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Lasallian Educational Approach [LEA]

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THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL
Agreement N° 007 May 8th 2008

In order to approve the
LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF THE
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA SALLE
By the powers conferred to it and

CONSIDERING

That the Superior Council, by Agreement No 011 of June 10th, 2005, approved to reform the Regulations of the University.

That the Superior Council, by Agreement No 07 of March 21st, 2007, approved the new Lasallian University Educational Project (PEUL).

That the guidelines included in the new Regulations and in the PEUL showed the need to formulate a new Lasallian Educational Model.

That the current context, the reflection about the purpose of the university and the progress in contemporary

pedagogical discourse demand the development of a Lasallian Educational Approach [LEA].

That regarding the change of paradigm the University is committed to go from "a university that teaches to a university that learns because it researches", it is necessary to have a LaSalle Educational Approach [LEA] that guides its teaching work and its pedagogic and didactic practices, which are inspired in LaSalle tradition.

That the Department of Lasallian Education in its Strategic Plan 2007-2008 assumed the purpose to "build, socialize, and put into practice the Lasallian Educational Approach [LEA]".

That this Department presented to the Academic Council, in its session of Tuesday April 22nd, 2008, the document "Lasallian Educational Approach [LEA]", which had an unanimously favorable concept to be sent to the Superior Council.

That the Brother President in the Superior Council's session, held on May 8th 2008, considered the proposal to approve the Lasallian Educational Approach [LEA], which after being studied was unanimously approved.

That in agreement with Article 23 section d) of the Regulations, it is a function of the Superior Council to "plan academic, research, extension, promotion and human development, administrative and financial policies of the University".

AGREES

Article 1º

To approve the Lasallian Educational Approach [LEA] included in this document: **LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH [LEA]**.

1. Introduction

The Lasallian Educational Approach (LEA) is conceived as the proposal of educational mediation at Universidad de La Salle, addressed to all the members of the educational community, in order to make institutional identity alive in every relationship inside it. An identity formulated in the PEUL [Spanish acronym for Lasallian University Educational Project] based on the nature of the Institution as Catholic LaSalle University which is, in its turn, the articulator parameter for all the university practices and the most important reason of reflection, research and updating for the institution.

2. Origin and intentionality of the Lasallian Educational Approach (LEA)

PEUL ideas about education in the University have come from the inspiring sources that originated and are still encouraging the thought and life of the Institution, and are a highly rich vein for those who want to deepen in this thought. There we find the motivation for the creation of this Lasallian Educational Approach (LEA). The University privileges the following values that come from those sources; these values are related to the sense of truth, autonomy in knowledge, solidarity, fraternity, honesty, social responsibility, respect, tolerance, hope and faith.

There it is also found the conceptions that give reasons for the intentionality characteristic of the education offered by the University: personal education that encourages human development of those who are part of the university community, that is, an education that all the time pursues the respect of everybody dignity and the display of all his abilities, thanks to an appropriate interaction with the groups of reference and with the society.

This education is then understood as a process oriented to make people responsible for their own acts, cultivate their critical sense, lead their actions towards deeper levels of the person, encourage the searching attitude, construct

by themselves their personal identity and the sense of their lives; but always in the context of social and community group interaction, and a political and economic intelligent contextualization, because we also comprehend the individuality of each student in a concrete sense, that is, inside a system of relationships and ecological, cultural and social conditions

Following the methods proposed in the PEUL, in the LEA a complete education is conceived as a process of self construction, that with the intersubjectivity, is oriented to display the abilities of their educational agents (teachers and students), through a pedagogical relationship based on the responsible exercise of autonomy, significant production of thought, and the decisive commitment to the transformation of reality.

In this order of ideas, the LEA establishes its origin and intentionality in an educational tradition that has accumulated an important knowledge in the field of human and Christian education of children, youth and adults. This tradition based on the knowledge remembers that every education effort is thought as the comprehension of capacities and abilities of educational agents, seeking environments, activities and experiences where complete human development is expressed.

On the other hand, this tradition from education urges to every person cultivates his social sensibility, his personal and professional responsibility, and his commitment with social justice, with a preferential option for the poor and for all the human beings who live in the borders of dehumanization.

3. Educational interaction in Universidad de La Salle

The PEUL also emphasizes a series of aspects that help us to answer the question on how to deal with interaction and educational communication in the University.

The Lasallian emphasis, regarding communication and interaction, is specially expressed in the relationship of fraternal accompanying between teachers and students and among all the members of the educational community. Through the history, Lasallian education has created a force that fosters fraternity and solidarity environments far from any kind of exclusion and discrimination.

It proposes to pay better attention to actual students' needs as a result of an active listening of their own voices, regarding their individual differences or family, cultural and social contexts, those related to previous intellectual and affective levels for and effective learning.

In the same way, it emphasizes the creation of environments that foster the respect to every person's dignity and to the itineraries and individual beliefs in the frame of a constructive tolerance based on the idea that living together overcomes simple coexistence as it allows mutual growth of educational agents.

It is therefore understood that educational relationship goes beyond strictly functional, as it propitiates interaction of personal and cultural views, and different beliefs and becomes in a laboratory to foster ethical and democratic construction and reconstruction of social fabric.

From the beginning, Lasallian Education has tried to improve the education and to get better quality levels, not only related to communication and interaction between teachers and students, but regarding research and epistemological processes in educational practices. When it is embodied in the context of higher education, the consequent educational interaction tends to understand that university is considered more as a question than as an answer to be placed in a space for questioning, curiosity, methodical search of truth, reverence for knowledge and respect for science.

4. Pedagogical bases of the Lasallian Educational Approach

The pedagogical bases of the LEA are found in the origin and evolution of the Lasallian Educational tradition. Those bases are theoretical and practical pillars from which actions and dynamics of the educational field get a new sense as they look for complete human development of their agents.

Therefore, any educational practice in the context of our university educational community is based on the following aspects:

The pedagogical relation as a fundamental mediation. The Lasallian emphasis explicitly expresses the importance of the pedagogical relationship as an educational possibility; in which communication, interaction of the educational agents, through different dynamics of knowledge, not only in the cognitive and epistemic dimension but also in the personal and existential one, are considered a valuable opportunity for integral human development.

The critical and constructive reflection as a thinking exercise. The option for a critical and constructive reflection on the pedagogical practice is proposed as a thinking exercise able to transform educational agents, to improve and innovate teaching learning contexts, and to create significant knowledge products. For this reason our university community encourages the willingness to think, evaluate and give a new meaning to the contents of the pedagogical experience, overcoming conceptions that limit the educational action to an exclusively functional and instrumental understanding.

Following the contributions of the Lasallian educational tradition expressed in the Guide to Christian Schools, we consider the reflection and the systematic register of experiences in the classroom as a learning space, and also the shared analysis and team work, as essential

characteristics of a pedagogy based on processes of observation, evaluation and systematization.

Ethics and values as a proposal of sense. One of the aspects that provides special identity to the pedagogical practice in the context of our educational community is the preference for educational experiences based on ethics and values and that make human relations, thinking actions and knowledge productions become expressions of sense.

Education based on a proper ethical discernment and in a solid set of values, makes possible that human development becomes a reality where educational agents build their condition of creators of sense, that is, free and autonomous individuals, open to a proposal of orientation and definition of their life project.

The dialogue with contemporary pedagogies. The LEA invites us to establish a relation between the rich Lasallian educational tradition and other proposals, such as the so called subject construction pedagogies which are based on the autonomy, self reflection, self discovery and self management of the education or of the life project, always with an opening attitude and interaction with reference groups, communities, their cultures and in general with society.

We highlight the richness of the dialogue with the collaborative and solidary learning proposal, especially if it encourages investigation, experience, vocation and research culture in the new ways of knowledge management. In the competence pedagogy we underline the development of research competences.

The LEA also encourages us to have a dialogue with responsibility pedagogies, because this topic and in general the ethics, are recurrent in the PEUL. And also it fosters us to dialogue with political pedagogies because our university is committed to education for the public service, citizen ethics and participative democracy. In this

sense, the Lasallian teacher continuously and systematically researches about knowledge, environments and educational situations that actually generate ethical and political behavior, as well as about appropriate spaces for dialogue and critics of the relations among ethics, faith, science, politics and culture.

In the same way, it encourages us with caring pedagogies, as an original principle of the Lasallian pedagogy is to "touch the heart", which intends to articulate intelligence with affect and with commitment, and the whole field of interiority and spirit of people. In this sense the LEA proposes to develop pedagogy of interior life and faith congruent with the level of superior education.

One of the strengths of our University in its integral education vision is the system of Promotion and Human Development which offers with an explicitly educational intentionality, the most varied range of welfare activities, health, culture and pastoral. The dialogue with significant pedagogical approaches and proposals in this field, in the light of our comprehension of human sense, value sense, the importance of relations among people, responsibility on the care of nature and in the search of God, contribute to complete and sustainable human development.

The above said allows understanding that LEA takes a pedagogical and curricular conception based on education and potentialities of its agents, and therefore, in the autonomy and abilities they have and may display. Thus, our university proposes, in its curricular spaces and human development experiences, a set of mediations led to help in intersubjective processes of construction of itself, acknowledging the value educational agents have on mediations.

5. Didactics privileged by the Lasallian Educational Community

In consonance with the pedagogical bases previously mentioned, the LEA privileges different didactics that

based on a reflective and critical exercise on education use the pedagogical knowledge as a referent of essential knowledge to carry out a pedagogical practice that supports conditions, ways and environments through which the agents may be responsible of their development.

In this way, it will choose didactics that encourage self and collaborative learning, that is, on the one hand processes that foster and go with independent work of the student, which is now called the academic credit system, and on the other hand, some processes promoting group dynamics, fostering interpersonal communication, and co-working intellectual production, debate, and dialogue which contribute to critical, reflective and transforming thought.

Besides that, there are also some didactics that promote attitudes, competences and result in researches; processes related to analytical reading, pedagogy of questioning, pedagogy of discovery, observation, systematization, interpretation, propositive, argumentative and analytical capacity. In the same way, processes that encourage quality writing production: protocols, essays, outlines, articles, reports, projects, state of the art, books. In this field, the LEA highlights institutional reading and writing programs currently in course starting from the PEUL formulation. In the same way, some didactics develop oral expression in clear, precise, and properly conceptualized presentations.

There are also some other didactics that stimulate the creation of constructive and significant knowledge and learning which allow a creative handling of new languages of cybernetic culture, such as critical reading of mass media, creation of innovator models and designs, participation in knowledge networks and virtual forums. All of it will make easier accompany students in their intelligence development and their social responsibility in this new field of culture.

In the same way, didactic leads to create appropriate spaces to agree regulations and values in favor of living together,

tolerance and construction of a democratic citizenship. In this sense, they will generate appropriate conditions to actively participate in political and social transformation processes, and also to propose and develop experiences linked to the commitment with justice and equity.

Finally, didactics that encourage students to think, make decisions, and serve: rigorous thinking to have a critical sense and creativity; make responsible, coherent and opportune decisions; and serve with solidarity, courage and hope.

6. Conclusion

Current dynamism of the University makes us think and systematically grasp the content of this Educational Approach, especially, from the experience, it makes us talk about our conceptions and proposals, find new ways to apply it in the educational practice, and finally it makes us go deeper and update our identity in every program and in every historical situation we face, in order to prove we are university and we embody with energy the Lassalian Educational Project, with the task of education a new generation of Colombians.

Article 2º

This Agreement is in force from the date of issuance and derogates any contradictory regulations.

It issued in Bogotá D.C. on the eighth (8th) day of May 2008.

JORGE ENRIQUE MOLINA VALENCIA. Fsc
President of the Superior Council

PATRICIA INÉS ORTIZ VALENCIA
Secretary General

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