

2018 Border Legislative Academy

The second Border Legislative Academy (BLA) was held in San Diego, California from July 12 through 14 and included participants from beyond the border states. In addition to the U.S.-Mexico border states of Baja California, Coahuila, California, and New Mexico; Colorado, Nevada, and Washington were also represented.

The Council of State Governments West (CSG West) Chair, Utah Senator Stuart Adams, presided over the program introducing panelists and speakers, and served as Ambassador for CSG West and member states not represented in attendance. Immediately prior to the kick off of the program, the World Trade Center (WTC) San Diego launched a report titled [“Trade and Competitiveness in North America: A Focus on the Cali Baja Mega-Region”](#) for which El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) assisted the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at UC San Diego School of Global Policy & Strategy in researching. San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer spoke about the uniqueness of the border region, as did Border Trade Alliance Chair Paola Avila, and WTC San Diego Executive Director Nikia Clarke.

On Friday, July 13, the BLA class program initiated with an overview of the binational relationship provided by former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico and Public Policy Fellow at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholar’s Mexico Institute, E. Anthony Wayne, and Rafael Fernandez de Castro, Director of the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. Mr. Fernandez de Castro is a political scientist who served as former Mexico President Felipe Calderon’s chief foreign policy advisor. Following the binational relationship overview, a discussion about border state legislatures’ structures provided an insightful comparison of similarities and differences between the states. This was followed by a discussion of opportunities and challenges in the field of energy specific to the binational region and a conversation on key cross-border institutions and initiatives along the border.

The morning of Saturday, July 14 focused on professional development with specific attention given to the area of communications. Concluding the skills training portion of the agenda, participants learned about an array of public policy resources available to border legislators. Additionally, stories of successful outcomes were shared with the intent to inspire those tasked with the unique privilege of governing in such a dynamic region.

The graduation ceremony for the academy was hosted at the University Club atop Symphony Tower providing a lovely view over and above San Diego from the 34-story building. Following the graduation ceremony, a wonderful discussion about “Perspectives about the U.S.-Mexico Border” took place with two names familiar to those who follow policy in this region: Dr. Andrew Selee, President of the Migration Policy Institute and founder of the Mexico Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Alfredo Corchado, an author and border-Mexico correspondent for The Dallas Morning News.

Congratulations to the Border Legislative Academy Class of 2018!



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