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## Immigration 'phenomenon,' not 'problem'

A Mexican official was able to deliver a planned immigration lecture Friday at the University of Arizona a year after illegal immigration opponents disrupted and forced the cancellation of his lecture.

A full auditorium at the UA's Integrated Learning Center heard Mexican Human Rights Inspector Mauricio Farah discuss the immigration "phenomenon" and his proposals for solutions. He delivered his lecture, titled "Mexico-U.S. Migration: Let's Talk About Solutions" in Spanish while a man in the back of the room translated it into English.

He emphasized the issue should be characterized as a "phenomenon" and not a problem, because illegal entrants provide a valuable contribution to the U.S. economy. Mexico and the United States must reach an understanding and each take responsibility for the factors that drive illegal immigration.

The speech and question-and-answer session went without incident, other than a somewhat heated discussion with a woman who belongs to an anti-illegal immigration group.

Farah said the views of people in the anti-illegal immigration circles in the United States are based on intolerance and prejudice and show a separation from the reality of the situation.

On Feb. 24, 2006, anti-illegal immigration advocates shouted him down, demanding he speak in English.

Peter Likins, then UA president, apologized to Farah, and accepted criticism that the university did not provide a translator. Farah returned at Likins' invitation.

— *Brady McCombs*

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