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AUSJAL *al día*

Executive Secretary Newsletter. Latin American Universities Entrusted to the Society of Jesus

Jesuits institutions debate about education and technology

13 representatives from 7 Jesuit universities took part in the Worldwide Conference on Adult and Distance Learning, summoned by the Secretariat of Communications of the Society of Jesus, AJCU and Regis University. The conference took place at Regis University's campus in Denver, USA, from November 1st to 3rd.

More than 120 representatives from around the world interested in distance learning gathered in the event. The central conferences and workshops promoted the exchange of interesting experiences, as well as the reflection on what the diverse organizations are doing, and what strategies might be developed in order to increase the cooperation among them at a worldwide level.

The networks that took part in this conference and the Secretariat of Communications have jointly agreed to prepare a project that will establish the organizational aspects and the mechanisms to improve the cooperation among the universities whose activities are directly dealing with the poor and marginalized people around the world.

Four of the 23 workshops were coordinated by AUSJAL representatives, as well as one of the central conferences titled «Online Education, University Collaboration and the Mission of Jesuit Universities» which was in charge of the executive secretary, Susana Di Trolio.

On the other hand, Omayra Parra (PUJ-Bogotá), Juan Carlos Gutierrez (Ibero-Leon) and Ana Maria Vacca (UCUDAL) were in charge of a workshop presentation about the collaborative courses of the AUSJAL's network and the experience of the AUSJAL's IT's Diploma. Luis Ernesto Blanco (AUSJAL) and José Gregorio de Llano (UCAB) explained the different pedagogical models of the courses offered by the AUSJAL.

Susana Di Trolio also explained in detail the advantages of the Continental Course on Poverty,



while Richard Vigilante (AJCU) gave a presentation about the joint catalogue AJCU-AUSJAL for virtual academic offer. On this point, there is a clear commitment to sign a letter of understanding between AJCU and AUSJAL to facilitate the students exchange and the tuition fees payments, as well as the possibility of including the AUSJAL universities as members of the JesuitNet.

The rest of the central conferences were about distance learning in the United States; the Jesuit universities and a look to the future; the possibilities of distance learning in Africa; and a pilot-experience presentation of a virtual program in Business Administration for refugees in the Thailand - Myanmar border. In turn, the workshops were an excellent opportunity for updating on the best practices around the world of the Jesuit universities' online teaching.

The event allowed those AUSJAL universities assistants who are also participants in the IT's Diploma to have a workshop on this subject. They have agreed to organize an audio-conference where Juan Carlos Gutierrez (UIA-Leon) and Ana Maria Vacca (UCUDAL) will explain the CADE's scope and aims and the possible incorporation of the Spanish version to the AUSJAL's academic offer.

The discussion about the formalization of the AUSJAL Network of peers on Information Technologies on Education was also initiated during this event. This network is expected to meet on 2007.

AUSJAL *briefs*

The Human-Rights Virtual Library. REDLEIDH representatives gathered in San Jose, Costa Rica, from November 15th to 17th, in a training workshop, organized by the REDLEIDH coordination, to discuss about the administration of the Portal and Virtual Library that this network is about to release. Both will be lodged in the servers of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights. Luis Ernesto Blanco, AUSJAL director of Information and Technology, assisted as the network representation.

International Cooperation Diploma. The Centro Magis announced the approval of the financing for the AUSJAL Virtual Diploma on International Cooperation for Development that will be developed by the Alberto Hurtado University (Chile), the Catholic University of Cordoba (Argentina) and the ITESO of Guadalajara (Mexico). The diploma's objective is to offer training on the design, formulation, management and evaluation of international cooperation projects, and public policy design. The program will be oriented to seek for alternatives to overcome some of the problems currently faced by developing countries.

Forums concluded. The Executive Secretary of AUSJAL, Susana Di Trolio, talked about the AUSJAL's proposal for developing common polices and a set of indexes on Social Responsibility for the universities. This was the last of the four virtual forums organized by the association to initiate the conformation of the AUSJAL Network of peers for Social Responsibility. A dozen universities took part in this virtual discussion.

To navigate. This AUSJAL Newsletter as well as the last edition of the AUSJAL Magazine «La Carta AUSJAL» is available at the section for periodical publications of our portal (www.ausjal.org). The agenda of events for 2007 is also available at www.ausjal.org/agenda.php.

Analyzing poverty. During the 4th Seminar: «Strategic Actions on Poverty and Exclusion» organized by the Mexican Higher Education Jesuit System, the members of the AUSJAL Poverty Network gathered to review the joint research project on Public Policies and Poverty in Latin America that this network will develop in 2007. The Seminar took place last November in Puebla, Mexico.

Congratulations to everyone. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2007 for the AUSJAL family and all our friends! The lord may bless us all during the year 2007 with the gift of wisdom put to serve the neediest, represented by the child of Bethlehem.

The Jesuit higher education committee gathers

The AUSJAL president, Luis Ugalde SJ represented the Latin-American universities at the International Committee of Jesuit Higher Education (ICJHE) meeting celebrated in Rome during the last days of October.

The regional representatives of the Jesuit higher-education institutions analyzed the situation of the higher education teaching in each of the five regions around the world and informed about the activities, changes and plans of the different areas that they represent. They also had the opportunity to initiate the preparations for the International Meeting of Jesuit Universities' presidents with the Father General which is expected to take place once the 35th General Congregation is finished.

It is important to underline that this meeting was the first time that the African region sent a representative.

Identity seminars reached Brazil

More than 40 authorities and administrators of the 7 Brazilian university members of AUSJAL (Unicap, Unisinos, PUC-Rio, Unifei, Faculdade Sao Luis and the Centro de Estudios Superiores) attended the Identity and University Seminar which took place in the Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro from October 22nd to 24th.

This event was part of the regional seminars series organized by AUSJAL in Latin America to share ideas and debate together with the Association's educational-institutions board-members about the university mission and Jesuit Identity. The AUSJAL president, Luis Ugalde SJ, installed this seminar and offered a conference titled «The Christian Identity of AUSJAL Universities and their relationships with the Catholic Universities in Latin America» while Francisco Ivern SJ shared with those present ideas about the Common Educative Project. Finally, the assistants debated about the activities that are taking place in their universities to fostering the Christian identity.