

STRATEGIC PLAN – CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF URUGUAY (UCU) 2019-2024

MISSION – We are a higher education institution, pluralistic and open to the world, committed to achieving excellence, to building a more inclusive and fair society, and to the evangelization of our culture; we educate open-minded people from the educational tradition of the Church and the Society of Jesus.

VISION – We will be an appealing and challenging *ethos*, which invites and motivates young and adult students, professors and graduates, to live a human and academic experience, characterized by an innovative profile, excellence in interdisciplinary and cross-curricular learning, the creation, discussion and diffusion of knowledge, institutional dynamism and personal, community and global commitment.

1) Elaboration process of the Strategic Plan

In February 2017, the extended Board of Directors started to redesign the educational model of the UCU. The work was done in two lines: on the one hand, activities were developed in order to collaboratively rethink the style and, on the other hand, the organizational structures and their management bodies were revised.

1.1 In July and August 2017, a workshop on “Design Thinking” called “Education as usual just can’t continue”, was held. It was delivered by Professor Reinhold Steinbeck and by consultant Ian Hunt, from IntoAction Consulting Inc. Eighty people participated in this activity: seventeen of them were student delegates and the rest of the people were academic and managerial staff. Every school, campus and unit was represented.

Eight challenges that arose from this workshop:

- 1) How can research be enhanced?
- 2) How can a culture of innovation be generated?
- 3) How can student services be transformed for them to become flexible, dynamic and efficient?
- 4) How can we take advantage of the experiences that exchange students have had in order to boost innovation at UCU?
- 5) How can the pedagogic and didactic competences of our professors be improved?
- 6) How can a new generation of entrepreneurs and innovators be fostered?
- 7) How can cross-curricular learning be encouraged?
- 8) How can internal communication be improved?

As a result of this process, the extended Board of Directors defined four projects: “Ludus Center”, to develop teaching competences of our professors; “Ithaka Center” of entrepreneurship and innovation; the scheme “Unpacking the Experience”, to make the most of the experiences of exchange students; and “Campus Project”, to better adapt the facilities and buildings to the objectives of university life.

1.2 At the same time, the organizational model of the UCU began being restructured in order to achieve unique management which promotes a joint institutional culture,

with strategic objectives, which surpasses the Napoleonic and professional university model which has characterized the Uruguayan university since the time it was created. The matrix model which started to be implemented seeks to strengthen and increase some of the main tasks which are introduced in this strategic plan: innovation in teaching and in the design of academic programmes; growth in the quantity and quality of the research; institutional dynamism; improvement of the range of postgraduate courses offered.

The milestones of this new model have been:

- 1) Reorganization of Vice-Presidency of the University Environment, which became Vice-Presidency of the University Community. The following areas were included: Students Affairs, Institutional Communication, and International Academic Affairs and "Alumni". (April 2017)
- 2) The division of the Academic Vice-Presidency into: Vice-Presidency of Academic Programmes, focused on teaching and learning; and Vice-Presidency of Research and Innovation, focused on the strengthening and development of these areas. (August 2017)
- 3) All the departments, institutes and centers that were in the different schools, now will depend directly on the Vice-Presidency of Research and Innovation, and in the case of some centers, on the Vice-Presidency of Academic Programmes. (November 2017)
- 4) Creation of Ithaka Center of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, which merged the entrepreneurship centers of the School of Business and the School of Engineering and Technology. (December 2017)
- 5) Creation of Ludus Center for the development of didactic and pedagogic competences of the teaching staff of the university. (February 2018)
- 6) Relaunching of Ignis Center, as a university audiovisual center. (May 2018)
- 7) Relaunching of the Department of Humanistic Education which has become the Department of Humanities, which includes the Institutes of Philosophy, History and Society and Religion. (June 2018)
- 8) Creation of the Center of Permanent Education, which supports and promotes continuing professional development offered by the Schools and Departments. (August 2018)
- 9) Creation of the School of Health Sciences, which merged the School of Nursing and Health Technologies and of Psychology, and which will soon be followed by the School of Dentistry. (October 2018)
- 10) Relaunching of the school of business as UCU Business School, with a new academic and organizational proposal, at faculty level, for business and management postgraduate courses, as well as for executive education. (November 2018)

11) Relaunching of Salto Campus and Punta del Este Campus, which have been levelled as units like faculties and schools, with their own plan of development and growth, creation of campus boards, and regular participation of their directors in the extended Board of Directors. (February 2019)

12) Approval of the new *General Organic Regulations* and the *General Regulations for the Academic Staff*, which include all the changes that have occurred in the past two years.

13) Creation of the *School of Postgraduate Studies*, at faculty level, which will assume the management of all the postgraduate academic programmes of the university except for the ones which are included in UCU Business School. (March 2019)

With the input produced during the years 2017 and 2018, the extended University Board of Directors defined the strategic lines and guidelines last February. These have been included in this document for the period 2019-2024, and it was presented for it to be revised by the General Academic Board dated February 28th 2019. The document was revised and has been enriched with contributions made by the directors of Students Affairs, International Academic Affairs and “Alumni”, Institutional Communication, Human Resources, Information, Administrative and Financial Systems. A meeting was held on April 1st in which work was done with the directors of the departments, centers and institutes. It was finally approved by the extended Board of Directors on April 10th 2019.

2. Strategic thrusts

2.1 Excellence in interdisciplinary and cross-curricular learning, in the face of a disruptive world.

2.1.1 University innovation aims to:

a) Implement the transformation of all the graduate and postgraduate programmes in accordance with the new university level, in the period 2019-2020, for them to be offered between 2020 and 2021.

i) Accomplish the cross-curricular integration of all the graduate and postgraduate programmes, so that the students can become part of this development and are responsible for their own learning.

ii) Diversify the number of academic graduate, postgraduate and permanent education programmes, strengthening the areas of health, art and design and agricultural sciences.

iii) Widen the academic offer of Campus Salto and Campus Punta del Este, regarding graduate, postgraduate and permanent education programmes.

iv) Manage to develop a humane, creative, innovative and entrepreneurial culture in all areas of learning, and that the curricular core of all the redesigned study plans promotes and facilitates it.

v) Strengthen hybrid models of teaching in order to cater for the diverse ways in which students learn.

vi) Include ICT as facilitator of innovation in university teaching.

vii) Develop a virtual campus as from 2020, which will be used to manage all the academic programmes and blended and online courses.

viii) See that in 2024, 85% of the students finish their studies in the time stipulated in the study plan.

ix) See that in 2024 graduate students finish their studies having attained a B2 level of English according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

b) Extend the use of the English language in teaching, research and other activities which are part of the university life.

2.1.2 Teaching professionalization and results of teaching and learning:

a) Define and improve pedagogic competences in all professors, by means of professional development, experimentation, good practice examples, internalization and English proficiency.

b) Train the professors to offer inclusive teaching classes, which cater for a diversity of students, and to personalize the learning experience.

c) Develop and implement an evaluation model for university professors for the year 2020, aimed at obtaining better processes and learning results.

d) Create an incentive scheme for teaching improvement for the year 2020.

2.2 Excellence in research: creation, discussion and diffusion of knowledge

2.2.1 Academic production:

a) Consolidate the UCU as a research university, by means of a wider innovative and high quality academic production, relevant for the needs of a developing society.

b) Consolidate a structure of departments and institutes, which maximize the organization and management of research and knowledge transfer.

c) Manage to have one hundred professors integrated to the National System of Researchers in the next five years.

d) Define and consolidate five lines and strategic projects in interdisciplinary research, which have an impact on the environment, according to their importance for the country and the mission of the university.

e) Generate an incentive scheme for research for the year 2020.

f) Develop a center in 2020 that stimulates and promotes research in the degree and master programs, by means of the inclusion of students in research conducted by university professors.

2.2.2 PhD Programs

The aims are to:

- a) Launch three new programs in the areas of Engineering, Health Sciences, as well as in Social Sciences and Education.
- b) Strengthen those areas which are still not at the appropriate level to develop more postgraduate and PhD programs, especially in Dentistry, Law and Administration.

2.3 Maximizing management

2.3.1 Institutional dynamism:

- a) Strengthen the structure and the matrix culture of the university with simplified processes of collaboration and interrelationship between the different academic and administrative units.
- b) Improve the academic management conditions in order to make progress towards cross-curricular programmes and interaction among academic programmes.
- c) Create a unique office in 2019 for handling all the administrative issues of students' affairs, from admission to graduation (Students' Office).
- d) Revise and improve the processes and criteria of administrative management in order to become a dynamic, efficient and effective institution in 2020.
- e) Digitalize the processes of information management of the UCU, especially of professors and students, to have timely and appropriate information necessary to make decisions.

2.3.2 Innovation in management:

- a) Strengthen participatory leadership in the different management units.
- b) Favor an institutional culture which is creative and innovative, open to change and to innovation, and warmly receptive of people who become part of it.
- c) Promote team and smooth work of the different units, simplifying the organization chart and making the rotation of positions and responsibilities more natural.
- d) Develop a professional development and evaluation programme for university management for the year 2020.

2.3.3 Management sustainability:

- a) Increase the number of undergraduate students by 30% in the next five years.
- b) Increase the number of postgraduate students by 50% in the next five years.
- c) Develop a project for attracting resources for research and transfer between 2019 and 2020.

2.3.4 Institutional communication:

- a) Position the UCU at national and international level as a university with an innovative model of organization and management, which stands out for its pedagogic, study and teaching project, integrated to different areas of knowledge: flexible, updated and of excellent quality.
- b) Consolidate the UCU as independent, serious and with a good academic reputation because of its contributions to the different problem areas that affect us all as a society.
- c) Improve internal communication, with students and staff, making it more efficient and effective.
- d) Communicate university production in research, entrepreneurship and transfer as a community service.

2.4 Personal, community and global commitment

2.4.1 University *ethos*

- a) Build the *ethos* of the UCU as an integrated and harmonic environment between academic-curricular life and non-regulated activities, and consolidate the “UCU experience” as an integral proposal for the education of the students, both as people and as professionals.
- b) Strengthen a religious approach, offered to the whole university community, which encourages in an explicit way a life of faith, a faith-culture dialogue and the university commitment supported by the Gospel.
- c) Strengthen the activities and spaces of the student life with innovative proposals in culture, sports, collaboration and student welfare.
- d) Promote a culture of collaboration among students which turns them into the protagonists of their learning process and which engages them in their university experience.
- e) Develop opportunities for encounters and exchanges among professors, staff from different areas in the university and students.
- f) Remodel physical spaces in the different Campus of the university to create a more appealing atmosphere, which encourages student life.
- g) Develop all the aspects of the *ethos* UCU in Campus Salto and Campus Punta del Este, so that students, professors and staff in general can fully live the UCU experience.
- h) Systematize and strengthen the Campus Project for the year 2020 so that the buildings and facilities of the “UCU” become an expression of the *ethos* that is being built: innovative, appealing, challenging, aesthetic, inclusive and sustainable.

2.4.2 Innovation, entrepreneurship and social impact:

- a) Promote innovation and an entrepreneurial culture inside and outside the academic programmes.
- b) Support the building and consolidation of innovative business projects performed by our students, graduates and professors.
- c) Tighten the links with the business world and position the UCU as an appealing institution, due to its contributions to the business development and its training programs as well as to its support services, consulting services and applied research.
- d) Address specific social problems in an interdisciplinary way with a real incidence in the community and promote citizen commitment in our students and professors.
- e) Strengthen university transfer programmes, especially for those sectors of society in need and for the most pressing problems, by means of strong and extended links with Civil Society Organizations, State Organizations and the Church. The idea is that these programs really express the commitment of the UCU with social university responsibility.
- f) Promote international recognition of the centres: Ludus, Ithaka, Ignis, Permanent Education, UCU Library and the Language Centre, as references in innovation of university model.

2.4.3 Internationalization:

- a) Achieve the fact that 40% of the undergraduate students of each generation take part in the international exchange during one term for the year 2024.
- b) Double the number of foreign students who study at UCU for at least one term for the year 2024.
- c) Increase the presence, quality and visibility of international professors.
- d) Double the agreements that allow our professors' mobility.
- e) Achieve five double certifications with universities from Europe and the United States.
- f) Manage to have, at least, 50 undergraduate and postgraduate courses in English for the year 2024.
- g) Strengthen the exchange of students and professors with Asia, as well as the agreements with universities from this region.
- h) Systematize and strengthen the Project *Unpacking the Experience* for the year 2020.

2.4.4 Alumni

Design and implement, between the years 2019 and 2020, a bonding project with the *Alumni*, which involves them in university life, at different campuses.