



Scott Fisher of Oomph Events and Dan Fipke of the International Student Energy Summit.



Horacio Cuevas and Usukuma Ekuere of the University of Alberta School of Business.



Student delegates Rod MacIntosh of Calgary and Carlos Vidal Wu of Peru.



Sumesh Singla of Haskayne School of Business, Matthew Church of the Prince George Public Library, Ruchi Soni and Aleem Muhammad of the WTO, and Zaman Istiaq.

# When young people ask tough questions

## International Student Energy Summit



JESSICA DEMELLO

Vicente Fox, former president of Mexico, delivered a keynote address in Calgary last week at the International Student Energy Summit. He declared a need for "re-energizing" NAFTA and for wholesale fiscal reform in his home country. He encouraged and applauded the leadership of those in the room, and talked about political decision-making as an exercise in applying ethics. His remarks were well delivered and engaging, but not surprising.

What was unexpected, though, were the hard questions from members of the audience. Students from Mexico, Colombia and Alberta stood at the microphone and asked how fiscal reform can be achieved, what particular strategies can be applied by foreign investors to create business opportunities without sparking the lingering resentments of those accustomed to Western exploitation, how democracy and free markets can become compatible in Latin America, and whether it was fair for carbon emission standards to apply equally in the developing and developed world.

Fox immediately became an artful dodger, speaking in eloquent generalizations.

Yet, the lunch was a highlight for many of the 300-plus student and young professional delegates who gathered from around the world for the three-day conference. A dinner and social at Ranchman's Cookhouse had many of them "mingling" late into the evening on Day 2; a gala dinner

with keynote speaker **Jeremy Rifkin**, president of the Foundation on Economic Trends, gathered everyone together on Friday night.

Among the other speakers were: **Dr. David Layzell**, executive director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy; **Dr. Pierce Riemer**, secretary general of the World Petroleum Council; **Dr. Michael Klare**, author of *Resource Wars* and *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Petroleum Dependency*; **Dr. Gustav Grob**, executive secretary of the International Sustainable Energy Organization; and **Sabrina Sullivan** of Deloitte Consulting LLP.

A panel on the future of the oil sands also took place. It featured: **Bill MacFarlane**, past president of the Canadian Heavy Oil Association; **Matt Fox**, senior VP of oil sands at Conoco Phillips Canada; author **Andrew Nikiforuk**; **Jennifer Grant**, policy analyst for Pembina Institute; **Calvin Duane**, manager of regulatory and environmental affairs at Canadian Natural Resources; and **Wishart Robson**, senior advisor for safety and climate change at Nexen Inc.

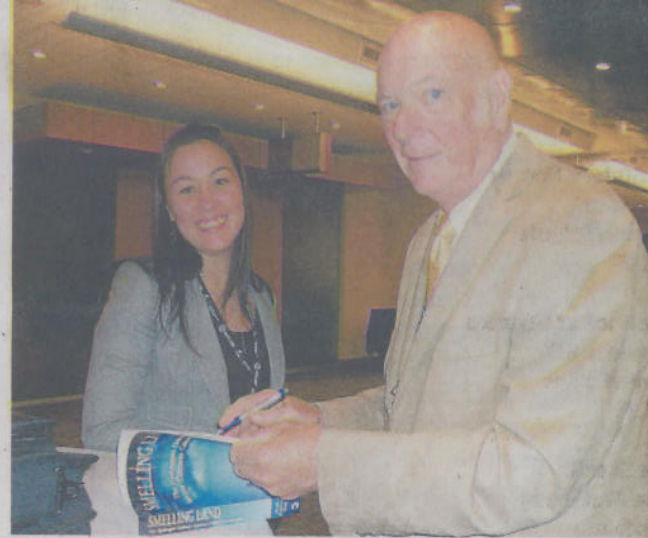
"This is the world's largest energy project and the world's largest engineering project," said Nikiforuk of the oilsands. "We have failed to manage our part of the value chain and, as former premier Peter Lougheed says, we have failed to capture our fair share."

Not surprisingly, industry representation disagreed. "Industry sees itself as on the front lines, providing a highly desirable resource which supports the rest of Canada with billions of dollars," said Duane. "Yet, we are besieged on every side."

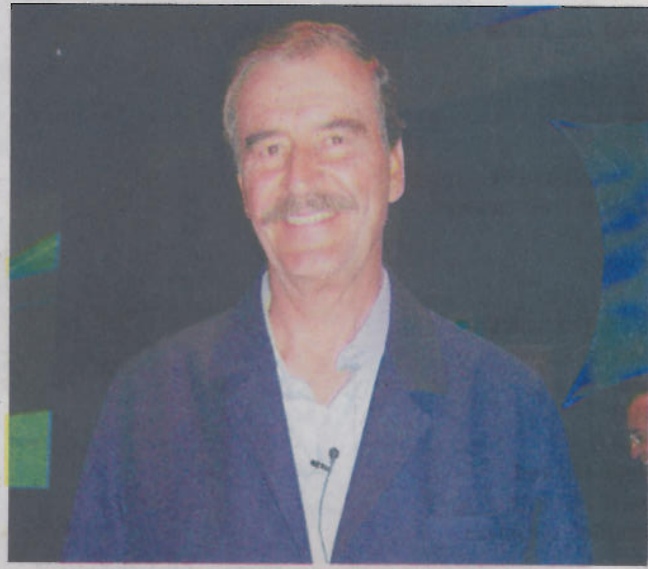
As with the end of each session, a student organizer of the conference provided a summary of the panel discussion. "That was probably the best panel I've ever heard," said the student. "I got like 15 text messages while you were speaking, and I was, like, 'this is awesome!'"

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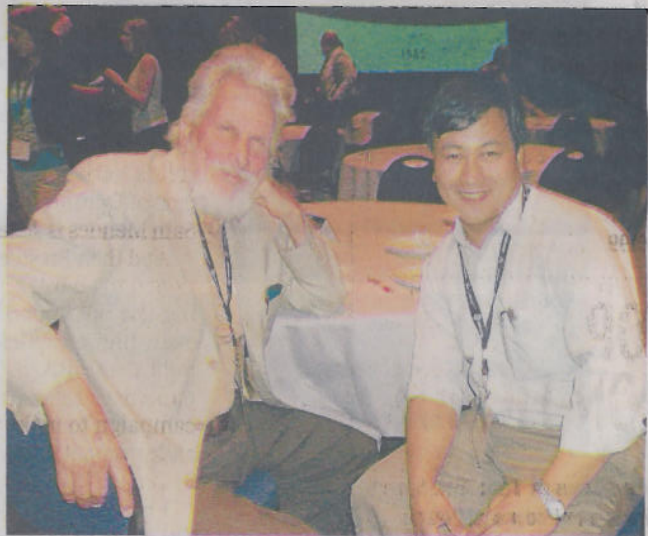
PHOTOS BY JESSICA DEMELLO FOR NATIONAL POST



Mirrel Ko with author David Sanborn Scott.



Vicente Fox, former president of Mexico.



Gustav Grob, executive secretary, International Sustainable Energy Organization, with Yogesh Lama of Nepal.



Anastasia Shukalkina of Alberta Energy, Samuel Roach of Enterprize Canada, and Trevor Wheatley of the Sauder School of Business.

