

# **WORLD CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

## **Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century**

### **Vision and Action**

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#### **Inter-American Organization for Higher Education (IOHE/OUI)**

Note1: To meet UNESCO publishing standards, some editing of papers has been required.

Note2: Authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in signed articles and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

Inter-American Organization for Higher Education (IOHE/OUI)

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**Speech of Prof. Juan Carlos Romero Hicks  
President of the Inter-American Organization for Higher Education**

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to address you on behalf of the Inter-American Organization for Higher Education.

It is widely recognized that education will be of fundamental importance in the coming millennium. In order to develop societies that enjoy freedom, justice, social well-being and democracy, the nations of the global community will need more education, not only primary education but a deeper understanding of the arts, the humanities, technology and science. In this international forum, we can begin to lay the foundations and sketch the broad outlines of the future.

The search for greater relevance, higher quality and accessibility by our institutions of higher education are certainly the governing principles of our discussion; nevertheless, we must also take into account how these principles can be implemented effectively in diverse parts of the world.

Thanks to the ongoing process of globalization, and the consequent need to internationalize higher education, organizations such as ours that aim to encourage inter-institutional cooperation have been established.

I would like to tell you about the Inter-American Organization for Higher Education, an organization that represents 380 universities and regional or national associations of higher education in 24 countries of the American continent.

The IOHE is an international, non-governmental, non-profit organization founded on 1980 that promotes cooperation among member institutions and fosters the development of higher education in the Americas. Our goal is to encourage greater understanding, mutual assistance, dialogue and the free expression of ideas despite our national differences.

The IOHE's primary objectives are:

- to promote and to develop the ties of friendship and solidarity among the universities of the American continent;
- to create mutual understanding in order to identify common needs, available resources and possibilities for institutional support;
- to bring together the universities of the continent through programmes for education, research and continuing education;
- to encourage exchanges of teachers, students, researchers and administrators of institutions of higher education.

The IOHE has four main activities:

- IGLU – the Institute for University Management and Leadership
- The College of the Americas
- The Interamerican Network on the Environment (RICA)
- The IOHE's Biennial Congress

Of these four, the first two directly address international cooperation and university leadership, so I will focus on them in particular.

**Institute for University Management and Leadership (IGLU)**

The IGLU Programme is a widely acclaimed programme aimed at developing the management and leadership skills of senior university administrators, creating ties among the educational institutions of the

continent and providing opportunities for sharing information about academic and administrative innovations among universities. The IGLU Programme has four parts: the IGLU Course on University Management and Leadership, the IGLU Seminar for University Presidents, specialized seminars and workshops on issues of university management, the *IGLU Journal* and the *IGLU Papers*.

The IGLU Course on University Management and Leadership for senior university administrators consists of the four-week Foundation Course, an independent project carried out by participants at their home universities and a seven-day practical session in another country on topics such as financial management, institutional assessment and accreditation, the internationalization of the university, and tools for improving university management.

Specialized seminars on topics such as strategic management, academic assessment and accreditation, new information and communications technologies, managing international cooperation and corporate-university relations are also offered in various locations throughout the year.

The IGLU Seminar for University Presidents centres on the following themes: community relations, government relations and policies on the development of higher education, science and technology.

### **The College of the Americas**

The College of the Americas is a mechanism for facilitating cooperation among institutions of higher education that will help them respond to the demands of their respective communities. It is an inter-American network of institutions offering interdisciplinary programmes that will enrich the scientific, academic and technological know-how of the continent and improve the efficiency of university administrations.

The programmes of the College of the Americas are:

- the Research Chairs on Continental Integration that will bring together researchers, doctoral and postdoctoral students and public and private sector organizations with the goal of carrying out advanced research on issues of continental significance;
- the Inter-American Networks for undergraduate and graduate students as well as young professionals in the private sector looking for further professional development. Among the various networks are International Trade, International Law and Conflict Resolution, Environmental Management and Ecotourism, Intellectual Property, Telematics, Urban Development and Heritage Management, and Women and Development;
- the Interamerica Seminars, a programme whose goal is the development of young leaders with an inter-American perspective;
- the Public Administration Programme, consisting of professional development courses aimed at disseminating knowledge and expertise about the modernization of the state among the public administrators of the American continent in the context of continuing education.

These projects reflect UNESCO's own perspectives and we invite all institutions of higher education and governments of the Americas to become involved in them with us. The process of globalization will benefit those who choose to participate actively in shaping the process as it unfolds and who build cooperative links with others. Global development will only be possible if the countries devote themselves to strengthening higher education.