Digital challenges and academic management

Academic development and gender equity

Educational project

Academic integrity

Student development and university life

Quality assurance

4.

ACADEMIC
CHALLENGES AND
INNOVATIONS

STRENGTHENING OUR EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

/ Updating and improving the educational project and implementing the new General Education Plan.

/ Defining innovative curricular frameworks, promoting pedagogies that favor deep learning, through flexible curricular designs, articulation between programs, intermediate exits and internationalization at home.

/ Developing a communication plan to sensitize the administrative and professional staff about their role in the educational project.

OBJECTIVE / 1
Academic challenges: objectives and actions

ACADEMIC CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIONS

In the last decade, the university has significantly broadened the spectrum of concerns and areas of action related to its educational project. Safeguarding its coherence and balance, while maintaining fidelity to our institutional identity and setting as a horizon to serve society and the country imposes new challenges of a cross-cutting nature. In the coming years we will continue to promote inclusion, internationalization, interdisciplinary and sustainability projects, but giving special priority to digital development, academic integrity and gender equity. In all these projects and challenges, students are and will continue to be the center of our actions and concerns.

Educational project

In this line, our main purpose will be to update, improve, and communicate the educational project, strengthening our commitment to the training of people capable of assuming the new challenges that we are facing as a society and global community. The educational project must start from the mission, principles and values of the Universidad Católica, promoting, based on them, a vision of building a society where virtues such as solidarity, justice, peace, and respect for diversity, gender equity, and care for the common home prevail.

"To have a solid and transversal ethical training, which goes beyond a single course…which is embodied in each of the formative stages".

La UC Dialoga / 2020

In relation to the curricular framework, we will seek to move towards creative designs and redesigns that allow greater levels of flexibility and autonomy for students, greater possibilities of articulation between programs and between different academic levels, enhancing interdisciplinary crossings, and training that promotes the achievement of lifelong learning and skills. As mentioned in the axis of University Governance, we will work with academic units to promote a curricular model with majors and minors that are equivalent among different programs, which will facilitate the development of more flexible academic programs and a cross-cutting curricular design for the entire university.

During the next five-year period, the new General Education Plan will be implemented and high-impact teaching practices will be strengthened, including the Service Learning program (A+S), and the undergraduate research initiatives and collaborative work, all with the aim of advancing our purpose of educating free, complete, and educated people, who are committed, aware and upright citizens, so that they become true agents of change in the service of others. The new General Education Plan, approved in 2019, has distinctive characteristics, such as the structured curricular flexibility, the integration in the curriculum, the development of superior academic skills in students and enhancement of their communication skills, a strong interdisciplinary emphasis, own courses, evaluation and monitoring mechanisms and the establishment of an academic and management leadership that allows the development of the committed purposes.

On the other hand, both interculturality and the new internationalization policies will be used to enrich

"Train and educate now, to see changes in the future".

La UC Dialoga / 2020

academic trajectories through education in values and diversity for citizenship training. In addition, procedures for the recognition of learning will be promoted, such as validation, prior knowledge exams, and the use of internationalization at home.

All the aforementioned challenges, and those that will be presented later, imply the joint work of the different actors of the community as agents and participants of the common objective of our educational project: the comprehensive training of people. In order for administrative and professional staff to be committed to this objective, it will be necessary to provide them with training and education opportunities, so that they share a common vision that contributes to the learning of the entire university community.

> "Teaching that incorporates new virtual methodologies and Learning and Service".
>
> La UC Dialoga / 2020

Digital challenges and academic management

The updating and improvement of the educational project requires that the innovation associated with the new digital challenges has a meaning and is linked to the learning, values, and student experiences that it seeks to promote. In this line, we will seek to enhance the interaction between academics and students, enriching face-to-face spaces and taking advantage of the enormous potential of digital tools and methodologies. This requires a teacher training and improvement plan, as well as the creation of a new digital environment that includes the design and progressive adaptation of new educational spaces in classrooms, workshops, laboratories and libraries, combining physical and digital infrastructure, as well as the necessary management support for the updating and improvement of the educational project.

Taking on the new digital challenges in terms of the progressive reconfiguration of educational spaces invites us to reflect on complementary aspects such as the duration of class modules and academic periods, in order to adapt them to this new scenario.

With the support of its professional teams and a new digital environment, Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will work to improve management in all areas of its competence and its coordination with the academic units. In particular, we expect to advance in the coordination of master's degree programs, in order to strengthen them as a whole and in areas that go beyond processes associated with self-evaluation, accreditation, monitoring of improvement plans and curricular development.

OBJECTIVE / 2
Academic challenges: objectives and actions

PROMOTING STUDENT LEARNING AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH NEW DIGITAL TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES

/ Designing a digital environment that includes curricular information systems, learning management and evaluation, to facilitate student learning and curricular progression. Providing training support to teachers and students in the use of digital tools for teaching.

/ Studying the length of class modules and the possible redefinition of the length of academic periods.

/ Optimizing administrative and academic management processes, adapting work platforms and ensuring efficient access to information for better academic management.

INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF AND GENDER EQUITY

OBJECTIVE / 3
Academic challenges: objectives and actions

/ Developing policies and strategies to ensure gender-balanced hiring in the academic staff and promoting the retention of professors, especially female and foreign academics.

/ Developing a policy for the development of the special academic staff and mechanisms to encourage and recognize academics from the different departments for their teaching performance.

/ Updating the teaching evaluation so that it considers the guiding principles of the educational project and academic integrity with a formative focus, together with promoting complementary norms that give due recognition to academic management and social outreach activities.

Academic development and gender equity

In order to strengthen its educational project, the university must promote the integral development of its academic staff. The implementation of the new special staff and, particularly, the reduction of the gender gap between male and female academics are part of our challenges. Regarding the special academic staff, it is necessary to complete their installation process in all units in order to promote their academic careers.

Another important milestone in the development of the academic career has been the creation of the Office of Gender Equality. The purpose of this new unit is to promote the academic development of women and generate the conditions to incorporate gender equity in the integral project of the university. This new department will promote the design and implementation of policies that address historical biases, quality of life and the updating of policies for the reconciliation of work, personal and family life, in order to ensure an adequate insertion, well-being, and subsequent trajectory of our academics. On the other hand, we will promote the renewal of complementary norms that give space and value to academic management and activities related to the society.

"Gender equity cannot remain as an isolated headline; it must be present on a permanent basis. The impact on the quality of life, dignity, recognition and development of thousands of women depends on the strength we put on this issue".

University Superior Council Day

Given that the updating of the educational project involves a series of new challenges, it will be necessary to communicate them effectively to the entire academic body, providing the necessary support for their full implementation through workshops and different types of resources.

Academic integrity

As part of an educational project based on the principles and values of the Universidad Católica, the academic work and learning of our students must be carried out within a framework of academic and ethical integrity. These aspects are a fundamental part of the comprehensive training of persons and, in their promotion, professors and assistants play an essential role. We must generate and promote actions aimed at creating a culture of integrity within the university.

Academic integrity is understood as acting with the values of honesty, truthfulness, trust, justice, respect and responsibility in all areas that involve university training. It is expected that all members of the UC Community act in accordance with these values, being role models for their environment.

To strengthen academic integrity, collaborative work among peers should be encouraged rather than being guided by a competitive and individualistic logic. A great challenge in this line is to promote more instances of joint work for research, publication and teaching. For example, encouraging professors in the same department or in the same field to have time and incentives to teach together and to have more coordination spaces.

STRENGTHENING AND PROMOTING THE CULTURE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

OBJECTIVE / 4
Academic challenges: objectives and actions

/ Developing and implementing policies and guidelines aimed at promoting academic integrity within the University.

/ Creating more instances of joint work among academics for research, publication and teaching, in order to foster collaboration among peers and thus strengthening academic integrity.

/ Establishing an institutional policy and model for continuous quality improvement and innovation in all dimensions of university activities and involving the entire community in this purpose.

STRENGTHENING THE ACCOMPANIMENT AND SUPPORT OF STUDENTS

/ Reviewing and modify academic placement systems to improve timely graduation and student retention.

/ Developing systems of accompaniment, tutoring and counseling for students.

/ Promoting student wellness policies, with particular emphasis on physical and mental health.

Quality assurance

The Universidad Católica has a strong commitment to excellence, which is reflected in its various policies, processes and quality assurance mechanisms in each of its areas of action. This effort, which has been built over the years by all members of the community, has allowed our university to be widely recognized for its academic results. In the coming years we must implement an internal quality assurance system and foster a culture of continuous improvement within the university, in line with the country's higher education policies. This system should consider processes, results, and indicators associated with teaching, research, management, and links with society, academic integrity, inclusion and internationalization, among other fundamental aspects for the development of the university, and should be linked to the UC Development Plan and the strategic plans of the academic units.

Student development and university life

Along with adjusting the graduate profile to the new needs, the future update of the educational project will invite us to take a close look at the admission profile and the changes that have been generated by the equity and inclusion initiatives. In the next five years, we will study and work on new types of admission, leveling and student support for an effective graduation, expanding and strengthening the accompaniment of students who enter through the different equity channels provided by the university. These initiatives and projects are addressed in the Expanding Opportunities axis of this plan.

"Enhancing the university experience is a fundamental pillar in the comprehensive training of students. Volunteering, student centers, university policy, among others, are an essential part of university life and allow us to generate meeting points between the various careers and disciplines".

University Superior Council Day

In addition to the above, there is the need to understand that the university experience must be an integral part of the educational project and contribute to coexistence based on respect for the dignity and identity of each person, an aspect that has been addressed in the UC Community axis as a priority for the coming years. In turn, it is necessary to value and recognize the co-curricular work and promote the good development of university life. This should be characterized by an inclusive hallmark, which values diversity, and should develop in a framework that promotes the general welfare of students with particular emphasis on their physical and mental health.