

# President of Tec: Research, key to Latin American development



**Research** with impact, **innovation**, **internationalization**, and **partnerships between universities** were the elements that [David Garza](#), president of [Tec de Monterrey](#), proposed for the development of Latin America.

**At the [QS Americas 2021](#) virtual event**, Garza said that **Latin American universities** need to contribute **research** to **solve society's problems**.

*"As we emerge from the pandemic, we've affirmed that **the 3 main roles of a university: teaching, research, and outreach** are more relevant and intertwined than ever, particularly in Latin America,"* Garza said.

Garza participated with a presentation called *"The Research Non-Dilemma: A Path of No Choice for Latin American Universities,"* in the forum organized by the evaluation firm [Quacquarelli Symonds](#).

Executives such as Inés Sáenz, Guillermo Torre, and Rodolfo Rubio also shared the institution's strategies in this same presentation, based on what Garza calls **the 3 "i"s: innovation, investigation, and internationalization**.

David Garza participó en el QS Americas 2021. width="900" loading="lazy"> **Innovation to transform communities**

Garza suggested that universities promote **research to transform their communities** and turn students and researchers into **agents of change** in the process.

*“Our **research activities** shouldn’t be disconnected from formal and robust outreach initiatives that engage with the **communities we are part of**,” he added.*

**Inés Sáenz**, vice president of Inclusion, Social Impact, and Sustainability at the Tec, said in her message that research with a real impact involves **universities collaborating with governments, the private sector, and civil society**.

*“At the Tec, we’re designing research initiatives for our [Sustainability and Climate Change Plan](#) with this in mind, using our campuses as **living laboratories** and generating **solutions that benefit our community** and our cities,” Sáenz said.*

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<https://tec.mx/en/news/national/institution/tec-de-monterrey-presents-its-sustainability-and-climate-change-plan>

She explained that the Tec has carried out initiatives for several years such as [DistritoTec](#) in Monterrey, where projects have been implemented for **urban planning** and **sustainability**.

Sáenz also spoke about the **Chiapas Center for Social Innovation**, a **social sustainability project** in southern Mexico, which has had an impact on **more than 20 indigenous communities** with the participation of **more than 1,500 students**.

As part of its global partnerships, the institution has joined the sustainability efforts of the [University Climate Change Coalition \(UC3\)](#) to find solutions to **global warming**.

*“Universities have an imperative responsibility to **work for fairer and more sustainable societies** ,” added the vice president.*

Inés Sáenz compartió algunas iniciativas de la institución como Distrito Tec. width="900" loading="lazy">

## The challenge-based research approach

Garza stressed the importance of **ensuring basic research** in universities because it’s vital to find **solutions** to the problems that afflict Latin America despite scarce funding.

*“It’s important to **increase the intensity of applied research** that creates impact in the short and medium term by **developing innovations and solutions** that contribute to closing the gaps that plague our societies,” added Garza.*

Dr. Guillermo Torre, rector of [TecSalud](#) and vice president of Tec Research, said that the institution has opted to be a university that **generates knowledge and solves society’s great problems** through research.

*“We’re committed through our research model to solving the main problems of society and **creating a better educational and professional experience** for students and teachers,”* Torre said.

*“It’s important to increase the intensity of applied research that creates impact in the short and medium term through the development of innovations and solutions.” – David Garza*

He explained that the institution’s strategy is based on an approach that has been called **“Challenge-Based Research,”** which consists of 5 principles:

1. **Interdisciplinary work** in specific areas to solve problems.
2. Redefining support for teachers, with more **time and incentives to do research.**
3. **International collaborations** in research projects.
4. **Support for specific projects** such as Nano and Origin.
5. Translating **research into meaningful business.**

Guillermo Torre habló sobre los 5 principios del enfoque de investigación basada en retos.  
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### **Internationalization to enhance efforts**

Due to the financial challenges institutions face for doing research in Latin America, Garza proposed that universities be ingenious and attempt to **reach beyond their borders.**

*“We need to **engage** with other science and thought **leaders around the world. Building valuable networks** between our institutions and other universities can be of immense value,”* said the president of Tec.

*“**Uniting our talent** with the best institutions around the world is a combination that we’ve tested at the Tec with great benefits for the **research ecosystem** and for society,”* he added.

**Rodolfo Rubio**, vice president of Communication and Relations at the Tec, pointed out that **international experiences** for students at the Tec have been a **pillar** in their learning process.

He said that about **7,000 Mexican students annually have studied abroad** during the last five years and about **4,000 international students have come to study at the Tec.**

In addition, he mentioned that the institution has **agreements with about 400 universities** in more than **50 countries.**

***“Uniting our talent with the best institutions around the world is a combination that we’ve tested at the Tec with great benefits.”***

*“This journey is enriched by the **partnerships we build** with other institutions that, like us, have valuable knowledge and contributions to **make towards solving the region’s challenges**,”* Rubio said.

As part of the 2025 plan, Rubio pointed out that an internationalization strategy called **Tec Global 2025** has been defined, which involves:

- Attracting and developing more **international academic talent**.
- **Strategic partnerships with the best institutions** for research and academic initiatives.
- **Increased resources** through funds and related companies.
- An improved **global mindset**, in which knowledge and leadership contribute to a greater reach.

Rodolfo Rubio destacó la importancia de la internacionalización en el Tec. width="900" loading="lazy"> **The 3 axes for research in Latin America**

Garza said that the way forward to **fulfilling the research mission** in Latin American universities is based on 3 axes:

- **Synergies that link the missions of teaching, research, and outreach**, and that generate benefits for academic communities and for society in general.
- **Increasing the intensity of applied research** with a global approach to obtain results that contribute to closing the gaps that affect the region’s countries.
- **Involving the best researchers** at Latin American universities with organizations and centers that see the benefits in empowering young talent with resources and knowledge.

*“If we focus on **the 3 “i”s: innovation, investigation, and internationalization**, we believe we can have an even greater impact on society,”* Garza added.

***“If we focus on the 3 “i”s: innovation, investigation, and internationalization, we believe we can have an even greater impact on society.” – David Garza***



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### **Multidisciplinary approach to finding solutions**

**Neil Hernández**, associate vice rector for Research and Technology Transfer at the Tec, reflected on the importance of **research to solve these problems**.

*“We’re looking for ways for researchers to increase their projects’ social impact, not only through publications or citations, but also by **building interdisciplinary groups** that promote efforts to deal with problems in each region,”* said Hernández.

He added that it’s important for institutions to **connect with society and take advantage of technologies** to generate research that addresses poverty, inequality, and gender issues.

Hernández participated in the *“Many Languages, Many Student Voices”* panel, along with Lynn Pasquerella, president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and Miriam Feldblum, director of the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration.

**QS Americas 2021** was held virtually on September 1 and 2. Its main theme was “A New Beginning: The Next Decade in Higher Education in the Americas.”

**[QS Quacquarelli Symonds Limited](#)** is a British company specializing in the analysis of the **best higher education institutions around the world**.

Neil Hernandez participó en un panel del QS Americas 2021. width="900" loading="lazy">

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