

# Tec's rector: Internationalization key for more competitive students



During the Franco-Mexico Forum on scientific and university cooperation, **David Garza Salazar**, Rector and Executive President of Tec de Monterrey, highlighted the **importance of internationalization** for the **professional development** and global **competitiveness of students**.

*“For us at [Tecnológico de Monterrey](#), internationalization has been a definite **priority** for **several decades** now.”*

According to the rector, it's **important to promote internationalization** in the **wake of the COVID-19 pandemic**, which will help **foster interculturalism** and broaden **students' global vision**.

He also said that for these **strategies to work**, they must be **followed by actions**. In the Tec's case, the **Office of the Vice Rector for Internationalization** is in charge of identifying these **areas of opportunity** and deciding **the path to follow** as an institution.

*“For [internationalization strategies](#) to work properly, they have to be **top priorities**. This is part of our [Strategic Plan](#), in which we aim to promote the three **'I's: Investigation, Innovation, and Internationalization**,”* said the Tec's rector.



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The Forum, organized by the **Embassy of France in Mexico** and the **National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions** (ANUIES for its initials in Spanish) was attended by various **educational institutions from France and Mexico**.

Also participating in the forum were **Adelino Braz**, Cooperation and Cultural Action Officer at the **Embassy of France in Mexico**; **Jean François Marchi**, Vice President for International Affairs at **Aix-Marseille University**; **José de los Reyes**, Rector of the **Metropolitan Autonomous University**; and **Thierry Valentin**, Director of **Campus France**.

### **The importance of international mobility and cooperation**

According to the rector of the Tec, **international experiences** throughout **undergraduate education** stand out when it comes to entering the **global labor market**.

*"We're fully **convinced of the benefits of international mobility and collaboration**. We've **followed up on the graduates and** we see that those **who have had some experience of international mobility stand out** after five or ten years over those **who haven't**."*

In Garza's opinion, **internationalization is a tool** to **develop** more **tolerance, civic engagement, and leadership skills** in students.

**“At Tecnológico de Monterrey, internationalization has been a priority for several decades now” - David Garza.**

**Adelino Braz**, Cooperation and Cultural Action Officer at the Embassy of France in Mexico, highlighted the **role of higher education** in the development of **global skills**.

*“The **role of higher education** is obviously to convey knowledge and train young people, but above all it’s about giving them the opportunity to acquire academic skills that can then be recognized in the **international labor market**.”*

*“Today, higher education is **no longer limited by the borders** of a state. **Instead, we must think globally**, to open up the possibility of **creating tools** for this,” Braz said.*



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### **The Tec and its international presence**

According to David Garza, the Tec **has more than 500 agreements** with institutions in **50 different countries**. 90 of these are with more than 70 institutions in France.

This collaboration with international institutions has allowed around **four out of ten students** to graduate with some **academic experience abroad**.

*“We’re setting a trend. Last year, we had **unprecedented mobility**, with **more than seven thousand** higher education students **going abroad**. Without a doubt, France is one of the main destinations,”* said the rector.

He recalled that at the end of 2021, the **Tec and the Embassy of France in Mexico** signed a **cooperation agreement** to teach **different academic disciplines** such as journalism, architecture, and social sciences.

*“Last year, we had **unprecedented mobility**, with **more than seven thousand** higher education students **going abroad**.” - David Garza.*

### **The challenges of internationalization**

Despite the Tec’s progress in **student mobility**, the rector pointed out that **financing international experiences** is one of the **challenges** that higher education institutions face today when promoting internationalization.

*“At the Tec, **one out of every two students have some kind of scholarship**, so mobility abroad becomes a challenge.”*

*“What alternatives have we used to address this issue? **Scholarships have been granted** by local governments, agencies, foreign governments, and the private sector,”* said Garza.

Another alternative implemented by the Tec to mitigate the funding challenge has been to find opportunities in **international companies or industries** for students to carry out their **research stays**.

The Tec rector highlighted how the recent **COVID-19 pandemic** opened up **opportunities to promote** other types of international experiences to students, such as **virtual mobility**.



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*“It’s important to clarify that virtual mobility is never going to replace the experience of face-to-face mobility, but we recognize that virtual mobility can be an **interesting and accessible complement** for those who **don’t have the opportunity** for face-to-face mobility,”* he explained.

During the pandemic, the Tec promoted its educational program called [Global Shared Learning Classroom \(GSL Classroom\)](#), an initiative that **promotes international experiences** in a **virtual format** and in which more than **10,000 Tec and foreign students** have participated.

*“The model is based on **an agreement to teach a class with a professor from another university**, with one to seven weeks **being taught jointly** between the two institutions.”*

*“This has been **very successful** because **of the interaction with other institutions** and **because our students have the opportunity to form bonds and collaborate** in the classroom,”* he said.

Initiatives such as this have also **contributed to expanding the institution’s faculty** to an **international level**.

*“We **have on-site visiting professors**, but we started with virtual ones during the pandemic. **Now, post-pandemic**, we’ve **150 international professors** participating as **virtual visitors**,”* said the Tec’s rector.

Regarding the **language barrier challenge** to internationalization, Garza explained the **actions that the Tec has taken to promote learning a second or third language** to students.

*“We’ve **promoted language learning a lot in high schools**, especially French, which I’d say is our **students’ main choice** for a second language.”*

*“At the **university level**, we’ve **created a language center**, which provides training in **more than 12 languages at different levels**,” he said.*



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Finally, **David Garza** highlighted the **global challenges** we face today as a society and the **importance of international collaboration in education to overcome them**.

*“In a **divided world**, collaboration is needed more than ever. We’re facing **political and economic division, climate change, inequality, and democratic regression**.”*

*“We’re convinced that **international collaboration between universities**, which was optional in the past, is now **something that should be mandatory**, and we want to know **how we can expand and improve it**,” he concluded.*

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