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Friday, March 7, 2008

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## Campus Partners With Mexican School on Health

BY STEPHANIE M. LEE

Contributing Writer  
Friday, March 7, 2008

Category: News > University > Academics and Administration

UC Berkeley's School of Public Health entered a partnership with Mexico's National Institute of Public Health yesterday to expand their collaborative research efforts addressing health issues throughout the United States and Latin America.

Under the initiative, researchers will exchange studies examining the impact of migration on health, health disparities between the U.S. and Latin America, disease prevention and health system reform, among other issues.

More than two dozen leaders from national and local government agencies in both countries, public health organizations and UC Berkeley, including Chancellor Robert Birgeneau, gathered in Alumni House to watch officials sign the arrangement.

"The challenges that California faces globally in the 21st century, like growing inequality-no one university can address those alone," said Stephen Shortell, dean of the campus' School of Public Health.

Mario Henry Rodriguez, director of Mexico's National Institute of Public Health, said the deal will benefit extensively from resources at UC Berkeley.

Shortell said the partnership began developing last year out of the Health Initiative of the Americas, a part of UC Berkeley's School of Public Health. The organization, which coordinates health resources with groups including Mexico's National Institute of Public Health, initially formed in 2001 as part of the UC Office of the President.

Nearly 13 million Hispanics live in California, roughly 36 percent of the state's total population in 2006, according to the U.S. Census Bureau Web site. Almost 20 percent of the state's employed men ages 18 to 64 are Mexican immigrants.

"Don't forget the mental and physical health of that population," said Mario Gutierrez, director of the Rural and Agricultural Worker Health Program at the California Endowment.

Earlier this week another arrangement was made between UC Berkeley and a foreign institution. The campus' mechanical engineering faculty will receive \$28 million to help develop the new King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia.

UC Berkeley graduate students in public health will likely participate in the new health partnership's research efforts, Shortell said. The initiative could also establish a joint public health degree program allowing students from each institution to study at the other.

Fatima Rodriguez, a doctoral student in public health at UC Berkeley, said studying health policy was "enriching."

"It's no longer something just good to have-it's something we have to have as part of our education," she said.

Stephanie M. Lee covers academics and administration. Contact her at [smlee@dailycal.org](mailto:smlee@dailycal.org).

Tags: UC BERKELEY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, MEXICO NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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