



Winter 2005

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## CAMPUS ALMANAC

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### Education Mayor

His country may be rebuilding its most basic infrastructure following decades of war, but Mayor Abdul Razzaq Arsalai of Jalalabad, in the Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan, puts a premium on education.

Toward that end, he spent a few days at USD this past November learning about the master's degree in peace and justice studies, along with other programs and resources.

“Education is the first priority,” Arsalai said, through an interpreter. “If there is not education and there are not educated people, we can't do anything. I do not ask for financial aid and these things.

If we have money, but we do not have people to use that money, it will not help us.”

Arsalai, who finalized a Sister Cities agreement with San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy in a Nov. 13 ceremony at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, praised USD's faculty and staff for “great support” during his time on campus. The ceremony included a moving rendition by four Afghani children — one girl clad in festive native garb — of what was described as “the most current version” of Afghanistan's national anthem.

Arsalai hopes to eventually secure scholarships and other educational help for students in his city. One initiative already afoot is a visit to USD by a team from Nangarhar University this winter. The plan is to establish relationships and faculty collaboration, as well as to explore ways to initiate distance learning.

“As the relationship develops, new ideas will also form,” says Cynthia Villis, director of USD's Institute of College Initiatives and vice chair of the San Diego-Jalalabad Sister Cities Initiative.

Noting that USD students are encouraged to live “globally competent” lives and commit themselves to service, USD President Mary E. Lyons foretold a “very long, deep and fruitful relationship” between the campus and the institutions of Jalalabad.



Flanked by SDSU president Stephen Weber and USD president Mary E. Lyons, Mayor Abdul Razzaq Arsalai of Jalalabad shares a handshake with San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy.