

THE GENERAL FATHER AND AUSJAL

We gladly welcome the election of the new Society of Jesus' General Father Adolfo Nicolas s.j. It was a surprise for many, which was confirmed as good news and a motive for joy and hope, as the profile of this Japanese-Spanish heritage father was known.

The most important is being virtuous and humble, say the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Father Nicolas reunites «virtuosity and study», as St. Ignacio wanted; he is a well educated theologian, enriched by the mastery of different languages, indispensable nowadays, and with an experience opened to the cultures of a globalized and pluralized world in which Christianity makes a spiritual and inspiring contribution.

For almost two years, the one hundred Jesuit universities from around the world have prepared our encounter with the General Father and the orientations of the 35th General Congregation. The 31 AUSJAL universities are open to the news, documents and orientations from the General Congregation and we will also stay active on the preparation of this meeting.

Before entering this new phase, we would like to remember what Father Kolvenbach has being to AUSJAL. When he was elected as General 24 years ago, AUSJAL did not exist. It was him who fostered our Association's birth in 1985, after a universities' international meeting in Rome, where the Latin-Americans participated individually. Then, due to the insistence of Rome, we finally decided to elaborate a document on the characteristics of the Society of Jesus' higher education in Latin America that we published, in 1995, under the title «Latin American Challenges and AUSJAL Educative Answer» and which allowed us to present basic concepts and master guidelines to give answers, through the universities, to the Latin American society and its problems. Later on, in 2001 we moved forward with the AUSJAL Strategic Plan which has being a guide to create the networks of peers with shared working policies and to the execution of common projects.

In 2001, the universities from around the world had the Meeting of Montecucco in Rome, with Father Kolvenbach; and we all have used, for university reflection, a dozen of extraordinary documents produced by him on the occasion of different anniversaries and visits to universities in different latitudes.



The world has changed a lot from 1983 to 2008. Nowadays, AUSJAL is an operative reality with many changes compared to what we were. The presence of laymen with complete authority, participation and identification with our university specificity is a growing reality in each university and in our Association's life. We have set out the Christian inspiration and the university vocation with even more professionalism and discernment. Another innovation, probably unthinkable back in 1985, is the active presence of women as university presidents (three presidents: «Universidad Rafael Landívar», UCA-Managua, «Universidad del Pacifico») and as AUSJAL Executive Secretary.

We would like to thank Father Kolvenbach for his humble, sharp and lucid lead that has brought us into the 21st century's university problems with an open heart and open-minded.

Welcome Father Nicolas with your personal qualities and with the conviction that Jesus Christ is light to the world; although it is express in a very different way from how it was understood seventy years ago in Villamuriel, hometown of Palencia where existence was inconceivable outside the Christian context (political, social and cultural).

Luis Ugalde SJ

Breves AUSJAL

AUSJAL in Bridges – LAC. The AUSJAL Executive Secretary, Susana Di Trolio, participated in Brussels on the LAC Bridges Project which is coordinated by the «Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona», to analyze and understand the challenges appeared while implementing higher-education academic exchanges between Europe and Latin American and the Caribbean. Five central dimensions will be explored during the project, these are: accessibility; diplomas' and academic record's recognition; quality assurance; political dimension; and participating and multiplying dimension. Besides AUSJAL participates, representing Europe: IPA from Poland, University of Leiden (Netherlands), Menon Network (Belgium) and University of Deusto (Spain). Also, representing Latin America, participates ALADI, FLACSO and University of West Indies (Bahamas). The University of Deusto and AUSJAL agreed to develop the dimension for diplomas' and academic record's recognition, and to organize a seminar for 2009 to present the research results.

AUSJAL Publishing Fund. As one of the agreements about the videoconferences held by the publishing directors of «Universidad Iberoamericana-Mexico City», «Universidad Catolica Andres Bello», «Universidad Javeriana – Bogota» and the «Universidad Catolica del Ecuador», it was decided to present their publications in PDF format, on the AUSJAL portal. They can be seen at www.ausjal.org/publicaciones.php. Other agreements points to general and specific agreements for joint publications on works of Latin-American interest. The publishing directors of the AUSJAL universities interested on becoming part of this initiative must get in contact with Isabel Campo icampo@ucab.edu.ve, in the AUSJAL Executive Secretariat.

AUSJAL President in Mexico. The AUSJAL President Luis Ugalde S.J. participated in the 24th Presidents Assembly of the Mexican Association of Higher Education Institutions with Christian Inspiration. The conference given by Father Ugalde S.J. was titled «University and Humanization of Science and Reason» and it can be read at <http://www.ausjal.com/superior.php>.

Registrations open. The participants of the 3rd Conference on Distance Learning for AJCU, AUSJAL, DACE, and Messina may register on <http://www.ausjal.org/distancia2008/communication1.php>. The agenda will include 4 conferences and 16 workshops; it is available on <http://www.ausjal.org/distancia2008/agenda.php>.

General Father's Counselor. On the context of the 35th Congregation, the president of the «Universidad Catolica del Tachira» Arturo Sosa S.J. was designated as Non Resident - General Counselor of Father Nicolas S.J. Father Sosa, former Provincial of Venezuela, participated previously on the commission in charge of the General Congregation's preparation, where Adolfo Nicolas S.J. was designated as General Father.

Leadership Program's Participants. The second cohort of the Program on Ignacian University Leadership started on September 2007. The program started on September in UCAB-Caracas, UCAB-Guayana and UCAT (Tachira), in Venezuela. The program will start progressively, according to the academic calendars, in «Universidad Javeriana» - Bogota, «Universidad Javeriana» - Cali, UIA - Mexico City, UIA - Leon, PUCE (Ecuador) and UCA - Managua. 186 students from the mentioned universities will participate in the second cohort. 27 coordinators and teachers collaborate in the program. The universities interested on participating in the next cohort of this AUSJAL project may apply between May and July 2008.

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Program	Starting Date
Diploma on International Cooperation for Development	April 2008
Values and ethics for university's faculty	April 7, 2008
Formation on ICT for university's faculty	June 2008
Human Rights	April 14, 2008
Ignacian University Leadership	(beginning of September, 2007)
ICT Formation for Tutors	February 18, 2008
Continental Course on Poverty in Latin America	February 2008
Environment and Sustainability	March 25, 2008