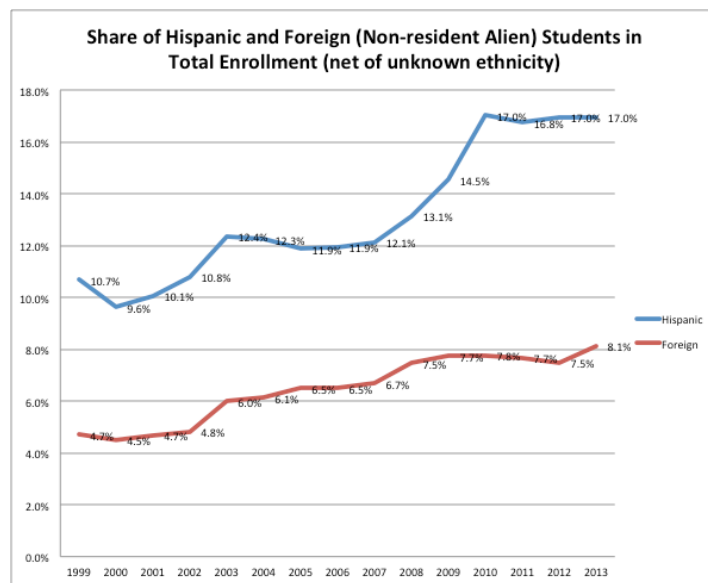
At the diplomatic level, the bilateral agenda between Mexico and the U.S. has prioritized a significant increase in educational exchanges. Both administrations aim to bring up to 100,000

¹ This strategic document was drafted by Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. Support from FSI Director's Fund and the Office of International Affairs made many of these activities possible.

Mexican students (up from 14,000, according to FOBESII) to study in the U.S., while a goal of 50,000 is set for U.S. students in the reverse direction. Stanford should position itself to attract the most talented undergraduate and the best and brightest graduate students and post-doctoral scholars, or they will end up placing in universities in the Southwest, Texas and the East Coast.

The relationship between Mexico and the U.S. is not just about the perpetual flow of trade, finance and people across the border. At Stanford, social scientists are actively working to understand the linkages created by illicit trade and undocumented migration. Research and teaching about alternative sources of energy, resource conservation and use of oil in Mexico are thriving areas of study. Mexican arts and culture are also well represented across the campus. And epidemiological and demographic transitions occurring in Mexico are focus of experts at the medical school. Stanford must be prepared to articulate to the world how its fruitful collaboration with Mexico is key to its international engagement.

Mexico also has an unprecedented place in the Stanford student body. More than 10 percent of Stanford staff and 4 percent of the faculty are Hispanic, most of them Mexican. Over the last decade the largest increase in the student population profile has been in representation of Hispanic students. And within the Hispanic student population itself, half are Mexican or Chicano.



In the graduate population the share of Hispanics is only 6 per cent. But it is safe to predict that this percentage will grow as the Mexican-origin population and Mexican international students become more competitive for admission into Stanford graduate programs. The Stanford student body is highly internationalized, and it actively seeks opportunities for engagement with the world. More than half of last year's class participated in a Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP) opportunity. Almost one-fourth of enrollees in language courses took Spanish. Notwithstanding their interest in Spanish, students find few opportunities to leverage their language skills in their areas of scholarly interest.

II. The Mexico Initiative.

The Mexico Initiative is built around six core activities:

1. Scholarships, exchanges and fellowships

Stanford has in place several programmatic opportunities for Mexican students. The Graduate School of Business has successfully established a steady flow of Mexican students (mostly from Monterrey) who apply and are accepted every year. This strategy has enabled the GSB to create a vibrant alumni network. In the Graduate School of Education, the Claudio X. Gonzalez Graduate Student Aid Fund provides financial support through fellowships for admitted master's students (ICE/IEAPA). The Mexican Science Council, CONACYT, provides funding for students in the School of Engineering.

CONACYT will provide additional partial funding for post-doctoral fellowships at Stanford. The Poverty and Governance Program at FSI has already secured funding for two of those fellowships, enabling the Office of International Affairs (the Dean of Research) to create a template agreement for similar academic programs across the university, including fellowships through the Mexican Ministry of Energy (SENER), which is in the process of negotiating fellowships at the Precourt Institute for Energy.

2. Area studies and student engagement

Stanford students are deeply engaged in world affairs and global issues. Stanford faculty belong to a global research community that has blurred the boundary between domestic and international scholarly networks. The time is ripe for rethinking the university's conception of area studies. Expertise in languages and historic-cultural sensitivity are basic requirements for students pursuing careers in a global environment. The Mexico Initiative will create the capacity to equip graduate and undergraduate students with the tools and technologies they need for research and experiential learning in Mexico, as well as in developing countries. Long-term working partnerships in Mexico will be established to facilitate research and education on the ground. Stanford programs that offer student support for international work abroad and on campus can significantly enhance these partnerships; they include Stanford Global Studies at H&S, the Haas Center for Public Service, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, BOSP and FSI's Global Student Fellows Program.

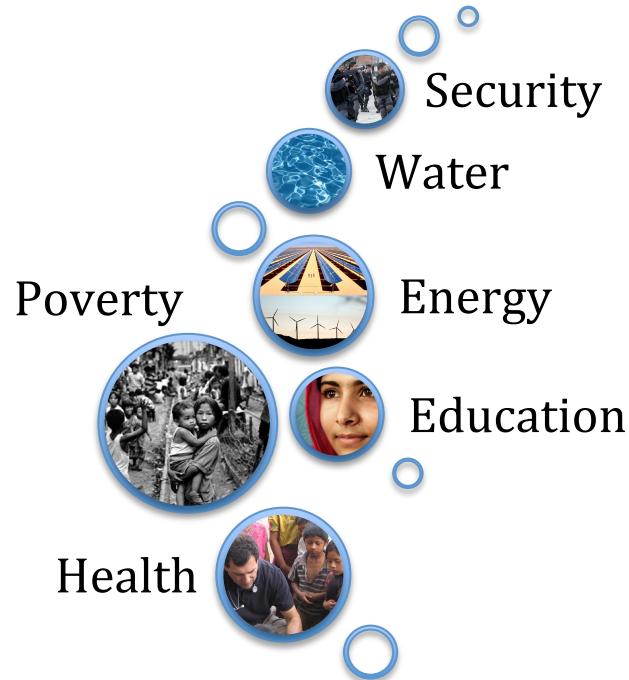
Specifically, the Mexico Initiative should support and engage:

- Summer student fieldwork with faculty mentors in Chiapas and Mexico City
- Internships in Mexico for Haas Center and Stanford in Government
- Meetings and exchanges of the student-led MEXFOCUS network
- BOSP educational activities in Oaxaca
- Field research on energy in Mexico (PESD)
- Rosenkranz awardees and field engagement in Cuernavaca
- Dirzo Lab activities in Veracruz
- ANUIES program of young entrepreneurs

3. Research projects with peer institutions.

In preparation of this strategic plan, considerable effort was made to understand the salient issues in Mexico and to identify potential matches between Stanford's areas of expertise and scholarly

activity in Mexico. Characterizing the landscape of higher learning institutions in Mexico was an important part of identifying potential research partners. Stanford's strategy should be one of inclusiveness in forming research partnerships across Mexico, rather than focusing on a single Mexican institution. The Mexico Initiative can facilitate the drafting of agreements and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) on behalf of Stanford faculty who seek formal research partnerships with academic peers and institutions of excellence across Mexico. Some areas of scholarship that should be prioritized given the intersection between Stanford expertise and high salience in Mexico are provided below:



4. Online Learning

Stanford is at the forefront of digitally mediated learning with a major investment in online education. Massive online open courses (MOOCs) will become one of the trademarks of Stanford's engagement with Mexico. This involves both the development of courses that have substantive Mexico-related content (history, society, literature, economics or politics), as well as bilingual learning opportunities in substantive areas of the sciences or engineering, learning opportunities that cater to Spanish-speaking students not only in Mexico, but also the U.S. and across Latin America.

5. Speakers series, workshops and conferences

Mexico's presence on the campus can be showcased by an annual conference that highlights Stanford's expertise in areas related to Mexico. We would like to start by web-streaming Stanford events in Mexico or, possibly, start a series of TED-style talks or online presentations with a strong research content prepared by Stanford faculty.

In addition we can take advantage of work being done by the Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Research and Innovation (FOBESII) to bring activities and events organized by the Mexican embassy and consulates to Stanford. Such activities would promote discussion about the Mexican diaspora, cultural fairs and festivals (MexIam) or exchanges of young entrepreneurs.

6. Mexico@Stanford web portal

The Mexico Initiative website will serve as a clearinghouse for Mexico-related research, teaching and outreach activities at Stanford. It will facilitate communication among the Mexico community, broadcast events and activities through social media and provide a regularly calendar of Mexico-related events at Stanford. The website will signal Stanford's commitment to Mexico, encourage connections between Stanford Mexican students and the alumni network, and serve as a virtual meeting point for potential partnerships and development opportunities.