

UC – Mexico Workshop

Mission Inn, Riverside

January 27-28, 2014

Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox's synthesis of workshop discussion for UC President Janet Napolitano:

This is the twentieth anniversary of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The United States and Mexico are significant trading partners with nearly \$500 billion in annual trade, so it is tragic to think that over that same period, we've grown further apart on the academic side, with fewer student exchanges and fewer research collaborations. That's all the more reason that this is such an opportune time to come together and work on new initiatives.

At today's workshop, we've worked on several levels – acting as 80 advisors to the two governments, the University of California and other institutions. We tried to identify specific activities in which we might work together to harness the human and other resources of the state of California and Mexico to address common issues for both entities.

A primary goal of the UC - Mexico Initiative is to create the next generation of leaders, people who are familiar with each other, working together with a sense of parity and equity, and ready to forge common goals. It will be a generational task to train these new leaders.

There is still lots to learn -- we have good starting points but more work to do. Some important touch points of our discussion:

- Key in everyone's mind today has been how to sustain this effort.
- Among the necessary components is the political will – and there is a sense by all of us that because of the timing and current political and economic climate, this could be a great opportunity.

- We are also looking for a broad vision and big ideas to help sustain this effort -- and engage and motivate people.
- We need a champion -- or champions -- to provide leadership.
- We need commitment from lots of quarters – buy-in at a strategic level.
- We need to be smart about aligning ourselves with current policy initiatives by the Mexican and U.S. governments.
- We need a central organizing structure, an advisory group of some kind, and some central coordination. The first years will be the most vulnerable.
- We need some kind of media strategy that lets everyone – people within the university, in our sister institutions both here and in Mexico, in the state of California, and in both governments – understand that we are committed in a way we haven't been before. This is part of a new ethos with renewed relationships.

We talked today about activities at various levels:

- On the educational side, there's a sense that one of the easier places to begin may include University and Cooperative Extension, which can do short-term, user-oriented, flexible courses and programs.
- Other opportunities involve certificate programs in Mexico, including public health management, law, public policy and others. This could also be a revenue source.
- At the undergraduate level, it seems to many that we can be smarter about the ways we work with each other. Students from Mexico (coming to UC) now go through the same process as students from other nations. But those from Mexico are our special friends and we need to think differently about the application, admission, and enrollment processes for them, as well as about possible bridge programs to provide an even greater level of support and connectedness. We also need to think differently with our friends in Mexico about how we mutually fund these students.
- We haven't been as smart as we could be about using all of our friends and relationships, and especially our alumni. These friends can potentially help recruit and support students, and guide our relationships with businesses and organizations in Mexico with which they are affiliated.

- We may want to think about some geographic focus for some of our activities. Analogous to enterprise zones for business, we might consider making special arrangements in some regions, for example, the opportunity for special health programming in the San Diego–Tijuana area where a specific set of policies and funding arrangements might apply.
- We're also thinking about collaborative research programs, with both public and private funding.

On the issue of funding, we're proceeding under the assumption that funding will be a shared commitment by multiple players on both sides of the border. We're not yet asking for specific funding -- but we'll be back. There's a sense among us that potential funders for this effort may go beyond the usual players, possibly including private foundations and corporations.

If we're talking about harnessing potential and developing the next generation of leaders, many people may want to help us with funding.

And if we identify research challenges that are defining for the futures of both countries, private enterprise may help too. It all goes back to the idea of long-term sustainability, without which this initiative will not succeed.