

UC: Mexico Best Ally for Research and Innovation

If California were a country, its economy would rank as the seventh strongest in the world, and a key aspect of that success is explained by the state's focus on education, science and innovation through the network of universities in our state. Our ties with Mexico are part of this prosperity and one of my goals as Chancellor and Executive Sponsor of Alianza Mexico is to strengthen our collaboration.

California and Mexico have become an increasingly dynamic and interdependent region, with supply chains and vibrant metropolises that have challenges but also great opportunities. Even more significant are the diverse and deep ties forged by Mexican American communities living in California and their communities of origin in Mexico. Today, nearly 40% of the population in our state is Hispanic, the large majority of which have Mexican roots. We also share important challenges that include environmental issues, food security, social inclusion, the preservation of our flora and fauna, and border security. Addressing these challenges provides an opportunity for the University of California (UC) and its partners in Mexico to offer solutions that contribute, for example, to managing shared ecosystems, watersheds and atmospheric basins, planning and developing binational infrastructure, accelerating the energy transition and ensuring social and climate justice, to name just a few areas where bilateral academic collaboration can contribute to our common goals.

The University of California network is a pillar of the state, national and regional economy. UC has ten campuses, three national laboratories and five medical centers spread across the state and is currently the leading research and innovation powerhouse in the United States. The UC system has 800 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, is home to 280,340 students and has a network of 2 million alumni. Among our faculty and scientists, we have 68 Nobel laureates and we publish the most research annually, and have five patents filed daily as a result of the research conducted at our campuses. Half of UC's campuses are Hispanic Serving Institutions, meaning that at least 25% of our student population is of Hispanic origin.

For these reasons and because of the history of shared culture and geography, UC is already the most important scientific and academic partner of Mexican higher education institutions. The purpose of my visit to Mexico at the end of April will be to continue strengthening the ties that already exist between our universities, through AlianzaMX, with the objective of promoting solutions to shared challenges between Mexico, California and the United States. Alianza Mx is a new initiative that unifies three previous programs, UC MEXUS, UC-Mexico Initiative and La Casa de California, which laid solid and historic foundations of collaboration with CONACYT, UNAM, IPN, CINEVESTAV and one hundred other research centers throughout Mexico.

Through Alianza MX, UC will strengthen these ties and establish new ways to expand research infrastructure and academic exchanges in Mexico. In addition to promoting scientific research in various fields, the Alianza Mx will pursue the creation of binational teams that address the most pressing challenges for Mexico and the United States, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship that will drive economic and social development. Likewise, Alianza MX will support, through student mobility, the creation of an inclusive and competitive binational workforce that contributes to job creation and expanded opportunities for all.

Universities today are called upon to take a more proactive role in providing solutions to the complex challenges facing our societies. The University of California is committed with its peers in Mexico to design joint programs that, based on scientific research and technological development, allow us to envision a prosperous and just present and future for California and Mexico.

Kim A. Wilcox is Chancellor of the University of California Riverside, recognized as the leading university in the United States for social mobility, and Executive Sponsor of Alianza MX, an initiative of the University of California System. The Riverside campus ranks among the top 1 percent of universities in the world.

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