

that students would be required to pass before enrolling in the predegree program. His goal was to limit the program to those students who had a good possibility of passing it. The aptitude test contributed to the tensions that led to the strike. Open access and free higher education are sacred in much of Latin America and certainly in Ecuador. Arrobo challenged both ideals and succeeded in introducing new approaches.

CONCLUSION

This article doesn't begin to describe the complexity of the reforms these two rectors have undertaken. What is intended here is to highlight that new economic models have become central to the higher education equation. Yet the extreme financial constraints have made it possible for these two rectors to challenge certain characteristics of public higher education that have been considered "untouchable" in this century. There seems to be a new and more practical attitude on campus that makes difficult reforms possible. No one—administrators, professors, or students—wants to settle for the alternative: an education inadequate to the demands of a modern and global future.

The University and Integration in Latin America

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One of the most important events in Latin American academia in 1996 was the Regional Conference on Politics and Strategies in the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized by UNESCO's Regional Center for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC). International cooperation was the major issue on the agenda. The main outcome of the conference was the realization that Latin American and Caribbean higher education institutions will have to merge their efforts in order to overcome the obstacles they face. Commission Five was entrusted with the formulation of a proposal for reorienting international cooperation in the field of higher education.

The current Latin American context and its overall problems require analyzing several historical patterns of cooperation and, more particularly, the recent horizontally developed experiences. This new type of horizontal cooperation seeks to spur endogenous development conditions and establish operative formulas emanating from the co-

operative practice itself. These experiences must spread in response to a period of structural changes requiring new patterns beyond traditional models. A new cooperation paradigm thus emerges, enriching the traditional relationships with the technical and/or financial assistance agencies in a "pairs and equals" situation rather than seeking to substitute them.

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Cooperation must then be geared toward surpassing existing asymmetries and establishing collaboration. It's very important to work within priority areas and proactive horizontal structures sharing resources, thus enabling innovative research, teaching, and coordination programs. CRESALC would seem to be the coordinating organization best suited to monitor and promote exchange intensification among higher education institutions by coupling its actions with the already existing networks and associations, and adapting its own structure and functions.

Using this context as a frame of reference, the commission recommended that:

- universities channel a specific portion of their budget toward horizontal regional cooperation;
- a web of networks be established emanating from the different joint experiences developed in the region—such as the Montevideo Group, the Amazonian, the Caribbean, and the Central American universities;
- academic consortia be fostered to share the requisite resources for cooperation;
- environment and sustainable development be made the top priorities of cooperation; and
- new social actors—i.e., gender, ethnic, linguistic, and class minorities—be actively involved in higher education change processes.

The commission also unanimously decided that CRESALC should be reconstituted into an autonomous institution for higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. This new body will act as (1) an information, database and research center for the Latin American and Caribbean higher education system, and (2) a collegiate body of horizontal collaboration and cooperation where the continent's new cultural and intellectual capital will be developed and reproduced.