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## UNH Political Science Professor Receives \$1.2 Million Federal Grant to Study Mexican Elections

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**Editors: Professor Eisenstadt can be reached at [toddeisenstadt@earthlink.net](mailto:toddeisenstadt@earthlink.net) for interviews.**

DURHAM, N.H. -- Todd Eisenstadt, assistant professor of political science at the University of New Hampshire, has been awarded a \$1.2 million grant by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to continue his research on the democratization of Mexico.

Eisenstadt is director of the three-year USAID-UNH Mexico Elections Project. Currently in its second year, the project recently had its funding tripled, making it one of the largest research projects in UNH's College of Liberal Arts.

Eisenstadt's research has documented the increasing autonomy of Mexico's electoral institutions from the previously dominant executive branch and former ruling political party over the last 20 years, which culminated last year in the peaceful transition from 70 years of one-party rule with the election of opposition leader Vicente Fox as president. The research has also documented the much slower pace of change in Mexico's rural areas. Hundreds of domestic electoral observers have been trained in an effort to spread the national norms of electoral transparency to the country's more remote areas.

"USAID rarely grants such project increases," says Jene C. Thomas, director of USAID Mexico's Democracy and Governance Program, "but Dr. Eisenstadt's unique expertise, well-targeted proposal and strong track record give us great confidence. The extension reflects

Dr. Eisenstadt's expertise in Mexican affairs and US-Mexico relations, his deep understanding of issues affecting the concerns of policymakers and academics alike, his diligence and efficient program management, as well as his originality in conceiving of important elections-related 'democracy and governance' work in Mexico."

As part of the collaboration with USAID, Eisenstadt participated in former President Jimmy Carter's mission to observe the landmark 2000 federal elections in Mexico, and the project also funded and directed a half dozen electoral observations in Mexican state and local races last year.

The last two years of the project will be devoted to continuing to provide technical assistance in the observation of Mexico's sub-national elections. In addition, Eisenstadt will work with two Mexican anthropologists to survey indigenous people in an effort to foster their participation in local decision making and governance. The survey will focus on marginalized groups in Mexico's conflicted areas, including Chiapas, where guerrilla rebels have publicized the lack of responsiveness to citizen needs, but in a violent manner.

"I always promote international travel and field research opportunities for students, such as UNH's International Research Opportunities Program," says Eisenstadt. "I'm thrilled for the chance to continue my own field work, and look forward to the special challenges of this fascinating and potentially important survey."

In addition to the political science department and chair John Kayser, Eisenstadt credits Angele Cook and Cindy Corriveau of the university's Institute for Policy and Social Science Research, and Andy Shepard and Amy Philbrick from the Office of Sponsored Research, for helping to secure the grant.

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