

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 23, 2009

Mr. Carmen Tobar
Charge d'affaires
Embassy of El Salvador
1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 100
Washington D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Tobar:

We write you concerning continuing reports of corrupt governance at the Oscar Romero University in Tejutla, Chalatenango. It is our hope that this rural university will receive all necessary support to enable it to focus its energies on its original mission: to provide opportunities for advancement to students traditionally excluded from higher education.

We expressed our concerns in 2006 to El Salvador's former ambassador to the United States, Rene Antonio Leon Rodriguez, with regard to members of the university's Board of Trustees who were suspected of corruption. Since then, these individuals have been prosecuted for corruption and misappropriation of funds. However, despite an order from the Sentencing Tribunal of Chalatenango and an agreement that two university officials associated with the allegations would step down, they continue to hold leadership positions within the university. A new University Administrative Council has been legally constituted and awaits certification by the Ministry of Education in order to assume command and to redirect the university toward its original goal of preparing leaders who can contribute to the economic, social and political well-being of their communities.

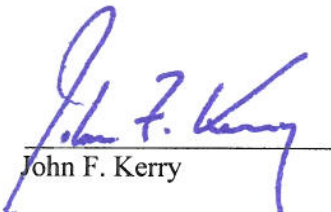
Doctors Francisco and Barbara Acosta, both U.S. citizens and founding trustees, and Bishop Luis Morao of the Diocese of Chalatenango, have requested an audience with the Ministry of Education to resolve the issue of the pending certification. We respectfully request your assistance to facilitate the timely authorization by the Ministry of Education of the new university administrative council.

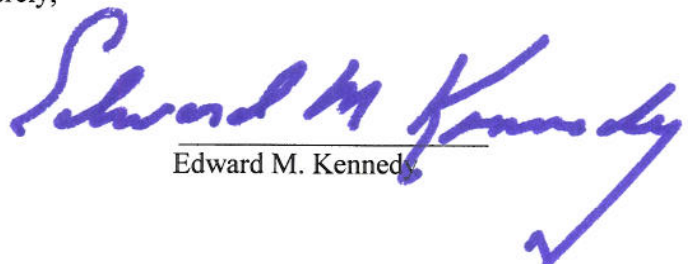
We commend you for your pledge to help eradicate corruption in your country and to reduce poverty. These goals are shared by the university, and your leadership on the issue is essential for the preservation and further growth of this important institution.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or would like additional information on this important issue.

With respect and appreciation,

Sincerely,


John F. Kerry


Edward M. Kennedy