Texas Conference on Digital Libraries

“New Paradigm For Studying Our Border”

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies

Austin, Texas May 17, 2010

Antonio Zavaleta, Ph.D.
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Director of the Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies
The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College
Texas Conference on Digital Libraries

“New Paradigm For Studying Our Border”
The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies

With assistance from:

Eduardo del Rio, Ph.D.
Associate Director the Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies

Mr. John Hawthorne,
Director of Special Collections & Archivist
The University of Texas at Brownsville

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies
A Center of Excellence where Knowledge Knows No Boundaries
Mission: To conduct original research on the Texas-Mexico border, to support faculty and students in their research by initiating collaboration with external international institutions, by establishing faculty fellowships and by attracting graduate students for the expressed purpose of border research and problem solving.

To provide data informing critical policy decisions made on or about border issues and to develop a curriculum supporting a Certificate in Border Studies.
Border 2010: The Geo-Political Reality

The U.S.-Mexico border is comprised of 24 U.S. counties in four U.S. states juxtaposed with 38 Mexican counties or municipios in six Mexican states.

The combined cross-border population was approximately 5.2 million persons in 1970 with the population more or less evenly distributed on each side of the border.

By 2010, the border population is expected to have reached approximately 20 million.

Very little has been done to sustain research on the implications of unchecked population growth and its implications along the U.S.-Mexico border.
Border 2010: The Demographic Reality

The population growth rate for the U.S.-Mexican border region easily represents one of the fastest growing populations in the U.S. and Mexico.

Simply stated Border States, counties and cities have not been able to keep pace with the demand that this population growth rate places on their social and physical infrastructure.

The greatest single pressure on the border population is the high migration rate from interior Mexican states to the Mexican border region.

Intense migration to the border has exacerbated already existing natural (birth rate) demands on public infrastructure, inadequate housing, widespread public health, nutrition and general environmental problems, lack of employment opportunities, low level of education, and extreme poverty. These factors, and others, have created public safety issues on the border which are realized on a daily basis.
Border 2010: The New Paradigm for Border and Transnational Studies:

The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College is uniquely positioned to play a leadership role in the sustained study of the lower border region.

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies is unique in its focus on the “rapid response” study of problems and issues through applied and evaluative research utilizing an interdisciplinary approach.

Research will be based upon the collaboration of faculty and students along with community based stakeholders and governmental agencies.

An example may be drawn from the economic benchmarking study conducted at UTB/TSC in 2003 entitled: “Cameron County/Matamoros at the Crossroads: Assets and Challenges for Accelerated Regional and Binational Development which examined the potential for regional cross-border economic development in the Brownsville-Matamoros region.”
Border 2010: The New Paradigm for Border and Transnational Studies:

The Texas Center will conduct research intended to have immediate local and regional impact and that also influences policy making at the national level of both countries.

There is currently only limited cross-border communication and cooperation for the solution of border problems.

The enhanced collaboration between U.S. and Mexican institutions of higher education may serve as the catalyst needed for an improved and sustainable dialogue needed between cross-border communities.
Border 2010: Some Critical Topics for Border Research

- A borderland research agenda, 2010-2020
- A Cross-Border Digital Library System
- Cross-border regional economic planning
- Border security and safety issues
- Environmental sustainability
- Transmigration issues across national boundaries
- Cross-border health issues
- Cultural, political and ethnic issues
- Borderland heritage, culture and eco tourism
Border 2010: The Border Studies Certificate

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies will offer an undergraduate and graduate certificate.

The Border Studies Certificate (BSC) will be designed to play a critical role in the fulfillment of UTB/TSCs institutional mission including expertise on the cross-border characteristics, our cultural and historic setting and social and economic issues.

The Border Studies Certificate will prepare students for meaningful participation in the study and solution of regional, national, and international problems affecting the border.

The undergraduate Border Studies Certificate program will require the completion of between 12 and 15 semester credit hours (four to five courses).
The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies

A Center of Excellence where Knowledge Knows No Boundaries

Border 2010: Study on the Border

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies shall develop a one to two semester program available to qualified third or fourth year undergraduate students from throughout the world who are interested in the study of border issues.

Students will benefit from an intensive semester or year of study and hands-on participation in border topics, including but not limited to, poverty; transnational-locality; environmental issues; public policy; issues concerning women and children; national security and safety and many others.
The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies shall develop broad based collaborative relationships with U.S. and Mexican institutions of higher education in addition to Federal, State, Local governments and NGOs for the purpose of applied and evaluative research targeting specific socio-economic issues and intended to provide current data supportive of policy decisions.

The Texas Center will establish collegial relationships with researchers and faculty members who are interested in becoming Fellows of the Center for the purpose of specific research projects as well as with students who are working on dissertations focused on some aspect of border research.
Border 2010: The University of Texas Border Poll

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies shall develop and operate an applied survey research center for the purpose of training UTB/TSC students in conducting survey research and statistics.

The applied research center is expected to rapidly become an essential component of both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The University of Texas Border Poll: Conducted in English and Spanish is expected to rapidly become one of the most expected, watched and quoted survey research polls in the American Southwest and Mexico as it examines issues and attitudes of international importance such as, concerning health reform, veterans issues, the border wall, poverty, violence, women’s and children’s issues and much more.
Border 2010: The U.S.-Mexico Border Commemorative Lecture

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies will sponsor an annual commemorative lecture on the U.S.-Mexico Border. The inaugural lecture will be delivered by Dr. Gilberto Cárdenas, Assistant Provost, Julian Samora Chair in Latino Studies & Director of ILS. Gilberto Cárdenas has worked in the area of immigration for thirty years and has gained international recognition as a scholar in Mexican immigration. Three times named by *Hispanic Business Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential Latinos in the United States, Dr. Cárdenas has authored or edited numerous books, articles, monographs, and reports on topics covering several fields of specialization, including international migration, economy and society, and race and ethnic relations.
Border 2010: Borderlands History and Family Genealogy Resource Center

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies supports the continued publication of UTB/TSCs Regional and Border History Series now in its 20th year of publication with nine critically acclaimed volumes published with volume 10 in preparation.

The Center has partnered with Mexican institutions such as the State Universities of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and Coahuila the state archives of these states and the National Institutes of History and Anthropology (INHA) to publish the proceedings of regional bi-national conferences.
The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies will serve as a repository for scholarly information or its access. The Center will establish the Digital resource center which has received a planning grant from the National Leadership Planning program from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The grant requires the Center to establish cooperative agreements with other U.S. and Mexican institutions as well as with governments, NGOs and cultural institutions on both sides of the border in order to preserve and to make accessible scholarly writings and original historic documents.
Border 2010: Border Data Center

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies will serve as a repository for data from the 2010 U.S. and Mexican census.

The Texas Center will maintain and analyze secondary data sets from local, regional, state and federal sources as well as from NGOs and private organizations.

These data sets will assist in our understanding of the border and the dissemination of data and their analysis will assist those who require informed decision making.
Border 2010: The U.S.-Mexico Border Forum

Along with the Texas Poll, the Border Forum will facilitate discussion on the most recent thinking, research and publications on the border.

The Border Forum will sponsor major cross-border seminars and conferences, will sponsor faculty and student research symposia and facilitate opportunities for scholarly discussion and debate.

The Border Forum will host visiting scholars, researchers and authors and manage the Center webpage and blog.
More Information

The website address for the Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies is:

http://www.utb.edu/vpaa/cbts/Pages/default.aspx