Erasmus Policy Statement

Comillas has been for a long time an active promoter of the internationalisation of our activities. Its strategy has been focused mostly on offering an international experience to all of our students. We are probably the top university in Spain regarding international exchanges relative to our student population, and we have more than 300 active international agreements for the exchange of students and staff.

Our international partners are selected based on academic excellence, but also on the coincidence of our values. Currently most of our partners are in Europe or, increasingly, in North America. However, we have been promoting much lately the expansion of these partnerships to Latin America and Asia. Some African countries, such as Kenya, have also been subject of our interest, and we have already set up some partnerships there. Our international strategy envisages both the increase in the number of partnerships in North America and Asia, and also the steady improvement in the quality of the institutions with which we partner.

Currently, the most important target group of our mobility activities is undergraduate students. We send abroad every year about 830 of them, mostly for study. We also have training programs for students, and in fact we manage the Goya-Mundus program for the Madrid region, which sends students for traineeships in international companies.

We have also recently created our International Doctorate School, which has among its goals increasing the international mobility of our PhD students, and also welcoming visiting professors and researchers. Our goal is to attract more international talent to our graduate studies, increasing the amount of courses given in English and also enlarging our international faculty and staff.

An area in which there is potential to improve is the mobility of staff, which is usually more difficult to achieve. In this regard, we plan to increase the number of slots offered for teaching and research exchanges for our faculty and staff. In particular, we would like to increase the number of long-term stays, since these are usually the most productive. We expect to achieve this by increasing the recognition of this merit in our promotion systems, increasing the funding available for this purpose, and by continuing with the administrative support that is already available for the staff in this issue.

Finally, regarding the development of double/multiple/joint degrees, our university is already the coordinator of both an Erasmus Mundus Masters program (on Economics and Management of Network Industries), and of an Erasmus Mundus Doctorate program (on Sustainable Energy Technology Strategies). In addition, we also have undergraduate degrees such as E-4 (International Business Administration degree) in which we also have double degrees with European and North American HEIs. Our strategy in this respect lies in the consolidation of these degrees (particularly the graduate ones, given that the undergraduate degree is already well placed and highly demanded), and in the exploration of new opportunities for this kind of programs.
Each project is organised and implemented in a different way, depending on its nature and goals. However, all of them are based in a strong collaboration between the school or faculty involved, and the central services of the university (Office for Research Transfer and Service for International Relations). As mentioned before, these projects are encouraged by the university through recognition and administrative support.

In Comillas we believe firmly in the benefits that an increased international activity will bring to our institution.

Regarding the increase of attainment levels for our students, our participation in the programme will help them understand the global environment in which they will develop their careers, and the international orientation that they must give to their training. The goal of Comillas is to provide an integral formation to our students, and the international experience is an essential component of it.

The exposure of our students and staff to other international environments will also help us improve the quality and relevance of our activities, by learning from other universities’ best practices and standards.

In addition to this last benefit, this programme will also improve the quality of the teaching and research of our university through mobility and cross-border cooperation. The program will definitely help us continue and strengthen our current participation in international networks and projects for teaching and research.

Regarding the linkage between higher education, research and business, at Comillas we already have a very strong relationship with firms and institutions in our region. Participating in this Programme will allow us to extend our relationships further, and to accompany better the international expansion of the companies with which we work. Our international collaborations will also strengthen the contribution we currently make to our region, and to our excellence.

Finally, we also believe that our international connections are already helping us improve our funding and governance.

Madrid, December 2013

[Signature]
Julio L. Martínez Martínez
Rector