

PUCRS REPORT

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND CHALLENGES TO THE LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY POLICY: TOWARDS CRES 2018

PUCRS / BRAZIL - PREPARATORY CYCLE

The PUCRS 2017-2018 Preparatory Cycle is an effort for the University's academic community to reflect upon the approach to be implemented to address the central issues of the Third Regional Conference of Higher Education of Latin America and Caribbean (Cres) – Unesco Iesalc 2018, to occur in Córdoba, Argentina, in June 2018, with an eye to the World Conference of Higher Education. The seven meetings of the Preparatory Cycle have been organized into eight different areas as suggested by IESALC/UNESCO. These areas will address the characteristics of Higher Education in the region in terms of their educational systems. The topics have been discussed by members of the academic community. This document contains our contributions and analysis of Higher Education.

CRES 2018 PREPARATORY CYCLE: THE VISION OF PUCRS

The PUCRS 2017-2018 Preparatory Cycle was intended to bring the University's representatives together to discuss the topics of the Third Regional Conference of Higher Education of Latin America and Caribbean (Cres) – Unesco Iesalc 2018. The first stage began on Nov 16, 2017, at a meeting that discussed the Challenges of Higher Education today, which was presented by the President of PUCRS, Br. Evilázio Teixeira. In the President's view, the university is one of the few institutions that must present a new civilizing model. “Our mission is to produce professionals that contribute to a more just and fraternal society”, said he. Among the international topics that have been discussed lately, he mentioned the diversity of the institutional models, internationalization as well as the quality and comprehensive development of individuals. Br. Evilázio claims that institutions must have autonomy but this does not mean that they can do whatever they want. “We have a duty to fulfill to society as we have been urged to respond to its demands. When universities quit fulfilling their duties and working together with society, they will become irrelevant”. Another current trend universities have been working towards is the promotion of continued education, which is now a priority for many of them: “We need to advance and encourage learning in every environment”,

complemented he. We must also give the right value to education for inclusion and acceptance of difference. "Our common challenge is to produce citizens of the world. The University must be the place where fundamental issues find their home in and where the comprehensive development of human beings is encouraged", claimed Dr Teixeira. Education must be for peace rather than oppression. All in all, in Br. Evilázio 's view, PUCRS is very much in line with this reality and this is something that needs to be celebrated. In his opinion, there is still a lot to be done and good will is not enough: a clear strategic view is also necessary. "We have a challenge: our actions must have an impact on society. I would like to invite you all to form a genuine community at the service of truth. We have been tasked to think about it".

In the second stage, the lectures focused on the Role of Higher Education before social challenges as it sought to conceive the university as an area that produces agents of change by applying the academic knowledge into the resolution of social problems. The discussion highlighted the importance of PUCRS being aware of its own identity, guided both by the legacy of its founder Saint Saint Marcellin Champagnat, and by the constant need of development. The Marist documents for Higher Education received special attention. These documents contain the word evangelization, which can be interpreted as education "for social, scientific and cultural changes. Education is what we are here for". This commitment involves not only academic knowledge but also the ethical aspects needed for the construction of individuals committed and capable of contributing to positive changes for society. Being of service is of importance too.

Everything that we produce and discuss here must be at the service of the community. How to produce a morally good human being? What things can the University do to improve its surrounding community, the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil and abroad? These are the challenges that the academic community must face. The mission of the university is to find solutions for problems through a teaching process based on an analysis of social issues.

The topic Higher Education, cultural diversity and interculturality guided the third stage of discussions. The concept of culture lifted from Edvino Rabusque's book *Philosophical Anthropology* has been used, as it says "culture is the transformation that human beings, freely and consciously, make to nature, both in their own and other people's, aiming to

making improvements to this very nature”. He mentioned German philosopher Georg Hegel, as he addressed the first nature, a “material” one, and the second “the one human beings build, that is, History and the culture we promote around us”. These ideas served as foundations for the emergence of the fields of Natural Sciences and Human Sciences, in the 18th and 19th centuries. Still, according to Hegel, “human beings are profoundly marked by the culture they are in, and this shows when they are exposed to a different culture, as he sees something other than him, and identifies who he really is in the differences he encounters”. With all of that in mind, as we discuss multiculturalism and interculturalism, the aspects of globalization and interactions of "cultures that coexist alongside and come into contact" have been mentioned. He used examples such as the migratory waves from countries in conflict in Africa and Middle East.

Scientific and technological research as well as innovation as a driving force of human, social and economic development was addressed in the fourth meeting. One of the conclusions of the meeting was that we need to observe the megatrends that are shaping society and economy, such as rapid urbanization, demographic change, hyper-globalization and accelerating pace of innovation. As for the trends of the future of work, participants stressed that we have been living in an exponential era, in which growth is much swifter and we need to produce individuals for a new society of the future, which is developing its roots in the present. It was also clear that despite the rapid development of technology parks in Rio Grande do Sul, the shortage of financial investments is still a reality in the country, especially for the development of research. As well as that, the drop in innovation and knowledge transfer indexes to the Brazilian industry has been reported. At first, technology parks focused on attracting major companies in order for smaller ones, such as startups and spinoffs, to grow. The current moment is calling businesses to consolidate these partnerships with strategic companies and to trigger the generation of startups and spinoffs in the short run.

The fifth meeting of the PUCRS 2017-2018 Preparatory Cycle had Higher Education in Sustainable Development as its main theme. This lecture began on the premise that “all professions have a very important role to perform to the sustainable development and conservation of nature as a whole”. With that in mind, every effort will be made in order to raise awareness of every party involved in the issue, especially when it comes to addressing it in class as a means to materialize actions in real life. In this sense, the concept of environmental sustainability “relates to the intrinsic value of biodiversity, as it is a biocentric vision”, that is, all forms of life are

respected. The explanation drew insights from the Pope, such as item 159, in which Francis states "the notion of common good encompasses future generations too. One cannot conceive of sustainable development without an intergenerational solidarity. If we are given land, we must look at it beyond a utilitarian concept of efficiency and productivity for individual profit. It is a loan that is bequeathed to each generation that follows".

The theme Higher Education, internationalization and regional integration guided the sixth meeting of the PUCRS 2017-2018 Preparatory Cycle. A general overview of internationalization of Higher Education all over the world has been presented, with a special focus on Latin America. In Brazil, the discussions have revealed that the deficiencies in High School come as barriers to the advancement of Higher Education. This is something that not always occurs in other Latin American nations. Hence, every effort needs to be made in order to strengthen cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions of the world, especially the South-South cooperation, including African countries. "Internationalization in Latin America and the Caribbean is guided by the principle of solidary cooperation and knowledge transfer to strengthen the scientific and technological capacities of the region" and "as we empower ourselves with the knowledge from the Northern Hemisphere and emerging countries in Asia, we can become a center with networks in our continent". The meeting also addressed a movement that was born in the European Union: internationalization at home, as students will have the chance to have international experiences through online education or international curriculum, and the importance of student and faculty mobility for the development of networks, development of research and individual training.

Session entitled Higher Education Proposals in the 100th anniversary of the Argentinean university reform in Córdoba marked the closing of the Preparatory Cycle. A retrospective summary of the 100th anniversary of the Argentinean university reform was intended to reveal the elements that could contribute to the drafting of proposals and analyses, thus valuing the legacy of educators, scientists and dedicated researchers. All demands and suggestions made by students in 1918, at the Córdoba Manifesto, were discussed in their specific context. The analysis concluded that many of the aspects en vogue back then are still a reality today, such as the importance of the quality of teacher-student relationships as a means to keep students at the university and the dialogs with society; the coherence between teaching and the application of academic knowledge in practice; social assistance to university students as well as autonomy of students.

The importance of conceiving realistic proposals to have a positive impact on how we relate to institutions, how we communicate with them and how we are inserted in society have been addressed too.

TOWARDS CRES 2018 PUCRS PROPOSALS

The seven meetings of the PUCRS 2017-2018 Preparatory Cycle have provided theoretical insights for the conception of concrete proposals to be presented at CRES 2018, in Córdoba, Argentina, by PUCRS.

We would like to stress that these proposals may come as important indicators for an efficient, collaborative and ethical attitude with individuals. These principles underlie every single action to be taken at the university especially when we try to keep high levels of academic excellence. We also believe it is important to highlight the unquestionable role of learning outcomes, the commitment to studying and assessment as cross-sectional variables that influence the permanent processes of bringing Higher Education to a higher level of quality. In addition to that, as a factor associated with the quality of students' experiences in their academic life, it seems to be of utmost importance to us to go beyond academic results and implement actions and aspects recognized as important components of the university context: participation, association, feeling of belonging, quality of learning, interpersonal relations, effective dialog with society, research, teaching and social actions. Lastly, we must bear in mind that all the proposals described herein deserve to be embraced by our academic community. This community needs to be aware that the challenges still to be overcome will have the chance to become concrete actions if the educational projects are assumed by everyone.

AREA 1. CURRENT CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

“Our mission is to produce professionals that contribute to a more just and fraternal society; we have a duty to fulfill to society as we have been urged to respond to its problems.

When universities quit fulfilling their duties and working together with society, they will become irrelevant".

1st area – Higher Education Challenges

- To be strongly committed to the quality of Higher Education by combining the institutional mission with the needs of society.
- Bring Higher Education and Basic Education together.

AREA 2. THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE SOCIAL CHALLENGES

Being of service is of importance too. Everything that we produce and discuss here must be at the service of the community. [...] Our mission is to solve problems for we have always been committed to addressing social issues. It is our duty”.

2nd area – Social Challenges

- To emphasize the commitment to social issues by putting knowledge to the service of community.
- To produce knowledge with an eye to addressing problems related to human development such as equity in the social, economic, scientific and cultural dimensions.

AREA 3. HIGHER EDUCATION, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURALITY

“Human beings are profoundly marked by the culture they are in, and this shows when they are exposed to a different culture, as he sees something other than him, and identifies who he really is in the differences he encounters”.

3rd area – Cultural and multicultural diversity

- To develop educational projects to include and accept differences and diversity.
- To develop educational projects to provide education for a globalized world and prepare to work with Latin America.

AREA 4. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AS A DRIVING FORCE OF HUMAN, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"We need to observe the megatrends that are shaping society and economy, such as rapid urbanization, demographic change, hyper-globalization and the accelerating pace of innovation".

4th area – Technology and Innovation

- To bring the university, society and businesses together.
- To develop educational projects for a new society of the new economy.

AREA 5. STRATEGIC ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“All professions have a very important role to perform to the sustainable development and conservation of nature as a whole”.

5th area – Sustainable Development

- To develop educational programs to environmental sustainability for faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate students.
- To develop research projects with focus on sustainable development with local and regional (and global) impact.

AREA 6. HIGHER EDUCATION, INTERNATIONALIZATION AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

“Internationalization in Latin America and the Caribbean is guided by the principle of solidary cooperation and knowledge transfer to strengthen the scientific and technological capacities of the region; “as we empower ourselves with the knowledge from the Northern Hemisphere and emerging countries in Asia, we can become a center with networks in our continent”.

6th area – Internationalization

- To emphasize the importance of Internationalization at Home (IaH) with an eye to the complete internationalization of the University, advanced by the knowledge of the Northern Hemisphere and the emergence of Asian countries. This would make it possible for the region to become a global development complex in the Southern Hemisphere.
- To develop projects and produce knowledge guided by a holistic view, critical thinking, human values and dialog, thus preparing the global citizen for a new society and economy.

AREA 7. PROPOSALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARGENTINEAN UNIVERSITY REFORM

"We focus on the importance of the relationship between faculty and students for education and consequently as means to keep students in students at the university; we must bear in mind that the generation from 100 years ago, as well as the generation that is here in our classrooms, have many dreams, major aspirations in life, many aspirations for their countries. But maybe this generation, the current youth is much more capable of making these dreams come true - it comes to life in a globalized, internationalized scenario.

7th area – Relevance of the Argentinean Reform

- To stress the importance of good relationship, especially that of the faculty-student for a high-quality education.
- To develop projects and programs that benefit the coming generations in their attempt to fulfill their dreams, to make changes for a genuinely just society in every sense: personal, social, academic, labor, economic and political.

Signatures:

President of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul,

Vice President of Undergraduate Studies and Continued Education of Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul.

Dean of Undergraduate Studies of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul,

Coordinator of the Center for Higher Education Studies - CEES - of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul

ANNEX I

DECLARATION OF PORTO ALEGRE: PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE CRES 2018 CYCLE OF LECTURES

The Preparatory Cycle of Lectures held at PUCRS from Nov 2017 to May 2018 came as a response to the Declaration of Porto Alegre dated Aug 2017. In the city of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, from Aug 28 - 29, 2017, the representatives of the Networks, Associations and Councils of Presidents of Universities from Latin America and the Caribbean were invited by the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and Caribbean, UNESCO-IESALC, to join the VIII Meeting of University Networks and Councils of Presidents of Universities in Latin America and the Caribbean. The meeting sought to address the following issues:

- In 2017, higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean faced the challenge to discuss, reflect upon and produce approaches that could guide the higher education system in a conceptual way as a means to socially connect it to its community and produce high quality knowledge.
- In 2018, Córdoba, Argentina will see the Third Regional Conference of Higher Education (III CRES 2018) in an effort to discuss new higher education trends and the guidelines that will guide the systems and institutions in order to accomplish the goals set forth for 2030 and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Argentinean university reform that changed higher education.
- Today, the 1918 Córdoba Reform attributes higher education the responsibility to open up for the production of knowledge and high-quality human development. When it comes to human rights, diversity and social sustainability, it urges individuals to open up for a socially democratic life and include and accept diversity and differences as well as fellowship as constructive principles for a society cutting ties with the socioeconomic and political problems.

Participants are sure of the value of Higher Education Institutions for society as a whole and of their capacity to make changes to produce sustainable and integrative societies. These societies will also produce several insights that will contribute to democratic life with the inclusion and acceptance of diversities and differences as they will be firmly engaged with the values of fellowship and cooperation for a

socially responsible exercise of civic consciousness. In view of that, once the participants of the VIII Meeting of University Networks and Councils of Presidents of Universities in Latin America and the Caribbean have analyzed, discussed and exchanged points of view, in view of their regional perspective and their respective conceptions as to how best address the issues in the agenda to be discussed at the III CRES 2018, established that an dialogue for the implementation of possible mechanisms of articulation to the strategies of incidence, communication and mobilization for the meeting in Cordoba. Amid this scenario, the cycle of lectures involving PUCRS and other Higher Education Institutions becomes a reality as it mirrors the aspirations and commitments of the academic community to the strengthening of regional higher education in the hopes that its suggestions be endorsed.

At the closing of the Declaration of the VIII Meeting of University Networks and Councils of Presidents of Universities in Latin America and the Caribbean, participants acknowledged and offered their unanimous support to UNESCO-IESALC as a specialized, unique, necessary, active institute firmly committed to its agenda and its actions for the strengthening and sustainable development of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. With that in mind, they provided support to the Plan of Work and development of CRES 2018 as an opportunity to make decisions about higher education to bring it to a higher level of development. Lastly, each party involved highly commended UNESCO-IESALC for this project and organization of the meeting.