

Why UC MEXUS

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"Mexico today is an important nation that can no longer be treated casually by the United States," says **James W. Wilkie**, Universitywide Coordinator of UC MEXUS. "In organizing the UC Consortium on Mexico and the United States, the University of California is officially recognizing Mexico's vital role."

Coordinator Wilkie points out that Mexico is this country's third largest trading partner, after Canada and Japan. Mexico's oil and gas reserves are another factor that makes Mexico of critical importance to the United States.

"Mexico has emerged as the world's fourth most important producer of hydrocarbon (oil, gas) energy since 1976," Wilkie says. "Mexico has proven oil reserves expected to reach 106 billion barrels, making them second only to Saudi Arabia, and assuring them of decades and decades of production. In fact, it is this oil wealth which has given Mexico a new

role on the world stage, such as hosting the north-south conference at Cancún last year and proposing the recent Central American peace initiative.

"For the first time in history, Mexico has to be seriously taken into account," and according to Wilkie "it is important to note that Mexico is leading an international movement to mediate the current conflicts in Central America."

In relation to the United States, economic problems in Mexico have social repercussions in the United States because of the immigration flow. "It is not appropriate to build a wall along that border; the two countries are intimately related. In fact, Los Angeles is, at times, Mexico's second largest city. So there is no question that Mexico must be the focus of intensive, well-coordinated study."

"The purpose of the Consortium is to make the whole of the nine campus Mexico programs more than the sum of its parts," Wilkie affirms. "Once we show the broad range of all the research, exchange, and teaching programs on the nine UC campuses, we can show that the University of California is unsurpassed among U.S. institutions in the area of Mexican studies.

In Wilkie's view, since the Programs at the various campuses were formerly going their separate ways, with little coordination, few people realized UC's commitment to the study of Mexico and the United States. One of the big goals is to provide communication about what UC is doing - communication within the University, nationally, and internationally.

Launched with UC Regents' Opportunity funds, UC MEXUS is governed by an Executive Committee composed of representatives from each UC campus.

To date, the UC MEXUS Executive Committee has distributed \$462,203 in the following manner:

Berkeley	\$68,300
Davis	50,098
Lrvine	57,300
Los Angeles	62,615
Riverside	43,500
San Diego	58,900
San Francisco	24,358
Santa Barbara	73,376
Santa Cruz	23,756

The current goal of UC MEXUS grants is to strengthen universitywide cooperation on programs in the areas of Mexican studies, U.S.-Mexican relations, Chicano studies, and physical or biological sciences significantly related to man in Mexico.