

World leader in urban planning joins Tec as distinguished professor



The internationally acclaimed architect **Alejandro Echeverri**, one of the people behind the urban and **social transformation** of **Medellín**, Colombia, has joined [Tec de Monterrey](#) as a **distinguished professor**.

This Colombian urban planner joins the **School of Architecture, Art, and Design (EAAD for its initials in Spanish)** as part of the Tec's [Faculty of Excellence](#) initiative, which is focused on attracting **extraordinary and internationally recognized professors**.

*"We have the **important task** of helping to improve people's **outcomes** and **quality of life**, and cities have a lot to do with that,"* says Echeverri.

Previously a **distinguished visiting professor** at the EAAD, Echeverri will now participate in Tec de Monterrey's national **urban transformation** initiatives.

He has played a leading role in **improving urban environments** in Mexico, Costa Rica, Brazil, India, and other countries, as well as in developing environmental and social inclusion processes.



width="900" loading="lazy">

Supporting the transformation of Medellín and turning it into a model to follow

Alejandro Echeverri is Director and Co-founder of the **URBAM Center for Urban and Environmental Studies** at **EAFIT University** in Medellín.

For a decade, he has **collaborated** with **Tec de Monterrey** on some of its urban initiatives such as **DistritoTec**, an urban improvement project involving the area surrounding the Monterrey campus.

The urban planner, together with the mayor of **Medellín**, **Sergio Fajardo**, has worked on **social urban planning** projects to improve impoverished districts and neighborhoods in the city, turning it into a model for the future of other cities in the developing world.

*“I got to lead the **urban transformation** of **Medellín** with a **social urban planning** strategy... making Medellín an **international point of reference**,”* says Echeverri.

He has been recognized with the **National Architecture Award** from the Colombian Society of Architects, the Urban Design Award from the Pan-American Biennial, the Curry Stone Design Prize, and the 10th Veronica Rudge Green Prize in Urban Design from **Harvard**.

“We have the important task of helping to improve people’s outcomes and quality of life, and cities have a lot to do with that.”

Arriving at Tec de Monterrey as a distinguished professor

Echeverri came to **Tec de Monterrey** as part of its **Faculty of Excellence** initiative, which focuses on recruiting **outstanding** and **world-renowned professors**.

*“This approach has been in the works for several years. The Tec’s directors were very interested in the question of **cities** and **how to link** the process of **improving people’s lives** with that of improving **Mexican cities**.”*

Echeverri says that part of his **job** is to actively participate in **Tec de Monterrey’s initiatives** and **programs**.

*“My relationship with the Tec began 10 to 12 years ago. At that time, **Mexican cities** made a big impression on me. I think **a lot of progress has been made**, (for example) in the **DistritoTec** and the transformation of the Monterrey campus,”* he added.



width="900" loading="lazy">

He also highlighted other **initiatives**, such as **city laboratories** in different cities across Mexico, which he says he collaborated on together with the Tec’s [City Observatory](#).

This **City Observatory** recently carried out a **proximity index** with information on **75 Mexican cities** and their **infrastructure** in **health, education, supply** chains, and other factors.

“There are a lot of processes that didn’t exist 10 years ago, and I think the Tec has been very important in laying the foundations.

*“They’re **inviting** me to continue working on this **project** and to see what else we can do in this regard,”* says Echeverri.

The challenges of Mexican cities

Echeverri was the **first Latin American** to win Japan's [Obayashi Prize](#), awarded for his work in **city development** in 2016.

This prize is awarded every two years by the **Obayashi Foundation** and is one of the prizes that recognizes work aimed at improving urban life through social initiatives.

The urban planner smiles as he notes that these awards give a different meaning to his job, making it more visible and validating the work he does.

However, he insists that it increases his **commitment** to confronting the **challenges** in **Latin American cities**, which can and should be solved through urban planning.

"I want 7- and 8-year-old boys and girls to be able to run around on their own without any danger, knowing that they'll be safe when crossing the road.

*"They can leave their homes and meet up with their classmates and friends in a **nearby park** in a **green city**, and they can get around on **bicycles** without being run over by cars,"* says Echeverri.

"I want 7- and 8-year-old boys and girls to be able to run around on their own without any danger, knowing that they'll be safe when crossing the road."



width="900" loading="lazy">

Since being included as a **professor** among the **Faculty of Excellence**, the Colombian architect says he's looking to continue his **work** and pursue this **development** in cities throughout **Mexico**

and **Latin America**.

*“I believe that the **Tec** now has a very **considerable reputation** across **Latin America**, and I think its role in this matter, not just in Mexico but also in Latin America, could have a major impact.*

*“I would like to be associated in some way with the idea that my work and efforts have **played a part** in the process of **improving** our **society** and our **city**,”* says the Tec professor.



width="900" loading="lazy">

READ MORE:

<https://tec.mx/en/news/national/education/winner-6-grammy-awards-who-now-tec-distinguished-professor>