



---

Dear colleagues,

Recently we have noticed a growing preoccupation among our colleagues at universities in the U.S. concerning the polemic topic of insecurity in Mexico and its possible effects on their students, faculty, and staff. In response, we would like to give you our impression of this situation. We base our position on the feedback from numerous members of our association, and we think that it is therefore fairly representative of the perception prevalent in Mexican higher education in general. It is important to point out that this statement does neither try to deny the current problem of insecurity in Mexico nor does it represent the point of view of any single person or institution, but rather a collective position of the Mexican Association for International Education (AMPEI).

As most of you may have noticed, the news about criminal activities related to drug trafficking and organized crime in Mexico, especially in the border regions, has increased significantly. There can be no denying that the crime rate has increased, especially homicides involving drug traffickers and police officers.

We would like to point out, however, that higher education in Mexico has not become part of these unfortunate statistics. This includes, of course, international students in Mexico. We consider that security at Mexican universities is stable and adequate for the normal development of educational activities, including exchange programs and international conferences. We have had no reports from our members about criminal activities related to drug trafficking or organized crime affecting their students.

Dr. Alan Adelman, the Regional Director of IIE Latin America in Mexico City, says: "I agree with the need to avoid blanket descriptions of Mexico and to contextualize and localize travel advisories. The difference between 'warnings' and 'advisories' should also be clarified. Based on what I know ... I would say to anyone, please come to Mexico City, Monterrey, Querétaro, Cuernavaca and many other places in Mexico. The circumstances on the ground are such that 'something bad' is unlikely to happen."

Francisco Marmolejo, the Executive Director of CONAHEC and member of the Board of Directors of NAFSA, explains that "for the most part, Mexico continues being a very safe and friendly place. However, like in many other countries, including the U.S., caution is always recommended." He also recommends that universities inform their students, faculty, and staff adequately and that "the message disseminated to faculty and students is both informative and carefully written in order to communicate the message without making unnecessary judgments."

In the words of a visiting student from Hong Kong at Universidad de Monterrey (UDEM): "I assume that everybody at home must be very worried, because they have the impression that Mexico is a very dangerous place. I think, however, that this

depends on how you look at it. There are potential dangers anywhere in the world, but I don't see any here, because everybody is very friendly."

We are all aware of the negative effects of drugs on our young people and students. This is true in Mexico as it is anywhere else. The Mexican government has made great efforts at enormous costs to combat the drug cartels, and many observers blame the violent backlash on the success of these measures. This fight has been and will be difficult and painful. We are confident that it will be won, especially considering the recent signs of cooperation coming from the new government of the United States, in terms of controlling the demand for drugs in the U.S., the dismantling of the U.S. drug distribution cartels, and implementing more effective controls of the proliferation of fire arms that all too often end up in the wrong hands.

Academic cooperation and exchanges are an intrinsic part of this larger cooperation and contribute to a better and more profound understanding of these complex issues. We encourage you to continue these valuable activities while implementing, at the same time, careful safety measures for all participants.

At AMPEI, we will continue to monitor the situation and will be happy to respond to specific doubts or questions. Please feel free to contact us at:

[tbuntru@udem.edu.mx](mailto:tbuntru@udem.edu.mx) or [bgarcia@udem.edu.mx](mailto:bgarcia@udem.edu.mx) .

Cordially,

Thomas Buntru  
President 2009-2010  
Asociación Mexicana para la Educación Internacional (AMPEI)

Thomas M. Buntru  
Director de Programas Internacionales  
Universidad de Monterrey  
Av. Ignacio Morones Prieto 4500 Pte.  
Col. Jesús M. Garza  
66238 San Pedro Garza García, N.L.  
México  
T: + 52-81-8215-1303  
F: + 52-81-8215-1447  
E: [tbuntru@udem.edu.mx](mailto:tbuntru@udem.edu.mx)