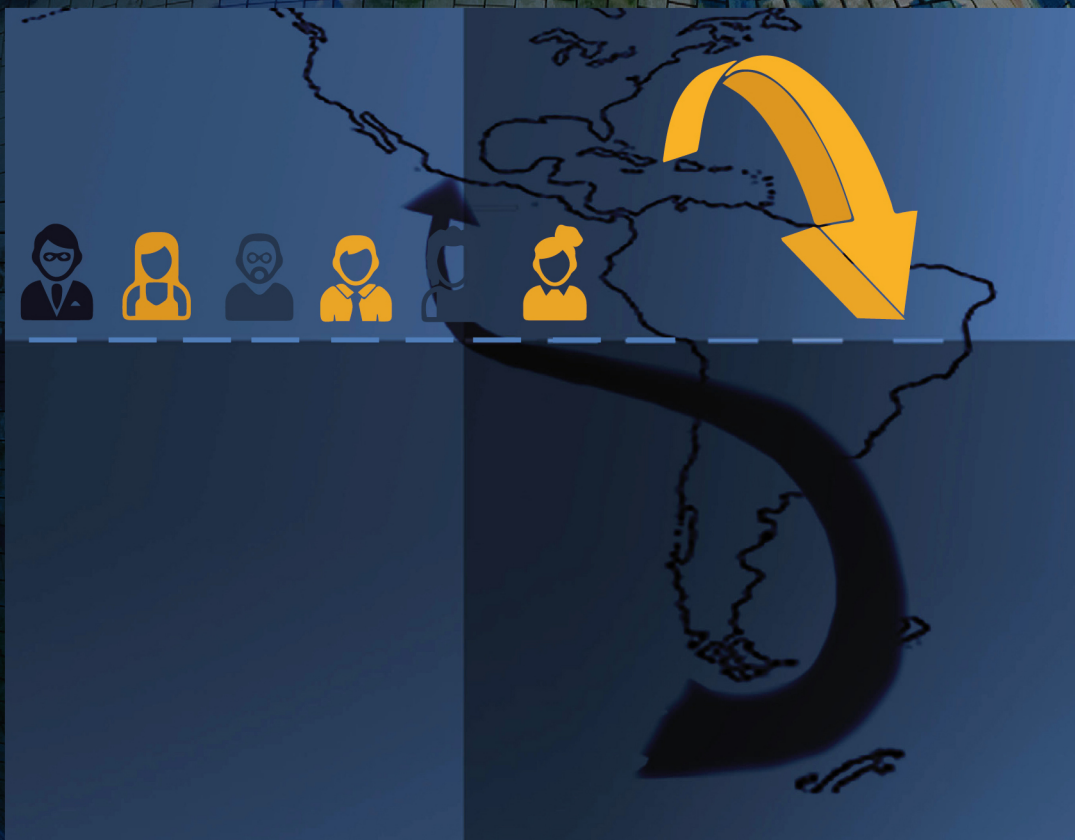


# BEST PRACTICES ON INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



**Jocelyne Gacel-Ávila**  
*Coordinator*





Best Practices on Internationalization  
of Higher Education in Latin America  
and the Caribbean



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## INTRODUCTION

**B**est Practices on Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean picks up where *The International Dimension of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2018) left off. Both have been published within the framework of the *Regional Network for the Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America* (Red Regional para el fomento de la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América Latina, RIESAL), with financing from the European Commission within the Erasmus+ program. The purpose of the two monographs is to report on the current state of the process of internationalizing higher education in the Latin American and Caribbean region by characterizing its progress, setbacks and challenges.

This second monograph details outstanding cases of good institutional practices that have succeeded in implementing internationalization strategies and programs in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It is divided into two sections. The first, “Best Practices: Institutional Case Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean”, consists of eleven chapters, each devoted to good practices at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The second section, “Best Practices in Collaboration Projects between European and Latin American/Caribbean Institutions”, looks at the European partner institutions of the RIESAL Project and consists of three chapters. Each one summarizes the achievements attained in cooperation with the European Union through the programs Latin America Academic Formation (América Latina Formación Académica, ALFA) and Erasmus+. Chapter two is especially interesting because it characterizes the modalities and challenges of international-

ization as we approach the third decade of this century. This text also contains the recommendations of good practices made by specialists from the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy).

## **First Section: “Best Practices: Institutional Case Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean”**

Chapter one outlines the experiences of the network of public universities from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay known as the *Montevideo Group University Association* (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, AUGM). The purpose of this association is to establish an area of regional integration for higher education, and its basic strategy has been to create two types of academic bodies: academic committees and disciplinary nuclei. The former are groups that define cross-sectional and regional thematic configurations, while the latter focus on one discipline of common interest with the participation of all the AUGM universities. As a result, the association has implemented a variety of mobility programs for both students and faculty, as well as workshops for young researchers; summer and winter schools; seminars; colloquia; workshops; permanent research groups; scientific, educational, extension and management networks; plus a variety of publications, among other achievements. It is worth mentioning that the AUGM, through its Escala Program for Graduate Students (Programa Escala Estudiantes de Grado, PEEG), also serves as an example of good practices when it comes to international student mobility, specifically at the graduate level, where the Universidad de la República (UdelaR) in Uruguay has implemented successful experiences.

Chapter two looks at the good internationalization practices implemented at the following Brazilian universities: the Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (UNESP), the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), the Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPEL), the Universidade Estadual do Paraná (UNESPAR) and the Universidade Federal de Integração Latinoamericana (UNILA).

As background, the text mentions that in the second half of the last century, the internationalization of higher education in Brazil was linked to research policies by way of student and faculty mobility, but it was not until Science Without Borders (Ciência sem Fronteiras, CSF) was launched in 2014, and then the Institutional Internationalization Program (PRINT) in 2017, that new strategies were incorporated, including the internationalization of research and internationalization at home.

UNESP and UFRJ are both internationally-ranked research universities. The former has consolidated its position by forming strategic alliances with foreign universities such as the University of Queensland, the National University of Australia, Victoria University and the University of Melbourne. As a result, it has seen a significant increase in resources devoted to research, scholarships, joint research projects and publications.

UFRJ, for its part, has diversified the internationalization of research and internationalization at home, as shown in a recent RIESAL-Erasmus+ survey conducted in 2018. Among its good research internationalization practices, the results of the International Student Office of the Institute of Chemistry (ISO-IQ) are mentioned, along with those of the international manager, as well as the achievements the Council of International Relations and the creation of Interpoli, a student initiative of the Polytechnic Engineering courses at UFRJ for accompanying foreign students. As for good internationalization-at-home practices at UFRJ, respondents valued the conferences and seminars on international topics, the cultural weeks, the foreign guest professors who teach courses and give talks, and the presence of foreign students in language courses.

Chapter three looks at cases of good internationalization practices in the universities that belong to the Colombian University Association (Asociación Colombiana de Universidades, ASCUN), implemented through its programs for student, faculty and researcher mobility. One case of internationalization at home that stands out is the Europe Chair at the Universidad del Norte, which has grown beyond the institution to become a forum for regional cultural encounters between Europe and Latin America.

Chapter four addresses the good practices for international cooperation and project management at two institutions from different countries: the Universidad de La Habana and the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica. In both cases, differences of context aside, a common approach to management can be appreciated.

The Office of International Projects of the Universidad de La Habana has identified the formation of the staff in charge of international cooperation projects as the cornerstone of its internationalization strategy, including the promotion of a culture for this kind of management, the involvement of key stakeholders, and the cultivation of good working relations with state administration agencies. Another example of a good practice from the same institution is the establishment of an Observatory of International Cooperation Opportunities.

The Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica adopted good practices through its Cooperation Office; two of the most noteworthy are the ongoing formation of the Office staff in the skills required for managing internationalization, and the creation of a support center for the financial processes involved in cooperation projects with international organizations.

A special case of good internationalization practices can be found at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) in Cumbayá, Ecuador, which is characterized in chapter five. This is an institution that since its founding in 1988 has developed close curricular ties in its learning practices with universities in the United States. The USFQ has a large proportion of foreign students, a third of them on personalized stays; moreover, a high percentage of its professors have studied abroad.

Its internationalization office does not limit its activities to managing student mobility; it also designs and plans international academic courses using a sustainable business model with resources devoted to research. With respect to personalized programs, the office works as an academic tourist agency, offering Spanish courses as well as courses on the history and politics of Ecuador.

In addition, there are activities for integration into the university community, where Ecuadorian students interact socially on weekends with the foreign students. For orienting biodiversity research, the USFQ

has institutional ties with the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill through its research center on the Galapagos Islands, and to the Tiptuni Biodiversity Station, located in Ecuador's Amazon region and coordinated by the University of Boston.

Chapter six presents the results of the survey conducted by the internationalization offices of three universities in El Salvador, using methodology developed by RIESAL: the Universidad Evangélica de El Salvador, the Universidad de El Salvador and the Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador. With respect to the first institution, the chapter looks at the case of the LASALUS project as an academic program for graduate student mobility financed by the Erasmus+ program. There are also cases of good practices in distance education programs, teaching strategies for developing professional competencies, and public health management. On the basis of these practices, distance graduate programs have been designed in the area of healthcare management.

Chapter seven focuses on the good practices of the Universidad Rafael Landívar (URL), in Guatemala, revolving around its incorporation as a partner institution into the consortium known as Regional Integration, University and Sustainable Development in Central America (Integración Regional, Universidad y Desarrollo Sostenible en Centroamérica, IRUDESCA), which also belongs to the Erasmus+ project (2016-2018). As a result of URL's participation in IRUDESCA, the university improved the management of its cooperation projects using a comprehensive internationalization approach coordinated by its Academic Cooperation Directorate (DCA). IRUDESCA also contributed to the improvement of URL's student mobility strategies and programs, its faculty formation, the re-engineering of its academic catalogue with a focus on internationalization, its institutional ties to international university networks, and its creation of a culture of entrepreneurship.

Chapter eight characterizes the good practices carried out in the bilateral program Mexico-France Technology Engineers (México Francia Ingenieros Tecnología, MEXFITEC), which aims at providing international mobility, both inbound and outbound, for graduate students in engineering enrolled in public Mexican universities and French HEIs. Among the noteworthy points of this program are the multilateral net-



working, its rigorous selection process, adequate funding, ongoing evaluation of the program, its orientation toward a specific field of knowledge—linked to a country with scientific and technological advantages in the area—, and a standardized execution process accepted by all the participants, as well as clear opportunities for comprehensive formation, including the benefits of mobility, professional internships and the possibility of a dual degree. It should be mentioned that MEXFITEC has also served to identify shortcomings in the curricula of Mexican HEIs, such as the insufficient preparation in math and foreign languages.

Chapter nine takes a look at cases of good practices in managing internationalization at two institutions, once again from different countries: the Universidad de Pinar del Río Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca (UPR), located in Cuba, and the Universidad Especializada de las Américas (UDELAS), in Panama. Both are seeking to implement internationalization using a cross-sectional approach that includes all of their substantive functions.

Chapter ten describes the case of student mobility as a good practice at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), in Lima, in its capacity as the coordinating institution for the Student Mobility Program of the Interuniversity Development Center (Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo, CINDA) over a space of thirteen years. This experience is particularly relevant in view of the fact that the CINDA is an international center located in Chile, recognized by UNESCO and the Chilean State, that comprises forty members, from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Spain, Italy, Mexico, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Chapter eleven presents two case studies of good internationalization practices at two universities in Uruguay, both focusing on graduate student mobility. The institutions are the UdelaR, a public university, and the Universidad ORT Uruguay, which belongs to the private sector.

Since 1998 the UdelaR has participated in the PEEG, which among other objectives seeks to include the construction of a common regional space for mobility and exchange based on an agreement by which the home university commits to recognizing all the studies completed at the host university. The PEEG developed a *Manual of Good Practices* in

2011, specifying the responsibilities of each of the actors in the mobility process: the AUGM, students, institutional coordinators and academic coordinators. The manual also defines the responsibilities of each university in sending and receiving students.

The management of the PEEG is governed by general regulations that contain guidelines for different functions and the corresponding forms to be filled out, as well as a table of equivalences for transferring grades. As for the management itself, this is handled by the International Relations Service (Servicio de Relaciones Internacionales, SRI), an office that takes care of the consultations needed to identify the inbound students and their interests, after which it connects them with the corresponding academic units. The SRI also provides foreign students with information about any legal and administrative procedures they need to complete, and organizes one-on-one and group meetings as needed for the program to function smoothly. The PEEG is evaluated annually by means of meetings with all the participating parties.

For its part, the Universidad ORT Uruguay has a Student Exchange Coordination that handles inbound and outbound mobility. For foreign students it organizes a *buddy* system: the buddies pick up the foreign students at the airport, take them to their residence and help them with whatever they need, including information about the country and its culture. The buddies are all students who have gone on an exchange themselves, which makes them sensitive to the foreign students' needs.

In the case of outbound students, one good practice is the assistance they receive from their academic coordination offices. These units provide guidance about the country and the best host university, on the basis of the students' profile and interests. Students can also approach the Exchange Coordination for information about agreements and requirements for application. They can also seek advice from faculty members and students who have already gone on an exchange.

## Second Section: “Best Practices in Collaboration Projects between European and Latin American and the Caribbean Institutions”

The second section of the monograph, which focuses on European RIESAL partners, is divided into three chapters. The first one, written by a group of internationalization experts from the Universidad de Alicante, presents a summary of the history of higher education cooperation between the European Union and LAC, particularly the ALFA programs, as well as an overview of the current situation of the Erasmus+ program. The chapter concludes with a balance of the achievements attained through these programs.

The second chapter, written by experts from the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) and Hans de Wit, describes good practices for human resource and faculty formation and for internationalization management. The text characterizes the management of the internationalization process as *ongoing, integrated and comprehensive evolution*, with no single universal model. For faculty, the greatest challenge is understanding the process of internationalizing the curriculum from the perspective of their own academic discipline, while administrative staff must deal with their own lack of preparation for taking on new and changing roles. After identifying the current challenges facing both groups, the chapter specifies the skills they need.

The third chapter, written by Françoise de Cupere from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, looks at three cooperation projects with Cuban universities: the Institutional University Cooperation Project with the Universidad Central Marta Abreu de Las Villas (2002-2013), the Institutional University Cooperation Program with the Universidad de Oriente (2013 onward), and the University Cooperation Network Program with the Universidad Central de Las Villas (2013 onward).

In conclusion, each of the chapters in both sections offers an original contribution to our knowledge of the challenges and good practices in the internationalization of higher education in LAC. The detailed description of each case study is extremely valuable and functions as a

reference and starting point for developing criteria for applying these good practices in other institutional contexts throughout the region.

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## SECTION 1

# BEST PRACTICES: INSTITUTIONAL CASE STUDIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



# BEST ACADEMIC-SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION PRACTICES FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION. ACADEMIC COMMITTEES AND DISCIPLINARY NUCLEI

ÁLVARO MAGLIA CANZANI  
JUAN MANUEL SOTELO

## Introduction

Since this monograph reviews the activities of the project known as the Regional Network for the Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America (Red Regional para el fomento de la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América Latina, RIESAL), within the framework of Erasmus+, for the purpose of identifying and describing cases of good university internationalization practices in Latin America as they are implemented in their respective institutional frameworks, this chapter looks at a case of a good practice at the regional level implemented in the network of the Montevideo Group University Association (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, AUGM), as a function of its institutional profile, which calls for “[...] the concept of regional integration, as the foundation and objective of academic cooperation” (Brovetto, 2016, p. 34).

This practice has to do with the academic committees (ACs) and disciplinary nuclei (DNs), which are distinctive initiatives of the AUGM that grew out of the first actions undertaken by the founding university rectors to follow through on the association’s ideological motivations and foundational principles. They eventually evolved into academic-scientific cooperation for regional integration.



## 1. Method

Different information-gathering techniques were used to put together this chapter, including archive searches (records, publications, institutional reports, evaluations, etc), interviews and a variety of other published materials.

In order to be validated, the good practice had to:

- Be relevant to the expected outcomes;
- Meet the organization's needs;
- Have an impact;
- Show results; and
- Be sustainable.

## 2. Montevideo Group University Association

The AUGM, sometimes also known as the *Montevideo Group*, is

[...] a network of public, autonomous, self-governed universities from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay that, in view of their similarities, share their vocations, their public character, their comparable academic structures and the equivalence of the levels of their services, characteristics that put them in the position of undertaking cooperation activities with a strong likelihood of feasibility. (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, s/fa, §1)

In the (2010) AUGM statutes, the main purpose of the association is set forth as follows:

[...] promoting the integration process through the creation of a common expanded academic space, based on scientific, technological, educational and cultural cooperation among all of its members. (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2010)

[One of the association's purposes is to] contribute to the development, strengthening and consolidation of: public education; a critical mass of high-level human resources, making good use of the comparative advantages offered by the region's installed capacities; scientific and technological research, including processes of technological innovation, adaptation and

transfer in strategic areas; continuing education aimed at the comprehensive development of the sub-region's populations; management structures of the universities that belong to the association; [and] the interaction of its members with society at large, by communicating advances in knowledge that will enhance its modernization. (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2010)

With respect to its activities, the association aims to promote and support, through cooperation,

The instrumentation of graduate courses that meet the demands of its members; the development of multi— and interdisciplinary programs covering topics of basic and applied research and experimental developments (R+D); the creation of exchange programs for professors, researchers, students and managers; support for programs that seek to fill in knowledge gaps and create new professional profiles that are identified as strategic; the execution of, and support for, projects linked to the demands of the productive sector (good and services); the execution of environmental management programs; the implementation of plans aimed at preserving and communicating regional culture (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2010)

Currently, the AUGM runs ten different programs, including the ACs and DNs, as well as four mobility programs (for undergraduates, graduates, research professors and managers-administrators), all under the ESCALA heading. Other programs are the Young Researchers' Workshops (Jornadas de Jóvenes investigadores, JJI), the Summer and Winter Schools (Escuelas de Verano e Invierno, EVI), the City and University Network (which includes the City-University Cooperation Observatory) and the International University-Society-State Seminar.

### 3. Nature of the good practice

We characterize this good practice as *strategic* due to its institutional role, which the association does a good job of articulating: “[...] a strategic role can be identified in these programs[,] inasmuch as they represent an opportunity for integrating specialists and researchers by setting up a valuable space for cooperation among universities” (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, p. 8).

Furthermore, the nature of the AC and DN programs is consistent with the orientation chosen by the AUGM for integrating regional higher education by creating an “expanded common academic space” (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2010) based on diverse forms of cooperation among its members.

#### 4. Type of good practice

As for the typology of this good practice, it should be pointed out that, strictly speaking, it involves or includes different types of practices,<sup>1</sup> and while these could be considered individually, that would preclude the necessary assessment of the case as a wide-ranging practice in which various typologies converge to form a more general type of practice that generates academic integration in the region, which is the key role of the ACs and DNs.

#### 5. Level of case development

The ACs and DNs were set up in the AUGM from the beginning as a strategy for the regional academic integration of higher education, as mentioned above, within the framework defined by the association’s general principles and guidelines. For this reason they are academic structures with over two decades of accumulated experience, systematically strengthened by the institution, that serve to support the construction of an extended common academic space. Even considering the adjustments they have undergone at different points in the association’s history, these academic structures have not lost their strategic value; on the contrary, they continue to provide the scaffolding and conditions for structuring other AUGM programs. A look at the regulations of the

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1 Mobility for professors and researchers, students and managers; international projects; collaboration in research and development or technology transfer; as well as governance of academic integration.

different programs shows their links to the ACs and DNs, and the association has carefully tended these links, recognizing that they are a key component of its constructive matrix.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in the case of the EVIs, it is established that “they will primarily be linked, in both academic and operational aspects, with the disciplinary nuclei, the academic committees [...]” (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, s/fb); in the JJIIs, the main topics depend on “the corresponding topics of the AUGM’s disciplinary nuclei and academic committees” (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2013a); and in the International University-Society-State Seminar it is set forth that while the Rectors’ Council defines the thematic agenda, the ACs and DNs may make thematic proposals for each edition (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2013b).

This same kind of link exists for some of the academic mobility programs. To give two examples, the ESCALA Program for Graduate Students in its call for candidates “encompasses graduate programs covering all disciplines and issues, although priority will be given to those that relate to the AUGM’s disciplinary nuclei and academic committees” (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015b); and the ESCALA Program for Professors, although it casts a wide net for participation and applications, establishes that “[...] priority will be given to applications submitted or supported by active disciplinary nuclei or academic committees” (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2016).

## 6. Background

Over an existence spanning more than a quarter century, the AUGM came up with good academic-scientific cooperation practices for regional integration through the generation of academic structures—original in their concept and functioning—that had a decisive impact on the associa-

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2 Strictly speaking, ACs and DNs were not conceived originally as programs, but as the institutional essence of the AUGM in terms of academic cooperation for integration.

tion's academic and institutional life, and that have survived because of their strategic value.

These practices were the instruments that the association's founding rectors created and developed to give expression to their fundamental purposes. Gottfried<sup>3</sup> (2007) makes explicit reference to the earliest iterations of the ACs and DNs: "It was the rectors of the early 1990s who proposed the key issues that would become the disciplinary nuclei and academic committees" (p. 122).

By definition, ACs are

Academic-technical groupings conceived to use a multi— and inter-disciplinary approach to address broad thematic configurations deemed strategic because of their cross-sectional and regional, rather than national, character[,] and that consist of the integrated scientific-technical academic offerings of the group's universities (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, s/fc, §1)

The DNs, on the other hand, are defined as

Academic-technical groupings that correspond to a discipline of common interest, where each member university makes its contributions in terms of highly-qualified personnel and material resources for scientific, technical, teaching, development, extension activities, etc. (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, s/fd, §1)

Both share the vocation of serving an institutional strategy of regional integration and forming networks for academic-scientific cooperation.

Initially, in 1992, six DNs and five ACs were formed (Gottfried, 2007, pp. 122-123). In subsequent years the numbers grew until they reached the current levels of thirteen ACs and twelve DNs,<sup>4</sup> which opened up the possibility of dealing with a wider range of issues and disciplines.

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3 Rector of the Universidad Nacional de Entre Ríos (Argentina) from 1991 to 2001 and founder of the AUGM.

4 The issues examined by the ACs are Accessibility and Disability; Food Crops; Water; Primary Health Care; Political and Social Sciences; Regional Development; Energy; Gender; History, Regions and Borders; Environment; Cooperative and Associative Processes; Animal Health; and Human Health. The issues addressed by the DNs are Biophysics; Materials Science and Engineering; Education for Integration;

## 7. Implementation

The achievement of the effects expected from the ACs and DNs requires the application of methods and measures. Over the lengthy trajectory of these academic groupings, which have involved different moments of institutional history and structure, the modes of implementation of the functioning of the ACs and DNs have varied, although they have all required the support and attention of institutional government and management, considering their decisive contribution to strategic academic cooperation and the role for which they were created and have been maintained.

Internal regulations govern different aspects of the ACs and DNs, such as their creation, inactivation, integration, functioning, follow-up and evaluation (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2012, pp. 1-9).

With respect to their *creation*, the applicable regulations call for an application that includes a justification, an action plan, and the backing of member universities, preferably from three countries. The initiative must specify not only the academic importance from the perspective of the disciplinary or interdisciplinary field, but also the transcendence of the issue within the regional framework.

As for the *members* of the AC or DN, the member universities name an institutional representative from their faculty, to act as a liaison between the committee or nucleus and the relevant academic areas at their university.

To understand their *functioning* it is necessary to consider certain regulations that shed light on organizational aspects of these academic structures. Each AC or DN proposes a coordinating university (with the Rectors' Council making the final designation), which serves for a period of two years (with the possibility of re-election for a second

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Teaching Spanish and Portuguese as L2/FL; Institutional Evaluation, Strategic Planning and University Management; Mechanical and Production Engineering; Literature, Imaginaries, Aesthetics and Culture; Applied Mathematics; Natural Bioactive Products and their Applications; Remote Sensing and Applied Meteorology; Information and Communication Technologies; and Molecular Virology.

two-year term), thus ensuring alternation among the universities. The coordinating university and the person in charge work on the coordination and general organization of the AC's or DN's activities, as well as their planning, follow-through and evaluation.

Once these structures are put in place, their autonomous academic character and the flexibility to constitute the network allow the academics to organize in the most suitable and open way possible in order to achieve the objectives that have been laid out, although they have the obligation to submit a two-year work plan and an annual operating plan with clear work goals, and to cooperate effectively with the AUGM's other programs, projects and activities.

As for *evaluation*, the DNs' and ACs' activities are examined every two years. The evaluation criteria and methodology are submitted in advance to the Rectors' Council. There is systematic follow-up on the ACs and DNs at different levels: functioning, level of activity, production, planning, links with other institutional programs and activities, results and impact, among others.

The *follow-up* mechanisms are varied, ranging from observation—undertaken systematically by the association's governing bodies and management structure—to the application of evaluation instruments, the analysis of reports and others.

The functioning of these academic work spaces, like that of other AUGM activities and programs, is funded by the member universities themselves.

## 8. Success factors

Success factors for these cases of good practices are taken to be those that contribute to the final purpose of the academic structures analyzed here.

Thus, the AUGM's institutionalization stands out as a fundamental factor, as it “makes visible the development of more structured and regular actions [...], encourages the development of activities in a type of network, a more plural communication space in terms of research

epistemologies and methodologies”<sup>5</sup> (Farenzena, 2018); furthermore, it allows participants to engage with and make use of other institutional programs (ESCALA, JJI, EVI), which shows ACs and DNs to be a “tool for strengthening and collaborating with the other programs that the AUGM undertakes” (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, p. 8), which in turn encourages cooperation and the fulfillment of the association’s plans.

A by-product of this institutionalization is the systematic nature of academic cooperation, mediated by known rules and procedures and managed by qualified academics (the AC and DN coordinators) (Panaia, 2018).<sup>6</sup> The coordinators exercise leadership within their thematic area and ensure the cohesion of their group and its functioning (Pereira, 2018).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the fact that the academic groupings have coordinating universities (as well as the coordinators themselves) is seen as a decisive factor for the good practices of the ACs and DNs.

Periodic management meetings held by the ACs and DNs have also been fundamental to the AUGM’s success. These meetings are primarily face to face, but some are virtual; they serve to program the activities that derive from the association’s mission, and to plan and adopt goals that can feasibly be evaluated (Panaia, 2018).

Regarding the planning of cooperation as a success factor, the evaluation document of the AC and DN programs (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, pp. 16-17) speaks eloquently: in response to the question “To what extent do you feel that the annual planning of activities contributed to the fulfillment of the DN/AC objectives?”, 25 of the respondents answered *totally*, 56% said *extensively*, and none answered *not at all*.

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5 Personal translation of the original in Portuguese. (Translator’s Note: This note refers to the text in Spanish).

6 Marta Panaia is the coordinator of the Academic Committee on Regional Development (CADR, in its initials in Spanish) of the AUGM.

7 Carolina Pereira Huertas is the Universidad Nacional del Sur’s delegate to the Academic Committee on Cooperative and Associative Processes (PROCOAS, in its initials in Spanish).



From another perspective, it can be seen that, aside from constituting a result in themselves,<sup>8</sup> the different programmed and periodic academic forums (colloquia, seminars, workshops, schools, conferences, symposia) feed into success factors by offering regular opportunities for researchers to meet; these encounters in turn foster academic collaboration and exchange, the dissemination of academic and scientific production, joint and collaborative research, in short, the ongoing cultivation of sustained academic initiatives (Panaia, 2018).

Likewise, the agreements generated with outside institutions<sup>9</sup> enhance the success that comes from cooperation by allowing academic exchange and engagement to move beyond academia and undertake solutions to regional problems (Vega, 2018)<sup>10</sup> with a regional perspective that brings together different countries and cultures as well as the member universities—including their top-level academics (Padoin, 2018).<sup>11</sup>

Contributions to the success of regional cooperation (which involves ACs and DNs) also come from the member universities' policies on promoting university internationalization and regional integration (Salomone, 2018).<sup>12</sup>

Although the evaluation of the AC and DN programs (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a) contains a number of comments from the respondents about the lack of resources and the difficulty in obtaining them to improve the committees' and nuclei's activities, interviews with qualified informants suggest in this regard that "[...] there is a perception that funding issues are not the most significant limitation, but rather sometimes just an excuse, not the main problem" (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, p.

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8 Note from the authors.

9 In particular, we refer to the agreements signed with the Latin American Energy Organization (Organización Latinoamericana de Energía, Olade), which involves the AUGM's Academic Committee on Energy (CAE, in its initials in Spanish).

10 Coordinator of the CAE.

11 Maria Medianeira Padoin is the coordinator of the Academic Committee on History, Regions and Borders.

12 Alicia Salomone is the director of Graduate Studies at the University of Chile and that university's representative on the AUGM's Permanent Commission for Graduate Studies.

11), which leads us to conclude that the funding available for the ACs and DNs to function, while not always sufficient, can also be identified as a factor for their success.

## 9. Impact and results

In the document *Internal evaluation of the AUGM's Disciplinary Nuclei and Academic Committees programs* (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, pp. 1-71) there is a report<sup>13</sup> on the evaluation of the AC and DN programs that was implemented between June 2014 and February 2015; the report contains valuable data for examining the impact and results of the actions taken by the AUGM's academic groupings, including the impact they had on the member universities. It is important to note that this impact, which “goes beyond the AUGM itself” (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, p. 19), is considered in reference to the academic cooperation and regional integration that resulted from the activities undertaken by the ACs and DNs.

The reflection on the impact of this case study states that when it comes to the objectives and goals pursued by the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) and other regional integration proposals, “it was especially through the committees and nuclei that they took shape, forcing, stimulating and enhancing regional integration through education”<sup>14</sup> (Padoin, 2018).

Along the lines of the statements above, the evaluation of the DNs and ACs (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a) also revealed two distinct and complementary visions regarding the purpose and impact of the nuclei and committees:

[...] a wide-ranging international projection and insertion in which it is established that [the AUGM] represents a space for engagement and a communication channel with society and Governments, contributing to the

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13 Of institutional authorship.

14 Personal translation of the original in Portuguese. (Translator's note: This note refers to the text in Spanish).

integration of the countries on the basis of higher education and promoting links between academia and government agencies (p. 13).

There is another more applied vision of the aspects of academic cooperation, which sees the AUGM as

[...] a space for integration, exchange and discussion about research, teaching —undergraduate and graduate— and outreach among universities. A network for recognizing and exchanging professional know-how and work methodologies, in order to increase the knowledge of professors, students and researchers in the region, and to improve undergraduate and graduate formation in universities (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, p. 13).

Above we pointed out the impact of the ACs and DN within the member universities as a result of the universities' participation in them. In fact, 88% of the AC and DN coordinators find that these groups make a significant contribution to their university (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, p. 20), which translates into, among other things, the formation of human resources, participation in events, discussion of regional issues, and strengthened ties among network members (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2015a, p. 19).

The results of DN and AC activity can be considered fundamental to their impact. It is undeniable that the AUGM has achieved a wide variety of results, of which we will mention only a few:

- The constitution of ongoing academic working groups that in turn have generated stable research groups with an impact on the participating universities, and formed academic-scientific, educational, outreach and management networks (Padoin, 2018).
- The inclusion on the AUGM's agenda of a regional academic event for each AC and DN, such as the *Colloquium on Territorial Transformations* (which held its twelfth biennial event in 2018, organized by the Academic Committee on Regional Development) (Panaia, 2018), or

the *International Energy Seminar* (of the Academic Committee on Energy —CAE—, held twice a year) (Chávez, 2018).<sup>15</sup>

- The inclusion on the institutional agenda of periodic events organized by more than one academic grouping, such as the conference *Waters, Environment and Energy*, which is organizing its second event in 2019 (Volpedo, 2018).<sup>16</sup>
- The publication of joint periodical journals, both digital and printed: *PAMPA*, *PROCOAS AUGM*, *AUGMDOMUS*, *Digital Journal of Linguistic Policies* (*Revista digital de políticas lingüísticas, RDPL*) and *Journal of Educational Policies* (*Revista de políticas educativas, PolEd*), among others.
- The publication of periodical journals in association with regional organizations, such as the journal on energy *ENERLAC*, published jointly with the Latin American Energy Organization (Organización Latinoamericana de Energía, Olade).
- The publication of thematic books such as *Gender Perspectives in Universities* (2018) and *Energy and Water and Society* (2017).
- Engagement with international organizations in the modality of cooperation agreements (or similar figures), such as Olade, the Network for Strategic Direction in Higher Education (Red de Dirección Estratégica en la Educación Superior, RED-DEES), the Mercocities Network, Internet Society (ISOC), the Pasteur Institute of Montevideo (IPM), Regional Cooperation of France, and at least a dozen more, which demonstrates the interest of other institutions in collaborating with the AUGM.
- The implementation of the EVI program in 2015, with the participation of students and professors from the member universities, defined as an internationalization and regionalization strategy promoted largely by ACs and DNs.

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15 Héctor Chávez is a member of the CAE, from the Universidad de Santiago de Chile (USACH).

16 Alejandra Volpedo is a member of the Academic Committee on Waters.

## 10. Strengths and weaknesses

The main strength of the ACs and DNs as a program lies in their strategic character within the framework of the AUGM and the degree of institutional consolidation that they have achieved, a key issue for fulfilling the institutional mission. It could be said that the AUGM cannot be imagined without these programs' decisive action.

Among their weaknesses, the low level of activity of some of the ACs and DNs has been pointed out, along with the lack of the universities' participation in them, which is an ongoing concern of the AUGM's governing bodies and institutional management.

## Conclusions

The ACs and DNs are good practices inasmuch as they contribute decisively to the attainment of a specific objective: academic-scientific cooperation for regional integration. They represent, therefore, a good cooperation practice with an explicit purpose of integrating higher education at the regional level. They have proven to be feasible and sustainable in their current mode of implementation.

The good practices described in this chapter and implemented by the AUGM require certain essential issues regarding strategic orientation and definitions; absent the definition of an institutional strategy of regional integration through academic cooperation, the replicability of these practices is limited.

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# BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERNATIONALIZING HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

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## 1. Internationalization of research

### *Institutional approach to the internationalization of research*

In order to develop an institutional approach to the internationalization of research, it is important to identify and intensify collaborations in new or existing areas and regions. This could be a *top-down* process, where the main administration selects potential allies and then defines who will work together and in what areas; it could be a consultation process where the academic community defines the potential partnerships for each area of knowledge; or it could be a composite process that takes both stakeholder groups into account.

Since we can compare international collaboration in strategic research with university-industry alliances, it will be necessary to shift from an *ad hoc* approach—which characterizes the relations established by individual researchers based on their personal experiences and networks (Frølund, Murray, and Riedel, 2017)—to a strategy whereby the organization’s experience and needs drive the process. According to Frølund, Murray and Riedel (2017), *ad hoc* approaches can lead to a high

number of collaborations, but run the risk of generating less impact and commitment. The establishment of strategic alliances with international research-driven institutions should form part of the institutional strategy of higher education institutions (HEIs) and encourage departments to participate in this strategy.

In order to develop an international strategy of alliances, institutions need to identify a diverse group of international collaborators on specific topics based on solid, symmetric relations with real possibilities of co-funding research activities. The initiative would look to generate outstanding production of knowledge and to form high-level human resources, all aimed at contributing to the solution of major challenges around the world.

Moreover, the selection of international partners should be based on four main characteristics: reciprocity, diversity, solidarity and complementarity. It should also seek to develop structural international partnerships.

All of this is proposed in the Strategic Internationalization Plan of the Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (UNESP). The plan classifies partner institutions at four levels: strategic, priority, prospective and mobility.

*Strategic alliances* are special relationships defined by the institutional and financial interests of the partner institutions, as well as by the complementarity of the cooperation in terms of issues that go beyond academic exchange. They are characterized by the existence of a mutual understanding on the part of the participating institutions regarding the application of internal funds for amplifying the activities they carry out jointly.

In order to identify and implement strategic alliances, the UNESP has developed a series of activities, including international missions to scout out and discuss alliances, participation in international conferences on the internationalization of higher education, and research workshops on specific topics.

*Priority partnerships* are those that the university identifies as *high-capacity* for the production of knowledge with a high degree of academic and social impact. For this, an analysis of academic quality is made on

the basis of scientific production indicators, considering at the same time collaboration potential and interest.

*Possible partnerships* are those that the university wishes to establish in order to support the development of specific topics that interest the institution. They may be simple or complex in terms of their implementation, and they are considered a solid way to start an international institutional relationship.

*Mobility alliances* are those whose primary objective is to guarantee the conditions for the institution's students, faculty, researchers and non-academic personnel to take part in formal international mobility. They have a low level of complexity in their implementation and represent one of the ways to start up an international relationship.

## **2. Strategic value of alliances to develop international research. Case study of the Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho and Australian universities**

Internationalization at the higher education level is associated more with teaching and learning than with research, but today the integration of all of these areas in universities is growing and considered an essential part of management, especially for research institutions. Research is international in its essence, but its priorities, dimensions and challenges, especially when it comes to funding, require a more strategic approach.

One very successful case in Brazil that exemplifies the points made in the previous paragraph is UNESP's partnerships with Australian universities. The construction of these relationships began at conferences, such as those of the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) and the European Association for International Education (EAIE) in 2011 and 2012. After these events, the next step was taken within the university's political sphere: it was necessary to consolidate within the institution the importance of the potential partner HEIs for Brazil, and a way to achieve this was found in academic and administrative missions using a co-funding format.

In 2013 an *administrative mission* to Australia was carried out. A UNESP team consisting of professionals from the Rector's Office and important administrative officials met with a team from Australia to identify and map out strategic areas and propose activities in specific academic areas that represented a potential for high impact for both parties.

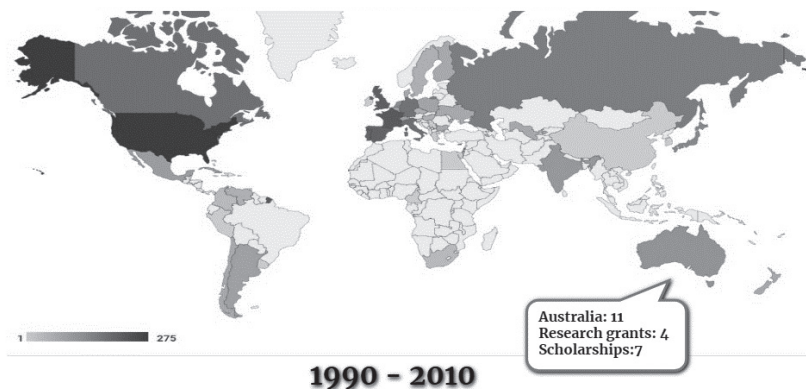
Consequently, in 2014, an *academic mission* was sent to Australia, and with the participation of a team of professors from the areas identified previously, the top-tier Brazilian and Australian universities started to work together, making plans for activities in their fields.

After two years (2013-2014) of *laying the groundwork* for solid collaboration activities, six workshops in thematic areas were held in Brazil, in partnership with leading universities from Australia, including the University of Queensland, the National University of Australia, Victoria University and the University of Melbourne.

The workshops revolved around cutting-edge research topics, as defined by both institutions. In 2015, in a show of institutional support, UNESP's then Deputy Rector published a letter supporting the organization of the workshops. This strategy was aimed at encouraging academics to apply for joint international scholarships and commit to the university's internationalization strategy.

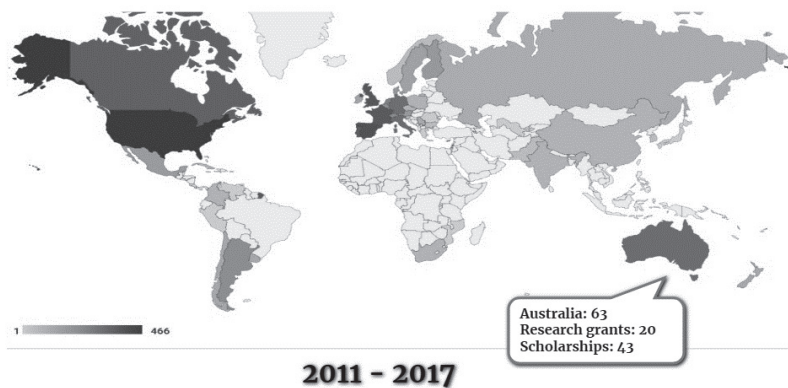
The process produced a series of tangible results. For example, these workshops led to a significant increase in proposals, such as the initiatives known as *FAPESP SPRINT* that fund aspects of academic mobility—including travel expenses, room and board, and health insurance—for researchers from the State of São Paulo and internationally eligible partner institutions. In subsequent years, thirteen joint research proposals were accepted within the initiatives with Australia. Figures 1 and 2 show the increase in international collaboration between UNESP institutions and Australia.

**Figure 1**  
International collaboration between UNESP institutions and Australia (1990-2010)



Source: authors' own elaboration on the basis of Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (2017).

**Figure 2**  
International collaboration between UNESP institutions and Australia (2011-2017)



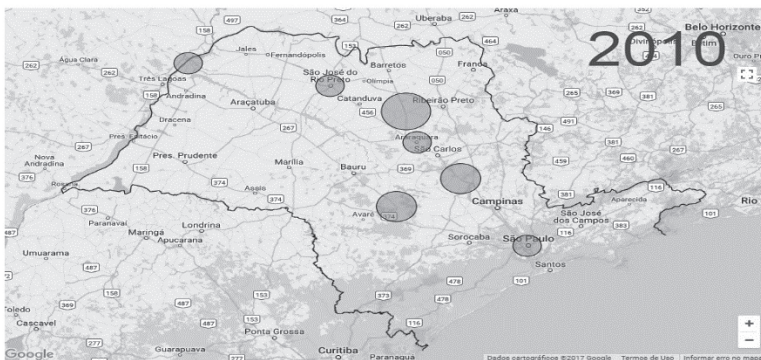
Source: authors' own elaboration on the basis of Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (2017).

According to our internal data, from 1990 to 2011 UNESP had only eleven FAPESP scholarships for activities at Australian universities. After the

strategic activities carried out between 2011 and 2015, this number rose to sixty-three grants and continues to climb.

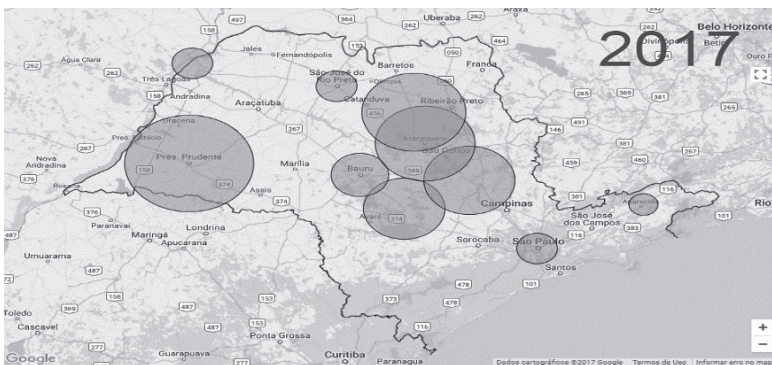
There was also an increase in the joint publications observed in this period, considering the entire UNESP university system that encompasses twenty-four campuses and thirty-four schools in twenty-four Brazilian cities (Figures 3 and 4).

**Figure 3**  
Publications by UNESP and Australian universities (2010)



Source: authors' own elaboration on the basis of Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (2017).

**Figure 4**  
Publications by UNESP and Australian universities (2017)



Source: authors' own elaboration on the basis of Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (2017).

This experience demonstrates that a combination of institutional, academic and administrative efforts generates strengths that can be applied to the construction of a strategic plan, in this case, an internationalization plan.

### **3. Data on good internationalization practices at Brazilian universities**

In Brazil, the internationalization of higher education was institutionalized in 1951 with the creation of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico y Tecnológico, CNPQ) and the National Campaign for the Improvement of Higher-level Personnel (Campanha Nacional de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior, currently the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher-level Personnel, Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior, CAPES) (Martins, 2015, p. 51), the purpose of which was to form specialists and researchers in the fields that were seen as important for the context at the time—physics, mathematics, chemistry, finance and social research, in line with a society undergoing complex heavy industrialization in the 1950s, under Vargas' second government (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior, 2014).

The policies for internationalizing higher education in Brazil are characterized by being extremely recent. Furthermore, due to the different levels of research and development in the different states of the country, internationalization-related activities are concentrated in some regions more than in others, which calls for adapting policies to diverse circumstances.

In 2014 the Federal Government implemented the program called Science Without Borders (Ciências Sem Fronteiras, CSF) for the purpose, according to Martins (2015), of stimulating Brazilian science in the areas of technology, innovation and competitiveness by expanding international mobility. To this end, financial incentives were used as a strategy to increase the presence of Brazilian researchers and students in

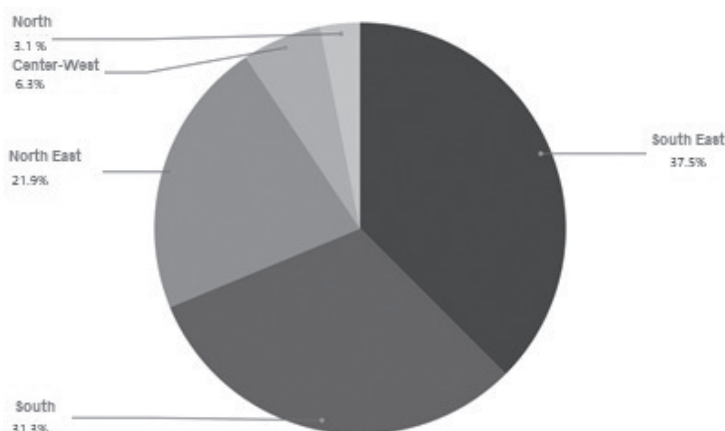


institutions of excellence abroad and to attract talented young scientists and researchers to work in Brazil.

The implementation of CSF put Brazilian universities in contact with the topic of internationalization, specifically the internationalization of scientific research and internationalization at home. A survey conducted in September 2018 at Brazilian universities around the country by Brazilian members of the project of the Regional Network for the Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America (Red Regional para el fomento de la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América Latina, RIESAL), under the aegis of Erasmus+, generated interesting data about this scenario, along with certain practices that are being implemented in the Brazilian offices in charge of these efforts.

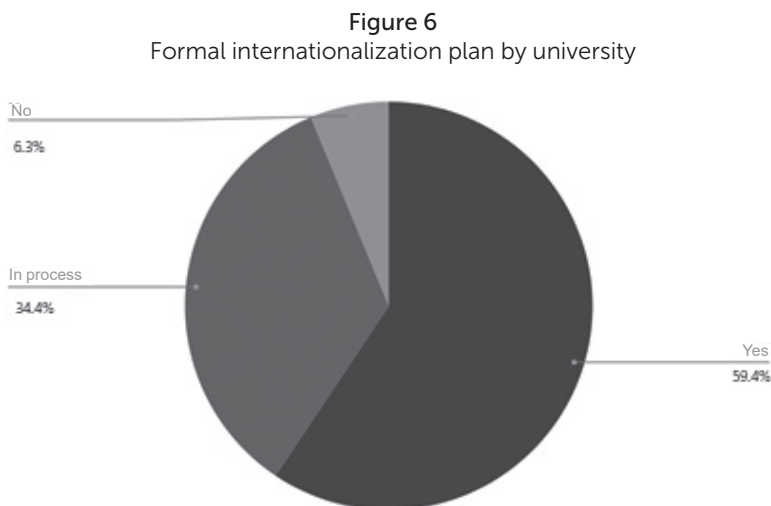
Brazil is officially divided into regions, defined by the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, IBGE). In order to group states by region, the RIESAL survey used criteria such as similarities in physical, human, cultural, social and economic aspects. Figure 5 shows that of the thirty-two institutions that took part in the survey, 21.9% come from the Northeastern region of the country and 37.5% from the Southeast.

Figure 5  
Brazil's universities by regions



Source: authors' own elaboration.

Of the surveyed universities, 59.4% have a formal institutional internationalization plan, and only 6.3% have yet to develop a plan to coordinate these activities. This is a current practice that promotes internationalization activities at the institutions, and helps with each university's internal organization and governance (Figure 6).

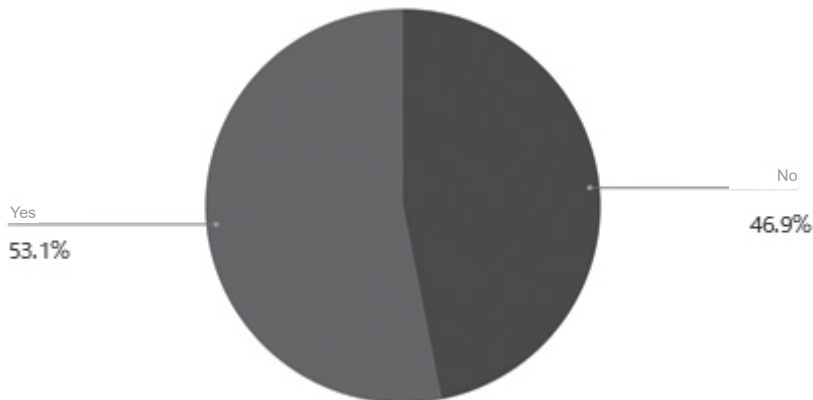


Source: authors' own elaboration.

Student mobility stopped being Brazilian institutions' major focus when it comes to internationalization. As Figure 7 shows, there is a balance between *yes* and *no* in the answers to the question *Does your institution's internationalization plan revolve around student mobility?*

Figure 7

Answers to the question about whether the institution's internationalization plan revolves around student mobility

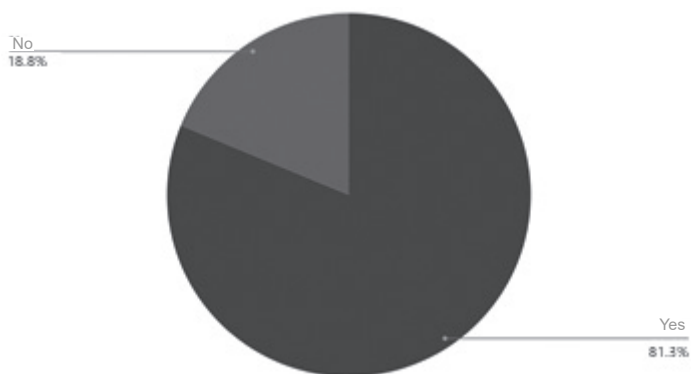


Source: authors' own elaboration.

Internationalization at home is another tool that Brazilian universities have used to bring internationalization to their campuses. Activities such as talks and seminars on the topic of internationalization; cultural weeks; hosting foreign guest professors and students for classes, courses and talks on campus; language courses for the university community; and institutional efforts such as the internationalization of the curriculum and graduate programs in English (with some modules offered in cooperation with partner universities abroad) are current examples of good practices at Brazilian universities.

Figure 8 shows that 81.3% of the universities surveyed have a strategy for internationalization at home in their internationalization plan.

**Figure 8**  
Answers to the question about internationalization at home



Source: authors' own elaboration.

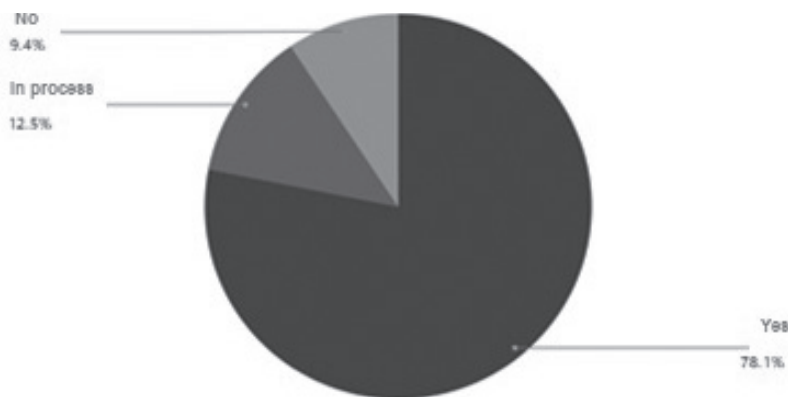
One internationalization-at-home success story that ended up spreading to a whole city grew out of the partnership between the Universidade Estadual do Paraná (UNESPAR) and the Universidad Nacional de Jujuy. The two institutions reached an agreement through UNESPAR's Office of International Relations and the Curitiba Institute of Art and Culture to jointly develop a mobility initiative for young people. This alliance succeeded in bringing a group of musicians from the Universidad Nacional de Jujuy to participate in the 35<sup>th</sup> Curitiba Music Office in February 2018. A group of six musicians performed at an event organized by the Curitiba city government, and two face-to-face courses were organized in the form of a workshop for the audience attending the event.

It is reported that there are currently 1,900 students competing for spots in over one hundred courses offered in the framework of this partnership, taught by the best professors, instrumentalists, maestros and singers. Over the years, the alliance has attracted representatives from all over Latin America, as well as the United States, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Norway, Spain, Italy, Portugal, China and Israel.

In this way, Brazilian universities that once focused only on international mobility are now working on other areas of internationaliza-

tion, including the ramification of the internationalization of research. Figures 9 and 10 show that over 75% of the institutions surveyed built their institutional internationalization plan to encompass activities such as the promotion of joint publications with partner universities, international post-doctoral and specialization opportunities, support for participation in projects —such as Erasmus+ programs or with other agencies that promote national research, such as CAPES in the state of São Paulo, or CNPQ and FAPESP, or international agencies—, and strategies for supporting researchers at certain universities through the international relations offices (IROs) with respect to external and internal funding, among other things. In section 4 of this chapter we present more specific case studies that exemplify this modality.

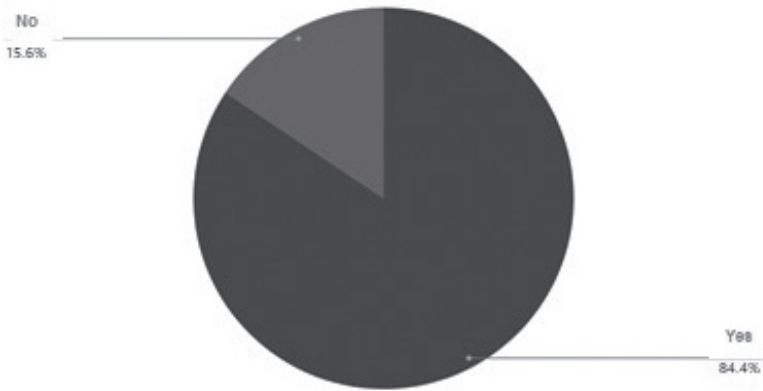
Figure 9  
Responses to the question about strategies for internationalizing research



Source: authors' own elaboration.

**Figure 10**

Responses to the question about supporting researchers in the IROs



Source: authors' own elaboration.

#### 4. Good practices in Brazil: internationalization at home

Internationalization at home “should be considered from both the organizational and academic viewpoints” (Beelen and Jones, 2015, p. 71).<sup>1</sup>

In the case of Brazil, internationalization at home does not necessarily require the presence of foreign students in the country’s universities, although this presence can be considered a differential framework in the classroom. All students, in themselves, have a unique and diverse educational and cultural experience, and these differences can be exploited in an international dimension. As Beelen and Jones (2015) point out:

Internationalisation at Home (IaH) is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments. (p. 76)

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1 The quotes in Spanish from this source are personal translations from the original in English. (Translator’s note: This note refers to the text in Spanish. The personal translation was then translated back into English, and does not necessarily reproduce the original text word for word).

Furthermore, different activities can be undertaken in the framework of the internationalization-at-home process, such as guest professors, the creation of bilateral welcoming initiatives, and other educational activities. Internationalization at home can range from study plans to three-way interaction between local and international students and HEIs, as well as the promotion of research on international topics. Some of the activities that encourage internationalization at home are simply pedagogical tools.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the main beneficiaries of HEI internationalization are the students in general, not just those who go on exchange programs:

Internationalization at home is not a didactic objective or concept in itself, but rather a set of instruments and activities that provide international and intercultural development for all students, not just for those who have the chance to enjoy international academic mobility. (Beelen and Leask, 2011, p. 71)<sup>2</sup>

The main aspects of internationalization at home are the results of teaching-learning, pedagogy and accessibility. Internationalization at home can vary quite a bit depending on the country and the context where it unfolds. This chapter refers to the Brazilian context, Brazil being an especially extensive country where a wide range of internationalization-at-home choices and processes can be found.

One of the main concerns of Brazilian universities as a whole is the way internationalization is put into practice across the HEIs' entire structure and functioning, once some of them began to pay attention to their structure after the creation of CSF. An internationalization-at-home project necessarily depends on political interest, and also includes roles for rectors and other university leaders, as well as professors and students, the latter being the main direct beneficiaries, as pointed out above. In addition, internationalization at home is interesting not only

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2 The quotes in Spanish from this source are personal translations from the original in English. (Translator's note: This note refers to the text in Spanish. The personal translation was then translated back into English, and does not necessarily reproduce the original text word for word).

for the Brazilian universities that focus primarily on research, but also for those that engage first and foremost in teaching.

For this particular study on good practices, the internationalization at home developed by the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) was chosen. Aside from the case studies from UFRJ itself, the Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana (UNILA) and the Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPel) also took part in this study. In the case of UFRJ, the data-gathering techniques used were video-conferences and surveys; for UNILA and UFPel, they were field visits and interviews. The universities selected to participate in this study offer some examples of good practices developed in their respective institutions. All three answered the following questions in the survey.

- What is the institution's current situation regarding internationalization? Do you feel it has a low, medium or high level of internationalization? Why?
- Is there an internationalization project at your institution? If so, what is it?
- What is your institution's relationship with other Latin American countries in terms of academic agreements and student mobility?
- Does your HEI currently take part in any scholarship program for students or professors? What is it?
- Does your HEI offer courses in English at the undergraduate and graduate levels? In what disciplines? Do you feel your HEI's curriculum is internationalized?
- Does your HEI form part of any Erasmus program that is currently underway, or did it participate in any over the last five years?

## **5. Survey of good internationalization practices at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro**

Before reviewing UFRJ's good practices, we offer a brief presentation of the university. UFRJ was the first university institution created by the Federal Government, in 1920, under the name of the Universidade do Rio de Janeiro (URJ). It assumed its university project due to the emergence of



proposals at the State level for university institutions; thus, it was the first federal public university. It resulted from the merger of three traditional schools: the School of Medicine (1808), the Polytechnic School (1810) and the School of Law (1891). In 1937 it was reorganized and renamed. It is made up of fifteen schools. In 1965 it took its current name.

At UFRJ, four activities that are considered good internationalization practices can be highlighted: 1) the creation of the International Student Office (ISO) of the Chemistry Institute (CI); 2) the creation of the position of international manager, as well as the Council of International Relations (CIR); 3) the CI professors' report evaluating the experience of the CSF program at their institute; 4) and last but not least, the creation of the Interpoli, a student initiative that arose from UFRJ's Polytechnic Engineering courses for sponsoring foreign students.

### *The creation of the International Student Office of the Chemistry Institute*

Created in 2015, the ISO-CI's main purpose was to respond to the growing demand of foreign graduate students. Today, it supports both applicants to the university (at the undergraduate, graduate and post-doctorate levels) and those who have already entered the institution. ISO-CI provides information about visa-renewal procedures, housing, transportation, access to resources, among other services.

In addition, it created its own website to offer more assistance to its students, as well as a logo (visual identity) to give the project greater visibility. On the website, students can obtain information such as the organizational chart, the institute's history and memory, scope and awards, regulation and statutes, academic calendar, reports, competition, internship opportunities, and even CI staff (faculty, administrative and technical collaborators at the institute, presented by name, telephone and photograph).

*The experience of the Science Without Borders program at the Chemistry Institute, evaluated by its professors: a case study*

In spite of the numerous criticisms that exist about the CSF program, one example of a good practice was the initiative taken by the CI faculty, including course coordinators, the adjunct direction, the academic and scientific initiation advisors, the international manager, the adjunct direction and the unit direction: they took a comprehensive look at the program, with all of its imperfections, and tried to identify the best that it had to offer to students. They finally drew up a detailed report about the program. The CSF had been implemented in 2011 to promote undergraduate student exchange as a way to prepare them through international insertion, and it was practically extinct for undergraduate students in 2016.

It should be pointed out that the program was innovative because it was created especially for undergraduate students, which caused considerable resistance in the academic community. Another highly criticized point of the program was the absence, in practice, of accompaniment and advice from the program in the HEIs on the part of a committee, even though this was called for in article 4 of Decree 7642, which set up the program.

In the framework of the CSF, the CI professors helped the students choose the foreign universities where they would participate, as well as the courses to take, thus making it possible to transfer practically all the credits earned abroad. The professors studied and vigorously evaluated the course equivalences, dividing them into *mandatory* and *elective* courses. The research lab stages were also divided into *final course project* (TCC, or *monograph*) or *practice*, so that they would match the organization of the Brazilian educational system.

The professors took a flexible approach so that the exchange would not interfere with graduation and licensing, or cause frustration that might affect the students' professional development. This type of painstaking work that the CI undertook led to a detailed report on the participation of the twenty-six students from the Institute who were involved,

and made a big difference to the students' experience in comparison with the accounts of students from other academic units at UFRJ and other HEIs.

*The position of the international manager at UFRJ  
and the Council of International Relations*

The position of the international manager is essential for UFRJ's internationalization-at-home process. The international manager is an official messenger of his or her academic unit for everything related to the international area: s/he conveys information from the highest levels of the university—in this case, the Rector's Office—, and from the International Relations Directorate of the Rector's Cabinet, as well as from other promotional bodies to his/her unit; s/he clears up professors' and students' doubts regarding the establishment of international cooperation agreements related to his/her unit; and s/he receives foreign delegations that correspond to his/her unit's field of action.

In addition, in 2013 the CIR of UFRJ was created, and assigned the mission to define the university's international relations policy and devise strategies for its execution, with an eye to favoring teaching, research and outreach activities. In 2016, a reformulation of the CIR assured better representation of the different bodies that make up UFRJ, and the designation of its members became the responsibility of the vice rectors, deans and center coordinators.

The CIR looks for the best ways to deal with institutional demands related to internationalization, and to standardize solutions and proposals for the entire university. The new council is made up of representatives from the following bodies:

- International Relations Directorate;
- Vice Rector of Undergraduate Studies;
- Vice Rector of Graduate Studies;
- Vice Rector of Outreach;
- The six academic centers: Center for Philosophy and Human Sciences, Center for Technology, Center for Health Sciences, Center

- for Literature and Arts, Center for Mathematics and Nature Sciences, and Center for Legal and Economic Sciences; and
- The multi-unit course of International Relations.

The council's meetings are public and take place on the first Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the University Council (UC) meeting room.

*Interpoli: sponsoring foreign students at the university's Polytechnical School*

The Interpoli is formed by a group of students from the Polytechnic School, the Chemistry School and the Alberto Luiz Coimbra Institute of Graduate Studies and Research in Engineering (COPPE, in its initials in Portuguese). It is a non-profit organization and sponsors foreign students who come to study at the Center for Technology (CT) on academic exchange or dual-degree programs in order to enhance their experience. Its main purpose is to generate a positive image of UFRJ abroad. It has the support of a group from the Assistant International Relations Directorate for the Polytechnic School of UFRJ (DARI) to welcome the students and facilitate their integration into the university and the city of Rio de Janeiro.

There is also the Buddy Program for exchange students, created, coordinated and maintained by the Interpoli. It works as a volunteer activity and offers an experience of cultural exchange without leaving the country, whereby students from the Polytechnic School, the Chemistry School and the COPPE welcome exchange students to UFRJ and help them settle in. The buddies' job is to provide academic orientation to the newcomers, showing them where to obtain study materials; how to contact professors; where to find their schedules and classrooms; where to eat, including the university cafeterias; where to find photocopiers, study rooms and libraries. They also help the foreign students to form cultural and social networks, i.e., to make friends and to get to know Rio de Janeiro and Brazil in general. The participants show them our culture and help them to improve (or learn) the Portuguese language.

Buddies are selected on the basis of academic affinity (major, semester and creation of networks), personal affinities (interests, hobbies and personality) and language proficiency (knowing languages that the foreign students speak). Another positive factor is prior experience in volunteer projects, as well as availability to take part in the program.

## 6. Universidade Federal de Integração Latino-Americana

UNILA is a free public bilingual university, linked to, and recognized by, Brazil's Ministry of Education. It opened its doors on January 12, 2010, at its campus in the city of Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná. It is a new university (just nine years old), the youngest in the federal system, founded in response to society's interest in creating an innovative university focusing on Latin American integration. Its explicit mission is academic and civic formation for Latin American integration through regional development and cultural, scientific and educational exchange with Latin America and the Caribbean.

After a videoconference with colleagues from UNILA, who helped us greatly to obtain the detailed data presented below, we can identify two good practices at the university: a differentiated selection process that depends on the interest in the target sector, and bilingualism.

### *Selection processes*

UNILA has three different selection processes: an international selection process, a selection process for admitting refugees and humanitarian visa bearers, and a selection process for indigenous residents of Brazil and other member countries of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

The elaboration of UNILA's differentiated selection processes, with different target sectors, promotes multiculturalism and internationalization at the university.

Its most significant activity, the *international selection process*, establishes and regulates the selection process for the admission of non-Brazilian Latin American and Caribbean students. The call for admissions

is written in three languages —Portuguese, Spanish and Creole— and its dissemination is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MFR), which publishes the calls for admissions on the websites of interested embassies. This international selection process has proven to be a solid mechanism for strengthening the Portuguese language.

The *selection process for refugees and humanitarian visa bearers* is new (it was launched in 2018) and is open to candidates of any nationality who have *refugee* status or have applied for refuge or bear a humanitarian visa that is recognized in Brazil. Among the requirements, applicants must have completed secondary school, be at least eighteen years old, and have lived at least six months in the country or have a Portuguese proficiency certificate.

Another new development at UNILA is a *selection process for applicants who belong to an indigenous people*. Applicants must submit a statement specifying which indigenous community they belong to, signed by the community leaders.

Applications for the three selection processes are made electronically (online), free of charge. The modalities of the selection process are the initiative of the Vice Rectors of Undergraduate Studies, Student Assistance and Institutional and International Relations (PROINT), as well as the Rector's Office.

Since 2014, UNILA has continued to promote initiatives along these lines, such as a special call for admissions for Haitians admitted into Brazil or bearing a humanitarian visa. The spots offered were one per course, and the decision was made by the CONSUN, which has also instituted the so-called *Special Program Offering Access to Higher Education for Haitian Students* (Pro-Haiti). The CONSUN's resolution considered the situation of the Haitian refugees and the destruction of higher education in their country after the 2010 earthquake, as well as the cases of xenophobia that Haitians have encountered in Latin America.

All of these selection processes are aimed at guaranteeing the university's role as a transformative social actor in the territory. Moreover, the increase in the institution's cultural diversity accelerates the internationalization process.

## *Bilingualism*

Bilingualism, Latin American integration and interdisciplinarity constitute UNILA's *tripod*. The university aims to be a bilingual university, where Spanish and Portuguese speakers can live in harmony while preserving their language and their culture.

In recent years universities have organized seminars on bilingual education so that professors and students can reflect not only on bilingualism, but also on multilingualism and bilingual education for the 21st century.

Within the UNLA, aside from Portuguese and Spanish, Guarani can also be heard among the Paraguayan students, most of whom speak it. Thus, one UNILA's main challenges at the moment is the implementation of bilingual education in the institution, with all documents issued in Portuguese and Spanish; for this reason, a study is being done on the planning and execution of the institutional language policy to contribute to faculty formation and the planning of bilingual education at the university.

Linguistic and cultural diversity is the UNILA's guiding principle.

## *Surveys*

The surveys sent out showed that UNILA was born with a sense of internationalization, inherent to its mission of Latin American integration and supported by its creation law, which gives priority to equality between students and professors from Brazil and from the other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This *sense of internationalization* seeks to fill half of the spots with international students. Currently, UNILA has a roughly 30% proportion of international students and professors, and it is a bilingual university (Portuguese-Spanish). Nonetheless, it values multiculturalism and interdisciplinarity, and for this reason the institutional setting is diverse, with a wealth of different cultures grounded in the integration of the different nationalities present at the university.

As for an internationalization project, this actually constitutes UNILA's identity. However, as a way to systemize this inherent interna-

tional reality, the university's internationalization policy, which contains guidelines of what the university community considers fundamental for UNILA's internationalization process, is being submitted to public consultation; after that it will be taken to the CONSUN for approval.

With respect to the third question on the survey, about UNILA's relations with Latin American countries in terms of academic collaboration and student mobility, the institution answered that it has students from over twenty Latin American nationalities and is currently expanding its student body to include thirty-two nationalities from the region. Today it has 1,240 international students among its 4,069 undergraduates. It also participates in networks and mobility programs such as the Union of Latin American and Caribbean Universities (Unión de Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe, UDUAL), the Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities (GCUB), the National Association of Directors of Federal Institutions of Higher Education (ANDIFES), Paulo Freire (of the Organization of Iberoamerican States —OEI— [in its initials in Portuguese and Spanish]), and Erasmus, and has signed eighteen cooperation agreements for academic mobility with different countries.

Furthermore, UNILA currently participates in some scholarship programs for both students and professors, among them, the Academic Program for Educational Mobility (Programa Académico de Movilidad Educativa, PAME) of UDUAL, the one included in the Paulo Freire, the Erasmus scholarship and the Santander scholarship (ANDIFES). It also has a scholarship program for institutional mobility, i.e., non-Brazilian students who went through the international selection process and were admitted to UNILA can apply for student stipends from the Student Affairs Office (Prorectoría de Asuntos Estudiantiles, PRAE). It is up to the PROINT to select the recipients of these stipends, which it does by way of calls for applicants, while the PRAE is in charge of transferring the number of available spots and defining socio-economic criteria as well as criteria related to students' living expenses. The availability of spots is determined by each year's budget allocation.

UNILA does not offer courses in English: it is a Portuguese-Spanish bilingual university, i.e., courses are offered in Spanish at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in different fields. The university



wants to strengthen bilingualism more and more and intends to issue all of its documents in these two languages in the near future.

The UNILA curriculum is internationalized, with priority given to South-South cooperation. Courses are taught in Portuguese and Spanish, and the faculty is diverse.

UNILA recently joined the Erasmus Mundus program with the Euro-Brazilian Windows+ project, coordinated by the Universidade do Porto and finalized in 2017, and it currently participates in the Erasmus+ program on the KA107 project, coordinated by the Universidad de Valladolid, in Spain.

## 7. Universidade Federal de Pelotas

UFPel is located in the city of Pelotas, in Brazil's extreme south. It was founded in 1969 and has twenty-two academic units that offer ninety-six face-to-face undergraduate programs, of which sixty-six are degree programs, twenty-two offer teaching certificates and eight are technological programs; there are also three distance degree programs, all of this at 117 centers. At the graduate level, UFPel offers twenty-six PhD programs, fifty master's degree programs, six professional master's degree programs and thirty-four specializations. In terms of research, there are 2,698 projects underway, distributed in different fields of knowledge, plus thousands of outreach projects that aim to insert the university in the local community.

UFPel's Coordination of International Relations (CRInter), formerly known as the Department of Exchange and International Programs (DIPi), created in 1993 by resolution 01/1993 of the University Council, belongs to the Rector's Cabinet, serves national and foreign students interested in international mobility, is in charge of international agreements and executes the institution's international relations policies. The main purposes of this coordination are academic exchange for professors, administrative technicians and researchers, as well as all activities related to international cooperation.

### *Summer courses*

CRInter has promoted summer courses for foreign students. In early September 2018 a group of English university music students from the University of Bath Spa spent twenty days at UFPel taking classes in the music degree program at its Arts Center, learning about the history and culture of Pelotas, which is not well known abroad. This gives foreign students an idea of the country's huge social and cultural diversity.

CRInter organizes this activity in collaboration with the School of Management and Tourism, the Superior School of Physical Education, the Institute of Human Sciences, and others. At present it can be seen as a good internationalization practice in the mobility area.

### *Revalidation of diplomas earned abroad*

CRInter handles the processes for revalidating both undergraduate and graduate diplomas earned abroad, and coordinates the work of the professors who evaluate these requests. The primary working tool for revalidating diplomas earned abroad is the Carolina Bori platform.

### *Business-university cooperation and foreign companies*

UFPel has a business incubator, created a year ago, and a technology park that seeks to facilitate technology transfer. One main focus has been the transfer of biotechnological products to Uruguay and Argentina. There is also a high level of cooperation and interaction with the Instituto Pasteur of Uruguay, in the area of genomics.

### *Surveys*

Regarding the questionnaire, UFPel showed a medium level of internationalization (in terms of mobility), due to its geographical location outside of the Rio-São Paulo axis. It has attracted a good number of foreign students interested in research in epidemiology, as it has an excellent graduate program in this area.

UFPel drew up a strategic internationalization plan that prioritizes actions in the areas of research, where it is internationally renowned. This strategic plan was the basis for a project that competed and won in the so-called *CAPES-Print*, the CAPES' new funding program.

Its relations with Latin American countries in terms of academic agreements for student mobility are still incipient. UFPel does not belong to the Montevideo Group University Association (AUGM) and does not currently have a mobility scholarship program for students and professors due to financial constraints, but such a program is part of the institution's future plans.

UFPel offers courses in English only on demand. The issue of the internationalization of the curriculum has been a topic of discussion. It has also never taken part in the Erasmus programs, co-funded by the European Commission.

## 8. New directions: Institutional Internationalization Program

Brazilian institutions still have a long way to go when it comes to internationalizing their higher education. There is, however, a new effort on the part of the national government to strategically develop this process.

In late 2017, the Federal Government created the Institutional Internationalization Program (PRINT, in its initials in Portuguese), which operates with less budget than CSF but with a more strategic format, whereby universities have direct participation in the management of the resources, processes and selection of areas and international partners.

The survey results reflect the new policy. In order to participate in the PRINT selection process, it was necessary to have a formalized strategic plan, approved by the universities' governing bodies. The institutions would be competing for part of the ninety million dollars earmarked for the program over four years.

The first results have already been published. Twenty-five HEIs were selected to participate in the program. More than half of the institutions chosen are concentrated in the states of São Paulo, Rio Grande

do Sul and Minas Gerais. Along these same lines, the Southern and Southeastern regions together have 80% of the participants that were selected. Almost 70% of the participants are federal public HEIs, 8% are state institutions, and 24% are private.

The CAPES, PRINT's funding agency, decided that 70% of the resources would be invested in alliances with foreign institutions from countries that had already cooperated effectively with the CAPES. Other guidelines included the hiring of professors with internationally recognized publications and the mobility of international academics.

PRINT's main objective is to develop research networks, international cooperation and mobility for graduate students and professors, with an eye to promoting comprehensive institutional internationalization, not just undergraduate student mobility in strategic areas, which is what happened with CSF. It will certainly be an important structural tool for the internationalization process of Brazilian HEIs, and could take the country's science and education to the next level.

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## UNILA webpages of interest

Processo de seleção de latino-americanos e caribenhos, exceto brasileiros:  
[https://unila.edu.br/documentos/system/tdf/arquivos/editais/01\\_-\\_](https://unila.edu.br/documentos/system/tdf/arquivos/editais/01_-_)

edital\_01-2018\_prae-prograd-proint-regulamenta\_o\_psi\_2019\_-\_versao\_espanhol\_1.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=2298

Processo de seleção para refugiados e portadores de visto humanitário: [https://unila.edu.br/documentos/system/tdf/arquivos/editais/edital\\_n\\_01-\\_2018\\_-\\_prae-prograd-proint\\_ingles.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=2436](https://unila.edu.br/documentos/system/tdf/arquivos/editais/edital_n_01-_2018_-_prae-prograd-proint_ingles.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=2436)

Processo de seleção para povos indígenas aldeados: [https://unila.edu.br/documentos/system/tdf/arquivos/editais/02\\_-\\_edital\\_ndeg\\_02\\_-\\_2018\\_-\\_prae-prograd-proint\\_-\\_estabelece\\_e\\_regulamenta\\_o\\_processo\\_de\\_selecao\\_para\\_indigenas\\_para\\_2019\\_versao\\_espanhol.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=2461](https://unila.edu.br/documentos/system/tdf/arquivos/editais/02_-_edital_ndeg_02_-_2018_-_prae-prograd-proint_-_estabelece_e_regulamenta_o_processo_de_selecao_para_indigenas_para_2019_versao_espanhol.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=2461)

Dispõe sobre a criação da Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-America — UNILA e dá outras providências: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2007-2010/2010/lei/L12189.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2010/lei/L12189.htm)

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# BEST PRACTICES FOR UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONALIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA, FROM COLOMBIA

LUISA FERNANDA VILLAMIZAR RODRÍGUEZ

## Introduction

**T**hanks to the hard work of different actors, internationalization has gradually taken its place as a key process in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Colombia, informing more and more of their substantive functions and strengthening them across all areas. Through internationalization, the HEIs are committed to improving their institutional quality and that of their academic programs.

As a strategy to consolidate their internationalization, Colombian HEIs have grown and improved by replicating initiatives from other advanced institutions, thereby improving the entire system, or else by implementing their own programs. By taking advantage of the good internationalization practices of other institutions, in some cases, with more experience and maturity, smaller institutions, with less progress or less recognition, partner with others to contribute and collaborate from their respective level of maturity. The good practices adopted allow the institutional work to grow, the regional context to be addressed, and national linkages to be strengthened through initiatives such as internationalization at home, thematic networks and mobility programs conceived in an associative spirit.

## 1. Internationalization at home. The Europe Chair

Beelen (2012) points out that the term *internationalization at home* was coined in 1999 by Bengt Nilsson, of Sweden, when he had to deal with the fact that the newly founded University of Malmö had not yet developed an international network that could offer its students a traditional study-abroad experience. For this reason, students had to look for ways to have this experience *at home*. This sparked a growing interest in exploring and formally analyzing an idea that has led to multiple interpretations. (Prieto Martínez, Valderrama Guerra, and Allain-Muñoz, 2015, p. 107)

The need identified in the previous citation is behind the creation of the Europe Chair, “an opportunity for academic and cultural encounters between the Colombian Caribbean and the European academic world” (Universidad del Norte, s/f). This is an institutional initiative to offer internationalization at home.

Dr. Jesús Ferro Bayona, the former rector of the Universidad del Norte, wanting his institution to establish a relationship with European universities since he had studied on that continent, decided to create the Chair over twenty years ago (Díaz-Granados, 2018).

In the beginning, the Chair had a strictly academic and scientific focus, and served to generate agreements and alliances for student and faculty mobility and for joint research at the university. Subsequently, the initiative took a turn toward cultural, social, economic and political inclusion, which broadened its scope (Díaz-Granados, 2018). Thus, in time, the event began to include cultural activities such as concerts, which are presented by each year’s guest country and organized in a public space so that they are open to the public free of charge; the latest versions have played before audiences of over 3,000 people (Díaz-Granados, 2018).

Currently, the Chair manages to coordinate the participation of a range of actors, such as representatives of the private sector, government and industry, as well as the students themselves, who have discovered the multiple opportunities the university offers to take part in international activities. With these developments the Chair channels its efforts toward university-business-state collaboration.

The Chair has evolved from being a university event to one that belongs to the city. Every March, without fail, it draws over 10,000 live participants, not to mention those who follow the events by streaming (Díaz-Granados, 2018).

In the last six years, the Chair has also evolved in an academic sense: it is no longer an exclusive activity of the Universidad del Norte, as it brings together researchers to look at topics that represent priorities for the Caribbean region, but that are also being [...] analyzed [...] by other universities around the country [...]; [the researchers] compare these dynamic priorities with similar cases in Europe. It was no longer just Europeans coming over, telling us what they were doing so that this information could be shared. Now it was more of a dialogue about what was happening in both countries [Colombia and the European country], and it was not restricted to the university, so that the knowledge could circulate in a variety of contexts. (Díaz-Granados, 2018)

The Chair now aims to go from being a university initiative to becoming a major international forum on relations within the framework of international education, which would transform it into an opportunity to exchange knowledge between Europe and Latin America. In this way it would transcend its current regional scope and become a national event hosted on Colombia's Caribbean coast (Díaz-Granados, 2018), one that could complement other major events of this kind.

## 2. Thematic university networks

The thematic university networks were set up as a strategy for voluntary collaborative work among HEIs. As evidence of this, the Colombian Network for the Internationalization of Higher Education (Red Colombiana para la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior, RCI), a university network of the Colombian University Association (Asociación Colombiana de Universidades, ASCUN) founded in 1994, which carries out its work in nine regional nodes throughout Colombia and which “promotes, facilitates and strengthens internationalization as a way to improve the quality of higher education through the cooperation and collaboration of its members with society, business and the state” (Red Colombiana

para la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior, 2018), created in 2010 the Latin American and Caribbean Conference for the Internationalization of Higher Education (LACHEC), which for over nine years has developed capacities through formation in internationalization, and has served as a space for generating knowledge and promoting the latest trends in the internationalization of higher education.

LACHEC is a reference, bringing together every year an average of 500 people from Colombian and foreign HEIs. High-level academics discuss current topics of interest, under the coordination and organization of one of the nine regional nodes of the RCI and with the support of strategic allies.

In its seventh edition, in 2015, held in Villavicencio, Colombia and organized by the Orinoquía node of the RCI, LACHEC reaffirmed that it is feasible to carry out events of this kind in smaller regions and with fewer institutions, under the premise of associativity. For these regional HEIs, many of which had no experience in internationalization, the conference served as a way to network and to obtain inputs for their processes of quality recognition and institutional advancement and development.

LACHEC is also a space for collaborating with local governments, which take advantage of the occasion to promote the region's culture, cuisine and customs (Domínguez González, 2018).

The former rector of the Universidad de los Llanos, Oscar Domínguez González, stated that LACHEC

offered the chance to shine a light on the universities in Meta and eastern Colombia so that they could on the one hand respond to what was being done in the world, in Latin America, particularly with respect to internationalization, and on the other hand, demonstrate some of the local potential, and the plans they had to take up the internationalization challenge, in order to give their academic communities, made up primarily of the students and faculty of the HEIs in Meta and eastern Colombia, the opportunity to find out about all the windows available through the RCI and LACHEC and to incorporate them into their institutional development strategies. (Domínguez González, 2018)

For its part, the eighth version of LACHEC, held in 2016 in Bogota, the capital of the country and twice host, has represented “the seed of vis-

ibility in an area that has often been overlooked. Over time, it became an important event for Colombia and for international partners, as well as for the visibility of the regions” (Selsted Barrero, 2018).

It is an event with great potential and necessary for Colombia and the regions. It allows institutions without the economic resources or the administrative infrastructure to send representatives to the major higher education conferences around the world [...] to gain exposure, and those that have already developed strategies, resources and infrastructure to lend a hand to other institutions. (Selsted Barrero, 2018)

Moreover, as Prieto Martínez, Valderrama Guerra and Allain-Muñoz (2015) point out,

The RCI is without a doubt Colombia’s longest-standing effort to coordinate university internationalization, and it has kept abreast of the evolution of the entire higher education system and of the concept of *university* that has been promoted by the public and private members of ASCUN. Its impact has been especially noticeable in younger or developing universities that, through experiences of networking, have succeeded in incorporating good practices from national and international universities with a longer tradition. (p. 107)

According to some actors, the challenge is for the country to believe again in collaborative work and to organize an event with greater international projection in order to draw more countries and institutions to join and participate (Domínguez González, 2018).

### **3. Mobility for students, faculty, staff and researchers**

In order to promote academic mobility that includes the presence of all kinds of institutions, with or without institutional accreditation, from all the regions of the country, ASCUN created its mobility programs. ASCUN’s associative spirit has allowed its member institutions to expand their internationalization; some of them have had their first international mobility experiences within this framework.

Programs such as Colombia-Argentina Academic Mobility (MACA), the Brazil-Colombia Exchange Program (BRACOL), Mexico-Colombia Academic Mobility (MACMEX), and more recently the Latin American Exchange Program (PILA), a trilateral program joining Colombia with Mexico and Argentina that intends to involve more countries, seek to support the HEIs' efforts to give their students, faculty, staff and researchers access to international cultural diversity and the kind of learning that comes from knowing the world.

These programs have had a positive impact on the emergence of other kinds of international academic and scientific cooperation, participation in international networks, the attraction of more international students, the signing of new international agreements, the appreciation of cultural diversity, curricular flexibility, the development of joint projects, and an increase in mobility numbers — which also applies as an internationalization factor for institutional quality accreditation.

ASCUN's mobility programs are based on the association's recognition and the trust it has earned after years of work with international partners, leading to framework or umbrella agreements that are then available to numerous HEIs who see these programs as a support for their institutional consolidation.

The mutual recognition of studies, the shared benefits and costs, the reciprocity, and the elimination of bilateral agreements, which speeds up internal administrative processes, are some of the benefits and virtues of these programs:

We found an easy formula for understanding, for operating, with the fundamental element of reciprocity, without having to undertake a one-on-one process for each university, but rather dealing through the associations, primarily the [National Interuniversity Council] CIN of Argentina, then the [Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities] GCUB in Brazil, and the [National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education] ANUIES in Mexico [...]. In other mobilities, [the institutions] have learned from this formula, which has made it possible to promote this initiative. If we managed to bring in other actors, we could dynamize this movement even more. What we have been seeing is that we can move from the bilateral to the multilateral in the latest program that was implemented with Mexico and Argentina, which is a reference for Latin America and for what is being proposed with ENLACES, which is the Latin American and Caribbean space

for higher education, where national university associations play a transcendental role [...], and it seems to me that up to now the bilateral and trilateral meetings have shown that if we had better public policies in this regard, these efforts could multiply and we could have much better numbers. The advantages of academic mobility have been clearly laid out, but in the future we could look at the quality of this mobility, not just academic tourism. There are elements that suggest that there will be several types of mobility, some that have little impact and others whose quality ends up affecting the institutions, their university community, their pedagogical methods, their faculty, even their own vision of the institution. (Forero Robayo, 2018)

From 2013 to the present day, over 2000 students, both inbound and outbound, have been mobilized under the aegis of ASCUN's mobility programs, which have been considered a successful model, so much so that other regions and associations around the world wish to replicate the initiative or else work with the association in this area. The aim is to strengthen the regional work even more and show the strengths of associative work in Latin America.

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# BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND PROJECTS AT THE UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA AND THE INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO DE COSTA RICA

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## Introduction

**T**he internationalization of higher education is a response from the university sector to the globalization process. It is defined as a process of comprehensive institutional transformation aimed at incorporating the international and intercultural dimension into the mission and substantive functions of higher education institutions (HEIs), in such a way that it becomes inseparable from their identity and culture. Internationalization should be seen as an institutional opening to the outside and an integral part of HEIs' developing plans, strategic planning and general policies (Gacel-Ávila, 1999).

One of the problems generated by the proposal of the project known as the Regional Network for the Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America (Red Regional para el fomento de la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América Latina, RIESAL) has to do with the limited professionalization of the international relations offices (IROs) in Latin American HEIs, "which are generally characterized by a deficient application of internationalization

strategies and a lack of culture in managing projects aimed at undertaking international actions” (Universidad de Guadalajara, 2016, p. 61).

When it is undertaken, international cooperation at HEIs opens the door for specialized assistance in curricular revision; program design; participation in international research and teaching networks; joint research and cooperative development projects; attendance at international conferences; mobility of guest professors, faculty, and researchers for doctoral and post-doctoral stays; mobility of students and administrative staff; the organization of international events; cooperation for innovation; and the exchange of good practices for institutional consolidation.

As Gacel-Ávila (2000) contends, the initial objective of the internationalization process is to design and implement an internationalizing policy centered on institutional interest, implemented through a structure that ensures professionalism, institutionality, and sustainability.

The following section presents the experiences and good practices of the Universidad de La Habana (UH): the Office of International Projects (OIP), which is under the Directorate of International Relations (DIR); and the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica (TEC): the Directorate of Cooperation (DCI/TEC).

## 1. Universidad de La Habana

UH, founded in 1728, is Cuba’s oldest center of higher education. It has twenty-eight schools, fourteen research centers and two higher institutes, where over 400 research projects are carried out, aimed at solving problems at the institution and in the country.

At UH, the management of international cooperation is aligned with national and institutional scientific policy, and has generated tangible, high-impact results in terms of raising the quality of the institution’s substantive functions and economic-financial management, and improving its infrastructure, which has in turn enhanced UH’s social relevance. For this reason, it is important to explain how international cooperation is managed in the OIP, as well as the experiences and good practices in this area.

## *Managing international projects*

In accordance with UNESCO policies for higher education, and for the purpose of promoting and sustainably developing a culture of international cooperation management, UH created its OIP.

The purpose of UH's OIP is to strengthen institutional capacity by creating a structure to effectively manage international cooperation as a key element of the internationalization process, and its mission is to enhance the management of the knowledge and the resources generated by international cooperation in order to support the growth and development of UH's substantive processes and contribute to its international visibility.

Figure 1  
The OIP's organizational chart



Source: authors' own elaboration.

The OIP has the following general functions:

- It offers methodological orientation and advice to the different university areas in the management of international cooperation and international projects. This support includes looking for sources of funding and partners, writing proposals and reviewing projects to ensure that they comply with the mechanisms stipulated by the country and the requirements of the funding agencies.

- It advises the areas in the elaboration of their respective project portfolios, in close coordination with the Office of the Vice Rector for Research and Graduate Studies and the central areas.
- It designs, coordinates and teaches courses and training sessions on international cooperation and international project management for professionals, professors and researchers; it also sets up training sessions with international experts.
- It facilitates integration and cooperation with other institutions of the Ministry of Higher Education (Ministerio de Educación Superior, MES), companies and national organizations, with an integrationist approach.
- It elaborates the project portfolio for strengthening institutional infrastructure.
- It uses the internet and the office's website to communicate information for professors, researchers and university officials to participate in international calls for projects and other cooperation actions.
- It promotes the creation of ad hoc commissions to identify, follow up and execute international projects with the actors involved in managing them.

Fostering a sustainable organizational culture for managing international projects involves creating and implementing norms and procedures to govern the activities; organizing training sessions; managing the project cycle properly; managing opportunities and looking for partners; advising on methodology; identifying and integrating projects that align with institutional and national priorities; optimizing human, financial and infrastructure resources; and implementing agile, effective processes.

*Good practices in the process of managing international projects at Universidad de La Habana*

- Horizontal coordination and communication have been enhanced among the internal actors involved in managing international projects, which contributes to management efficiency and effectiveness.

- Links have been created between professors and researchers, transcending the boundaries of projects and laying the groundwork for future cooperation projects with the participation of production and service businesses, organizations and entities, which guarantees their sustainability and social impact.
- The university leadership's decisive and growing support for the management of the activities, including the promotion of rehabilitation actions, justifies the institutional and management viability of each international cooperation initiative.
- The participatory and integrating approach, which includes the participation of different internal and external actors, has been a key to the process of managing the phases of the international cooperation project cycle.
- The sustained, growing training process has built skills and established practices that lay the foundation for managing and participating in different modalities of international cooperation projects; it has also fostered a culture of international project management and catalyzed other international initiatives.
- The creation of a Center of International Cooperation Expenses, along with a bank account in the International Financial Bank (Banco Financiero Internacional) to manage the funds, serves to facilitate, control and make feasible the financial economic management of the resources earmarked for international cooperation.
- The synergies established between researchers and actors in the production and service sectors have made it possible to make use of the research results, turn science into products and extend the international projects' scope of action so that they benefit society directly.
- The involvement of key stakeholders in the projects ensures sustainability and the fulfillment of the commitments established in each one.
- The design of the office's website features links to the main sources of cooperation funding, and for the first time incorporates an International Cooperation Opportunity Observatory to enhance their management.

- The specification of norms and procedures for managing international projects at UH allows the academic, scientific and support communities to understand the process of managing the international project cycle.
- The organization of the first International Cooperation Seminar, with the participation of the diplomatic corps of potential donor countries accredited in Cuba —including United Nations agencies and members of the European Union— served to publicize UH's potential and encourage exchanges between actors.
- The sustained and growing program of seminars, workshops and courses with national and international experts for UH professors, researchers and senior authorities has succeeded in driving a considerable increase in the number of approved projects.

*Impact of the newly-introduced good practices on the process of managing international cooperation projects at the Universidad de La Habana*

- Establishment of good working relations with the agencies of the central state administration.
- Increase in the number of projects and of other internationalization indicators.
- Acquisition of high-tech equipment to update lab infrastructure for teaching, research, and services to third parties, including Cuban universities.
- Increase in knowledge for internal use and for sharing with other institutions in the system regarding best practices for managing international cooperation and the project cycle.
- Impact on all university processes: undergraduate and graduate formation, research, innovation and extension, which contribute to the country's development in all sectors of production and services.
- Assimilation of new technologies and tools by professors and researchers, which contributes to their doctoral and post-doctoral formation through the transfer of technologies and knowledge.

- Guaranteed multiplier effect with the participation of other HEIs from the MES system.
- Design of joint programs for earning scientific degrees.
- Multi-disciplinary integration, teamwork and participation of member schools and centers in the institution's academic and scientific networks.
- Incorporation of research, development and innovation (R+D+I) project management and execution with the participation of companies and organizations from the province of Havana and the rest of the country.

## 2. Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica

TEC is a public HEI founded in 1971, devoted to teaching, research and extension of technology and the related sciences. It is located in the city of Cartago, Costa Rica. It has regional campuses in the cities of San Carlos, San José and Limón, in the same country. It is also, together with other public universities, part of the inter-university campus of Alajuela.

TEC considers research to be a fundamental activity of its institutional mission and of academic development, with teaching and extension integrated and connected through scientific-technological creation, management, transfer and production.

TEC's Office of the Dean of Research and Extension (Vicerrectoría de Investigación y Extensión, VIE) is in charge of creating the conditions for students and professors to generate, adapt and validate scientific knowledge, propose technological developments and intervene in the country's different economic, social and productive systems, always by transferring science and technology together with a clear understanding of, and commitment to, development. For this, the VIE works through its four areas: the Directorate of Research and Extension Projects, the Directorate of Cooperation (DC), the University-Business Collaboration Center, and the Technological Publisher.

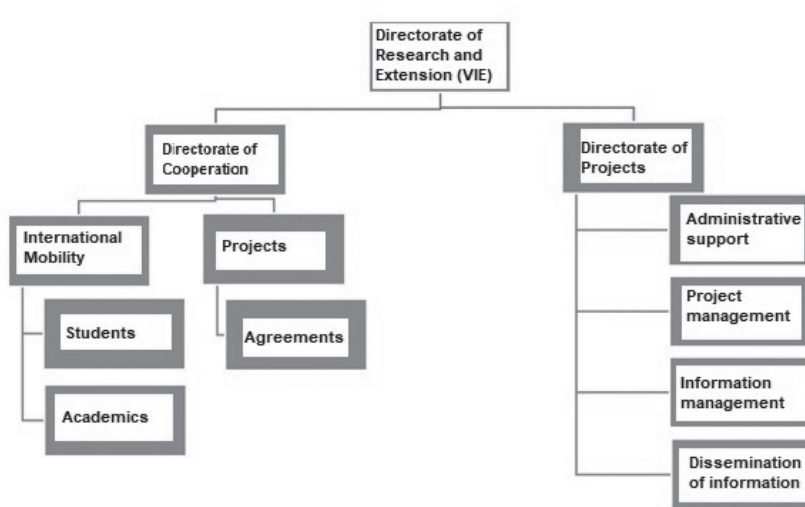
Among the DC's main tasks are the establishment of collaboration relations at the national and international levels to support academic and



student mobility programs, international programs, donations, agreements, international projects and international networks.

The directorate of projects of TEC’s VIE works closely with the DC and is charged with promoting and facilitating research and scientific and technological knowledge transfer that will contribute to the institution’s academic consolidation and its ongoing ties to the productive sector and the national and international communities, with the ultimate objective of furthering the country’s comprehensive development.

Figure 2  
Organizational chart of the VIE



Source: authors’ own elaboration.

TEC’s DC is in charge of developing and coordinating networks of international contacts to provide schools and departments with technical support related to international cooperation. In this way, it becomes the official channel connecting the institution with the ministers of Foreign Relations and of National Planning and Economic Policy, as well as with the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners, the different embassies, and international organizations.

It is important to present TEC's experiences and good practices in the field of international cooperation management, with specific reference to international projects.

*The management of international projects at the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica*

As the office in charge of managing international projects, TEC's DC has a professionalized team that offers support to the institute's academic and administrative departments for the submission of proposals, the formulation of projects, the identification of partners, and administrative management. It also helps with the identification of funding sources and the preparation of the documents that international organizations require.

The main projects it helps with are those that receive funding from international organizations, institutions and companies, both research projects and student, academic and capacity-building mobility initiatives, together with South-South and Triangular Cooperation projects, channeled through Costa Rica's Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Religious Affairs.

The office also offers support to the institutional schools and departments with the administrative management of certain international projects that require it, but the management of the resources themselves is up to the departments and schools according to their institutional regulations and the provisions of the funding sources that support, with excellence and relevance, Costa Rica's development processes. The main sources of funding come from Chile, Italy, Argentina, Mexico, Spain, France, Germany, the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank. In this way, the DC accompanies the country in its transition from a society based on the economics of primary extraction of its natural resources to one driven by knowledge and innovation in its strategy of sustainable human development.

The Directorate of Research and Extension Projects (Directorate of Projects), for its part, is in charge of managing national projects linked to the needs of Costa Rica, for the purpose of maximizing their impact

on the economic, social and environmental dimensions so that they can attract both national and international funding in addition to universities' funding of scientific, technological and innovation activities. The directorate includes interdisciplinary groups that focus on applied problem-solving research.

Administrative management follows a *Procedures Manual for Presenting International Projects*, a *Guide for the Internal Management of the TEC's Research and Extension* (for research and extension projects with an international component), and the *Bases for Participating in International Calls for Research*.

The Directorate of Projects offers accompaniment in the process of submitting and evaluating proposals, managing the documentation required by researchers for managing the project cycle, and submitting proposals for incorporation into international networks based on participation in international projects or other initiatives at the worldwide level.

### *Good practices in the process of managing international projects at the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica*

- The DC has succeeded in enhancing horizontal coordination and communication with the ministries of the Government of Costa Rica, foreign universities, the different embassies and international organizations with respect to international cooperation.
- The sustained and bottom-up training of the DC's international relations professionals has generated skills and established practices that lay the groundwork for managing, developing, coordinating and participating in different modalities of international cooperation projects.
- The creation of Fundatec, a center offering administrative support for submitting financial reports on specific cooperation projects undertaken with the backing of international financing and fund-management organizations, has facilitated the financial economic management of the resources allocated through international cooperation.

- The increase in international mobility at TEC has fostered the undergraduate and graduate formation process, research and extension, all of which are aspects that are closely linked to Costa Rica's needs, as mentioned before, for the purpose of maximizing their impact on three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

### *Lessons learned*

- The concept of *internationalization* should no longer be seen as the organization of international activities. HEIs should have solid internationalization and international cooperation policies and strategies.
- HEIs that have identified international cooperation as a key element of the internationalization process, that have designed policies and strategies and created structures to promote internationalization, are already showing better results than those that continue to work within obsolete formats and structures that are more about international relations activities.
- The experiences of UH and TEC demonstrate that it is essential to have highly professionalized teams to take care of key processes such as managing internationalization and international cooperation with an eye to science, technology and innovation, using a participatory, integrating approach.
- Team work is key. The support of university authorities in managing activities ensures the institutional and management feasibility of each international cooperation action.

### **Conclusions**

In order to implement international cooperation as a coherent and feasible policy of institutional development, it is necessary to cultivate the capacities and professionalization of the international cooperation management structures.

The management of international cooperation at UH and TEC has enhanced the management of knowledge and the resources that are

offered, has contributed to the institutions' international visibility, has impacted their substantive activities and institutional consolidation, and has made it possible to attain strategic objectives. Both institutions have come to appreciate the importance of strengthening ties between professors and researchers as a key element for laying the foundation for the future development of international projects with the participation of businesses that support processes in Cuba and Costa Rica.

UH's OIP and TEC's DC, created with an eye to multidisciplinary integration with the participation of the universities' schools, research centers and support areas, guarantee ongoing growth of the results achieved with the mechanisms for managing internationalization processes and international cooperation at the universities examined in this chapter.

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# UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO: PROMOTING LATIN AMERICAN BIODIVERSITY

ALMA SOFÍA CASTRO LARA

## Introduction

Close to 1,000 foreign students do academic or research stays every year at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ), in Ecuador, which makes it one of the Latin American institutions that receive the most international students.

Its Directorate of International Programs has played an important role not only in the exponential growth and consolidation abroad of its international programs in recent years, but also in the documentation and development of processes that guarantee their high quality, backed by the strengths of the teaching and research faculty both at the university and in the country at large.

In this sense, *biodiversity* has been one of the threads running through the institution's internationalization and research programs, as shown by its campuses on the Galapagos Islands, known as the *Galápagos Academic Institute of the Arts and Science (GAIAS)*; the research center on the same island (GSC), operated in collaboration with the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and the Típutini Biodiversity Station (TBS), located in Ecuador's Amazon region. At these centers, international students can take short courses, do research stays and even take complete academic semesters.



## 1. Background

Since its creation, USFQ has been known for breaking the molds of teaching by developing curricular programs based on the liberal arts, offering its student high-quality education with North American standards. The success of this Ecuadorean higher education institution (HEI) is rooted in the importance it has given to internationalization since day one.

In 1988, Santiago Gangotena, together with Carlos Montafur and Bruce Hoeneisen —three physicists educated in the United States— made good on their dream of bringing the North American university model to Ecuador by founding USFQ. Consequently, from its beginnings the institution has been known for its ties to U.S. universities, as evidenced by the signing of three international agreements with universities from that country during its first year of existence.

USFQ, currently made up of ten colleges that offer forty-two undergraduate programs, fifty-seven sub-specializations and twenty-five graduate programs (master's degrees and PhDs), offers over 3,100 courses —20% of which are taught in English— to more than 9,000 students each semester, with the support of over 460 full-time professors —280 of whom have a PhD— and 300 part-time professors. Its main campus is located in Cumbayá (Quito), and it also has the GAIAS and the TBS, both mentioned earlier.

## 2. International programs

USFQ offers students and international partners two inbound mobility modalities: an academic semester, which can be done at the Cumbayá campus or at GAIAS, and personalized courses, which are custom designed to meet the partner's academic and logistical needs. Furthermore, students who wish to do research can do it at the GSC.

USFQ's international programs are administered from the corresponding directorate, which has created a sustainable business model by which significant resources are managed for research and carrying out institutional initiatives. There are currently active agreements with

144 universities abroad, 53% are with North American universities and 28% with European universities.

Through the different programs offered, USFQ has succeeded in mobilizing to Ecuador almost 3,440 international students since 2014, 90% of whom came from U.S. universities (Sáenz, 2018). In 2017 alone, the university received 904 international students, 330 of whom studied in one of the twenty-nine personalized programs designed by the Directorate of International Programs for its international partners; the other students did academic semesters at the Cumbayá campus or at GAIAS (Universidad San Francisco de Quito, 2018).

The students who do an academic semester in Cumbayá can choose classes from the university's different colleges, and also have the opportunity to live with host families, who are carefully vetted and monitored by the Directorate of International Programs. This housing meets certain specifications, such as not being more than two bus rides away from the main campus. Student and landlord also jointly sign a document in which the parties agree to certain conditions.

The Directorate organizes ongoing orientations during the semester, i.e., induction does not take place only on the first day of classes, as is traditional. Meetings are held at least three times per semester so that students can discuss their concerns and problems, which keeps an channel of communication open between them and the directorate's administrative personnel.

In addition, there are activities to integrate the visiting students into the university community, such as the Global Dragons group, where Ecuadorian students participate in weekend activities with foreign students under close supervision by the Directorate, and the twenty-five student clubs active at the university. Students also have the option of taking trips to the Galapagos and to Tiputini (Velasco, 2018).

In the Galapagos, courses are offered in English on subjects related to biology and social sciences (specifically, marine ecology; evolution, ecology and conservation; people, politics and the environment; and sustainable tourism). The academic semester at GAIAS starts with a module at the main campus in Cumbayá, and students are required to take a class in conversational Spanish. Students participating in this program

are also offered a home-stay option, both in Cumbayá and on the island. Moreover, two blended-learning undergraduate programs are offered, plus an English program for island residents.

With respect to personalized programs, the directorate offers global learning programs, which take care of both the logistical and the academic details. USFQ offers its partners programs on topics related to Spanish language learning, Ecuadorian history and politics, ecology and conservation, sustainable business and tourism, marine biology, among others. These programs last between one and eight weeks and are taught exclusively by USFQ professors or jointly with professors from the visiting institution. Most of these programs are offered at GAIAS, which is why both academic and logistical costs are considered, always with the objective of ensuring that the objectives of the academic experience are met. This is achieved through ongoing communication with the partner and the existence of a wide range options when it comes to transportation, housing and program topics.

In the past, the personalized programs and the semester programs were managed in two different areas of the university, which entailed a duplication of roles. Recently, operations were redesigned to set up a completely horizontal structure to take care of specific tasks on the existing program offerings. The directorate also has two people in the Galapagos to support internationalization operations.

Aside from this restructuring, the process flow within the directorate was analyzed to determine workloads, peak periods for applications and international students, and the existence of process leaders; subsequently, committees were created to deal with key topics such as housing and security, among others. All of this has led to process standardization and the documentation of specific special cases to serve as a guide for future situations (Velasco, 2018).

### **3. Key factors for success**

Different factors have contributed to USFQ's success and recognition as a destination for academic experiences in Latin America. One of the most

important has been the links with foreign universities that the institution has had since its founding, especially with North American universities, which have been cultivated and intensified by different actors in the university community. It is not only the team in the Directorate of International Programs that has made efforts to start, maintain and consolidate relations with international strategic partners; the university's faculty and authorities have also taken initiative in this area thanks to the entrepreneurial values that are encouraged on campus (Montufar, 2018).

The university's philosophy has been a key factor: the spirit of liberal arts is felt both in the campus's physical structure and in the classroom, where professors and students interact as equals, with formalisms and titles left aside. Furthermore, most of the professors hired by the university have done graduate studies in the United States, which is used as a guarantee of academic classroom experience (Montufar, 2018).

Finally, the identification and utilization of the cultural and biological strengths that the territory offers have proven decisive in developing projects and programs that contribute to the internationalization of USFQ. The academic and research opportunities of GAIAS, GSC and TBS are unique in Latin America, and together with the attention to detail in each of the programs offered, they make the university an ideal partner for any foreign university looking for an academic experience with guaranteed quality.

#### 4. Future challenges

Carlos Montufar, USFQ's Rector, identifies one of the institution's most important future challenges as safeguarding the university's spirit over time, not only because it has been a key factor in the institution's success, but also because as the university grows and its founders turn its substantive functions over to new generations, it runs the risk of losing its most valuable intangible asset (Montufar, 2018).

From the Directorate of International Programs, Alexandra Velasco identifies the challenge of moving beyond student mobility programs toward joint academic and research projects with more foreign univer-

sities, as well as consolidating the documentation of faculty mobility, which has happened organically. In addition, it is important to seek opportunities for PhD studies for professors and funds to finance the university's research (Velasco, 2018).

Within the framework of international programs, the main challenge is to follow up on the foreign students to measure cultural perceptions before and after their stay at USFQ. Other challenges include developing joint programs with other universities abroad, cultivating relations especially with Latin America; overcoming the current imbalance of spaces with the U.S. universities by looking for a way to make use of the spaces that are available there; and starting up a recruitment strategy in countries like India, China and Pakistan, which have a high flow of outbound students to whom USFQ could offer the experience and quality of a U.S. university at a lower cost.

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# STRATEGIC PROJECTION OF UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONALIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

ODORICO MORA CARREÓN  
FRANCISCO JAVIER RICO BÁEZ

## Introduction

**D**uring the visit to the Republic of El Salvador from October 22 to 25, 2018, the research instrument developed by the Regional Network for the Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America (Red Regional para el fomento de la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América Latina, RIESAL) was applied to universities in this Central American country, for the purpose of learning about the good internationalization practices that have been implemented there.

On this basis, we present an analysis of the internationalization process undertaken by three outstanding universities in El Salvador: the Universidad Evangélica de El Salvador (UEES), the Universidad de El Salvador and the Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador (UTECS), highlighting the strengths and weaknesses they have had to deal with, in order to come up with a general balance of the state of the foreign academic mobility process. In section four, we present a set of cases from the Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador, the Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña and the Universidad Don Bosco.



## 1. Universidad Evangélica de El Salvador

UEES, registered as a *private non-profit public-service corporation*, was founded in San Salvador in 1981. It identifies with a Christian ideology and has a current enrollment of roughly 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

Within its institutional structure, UEES has a Directorate of International Relations and Cooperation for executing its internationalization strategy. The Director is Patricia del Morán, and it has implemented practices such as international student exchange, both inbound and outbound; collaboration on international research projects; the management of opportunities of student and faculty mobility; visits by foreign academics/experts to the university; as well as foreign language teaching as part of the curriculum (in some programs only) and internationalization at home.

As part of its strategies for strengthening internationalization, UEES's Directorate of International Relations and Cooperation has undertaken activities such as offering distance or online programs abroad, offering short-term language programs for international students, promoting and attracting international undergraduate students, and designing and implementing international training and development projects.

UEES's internationalization strategy contains eight lines of action: 1) internationalization at home, 2) academic mobility, 3) internationalization of the curriculum, 4) internationalization of research, 5) accreditation of degree programs at the international level, 6) interconnection of university networks and associations, 7) joint publications with other universities at the international level, 8) management and implementation of educational projects with the support of international cooperation.

*LASALUS project as an academic program in collaboration with Erasmus+ to encourage graduate mobility*

With respect to the ideas set forth above, UEES participates as a partner university in the LASALUS project, co-funded by Erasmus+. As an example of good practices in internationalization activities, the project

“is aimed at developing a graduate curriculum in the ‘distance’ modality in the area of Health Organization Management for Latin America” (LASALUS, 2016). In coordination with other higher education institutions (HEIs) from Latin America that are participating in LASALUS, UEES is currently implementing the first phases of the project, which will last for three years.

The project is being directed by PhD Tomás Figueroa and falls under the university’s Academic Dean’s Office, with an internal team that includes representation from the Office of the Dean of Research and Social Projection, the Technology and Information Office, the Financial Office, the Medical School, the Dental School, the Graduate School, the Directorate of Virtual Education and the Directorate of Planning and Curricular Evaluation.

César Quinteros, the Rector of UEES, attended the official meeting where the project was launched in Brussels, Belgium, in January 2016. For their part, Mario Parrillas, UEES’s general manager, and Figueroa participated in the working meeting held in Argentina in February 2016.

Furthermore, within the framework of the work package focused on the transfer of good practices from Europe to Latin America, from June 27 to July 15, 2016, the LASALUS work team engaged in a comprehensive internship at the campuses of three European universities that are project partners, reporting the following results:

- Universidad Pública de Navarra (UPNa), in Pamplona, Spain. At the working table at the UPNa, discussions and talks were held on e-learning ecosystems, their uses and potential, the guidelines for content design, their quality framework, as well as the requirements for virtual monitoring, in which special attention must be paid to the analysis of modern multimedia tools used in distance education.
- L’Ecole des Hautes Études en Santé Publique (EHESP), in Rennes, France. During their stay at this institution, the project team learned about its unique and widely recognized experience in specialized areas of forming high-quality health promoters. The representatives of the LASALUS HEIs had the chance to access case studies and specific teaching methods on key topics of health management. Academic leaders from the EHESP demonstrated the Elipce application, a

collection of tools for constructing and analyzing core indicators of health organizations, a key information instrument for contributing to the optimization of health institutions' performance, as well as other simulation tools applied to the purchasing process of a health organization.

- L'Università degli Studi di Pavia (UNIPV) and the Consorzio di Bioingegneria e Informatica Médica (CBIM), in Pavia, Italy. UNIPV presented a project that is currently underway at the Università di Bologna: Simulempresa. Under the system of *learning by doing*, students participate in a simulated business, with different assigned tasks and responsibilities and different work instruments. In these cases, the professor acts as a consultant and students set qualitative and quantitative objectives. UNIPV also presented the Senior Ludens project, an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) platform that helps with *smart aging*, integrating cognitive evaluation tests and games in a 3D environment and including memory and attention-based tasks, among others. Of special interest was the presentation about the development of *second-life* platforms, along with an exhibition of the Network Regioni project, a performance assessment system applied to the Tuscany region based on 160 indicators linked to the assessment of the state of the population's health, the ability to achieve regional strategies, financial-economic assessment and operating efficiency. This internship allowed participants to learn good practices that have emerged in Europe in the application of the distance education paradigm, and to examine pedagogical methods used to develop professional competencies for teaching and learning public health and its management, which helps to generate the conditions to develop distance education programs for Latin American graduate programs in the management of healthcare service providers.

In spite of the efforts made by UEES, obstacles remain to the institution's internationalization, some from outside the university: limited public/private funding for supporting internationalization; the language barrier; the fact that internationalization is not a high-priority national policy;

and the lack of uniformity in graduate studies, which is required in order to transfer academic credits and make the most of the international student mobility agreements that are already in place.

Inside the university, the main obstacle is the lack of institutional resources, which makes it hard to promote international programs.

**Table 1**  
Good internationalization practices identified at UEEES

Good practices identified	Mobility for academics and researchers. Collaborative academic programs. Internationalization of research.
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Source: authors' own elaboration.

## 2. Universidad de El Salvador

Located in the nation's capital, the Universidad de El Salvador is the only public university as well as the largest university in the country, with over 60,000 students enrolled at the undergraduate and graduate levels. As part of its institutional structure, it has the Secretariat of National and International Relations, coordinated by Néstor Hernández with the support of Andrea Marcela Recinos Orellana. With the support of four technicians, a legal advisor, an assistant and a head of general services, plus two or three interns, the Secretariat works to foster the internationalization of the academic institution.

The internationalization practices implemented at the Universidad de El Salvador include international student exchanges, collaboration on international research projects, mobility opportunities for students and faculty, the development of joint and dual-degree programs with partner HEIs, visits to the university by foreign academics/experts, and the teaching of a foreign language as part of the curriculum (only in certain degree programs).

*The CELAC-UE Academic and Knowledge Summit  
as part of cooperation for development*

To strengthen internationalization, the Salvadoran HEI has staked its hopes on the design and implementation of international training and development projects, such as receiving the academic community, universities and other higher education and research institutions within the framework of the CELAC-UE Academic and Knowledge Summit, which itself forms part of the agenda of the preliminary activities of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit of Heads of State and Government of the countries of the Community of States of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union (CELAC-UE). Both summits are committed to achieving more prosperous, cohesive, integrative and sustainable societies, for the sake of our peoples and future generations.

One of the main objectives of the academic summit was to contribute to the construction of a common Euro-Latin American and Caribbean space for higher education, science, technology and innovation, through the generation and management of knowledge, integration, and strategic bi-regional cooperation. The meeting focused on the good practice of cooperation for development.

Other objectives were to design strategies and instruments to create a common bi-regional space and exchange knowledge; to influence the formulation of public policies and national plans and programs through the creation of spaces for discussion; to make science-based proposals; to build bridges between academia and the surrounding world; and to point academic initiatives and knowledge generation in the direction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda.

Education, science, technology and innovation constitute a relevant portion of the priorities and objectives of the strategic bi-regional partnership between Latin America/the Caribbean and the European Union. In working toward them, universities play an important role, which is why the CELAC-UE summits, as well as the bi-regional cooperation mechanisms and actions that result from them, represent a framework for advancing measures that will favor public policies governing knowledge generation and collaboration between academic institutions.

Furthermore, the CELAC-UE summit set forth the importance of building a more prosperous, fair and supportive society, with a model of sustainable comprehensive human development, a goal that must be taken up by all countries and global society as a whole in accordance with the 2030 Agenda and the initiatives undertaken to meet the SDGs, which are meant to be a fundamental priority of Governments and of higher education, science, technology and innovation.

In short, European and Latin American/Caribbean institutions of higher education, science, technology and innovation have different degrees of academic consolidation and integration, which means that creating a bi-regional space will entail differentiated collaboration efforts guided by the principles of solidarity, cooperation and complementarity.

All of this, within the framework of the CELAS-UE summit, has caused organizations and representatives of different countries to turn their gaze toward El Salvador and to create new relationships, which in turn has served to strengthen the leadership of the rector of the Universidad de El Salvador and the institution's international image, especially because of the role it played in the preparation of the *El Salvador Declaration*, which contributed to the development of international co-publications as a good internationalization practice.

Unfortunately, the efforts made by the Universidad de El Salvador have been undermined by problems such as the limited public and private funds earmarked for supporting internationalization, the difficulty in transferring credits or recognition from their study programs, the language barrier, and the lack of institutional resources, all of which restrict the university's ability to project itself internationally.

**Table 2**  
Good internationalization practices identified  
at the Universidad de El Salvador

Good practices identified	Cooperation for development. International co-publications.
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Source: authors' own elaboration.

### 3. Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador

#### *Student mobility and the internationalization of research as first steps toward internationalization*

With its campus in the country's capital, UTEC has an enrollment of approximately 2,400 undergraduate and graduate students, who can have access to international exchange scholarships to complete their studies thanks to the bilateral international mobility program developed in the International Relations Office under the direction of PhD Blanca Ruth Orantes. In addition, UTEC works on writing international research project proposals, organizing visits by foreign academics and experts to the university, and setting up internationalization-at-home activities and foreign language instruction (in some programs).

The partners with which UTEC has collaboration agreements include universities in Europe, the United States, South Korea and South American countries, which propose different programs offering full or partial scholarships aimed at attracting international undergraduate students, designing and implementing international training projects, offering distance and online programs to the international community, and promoting short-term language programs for international students.

The process for awarding scholarships is carried out by each country and each institution, with an eye to benefiting all sectors. UTEC's entire student body is considered, as well as students from other HEIs, with aspects such as economic vulnerability, social vulnerability and exclusion taken into account.

Unfortunately, there have been obstacles to the promotion of outbound student mobility, such as limited public or private funds allocated for internationalization, language barriers, together with a lack of interest on the part of eligible HEIs in the programs that are offered in the country and the low priority given to internationalization in national policy.

Nevertheless, UTEC has set out to overcome these obstacles, and has managed to intervene in approximately fifty-five scholarship processes. The numbers have been increasing since 2012, according to information provided by Orantes, who also contends that student exchange is an

*anchor* in the students' academic, professional and personal life, because it contributes to the formation of professionals who are committed to their country's development, an aspect that young people should consider when they choose where to study.

**Table 3**  
Good internationalization practices identified at UTEC

Good practices identified	Student mobility. Internationalization of research.
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Source: authors' own elaboration.

#### 4. Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador, Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña and Universidad Don Bosco

With respect to the Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador, the Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña and the Universidad Don Bosco, surveys were applied to find out about their application of good internationalization practices and the status of their international departments. The results are listed below.

##### *Enrollment (number of undergraduate and graduate students)*

- Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador: 5,500.
- Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña: no information.
- Universidad Don Bosco: 9,659.

##### *Internationalization practices implemented*

- Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador: student mobility programs and the development of joint and dual-degree programs with partner HEIs.
- Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña: international student exchanges and the attraction of international students to the institution, col-



laboration on international research projects, student and faculty mobility opportunities, visits by foreign academics/experts to the university, and internationalization at home.

- Universidad Don Bosco: international student exchanges and the attraction of international students to the institution, collaboration on international research projects, student and faculty mobility opportunities, the development of joint and dual-degree programs with partner HEIs, visits by foreign academics/experts to the university, foreign language instruction as part of the curriculum, and promotion and enrollment of international undergraduate students.

#### *Activities carried out to strengthen internationalization*

- Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador: distance or online programs from abroad available for students.
- Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña: promotion and enrollment of international undergraduate students.
- Universidad Don Bosco: promotion and enrollment of international undergraduate students, design and implementation of international training and development projects, distance or online programs from abroad available for students, and access to the international network of Salesian HEIs.

#### *External obstacles to the internationalization of the institution*

- Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador: limited public and private funds to support internationalization, problems transferring credits or recognition from their study programs, and lack of interest in their institution on the part of HEIs.
- Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña: limited public and private funds to support internationalization, problems transferring credits or recognition from their study programs, language barrier, visa restrictions for foreign students imposed by the country, low priority given

to internationalization in national policy, and lack of interest in their institution on the part of HEIs.

- Universidad Don Bosco: limited public and private funds to support internationalization, visa restrictions for foreign students imposed by the country, as well as visa restrictions for their students in other countries.

#### *Institutional obstacles to internationalization*

- Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador: insufficient financial resources.
- Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña: personnel's limited experience.
- Universidad Don Bosco: insufficient financial resources.

#### *Department of internationalization*

- Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador: even though this university has had some success stories when it comes to internationalization, such as receiving German students, it does not have an office in charge of setting up programs of this kind. It is considered important to start up academic and student exchange projects with an eye to enhancing the quality of these experiences.
- Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña: this HEI has an Office of International Relations, which is in charge of planning, running, controlling and evaluating the development of the university's internationalization activities, as well as promoting national and international collaboration agreements, academic exchange and the participation in international networks.
- Universidad Don Bosco: this university does not have an international relations office, but these matters are handled by the institution's cooperation department. The creation of an internationalization office would benefit the promotion of mobility and afford professional growth.

## Final considerations

As this section has shown, Salvadoran universities have undertaken projects and programs aimed at academic internationalization. Moreover, the universities analyzed, despite their relative youth, have set up offices or departments in charge of international affairs.

However, the weaknesses inherent to their context have slowed down internationalization, as challenges such as the lack of resources and support for the programs make it difficult to create a space devoted to external academic affairs commensurate to the size of their enrollment.

The lack of involvement on the part of other HEIs has forced international affairs offices to concentrate on obtaining resources from European funds, such as the Erasmus+ program, which means that their mobility initiatives do not offer enough options to motivate their students to undertake studies abroad.

Unfortunately, the international context in which Latin America must function, especially Central American countries, does not favor the development of new collaboration agreements. For example, the authors of this chapter had to suspend a working trip to Nicaragua as a result of the social and political crisis the country is undergoing.

Nevertheless, the efforts made by the universities in question, as well as the development of documents such as the *El Salvador Declaration*, could serve to encourage collaboration between the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla and Central American HEIs, focusing first of all on proposing some kind of scholarship to allow Salvadoran students to study for an academic term in Puebla's premier institution of higher education.

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# THE IMPACT OF AN ERASMUS+ PROJECT ON THE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION. A CASE FROM THE UNIVERSIDAD RAFAEL LANDÍVAR

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## Introduction

**T**his chapter looks at the impact of a bi-regional multi-institutional project with third-party funding at a private Central American university, i.e., the implementation of an internal management model based on *co-coordination*, which has allowed the international dimension to permeate the institution's academic and administrative culture. This model has been replicated successfully in new projects, allowing various departments to explore this dimension and make it their own. At the same time it has heightened the visibility and the functions of the office in charge of internationalization.

### 1. The institution

The Universidad Rafael Landívar (URL) is a private higher education institution (HEI) run by the Society of Jesus. Founded in October of 1961, it currently has its main campus in Guatemala City, along with nine other campuses in other parts of the country. The main campus has over 140 full-time professors and close to 1,000 adjunct professors tea-

ching in thirty-eight undergraduate degree programs distributed among nine academic departments, plus twenty master's degree programs and several certification courses. In the 2018-2019 academic year, URL's total enrollment is 31,376, of whom 29,114 are undergraduates and 2,262 are graduate students (Universidad Rafael Landívar, 2017).

## 2. The Office of Academic Cooperation

The current director of URL's Office of Academic Cooperation (OAC) has held the position for over ten years. Within the institution's organizational chart, the office falls under the responsibility of the Academic Dean, making it a second-tier office. According to Gacel-Ávila and Rodríguez-Rodríguez (2018), the number of years the director of the international relations office (IRO) has held her position and the office's hierarchical level are two "fundamental [indicators] of the efficiency and viability of the institutional strategies" (p. 56), which in the case of URL's OAC, with a level in the organizational chart that is even higher than that of other HEIs in the region (Gacel-Ávila and Rodríguez-Rodríguez, 2018), along with a low level of staff turnover, offers the possibility of maintaining continuity in the implementation of strategies and plans for working on the international dimension.

Historically, the OAC has had a team of three people supporting the director. This persistence in team size coincides with the observations made by the researchers of UNESCO's Regional Observatory on Internationalization and Networks in Tertiary Education (Observatorio Regional de la UNESCO sobre Internacionalización y Redes en Educación Terciaria, OBIRET) (Gacel-Ávila and Rodríguez-Rodríguez, 2018). This is reflected in the institution's management capacity: URL has a track record that includes over sixteen Erasmus+ projects, making it the Guatemalan HEI with the most participation in bi-regional cooperation.

### 3. Erasmus+ Project: Regional Integration, University and Sustainable Development in Central America

URL is one of the two Guatemalan partners of the consortium that is carrying out the project Regional Integration, University and Sustainable Development in Central America (Integración Regional, Universidad y Desarrollo Sostenible en Centroamérica, IRUDESCA), an Erasmus+ project (2016-2018) in the area of Capacity-Building in Higher Education (CBHE).

IRUDESCA aims to reinforce the relations between Central American and European universities as well as the social and economic fabric, within the framework of a new way of understanding economic models based on cooperation, sustainability, respect for the environment and for people, and the universities' role and responsibility in the formation of professionals and businesspeople who are committed to smart economic growth in their countries (Lemus, 2018).

In order to fulfill this objective, universities and their links to businesses are key, given their participation in the formation of entrepreneurs and future regional business owners who have the know-how and the training to create sustainable regional value chains that will improve the productivity of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and cooperatives, and make them competitive.

In this sense, and in order to come up with a new model of education in entrepreneurship that will allow students to incorporate the latest tools for connecting with the productive sector, IRUDESCA proposes implementing three main lines of work: 1) *entrepreneurial education*, paying special attention to content related to study programs that include business cooperation and the creation of sustainable value chains; 2) new methods of practical formation and real-world case studies taken from business and industry, using the *Assisted-Management Network (Red de Gerencias Asistidas, Redga)*; and 3) *university-business cooperation*, with new university services for guiding and mentoring students, in collaboration with the productive sector.

IRUDESCA's final beneficiaries are the participating universities themselves and their respective communities (graduate students, faculty and researchers), professionals from the MSMEs who wish to



update and adjust their processes, and HEIs from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the European Union that could adopt the project's products and results (Lemus, 2018).

#### 4. Implementation challenges

Implementing the IRUDESCA project brought with it a certain number of challenges, both within URL and in terms of its links to the local and national productive sectors. With respect to internal administration, the OAC, which has the institutional responsibility for IRUDESCA at URL, found that the Department of Entrepreneurs, in the School of Economic and Business Science, offered the ideal academic home for the project.

The first challenge was to accompany the Department of Entrepreneurs at all times once it became the coordinator and began to implement IRUDESCA. The Department of Entrepreneurs, in turn, had to adjust its academic catalogue to fit the student profile that the Erasmus+ project was aiming to form. For this, it had to create innovative content and study programs.

Administratively, the OAC managed to set up the dynamics and logic of the international networking with the partners, while also working out all the internal legal, administrative and financial processes as the logic of the networking permeated the institution from within.

With respect to the productive sector, formerly inexistent ties had to be created between the academic department and the student's future employer; this was done by establishing an innovative culture with "assisted managements" (Lemus, 2018).

#### 5. Good practices

URL took advantage of the learning that emerged from the structural changes that IRUDESCA brought about within the institution and from its collaboration with the local productive sector, and it used these changes to perfect its own project management using an integrated

internationalization approach. The model, which URL has called *co-ordination*, is implemented by the OAC together with the Department of Entrepreneurs, and it has become part of the institution's organizational culture; in fact, the Engineering School has now adopted it and is working on its first international project using the inter-university consortium model, with international academic courses offered in its new graduate program in robotics.

The new co-ordination culture has also led to a new model of internal operational conflict resolution in which two apparently unrelated departments, such as entrepreneurs and engineering, accompany each other. Another manifestation of this new culture is that the OAC is accompanying the School of Health Sciences as it establishes ties with universities in the United States; the School has already developed its first international academic program funded by the program 100K Strong in the Americas.

IRUDESCA has also helped URL to perfect its integrated internationalization strategies and programs by supporting its progress toward its goals in the areas of student mobility, faculty formation, reengineering of the academic catalogue with elements of international collaboration, and local and regional institutional collaboration in international university consortia and networks, among others (Lemus, 2018).

The Redga has likewise made high-impact contributions to entrepreneurship culture: at the national level the project is seen as having pioneered the establishment of ties between academia and the private sector; at the Central American level, it activated the process of building a network of businesspeople in the region who have had international experiences and of academics who acted as tutors alongside the businesspeople, all within the framework of a methodology that is now known as the network (Lemus, 2018).

## Conclusions

The model of managing according to the logic of co-ordination has brought real benefits to URL in the form of specific results. These same

results have allowed the OAC to develop a proposal aimed at strengthening organizational culture by adding a new member to its work team: the head of International Projects and Programs. URL's Office of the Rector has authorized this new member. In this way, the OAC positions and powers itself strategically within the framework of the institution's internationalization priorities.

For its part, URL has raised its profile by positioning itself as a national leader in the Erasmus+ working group, made up of URL plus the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala and the Universidad Galileo—private institutions—and by the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, which is public. This working group is recognized by the Ministry of Planning and Programming of the Presidency (Secretaría de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia, SEGEPLAN) of the Government of Guatemala and looks for ways to strengthen the area of international cooperation and support the scholarship program offered by the national Government.

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# THE MEXICO-FRANCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERS PROGRAM: A STUDENT MOBILITY SUCCESS STORY IN THE FIELD OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

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## Introduction

This chapter presents the characteristics and some results of the Mexico-France Technology Engineers program (México Francia Ingenieros Tecnología, MEXFITEC), which allows undergraduate engineering students from Mexican public state universities to study abroad in France. The program is organized around two pillars that have allowed it to flourish almost ten years after it was launched, and that to a great extent have ensured its success: 1) the coordination and funding by the governments of the two countries involved, and 2) the academic cooperation between Mexican and French institutions.

The sources of information for this chapter were documents generated by the participating institutions, such as reports, program descriptions on different websites, personal interviews with officials in charge of managing the program, and the results of the *MEXFITEC Student Follow-up Survey*, undertaken recently by the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP).

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first is an analysis of the definition of *student mobility*, which serves as a theoretical framework. Then comes a description of the MEXFITEC program, its background,

organization, participants, evaluation, as well as its strengths and areas of opportunity. The last section presents the authors' conclusions.

## 1. Student mobility: how is it defined, how is it organized, and what kinds of activities does it include?

The term *student mobility* is used interchangeably to refer to a wide range of actions with a variety of objectives, processes and results, including the recruitment of foreign tuition-paying undergraduate and graduate students, trips abroad as part of a course, summer courses in another country taught by a professor from the home institution, and the traditional semester or year-long exchanges during students' undergraduate years. It thus comes as no surprise that researchers and academics in different parts of the world have tried to come up with a common definition and understanding of the term, in order to be able study this phenomenon that is growing in importance.

One of the first efforts along these lines came from Kelo, Teichler and Wätcher (2006), who define a *mobility student* as someone who has crossed borders for the express purpose of studying or engaging in study-related activities in the country to which s/he has traveled for at least one academic term or period. This is still quite a wide-ranging definition, and later researchers have tried to distinguish among the main categories of student mobility (Colucci, Ferencz, Gabael, and Wätcher, 2014; Teichler, 2012), including:

- Depending on its duration: whether the student goes for an entire study program (also called *degree mobility* or *diploma mobility*), or for part of a study program (also known as *for-credit mobility*, *short-term mobility* or *student exchange*).
- Depending on the direction of the mobility: inbound students or outbound students.
- Depending on the type of activities to be undertaken abroad: studying an entire undergraduate or graduate program, taking courses from the student's own curriculum, doing research, learning languages, doing research stays, etc.

- Depending on the framework in which the mobility is organized: national or supranational programs, higher education institutions' (HEIs') own programs, mobility organized by the students themselves (free-mover mobility), etc.
- By nationality: students at a HEI can be local or foreign.

One important clarification on the last point: the use of nationality as a proxy for mobility is a common, deeply-rooted practice in statistics on student mobility around the world, but it is an erroneous practice that should be eliminated (Teichler, 2012), because students of a different nationality can also be permanent residents or long-term migrants, and they might not have crossed the border for the specific purpose of studying.

These categories of mobility are in no way mutually exclusive. The clearest example of this is for-credit mobility, which can be inbound or outbound; organized by the participants or by their home institutions; offered by a bilateral program between universities or by a national network or consortium or by a supranational program; and the participants can take courses, do internships, do research stays, or a combination of all these options. However, for student mobility to be considered *for-credit* mobility, two conditions must be met: 1) the home institution must recognize in the students' academic record what they have studied at the host institution, and 2) the students must return to their home institution to continue or conclude their educational process.

On this basis, those in charge of managing student mobility at HEIs usually recognize the following modalities of for-credit mobility:

- Mobility to study for one or more academic terms that implies the recognition of the students' work on their academic record at their home institution. This mobility can be agreed to directly with one or more institutions by signing an agreement, or else be offered within national or supranational programs recognized by the home institution.
- Mobility for internships or work stays, undertaken within the framework of collaboration with industry.



- Research stays, which are much more common among graduate students than for undergraduates, that involve participation in research projects at the host institution, either as part of the student's final degree research project or as part of a course.
- The organization by the home institution of other study-abroad opportunities, either in collaboration with other institutions or on its own, such as trips, courses or short stays (with or without curricular value), international projects and competitions, conferences and seminars, as well as other activities that offer innovative opportunities to enhance students' international profile.
- Virtual mobility allowing students who are physically located in different countries to collaborate on academic projects through technology.

On this basis, it is clear that *student mobility* does not always mean the same thing; rather, it is an wide-ranging concept, with ill-defined boundaries, that represents a phenomenon with diverse facets, objectives, modalities and actors. Therefore, before analyzing any aspect of this phenomenon, it is a good idea to clearly define the type of mobility in question and to set its boundaries by indicating its differentiating features, as this chapter will do in the next section.

## 2. The Mexico-France Technology Engineers program

On the basis of the foregoing, this chapter analyzes a for-credit student mobility program, MEXFITEC, that has the following characteristics:

- It is a bilateral program between Mexico and France that allows for inbound and outbound mobility. It is organized by the General Directorate of University Higher Education (Dirección General de Educación Superior Universitaria, DGE SU) of the Mexican Ministry of Public Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP), within the framework of a bilateral agreement between the governments of France and Mexico. HEIs join the program by creating consortia between public state universities and French institutions that

belong to the system of *grandes écoles d'ingénieurs* (GEIs) or major engineering schools.

- The mobility stays last an entire academic year. This program is for engineering students only. Its main objective is to allow participants to take courses with curricular value that will be recognized as part of their academic record once they return to their home institution. It has a language component: all participants take a French course without curricular value, and it can include professional internships, work stays and other academic formation activities in industry.
- Depending on the agreements reached by the Mexican and French institutions, participants can have the possibility of obtaining the degree from both institutions, making this not only a for-credit mobility program but also a degree mobility program.

### *Background*

MEXFITEC has its origins in the Cooperation Program in the Area of Technological and Professional Higher Instruction Formation, that the governments of Mexico and France agreed to on September 19, 2001 and that allowed for the formation of 439 Mexican engineering students in the GEI network between 2002 and 2009. Seeing the program's success, the two governments decided to continue promoting the comprehensive formation of engineering students by developing consortia or networks between HEIs from the two countries.

The new agreement was called MEXFITEC, and it has been operating since June 5, 2008. The agencies that run the program are the DGESU-SEP in Mexico, and the Ministry of Foreign and European Relations (MAEE, in its initials in French), which belongs to the Directorate of Scientific and University Cooperation (DCSU), the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR) of the Directorate of European and International Affairs (DREIC), and the Conference of Directors of French Engineering Schools (CDEFI) as a consulting and support group; all of these last-mentioned organizations are in France.

MEXFITEC's objective is to promote collaboration projects aimed at improving study plans and teaching methods in the two countries, as well as the bi— and multilateral exchange of students and professors.

### *Program organization*

On the Mexican side, those participating in MEXFITEC are public institutions that have engineering programs accredited by bodies authorized by the Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education (Consejo para la Acreditación de la Educación Superior, COPAES), and that have participated in the calls for consortium-formation with French GEIs, either bilaterally or jointly with other Mexican universities. On the French side, the participating institutions are those that have been authorized by the French government to grant engineering degrees.

The approved consortia are authorized for three years; those operating at present started up in 2017 and will conclude in the summer of 2020. The next call for renewals or new consortium proposals will be launched in 2019 by the DGESU. The student mobility takes place during the academic term, from August to July. Each country takes responsibility for the funding for its own nationals: for the projects running between 2017 and 2020, Mexico committed to sending 100 scholarship students per academic term, while France committed to fifty.

In the case of Mexico, there are almost always more candidates than available scholarships, but that does not happen on the French side, where few students are interested in studying in Mexico, although the number has been slowly growing. The DGESU keeps track of the statistics of the Mexicans who go to France, while the information on the French students who come to Mexico is kept at each participating French institution.

The agreement between France and Mexico also considers faculty exchange, but internal procedures at the SEP in Mexico have made it impossible to organize that kind of mobility. The main obstacle is that the financing for the program comes from the funds of the National Scholarship Coordination for Higher Education (Coordinación Nacional de Becas para la Educación Superior, CNBES), and administrative

and legal constraints do not allow the coordination to grant economic stipends to professors. Thus, the only participants in MEXFITEC for the time being are students. However, there is nothing keeping the participating institutions from organizing faculty exchanges, as long as they cover the costs themselves.

### *The participants*

On the Mexican side there are nineteen public state universities participating in MEXFITEC:

1. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla.
2. Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes.
3. Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.
4. Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua.
5. Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez.
6. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León.
7. Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro.
8. Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí.
9. Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa.
10. Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas.
11. Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.
12. Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas.
13. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo.
14. Universidad de Colima.
15. Universidad de Guadalajara.
16. Universidad de Guanajuato.
17. Universidad de Sonora.
18. Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco.
19. Universidad Veracruzana.

It is important to point out that even though the program is also aimed at the country's technological education sector, made up of technological universities and institutes, the participation of students from these institutions is minimal. Likewise, not all the public state universities mentioned above participate equally in the program; in fact, some have

only sent students sporadically, such as the Autónoma de Zacatecas, Autónoma de Tamaulipas, Autónoma de Querétaro and Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco.

The low rates of participation, from both the universities and the technological institutes, are due generally to one or several of the following factors: 1) their engineering programs' curricula do not include French language courses, 2) the institutions do not have extracurricular language centers or programs, or 3) the institutions do not have a solid internationalization office to manage the program properly (López Bedoya, 2018).

As for the students, 750 Mexicans participated in MEXFITEC between 2009 and 2018. All of these students received one of the most complete mobility scholarships that exist in the system: a monthly stipend of €815.00; a course to perfect their French in Vichy, France, for at least four weeks before the start of the academic term; round-trip international transportation; and medical insurance.

For its part, the French government takes care of tuition payments and gives the participants the status of *scholar of the Government of France*, which includes special concessions for their daily life in France, such as discounted fares for transportation, facilities for obtaining housing, etc.

The Mexican government requires the students to pass through various filters in order to be chosen to spend a year abroad in France: they must meet the general requirements as defined by the SEP, be nominated by their institution, accredit a B2 level of proficiency in French, demonstrate an A2 level of proficiency in English, and be approved in the selection interviews conducted by the Mexican government in collaboration with the French.

### *The evaluation of the program*

MEXFITEC is a program that is under ongoing evaluation. One of the evaluations consists of bilateral forums held every eighteen months, alternating between Mexico and France, with the participation of government officials and representatives of the participating institutions from

both countries: academics, administrators and students. As of 2018, five forums had been held, in Lyon (2011), Mexico City (2013), Toulouse (2015), Merida (2016) and Bayonne (2018). At these meetings, the results of the previous call for participation are analyzed, along with the most important aspects of the participants' performance, among other topics.

Another way the program's relevance is evaluated and the circulation of talent is encouraged is through reunions of former scholars. The main purpose is to facilitate networking among the Mexican students who have participated in the program and with officials from the Embassy of France, the Franco-Mexican Chamber of Commerce, and the Alliance Française, so that they can get to know each other and take advantage of study and work opportunities linked to their stay in France. The first scholars' reunion took place in July, 2016, and subsequently two more have been held, in July of 2017 and 2018. Each reunion brings together only the students who went abroad in the academic term that is just concluding that July. In other words, the 2016 reunion was for the MEXFITEC students from the 2015-2016 academic term, and so on.

One more evaluation instrument was a survey sent to participants from three generations of the program: 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. The *Survey following up on MEXFITEC students*, conducted by the BUAP as was pointed out previously in the introduction, contained questions about the students' academic and demographic profile, comments on their preparation before going to France, the obstacles they faced during their stay, information on the internships they did, and suggestions to improve the program. A report on this evaluation was submitted to the DGESU and presented at the 2018 bilateral forum.

### *The program's strengths and areas of opportunity on the Mexican side*

One of the program's major strengths is the fact that its objectives and scope go beyond student mobility, as MEXFITEC allows for dual degrees, faculty exchange, and research projects. In general it could be said that MEXFITEC consolidates cooperation between Mexican and French ins-

tutions by impacting various areas of institutional life and fostering the circulation of talent and knowledge.

Another positive aspect of MEXFITEC is that it is a program that has worked through networks, multilaterally, and that demands teamwork from all players; in this way it fosters synergies among the Mexican students who come from different institutions and among the program managers at the French and Mexican institutions.

One more very relevant aspect of MEXFITEC is the dynamic that it has set up for ongoing evaluation, in different modes and by different actors. Also worth noting is the transferability of the program's organization: MEXFITEC has laid the groundwork for collaboration in a specific field of knowledge, with a certain country and following a standardized process that is accepted by all the participants.

Regarding areas of opportunity, the most important one is that, in spite of its efforts and the wide-ranging possibilities it offers, MEXFITEC has limited its actions for the most part to student mobility and neglected other areas that could have greater long-term institutional impact.

Another no less important challenge is the proper selection and preparation of the candidates: although some progress has been made toward a more accurate selection process and more robust prior academic preparation, program evaluations indicate that the Mexican scholars often have significant weaknesses in Math that keep them from getting more out of their stay in France and, in the most extreme cases, affect the program's terminal efficiency.

One more cause for worry is that, even though the number of scholars is high and the program is exceptional in terms of funding, the student population that can benefit from it is very small, because only nineteen of the sixty-nine eligible state public and intercultural universities and institutions that support low-income students are participating.

Finally, bilateral mobility continues to be a pending issue. While Mexican students have made good use of MEXFITEC, the participation of French students is still negligible. More fluid cooperation in both directions is not only desirable, but also necessary for the program's long-term survival.

## Conclusions

Some of the features that make the MEXFITEC program a success story in international student for-credit mobility from the Mexican perspective are:

- It is grounded in a bilateral commitment to academic cooperation at the government level, which contributes to its long-term funding and survival.
- The disciplinary field that is the focus of its actions—engineering and technology—is strategic for the country’s development.
- France, the selected cooperation partner, is a country with proven strengths in the disciplinary field of engineering and technology.
- Each project is proposed and negotiated between the HEIs, which contributes to the academic soundness of the exchange and facilitates the search for other actions or topics for cooperation.
- It facilitates the comprehensive formation of Mexican students, because aside from the language course they take before starting classes at the GEIs, which makes a big difference to their proficiency in French, most of the participants do professional internships in industry or labs in the second semester of their stay, and many of them can opt for a dual degree.
- The program has outlasted administrations of both the Mexican federal government and of the participating institutions, and has benefited many underprivileged students who attend public state universities.

The program’s virtues notwithstanding, MEXFITEC could yield much better results if it reinforced its initial objective of achieving broader cooperation. It is essential for student mobility to be seen as just one component among many of the overall bilateral cooperation infrastructure, so that MEXFITEC can contribute to the consolidation of teaching and research in the fields of engineering and technology at Mexican institutions. In this sense, the crystallization of dual degrees between French and Mexican institutions, along with the development of joint projects that help to improve Mexican professors’ research processes



and products, as well as the formation of young researchers, are topics that should be addressed in depth at the next bilateral evaluation forum, especially with an eye to the call for new projects that has been announced for 2019.

It might be time to roll out MEXFITEC 2.0, where the priority would be the creation of networks and consortia aimed at joint teaching and research. These networks and consortia could also continue to offer and encourage student and faculty mobility, but that would not be its ultimate purpose. While no one can doubt that the way the program has been run since 2009 explains much of its success, now is a good time to take a careful look at its contribution to the creation of alliances with greater impact, depth and solidity between French and Mexican institutions.

At the same time, MEXFITEC's accumulated experience needs to be systemtized and transferred. The field of engineering and technology is not the only one that can benefit from a program like this one that involves educational institutions and government agencies from both countries, creating long-term synergies and collaboration. Mexico could design more programs like MEXFITEC in other fields of knowledge, and look for alliances with other countries that share a similar vision of academic cooperation. There are many fields of formation that need reinforcement, and Mexico could collaborate with countries that have a similar or higher level of development—from Eastern Europe, Asia, or even Latin America, where there is no language barrier to deal with.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR UNIVERSITY  
INTERNATIONALIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA.  
EXPERIENCES FROM THE UNIVERSIDAD DE PINAR DEL  
RÍO HERMANOS SAÍZ MONTES DE OCA AND THE  
UNIVERSIDAD ESPECIALIZADA DE LAS AMÉRICAS

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## Introduction

For many years now, fostering internationalization has been a relevant topic of discussion at universities because it encourages excellence and contributes to the achievement of a knowledge society that in turn spurs growth at the local, regional and global levels.

The *Córdoba Declaration*, issued by the Regional Conference for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Conferencia Regional de Educación Superior para América Latina y el Caribe, CRES) stated:

[...] internationalization has become an essential tool for transforming higher education, strengthening its communities, and promoting the quality and relevance of teaching, research and extension. It encourages the formation of citizens and professionals who are respectful of cultural diversity, committed to intercultural understanding and the culture of peace, and capable of coexisting and working in a local and worldwide community.

(Conferencia Regional de Educación Superior para América Latina y el Caribe, 2018, s/p)

This study takes the following practical definition of *internationalization* as its point of departure:

A process of institutional renewal that aims to incorporate an international and intercultural dimension into the culture, mission and vision, and cross-sectionally into all institutional strategies for institutional consolidation [and] the enhancement of the quality and relevance of graduates, teaching programs and research products. (Gacel-Ávila, 2009, p. 8)

It must be emphasized that today, no educational model for a university institution should be considered if it does not include an internationalization plan, conceived from a strategic perspective, that projects an explicit horizon and specifies a set of goals and indicators that it builds gradually and progressively, that evaluates the progress of the actions taken and sets forth examples of good practices and new projections for both the internationalization-at-home dimension and internationalization outside the institution.

This chapter looks at examples of experiences of good practices related to university internationalization. It examines their results, as well as the complexities that the participating universities faced. In addition, it facilitates the understanding of the internationalization process in the respective contexts and the exchange of good practice experiences, which contributes to the development of internationalized institutions.

## **1. Managing university internationalization: practical experiences from the Universidad de Pinar del Río Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca**

The Universidad de Pinar del Río Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca (UPR) opened its doors on October 22, 1972 as a campus of the Universidad de La Habana in Pinar del Río, Cuba. In 1976, following the creation of the network of centers of the Ministry of Higher Education (Ministerio

de Educación Superior, MES) as stipulated in Law 1307 of July 29 of that same year, it became the Centro Universitario de Pinar del Río. Due to the development it achieved, it attained university status on June 21, 1994, as set forth in agreement 2765 of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers (Comité Ejecutivo del Consejo de Ministros, CECM).

As part of the improvement of higher education in Cuba, agreement 7599 of the CECM, dated August 2, 2014, called for the integration of the Universidad de Pinar del Río, the Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas Rafael María de Mendive and the Facultad de Cultura Física Nancy Uranga Romagosa, thus constituting the UPR. Its mission is to meet the higher education needs of professionals so that they can keep up to date in the fields of agriculture, technology, social sciences, the humanities, educational sciences and physical education and sports, based on the integration of the substantive and support processes in order to guarantee graduates who are competent, committed to the revolution, and who have acquired a comprehensive cultural formation. It also seeks to generate and implement scientific-technical results that further the socioeconomic development of the province of Pinar del Río and other regions.

Figure 1  
Location of the UPR in Cuba



Source: authors' own elaboration.

It can be stated that since its founding, UPR has undertaken activities related to the internationalization process, on the basis of the provisions of the 1962 university reform, including the expansion of international

collaboration as a form of solidarity, the signing of agreements, inbound and outbound mobility, participation in networks, among others.

Could it be argued that these were good practices? Yes, given the concrete results obtained, although

they were managed using an eminently spontaneous and reactive approach, as the culture of university internationalization and its management were in their infancy at the time. It can be said that the foundations were laid for the consolidation of this management when it was conceived as an area of key results (AKR) in the strategic planning of the initial stage. (Fernández y González, 2017, p. 3)

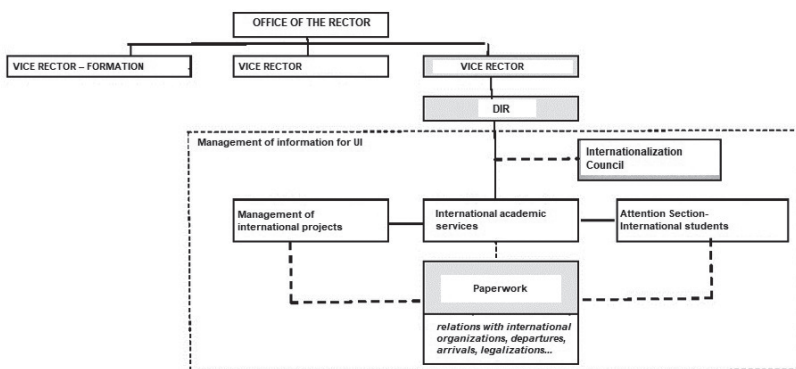
Good practices are recommendable ways of executing a certain process that can serve as models for other contexts. Inasmuch as university internationalization is an objective to attain and at the same time a process to manage, it is evident that its management must be approached with a cross-sectional vision using institutional strategy as a framework for experimenting with good practices.

### *UPR's Master University Internationalization Strategy*

It can be affirmed that the conception of UPR's Master University Internationalization Strategy (MUIS), projected originally for the period 2003-2010, represented in itself an example of a good practice in the field of internationalization at home (IAH). This good practice has been reinforced by the lessons learned since its implementation up to the present day, and it has also had an impact on internationalization outside the institution. Of the accumulated experience, certain aspects deserve mention.

With respect to internal organization, in 2011 the Directorate of International Relations (DIR) was constituted, under the authority of UPR's Office of the Vice Rector for University Extension and International Relations (VRUEIR) (Figure 2). In 2013, the University Internationalization Council (UIC) was founded as an advisory body made up of representatives of the schools, study centers, plus members of the DIR.

Figure 2  
Organizational chart of UPR's DIR



Source: Dirección de Relaciones Internacionales (2017, p. 5).

In September 2015, upon the integration of the universities from UPR's territory, the University Internationalization Policy was updated: the DIR's structure was reorganized and the procedures for managing its sub-processes were reformulated into different areas: attention for international students, commercialization of academic services, paperwork and agreements, and international projects and donations.

As a result, for UPR's 2017-2021 planning, internationalization was classified as a strategic process grounded in institutional culture and the context of the development of higher education in Cuba and the region. On this basis, work began on a master management strategy for the deliberate management of the internationalization of substantive processes, the MUIS mentioned above, which in turn made use of the strengths and opportunities that came from integration. As an example of a good practice, the MUIS is grounded in principles, responds to specific needs, permits evaluation and reorientation, and fosters creativity.

First, a diagnostic survey that was applied to the university—a necessary measure in view of the manifold approaches to the topic that existed before integration—demonstrated the respondents' solid understanding of the topic of internationalization.



Then, the strategy was designed using a matrix approach that focused on the development of culture and its management. This development consisted of three areas corresponding to the university's substantive processes: teaching; research, development and innovation (R+D+I); and extension. These principles support the achievement of explicit strategic objectives, which in turn coincide with four strategic areas and a set of goals, which for their part resulted from a series of actions for which the people responsible, the timeline and indicators were defined (Fernández, 2018). Figure 3 shows a general overview of the MUIS.

On the basis of this design and the regulations of the Ministry of Higher Education, and in response to the university's priorities, the MUIS was deployed in the different selected areas, in such a way that the responsibility for its management was shared by the university community in order to ensure that the actions from the educational project were coordinated with the research and extension plans, with Cuba's higher education language policy, and with current regulations regarding ongoing improvement in English at Cuban universities, based on the precepts of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Control of the execution of the MUIS actions is guaranteed by way of periodical evaluations, comprehensive institutional visits from the quality management program, and accountability to the UIC, which is a meeting that takes place twice a month with a work agenda that includes the review of agreements, the socialization of cooperation actions, the deployment of training topics, the call for mobility, areas' accountability regarding results, and strategic projections in accordance with plans. Since its deployment, an accountability format by area has been developed. In the MUIS report at the end of 2017, issued by UPR's DIR, examples of good practices can be found in several UI areas.

In addition, UPR participates in nine international projects; this action is set forth in objective 2 of the MUIS. Examples of actions developed in this field include participation in the Regional Network for the Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America (Red Regional para el fomento de la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América Latina, RIESAL) and its transcendence in the institutional

**Figure 3**  
General overview of the MUIS

Mission	To integrate internationalization into UPR's substantive processes in order to help elevate its profile, its recognition and its international prestige, and achieve its strategic objectives.		
Vision	To gradually integrate internationalization into the management of substantive processes and the management of UPR, in order to make a significant contribution to elevating the university's quality and visibility.		
Goals	Objectives		
1. To develop the internationalization of the formation process	1.1 Undergraduate and graduate formation strengthened by UI in its curricular and extracurricular dimensions	1.2 Faculty prepared to manage UI in academic programs and research projects.	
2. To align international projection with R+D+i processes	2.1 To apply UI tools to R+D+i project management	2.2 To elevate the visibility of R+D+i results through publications on the knowledge web	2.3 To elevate the international relevance of R+D+i by obtaining awards and participating in recognized events, on the basis of intellectual property preservation
3. To develop internationalization culture at the university	3.1 To execute training programs		2.4 Promotion and execution of scientific-technical services
			3.2 To integrate the international dimension into the university extension process

4. To perfect the management of the UI process	4.1 To deploy the management system in all academic and scientific structures	4.2 To raise the effectivity of signed international agreements	4.3 To execute international projects at each study center and school, in terms of cooperation actions and donation procurement
	4.4 To raise the effectivity of membership in international networks and organizations	4.5 To increase income from international services, especially scientific-technical services linked to R+D+i processes	4.6 To perfect the information process for UI management
MUIS management committee	<p>Areas</p> <p>VRUEIR, DIR</p> <p>Office of the Vice Rector for Professional Formation.</p> <p>Office of the Vice Rector for Research and Graduate Studies.</p> <p>General Directorate 1.</p> <p>General Directorate 2.</p> <p>Study centers.</p> <p>Schools and Departments.</p>	Coordination	Members
Main principles	<p>The role of university internationalization as a tool for improving university processes.</p> <p>Education training and communication in the management of university internationalization in all structures.</p> <p>Deployment and systematic monitoring of attainment of proposed objectives.</p> <p>The foundations of the university internationalization process are: knowing the procedures, coordination and mutual collaboration.</p>		

Source: Dirección de Relaciones Internacionales (2017, p. 12).

project: perfecting the management system of the UPR's teaching department (TD), specifically in the area of its internationalization.

The work methodology for this institutional project includes frequent meetings of the working group—nine researchers: four PhDs, three master's degrees and three master's degree candidates—to plan the actions to take.

First, a literature review was made on the subject of university internationalization, using references from the RIESAL project, for the purpose of assessing the management of the process in question in the TD and identifying current development trends around the world and at other Cuban universities, as well as systematizing the concepts in order to construct an operational definition of university internationalization. As a partial result, nine scientific articles are being developed in a methodological workshop and other events.

Along the same lines, and with the orientation of UPR's DIR, the management of the internationalization of the curriculum—objective 1 of the MUIS—has been defined as a line of methodological work (MW) in the strategy carried out at the School of Childhood Education (SCE). This line of MW frames its actions in terms of the university's substantive processes as contributions to the strengthening of academic programs, exchange and collaboration in the field of research, and the internationalization of extension.

In this process at the SCE, a survey was applied in order to produce an minimal compendium of the knowledge, values and general skills to prioritize in the formation of professionals related to university internationalization. The literature was reviewed and the MW for this line was projected from the organizational levels of the teaching process: academic program collective, year collective and discipline collective, as well as its execution using the types of teaching methodology work in the following order: teaching methodology meeting, methodological class, open class, test class, teaching methodology workshop and course collective.

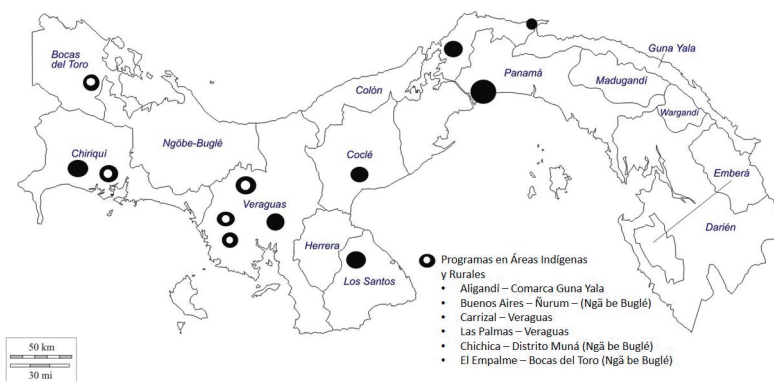
As fundamental results, rising levels of preparation can be observed, along with understanding and awareness among those involved, and progress in the integration of the international dimension into the area's academic programs.

## 2. The management of university internationalization: practical experiences from the Universidad Especializada de las Américas

The Universidad Especializada de las Américas (UDELAS), in Panama, was created by the decree of Law 40, dated November 18, 1997. It is a public autonomous university characterized by its social commitment, innovation and continuous improvement by way of a specialized educational intervention with international projection. Figure 4 shows its national presence, which demonstrates its commitment to meeting the social needs of Panama's most vulnerable groups (Universidad Especializada de las Américas, 2015).

As the main element of its institutional development, the university's pedagogical model (Universidad Especializada de las Américas, 2015) states that UDELAS is an official institution of higher education with social projection; innovative in terms of teaching, research, extension and management; and created for the purpose of forming competent, enterprising professionals with scientific knowledge and human qualities, as well as a commitment to the country's development.

Figure 4  
UDELAS' presence in indigenous and rural areas of Panama

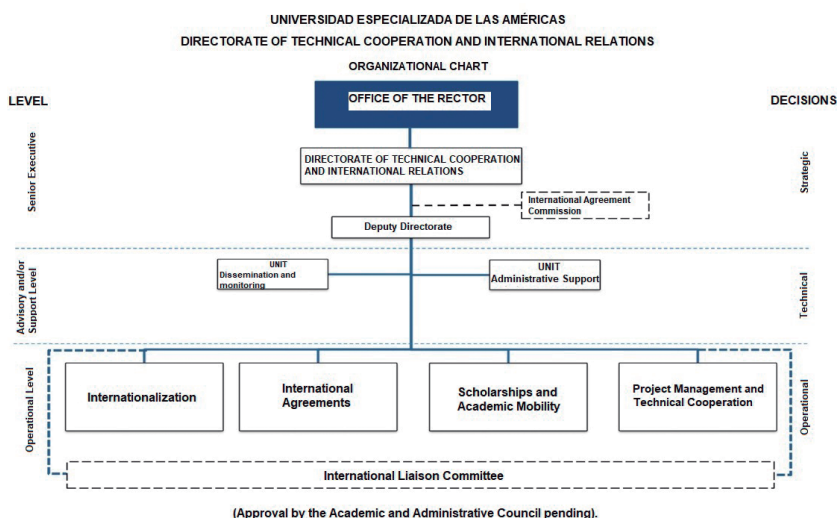


Source: elaborated by the Directorate of Planning and Quality Evaluation of the Universidad Especializada de las Américas on the basis of internal information.

The same Law 40 also created the Directorate of Technical Cooperation and International Relations (DTCIR) of UDELAS, through the University's Organic Statute in its articles 260, 261, 262 and 263. Article 260 states that the DTCIR is the office in charge of broadening and strengthening the collaboration and ties between the university and international institutions.

The DTCIR answers to UDELAS' Office of the Rector, which allows decisions to be made from three hierarchical levels (Figure 5).

Figure 5  
Organizational chart showing the functioning of UDELAS' DTCIR



Source: elaborated by the Directorate of Technical Cooperation and International Relations of the Universidad Especializada de las Américas on the basis of internal information.

### *Strategic axes favored by internationalization at Universidad Especializada de las Américas*

The goal that UDELAS sets for itself is professional excellence, with social purpose and attention to diversity, national and international recognition, and the capacity to intervene proactively in solving social problems in the country and the Latin American region. These objectives are pursued

along four strategic axes: a teaching and learning model that emphasizes quality and relevance; more and better research and innovation; solid, broad-based ties between UDELAS and society and the community; and the transformation and modernization of administrative management.

The road map for university internationalization, specifically for the construction of its planning for the period 2019-2023, is based on the same vision of being a university characterized by professional excellence, with social impact and international recognition. The university internationalization plan proposes the objectives listed in Figure 6.

**Figure 6**  
Road map for the construction of UDELAS' university internationalization plan (2019-2023)

ROAD MAP VISION To be a university of professional excellence, with social impact and international recognition.  VALUES "Diversity with attention to equity"						
Objective 1: Internationally recognized quality of knowledge						
Action	Key performance indicators	Time frame				
		X S	S	M	L	X L
Set quality standards in accordance with international criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International quality criteria identified and defined.</li> <li>Quality standards established.</li> </ul>					
Establish and apply internationalization parameters in undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate programs (master's degree and PhD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internationalized programs.</li> </ul>					
Create a quality management system, taking the best practices of the region's universities into account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality management system for internationalization established.</li> </ul>					
Objective 2: Institutional internationalization policy and culture						
Action	Key performance indicators	Time frame				
		X S	S	M	L	X L
Establish solid financial foundation for university internationalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget account created for university's internationalization activities.</li> </ul>					
Make internationalization cross-sectional in institutional strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic plan with cross-sectional internationalization axis.</li> </ul>					
Promote institutional sensitization and training actions for major actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact of institutional sensitization and training campaigns</li> </ul>					

Objective 3: International UDELAS academic community created						
Action	Key performance indicators	Time frame				
		X S	S	M	L	XL
Strengthen tutorials for final degree or thesis project with international option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate regulation for final or thesis project tutorials establishing the international option.</li> </ul>					
Develop an induction program aimed at facilitating specialized continuing formation for professors, encouraging them to learn a second language or earn a master's degree or PhD at the international level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction program with international standard created.</li> <li>Professors who have taken advantage of specialized continuing formation, or who speak a second language.</li> <li>Professors enrolled in specialized master's degree or international PhD programs.</li> </ul>					
Involve administrative staff in international projects to improve the university's services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative staff involved in international projects.</li> <li>Increase in university administrative units with international standards.</li> </ul>					
Objective 4: New professional figures of excellence, with impact on the territory						
Action	Key performance indicators	Time frame				
		X S	S	M	L	XL
Create specialized collaborations with international excellence in different fields of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation of international professors in the academic development of degree programs.</li> <li>Fields of knowledge impacted with the development of graduate, master's degree and PhD programs with international excellence.</li> </ul>					
Construct flexible new-generation curriculum with local and global focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New-generation curriculum established and applied to degree programs.</li> </ul>					
Establish strategic alliances with the productive sector and other employers, with social sensitivity, to strengthen internship scenarios with international connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internship scenarios established in the productive sector and with other employers.</li> </ul>					

Source: elaborated by the Directorate of Technical Cooperation and International Relations of the Universidad Especializada de las Américas on the basis of internal information.

UDELAS currently develops its internationalization with cross-sectionality as the starting point, so that it permeates the administrative area, formation, research and extension, outside collaboration and projection. In this way internationalization is developed in all areas of the university, not as something exclusive to the DTCIR. As a result of this decision,



the four variables of internationalization are stated, on the basis of which good practices are discussed (Torres, 2018):

- Appraisal of the international setting. The university's regional vocation justifies its participation in the Superior Council of Central American Universities (Consejo Superior de Universidades de Centroamérica, CSUCA), which aligns with the first element of UDELAS' international dimension and serves as a framework for establishing ties with universities and organizations through programs, agreements and projects that reflect the institution's commitment to university internationalization. The CSUCA comprises twenty-four public universities in the region and in the Dominican Republic, and focuses on topics such as evaluation and accreditation, university-society relations, student life, university publishers, libraries, internationalization, research and graduate studies.
- Academic mobility. In the last four years, a total of 452 member of the UDELAS community (students, professors and administrative personnel) have taken part in some kind of international experience, including internships, conferences, regional meetings, seminars and courses. This practice has also facilitated international consulting regarding the creation of new degree programs, such as the undergraduate programs in Psychology, Comprehensive Artistic Education and Therapeutic Social Education, as well as the updating of the undergraduate program in Physical Activity and Sports. A total of 120 foreign professors have taught classes in undergraduate, certification, graduate, master's degree and PhD programs (internationalization at home). And with the support of the Panamanian Foreign Office, nineteen international students—from Korea, Mexico, Spain, China, India, Egypt and the Dominican Republic—have studied at UDELAS (Figures 7 and 8).
- International participation. Thanks to cross-sectionality, interconnection and strategic coherence, these international experiences are tied to academic interests, such as innovation and the identification of good practices in allied universities.
- International project management. This modality is possible thanks to the support of the Erasmus+ program, which has funded, among

others, the Project for Consolidating the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Latin America and Europe (Proyecto para el Fortalecimiento de la Internacionalización de la Institución de Educación Superior de América Latina y Europa, FORINT) —in which the road maps for internationalization are prepared—, the Project for Curricular Alignment and Innovation (Proyecto para la Armonización e Innovación Curricular, HICA-CSUCA), the Regional Observatory for the Quality of Equity in Higher Education (Observatorio Regional para la Calidad de la Equidad en la Educación Superior, ORACLE) and the Strengthening the Impact of Latin American Universities program (programa de Fortalecimiento del Impacto de las Universidades Latinoamericanas, IMPALA 2019).

Figure 7  
Outbound academic mobility



Source: elaborated by the Directorate of Technical Cooperation and International Relations of the Universidad Especializada de las Américas on the basis of internal information.

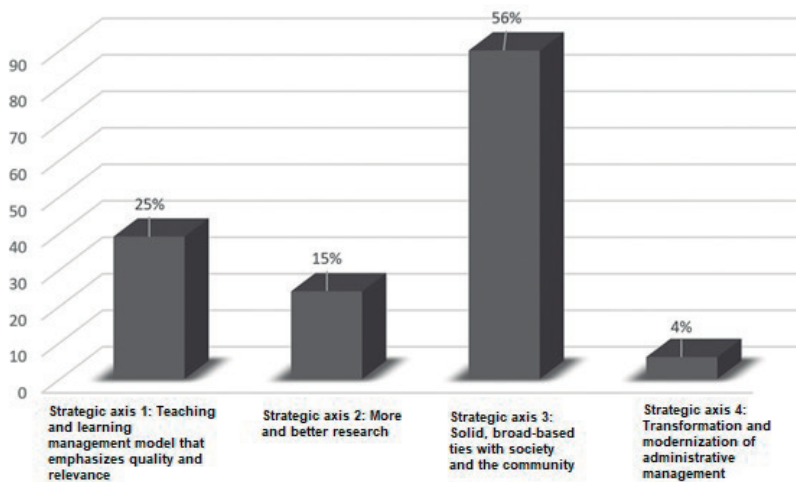
Figure 8  
Inbound student mobility



Source: elaborated by the Directorate of Technical Cooperation and International Relations of the Universidad Especializada de las Américas on the basis of internal information.

With respect to the impact of its internationalization actions, UDELAS has had some interesting results (Figure 9).

Figure 9  
Academic mobility by strategic axis (2018)



Source: elaborated by the Directorate of Technical Cooperation and International Relations of the Universidad Especializada de las Américas on the basis of internal information.

Finally, UDELAS' DTCIR and Institute of Languages and Technology (ILTEC) promote the learning of languages such as French, Portuguese, English and Mandarin within a language policy that encourages foreign language proficiency as a key element of university internationalization.

### *Complexities in managing university internationalization at Universidad Especializada de las Américas*

Without a doubt, there are complexities in managing internationalization that must be considered for future actions, such as the necessary understanding of the process, the commitment to this process by all members of the UDELAS community, the implementation of a generalized common work culture—since internationalization implies working with people from contexts and with styles of working that are different from one's own (Bosco, 2018)—, as well as the search for correspondence between the level of knowledge of university internationalization management and the preparation of professors. Another challenge is dealing with the reality of ever-scarce funding, which calls for creativity and resourcefulness in achieving the proposed objectives.

These complexities are manageable to the extent that the contexts of interaction are fully understood, on the basis of responsibilities assumed in the management of internationalization.

## **Conclusions**

This study served to corroborate the need to manage university internationalization as a strategic process within the framework of an institutional strategy involving the entire university community in the attainment of its objectives.

The management of the internationalization process at UPR and UDELAS reveals a number of good practices, defined in terms of the management process and the results obtained, in accordance with the characteristics and complexities of the context of the two educational institutions. These good practices are related to the planning of the

process, faculty and student mobility resulting from agreements, cooperation programs, actions undertaken in the framework of international networks, and the establishment of the process and its constituent tasks as lines of MW.

In terms of the main impacts, the internationalization process has allowed the two institutions to improve their projection both on and off campus, and to follow up on international commitments that promote multi-dimensional cooperation between countries.

It is worth adding that cooperation between universities around the world is gaining momentum, which means that the actors involved in university internationalization must have a solid formation in their own particular field, as well as intercultural competencies in order to deal with the inherent complexities and achieve the desired objectives, including a favorable position for each institution in international rankings.

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# STUDENT MOBILITY PROGRAM OF THE INTER-UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER-UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE PERÚ. MORE THAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE

VANESSA GARCÍA BERMEJO

**G**acel-Ávila and Rodríguez-Rodríguez (2018, p. 45) mention some of the benefits of internationalization for higher education institutions (HEIs): 1) it enhances students' international profile, 2) it improves the academic quality of educational programs, 3) it strengthens the internationalization of the curriculum, 4) it strengthens research and knowledge generation, 5) it increases the institution's prestige or profile, 6) it increases and diversifies income, 7) it offers students life-changing opportunities, 8) it strengthens interculturality and respect for other perspectives, 9) it allows academics to work in regional and international thematic networks, and 10) it supports institutional accreditation.

For HEIs around the world today, working on policies, strategies or actions that foster internationalization is synonymous with aspiring to provide quality education linked to other fundamental axes such as research, extension, curriculum and institutional accreditation, among others. Thus, internationalization ends up being a cross-sectional, integrative axis that drives the development of quality higher education.

The benefits of internationalization mentioned above are transcendental for the growth of any HEI that seeks to form fully-integrated persons, both students and faculty, authorities or administrative personnel. The Universidad Católica de Perú (PUCP), located in Lima since 1917,



states on its web page that part of its mission is to offer civic, humanistic, scientific and integral formation, and to contribute to the broadening of knowledge through research and innovation at the international level (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú, 2018). Within the framework of these missions, PUCP optimized its status as a founding partner of the Inter-University Development Center (Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo, CINDA) and encouraged its students to participate in the Student Mobility Program; it also agreed to serve as the program's coordinating unit.

According to Jane Knight (2011), one of the myths about the internationalization of higher education is that the more agreements or international networks a HEI has, the more attractive it will be for its allies, students and faculty:

It is often believed that the greater number of international agreements or network memberships a university has, the more prestigious and attractive it is to other institutions and students. [...] Maintaining active and fruitful relationships requires a major investment of human and financial resources from individual faculty members, departments, and international offices. (Knight, 2011, p. 14)

The reality is that investing in human resources and financial opportunities is more fruitful, and in the case of PUCP, the administration of CINDA's Student Mobility Program has allowed it to strengthen its relations and alliances with students and HEIs.

CINDA is an international center located in Chile, recognized by UNESCO and by the Chilean State as a non-governmental international organization. Its main objective is to promote ties between outstanding universities in Latin America and Europe in order to generate, systematize and disseminate knowledge that will contribute to the development of higher education and university management policies in all areas.

It was created in 1971 on the initiative of the Universidad de los Andes (Colombia), PUCP and the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, with the aim of channeling universities' contributions to Andean integration and research on the region's challenges. In 1977, CINDA started to expand by establishing ties with other universities. It currently has forty members, from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia,

Costa Rica, Mexico, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela, Spain and Italy (Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo, 2018).

CINDA runs a number of programs, such as the Student Mobility Program, the Academic Program, the Service Provision Program and the Quality Assurance Program. This chapter analyzes how its Student Mobility Program can be considered a *case of good internationalization practice*. It will relate PUCP's experience as the program's founding institution and its coordinating unit for thirteen years.

PUCP was chosen as the coordinating unit when the program was created in 2003. The program was conceived for the purpose of generating a space for academic mobility, promoting the institutions that form part of the network, and fostering internationalization through inter-institutional cooperation. Between 2003 and 2016, more than 2,500 students from the network's member universities participated in student exchange experiences sponsored by the program, and Peru was one of the countries that generated the greatest number of these study abroad experiences (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú, 2016).

In July 2018, the Universidad del Norte, located in Barranquilla, Colombia, through its International Project Coordination, part of its Office of Cooperation and International Development, and in its capacity as partner of the Regional Network for the Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America (Red Regional para el fomento de la Internacionalización de la Educación Superior en América Latina, RIESAL), of Erasmus+, visited PUCP to find out more about its experience coordinating the Student Mobility Program and the impact generated among its students and in the institution.

During the visit, it learned that PUCP took on the program as part of its strategy to increase student mobility and foster the internationalization of higher education in its own institution. This program was coordinated by the student mobility section of PUCP's Office of International Relations Development from 2003 to 2016.

PUCP also stated that the opportunity to coordinate CINDA's Student Mobility Program had a positive impact on the institution and on the

personal and professional growth of the PUCP students who took advantage of the program to study abroad.

The program stipulates that each member university serving as a host institution must exempt international students from any payment related to their international academic activity when they go on exchange to a university that belongs to CINDA, and that each member university serving as a home institution is autonomous when it comes to maintaining the costs required for its students' mobility (Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo, 2018).

PUCP, aware that access to international academic opportunities through student mobility is sometimes limited due to students' lack of economic resources, the dearth of scholarships and a low level of language proficiency, not to mention family and work commitments, administrative or bureaucratic snags and overly rigid curricula (Gacel-Ávila and Rodríguez-Rodríguez, 2018), decided to include in its internationalization strategy the exemption of payment of academic fees for its students who went to study abroad at universities belonging to CINDA, in order to contribute in this way to their life projects and give them the opportunity to devote that money to covering other required expenses, such as visas, plane tickets, international medical insurance, room and board, and local transportation during the time spent at their host institution.

This could be called a *scholarship* to encourage international mobility among PUCP students. According to María José Guardia, head of PUCP's Student Mobility Section, the policy got more students interested in making international academic exchange happen for themselves:

Since 2003 —this [is] really an initiative of ours—it has made the opportunity quite attractive, and has also diversified mobility, because many of the universities that belong to CINDA do not necessarily have a bilateral agreement with us [...]; [this program] has made an impact because they've been able to go. These are students with a strong academic level, the level of competency is high [...]; I feel it has been a good practice, we've served as mediators so that in the end the network handles the topic of student mobility in a harmonious way. (Guardia, 2018)

In addition to raising the number of students who study abroad in order to fulfill institutional strategies, it is important to emphasize that wor-

king to encourage internationalization also has an impact on people—students, professors, administrators or authorities—due to different policies, strategies or actions that are carried out. In PUCP’s case, those in charge are convinced that CINDA’s Student Mobility Program did not only raise the institution’s international student mobility numbers and indicators; more importantly, it had a positive impact on students by contributing to their life project, generating knowledge in different spaces, transforming prejudices, breaking paradigms, fostering the relevance of strengthening their areas of study, and in some cases facilitating language learning.

Two PUCP students confirmed the foregoing during an interview with Vanessa García, coordinator of International Projects at the Universidad del Norte, Colombia:

I [recommend the program] wholeheartedly. Living abroad for a time marks a before and an after; the same can be said of getting to know other cultures, of dealing with a different reality [...]: it opens your mind, opens up your view of the world, broadens your knowledge [...]; on a regular exchange, without the scholarship you have to pay for each course and credit, but this time I didn’t have to pay for anything [...], I just had to pay for my room and board, not my studies [...]. If it had not been for CINDA, I would not have been able to go on the exchange [...]. Overall it’s an experience that I will always recommend; it’s one hundred percent worth it. (Morimoto, 2018)

If I had had to pay tuition at my host university, plus room and board and traveling expenses, it would have been impossible for me. The agreement [between] the host university and CINDA means that I can just concentrate on studying [...]. I feel that what I got out of this exchange surpassed my expectations: I feel that I improved academically and personally. I shared a number of experiences and projects with people from different countries, which improved [my] knowledge and [my skills]. (Márquez, 2018)

It can thus be considered that PUCP’s making use of its capacity as the coordinating institution of CINDA’s Student Mobility Program is an example of a good practice for the internationalization of higher education for the following reasons:

- It increased student mobility indicators at PUCP.
- It strengthened one of the most notable axes in the internationalization process, and thus contributed to quality education.

- It increased PUCP students' international academic experiences for the purpose of impacting their professional and personal lives. These experiences would most likely have been more limited had academic exchange not been encouraged with the exemption of payment at their home university and at their host university, a CINDA member.
- It offered benefits in the framework of membership in an international academic network like CINDA, such as international institutional academic recognition and visibility. These benefits increase if the institution administers a program that can be optimized.
- It strengthened international academic collaboration relations, in the sense that CINDA member institutions, by participating in international scenarios, find spaces to share experiences focused on the internationalization of higher education.

Challenges remain. CINDA, in consensus with its members, decided to expand and restructure the Student Mobility Program to include graduate students; professors in the field of research, innovation and technology transfer; and opportunities for cooperation and the communication of good practices in university management among the member universities. These initiatives are currently being promoted through CINDA's University Exchange Program (Programa de Intercambio Universitario, PIU).

María José Guardia, head of Student Mobility at PUCP, stated that

PIU will facilitate more exposure for professors, and this will generate more links through research, at the level of faculty exchange, at the level of graduate studies, of research. The truth is that semester-long undergraduate student mobility is a relatively minor issue. (Guardia, 2018)

It is clear that the Student Mobility Program has been an important stepping-stone for reaching PIU. This new program seeks to exempt undergraduate and graduate students from the payment of academic fees, although host HEIs that belong to CINDA will be able to charge some fees that have been agreed to previously.

This had already been a strategy that PUCP began to implement in 2003 and continued to apply for the thirteen years that it coordinated the Student Mobility Program. Although it might be seen as a *simple* institutional decision, it is precisely at the institutional level where analyses can confirm whether a strategy like this one will really generate consequences with a positive impact on the institution and its beneficiaries, the students.

According to the assessment made by Gacel-Ávila y Rodríguez-Rodríguez (2018), only 62% of the HEIs in Latin America and the Caribbean offer a program of scholarships or economic support for student mobility, and of that percentage, only 6% offer complete scholarships or stipends. That means that 38% of the institutions do not offer any type of support for their students (Gacel-Ávila and Rodríguez-Rodríguez, 2018, p. 91). For this reason, the case of PUCP and the way it administered CINDA's Student Mobility Program can be considered a good practice that encourages international mobility as one of the axes of the internationalization of higher education.

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# BEST HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION PRACTICES IN URUGUAY. ACADEMIC MOBILITY FOR STUDENTS

LINCOLN BIZZOZERO  
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## Introduction

**T**he higher education internationalization process in Uruguay, as in many other countries, draws on the development of a variety of activities and practices, of which academic mobility<sup>1</sup> for students has made considerable progress in the country and become one of the most dynamic internationalization activities at all of its universities.

In order to share good institutional practices that have been developed for student mobility in Uruguay, particularly for graduate students, and in light of the peculiarities of the country's higher education system,<sup>2</sup> this chapter presents two case studies that reflect the approach, structure and operations of a public university, the Universidad de la República (UdelaR), and of one from the private sector, the Universidad ORT Uruguay.

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1 For-credit mobility.

2 Given the country's territorial and demographic dimension, the Uruguayan higher education system (made up of universities, university institutes and non-university tertiary institutes) includes six universities: two belong to the public sector and four to the private.



For the case study of the UdelaR, Lincoln Bizzozero discusses the university's experiences with the mobility program ESCALA for Graduate Students (PEEG, in its initials in Spanish), of the Montevideo Group University Association (Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, AUGM). For their part, Virginia Delisante and Alejandra Tagliani share the experience of the Student Exchange Coordination at the Universidad ORT Uruguay. In each case, the intention is to show the successes and challenges of the management process.

## 1. Case of good practices: ESCALA Program for Graduate Students of the Montevideo Group University Association<sup>3</sup>

### *Background and context*

The PEEG started operations in 1998 as one of the AUGM's strategic programs; its objective was to create an expanded common academic and intercultural space.

The PEEG seeks to promote the strengthening of the construction of a regional common space, the promotion of regional integration through university higher education, the internationalization of higher education by building an expanded common space for mobility and exchange, the development of international experiences in order to enrich students' formation, institutional consolidation within the framework of cooperation in the university network, and the reinforcement of ties among the professors participating in the program's academic coordination.

The basic agreement by which the PEEG works is that the student's home university commits to recognizing all of the credits taken at the host university, which for its part assumes the commitment to allow the student to take the courses s/he chooses.

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3 The author thanks Susana Mantegani and Macarena Sarli for their collaboration in preparing this example of good practices.

### *UdelaR's numbers in the program*

The PEEG turned twenty years old in 2018. The number of spaces offered in the calls for participation has risen, and since 2010 it has broken the 500 mark, which reflects the relevance it has for the universities.

Between 2005 and 2016, 380 UdelaR students took advantage of the program and studied abroad at other AUGM universities in the region. At the same time, UdelaR received 353 students from universities that belong to the network. In 2005, thirty-two UdelaR students engaged in academic mobility through the program, while in 2011 the number climbed to eighty-four, and in 2013, to eighty-five, counting both out-bound and inbound students.

### *Operations*

In 2011 the 40th Meeting of the Rectors of the Montevideo Group approved a manual of good practices for the PEEG. The manual grew out of the work of the AUGM, based on its experiences in applying the program (Secretaría Ejecutiva de la Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo, 2011). The manual defines the program according to its objectives and situates the actors involved in the mobility process (AUGM Executive Secretariat, student, institutional coordinator and academic coordinator), specifying the responsibilities that correspond to each party so that program can function smoothly.

The document also delimits the information and overall responsibilities of each university in terms of sending and receiving students. The information that each university must offer includes institutional and academic information, plus the study plans with their possible modifications. The management of the PEEG is governed by general regulations that, in addition to operational rules, contain the official program forms (study contract, contract modification) and the equivalence table that governs the transfer of grades when the activities done abroad are recognized by the student's home institution.

At the UdelaR, the institutional liaison with the PEEG is the International Relations Service (SRI, by its initials in Spanish). Each academic

year, the SRI consults with the Registrar's Office to determine both outbound and inbound students' interest in participating in the PEEG and their preferences. On the basis of this information, it systematizes the information and tables of preferences to take to the meeting of the regional program delegates.<sup>4</sup>

The SRI coordinates the links between the students selected to study at the UdelaR and the academic coordinators of the corresponding services. In this sense, it maintains lines of communication with the academic coordinators of the schools that will be receiving selected students in order to keep them informed, and it writes the acceptance letters to send to the students' home universities. The SRI is also in charge of sending information to the foreign students about the legal and institutional procedures they must carry out for their stay at the UdelaR, organizing personal and group meetings with the foreign students and providing all necessary information about how the program works.

### *The program as an example of good practices*

The basis for the PEEG's smooth functioning can be found in the principles it is built on: trust between the participating institutions, based on mutual recognition of the quality of the teaching offered; transparency with respect to information, which makes it possible to know about the other universities in the program as well as the conditions in which the students will be doing their mobility (information about administrative and academic contacts at the host university, course calendars, study plans, conditions during the stay, etc.); and flexibility, which makes it possible to deal with differences in organization that arise from the different administrative structures and teaching systems at the institutions that take part in the program. This flexibility is also manifested in adherence, financial commitment, the services involved, and the reciprocity of the exchanges.

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4 SRI was created at June 2018 by the Consejo Directivo Central of UdelaR. At that moment, the institutional coordination was made by the General Direction of Relations and Cooperation.

Joining the PEEG is voluntary, although the universities must express their interest in participating in each call. As for the financial commitment, each university that wishes to take part determines the form and scope of its participation. Since the spots are reciprocal and demand different financial commitments depending on whether the university is the host or the home institution, each university must define the way it will fulfill its commitments; it also indicates how many spots it will make available per semester.

One aspect that deserves special mention is the fact that the PEEG finances itself, and this characteristic gives it stability and projection over time. Self-financing means that the participating universities can cover the room and board of the foreign students that they receive, while providing some economic support for their own students' transportation costs.

Another point to highlight is the program's self-evaluation, which is conducted by way of surveys sent to different actors involved in the process. In particular, the survey sent to students—the central actors in mobility—is an input that is taken into account to undertake improvements. The program is evaluated annually using an electronic survey sent to students and designed to gather information about different aspects, including the existence of administrative and academic snags both at home and abroad; the conditions of the infrastructure offered by the host institution; any difficulties in transferring credits for the activities undertaken abroad; and the assessment of the program as an integral, academic and cultural experience. The evaluation is submitted to the institutional coordination offices (advisory delegates) so that each university can take any actions that it deems fit, either by modifying processes that are evaluated negatively, or by strengthening those that receive a positive evaluation.

## **2. Case of good practices. Student Exchange Coordination at the Universidad ORT Uruguay**

The case study from the private sector is that of the Universidad ORT Uruguay, which provides its students with the opportunity to live for

a semester abroad.<sup>5</sup> This broadens students' expectations not only for their study program, but also at a personal level, as they incorporate new social and interpersonal skills into their internationalized curriculum.

At the same time, more and more foreign university students are choosing Uruguay for their international semester. The country offers safe surroundings, temperate climate and political stability, all of which make it an attractive destination.

The Student Exchange Coordination has the institutional responsibility for managing all types of mobility. Between 2005 and 2017, the Universidad ORT Uruguay has received 1,045 foreign students—250 from Latin America, 129 from North America, 455 from Europe, 141 from Asia, and seventy from Oceania. The main countries of origin are Mexico, the United States, Germany, Spain, France, China and Australia. For their part, these students come to take primarily undergraduate courses, mostly in the areas of Engineering and Technology, and Social Sciences.

On the other hand, 779 of the university's own students have taken a semester abroad. Europe is the main destination, with 524 students, while 162 have gone to North America, seventy-two to Latin America, twenty-two to Oceania and nine to Asia. The number-one destination is Spain, followed by Germany, the United States and Mexico. As with the inbound mobility students, the leading areas for outbound mobility are the Social Sciences, Architecture, and Engineering and Technology.

The procedure for foreign students consists of first making the application, in accordance with the criteria of their home university and within the framework of the existing agreement. Students register their interest by filling out an online form. Then, the university sends the information about the interested applicants, who for their part enter the system of the host university. The Universidad ORT Uruguay, in coordination with the academic departments, signs the applicants up for the courses they have selected. Once in Uruguay, the students have two weeks to corroborate that the courses they are signed up for meet their expectations, with the option of changing them if they wish. One

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5 Mobility undertaken within the framework of bilateral agreements, special programs and student mobility programs.

advantage of the exchange program is that it gives students the chance to sign up for courses in different departments, as long as their home university agrees.

Another example of good practices for student mobility is the buddy program. Exchange students are met at the airport with transportation, and a student from the Universidad ORT Uruguay, known as a *padrino* or *buddy*, offers the foreign student support in whatever s/he needs —university requirements, but also information about the country, its customs, etc.— and follows up on his/her charge, especially during the first few weeks. The buddies are usually students that have done an exchange themselves, which makes them sensitive to the foreign students' needs.

The procedure for outbound students starts with the academic coordinators of each degree program, who postulate interested students before the Student Exchange Coordination. Depending on the university where the students wants to go, the coordination provides the requirements for application, provided there is an agreement between the two institutions. In order to go on an international semester, students must have completed their second year and earned an accumulated grade average of at least 70. The requirements and documentation for application vary depending on the destination.

Once students decide, the academic coordination of their degree program plays a key role in orienting them about the destination and the host university. As a good practice it should be mentioned that study abroad applicants meet with academics as well as other students who have already studied abroad, to hear advice about the different emotional stages and ups-and-downs they will most likely go through. The university is available during the entire semester to deal with any complex situations. In such cases, students are provided with advice and support, as occurred during the attacks in Paris (2015) or the threats to South Korea (2013).

ORT Uruguay works on the continuous improvement of the management of student mobility and is constantly incorporating new agreements, thus broadening students' options. The increase in the numbers speaks well of the exchange program, as do the results of the surveys conducted among participants.

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**SECTION 2**  
**BEST PRACTICES IN COLLABORATION PROJECTS**  
**BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN**  
**AND THE CARIBBEAN INSTITUTIONS**



# EVOLUTION OF BI-REGIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND LATIN AMERICA AT THE HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL

DEBORA BRUSINI

ROBERTO ESCARRÉ

CAROLE MAPELLI

**T**he creation of a European Union (EU) higher educational space with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) constitutes one of the priorities of European cooperation. In 2000, within the framework of the *Declaration of Paris*, an agreement was signed regarding the common higher educational space of the EU and LAC (LACEU common space), which is intended to boost the intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation and relations in the field of higher education.

The development of the LACEU common space is a major challenge that the EU is undertaking by creating programs and funding university cooperation projects in the Latin American region, where the EU has over thirty years of cooperation experience. This cooperation consolidates multi-cultural relations, fosters the exchange of good practices and technology transfer, and contributes to promoting egalitarian economic and social development in the countries involved. In order to ensure the efficiency of education systems, it is essential to offer young people and adults who are engaged in formation the competencies that the labor market is asking for, so that they can take a productive place in society. The cooperation also serves to further the internationalization of higher education, which is fundamental for developing these competencies in young people.

Knight (1994) defines the *internationalization of higher education* as the *process of implementing policies and programs that integrate the international and intercultural dimension into the institution's functions of teaching, research and service*. Cooperation at the level of higher education between the EU and LAC has included all of these areas identified by Knight.

## 1. History of European Union-Latin America/Caribbean cooperation in higher education. The ALFA programs

The first cooperation program between higher education institutions (HEIs) from the EU and LAC started up in 1994. It was known as the *ALFA* program, short for *América Latina Formación Académica (Latin America Academic Formation)*.<sup>1</sup> This program was open to the participation of all the EU member states and eighteen countries in LAC,<sup>2</sup> plus other types of institutions such as NGOs, chambers of commerce, professional associations or private companies.

The ALFA program was divided into various phases between 1994 and 2013. At first, it focused on developing cooperation between LAC and the EU in the area of higher education and on fostering regional integration for the purpose of establishing exchanges between Latin American countries. Later, it also started to address the issue of improving the quality of higher education as well as access to it, by expanding coverage. Funding from the EU increased in each phase (Table 1), which demonstrated its growing interest and determination to cooperate with Latin American countries.

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- 1 Program created by Council Regulation No. 443/92 dated February 25, 1992, regarding financial and technical support and economic cooperation with countries from Latin America and Asia. The regulation can be consulted at : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31992R0443>
  - 2 Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

**Table 1**  
ALFA program budget, by phase

Program phases	ALFA I	ALFA II	ALFA III
Budget (millions of EUR)	32.4	55.5	85

Source: European Commission (2007).

During the different program phases, numerous projects were carried out. During ALFA I, 846 projects were approved; in ALFA II, 225 projects were executed; and ALFA III funded fifty-one projects, with the participation of 153 institutions from the EU and 341 from LAC. It is important to point out that only fourteen projects were coordinated by HEIs from Latin America, i.e., 27% of the total, which indicates a lack of capacity on the Latin American side to write grant proposals and coordinate consortia, although the evolution of the ALFA program has fostered Latin American participation in projects with the EU.

ALFA III sought to contribute to the attainment of the following objectives:

- Improve the quality of higher education by considering the society's need and establishing ties between HEIs and the labor market;
- Promote lasting access to higher education for the most vulnerable sectors of society; and
- Modernize, reform and harmonize the higher education systems of Latin American countries.

The ALFA III program yielded good results. For example, networks were created among LAC universities around different topics; new curricula and innovative teaching methodologies were developed; new technological tools were shared; and access to higher education was improved, among other initiatives. ALFA III made a substantial contribution to the creation of a common higher education area in LAC.

Within the framework of this program, certain projects stand out for focusing specifically on the development of the internationalization of higher education: INCA (for promoting the internationalization of higher education in Central America), EULAC, Partnerships for Internationalisa-

tion of Higher Education (PIHE Network),<sup>3</sup> Self-Financing Alternatives for International Relation Offices (SAFIRO, with an additional second stage, SAFIRO II), EL Gate (recognized as a *gate* for university cooperation between the EU and Latin America), ALFA-PUENTES (which seeks to build capacities in university associations to promote Latin American regional integration), Linking Universities to their Surroundings for Sustainable Social and Economic Development (Vinculación de las Universidades con su Entorno para el Desarrollo Social y Económico Sostenible, VINCULAENTORNO) and KickStart (focusing on new forms of teaching and innovation).<sup>4</sup>

Some of the relevant results of these projects were:

- The modernization of international relations offices at partner universities;
- The establishment of good practice transfer guides for managing international relations offices<sup>5</sup> and internationalization funding guides;
- The dissemination of models of international relations offices for organizing international mobility programs, educational marketing and international projects; and
- The creation of a Central American network focused on topics of internationalization and cooperation.

Consequently, through projects, European universities were able to help the international relations offices of Latin American institutions to become major players in the development of international university cooperation.<sup>6</sup>

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3 More information at: <https://web.ua.es/pihe/index.htm>

4 More information at: <https://alfakickstart.wordpress.com/>

5 Compiled in the book *Prácticas y tendencias para la internacionalización y la cooperación entre universidades de América Latina y Unión Europea*. A version can be consulted at: [https://web.ua.es/pihe/download/PIHE\\_LIBRO.pdf](https://web.ua.es/pihe/download/PIHE_LIBRO.pdf)

6 The overall results of AFA III can be consulted at: <http://www.alfa3programme.eu/es/acerca-de-alfa/resultados-alfa-iii>

## 2. Current European Union-Latin America/Caribbean higher education cooperation: capacity-building

Today, cooperation between the EU and LAC falls under the Erasmus+ program.<sup>7</sup> The EU merged all the previous European programs in the areas of education, formation, youth and sports into this one program for the period from 2014-2020. Its name is inspired by the previous student and faculty exchange program between universities, the Erasmus program, for the purpose of not losing the *well-known Erasmus label*. The program develops cooperation activities to meet the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy (Comisión Europea, n/d).

This new program funds projects both between EU countries and between EU countries and other regions of the world. It therefore has a significant international dimension, especially in the area of higher education, since it does not only improve the quality of education in European institutions, but also fosters the sustainable development of education in partner countries with an eye to promoting international mobility and talent circulation.

The objectives of the Erasmus+ program can be summarized in three key actions—KAs—:

- KA1: short-term for-credit mobility for students, faculty and academic personnel, and joint master's degree programs;
- KA2: cooperation for innovation and good practices; and
- KA3: support for reform policies.

The capacity-building projects in the area of higher education belong to the KA2 projects, which promote the modernization, access and internationalization of higher education in the participating countries. This type of project undertakes knowledge transfer actions to improve the management and governance capacities of institutions in the partner countries, for the purpose of helping them consolidate mobility and

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7 Program created by *Regulation (EU) No. 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council, dated December 11, 2013*. A version of the regulation is available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0050:0073:ES:PDF>



promote their socioeconomic development. It is primarily HEIs that participate in these projects, but non-academic partners can also take part, when they seek to strengthen ties with businesses or NGOs and support the projects' impact on society.

In addition, the capacity-building program in the higher education area distinguishes between two types of projects: joint and structural. The former undertake changes at the institutional level, i.e., their primary beneficiaries are the institutions participating in the projects. The structural projects, on the other hand, work in the regional and national context; their aim is to impact the higher education system. Structural programs require the participation of the target countries' ministers of Education, in order to ensure impact at the system level.

Thus, Erasmus+ is the EU's current financial instrument for providing economic support to international projects focusing on institutional consolidation in the area of higher education. The budget allocated for the 2014-2020 period is 14.7 billion euros, two thirds of which are reserved for education and formation, 28% of it for the K2s.

Within the framework of the K2s, the budget assigned to capacity-building projects in the higher education area is quite substantial: in 2016 it represented 25% (Mazur and Chircop, 2016, p. 6). Each project receives between 500,000 and one million euros. The EU assigns a budget of 1.68 billion euros to fund projects undertaken with non-European countries.<sup>8</sup>

The Erasmus+ program has been a big success, especially when it comes to mobility (four million people); it is evident that it attracts a great number of people and encourages them to move around the world exchanging experience and knowledge.

Up to now there have been four calls for proposals in the capacity-building program in the higher education area. In the 2015 call, the EU received 515 proposals for projects in this area, including sixty-four projects from LAC. Of the 140 projects that were accepted (that is, 27% of the proposals), 87% were for joint projects and 13% for structural.

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8 Key Erasmus+ figures and statistics can be consulted at: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/key-figures\\_es](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/key-figures_es)

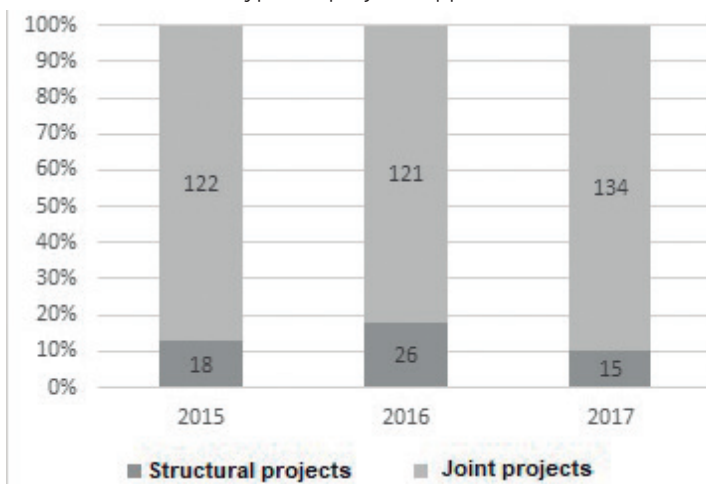
Nineteen projects from LAC were approved, which represents a success rate of 30% (Angelescu, 2016); however, only three projects were coordinated by Latin American institutions. A total of 911 HEIs from ninety-three countries participated in the selected projects: 601 institutions from sixty-one partner countries and 310 from thirty-two European countries. Twenty-eight projects (20%) were coordinated by institutions from partner countries, which shows the worldwide dimension of the Erasmus+ program, as a large number of non-European countries got involved in the projects.

In the 2016 call, of the 736 project proposals of this kind that were submitted, 147 were accepted, i.e., 20%. As for LAC, seventy-eight projects were submitted and fourteen of them were accepted, which represents a success rate of 18%. Of the total of 147 selected projects, 82% were for joint projects and 18% for structural. Thirty-four projects were coordinated by partner countries, i.e., 24%, representing a 4% increase over the previous year. The number of partner participants that took part in these projects also went up, from sixty-one to seventy-nine. However, these figures are still lower than those of other regions participating in the program (Angelescu, 2017).

In the 2017 call, 833 proposals were submitted (13% more than in the previous year) and 149 projects were approved, of which only 10% were structural. Ninety-eight project proposals came from LAC, and of these, fifteen were chosen (Angelescu, 2017), for a success rate of 15.3%.

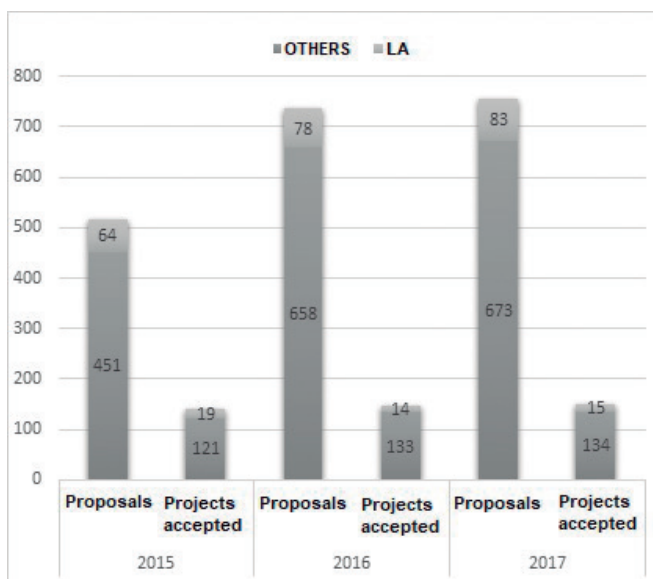
Figures 1 and 2 summarize this information.

**Figure 1**  
Types of projects approved



Source: authors' own elaboration with information from Angelescu (2016 and 2017).

**Figure 2**  
The presence of Latin America (LA) in Erasmus+ projects



Source: authors' own elaboration with information from Angelescu (2016 and 2017).

An analysis of the data from these last two years indicates a significant increase in the number of proposals from all the regions, with a total increase of 61.7%. This shows the importance and the success of the Erasmus+ program, which has sparked growing interest throughout the world. Although we can point to a decrease in the success rate over the three calls, the ratio is still interesting, compared for example with the ratio of the calls of the Horizon 2020 program. Furthermore, the participating countries are acquiring more and more competencies in implementing projects that encompass more than two regions.

It can also be seen that even though joint projects continue to pre-dominate, this is not due to disappointing results from the structural projects, but to their evident minority status among the proposals submitted.<sup>9</sup>

With respect to the projects from LAC, the data show a drop in the success rate, which should however not be attributed to a low level of quality in the proposals, but to an increase in the number of competing proposals, and also to a disproportion of direct funds for each region. LAC has a smaller budget allotment than other regions that are just as large. From 2015 to 2017, the total budget has grown by 21.6%, while the amount earmarked for LAC has grown by only 7.7%, a percentage significantly lower than that of regions such as Asia (18.2%).<sup>10</sup>

Although Erasmus+ disburses a very generous budget, the LAC region received more funds under the ALFA program, which between 2007 and 2013 assigned eighty-five million euros. If the same proportion had been maintained as under ALFA between 2014 and 2018, LAC would have received about sixty million euros from Erasmus+; the actual budget however did not even reach forty million.

Another difference under Erasmus+ between LAC and other groups of countries (particularly those that the program calls *neighbouring countries*)<sup>11</sup> is that the Latin American region has regional priorities, but

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9 In the 2015 call, for example, only 14% of the proposals were structural (Angelescu, 2016).

10 The percentages were calculated with the data presented in the budget allocations for each call.

11 These are the countries that are geographically adjacent to the EU, including the countries of Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Mediterranean coastline and the

not national priorities. This is not a trivial point, because the program conceives of LAC as an unvarying whole, which is far from the truth. If the program identified national priorities, it would doubtlessly encourage the submission of more complete proposals that address the needs of Latin American countries' higher education systems.

Another relevant aspect to analyze has to do with the presence of partner countries<sup>12</sup> as project coordinators. In the case of Latin American countries, it is clear that under the Erasmus+ program, the same as under ALFA, there are still very few applications to be coordinators of selected projects, which is a chronic weakness in the region that also affects other EU programs.

Moreover, a common factor in all the countries that coordinated selected projects in all the past calls for proposals under Erasmus+ is experience. Specifically, the institutions from Latin America that have coordinated projects had already acquired valuable experience as partners in previous projects, under both ALFA and Erasmus+ (with respect to the second and third calls for proposals). For example, the Universidad de Guadalajara (Mexico) and the Universidad Nacional de Luján (Argentina) were both partners in projects conducted under the ALFA program. The Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Colombia), whose projects were selected in the 2015 and 2017 calls, also had prior experience as a coordinator under the ALFA program.

To conclude, we can highlight several key elements that summarize the evolution of the cooperation between the EU and LAC in the area of higher education:

- The cooperation grew steadily and different programs were developed to offer Latin American and European countries more opportunities to exchange good practices in the area of higher education.
- The ALFA program was an important stimulus for academic cooperation between the EU and LAC, with budgetary outlays that have not been seen again in recent years.

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Russian Federation.

12 These are countries that participate as beneficiaries of the program but do not belong to the EU.

- The Erasmus+ program has witnessed a drop in the budget allocated for Latin American countries, in spite of clear evidence that it is having a very positive impact on higher education systems in the region.

Some ideas have been suggested to improve the current Erasmus+ program (capacity consolidation in the area of higher education), or the participation of HEIs from LAC in it:

- At the program level: 1) if the program set national priorities in LAC, that would make it easier to submit proposals that are better adapted to local needs; 2) the quality of proposals from Latin America could be enhanced if the region learned how to write up grant proposals or received a guide from the EU for presenting them, as is done in other programs.
- At the institution level: 1) it is helpful to start participating as a partner in a consortium before trying to coordinate a proposal; 2) it is always important to respect the program's priorities and look for balanced consortia that integrate a variety of actors (ministries, NGOs, businesses, etc).

As a final conclusion, the cooperation projects between the EU and LAC in the area of higher education have played, and continue to play, an important role in their context, and constitute an excellent way to encourage the internationalization of universities and the exchange of know-how in areas that are crucial for the development of higher education systems in the Latin American region.

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# BEST PRACTICES IN THE FORMATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION

FIONA HUNTER  
ELSPETH JONES  
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## 1. Internationalization as an evolution process

Universities have always devoted their efforts to generating and disseminating knowledge, and this is interpreted more and more as the production of employable graduates and of research that is useful to society. Whatever the university's focus, it usually pays the most attention to those who come to it looking for education, while rarely considering those who work there or providing them with the skills they need to adapt to a changing world. This is even more evident in the process of internationalizing higher education, which is happening at an ever faster pace. Particularly serious is the lack of adequate training offered to both academic and administrative personnel so that they can understand what it means to *internationalize a university* and deal with the changes that this process entails.

Internationalization does not stop. It is a process in constant evolution, driven by institutional, local, national, regional and global contexts and trends. There is no single model that fits all institutions: each must determine its own policies based on clear foundations and institutional needs. Leaders, together with academics, administrators, students and outside stakeholders, must play a key role in the definition and delivery of the kind of internationalization that aligns with the university's mission

and specific context. Too often, however, decisions about internationalization are taken exclusively by a select group of senior leaders, who then expect academic and administrators to implement these decisions and student to accept whatever form of internationalization is offered to them.

Moreover, even today internationalization is primarily perceived as an option that happens *abroad*, i.e., student and faculty mobility, together with short and long-term inbound and outbound programs. When internationalization is driven only by mobility, it inevitably ends up being an elitist endeavor, reaching only a small proportion of students and professors: between 15% and 20% in Europe, 10% in the United States, less than 5% in other parts of the developed world and below 2% in developing and emerging societies. And mobility in and of itself is no guarantee for the development of an internationalized student experience, because many mobility formats do not integrate the experience into the local university's curriculum or integrate the students and academics into the host society during the period of mobility.

Internationalization is an integral process that needs to encompass the three basic functions of higher education: research, teaching and service to society. It should not be seen as an objective in and of itself, but rather as a means to improve the quality of these three functions. Nor should it be perceived as aimed exclusively at a tiny minority of the university community. To make this point absolutely clear, de Wit, Hunter, Howard and Egron Polak (2015) extended Knight's definition (2004), stating that *internationalization* is

the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to improve the quality of education and research for all students and personnel, and to make a significant contribution to society. (de Wit, Hunter, Howard, and Egron Polak, 2015, p. 29)

An internationalized student experience must be based on an internationalized plan of studies. This plan comprises not only the content of the program, but also the models of teaching and learning, as well as the support services of a study program (Leask, 2015, p. 9). The *models of teaching and learning* can be achieved through a wide variety of actions,

of which mobility is just one element. In order to reach all students instead of just a mobile elite, the focus must be primarily on the student experience *at home*, both on campus and in local communities. However, we emphasize that internationalization at home must be intentional (Beelen and Jones, 2015) and must be achieved by internationalizing the results of learning in the curriculum.

## 2. Internationalization and academic personnel

The ideas set forth up to this point imply that academics play the most important role in the internationalization process, because they are key for the study plan and its execution. It is important, therefore, to pay attention to training academics to address the international and intercultural dimension of the curriculum and help them to design and evaluate the results of effective internationalized learning.

Making academics the main interested party in the process is essential for its success, and it will also lay the groundwork for their commitment to undergo training to address a changing context. The role of academics in the internationalization process has garnered attention only recently in certain parts of the world, and several facilitating factors and stumbling blocks have been identified, which are important to keep in mind when developing internationalization policy, just as it is important to anticipate potential resistance to change, and consider how to overcome it.

## 3. Internationalization and administrative personnel

It is interesting to observe that as the definitions of *internationalization* have evolved over the last twenty-five years, they have generally overlooked—or made few references to—the administrative function, even though the administrators in the international office have often been the ones to come up with the institutional internationalization strategy. More recent definitions, particularly the definition of 2015 cited above,

advocate an integral approach and refer to support functions, but there is still relatively little discussion about the role of administrative personnel in internationalization. Therefore, as Leasks's definition (2015) also indicates, it is crucial to think not only of academics but also of support personnel when the training needed for internationalization is being planned.

Even though administrative personnel have often been left in the background, they are expected to adapt to changing institutional needs and provide the levels of service needed, with or without adequate training. A current Erasmus+ project, the Systemic University Change Towards Internationalisation (SUCTI), is an example of the attempts to address this omission through specially designed training that recognizes the fundamental role played by administrative personnel and that allows them to take an active part in the internationalization processes at their institutions.

#### 4. Constructive commitment to internationalization

Universities publicly state that internationalization is more and more important or even essential for their development. Naturally, these strategic statements display a wide variety of forms and levels of effectivity. While having a strategic plan does not always mean that it is reflected in institutional policies and everyday practice, institutions with an integral approach to internationalization will more likely also try to construct a shared understanding and a sense of commitment to internationalization.

On the other hand, weaker processes tend to divide the university community into two groups: those who are committed and convinced, and those who feel distant and disconnected from internationalization and who might have a limited understanding or resist participating.

Developing a commitment to internationalization among academic and administrative personnel calls for a carefully thought-out strategic process that involves the entire institution and provides adequate training for its human resources. This inevitably entails a long-term change process, and the more open and focused the university is, the more likely

it will be willing to invest in training as an essential component of its internationalization strategy.

## 5. Change of academic and administrative roles

A broader approach to internationalization inevitably leads to a growing volume and scope of international activity at the institution, and this in turn requires a higher level of professionalization in the staff. Universities that recognize this need understand that academic and administrative personnel are equal partners that play different but decisive roles in internationalization.

On the other hand, universities that persist in applying a short-term, improvised approach to internationalization and in reacting to external pressures instead of planning ahead, will more likely encounter resistance in their personnel who feel unprepared to deal with new demands in their work.

## 6. Challenges of internationalization for academic personnel

For academic personnel, the challenges have to do with understanding that student mobility, the delivery of a program in English, or the presence of international students are not means to internationalize the curriculum. For a long time, these have been the assumptions at many institutions, and they are perpetuated in institutional strategies and policies. The real challenge is to understand the process of internationalizing the curriculum from the perspective of one's own academic field.

There is not just one single way to internationalize a curriculum: it will be different for each field and each university. So, within the global, national and institutional context, what should graduates be able to demonstrate at the end of such a study program? What would a similar program be like in another country, with an alternative perspective regarding the curricular content? What are the problems of their field

in a global society and how can the field contribute to solving global problems? What intercultural skills do graduates of this program need? Academics must consider these and many other questions, and the best answers come from discussions with colleagues within the field, ideally facilitated by an academic developer. Leask's curriculum review model and his questionnaire on curricular internationalization (Leask, 2015) can offer useful points of departure.

These, however, are just the first step. The next is the internationalization of the intended learning results; then come the models of teaching and learning, which must be aligned with the delivery of these results; and finally, there are the evaluation methods designed to allow students to demonstrate that they have achieved the results. Academics often feel that they lack the skills and experience needed to design internationalized learning results; the solutions to this problem will vary from one institution to the next. Actually, good training for academics is what is needed to overcome the myth that mobility, teaching in English and the presence of international students in the classroom are the only ways to internationalize the curriculum.

## **7. Challenges of internationalization for administrative personnel**

The challenges facing administrative personnel may come from a lack of proper preparation to deal with their new —and often changing— roles. However, there are other challenges located not in the internationalization process itself, but in institutional structures and practices that do not support the needs of internationalization. These institutional practices are usually weak in terms of coordination and vertical and horizontal communication. There might also be a lack of alignment in the objectives, both between different administrative units and between academic and administrative units. The challenges can be aggravated by the absence of an enabling policy framework and an overbearing bureaucracy. International office administrators are expected to comply with internationalization without necessarily being recognized for what they

do or without having the ability to implement the institution's strategies and policies. This can lead to a lack of empowerment and difficulties communicating with academic personnel.

## **8. Key internationalization skills for academic personnel**

Academics need time and space outside of teaching and their other duties in order to have the discussions mentioned above. If they feel they lack international and intercultural experience, facilitated intervention can help them explore what internationalization means in their field and how to cultivate it in a plan of studies. Some might need support in designing and evaluating the results of internationalized learning.

Adapting teaching and learning processes to help students to develop intercultural competencies might be another aspect of the key skills that academics need to develop. Furthermore, if they are to offer programs in a second language, such as English, aside from developing proficiency in the language itself, they might need support for teaching in multinational and multicultural classrooms.

## **9. Key internationalization skills for administrative personnel**

For many institutions, training for internationalization tends to be understood as *English courses*, and while language proficiency is certainly a key skill that both administrative and academic personnel ought to acquire, it is not enough in itself. Personnel must know how to communicate in a multicultural setting, and have an understanding of internationalization. More specifically, they need to know about their own institution's internationalization strategy in order to feel that they are part of the institutional project. In fact, training consists not only of acquiring necessary knowledge and skills, but also of fostering a team spirit and a shared commitment.



In general, there is very little specific training about internationalization for administrative personnel, regardless of the stage of the institution's internationalization process or its strategic management traditions, or even when it offers a wide range of training. When internationalization training is provided, it might or might not be linked to the strategy and it is seldom offered systematically; rather it is adapted to specific administrative needs or it is formally recognized for professional advancement.

## **10. Internationalization of human resources as leverage for change**

One strategic approach for internationalization recognizes the value of all personnel and sees academics and administrators as equal partners whose active participation is essential to the process. When the offer of training is aligned with the strategy, it provides academic and administrative personnel not only with necessary skills and competencies, but also with confidence and commitment to make an active contribution by developing and delivering high-quality activities.

Internationalization can also go hand in hand with institutional change, and both individuals and the institution need to be willing to learn new practices. A stronger sense of institutional happiness is achieved when internationalization is planned and implemented carefully, when decisions are communicated effectively, and when the proper structures and processes are implemented.

It is also essential, however, to ensure that all personnel are properly trained to carry out the tasks that are expected of them. Internationalization exposes and magnifies institutional weaknesses, and any university that takes it seriously must also be ready to honestly and critically analyze its traditional way of operating, and to reflect on the changes it need to undertake (Hunter, 2018).

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# BEST PRACTICES IN UNIVERSITY COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT. COLLABORATIONS OF THE VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL

FRANÇOISE DE CUPERE

## 1. Background

**A**ware that global challenges require going beyond the boundaries of individual institutions, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (vUB) supports international relations that arise out of *bottom-up* initiatives from the academic community, while also building institutional ties with similar-thinking partners.

In this sense, its collaboration with Cuban higher education institutions (HEIs) began in 1998 as a typical bottom-up initiative, with the collaboration between two research groups: Protein Chemistry, from vUB, and Plant Biotechnology, from the Universidad Central Marta Abreu de Las Villas (UCLV). This collaboration of vUB not only became an institutional alliance with UCLV —and more recently with the Universidad de Oriente (UO)—, it also had an important positive impact on vUB's relations and collaboration with the Embassy of Cuba in Belgium, the country's Ministry of Higher Education, and the National Commission of Scientific Degrees of Cuba.

Cooperation for development takes a prominent place in vUB's internationalization strategy. The main funding body for university development cooperation is the Federal Government of Belgium, through the Inter-university Council of Flanders (VLIR-UOS). This funding by law must focus on solid partnerships between Flemish universities and

universities of the global south, where Cuba has been one of the partner countries since the beginning of this funding plan in 1992.

Within its internationalization policy, vub looks for coherence and complementarity among the activities it undertakes, in order to guarantee sustainable structural relations with a limited number of partners and countries. For this reason, vub had participated in the past as a partner (Eureka SD and EMA2 programs) or as a country of the program (KA107) in previous calls for participation of the European Union that included Cuban HEIs.

An example is the establishment of a joint PhD program between vub and Cuban HEIs with vub funding in September 2014, after the signing of a formal framework agreement for joint PhD programs between vub and the Cuban National Commission of Scientific Degrees.

vub also started up collaboration projects between UCLV and UO, and Close the Gap. This NGO, a subsidiary of vub, is an international non-profit organization dedicated to closing the digital gap by offering high-quality restored computers for educational, medical and social projects in developing and emerging countries, and funding e-projects for waste management. Aside from information and communication technology (ICT) facilities and the professional support developed by vub and Close the Gap with the cooperation of the two Cuban HEIs, infrastructure and support was also provided for local public services, such as hospitals and libraries.

Furthermore, the vub delegations' regular participation in Belgian Week in Havana, organized by the Embassy of Belgium in Cuba, and in the twice-yearly university conference *Universidad*, reinforces vub's focus on a sustainable structural partnership.

Finally, a new program called Global Minds is being implemented, funded in the framework of cooperation for university development. It will offer mobility opportunities for research and education personnel, exploration workshops, travel scholarships for Flemish students, and joint PhD programs, with the same focus on complementarity and sustainability. The program considers both south-to-north and north-to-south mobility.

## 2. Implementation

Two types of projects have been very important in vub's collaboration with Cuba: Institutional University Cooperation programs (IUCs) and university cooperation networks.

### Institutional University Cooperation programs

IUC programs are long-term institutional partnerships between a university in the global south and several universities and university colleges in Flanders. An IUC program is subdivided into a series of synergetic-complementary projects (related to research, capacity-building and extension) that in turn consist of a series of interrelated activities undertaken in the framework of a five-year program cycle.

An IUC, however, is more than the sum of its projects: through program-level management, the overall scale of the project, the ties between the different projects, the support provided by the program support unit, and the critical mass of capacity that it creates, an IUC has to potential to empower the local university as a whole to better carry out its role as an actor in the development of its society.

As an initial impact, an IUC aims to contribute to development changes through its results in the different projects. The second intended impact is twofold: to contribute, on the one hand, to improving the HEI's performance, and on the other, to changing the university's role to that of a development actor.

As mentioned above, an IUC consists of multiple cross-sectional projects that follow a logic similar to that of a TEAM project. The objective of these projects is to improve the HEI's internal services or systems, such as ICT, electronic learning, library services, research management, etc. This is not only an asset for the different classical projects; it also makes a strong contribution to improving the HEIs' institutional performance.

*Institutional University Cooperation program with the Universidad Central Marta Abreu de Las Villas (2002-2013)*

Coordinating Flemish university: VUB.

The IUC with UCLV included the following synergetic projects, directed by a Flemish university:

Cluster 1: ICT-related institutional development.

- ICT infrastructure (Universiteit Gent).
- ICTs in education (VUB).
- Development of information culture (Universiteit Antwerpen).

Cluster 2: institutional policies and management capacity-building.

- Capacity-building for communication in English for academic purposes in international collaboration (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven).

Cluster 3: collaborative formation and research.

- Improving the quality of undergraduate and graduate study programs in plant and animal science (VUB).
- Strengthening undergraduate and graduate education in pharmaceutical science (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven).
- Environmental education and clean technology development (Universiteit Gent).
- Strengthening graduate research and education in computer science (VUB).

*Institutional University Cooperation program with the Universidad de Oriente (2013 and onward)*

Coordinating Flemish university: VUB.

This IUC program addresses important national and regional issues, and concentrates on research, innovation, education and the extension of the results of the university's cooperation throughout eastern Cuba, while also focusing on achieving better indicators related to sustainable development and academic performance.

This program's key areas and specific projects are entirely consistent with Cuba's national priorities and with the national strategies of

VLIR-UOS (food security, development of the agricultural sector, environment and climate change, support for health and education, energy and fuels, improvement of science and technology); they also support institutional consolidation (ICT and infrastructure, academic English, strengthening basic and natural sciences).

This IUC has the following cross-sectional projects, with their respective Flemish partner university:

- Information and communication technology infrastructure (Universiteit Gent).
- Improvement of basic and natural sciences at the UO (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven).
- Strengthening competencies in foreign languages for science and technology (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven).

It also includes the following thematic projects:

- Scientific environmental services for developing sustainable agriculture and dealing with climate change in eastern Cuba (Universiteit Hasselt).
- Research and applications of biomedical images and signal processing (VUB).
- Biopharmaceutical products from natural sources for biotechnological development (Universiteit Antwerpen).
- Social sciences and humanities for dealing with the challenge of social development and local culture: improving heritage preservation (Universiteit Antwerpen).
- Energy, biofuels and clean technologies for sustainable development (Universiteit Hasselt).

## University Cooperation Network

A University Cooperation Network program (RED) is an institutional network at the national level led by a previous IUC, focusing on a high-priority topic within the country's strategy (grounded in needs at the national level) and based on previous cooperation experiences. The pro-



gram tries to multiply and extend capacity-building efforts. Actually, a RED tries to empower local universities to join forces and work together to contribute to national objectives in higher education and development.

A RED aims at national-level impact in a specific thematic area by providing substantial support to a limited number of carefully selected partner universities in one of the partner countries. As stated above, it is based on the experiences of a previous IUC, a member of which becomes the coordinating university (hub).

The RED can be seen as a partnership between various associated institutions in a specific country in the global south and universities and university colleges in Flanders.

A RED program represents a long-term commitment that involves considerable team work and a partnership between Flemish universities and university colleges on the one hand, and different universities in the global south on the other. As indicated, a partner university of a previous IUC coordinates at the local level and also chooses a local program coordinator. There is also a coordinating Flemish university, although the aim is to involve different Flemish institutions.

*University Cooperation Network program with the Universidad Central Marta Abreu de Las Villas (2013 and onward)*

ICTs for development represent a high-priority topic for the Cuban government and, as an important cross-sectional competency, offer opportunities for deepening inter-university cooperation within Cuba as well as participation in regional and international networks. This will be achieved with the creation of an ICT network for the development and multiplication of the results of a successful IUC program (2003-2012) through the national impact of the UCLV.

The ICT RED known as VLIR-Cuba, coordinated by UCLV, broadens ICT-related capacity-building and research that is relevant for Cuba's economic and social priorities. The project's activities focus on ICT systems and management, ICT support for educational processes and knowledge management, and research in related sciences (RESICT program). Six Cuban universities pool their knowledge: UCLV, the Univer-

sidad de Pinar del Río Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca (Universidad de Pinar del Río), the Universidad de las Ciencias Informáticas (UCI), the Universidad Oscar Lucero Moya de Holguín (Universidad de Holguín), the Universidad de Camagüey Ignacio Agramonte y Loynaz (UC), and the UO. The Flemish universities participating are VUB (coordinating university), the Universiteit Gent and the Universiteit Hasselt.

## Success factors and conclusion

The incorporation of all the Flemish universities in the two long-term projects described here meant that they all got to know the different Cuban HEIs that work on the projects' main research topics. A multiplier effect was clearly felt in the TEAM projects, i.e., the projects between research departments. Many of them have come to an end, but in each call for participation, the number of applications is very high, and come from all the Flemish universities and all the Cuban universities.

This very specific case bears witness to sustainable collaboration that has been instituted between HEIs from Flanders, Belgium and from Cuba.

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*Best Practices on Internationalization of Higher Education  
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This monograph details outstanding cases of good institutional practices that have succeeded in implementing internationalization strategies and programs in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

Its content is divided into two sections. The first, “Best Practices: Institutional Case Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean”, consists of eleven chapters, each devoted to best practices at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

The second section, “Best Practices in Collaboration Projects between European and Latin American and Caribbean Institutions”, looks at the European partner institutions of the Regional Network for the Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America (RIESAL) Project and consists of three chapters. Each one summarizes the achievements attained in cooperation with the European Union through the Latin America Academic Formation (ALFA) and Erasmus+ programs.

This material aims to continue the effort started on *The International Dimension of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*, which is oriented to set the general situation of the internationalization of higher education process in LAC through the contributions of RIESAL members, a project funded by Erasmus+.

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