



UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

A SNAPSHOT

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About the Alfa PUENTES Project

The Alfa PUENTES Project is an international cooperation initiative created to foster the development of the Latin American Higher Education Area. Led by European and Latin American university associations, it aims to improve modernisation mechanisms, reform and harmonisation of Latin American education systems, and promote large-scale collaboration between European and Latin American universities. Co-financed by the European Commission Alfa programme, the project covered a three-year period (2011-2014) and was coordinated by the European University Association (EUA) and a bi-regional management team.

Alfa PUENTES gathered six European associations (EUA and the national associations of France - CPU, Germany - HRK, Spain - CRUE, Poland - CRASP, and Portugal - CRUP), as well as the Observatorio de la Relaciones Unión Europea - América Latina (OBREAL) and SGroup Network of European Universities) with Latin American partners, also university associations: Colombia - ASCUN, Chile - CRUCH, Bolivia - CEUB, Peru - ANR, Costa Rica - CONARE, Panama - CRP, Honduras - UNAH, Mexico - ANUIES and the Universidad Veracruzana, Brazil - CRUB, Argentina - CIN, Paraguay - UNA, Uruguay - UdelaR, the Central American University Council (CSUCA) and the Association of Universities Grupo Montevideo (AUGM). Each partner, through its own history of cooperation within Latin America and bi-regionally, used the project to deepen and widen the internationalisation of higher education in their countries/regions and promote international dialogue.

The project also tried to make visible and strengthen the existing sub-regional convergence processes in Latin America, articulated by the Andean Community, the Mercosur region and Central America/Mexico. Mutual learning activities between Latin America and European associations and their members targeted quality assurance reform (Andean Community), enhancing recognition of degrees, building qualifications frameworks (Central America) and increasing academic mobility (Mercosur) - themes that are inherently interlinked.

The project aimed to enhance wider regional Latin American convergence, utilising the sub-regional experience as a building block. In parallel, it aimed to generate stronger working relationships between European and Latin American associations.

1. Introduction

The survey for Latin American university associations was carried out between October 2012 and August 2013 within the Alfa PUENTES project with the following objectives:

- to complement the institutional TRESAL survey (Transformations and reforms in Latin American higher education)¹ of the Alfa PUENTES project by exploring perceptions about higher education system development in Latin America, specifically from the perspective of university associations;
- to obtain information about the role of university associations from the Alfa Puentes project in their national and regional context, and in particular on their work areas and priorities;
- to present the partners of the Alfa PUENTES project - their structures, tasks, similarities and differences - and promote future cooperation between them and also with similar organisations in Europe.

This publication consists of two parts:

- an analysis of the replies from Latin American associations on trends in higher education in their education systems.
- information sheets on the associations.

The publication attempts to give the university associations' views on higher education trends and to promote their role at national and regional level of higher education reform processes.

1.1 Methodology: Alfa PUENTES partners represented in this report

The survey was completed by 15 university associations from the Alfa PUENTES project (see table 1). The survey included the response from CEUPA - Ecuadorian Corporation of Private Universities, which is not a partner of the Alfa PUENTES project; however Ecuador was active in the project and represents an important actor in the Andean Community's sub-regional higher education system.

¹ The TRESAL survey was created within the framework of the Alfa PUENTES Project to find out how universities are changing with regard to teaching and learning, research, mobility and internationalisation, quality assurance, governance and management. It had three questionnaires, each with a specific purpose, aimed at university leadership, professors and students of higher education institutions. There were 150 replies from institutions, 1 568 from professors and 7 672 from students from 14 Latin American countries.

Table 1: List of survey respondents and partners of the Alfa PUENTES project

Region	Country	Institution
Mercosur	Argentina	National University Council (CIN)
	Brasil	Brazilian Rectors' Conference (CRUB)
	Paraguay	National Higher Education Council of Paraguay
	Uruguay	Universidad de la República (UdelAR)
	Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay	Montevideo Group Universities' Association (AUGM)
Andean Community	Bolivia	Executive Committee of Bolivian Universities (CEUB)
	Chile	Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH)
	Columbia	Association of Colombian Universities (ASCUN)
	Peru	National Rectors' Assembly (ANR)
	Ecuador	Ecuadorian Corporation of Private Universities (CEUPA) ²
Mesoamerica	Costa Rica	National Council of University Presidents (CONARE)
	Honduras	Higher Education Directorate of Honduras (represented by the National Autonomous University of Honduras - UNAH)
	Mexico	National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES)
	Panama	Panama Rectors' Council (CRP)
	Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic	Central American University Council (CSUCA)

Not all the questions were answered by every association, which explains the difference in numbers in the total responses to each question. Given that the survey was intended to generate a limited number of responses (representing the Alfa PUENTES partner associations, but not further) it is important to understand the responses in their context. One should also bear in mind that regarding some questions on national trends, the associations may not represent the country's higher education sector as a whole.

² Not an official partner of the Alfa PUENTES project

The respondents are mainly university associations or organisations with similar functions in their respective countries. The names of the organisations vary, however, most are representing university leadership and universities more widely: Presidents Assembly (Peru), a Rectors' Conference or similar (Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay) and an Executive Committee of Universities (Bolivia). Honduras is an exceptional case because as a partner in the Alfa PUENTES project it is represented by the National Autonomous University of Honduras. Uruguay is also a special case; due to the lack of a national association it is represented by the largest university in the country - the University of the Republic (UdelaR). The responses of the UdelaR have not been included in those questions aimed specifically at university associations. The Central American University Council (CSUCA) and the Montevideo Group University Association (AUGM) have a special role in the Alfa PUENTES Project as they represent a sub-regional perspective. The responses from CSUCA and AUGM were not used for national conclusions, only for those on general trends. CSUCA represents public and autonomous universities from eight countries: Guatemala; Belize; El Salvador; Honduras; Nicaragua; Costa Rica; Panama; and Dominican Republic, of which, in the Alfa PUENTES Project, three are also represented by their own university associations (Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama). AUGM includes a selection of public and autonomous universities in six countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay), mainly in the Mercosur region, which share missions and interests. These countries are also represented by their own national university association within the framework of the project and survey.

For practical reasons, the term “university association” will be used as a general term to refer to all different types of institutions (rectors' council, assembly, etc.) participating in this survey.

1.2 Latin American university associations: an overview

In Latin America there is a large variety of university associations which are heterogeneous with regards to number of staff members, year of foundation, history and development of national education systems, number of members, funding sources and composition. The oldest associations were founded in the 1940s and 1950s. For example, CSUCA was created in 1948 and ANUIES in 1950. The more recent associations were created in the 1990s (for example the CRP in 1995 and the National Higher Education Council in Paraguay in 1993).

In this sample, the university associations encompass and represent mainly public higher education institutions, or both public and private institutions. For CSUCA and AUGM, the associations represent a wide range of institutions in a specific sub-region. In Argentina, the CIN exclusively represents public universities whereas in Paraguay, the National Higher Education Council represents all public and private universities in the country. In other countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama or Peru, university associations represent both public and private higher education institutions.

The number of institutions that belong to the university associations varies considerably. In some countries, university associations have a relatively low number of members (for example, four in Costa Rica and 15 in Bolivia, versus 152 in Brazil and 175 in Mexico). On average, the university associations represent more than half of the higher education institutions in their country (both public and private). In some countries, representativeness of the sector is very high in terms of numbers in institutions represented by the association (for example, ASCUN in Colombia represents 89% of the universities). In other countries, the percentage is lower, for example in Mexico, where ANUIES represents only 10%. This correlation does not take into account the student population. There are several universities (in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, and also in Guatemala) that have more than 100,000 students, in some cases even over 300,000. Most associations in this survey represent such large public institutions and thus represent a large percentage of the student population in the country.

Some Latin American countries have several different university associations. This trend is linked to the diversification that has accompanied the changes and growth in Latin American higher education systems over time. In many countries, private universities have grown exponentially in number which has required associations to reform, expand or refine their membership. New national associations representing specific types of universities were set up in some countries (for example, private institutions or state universities). In Colombia for example, there was a growth in the different types of higher education institutions (as opposed to universities) which subsequently created their own association. Later on some of those institutions joined ASCUN's Rectors' Council.

In general, different university associations cooperate on common topics in higher education that affect their countries. In Bolivia, the CEUB works with the Private University Association on common initiatives and committees, such as the National Accreditation Agency. In Argentina, the CIN and the Private Universities' Rectors Council have joint decision-making mechanisms such as the National Commission for Evaluation and Accreditation and in Panama, the CRP cooperates with the Private University Association of Panama on academic activities related to quality assurance and participation in international projects. In Ecuador, CEUPA and the University and Polytechnic School Association of Ecuador (ASUEPE) work collaboratively to face changes in the higher education system and also to influence policy making.

In Costa Rica, the CONARE and the Private Universities' Rectors Unit (UNIRE) have academic relations through a mixed commission which includes representatives of both organisations. This commission is in charge of executing activities agreed on in the annual rectors' meetings of Costa Rican universities in which rectors from private universities that are not members of UNIRE also participate. There are different types of university associations representing different types of higher education institutions in Brazil, which include public, private, federal, state-funded, municipal, confessional and community universities. CRUB is an umbrella organisation for all types of institutions. The CRUB cooperates and collaborates extensively with other university associations, mainly on topics such as higher education legislation, internationalisation, and funding among others. CRUB is the oldest association whereas the other organisations were set up when the higher education system started to grow.

When it comes to analysing the structure and work mechanisms, all university associations have an executive secretariat, the size of which varies. Some of these offices have between three and five staff members and others over 31. Five of the university associations employ less than 31 people full-time, whereas four of them have from five to 10 staff members. The number of staff members does not necessarily correspond with the size of the higher education system in the country, but is linked to the tasks carried out by the association. The National Rectors' Council of Costa Rica has a large secretariat despite the small size of the country, but has a wide range of tasks, including supporting higher education quality assurance processes in the country. ANUIES, which is large in size, has an important role in the annual negotiations on university budgets, which is constitutionally set in other countries. Other associations have small offices, but tasks are decentralised and carried out by different task forces.

Some university associations are mainly financed by government sources (for example, Paraguay, Brazil, Honduras and Mexico). Others are funded almost exclusively by membership fees (Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru) or through a combination of different sources. In ASCUN, for example, the budget is composed of 20% members' fees and 80% participation in projects. Regardless of whether associations in Latin America are publically funded or not, the majority of associations are independent and autonomous in their decision-making, according to their statutes.

Sub-regional associations represented in this survey have higher membership fees due to their different (and more exclusive) membership composition. For example, AUGM is financed almost exclusively by members' fees (96%) and CSUCA by 50% membership fees, 40% donors subventions for projects and 10% university sources.

1.2.1 The university associations and their tasks

University associations carry out a variety of tasks and activities.

Table 2: Which are currently the most important tasks of your university association? (“very important” displayed)

Support the development and modernisation of the universities in your country	12
Support universities in reforms of learning and teaching	11
Support internationalisation in higher education	11
Contribute to the regional integration and harmonisation of the structure of study plans	11
Provide a political voice towards the government / ministries and parliament (lobby on behalf of higher education)	10
Support universities in their research activities	10
Development or improvement of the credit system	10
Develop a qualifications framework for higher education	10
Internationalisation of quality assurance structures	10
Reform the structures for quality assurance	9
Increase the mobility opportunities for students and academic staff	9
Promote access to higher education	8
Create university-industry relations	8
Improve academic qualifications	8
Support capacity development in doctoral education	6
Public relations with the media and public in general	5

■ very important

Total answers: 14

In the survey, the task evaluated as most important for the university associations that responded is support of the development and modernisation of universities. Other tasks evaluated as very important are the support for internationalisation in higher education, promotion of regional integration and harmonisation of study plans and structures, as well as support for universities in reforming teaching and learning. In contrast, one of the tasks considered less important is the support for capacity development in doctoral education. The majority of higher education institutions in Latin America emphasise teaching over research (with the exception of a relatively small number of large internationally renowned institutions located mainly in capital cities, such as Mexico City, Santiago de Chile, São Paulo and Buenos Aires) and the overall number of doctoral students is relatively low. That said, according to a recent EUA project entitled CODOC³, education is a growing priority in most countries in the region.

All associations surveyed collect data on their members. The most common data are statistical information on the number of undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes offered by their member universities, enrolment, and the number of academic and administrative staff, among others. In addition, a few university associations collect data on main study areas and research fields of universities, as well as research projects, social interaction programmes, etc. The ANUIES (Mexico), being one of the biggest university associations which coordinates its own mobility programmes, indicated that they also collect data on mobility of students and academic staff. The CEUB (Bolivia) indicated that they also have budgetary information, such as the budget the state assigns to public and autonomous universities.

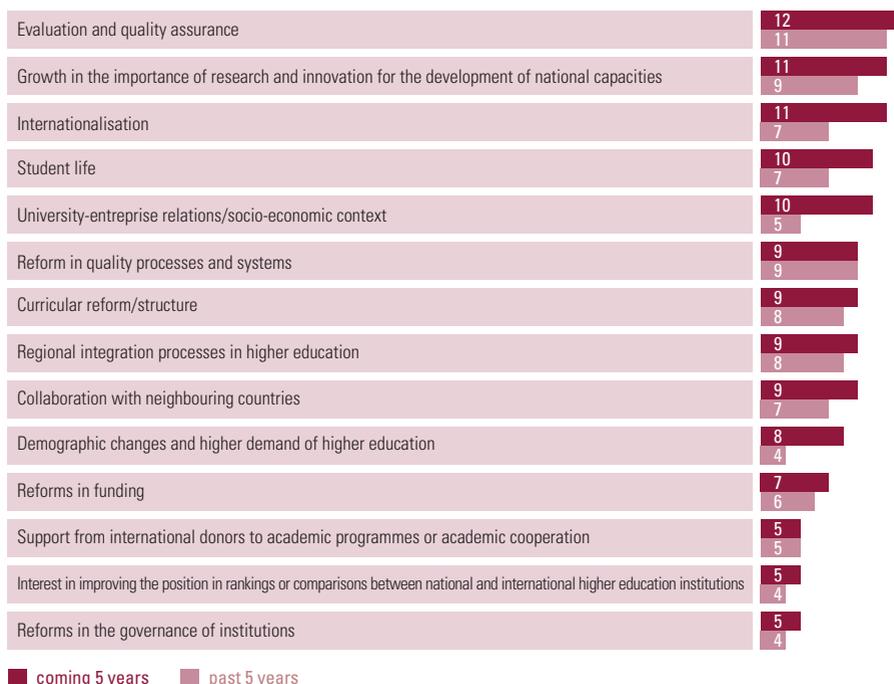
³ CODOC ("Cooperation on Doctoral Education between Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe") is a project co-funded by the European Commission which was carried out by EUA from 2010 to 2012.

2. Trends in Latin American higher education: opinions of the university associations

2.1 Transformation and institutional trends

According to the university associations, in the past five years (table 3), the main topic which has defined the strategies for development of universities has been institutional quality evaluation/quality assurance. This tendency is in line with the survey TRESAL which shows that in the past five years the main topic which has been included in the university's strategies has been accreditation and quality assurance. Other topics which have had a strong influence have been the growth in the importance of research and innovation for national capacity development and reforms in quality processes and systems. The topic which has been considered least important is reforms in governance of institutions.

Table 3: Which of the following topics have been included in the strategies for development in the universities of your country? Please evaluate the importance. ("very important" displayed)



Total answers: 13

In the next five years (table 3) the evaluation/accreditation of quality (quality assurance) and the growth in the importance of research are still the most important topics for institutional strategies. When comparing the next five years with the past five years there are several topics which have gained more importance, such as:

- internationalisation (exchanges and collaboration with foreign institutions, student exchange and international student recruitment, etc.);
- university-enterprise relations/ socio-economic environment;
- demographic changes and their impact of higher education demand.

Higher education institutions in Latin America are continuously facing change and transformation. Regarding the anticipated changes in institutions in the next five years (table 4), university associations assessed improvements in internal quality processes as the most important. In addition, improvement in cooperation with other higher education institutions, enhanced cooperation with industry and diversification in funding sources were also assessed as very important. The changes which are considered least important are increases and decreases in autonomy. Of note, more university autonomy is evaluated as important by associations from Bolivia, Ecuador and Mexico.

Table 4: In the next 5 years, how important do you evaluate the following changes for the institutions? (“very important” displayed)

Improvement in internal quality processes	10
Improvement in cooperation activities with other higher education institutions	8
Improvement in cooperation with industry	8
Major diversification in funding sources	8
New policies for academic careers	7
New entrance requirements for the different study levels/cycles	7
Changes in the quota of fellowships/scholarships	5
Stronger competition with other higher education institutions	5
More autonomy	3
Less autonomy	0

■ very important

Total answers: 12

2.1.1 Trends in the Latin American Higher Education Area

With regards to trends in the Latin American Higher Education Area, all associations agree that there is a strong growth in the number of school graduates accessing higher education. The associations (with the exception of Costa Rica) also note a strong growth in private universities. The privatisation tendency in higher education has created a controversial debate in Latin America. While some see privatisation as a necessity, others are concerned about the quality of education offered. The growth of different providers of higher education is due to massification, and the fact that in many countries governments cannot maintain their investment in public institutions. This is why the action plans of the CRES 2008⁴ and CMES 2009⁵ highlight that it is important that governments increase the investment in higher education, with the aim to support quality and equity.

Some trends that were not highly cited by the university associations were growth in foreign providers opening new campuses and a growth of public universities and for-profit universities. It is interesting to observe that a growth in public universities is above all visible in Mercosur (Argentina and Paraguay) and the Andean Community (Ecuador and Peru). According to the questionnaire, the growth of for-profit universities is a trend in Chile, Peru and Honduras.

Table 5: In your country, is there a tendency towards (please mark all choices that apply):

Growth in the number of school graduates accessing higher education	12
Growth of private universities	10
Growth of foreign providers opening new campus	5
Growth of public universities	4
Growth of for-profit universities	3

Total answers: 12

2.2 Internationalisation

The internationalisation of higher education is a topic of major importance in Latin America. According to the associations, internationalisation of higher education represents a priority for the government in eight of the surveyed countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Paraguay).

⁴ The Regional Higher Education Conferences (CRES), organised by the UNESCO, was celebrated in 2008 in Colombia as a preparation for the World Conference of Higher Education (CMES).

⁵ The World Conference of Higher Education (CMES), organised by the UNESCO, was celebrated in Paris in 2009.

However, few governments have a national or similar strategy for internationalisation according to the respondents. The Ministry for Education in Argentina has put in place a programme to promote Argentinean universities abroad, in accordance with the national strategic interests. In Mexico there is no formal national strategy for internationalisation, but the importance of the topic is recognised in the National Development Plan. The internationalisation of higher education has not been integrated in planning exercises, funding and evaluation of educational policy at national level to the extent it has been within institutions. In the next sectoral programme for education which will be presented by the Public Education Secretary 2013-2017, a national strategy for internationalisation of higher education, as well as indicators, objectives and action points should be elaborated. For the case of Colombia, several government statements point to the importance of higher education, research and internationalisation, but this is not necessarily reflected in the budget allocation.

Even though internationalisation strategies might be imprecise or inexistent at government level, it is important to highlight that many university associations have clear policies for internationalisation. For example, one of the five policy guidelines of ASCUN refers to the strengthening of internationalisation processes at Colombian universities in order to better respond to globalisation and the international standards of higher education in the world. Internationalisation is regarded as fundamental for enhancing graduate training and professional performance, which is becoming increasingly global. In addition to the work of national university associations, it should be noted that in the past 10 years, networks were created to support the internationalisation of universities (for example, the Mexican Association for International Education - AMPEI and the Advisory Forum to Brazilian Universities for International Affairs - FAUBAI).

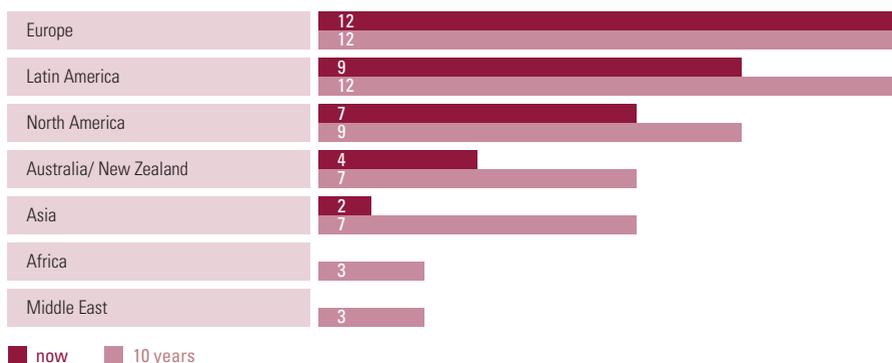
2.2.1 International cooperation

According to the questionnaire (table 6), Latin American higher education institutions prioritise cooperation with Europe, followed by Latin America and then North America. This last datum is noteworthy since the country which receives the highest number of Latin American students is the United States of America. The regions which are considered least important in international cooperation are Africa and the Middle East (none of the associations evaluate cooperation with these regions as very important at present), though this does not differ greatly from European cooperation priorities for example⁶. However, considering the recent trends in international trade and the enhanced South-South economic dimension, this is likely to also impact higher education cooperation. This tendency has been confirmed to some extent by the CODOC project, which analysed the current state of doctoral education cooperation between Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. One of the results is that South-South higher education cooperation is currently quite new, but that there is increasing interest in developing it in the future. To some extent this might also be the case in Latin America, as university associations expect cooperation with Africa and the Middle East to gain more importance in the next 10 years. Cooperation with Latin America as well as North America is modestly gaining importance, however international cooperation with Asia and Australia/New Zealand (non-traditional partner regions) is significantly increasing in importance.

⁶ The European cooperation priorities have also been reflected in the EUA "Trends 2010" report.

It is interesting to observe that when comparing the situation now with the situation in ten years, Europe remains the most important region (all associations, except for Honduras evaluate cooperation with Europe as very important). It is also interesting to see that in the next 10 years, cooperation with Latin America appears to have the same importance as cooperation with Europe. This may be an important rationale for enhanced regional integration in higher education. Overall, the university associations forecast that international cooperation of Latin American higher education institutions will increase and diversify in the future.

Table 6: Please estimate the importance that international cooperation has for higher education institutions from your country with the following regions now and in 10 years (“very important” displayed):



Total answers: 13

There are a variety of international cooperation activities which are carried out by university associations. With regards to the importance of these activities, the associations surveyed have expressed a preference for the following:

- organisation of bilateral meetings for rectors to establish contacts and exchange information;
- international collaboration projects like Alfa or the Erasmus Mundus programme;
- initiatives funded by international donors, regional development banks, national cooperation agencies, World Bank, etc.

Slightly less important are Memoranda of Understanding between associations and other parties which elaborate agreements on exchange or recognition. Initiatives to strengthen the quality assurance systems in higher education and university management (Bolivia) and agreements with regional structures (Peru and AUGM) were also mentioned.

2.2.2 Subregional cooperation

The Alfa PUENTES project was built upon the basis of existing sub-regional cooperation in order to foster the Latin American Higher Education Area. The sub-regions differ significantly in terms of existing protocols and their governing bodies, as well as in their general efficiency at political and economic level. Similarly, inside the different sub-regions one can observe considerable differences in the higher education systems. For example, on the one hand Mercosur has higher education systems as large as Brazil, and on the other hand as relatively small as Paraguay. The survey sought to assess the relevance of these different sub-regions for the work of the associations.

Table 7: How important are the following sub-regional political structures for your work? (“very important” displayed)

Central America (SICA)	4
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	3
Mercosur	8
Andean Community (CAN)	8

Total answers: 14

It seems natural that associations primarily value cooperating with their own sub-region. Mercosur, for example, prioritises collaborating with the countries of its sub-region, and then with the Andean Community. In the Mercosur region there are several mechanisms for collaboration in higher education, such as the sub-regional programme accreditation system ARCU-SUR⁷. In addition, non-governmental associations like AUGM develop mobility programmes which bring together universities of the sub-region. The regional governmental body has an official cooperation section in higher education which brings together Education Ministries (“Mercosur educativo”). Cooperation programmes of Mercosur often open up to cooperation with countries outside Mercosur (as with the AUGM membership and mobility programme which includes some institutions in Bolivia and Chile). In this sense, the definition of sub-regions is sometimes imprecise. Given the overlap in sub-regional spaces, it seems logical that the Mercosur countries also value cooperation with the Andean Community.

The Andean Community prefers to cooperate with its own sub-region followed by Mercosur (there are a few countries in the Andean Community which identify with the region of Mercosur, for example, Chile). The Andean Community has a regional Rectors’ Council (CONSUAN) which was created in 2008 and is still relatively young. Alfa PUENTES helped to promote and foster the relationship between the university associations in the region, and supported CONSUAN to develop activities and projects with the quality agencies in the region.

⁷ The regional accreditation system for university degrees for Mercosur (ARCU-SUR) is the result of an agreement of the Education Ministries from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile, and was created in 2008.

The work preferences of Central America seem to be more balanced. The main work preferences with sub-regions are with Central America and the Caribbean Community, and less strong with the Andean Community and Mercosur.

Table 8: Importance of the sub-regional political structures - Comparison between sub-regions

Mercosur



Andean Community Mercosur

Central America



Andean Community Mercosur Caribbean Community Central America

Andean Community



Mercosur Andean Community

Total answers: 14

2.2.3 Academic mobility and data collection

According to the associations, student and staff mobility is a priority for governments only in Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay. Even though for most governments student mobility is apparently not a priority, many university associations promote and manage mobility programmes.

Quantifying and evaluating internationalisation is a topic of growing interest in Latin America. The different data sources on student and staff mobility are an important indicator. In the majority of countries, the survey respondents indicated that universities provide the main source of data on mobility. Only two respondents indicated that student and staff mobility data are not collected in their countries (Bolivia and Panama). In some countries, data on mobility is obtained through a combination of universities and other bodies or programmes. In Brazil, Colombia and Mexico data on mobility is obtained from the respective mobility programmes, but other types of mobility are not registered (free-movers, etc.). In Uruguay and Paraguay, data is collected in collaboration with development agencies and international organisations that fund mobility (e.g. AECID, DAAD and others). In the cases of Argentina and Mexico, the government and its different bodies (for example, the Ministry and Secretary for Education, Secretary for External Relations, the National Council for Sciences and Technology, etc.) provide data on mobility. In Ecuador data is collected through the National Information System of Higher Education in Ecuador (SNIESE).

However, one of the results of the Alfa PUENTES project was that in Latin America the data which exists on mobility is incomplete⁸. The sub-regional project in Mercosur, which focused on developing a mobility strategy for the region, made a small step towards more complete collection of data and better use of it. Nevertheless, it is clear that a lot of work remains to be done with regards to collecting data on mobility and evaluating it.

Brain drain

For the majority of surveyed associations (with the exception of Bolivia) brain drain is a concern, particularly for researchers (in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay), followed by Master students and doctoral candidates (in seven countries). In four countries (Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Mexico) brain drain is of equal concern at all levels (researchers, students and staff). Chile is an exception, as it seems that brain drain is not an issue and that most of the students and graduates return. Argentina also did not express concern regarding brain drain, and pointed to the fact that links created by international collaboration can compensate to a certain extent.

Table 9: Does brain drain represent an issue of concern in your country?

Yes, of researchers	10
Yes, of students studying for a Master's degree	7
Yes, of students studying for a doctorate degree	7
Yes, of teaching staff	5
To some extent, but the international links created through international collaboration balance until certain point	4
To some extent, but there are enough students who come back	2
No	1

Total answers: 13

Despite their concern about brain drain, Bolivia, Costa Rica and Honduras do not have an official policy on this topic and the governments have not taken specific actions yet. In some cases, for example in Central America, governments may not have an official policy to prevent brain drain, but many higher education institutions have specific measures, such as scholarships that encourage students to return and reserving jobs for grantees.

⁸ This is also clearly a challenge in Europe, according to the report EUA "Mobility: Closing the gap between policy and practice" which was developed in the framework of the MAUNIMO project (2010-2012).

In Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Panama, Peru and Mexico the government is acting to mitigate brain drain and a variety of programmes and initiatives have been implemented:

- In Argentina, the programme R@íces (Network of Argentinean Researchers and Scientists abroad) promotes the continuity of national researchers in Argentina and the return of those who are interested in develop their activities in Argentina.
- In Paraguay, Uruguay and Colombia it is common practice that higher education institutions require teachers / researchers to sign a legal agreement to return to the country.
- In Ecuador, all scholarships which are awarded by the government establish the obligation to return to the country.
- Chile has various programmes to attract recently graduated doctorates abroad.
- In Peru, the National Migration Institute has set up a project to incentivise the return of emigrated Peruvians.
- In Panama, the National Secretary for Science and Technology (SENACYT) created a scholarship programme for studies at PhD and postdoctoral level which guarantees the return of the grantees.
- In Costa Rica, the Science Academy and the private project “Strategy 21st Century” have worked together to provide nationals from abroad with local jobs. This is done mainly through scientific or discipline-based networks using information and communication systems.
- In Mexico, the National Science and Technology Council (CONACYT) has implemented a programme called “Retention and Return”. The objective of the programme is to encourage Mexican researchers from abroad into higher education institutions and centres for scientific research, as well as to strengthen high quality research groups fostering the training of qualified researchers / professors.
- In Brazil, the Science Without Borders programme has the objective to develop and, at the same, time retain young students / researchers in Brazil. The aim is to award scholarships to 100,000 students to study in other universities of the world, develop linguistic capacities and increase the number of students with competences mainly in scientific disciplines. Brazilian authorities report that so far there is a very high return rate to Brazil.

2.3 National framework of degrees and qualifications framework

The survey also asked university associations whether a national qualifications framework existed in their countries. National qualifications frameworks describe what learners should know, understand and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification as well as how learners can move from one qualification to another within a system⁹. Such frameworks have become important in the European context, for example, where each country is defining its own framework and correlating it with European-level frameworks so as to enhance transparency between higher education systems. Four associations in Latin America said that this did exist in their countries. However, upon further consultation, it is believed that the respondents of the survey had some difficulty in distinguishing between the existence of a descriptive framework of degrees and a qualifications framework due to the terminology used in the question¹⁰. In the majority of countries in Latin America, there are frameworks that describe degrees in higher education (laid down in higher education laws, inter-university agreement, statutes and regulations of universities, etc.). In most cases, these frameworks provide a certain nomenclature / terminology for degrees in the national context and describe access requirements and duration. There are currently no official frameworks in Latin America which include expected learning outcomes / competencies for degrees or focus on progression, which would be essential elements of a qualifications framework.

In the framework of the Alfa PUNTES Project, the partners of the sub-region of Central America developed a proposal for a regional qualifications framework for higher education which defines the higher education levels and descriptors of the competences one should acquire. The European input and experience provided, based on the European Qualifications Frameworks (for the EHEA and the European Union) was an important contribution in the development of this framework. Currently the Central American qualifications framework is being discussed and a consensus between the relevant institutions and bodies of the sub-region is being sought. A first draft of the framework from the academic point of view has been agreed by CSUCA and endorsement is being sought by the associations of the region to use it as a working document when assessing curricula in the region as well as study progression.

2.3.1 Recognition of degrees and credits

The university associations agree that the recognition of degrees and credits earned abroad is important to encourage mobility of students, graduates, researchers and academics at regional and international level. Furthermore, it allows the participation of researchers in international research projects.

⁹ For a more detailed definition see also the official website of the EHEA: <http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=17>

¹⁰ “¿Cuenta su país con un sistema nacional de titulaciones (marcos de calificaciones) para la Educación Superior?” = “Does your country have a national degree system (qualifications framework) for higher education?”

The respondents point out that the cross-border recognition process of higher education degrees has been bureaucratic and difficult. However, there is progress being made at some levels which is slowly beginning to have impact: CSUCA defined a nomenclature and common academic norms for regional postgraduate studies which served as a reference to harmonise the degrees of the Central American postgraduate university system. In addition, CSUCA has agreed to a common definition of an academic credit called Central American academic credit which has served as a reference for Central American universities. Also, there is an agreement that exists since 1962 between Central American states for the recognition of university degrees and diplomas. Furthermore, the CSUCA member universities have recently started a process for a new agreement for the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas between public universities in the region. Moreover, through a constitution agreement of the Central American Accreditation Council (CCA), the universities, the education ministries and the professional colleges have agreed to recognise the degrees and diplomas which have been awarded by programmes accredited by accreditation bodies.

These examples are specific to Central America, but other cross-regional initiatives are underway; an important contribution has been made through the Tuning project¹¹, which defined generic competencies and specific competences for 15 university disciplines - regionally, as well as the proposal for a Latin American Reference Credit (CLAR). In the framework of the Alfa PUENTES Project, in South America the main priority of the Andean University Council (CONSUAN) was to design an accreditation model. This was intended to promote trust between institutions and governments regarding academic degrees and to eventually enhance the mobility of the work force which is required by a common Andean market. This initiative was inspired by the ARCU-SUR process in the Mercosur countries, a process of joint accreditation of academic programmes in a few professional disciplines. Furthermore, one can observe that many countries and national rectors' conferences have recognition agreements with neighbouring countries. For example, Colombia has signed agreements with Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Germany, France and Spain for the automatic recognition of accredited programmes.

Regardless, it is evident that there is still a long way to go in this area. The existing tools that have been developed, need to be promoted and utilised and the recognition agreements need to be honoured and practiced by more institutions.

¹¹ Alfa Tuning Latin America was carried out from 2004 to 2007 with the objective to fine-tune the education structures in Latin America. For more information: <http://www.tuningal.org>

2.4 Latin American Higher Education Area

From the beginning of the 2000s reference was made to the creation of a Latin American Higher Education Area. In many ways, this area was inspired by the creation of a European Higher Education Area, even though it has its own dynamics and characteristics. The creation of a Latin American Higher Education Area is one of the objectives of the Alfa programme of the European Commission, which finances cooperation projects to this effect. Nevertheless, there are a variety of different concepts and ideas with regards to what defines this area in practice. The respondents agree that the Latin American Higher Education Area can be defined by the diversity and heterogeneity of its university institutions. They emphasise cooperation as an important attribute, given that it is the different cooperation mechanisms between the countries in the region that permit the exchange of experiences, transfer of knowledge and technology, mobility of students and academics and regional integration. Another characteristic of great importance is the increase of regional quality assurance mechanisms in higher education.

The Alfa PUENTES project responded directly to the call to develop the different attributes of the Higher Education Area in Latin America. Each sub-region undertook its own initiatives to develop cooperation in quality assurance, the promotion of internal mobility in the region or frameworks for the transparency of qualifications. Besides Alfa PUENTES, there are other projects working in the same direction that have an important impact. For example, the Tuning project (another Alfa project) launched the proposal for a Latin American Reference Credit (CLAR). The ENLACES¹² initiative created a space for Higher Education Networks from Latin America and the Caribbean seeking for regional integration.

The associations mentioned a series of aspects that the Higher Education Area should develop. There is a need to establish unifying university structures at Latin American level. Another point which was stressed was the recognition of university degrees and the validation of studies in the Latin American region. For this, stronger integration is needed between higher education institutions, and in particular greater harmonisation of degree structures, academic credits, qualification frameworks and certification of competences.

There was strong agreement among the respondents that (joint) scientific research should be promoted more in all knowledge areas. Exchange programmes (mobility of staff and researchers) should be further developed and strengthen the international collaboration agreements between Latin American countries, the creation of consortia, networks and joint postgraduate study programmes.

¹² www.iesalc.unesco.org.ve/enlaces

According to the results of the questionnaire, the university associations have a key role in the development of a stronger university cooperation in Latin America. The university associations, organised at national, sub-regional and regional level, can be the catalyst to contribute to the development of national and regional policies, in close collaboration and consultation of their members, and link these processes up to international partners, discourses and development trends. In this same line, the respondents agree that the university associations should lead, promote and manage the construction of the Latin America Higher Education Space. In particular, the associations can serve as facilitator between the member universities and associations from other countries. In this way agreements for collaboration can be established, with a wider level of participation regarding cooperation.

It is important to point out the recent progress in establishing a regional association in Latin America - AcruLAC¹³ - which at the moment brings together 15 associations from Latin America and has the objective to institutionalise the efforts of the associations to promote the Latin American Higher Education Area. It is hoped that AcruLAC will have a legitimate representation and credibility to guide the necessary intergovernmental policy decisions to strengthen the integration and development of science, culture and higher education, which has become a priority of the current process of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

¹³The Association of Councils of University Rectors of Latin America and the Caribbean (AcruLAC) was created in 2013 and recognised in the CELAC summit in January 2014 as a key actor in regional integration.



INFORMATION SHEETS
ON THE UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATIONS

National University Council

(Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional - CIN)



Argentina

www.cin.edu.ar

Legal nature, history and mission

The National University Council (CIN) is a legal entity under public law as a non-governmental organisation. It was created by a decree of the President of the Republic of Argentina, Dr Raúl Alfonsín, on 20 December 1985. During the first months of 1986 it had a series of meetings and finally held its first Plenary in October that year. Its first Statute was drafted in March 1997 and was reformed to produce nine more to adjust to the Higher Education Law (Law No. 24.521).

The CIN is a public body that coordinates, consults and proposes policies and strategies for university development; it joins national and provincial higher education institutions to better organise them. The CIN has full legal capacity to carry out its activities in both the public and private sector.

Structure

The governing bodies of the CIN are composed of the Plenary, the Executive Committee, the President and the Vice-President. The executive office employs three full-time staff members. The organisation's funding comes from its membership fees (70%) and national government funds (30%).

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The CIN has 56 members that are public universities. Benefits for members include the preparation of policy proposals and development strategies and the coordination of academic activities, university research and cooperation between members. It also coordinates its members' policies according to national education jurisdiction and offers support for self-evaluation and external evaluation. The CIN fosters joint research projects (at national and regional level) and a scholarship programme for teachers and students. The organisation also participates in the validation of programmes and degrees and in the analysis of university and education challenges worldwide, especially in Latin America, as well as in exchange and academic integration proposals.

Higher Education in Argentina

Type of institution	Number of students in 2010	Number of institutions 2010	
Universities and university institutes ¹	1,730,853	Public	56
		Private	63
Other higher education institutions ²	656,196	Public	917
		Private	1 175

Most important reforms and developments in Argentina in the last decade:

- Quality Assurance and Accreditation
- Increase in funding for education
- Increase in the number of new higher education institutions

International projects the CIN has been involved in:

- Youth Exchange Programme Mexico-Argentina (JIMA)
- Alfa Tuning Latin America
- Academic Mobility Colombia-Argentina Programme (M.A.C.A.)

Studies, publications and important projects the CIN has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- National programme for sustainable universities. CE Resolution No. 768/12
- Argentinian Chancellery's University Council. Plenary Agreement No. 884/13
- Towards a redefinition of evaluation criteria for technological and scientific staff. Plenary Agreement No. 833/12
- Agreement to standardise double doctorate degrees. Plenary Agreement No. 825/12
- Internationalisation of universities. Plenary Agreement 812/12
- Technological and Scientific Research Projects. Plenary Agreement 725/10
- Debate and agreement on academic credit proposals
- University-industry cooperation projects

¹ State-funded or private universities or university institutes according to Law No. 24.521

² State-funded or private higher education institutions (national, provincial or from the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires)

Executive Committee of Bolivian Universities

(Comité Ejecutivo de la Universidad Boliviana - CEUB)



Bolivia

www.ceub.edu.bo

Legal nature, history and mission

The CEUB is an organisation that represents the Bolivian public university system. It coordinates and carries out the resolutions of the universities that belong to the system. The V National University Congress, that took place between 11 and 16 December 1978, approved the Constitution of Bolivian Universities Report that states the principle of autonomy for universities. On 16 December 1978, universities set up a Central Body for Coordination and Planning which was then named Executive Committee of Bolivian Universities (CEUB).

The CEUB carries out its activities according to the National Plan for University Development whose mission is to prepare professionals of scientific excellence and critical awareness with a capacity to create, adapt and contribute to scientific and technological sustainable development, and to promote progress, national integration and social interaction. Moreover, the CEUB's mission is to foster scientific research and humanity studies; disseminate and enhance cultural heritage; and contribute to defending national sovereignty and its social commitment.

Structure

The governing bodies are composed of nine Secretariats, including the National Executive Secretariat, the National Institutional Development Secretariat, the National Academic Secretariat, National Postgraduate Secretariat, National Evaluation and Accreditation Secretariat, National Secretariat for Science and Technology, the National Secretariat for International Relations, the National Secretariat for Social Involvement and the National Secretariat for Administration and Finance (the latter is still not operational).

CEUB runs on government funds (main funding source) and on its own funding.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The CEUB is composed of 15 members, 11 of which are autonomous public universities and four non-autonomous public universities. Autonomous universities became part of the system when it was created; non-autonomous institutions need an approval from the University Congress to be admitted.

Benefits are representation of universities at national and international meetings, coordination and organisation of institutional, academic and research activities and university management.

Higher Education in Bolivia

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011	Number of institutions 2011	
Universities	369,153	Autonomous and public	11
		Public non-autonomous Private	4
Other higher education institutions ³	Not available	Indigenous universities ⁴	3
		Private	Not available

Most important reforms and developments in Bolivia in the last decade:

- Reform of curricula
- Reform of university statutes
- Quality Assurance systems implementation

International projects the CEUB has been involved in:

- Alfa PUENTES project
- Telescopi project - Network of Observatories for Good Practices in Strategic Management of Universities in Latin America and Europe
- Alfa Tuning Latin America

Studies, publications and important projects the CEUB has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Publication of all institutional regulations (Bolivian university statutes, regulations, etc.)
- Updated statistics of all the university system
- Publication of academics' research
- Development of evaluation and accreditation processes for public university degrees and programmes
- National University Development Plan
- Protocol and Ceremony Regulation for Bolivian University System

³ The CEUB does not have information regarding the number of students at private and indigenous universities, nor the number of private institutions

⁴ In addition to the public autonomous universities and public non-autonomous and private universities, there are three indigenous universities, created recently by the national government in rural areas to facilitate access of school graduates from rural areas

Brazilian Rectors' Conference

(Conselho de Reitores das Universidades Brasileiras - CRUB)



Brazil

www.crub.org.br

Legal nature, history and mission

The Brazilian Rectors' Conference (CRUB) is a non-for-profit legal entity that acts as a liaison and consulting body between Brazilian higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education. It was created on 30 April 1966 to foster exchanges and cooperation among Brazilian universities.

It was founded with the expressed intention to articulate and consolidate Brazilian Higher Education. The organisation has been active for almost five decades at the centre of national and international actions to develop and modernise higher education institutions. It has also carried out studies, debates and seminars on several topics.

Structure

The CRUB is composed of the president, four vice-presidents (from the federal level, state and municipalities, from the community and from the private sectors) and a consulting body. The CRUB is state-funded.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The CRUB encompasses all types of universities - federal, state, municipal, community and private. It has 152 members.

To be a member the higher education institution has to comply with the following: be considered as a university or university institute by the Ministry of Education and be approved by an absolute majority of the Executive Board and members.

Benefits for members include cooperation with the federal government and embassies and liaison with other rectors' councils, internationalisation programmes, capacity building workshops and evaluation programmes.

Higher Education in Brazil

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011	Number of institutions 2011	
Universities	Not available	Public	102
		Private	90
Other higher education institutions ⁵	Not available	Public	192
		Private	2194

Most important reforms and developments in Brazil in the last decade:

- Higher Education National Plan
- Science Without Borders Programme
- National Evaluation System for Higher Education

International projects the CRUB has been involved in:

- Alfa PUENTES
- CREPUQ
- Science Without Borders Programme

Studies, publications and important projects the CRUB has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Brazilian Education Magazine
- Translation and dissemination of UNESCO documents about higher education topics such as: Trends in Higher Education in the 21st Century and other reports from the World Conference on Higher Education
- Seminars about the National Education Plan and topics such as the Brazilian Higher Education system

⁵ Isolated and integrated faculties and federal technical institutes

Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities

(Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas - CRUCH)



Chile

www.consejoderecutores.cl

Legal nature, history and mission

The CRUCH is a legal entity under public law. It was created in 1954 as a coordinating body for the country's universities. It is a strategic network of public institutions, committed to the wellbeing of the country as a whole and each one of its regions. Its main mission is to contribute to the articulation of a national higher education system based on academic excellence and equality that contributes to a democratic society that guarantees quality education, academic freedom and equal opportunities. It also strives to strengthen the internationalisation of Chilean higher education, build on the scientific structure of the country, a qualifications framework, excellence and commitment with sustainable and harmonious development.

Structure

The CRUCH is presided by the Minister of Education and the executive vice-president who is a rector of one of the universities of the Council. It is funded by membership fees.

The CRUCH is organised in committees: The Executive Committee leads the Council and liaises with the public institutions. The Committee for Strategic Development works on matters affecting the future of higher education and supports the Strategic Plan. The Science and Technology Committee prepares policy proposals, coordinates debates and joint ventures with the national scientific community.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The CRUCH has 25 members: public and private universities. The universities belonging to the Council of Rectors have been defined by law decree.

The main benefits for members are: offering a unique admissions system for universities which is nationally and publicly acknowledged in the country; participating in the preparation of a national scientific policy; revising funding mechanisms; and participating in the generation of academic innovation strategies.

Higher Education in Chile

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011	Number of institutions 2011	
Universities ⁶	272,768	Public	102
Private universities ⁷	352,529	Private	90

Most important reforms and developments in Chile in the last decade:

- Quality Assurance and Accreditation
- Funding
- Credit Transfer System

International projects the CRUCH has been involved in:

- Alfa PUENTES
- Doctorate Schools HRK (German Rectors' Conference)
- CPU Doctorate Schools (French Conference of University Presidents)

Studies, publications and important projects the CRUCH has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

The CRUCH's main publications feature documents on postgraduate studies, innovation in curricula, policy proposals in higher education, reports from conferences and annual statistics.

⁶ Public universities and traditional private universities

⁷ Private universities that do not belong to CRUCH

Association of Colombian Universities

(Asociación Colombiana de Universidades - ASCUN)



Colombia

www.ascun.org.co

Legal nature, history and mission

The Association of Colombian Universities (ASCUN) is a non-for-profit association under private law with its own regulations. It elects its leaders autonomously and democratically. It dates back to 1950 when several rectors of Colombian universities suggested joining forces to contribute to re-establishing democracy and autonomy in the universities. In 1957 the first National Rectors' Conference approved the creation of ASCUN. The document proposed a joint venture based on democratic and patriotic values, to contribute to national reconciliation, harmonious coexistence and the strengthening of institutions.

ASCUN's mission is to foster quality, autonomy and social responsibility in universities; promote integration and interaction in the academic community; and represent and serve as an intermediate for Colombian universities.

Structure

ASCUN has three instances in its organisational structure: the National Rector's Council, the Directive Council and the Executive Management. ASCUN runs on approximately 30% membership fees and 70% on grants for projects.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

ASCUN has 77 members (34 public and 49 private Colombian universities). In principle, all authorised universities can be accepted as members.

The main benefits for ASCUN members is the group's capacity to influence public policies in higher education, the opportunity to share experiences for peer learning, identification of good practices, debate concepts and propose policy frameworks. ASCUN also represents universities at meetings with national and international agencies.

Higher Education in Colombia

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011	Number of institutions 2011	
University	1,046,609	Public	32
		Private	49
Other higher education institutions ⁸	450,734	Public	49
		Private	159

Most important reforms and developments in Colombia in the last decade:

- Applying the national exam (Saber Pro) to higher education students in their final year, which has contributed to competence-based positioning
- Setting up an employment observatory for higher education which has allowed to follow-up on graduates
- Strengthening of high quality accreditation as a voluntary procedure which has reached out to institutions and recently has been implemented for Master and doctoral programmes

International projects ASCUN has been involved in:

- Alβan – Regional cooperation programme
- Tuning Latin America (Alfa Programme)
- Vertebralque (Alfa Programme)

Studies, publications and important projects ASCUN has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- International cooperation in science, technology and innovation in Colombian higher education (2008)
- International forum. Debate about competence-building in higher education. Reports (2010)
- Inclusion of ethnic population in higher education: significant experiences 2011
- Equality and equity in higher education. University thought # 23 (2012)
- Analysis of accessibility to sports and leisure for disabled people at higher education institutions (2011)
- Social service programme in higher education 2006-2010. Building a higher education social service system (2011)
- Higher education policies 2010-2014. Towards new social dynamics in higher education (2010)

⁸ Professional technical institutes, technology institutes and university institutes or technical schools

National Council of University Presidents

(Consejo Nacional de Rectores - CONARE)



Costa Rica

www.conare.ac.cr

Legal nature, history and mission

The National Council of University Presidents (CONARE) is the coordinating body of the public higher education in Costa Rica. It was created through the Costa Rican Public Higher Education Agreement, signed by the Public Higher Education Institutions (IESUE) in 1974 and was amended in 1982. It regulates coordination aspects for university autonomy in different fields.

CONARE's tasks are the coordination and global planning of its member institutions. It is also in charge of approving degrees and programmes that the IESUE submits. It is part of the Liaison Commission, jointly with government ministers, which defines the five-year plan of public funding for universities of the IESUE, according to the Republic's Constitution.

Structure

CONARE is composed of a Council of rectors from each member institution. The Head of Higher Education Planning Office (OPES) is also the Executive Secretary of the Council. It has other committees of vice-rectors from different areas as well as subcommittees for specialised work areas, both academic and administrative.

The OPES is part of CONARE as well as other programmes: the National Centre for High Technology; the National Centre for Biotechnology Innovation; and the Programa Estado de la Nación. The National Accreditation System for Higher Education (SINAES) is linked to CONARE but works independently on its activities.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The CONARE is composed of four public higher education institutions from Costa Rica. The admission system varies from institution to institution although they do share some technical and administrative elements.

Benefits for members are the coordinated work and a joint platform to face challenges in the public university field. Its funding from public universities has been very valuable for the stability it has given universities and the assurance of being capable to carry out its planning and development activities.

Higher Education in Costa Rica

Type of institution	Number of students in 2012	Number of institutions 2012	
Universities	195,364	Public	5
		Private	53
		Other ⁹	5
Other higher education institutions ¹⁰	450,734	Public	2
		Private	15

Most important reforms and developments in Costa Rica in the last decade:

- The last two funding agreements for public higher education. The first (2005-2009) allowed a great increase, and the second (2011-2015) protected universities in times of weak economy in the country
- Consolidation of the National Higher Education Accreditation System (SINAES)
- Creation (2008) of a new public university: the National Technical University (Universidad Técnica Nacional)

International projects CONARE has been involved in:

- Tuning Project – Latin America I + II
- Alfa PUENTES Project

Studies, publications and important projects CONARE has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Funding of the Employment Observatory and publication of the first study to follow up on graduates from all universities in the country – since 1989 there had been studies but only of public universities
- National Centre for Higher Education Information (which includes for the first time most of the 53 private universities of the country)
- Coordination of the proposal of the Higher Education Improvement Project: a US\$200 million initiative which will be funded by a loan contracted by the Government of the Republic from the World Bank
- Preparation and approval of the National Plan for Public Higher Education (PLANES) 2011-2015
- Set-up of annual funds for international mobility of students belonging to the four member universities
- Continuous publication of: National Report (Informe del Estado de la Nación, annual, now XXVIII edition), Regional Report (Informe del Estado de la Región, now IV edition) and Education Report (Informe del Estado de la Educación, III edition)
- Participation in the project aiming at establishing the National Centre for Biotechnology Innovation (CENIBiot)

⁹ International higher education institutions: CATIE, ICAP, INCAE, Universidad EARTH, Universidad para la Paz

¹⁰ "Parauniversitarian" institutions

Higher Education Headquarters of Honduras

(Dirección de Educación Superior de Honduras)



Honduras

<https://www.unah.edu.hn/?cat=1252&fcats>

Legal nature, history and mission

The Higher Education Headquarters of Honduras (Dirección de Educación Superior de Honduras), founded in 1989, is the executive body of the Higher Education Council. The Higher Education Council belongs to the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH), it was created to lead and decide about the level of higher education in the country. The Headquarters works as a Secretariat which processes and registers applications concerning the creation of higher education institutions and its degrees, as well as degree recognition, by universities in Honduras and other countries.

In order to define this body, a Higher Education Law, General Regulations and Academic Standards were created. The Higher Education Headquarters is responsible for the creation and development of public and private universities and is the institution that certifies all Higher Education matters.

Structure

According to the law, the Technical Consulting Council is composed of rectors from all legal universities in the country. The Higher Education Council is composed of representatives from public and private universities (12 members). The Higher Education Headquarters is funded by state resources.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The Higher Education Headquarters of Honduras represents 20 members, of which 14 are private universities and six are public. According to the law, the Higher Education Council approves these institutions and once approved, they automatically become part of the higher education organisations. Benefits for members include legalisation of institutions' activities and their academic programmes and academic support.

Higher Education in Honduras

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011	Number of institutions 2011	
Universities	181,020 ¹¹	Public	5
		Private	10
Other higher education institutions ¹²	2 099	Public	1
		Private	4

Most important reforms and developments in Honduras in the last decade:

- Legal reform for recognition of online education
- Creation of the National Quality Assurance System
- Development of Admissions Systems according to international criteria

International projects the Higher Education Headquarters of Honduras has been involved in:

- Infoaces (Alfa Programme)
- Alfa PUENTES (Alfa Programme)
- Central American Accreditation Council for Higher Education (CCA)

Studies, publications and important projects the Higher Education Headquarters of Honduras has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Repetition and Drop-out in Honduran Higher Education (June 2011)
- Honduran Quality Assurance System in Higher Education (July 2011)
- Strategic Development Plan for Honduran Higher Education (2012)
- Statistics in higher education
- Criteria and standards for postgraduate degree recognition for online programmes
- Criteria for creation of institutions and courses for distance learning in Honduran higher education

¹¹ Data from 2013

¹² Schools, an institute and a seminar

National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions

(Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior - ANUIES)



Mexico

<http://www.anuies.mx>

Legal nature, history and mission

The National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES) is a civil association created in 1940, after a rectors' meeting in Mexico City. It was not until 1950, after five rectors' assemblies, that the first statutes of the organisation were approved.

ANUIES aims at contributing to the integration of the higher education system and improving institutions' teaching and research. To do so, the organisation fosters cooperation, internationalisation and academic exchange between members. It also articulates and represents the academic and administrative interests of its members before the executive, legislative and judicial powers of federal, national and municipal institutions and also before public and private bodies, national and from abroad, dealing with higher education.

Structure

The organisation is composed of the General Assembly, the national Council, the Regional Council, the Special Council and the Executive Secretary General.

ANUIS is funded by 92.4% government funds and 0.4% project grants.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

It has 175 member higher education institutions: 146 are public and 29 are private. To join, an institution has to belong to the type of institution defined by ANUIES, comply with the criteria regarding time in practice, programmes and graduates that the General Assembly sets. They must also comply with the quality, development and academic standards the General Assembly sets and cannot be part of another organisation that is already associated to ANUIES. Institutions also need a recommendation from the National Council and approved by the General Assembly.

The main benefits are the administration of public funds for members and supporting cooperation between institutions in projects. It promotes public policies to benefit members and higher education and participates in international initiatives managed by ANUIES.

Higher Education in Mexico

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011	Number of institutions 2011	
Universities	2,076,244	Public	51
		Private	82
Other higher education institutions ¹³	1,474,676	Public	696
		Private ¹⁴	2115

Most important reforms and developments in Mexico in the last decade:

- Science and Technology Law, published by the Federation's Official Journal on 5 June 2002
- National Grant Programme for Higher Education (PRONABES) created in 2001 and still running
- Creation of the Polytechnic Universities Subsystem in 2001

International projects ANUIES has been involved in:

- Knowledge, Inclusion and Development Project (CID) - Alfa III programme
- Vertebralcurve - Alfa III programme
- Alfa Tuning Latin America

Studies, publications and important projects ANUIES has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Competence-based education and constructivism. A model and approach for pedagogic training in the 21st century (Mabel Bellocchio, 2010, ANUIES Collection)
- Tutoring: an innovative strategy in students' assessment programmes (Alejandra Romo López, 2011, ANUIES Collection)
- Youth and Baccalaureate (Eduardo Weiss, Coord., 2012, Higher Education Library collection)
- Inclusion and social responsibility. Diagnosis and proposals for a new generation of higher education policies (ANUIES, 2012)
- Security in higher education institutions. Current situation and recommendations (María Angélica Garnica Sosa, 2012)
- Labour market in Mexico. Diagnosis (2000-2009) and future (2010 and 2020) (Enrique Hernández Laos, Coord. general, 2013)
- Funding higher education and economic crisis (Javier Mendoza Rojas, 2009)

¹³ Technical institutes, research centres, normal education schools and federal or state schools or programmes for education, health, security, defence and agriculture

¹⁴ Institutes, private schools and education schools

Panama Rectors' Council

(Consejo de Rectores de Panamá - CRP)



Panama

www.consejo.ac.pa

Legal nature, history and mission

The Panama Rectors' Council (CRP) is a non-for-profit higher education organisation. Since its foundation in the 1980s, its aim has been to create a National University System that integrates public and private universities of Panama in a Rectors' Council. In 1995 the idea was expressed and voted in the first Executive Committee of the Rectors' Council, in which members committed to work towards this goal.

The organisation's mission is to contribute to the university system in Panama in teaching and research to deliver to society excellent, appropriate, innovative, entrepreneurial, professionals who are committed to strengthening the national identity and collective well-being.

Structure

The Executive Committee has five members (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and board member). The General Assembly is composed of all members and the executive director. The CRP is funded by membership fees.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The CRP has 18 members. Universities who wish to join the organisation need to comply with legal requirements that regulate establishment of universities in the country, a certain academic offer, accreditation and other CRP-specific obligations.

If all is in order, the Admissions Committee presents a report recommending the candidate university. The council must approve the admission unanimously. Benefits for members include support in university accreditation procedures and cooperation links at international level.

Higher Education in Panama

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011 ¹⁵	Number of institutions 2011	
Universities	133,497	Public	5
		Private	35
		Other ¹⁶	18
Other higher education institutions ¹⁷	5 569	Public	5
		Private	59

Most important reforms and developments in Panama in the last decade:

- Approval of law 30 on 20 July 2006 that has had a positive impact and replaced all university higher education regulations
- Institutional and degree accreditation process that started in 2010 and is ongoing

International projects the CRP has been involved in:

- Alfa Tuning (Alfa Programme)
- Alfa PUENTES project (Alfa Programme)
- Vertebralcurve project (Alfa Programme)

Studies, publications and important projects the CRP has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Participation in the University Academic Offers Improvement and Projection Study that contributed to the county's development (2009)
- Participation in the Second Report on Outcomes from the Second Conference about human resource training in Panama (2007)
- Participation in the preparation of the evaluation report on minimum degree courses necessary for the country's social and economic development
- University Policies Proposal: yet to be published, this document defines strategic areas of development in university policies

¹⁵ Data from the National Institute of Statistics and Census of the Republic of Panama

¹⁶ Executive decree still pending approval

¹⁷ Private and public institutes and schools, not universities

National Higher Education Council of Paraguay

(Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior de Paraguay)

Paraguay

<http://www.consejouniversidades.edu.py>

Legal nature, history and mission

The National Higher Education Council of Paraguay was created in 1993 through Law No. 136. Its mission is to define a higher education policy integrated in the national education system and to coordinate and evaluate universities' activities at a national level. It also approves the statutes and authorisations for new universities and establishes academic degrees (such as Bachelor, Masters, engineering degrees, doctorates, etc.).

Structure

The National Higher Education Council of Paraguay is composed of representatives from public universities, private universities and institutes and also representatives from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the National Council for Education and Culture.

It has an Executive Secretariat and an Administrative Secretariat. It also has an administrative structure and its own budget, within the higher education subsystem. It is financed by the government from the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is however an autonomous body.

It has an Executive Committee that implements the resolutions of the Council and offers technical support by carrying out studies, analysis and providing information about higher education. The organisation has a president, a vice-president and a secretary general.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The National Higher Education Council of Paraguay is composed of higher education institutions; it has seven public universities and 46 private.

Higher Education in Paraguay

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011 ¹⁸	Number of institutions 2011	
Universities ¹⁹	303,540	Public	7
		Private	46
Other higher education institutions ²⁰	11,978	Public	51
		Private	287

Most important reforms and developments in Paraguay in the last decade:

- Higher Education Law

International projects the National Higher Education Council of Paraguay has been involved in:

- Alβan – Regional cooperation programme
- Tuning Latin America (Alfa Programme)
- Vertebralcurve (Alfa Programme)

Studies, publications and important projects the National Higher Education Council of Paraguay has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

The new Higher Education Law study which had an impact on the Paraguayan society.

¹⁸ Estimation

¹⁹ Public universities and one private university (Universidad Católica - UCA)

²⁰ Higher education institutes and teacher training institutes

National Rectors' Assembly

(Asamblea Nacional de Rectores - ANR)



Peru

www.anr.edu.pe

Legal nature, history and mission

The National Rectors' Assembly (ANR) is a public autonomous organisation composed of rectors from public and private universities in Peru.

The ANR, founded in 1983, has its origins in the 1960 Law 13417 that created the Interuniversity Council (CIU), as an association of rectors to discuss common challenges with the aim to come up with recommendations for universities.

The current University Law 23733 points the organisation towards the coordination and organisation of university activities to strengthen them economically and to increase national responsibility.

The ANR's mission is to discover and solve conflicts in public and private universities regarding legitimacy of their governing authorities. It deals with private universities that have irregularities. It also coordinates the national register for university degrees.

Structure

The ANR is composed of several bodies: The governing body is the Rectors' Plenary. The Direction, Coordination and Execution Committee is composed of the University Coordination Commission (CCI), the Presidency and the Executive Secretary. It also has a Support and Assessment Committee and other decentralised bodies such as the Northern, the Southern, the Central the Lima and the Amazonian Regional Interuniversity Councils. It also has autonomous units such as CODACUN and the National Council for University Authorization (CONAFU).

The ANR is funded with 67% of its own sources and 33% government sources.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

The ANR has 77 members from public and private universities. All authorised universities can be accepted as members. Benefits include trainings and assessment for universities in their competence areas and also awarding university ID cards. It also supports the edition and publication of research papers and has funds to stimulate scientific research and promote academic excellence.

Higher Education in Peru

Type of institution	Number of students in 2011	Number of institutions 2011	
Universities ²¹	839,328	Public	51
		Private	82
Other higher education institutions	Not available	Not available	

Most important reforms and developments in Peru in the last decade:

- The Privatisation of Higher Education Law 882
- Creation of Evaluation and Quality Assurance System
- Administrative and economic regionalisation and decentralisation of the country

International projects the ANR has been involved in:

- Student Mobility Platform and the Academic Pacific Alliance
- Tuning Latin America
- Iboamerican Network for Accreditation and Quality in Higher Education

Studies, publications and important projects the ANR has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Auto evaluation model to improve university degrees
- Report on University Reality
- University census data
- Research Landscape at Peruvian Universities
- New university Law proposal
- Proposal for Distance Learning Law

²¹ The number includes universities currently in institutionalisation process

Montevideo Group Universities' Association

(Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo - AUGM)



Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay

www.grupomontevideo.org

Legal nature, history and mission

The Montevideo Group Universities' Association (AUGM) is a non-profit association under Uruguayan law. It is a network of public, autonomous and self-governed universities from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay that share similar goals, academic structures and levels of services they offer which bring them together with the will to cooperate and develop activities jointly.

The association was founded in 1991 to respond to challenges at universities. A group of universities and university members took on the task of working for excellence, quality, and sustainability, and to comply with all the duties public higher education entails.

The group was consolidated over the years sharing highly qualified academic staff, material resources, premises, equipment, laboratories, libraries to build a widely shared academic platform, in order to overcome obstacles and enhance opportunities for action.

Structure

AUGM has several coordinating groups: the Rectors' Council, a hierarchic body which is composed of all the rectors from the member universities. The presidency and the vice-presidency are appointed by the Rectors' Council. The advisory delegates support different parts of the organisation; it is composed of representatives appointed by the rectors, one for each university member.

The Executive Secretariat has an Executive Secretary and a team of administrative staff which coordinates the different groups within the organisation. AUGM is funded completely by membership fees.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

AUGM has 30 member institutions. In order to be accepted as a member, a university needs an invitation from the Rectors' Council. To be an eligible candidate, the institution has to be a public, autonomous and self-governed university, have links with the funding members, similar academic structures, teaching, research backgrounds and the mission to serve society.

Members benefit from academic cooperation, mobility exchanges of academic and administrative staff and students, sharing premises, equipment, laboratories, libraries, dialogues with regional society and a political organisation to build a common academic space.

Most important reforms and developments in the region in the last decade:

- Scientific and technological development led by some countries in the region
- Strengthening quality assurance at higher education institutions
- Development and strengthening of internationalisation processes in Higher Education

International projects the AUGM has been involved in:

- Building a Latin-American and Caribbean Higher Education Area
- Regional Integration Projects in Mercosur: MercoCiudades, Cuenca Del Plata, etc.
- EU-funded projects

Studies, publications and important projects AUGM has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Contribution to the regional higher education conference and the global conference on higher education (2008 and 2009)
- International university-society-state seminar (2010 - alternative energy sources / 2011 - university reform / 2012 - 400 years of universities in the region)
- Scientific academic contribution through Academic Committees and Disciplinary Gatherings
- Network of AUGM cities and universities
- Urban Observatory for Technologic and Social Transfer and Innovation

Central American University Council

(Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano - CSUCA)



Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Dominican Republic
www.csuca.org

Legal nature, history and mission

The Central American University Council (CSUCA) is an integrating body for Central American higher education. It was founded in the First Central American University Congress in 1948. Its mission is to foster the improvement, innovation and regional integration of public higher education of the region according to the Central American Integration System (SICA).

The CSUCA also aims at defending university autonomy and facilitating joint actions to contribute to the development and integration of Central American countries.

Structure

The organisation is composed of rectors and presidents of the student associations of its member universities. The regional systems involve vice-rectors and other staff members relevant to each system. Currently, CSUCA has seven systems: SICEVAES, SICAR, SIREVE, SICAUS, SIESCA, SIDCA y SEDUCA. The organisation is funded 50% from membership fees, 40% from grants for projects and 10% from funds from the central university.

Members, admission criteria and benefits

CSUCA has 21 member universities, which are all public and autonomous, from 8 countries that are part of the Central American Integration System: Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

Universities of the region can apply to be part of the organisation as long as they comply with the principles and regulations expressed in the Statute of Central American University Confederation (Articles 4 and 5).

CSUCA provides its members with a platform to exchange good practices, ideas and experience and to collaborate at regional and international level. It also works on capacity building of staff members in innovative topics and collaborates and defends universities' autonomy.

Most important reforms and developments in the region in the last decade:

- Creation of evaluation and accreditation bodies and their articulation as a regional Central American system
- Creation of new private universities
- Greater participation in international fora
- Interest in curricula reform based on competences

International projects the CSUCA has been involved in:

- Alfa Tuning (Alfa programme)
- ENLACES project (Latin American and Caribbean Higher education Area) and the creation of the Latin American University Rectors' Council Association (ACRUAL)
- Alfa PUENTES (Alfa programme)

Studies, publications and important projects the CSUCA has produced in the last five years that have influenced at national or regional level:

- Creation of the Central American Accreditation Council
- Creation of the Central American Accreditation Agency for Architecture and Engineering
- Creation of the Central American Accreditation Agency for Postgraduate studies
- Creation of the Central American Accreditation Agency for Agri-food sector
- Pilot project for regional academic harmonisation
- Debate and consensus on academic credits
- University-industry cooperation projects

