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## Poveda: 'decentralize science'

Science and technology "help to build up a cultural background in which human beings can live free of fear," Arcadio Poveda, director of the Institute of Astronomy, Universidad Autonoma de Mexico, said Tuesday at UNL.

"It is very easy nowadays to stay home in a thunderstorm and not worry about it." Vary few people think of technology being responsible for explaining natural catastrophes, Poveda said.

He was speaking with Carlos A. Mallmann of Argentina and Luis Manuel Penalver of Venezuela as part of the Inter-American symposium on the "Scientific and Technological Gap in Latin America," sponsored by the Montgomery Lecture Fund.

Poveda said Mexico devotes only \$40 million a year to finance scientific and technological activity. It is easy to see why production is so limited, he said.

Since 1940, research growth in Mexico has been rapid, Poveda said, and it has begun playing an important part in schools and factories. "The University is getting involved in a vast number of applied research projects."

Increased programs to promote scholarships for students to study abroad have begun, according to Poveda. But there is still a need to improve balance in the geographic location of resources, he said.

Because centralism has been a way of life in Mexico, it is not surprising that most of the qualified researchers are found in the capital city, Poveda commented.

"We need centers throughout the country," he said. "There is a gap between Mexico City and the rest of the country just as there is a gap between Mexico and other countries."

Poveda said Mexico is severely understaffed, even in teaching. The many unemployed young scientists in the United States should not be wasted, he said. There should be some way that they could come to Mexico, he added.

Poveda said if this could happen it "would show how science can unite the peoples of the world."

Mallmann, former physics professor at two major institutions in Argentina, also stressed the importance of research.

"We want to develop science for the use of "man" and not let man be used by technology," he said, outlining his plan for research in his country. "Technology should be studied before it is introduced in a country."

Mallmann said there were creative, government participation and production systems in every country. Transfer of knowledge between systems is rapid in some countries, he said. But "coordination between applied research in systems in Argentina is very small."

This gap is transporting knowledge from one system to another must be worked out, he said.

Mallmann said his country was using twice as much money introducing foreign knowledge of science and technology as adapting it.

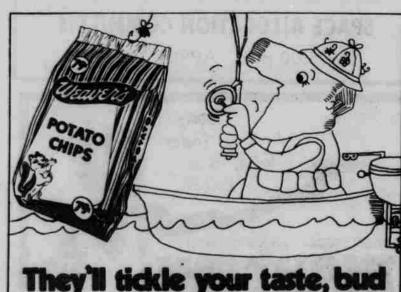
Penalver, rector of the Universidad Metropolitana in Caracas, Venezuela, said his country also "pays a very high price for using foreign technology."

During the last few years Venezuela has tried to develop on its own through an increase in education, he said. Technological education has not been well coordinated with the needs of industry, Penalver commented.

He said science was marginal in Venezuela and was usually disconnected from the rest of society

"The value of science and technology is important," he said. "We are in the integration stage, preparing to enter the planning stage based on research.

Penalver said plans in Venezuela to close the gap in scientific knowledge included: developing better higher education, updating teaching of science in the educational system, developing programs for community aid to research within a priority plan, creating a Venezuelan Institute for oil and coordinating libraries.





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