Mr. Pablo Marvin, a 1966 graduate of Texas A&M, is constructing a new teaching and research facility in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato for use of Texas A&M faculty and students and their research and study partners in Mexico. Hacienda Santa Clara, the name of the facility, will have dormitories, a large dining room, classrooms and meeting rooms, a game room, indoor and outdoor space for small gatherings, and patio benches for individual work. Santa Clara will also have a building for conferences, theatre performances, exhibitions, and other events called the “Chapel” as it resembles a hacienda chapel, with capacity to hold 300 persons. A large bus for excursions and a small bus for regular round trips into San Miguel de Allende will be available to students and faculty.

Mr. Marvin strategically chose San Miguel de Allende as the site for this new facility. The city is a world-renowned center for the arts and was declared a World Heritage site in 2008. Founded in 1542 as a city located on the Spanish Royal Road (Camino Real) to the silver mining areas of the State of Zacatecas, San Miguel has well preserved its colonial style and maintained many churches and historical structures. The city flaunts 133 arts and handicrafts galleries, plus numerous restaurants, cafes, and colorful small hotels and bed-and-breakfasts. It is also a major tourist attraction and a favored location for second homes for foreigners. At any one time San Miguel has about 11,000 to 12,000 foreign residents, of whom 70% are from the United States, 20% from Canada, and the remaining 10% from 31 countries.

Hacienda Santa Clara, as well as Texas A&M’s other centers abroad, fall under the direction of Dr. Martyn Gunn, Vice Provost for Academic Services.

Dr. Roger Norton, of International Initiatives at Texas A&M, is the Executive Director for Initiatives for the Americas, and Dr. Jennifer Brown, Director of the Texas A&M University.
TEACHING AND RESEARCH FACILITY, CONTINUED

Center in Mexico, are also working closely with Dr. Gunn on the development of Santa Clara, instigating research and academic programs with Texas A&M faculty for use of the new facility. There will be a resident facility manager on-site at Santa Clara as well as a Texas A&M coordinator for student and faculty programs.

The facility will be completed by January 2011, and will be functional enough to accommodate short-stays by March 2011. Requests for use of Santa Clara by Texas A&M faculty and students should be sent to Dr. Jennifer Brown at jgbrown@tamu.edu.

SEPTEMBER LECTURE SERIES COMMENORATING MEXICO’S BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

In commemoration of Mexico’s bicentennial celebration of its independence and centennial celebration of its revolution, the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico and Texas A&M’s Initiatives for the Americas co-hosted a lecture series in collaboration with CIDE (Center for Research and Teaching in Economics), one of Mexico’s premier educational institutions in economics and public policy. During the month of September, four lectures were presented via videoconference by leading scholars from CIDE and provided insight from the Mexican point of view on the current state of Mexico’s progress, plights, foreign relations, and vision for the future. Dr. Luis Barrón, Professor Jorge Schiavon, Professor Erika Ruíz, and Dr. Allys Benton from CIDE served as the expert lecturers during the series.

AGGIE REUNION IN CUERNAVACA

On July 17, 2010, around 15 former students and their families gathered at Monterrey Tec’s campus in Cuernavaca for an Aggie reunion coordinated by the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico (Mexico Center) and Dr. Ricardo Thierry ’00, Aggie Club President and Director of Liaison and Outreach at Monterrey Tec - Campus Cuernavaca.

During the reunion, Aggies shared favorite memories from Texas A&M, and Dr. Jennifer Brown ’97, Director of the Mexico Center, presented the university’s current programs and projects in Mexico and led a discussion on potential club activities for the upcoming year. Several people expressed interest in networking and socializing opportunities with Aggies living in Mexico, collaborative research projects with Texas A&M faculty, and providing internship and study opportunities in Mexico for Texas A&M students. After the group discussion, the Aggies convened at the sport facilities for a soccer match and picnic lunch.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: COLLIN LADEN AND JUSTIN RAY

Two undergraduate students from Texas A&M participated in internships during summer 2010 as a part of the Mexico Internship Program (MIP) coordinated by the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico and the on-campus Career Center.

Collin Laden, a senior at Texas A&M and President of the Memorial Student Center, interned for Mr. Pablo Marvin in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Mr. Marvin, a former student of Texas A&M, is currently developing a new student and research center called Hacienda Santa Clara, which is located about twenty minutes outside San Miguel de Allende in the state of Guanajuato. Collin’s primary responsibilities were working to document the progress of the project and identifying opportunities for student groups or student interns within San Miguel. Collin will graduate in December 2010, with a degree in International Studies and a minor in Business. Upon graduation, he will pursue a graduate degree in either International Law or Public Administration.

Justin Ray, a senior at Texas A&M majoring in International Studies and minoring in Business, interned at the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico, located in the Bosques de las Lomas area of Mexico City. His activities at the Center involved the scanning of Franciscan manuscripts as a part of a research project in conjunction with Texas A&M’s Center for Conservation Heritage, reestablishing the Aggie network in Mexico, and making promotional videos to encourage students to study or intern in Mexico. Justin chose to intern in Mexico City because he wanted an opportunity to work and live in an environment “outside his comfort zone” and to “adapt to the business culture of a Latin American country.”
Texas A&M Engineering Meets with Mexico’s Secretary of Energy

On August 24, 2010, a delegation led by Dr. John Niedzwecki from Texas A&M’s Dwight Look College of Engineering met with Mexico’s Secretary of Energy, Dr. Georgina Kessel, at the Ministry of Energy located in Mexico City, Mexico. The meeting with the Minister was arranged by Dr. Roger Norton, the Executive Director for Initiatives for the Americas at Texas A&M, and it was the purpose to understand Mexico’s priorities for scientific research related to energy and to establish a mechanism for guiding collaboration in this area between Texas A&M, Mexico’s Ministry of Energy, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the Mexican Academy of Engineering, and other institutions in Mexico. As a foundation for that cooperation, Texas A&M and UNAM have been working together on the establishment of dual degree programs for doctoral studies in petroleum, civil, and chemical engineering.

Also participating in the meeting were Mr. Mario Gabriel Budebo, Mr. Carlos Petersen, and Mr. Benjamín Contreras (Undersecretaries of Hydrocarbons, Energy Planning and Technological Development, and Electricity, respectively); Dr. Sergio Alcocer, Provost of UNAM; Mr. Alfonso Ramirez of UNAM; and Mr. Juan José Vilchis Vivero from the Mexican Academy of Engineering. Other members of the delegation from Texas A&M, in addition to Drs. Niedzwecki and Norton, included Dr. José Roesset of Civil Engineering, Dr. Zenón Medina-Cetina of Civil Engineering, and Dr. Jennifer Brown, Director of the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico.

Faculty Abroad Seminar

On May 16-23, 2010, six faculty members from Texas A&M University traveled to Mexico for the 2010 Faculty Abroad Seminar (FAS), which is coordinated by Texas A&M’s Initiatives for the Americas and the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico. In its sixteenth year, the seminar contributes to the internationalization of faculty through enhancing understanding of Mexico’s higher educational system as well as its government and business climate, culture, and history. Significantly, the FAS facilitates academic and research partnerships with Mexican universities and institutions. Many participants submit joint research proposals with their Mexican colleagues to the Texas A&M-CONACYT Collaborative Research Grant Program.

This year, the faculty members met with counterparts from major Mexican universities such as UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Universidad Anáhuac Norte, Universidad La Salle, Monterrey Tec, C I N V E S T A V (Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional), Universidad Panamericana, Universidad Iberoamericana, and Universidad de Guanajuato. They also received lectures at the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico on the history and politics of Mexico. These activities were complemented by cultural visits to national historic landmarks and museums such as the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. After four days in the country’s capital, the group traveled to San Miguel de Allende where they visited the Instituto Allende and the academic and research facility currently being built for Texas A&M’s use by Aggie Pablo Marvin ’66. The seminar concluded in the city of Guanajuato with meetings and a concert of the Symphony Orchestra of the Universidad de Guanajuato.

Participating faculty members were Dr. Tazim Jamal, Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences; Dr. Jeffrey Liew, Department of Educational Psychology; Dr. Vladislav Panin, Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics; Dr. Dennie L. Smith, Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture; Professor Robert Warden, Center for Heritage Conservation – Department of Architecture; and Dr. Wei Zhan, Department of Engineering Technology and Industrial Distribution.

The Faculty Abroad Seminar is funded by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academics; the Office of the Vice President for Research, and the individual departments of the participants.

Texas A&M and CONACYT Implement New and Established Programs

Texas A&M University and Mexico’s equivalent to the National Science Foundation (CONACYT) continue to collaborate on established as well as new programs. The Texas A&M-CONACYT agreement for collaboration in research, originally signed in 2001, has been extended until 2012. The Collaborative Research Grant Program, which forms a part of the agreement, recently funded 18 new projects for 2011. Each proposal was submitted by both a Texas A&M and a Mexican principal investigator and had to be of a bi-national magnitude.

Texas A&M and CONACYT also implemented a new program for the Exchange of Visiting Student Researchers to begin January 2011. The Texas A&M University Center in Mexico and Texas A&M’s Initiatives for the Americas facilitated the development and implementation of the program between CONACYT and the Division of Research and Graduate Studies at Texas A&M. CONACYT will fund living expenses and a travel allowance for Mexican graduate students wishing to spend one semester at Texas A&M; and the Division of Research and Graduate Studies will provide funding for Texas A&M graduate students planning to do a semester of research at qualifying institutions in Mexico. Students will not be charged tuition since they will not be enrolled in classes. Preference is given to candidates working under faculty who have participated in the Texas A&M-CONACYT Collaborative Research Grant Program.
Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) Initiatives in Mexico

Since July 2010, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) has rented an office at the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico for Mr. Juan Carlos Villa to advance research initiatives related to Mexico. TTI is currently implementing systems to measure commercial vehicle crossing time at international land ports of entry. The systems will provide a reliable and consistent way of measuring border crossing times and are being implemented at the following crossings: Brownsville, McAllen (Pharr), Laredo, Colombia, El Paso and Nogales.

TTI is also working to update the International Trade Corridor Plan for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The plan provides the Department and the Texas Legislature with information on land trade in Texas and a specific proposal to increase trade, particularly with Mexico, Texas’ largest trade partner.

Another initiative TTI has developed pertaining to Mexico involves two projects for the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). These projects aimed to analyze the environmental implications of freight transportation in North America with respect to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to develop a methodology to analyze GHG on a trade corridor between Mexico City and Montreal. The reports served as a base for a larger report prepared by the CEC that will be presented at a joint conference organized by the Center for Dialogue and Analysis for North America at the Monterrey Tec campus in Mexico City.

Texas A&M Collaborates with Monterrey Tec – Campus Toluca

Dr. Wei Zhan from Texas A&M’s Department of Engineering Technology and Industrial Distribution has been working with colleagues he met during the 2010 Faculty Abroad Seminar at Monterrey Tec’s campus in Toluca, Estado de México. In August, Dr. Zhan was invited to Toluca to participate in a professional course with Dr. José Ignacio Huertas and to give a lecture on “statistical analysis for design optimization using the Six Sigma approach.”

Dr. José Ignacio Huertas and Dr. Marco Serrato from Campus Toluca then traveled to Texas A&M in October for meetings arranged by Dr. Roger Norton with the following departments at Texas A&M: Atmospheric Sciences, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering Program, Engineering Technology and Industrial Distribution.

As a result of the above meetings, Dr. Huertas and Dr. Renyi Zhang from the Department of Atmospheric Sciences are working on an exchange program for PhD students and professors. Also as a result of the October meetings in College Station, Dr. Huertas and Dr. Serrato held initial discussions at the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) for a potential partnership in emissions testing.