

CSU cuts ribbon on research, education center in Mexico

by Dell Rae Ciaravola | April 23, 2015 6:13 PM

Colorado State University celebrated the ribbon cutting of its first international research, academic and outreach center, located in Todos Santos, Mexico, on Sunday, April 19. The buildings and grounds were donated to CSU by MIRA, a development company. The donation of land and buildings gives CSU a venue for its research and educational programming in Mexico, a strategic and important international setting.



CSU President Tony Frank was among several local and regional speakers who celebrated the CSU Todos Santos Center ribbon cutting. The center will benefit CSU students, CSU research and the residents of Baja California Sur. A full range of programs are still being developed; current plans include local projects and international study opportunities, offering their expertise in a wide variety of topics including veterinary medicine, environmental studies, biology, agriculture, ecology, human development and family studies, health and nutrition, arts, music, theater, construction management, hospitality, political science, history, archaeology. Speakers included President Frank; Delegado de Todos Santos, Arturo Martínez Villalobos; Secretario General del Municipio, Marcos Nuñez; Secretario de Educación Pública, Héctor Jiménez Márquez; and President of MIRA, Javier Barrios.



CSU administration, faculty and staff was on hand to celebrate the event. Those in attendance from CSU include, from left to right, Dana Hill, freshman veterinary medicine student; Cody Minor, senior veterinary medicine student; Kim Kita, director of Special Projects and Partnerships; Kate Huyvaert, professor of fish, wildlife and conservation biology; Jennifer Elliott, senior veterinary medicine student; Danielle Straatmann, director of Veterinary Medicine Education for CSU Todos Santos; Amy Parsons, vice president for Operations; and Dr. Tony Frank, president of Colorado State University.



Two Todos Santos high school students perform a traditional dance for the ribbon cutting crowd.



Todos Santos residents and regional government officials peruse the grounds of the university's new research and education center during the open house following the ribbon cutting ceremony. The April 19 event included self-guided tours of the buildings and grounds, information booths about programs that will be offered and an opportunity for visitors to provide feedback on educational programs they would like to see be developed.



Colorado State University leaderships joined in a memorandum of understanding with Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur in La Paz, Mexico, fostering partnerships for research and student exchange. Pictured left to right are, from CSU, Dana Hill, freshman veterinary medicine student; Cody Minor, senior veterinary medicine student; Kim Kita, director of Special Projects and Partnerships; Kate Huyvaert, professor of fish, wildlife and conservation biology; Jennifer Elliott, senior veterinary medicine student; Danielle Straatmann, director of Veterinary Medicine Education for CSU Todos Santos; Amy Parsons, vice president for Operations; Dr. Tony Frank, president of Colorado State University; and from Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur, Dr. Gustavo Rodolfo Cruz Chavez, rector (president); Mario Galo Ramirez De Aguilar Azpiruz, student representative; Dr. Juan Manuel Ramirez Orduña, Jefe Del Departamento De Zootecnia (Department head for Veterinary Medicine and Agronomy); Nuria Ximena Rodriguez Ortega, student representative; Roselyn Villegas, student representative; Dr. Ramon Cepeda Palacios, professor and researcher; and Dr. Dante Arturo Salgado Gonzalez, Secretario General (Secretary of Academics).



The CSU Todos Santos center grounds include dormitory-style lodging for 46 students and faculty, indoor and outdoor classroom spaces, a commercial kitchen, and office spaces for faculty, as well as a veterinary medicine building.



The entrance to the veterinary medicine building.



The creation of a center in Todos Santos, shown here at dusk, builds on Colorado State University's mission of teaching, research, service and outreach, and the university's already established international research and student exchange presence in Latin America involving a range of interests including infectious disease research and veterinary medicine. The new international CSU center supports the U.S. State Department's 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative, which calls for a doubling of the number of U.S. students studying abroad in Latin America.



Last week, President Tony Frank celebrated a ribbon cutting ceremony to inaugurate the Colorado State University Todos Santos Center in Mexico. Dr. Frank and CSU faculty, students and staff hosted local Baja California Sur officials and more than 250 guests. The crowd celebrated CSU's first international center, learned about CSU's mission in Todos Santos, including programs to be offered through the center, and toured the facilities.

“In Todos Santos, CSU is building on our land-grant heritage, which strives to share research and knowledge to solve problems. At the same time, we’re creating something entirely new: an international center that will allow the people of this community and our Colorado State community to mutually engage in meaningful education and research while also fostering lasting connections across cultures that will advance our understanding of one another and our world,” said Frank.

The installations for the Colorado State University Todos Santos Center were made possible by a donation from MIRA, a real-estate development company working in the community. The center will provide teaching, research and service-learning experiences for CSU students, students at universities in neighboring Mexican communities, and local residents and visitors.

Center builds on national initiative

The center builds upon the federal government’s 100,000 Strong Initiative. The new CSU Todos Santos center helps address this national priority announced in 2014 by the United States federal government to double student exchange between the U.S. and Latin America by 2020. The effort asks United States universities to increase ties and exchanges with Latin American nations, noting their strategic and economic importance to the U.S.

Fulfilling CSU’s promise of collaboration with local universities in Baja California Sur, last week Pres. Frank also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Autonomous University of Baja California rector, Dr. Gustavo Rodolfo Cruz Chávez. The memorandum of understanding with the university, located in La Paz, provides an opportunity to work together on areas of mutual expertise and concern, using the CSU Todos Santos center as a unique foundation to build partnerships.

Dr. Danielle Straatmann, director of Veterinary Medicine and Science Programs at the center, was instrumental in forming local relationships with Autonomous University, known as UABCS. The partnership creates unique opportunities for CSU faculty to engage in research and teaching with local experts, and Straatmann has used those partnerships to enhance programs for CSU students at the center.

“As teachers and researchers, we make a natural connection in looking to ways to utilize our shared hopes and combined knowledge in creating learning experiences,” she said. “Working with faculty and staff at UABCS has been a great experience for myself and even more, the students. It is enlightening to share, compare and learn from the variety of life and work experiences and differences. We all have while working in the same field but different countries. The UABCS faculty and staff have not only willingly, but enthusiastically, taken time to teach our CSU veterinary students, even incorporating and welcoming them into classes with their own students.”

Variety of programs expected

Many academic, research and outreach programs to be offered at the center are still in development, and are expected to focus on issues such as water, agriculture, infectious disease, education, wildlife ecology, veterinary medicine, public health, and environmental and social sustainability. The multifaceted CSU center includes dormitory-style lodging for 46 students, apartments and office space for faculty, indoor and outdoor classroom spaces, and plans for an Agriculture and Water Research Center where local farmers and CSU students and

researchers will grow organic fruits and vegetables and study effective water use. The university will also offer English language workshops for local residents.

Several colleges have taken the lead in developing courses in Todos Santos, including the College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Natural Resources. Professors Kate Huyvaert and Paul Doherty guided 18 students on a 3-credit field course this past January.

“Baja California Sur is home to unique wildlife and ecosystems that offer a great opportunity to develop courses that challenge students’ image and experience of the natural world,” said Kate Huyvaert, a faculty member in the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology who, with colleagues, taught a course in January through partnerships in the area[1]. “Being able to provide my students with unique, international field experiences through CSU’s Todos Santos center is incomparable.”

Colorado State University has a long history of working in partnership with people and communities to address issues through education and research. CSU already enjoys existing relationships in Mexico with UADY in Merida, Yucatan and ECOSUR in Chiapas as well as emerging partnerships with CIBNOR and other universities in Baja California. These international partnerships with other institutions aim to advance the quality of education, research, and outreach for these campuses and the people the universities serve.

“The Colorado State University Todos Santos Center’s mission is to cultivate generations of global citizens and thriving communities through collaboration, experience, and exchange of knowledge. By developing programs to collaborate with local projects, CSU is focused on cultivating international study and service learning opportunities for students, faculty and the community at large,” said Amy Parsons, vice president for Operations. “CSU’s outstanding educational resources and expertise combined with natural, cultural and historical aspects offered by Todos Santos citizens will create expansive possibilities for research, learning and experiences for local Todos Santos citizens and the CSU community.”

For more information about the CSU Todos Santos center, visit <http://todossantos.colostate.edu/>[2]. CSU faculty and staff should watch for information later this fall regarding workshops on building curriculum and research programs at the center, hosted by colleagues who have programs in Todos Santos.

Endnotes:

1. taught a course in January through partnerships in the area: <http://source.colostate.edu/wildlife-students-immersed-in-ecosystems-of-baja-california/>
2. <http://todossantos.colostate.edu/>: <http://todossantos.colostate.edu/>

Source URL: <http://source.colostate.edu/csu-cuts-ribbon-on-research-education-center-in-mexico/>

Copyright ©2015 **SOURCE** unless otherwise noted.