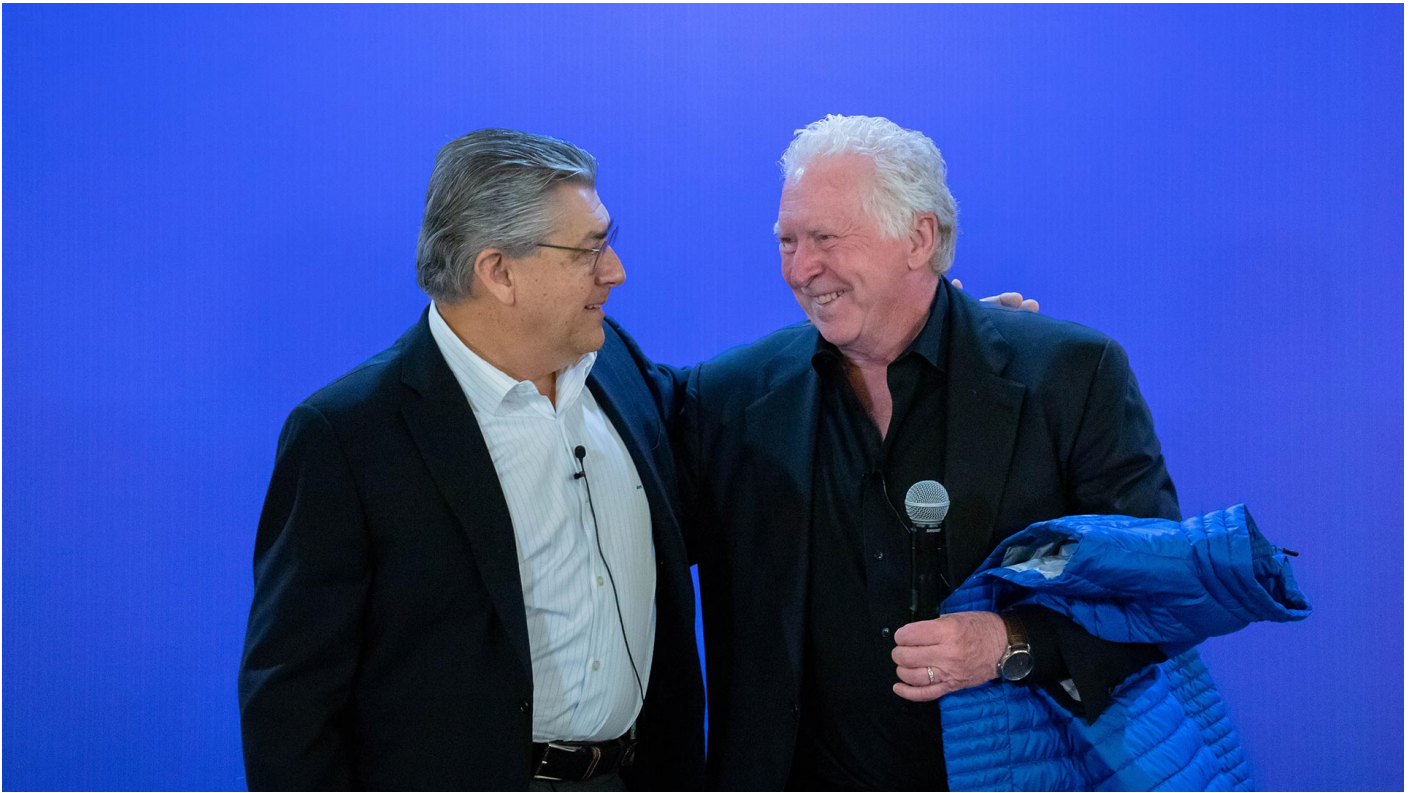


Founder of Ragon Institute research center proposes Tec partnership



Terry Ragon, Founder of the [Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT, and Harvard](#), a research center focused on immune system diseases, proposed a potential partnership with [Tec de Monterrey](#).

Ragon participated in a discussion on **philanthropy** and **research** with **José Antonio Fernández**, the Tec's Chairman of the Board, at [TecSalud's](#) Zambrano Hellion Hospital.

*"I believe that in the **best place** and with the **best partners**, we can find ways to cooperate and even develop new technologies,"* said Fernández Carbajal.

This institute brings together scientists and engineers from diverse fields to promote **immune system** and health research with the aim of preventing and curing human **diseases**, mainly focusing on **HIV** and **AIDS**.

"How can we change the world for the better? (...) If we're successful (in finding a cure for HIV), we'll probably learn how to tackle other diseases in the process," Ragon said.



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An opportunity to work with the Tec

David Garza, Rector and Executive President of **Tec de Monterrey**, said that one of the **main aims** when seeking **partnerships** with other universities and institutions essentially lies in **increasing** the Tec's **ability to make an impact**.

*"We believe in **international synergies** with world leaders, such as this institution, which is working with **MIT** and **Harvard** and is interested in establishing a relationship.*

*"Also, listening to these kinds of **messages** and stories is **inspiration** for us all," Garza said.*

To this end, Terry said that the idea of exploring a **possible collaboration** between **Tec de Monterrey** and **The Ragon Institute** came from **Bruce Walker** and **Facundo Batista**, who is a Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at Harvard.

*"That's the reason we're here, to **discover possibilities** and see if there are **opportunities** for **all of us**," Ragon said.*

Where his passion for helping people came from

During the discussion, Terry shared how his interest in **philanthropy** and **research** first developed, after his father moved him and his family from the United States to Bogotá, Colombia, in 1967.

On his way to high school, Terry would see various young people and children who didn't have the **opportunities** that he had in life, and he would wonder why that might be the case.

*"Years later, when I'd pursued my **career** and was more financially successful, I kept thinking about those kids and realized that I felt a **responsibility** to do something to help make the world a better place.*

*"That **passion** evolved into wanting to help people in developing countries develop the skills to help themselves," Ragon said.*



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After graduating from university, he started working at a company developing medical technology applications.

That was when his journey as an **entrepreneur** began, seeking to make a profit but without forgetting that passion he felt.

A year and a half later, Terry started his own company focused on these **technology applications**, such as developing software used in various fields, both in finance and health.

"30% of stock market transactions are made with systems that use our software.

*“But helping a bank to increase its profits doesn’t give you the same **thrill** as helping a **healthcare system** whose aim is **saving human lives**,” Ragon said.*

The Ragon Institute currently focuses on **6 main research areas** and **COVID-19** as an international emergency.

These areas include **HIV**, Global Infectious Diseases, Emerging Infectious Diseases, Vaccine Development, Clinical Studies, and Basic and Applied Immunology.

Its **facilities** in **Cambridge, Massachusetts**, are designed to safely conduct **immunology** and **infectious disease** research.

He tells how The Ragon Institute began

During the discussion, Terry explains that the institute’s work began with a **visit to Africa** with **Bruce Walker**, the current Chief Scientific Officer.

“I don’t understand. I can process every word you say, but I don’t understand what you’re doing.

“Perhaps if I go to Africa with you, I can better understand what it is that you do,” Terry told Bruce the day they met and on what would be the beginnings of their collaboration.

During that visit, he learned about cases of **women** who had **HIV** in a community in which Bruce had worked, as one of the world leaders in the study of immune control and the **Human Immunodeficiency Virus**.

From that moment, Terry and Bruce began working on The Ragon Institute’s main goal: contributing to the **HIV** and **AIDS vaccine** through joint study and research.

“I couldn’t help those people in particular, not without first doing something in the field of HIV. I saw that there were opportunities for working in that area.

*“We began talking about HIV and about putting together a **new ‘Manhattan Project’**, where we bring together the best scientists from different fields and work to solve important issues,” Ragon said.*

“We began talking about HIV and about putting together a new ‘Manhattan Project’, where we bring together the best scientists from different fields and work to solve important issues.”

Terry added that one of the **reasons** for funding this project from a **philanthropic view** is that it can **speed up the process** of finding solutions or even cures, as opposed to doing research with public organizations in the traditional way.

*“If we’re **successful** (in finding a cure for HIV), we’ll probably learn how to tackle **other diseases** in the process,” Terry said.*



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The importance of leadership in research

Terry points out the importance of **leadership** in projects that seek to make the world a better place and, just like the organization he founded, that seek to **bring together talent** for a purpose.

*“I think the reason the **3 institutions** (Harvard, MIT, and MHG) came together was that, just like here at [Tec de Monterrey](#), the presidents of these institutions are **committed** to their mission,”* he says.

Terry pointed out the **challenge** of **universities** carrying out these activities because they don’t work in the same way as companies or corporations.

*“Universities work differently, so it was interesting to see how institutions that work differently came together to **collaborate**.”*

*“It wouldn’t have been possible without the **support** of the **directors** or **faculty**. At the end of the day, what really stands out is their **good heart** and keenness to make the world a better place,”* said Terry.



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Its role in times of crisis and COVID-19

During the **COVID-19** pandemic, the HIV/AIDS research work carried out by The Ragon Institute was also **helpful** in the **medical field**.

Terry says that they're already working on a universal **coronavirus vaccine**, as well as an **influenza vaccine**.

*"I believe that it's **possible** and that the **research** we're doing on HIV is **fundamental**. One of the biggest problems with **HIV** is that it **mutates** so quickly. It does so even more times in a single individual than influenza does around the world in a year," he explained.*

Terry says that the work already carried out in that area was of vital importance during some of the **coronavirus research**.



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