

# David Garza at world summit: universities drive innovation



David Garza, rector and president of [Tec de Monterrey](#), explained that **government, industry, and universities** must work **together** to lead **innovation**.

The rector participated in the talk *“Who steers the direction of innovation?”* at the [Times Higher Education Innovation and Impact Summit](#), alongside educational leaders from around the world.

*“Innovation comes from more than one source. However, I believe that **universities** are **better positioned to drive it**,”* said **Garza**.

The leaders discussed ideas about who leads innovation around the world and **who should do so** in the online discussion, as well as the **roles** of those organizations taking part.

Garza spoke with **Dan Breznit**, director of innovation at the [University of Toronto](#), and **Christine Loh**, Head of Development Strategy at the [University of Hong Kong](#).



width="900" loading="lazy"> **Universities: the main drivers of innovation**

Garza explained that **innovation** must be promoted by **governments**, **international organizations**, and **industry**, but above all by **universities**.

*“I’d say that **innovation** comes from **more than one source**. I like to see it more as a **propeller** that’s made up of **different parts**.”*

*“We need more **entrepreneurial states** and **governments**, more socially conscious private sector businesses, and **an education sector** with the **mindset** for discovering **solutions** to big problems.”*

Identifying **needs** is one of the **main factors** that defines the **direction** that **innovation** should take, said Garza.

*“It’s a highly complex question because who or what determines a need? Is it **global issues**, **local government**, or **economic, social, or political interests**?”* he reflected.

### **Different stakeholders must play a role in innovation**

The Tec rector believes that each organization **must play a role** in **social development** and not depend solely on work carried out separately by different sectors.

Talent from **research institutes**, academic rigor from **universities**, funds from **industry investors**, and government agendas were just a few of the **factors** Garza mentioned.

*“Today, it’s **impossible** to think of a good future for innovation without **including** different **stakeholders**,”* he added.



width="900" loading="lazy">

## Universities: neutral ground for innovation

Several topics were addressed in the discussion, including the **barriers** that stop **different organizations** working together, especially **governmental** ones.

Garza said that, **contrary to popular belief, international relations have seen a big improvement** recently.

*“The time when **we had the greatest interaction** with colleagues from **American universities** was during the **previous United States administration**, when they wanted to build a **wall**.”*

*“**Universities** are **neutral ground** where many great things happen: **innovation**, future **leadership**, and community **development**,”* he said.

Another issue highlighted by the rector was the importance of recognizing that **collaboration** is **necessary** and **beneficial** in tackling **big challenges** such as climate change.

## Collaboration for innovation to solve big challenges

Garza also explained that the **challenges** of the present and future, such as the **pandemic** and how we will work in the **post-covid era**, are an **incentive** for innovation.

*“I think that between **60 and 70%** of my **conversations** with **colleagues** are about the **future**, about what will happen after the pandemic.”*

*“They’re about the **challenges** that **universities** will face, how the world will change, and the **role of universities in the future**,”* he says.

Garza also explains that the **lack of resources** in **regions** such as **Latin America** fosters **collaboration** and **innovation** for performing research and development.

**READ MORE AT CONECTA:**

<https://tec.mx/en/news/national/institution/plan-2025-tec-de-monterrey-outlines-its-plans-future>