

# **THE WAR ON DRUGS: CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES FROM MEXICO**

**An SDSU OIP Award Faculty Report  
prepared by**

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# INTRODUCTION

During Spring Break of 2001, I traveled to Jalisco, Mexico to meet the objectives of my 2001 Office of International Programs award. My objectives were to 1) lay the foundation for a Criminal Justice Administration (CJA) course dedicated to studying the War on Drugs from the perspective of Mexico and 2) to create formal partnerships between SDSU, El Instituto Tecnológico y Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO) and La Universidad de Guadalajara (UG). Taking advantage of contacts provided to me by a colleague at USD, my travels to Jalisco broke down into two phases.



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# PHASE ONE

*Phase I* (3/8/01 - 3/12/01) was dedicated to making contacts with US government employees (from the Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Drug Enforcement Administration) assigned to the US Consulate in Guadalajara and Mexican government officials and educators.

The following is a day-by-day summary of my meetings during Phase I:

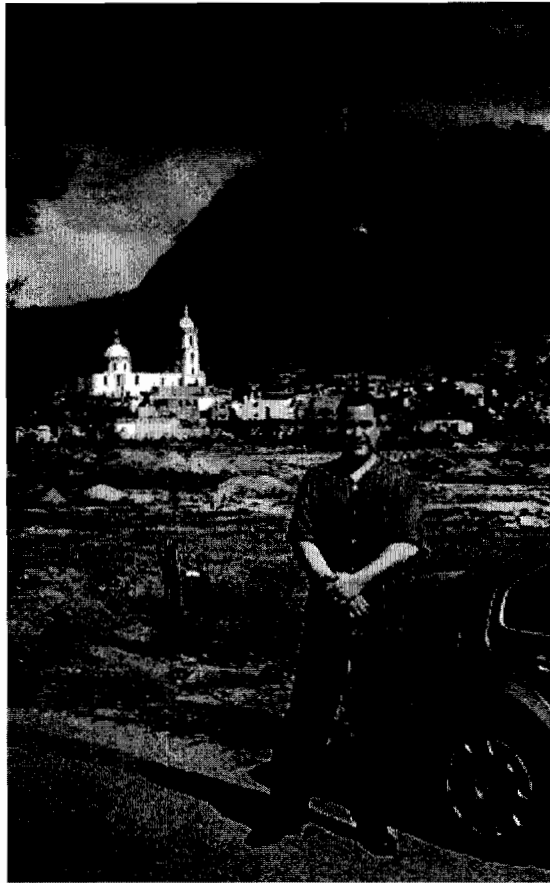
*Friday 3/8:* I flew from Tijuana to Guadalajara. I then met an American government official to discuss my plans for the week.

*Saturday 3/9:* I traveled to Tamazula, Jal. with two American government officials, a rural town of roughly 30,000. These officials then provided a tour that emphasized the business of rural marijuana production.

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# PHASE ONE



Dr. McIlwain in Tamazula, Jal.

*Sunday, March 10:* Spent Sunday morning and afternoon in Tamzula. Traveled to Manzanillo, Colima with same American officials.

*Monday, March 11:* Received a tour that emphasized the business of cocaine importation through the Port of Manzanillo, the main Mexican port-of-entry of Colombian cocaine on transit to the US.

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# PHASE ONE

*Monday March 12:* I met with a Mexican police official and a crack addict in Manzanillo to discuss drug trafficking in and through that port city. I met with local travel agents to discuss lodging arrangements for students if a field trip to Manzanillo were to be organized for part of my planned 2002 study abroad course.

*Tuesday March 13:* I returned to Guadalajara. I met with the US Consulate's Public Affairs Attaché and Education Deputy to discuss their role in assisting with the creation of a 2-3 week SDSU study abroad course in Guadalajara during the summer of 2002. I then picked up SDSU students from the Guadalajara airport for the beginning of Phase II.



Guadalajara's Hidalgo International Airport, site of the 1993 assassination of Roman Catholic Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo by San Diego Calle Treinta gang members on behalf of the Tijuana-based Arellano-Felix cartel.

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# PHASE TWO

*Phase II* (3/12/01 - 3/17/01)

originated from an invitation from my colleague in the Department of Political Science at USD, Randy Willoughby. Dr. Willoughby and I are collaborating on a number of projects centered on the intersection of transnational organized crime (particularly drug trafficking) and national security. These projects encompass scholarship, service and, primarily, teaching. The invitation was for me and a team of SDSU students to join him and a team of USD students in a trip to Guadalajara for the purpose of participating in a conference emphasizing the Mexican perspective on the War on Drugs. We had discussed this idea for the summer of 2002, but he informed me that his colleagues at ITESO and UG were anxious to do something during March 2001 as a “trial run”.

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# PHASE TWO

I brought this idea up to my School's Director, Lou Rea, and Ginny Foster, Travel Study Coordinator for SDSU. Both said it was possible, but that it should be done as a formal course. I quickly devised a course that was approved by the SDSU Curriculum Committee (CJA 496x: The War on Drugs—Cross Cultural Perspectives) and a budget that was approved through Travel Study and Extended Education. To make the trip affordable to the students, and because the purpose of the trip fell within my OIP grant proposal, I covered my personal expenses through the OIP award. I was quickly able to put together a team of nine CJA undergraduates, one ISCOR student, and two graduate students in the Program in Criminal Justice and Criminology. The SDSU and USD teams flew to Guadalajara on March 12. Phase II began when I picked them up from the airport.

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# PHASE TWO

The following is a day-by-day itinerary for Phase II:

*Tuesday March 12:* After picking up the two teams from the airport, we checked into our hotel. Then Dr. Willoughby and I briefed the students on the agenda for the next three days.

*Wednesday March 13:* The SDSU and USD teams were joined by ITESO students and faculty for a visit to the US Consulate in Guadalajara. The Counsel-General, his Chief of Staff and the Public Affairs Director gave talks on the Department of State's role in the War on Drugs.



SDSU, USD and ITESO faculty and students listen to a presentation from the US Counsel General to Guadalajara.

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# PHASE TWO

They were followed by Special Agents of the FBI and DEA, who discussed the role of their agencies in the same, as well as a description of their day-to-day life working in another country.

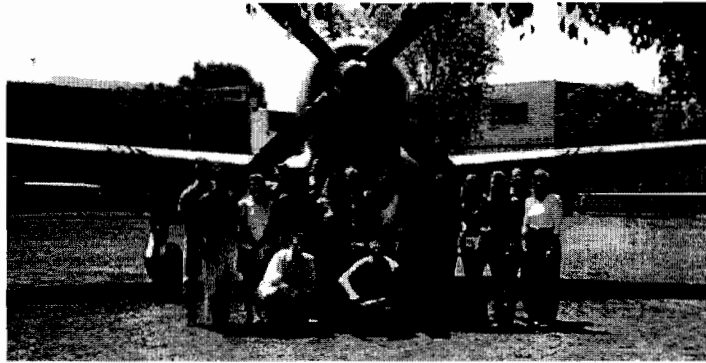
Students then received a tour of the Consulate's immigrant processing center.

We then visited a Mexican military museum and received a tour from a Captain in the Mexican Air Force. We spent most of our time in a wing of the museum dedicated to the Mexican military's role in the War on Drugs. A highlight of my visit for me was unexpectedly discovering they had the actual P-57 Mustang my grandfather trained Mexican aviators on during the Second World War.

After having lunch at the Plaza de las Mariachis, we went to the office of a former prosecutor for the state of Jalisco. His fight against the Guadalajara Cartel and corrupt

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# PHASE TWO



Dr. McIllwain and SDSU and USD students in front of his grandfather's P-57 Mustang at the military museum in Guadalajara.

Mexican officials had a tragic cost; his son was murdered and three attempts were made on his life. After the third attempt on his life, we went into exile in Spain, only to return to Mexico three years later. The students were fascinated by this man who put his life on the line to fight corruption and organized crime in his country.



Dr. McIllwain and Arturo Zamora Jimenez, former prosecutor of the Guadalajara Cartel and corrupt Mexican government officials.

# PHASE TWO



SDSU and USD students prepare to listen to Arturo Zamora Jimenez in the conference room of his law office.

*Thursday March 14:* The two teams arrived at ITESO for the first day of our conference. Under the guidelines of the conference, the students and faculty from the three universities discussed a number of issues pertaining to the many facets of the US War on Drugs (e.g., corruption, economic development, violence, etc.). Students also heard from local experts on aspects of the drug war (e.g., a coroner/UG faculty member talking on the forensics of interpreting drug homicides).

# PHASE TWO

*Saturday March 16:* I took the SDSU contingent and a few USD students on a tour of historical and cultural sites throughout Guadalajara. Of particular note were the murals of Orozco located in the old Jalisco government building. These murals poignantly illustrated the Mexican mind-set towards its exploitation by fascism, communism, socialism, capitalism and imperialism. As one student astutely commented, "Orozco surely would have included the War on Drugs if he were alive today!"



Orozco's vision of the devastation of the 20th Century on Mexico. If painted today, it would surely include the War on Drugs.

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# RESULTS



SDSU students in front of the old Governor's Palace in Guadalajara.

My trip to Guadalajara met with the following results:

*Phase I:* I was able to network with various American government officials who have agreed to assist me in implementing my Summer 2002 Study Abroad course by providing tours, guest speakers and contacts the Mexican public and private sectors. I was also able to scout two possible locations for side-trips: Tamazula and Manzanillo. I decided that Tamazula would not be appropriate due to logistical and safety concerns. Manzanillo is a possibility, given budgetary concerns for a one or two night stay there.

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# RESULTS

*Phase II:* Phase II was a resounding success. I was able to network with a number of faculty and administrators from ITESO and UG. I did so in the context of a “trial run” for my planned Summer 2002 study abroad course. ITESO and UG representatives have agreed to provide logistical support, and facilitate more speaker contact, that would make the course a reality. We plan to meet this summer or fall in Guadalajara to work on these logistical issues.

The ITESO and UG faculty have also expressed an interest in establishing institutional ties with SDSU that would find their faculty and students traveling to San Diego. This April, two UG faculty will provide public lectures at SDSU and meet with SDSU faculty to discuss possible student and faculty exchanges. Dr. Alfredo Rodriguez

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# RESULTS

Garcia, a UG Professor and forensic pathologist, will give a lecturer to the SDSU community on "Forensic Science and Drug Homicide: Lessons from Mexico." His UG colleague, Marcos Pablo Moloeznik, a specialist in Mexican military affairs and national security issues, will present a lecture on "National Security Challenges Facing Mexico."

As for the SDSU students, they benefited greatly from the experiential learning opportunity provided by the study abroad experience. For example, the two graduate students who attended the conference both came up with thesis topics as a result of their experiences in Guadalajara.

Additionally, a number of my undergraduates are now attempting to sign up for intensive Spanish lessons in Mexico. Those who are not graduating this year also expressed a strong desire to return to Mexico with me in 2002.

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# CONCLUSION

Thanks to this OIP award, SDSU is one-step closer to establishing a formal presence in Guadalajara, Mexico's second largest city. Thanks to the OIP award, my major objectives for this trip were accomplished: 1) The foundation was laid for creating a summer 2002, 2-3 week, study abroad course dedicated to the cross-cultural study of the US War on Drugs. 2) The first steps at establishing formal partnerships between ITESO and UG and SDSU. This spring I plan to apply for a second OIP grant that will provide me with the funds to handle the logistical arrangements to make a summer 2002 study abroad course a reality.

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