

HACU's 6th International Conference focuses on technology and culture in Hispanic higher education
"Technology and Culture: International Convergence"
Santa Fe, New Mexico – May 22-24, 2005 – Eldorado Hotel

San Antonio, Texas – The 6th International Conference of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) ended last week with calls for new partnerships to support the increasing technological needs of our global community.

More than 250 international leaders from various parts of the world, representing the Hispanic higher education community, corporations, government agencies and philanthropic sectors, attended the conference May 22-24, 2005 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"The Conference provided an exciting opportunity to bring together distinguished speakers from all over the world to explore the latest issues in international Hispanic education and technology. I'm sure that all the participants will be as busy as we at HACU will be in implementing the ideas from this extraordinarily fruitful gathering," said HACU President and CEO Antonio R. Flores.

International education collaboration, multicultural multilingual education, and cross-border technology trends and the role of Hispanic higher education were just some of the themes covered through a rich series of special sessions and workshops. The quality of all concurrent sessions and plenary sessions was outstanding.

The Mayor of Santa Fe, Larry Delgado was on hand at the Opening Reception of the conference to welcome all the participants to the beautiful city of Santa Fe. The Honorable Tom Talache, Jr, Governor of Nambé Pueblo, New Mexico, and the Honorable Mr. Juan Manuel Solana, Consul General of Mexico in New Mexico, welcomed participants, as well.

Prof. José Luis Iriarte, Vice Rector of the Public University of Navarra, Spain, provided an excellent framework for the conference with a presentation at the Opening Plenary the morning of May 23, 2005, on the theme of the conference "Technology and Culture: International Convergence." His European perspective of the theme sparked the interest of the audience.

President Louis Caldera, of the University of New Mexico, presented his views on the topic of "The Role of the Universities in promoting Regional Collaboration." His excellent presentation opened the second Plenary Session on May 23rd.

Following President Caldera, Dr. Rudolf Bergermann, Founder and President of Schlaich, Bergermann und Partner, in Germany, and Professor Dan Zaslavsky from the Israel Institute of Technology both spoke about alternative energy sources for the future. They both referred to cutting edge technology that can be successfully transferred from one region of the world to another. While, the Honorable Raymundo Garcia de Leon, Secretary of Economy from Sonora, Mexico, and Mr. Joaquin Gortari Unanua, Founder of SODENA (Society for the Development of Navarra) spoke on the importance of partnerships between nations for greater accomplishments in higher education. The Navarra, Spain, and Sonora, Mexico, partnership is a perfect example of regional collaboration.

At the Closing Plenary session on May 24, HACU and the Organization of American States (OAS) announced the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, whose purpose is to establish a relationship between HACU and OAS to coordinate activities that will strengthen education and training in the Americas through information technology and other types of initiatives. Dr. Carlos Paldao, Chief of the Division of Information Technology for Human Development of the Organization of American States (OAS) was present to elaborate on the MOU and surprisingly announced that OAS will offer HACU 3000 scholarships to help with HACU's mission of capacity building for its member institutions. These scholarships will allow faculty and student development through free access to courses offered by OAS using the most modern technology. The coursework is accredited throughout the Americas. Also at the Closing Plenary, Dr. Peter Smith, the first American to be appointed to the position of Assistant Director-General for Education at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, France, inspired the audience with a vibrant speech. He received a long ovation after his presentation on the topic of "The Quiet Crisis: How Higher Education is Failing America." He related the topic to the global situation from the perspective of his new position at UNESCO.

The conference ended with remarks from New Mexico's Governor Bill Richardson. Mr. Richardson was excited that New Mexico was the site of HACU's 6th International Conference. He praised the work of HACU and all that the organization has accomplished in its 19 years.

HACU, which has its national headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, represents more than 400 colleges and universities, including Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), which collectively serve more than two-thirds of all Hispanic higher education students in the United States. HACU's international membership includes leading higher education institutions in Latin America and in Spain.

Conference sponsors included the governments of Navarra, Spain, and Sonora, Mexico, General Motors, the College Board, Gateway, Home Depot, and Citibank. Special recognition was given during the conference to Mr. Benito Prieto Toni, who worked extremely hard in support of HACU for this conference.

For more information about HACU or its 6th International Conference, please visit www.hacu.net.