

# ASHLAND DAILY TIDINGS

By Kernan Turner

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## SOU president to visit University of Guanajuato in May



From left, in the Guanajuato Room at SOU in July 2015 during the visit to Ashland by a contingent from Guanajuato, Mexico, are counselors Guadalupe Barrera, Clarissa Beatriz Arrache de Abascal, Jose Luis Camacho Trejo Luna, Avelina Aguilar and Maria Rosa Amelia Garcia; SOU President Dr. Roy Saigo; festival queen Wendy Rodriguez; Council Legal Adviser Jorge Luis Hernandez; and Counselor Luis Felipe Luna DomÁnguez. Saigo will be visiting Guanajuato in May. File photo by José Luis Camacho Trejo Luna

**Southern Oregon University President Dr. Roy Saigo will visit Ashland’s Sister City Guanajuato May 1-6 “to reestablish long-standing (SOU) relations” with the University of Guanajuato.**

“We’re looking forward to signing agreements that will assure we can continue this traditional 47-year academic relationship,” Saigo told the Ashland Amigo Club this week.

Saigo and SOU Provost Dr. Susan Walsh will meet with their counterparts, UG President Dr. Luis Felipe Guerrero Agripino and Provost Dr. Hector Efraín Rodríguez de la Rosa. Guerrero Agripino plans to visit Ashland later in May.

Rodríguez de la Rosa, who earned his master’s at SOU under the Amistad program, visited Ashland in February with other UG administrators. They met with Saigo, Walsh, faculty members and International Programs personnel, including Director Virginia Roberson and Study Away Manager Mary Gardiner.

In a related Sister City development, the Amigo Club announced this week it will offer its first Amistad student-exchange scholarships this fall, one for an SOU student and another for a UG student.

Amigo Club board members have met with university staff and SOU Foundation Executive Director Janet Fratella to establish scholarship criteria intended to encourage a more vigorous participation in the traditional Amistad student exchange program. The club and the university formed a scholarship selection committee in March.

The Amigo Club raised more than \$55,000 last year for an endowed scholarship fund administered by the SOU Foundation, including a \$25,000 donation from Francis “Faffie” Siekman Romero, wife of Amistad alumnus Juan Carlos Romero Hicks, a former UG president and Guanajuato State governor who is currently a federal senator in Mexico.

Ashland and Guanajuato became Sister Cities in 1969, the same year the Amigo Club was formed. In 1971, SOU formalized its bilateral partnership with UG through the Amistad (Friendship) program for the purpose of building friendship, enriching campus diversity and curriculum, and developing exchange activities.

Since then, numerous additional agreements and programs have promoted more than 1,000 exchanges of students, faculty and staff, the sharing of equipment, books, arts and music programs, and encouraged joint research, curriculum development and new academic programs.

*Amigo Club’s Entre Amigos (Between Friends) column about Ashland ties to its sister city Guanajuato, Mexico, appears on the third Tuesday of each month. Longtime AP reporter and bureau chief Kernan Turner is an Ashland resident and Amigo Club member.*

<http://www.dailytidings.com/article/20160418/NEWS/160419840>