

**San Antonio Business Journal - April 1, 2002**

<http://sanantonio.bizjournals.com/sanantonio/stories/2002/04/01/story7.html>



From the March 29, 2002 print edition

[→ More Print Edition Stories](#)

## **Grad students at UTSA help city expand trade opportunities**

James Aldridge

San Antonio leaders have brought in a new ally in their efforts to expand foreign-trade and investment opportunities for local businesses.

The University of Texas at San Antonio's (UTSA) College of Business has agreed to enlist its MBA International Business students to develop business plans, as part of their course work, based on the city's research base and targeted growth industries.

San Antonio is home to some of the nation's leading-edge research in the fields of information technology, energy, aircraft sustainability, biomedicine and homeland defense.

By working with these public and private research groups, proponents say MBA graduates, in turn, should be able to translate those business plans into new, viable small firms in San Antonio that will market products and services worldwide.

For the last eight years, UTSA -- through its North American Graduate Student Exchange Program -- has worked with counterpart universities in Mexico and Canada through a NAFTA MBA program. The graduate students study the laws, regulations and business environment of each NAFTA partner.

However, since San Antonio is gearing up to host its first Trilateral Technology Summit later this year, UTSA and conference organizers are pooling their resources as a way to create additional international trade opportunities for businesses locally.

Trilateral Summit organizer U.S. Rep. Ciro D. Rodriguez will address students from UTSA, the University of Calgary and the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey on the upcoming summit as part of a local visit that is being planned. Students from each university will be in San Antonio May 20-25.

International business students will get a preview of the Trilateral Summit and learn about the work being done at the Brooks Technology and Business Park, including the Air Force's and city's efforts in support of homeland defense.

Although the Fall summit's final content has not yet been finalized, there likely will be a special focus on education and workforce development through the new Information Technology and Security Academy and UTSA's Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security, organizers say.

With Dean Bruce Bublitz's blessing, UTSA professor Victor Heller with the NAFTA MBA program, in turn, has agreed to serve as a member of the Trilateral Summit's education committee. Heller says he is prepared to roll the college's graduate program into the city's trilateral initiatives as a way to support the local economy long-term.

In the past, International Business students have focused on various themes to form business plans, such as agriculture or energy. This year, there will be a special emphasis on technology, which made partnering with the Trilateral Summit a natural fit, Heller says.

Heller adds that by dovetailing graduate students' work with local economic development efforts, local leaders may be able to expand San Antonio's technology base.

"These initiatives offer us the opportunity to showcase our local capabilities while building international partnerships for the future," Rodriguez says.

"The technology industry is global, and these initiatives (the Trilateral Summit and the NAFTA MBA program) will help spur international marketing opportunities for San Antonio businesses," the congressman adds.

Formed originally to promote trade opportunities among NAFTA partners in the field of information technology, the Trilateral Summit has since expanded to include other growth sectors in the wake of Sept. 11. The first conference took place in Calgary in 2001. The 2003 conference will take place in Mexico.

The summit will have an estimated 1,000 North American participants looking to form strategic alliances, expand their customer base and find new businesses in which to invest.

The four-day event will take place Sept. 22-25 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. The conference is being hosted locally by the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and the City of San Antonio.



Copyright 2002 American City Business Journals Inc.  
[Click for permission to reprint \(PRC# 1.1661.571573\)](#)

*All contents of this site ©American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.*