

The Center of Advanced Studies at Unicamp: Objectives and prospects

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Introduction

THIS PAPER presents briefly and succinctly the Center of Advanced Studies at Unicamp created in 2010; the historical context of its foundation; its ongoing activities and its prospects. The authors start by explaining the very concept of advanced studies to then describe experiences in Brazil and, in particular, at Unicamp.

The concept of advanced studies in its historical, social and political origins

The concept of advanced studies cannot be decoupled from its historical, political and social context. From an externalist perspective of the History of Science (Patterson, 2001; Funari, 2003, p.291-3), one can understand the transformations in the scientific fields, as scientific trends and resonances are contextualized in the clashes of power relations. Today, on the occasion of the fourth centenary of Galileo Galilee (1967), we cannot fail to observe the relevance of the context (Beller et al., 1993). The emergence of advanced studies is linked to the scientific development of the first decades of the twentieth century, particularly in Germany¹ and the UK,² but the name was only used in the United States with the creation of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey. The concept was introduced by Abraham Flexner, a great reformer of education in general and of the teaching of medicine in particular. According to the American scholar:

I have myself spent many years pleading that our schools should become more acutely aware of the world in which their pupils and students are destined to pass their lives. Now I sometimes wonder whether that current has not become too strong and whether there would be sufficient opportunity for a full life if the world were emptied of some of the useless things that give it spiritual significance; in other words, whether our conception of what is useful may not have become too narrow to be adequate to the roaming and capricious possibilities of the human spirit.³

The emergence of the concept was therefore linked to the pursuit of a type of knowledge capable of overcoming the barriers of formal disciplines and

obtaining of academic degrees such as bachelor's, master's, doctoral or fellowship.⁴ However, this did prevent the model that emerged at Princeton and was disseminated by many institutions in the following decades, from relying on schools and permanent fellows. This system stood apart from traditional institutions due to its emphasis on research, the lack of commitment to academic degrees and the pursuit of excellence. For this reason, it attracted great talents such as scholars who had been awarded the most outstanding prizes, such as the Nobel.

Over time, other models would emphasize different aspects, with less attention to fixed topics or permanent researchers and in shorter-term sojourns of scholars in the retreat of an Institute of Advanced Studies. Likewise, emphasis was placed on the interaction of sciences, on the search to overcome discipline boundaries. In many cases, researchers gather in an environment of conviviality that fosters personal and intellectual exchanges,⁵ in an atmosphere characterized by the principle of freedom and shared life.⁶ Confraternity members are only doctors and graduate scholars with visiting fellowships, differentiated subsidies, few formal obligations and many opportunities.⁷ Another very recurrent aspect in institutions of advanced studies is the availability of scholars as a criterion for the establishment of research programs.⁸ Since the beginning, with the Princeton Institute, scholars of Natural Sciences and Humanities shared the same environment,⁹ which, despite being an important factor will not characterize all centers, since over time advanced studies emerged in specific areas and fields of knowledge.¹⁰

Specificities of advanced studies

The diffusion of institutes of advanced studies came in late. The first center in Europe was established only in 1971 - forty years after the creation of the pioneering center at Princeton (1930) - in Holland (Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences) (Hugenholtz, 2001). The dissemination was slow and, outside of the industrialized countries, the establishment of the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of São Paulo, in 1986, marked an era and represented, in a way, the materialization of the democratization movement that spread around the world in the final years of the Cold War (1947-1989) and the fall of dictatorships in Latin America and in Brazil in particular. It should not be surprising that the first Brazilian university worthy of the name was also the first to establish a center focused on academic excellence, external to departmental structures and teaching units.

From the 1990s, with the exponential growth of virtual communication, the growing appreciation of cultural and environmental diversity and the integration and internationalization of research, advanced studies began to spread more sharply, especially from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Institutes of Advanced Studies in universities grew at a stunning pace, since there were only five in 1986, thirteen in 2000, twenty in 2005 and thirty two in 2010.

This is largely explained by the strategic and fundamental role played by advanced studies in including a university in the world scenario. This is due, firstly, to the very characteristics of advanced studies of promoting interdisciplinary research, bringing together the best international researchers, and creating an inspiring and stimulating atmosphere. Although institutions in industrialized countries still prevail, as one would expect, China's concern for such an institution is proof of the recognition of the central role of advanced studies in the search for global insertion. The same can be said of other areas in the world.

But what explains the growing and widespread interest in advanced studies? Some answers were provided in recent events that brought together leaders of centers of advanced studies, particularly in Freiburg¹¹, in September 2010, and at Unicamp, in March 2011. Some of these answers are pretty straightforward and relevant: the best universities in the world have these institutes in place and the *crème de la crème* in world science comes, largely, from these institutions. Therefore, countries like China and Korea have invested in these initiatives, already with important results. The proverbial proof of the pudding of the British (“the proof of the pudding is in the eating”) therefore shows that advanced studies are a great success.

This, however, does not respond to the causes, to that which explains this result. What explains this resounding success? In this regard, it would be appropriate to return, as proposed by the physicist Peter Goddard, director of the IEA Princeton in his speech in March 2011 at Unicamp¹², to the early days of the search for knowledge, among the Greek, with their resourceful and uncompromising speculation (what they called *skholé*, whence comes our “school” and the term scholar, which means far more than “researcher” or “specialist”, characterizing the true student of an area). This principle was also present in new forms in the emergence of this institution that is so central to the organization of knowledge, the medieval university, with its aim to allow one to study all one aspires to study (hence the name we still use to date, *universitas studiorum*, or a grouping of studies). This ambition was resumed under new forms from the experimental, rational and specialized science in the foundation of the modern university based on the German model of Wilhelm von Humboldt, according to whom one should try to learn and do everything (*alles wissen, alles tun*).

Over the decades, since the early nineteenth century science has undergone a process of increasing specialization and bureaucratization. On the one hand, we increasingly know more about less, and without this over-segmentation much of the progress of modern science would have been impossible. As it is said in jest, in the defense of a doctoral dissertation, the only true party that masters the minutiae of the subject of study is ... the candidate! On the other hand, as studied by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984), University and science cannot dispense with an administrative and power structure. The academic chairs and departments are forms of this bureaucratic power which,

like all forms of management, strives for order, for the maintenance of the status quo, for the guild, all of which is further complicated by closed environments that promote the proliferation of human feelings not always conducive to affection and cooperation.

The emergence of the first IEA at Princeton in 1930 sought to break with some of the aporias and difficulties of over-specialization, bureaucratization and lesser feelings; hence its immense success, already in its infancy, with the arrival, right from the outset, of the physicist Albert Einstein and other great geniuses as the art historian Erwin Panofski, both fugitives from German society and science under the Nazi yoke. Some of Princeton's features have remained as cornerstones of advanced studies since then, first of all, as reminded by Professor Brito Cruz, scientific director of Fapesp, Unicamp dean (2002-2005) and professor (IFGW), at an international symposium at Unicamp in March 2011: impartial research, without administrative demands, without necessarily targeting applications, without the pressure of "publish or perish" that prevails in the usual academic world. Science has become, in recent decades, increasingly concerned with counting academic production, with the number of articles, quotes and other quantifiable data, which can be justified but is a clear barrier to the uncompromising reflection that can result either in an important book, a brilliant equation or a change of mind or even a failure. The two most important results in the recent history of Mathematics, Fermat's theorem (Andrew Wiles, 1995) and the Poincaré Conjecture (Grigori Perelman, 2002), for example, were demonstrated by researchers who somehow strayed away from the demands of an academic career (Wiles locked himself in the attic of his home in Princeton and not even his wife knew what he was working on, and his university colleagues saw him as stagnant in his career; Perelman lived with his mother and did not belong to any institution). The impartial environment of the IEA, as attested by their most successful members, by providing the necessary freedom to change direction or even to fail in achieving an objective was fundamental for subsequent successes that would not have occurred otherwise. The pursuit of excellence, therefore, not always can be quantifiably measured. Significant advances in science would not be possible in an environment other than that provided by the impartial search for knowledge.

Advanced studies at universities have their own characteristics. During the meeting in Freiburg, some of the recurring topics included the concern with the integration and relevance of advanced studies to the University and, as a consequence, to society as a whole. While Princeton is based on indirect benefits and long term, Universities show their relevance in a much more direct and immediate way. Among the many benefits for the university is the incubation of innovative research, in order to inject energy into less traditional and risky activities, which are nonetheless promising and fraught with substantial breakthroughs. In everyday life, the publication of articles in journals is the core of every academic

discipline and leads to increasing scores in institutional evaluations in different countries. This is all very positive, in particular for each discipline and for each specialized field of research, but at the same time it limits creativity and the search for the unknown that can lead to major advances in knowledge and its potential to transform society. Advanced studies at universities play this very special role that transcends traditional discipline boundaries.

THE CEAV/Unicamp

The State University of Campinas (Unicamp) has a unique history in the Brazilian context, which explains specific motivations in the field of advanced studies. Higher education institutions in Brazil came in late. The first two law schools were only created in 1827 in Olinda (state of Recife) and São Paulo, and for many decades only isolated schools of engineering, medicine and some others existed (Cunha, 2007), until the creation of the first university of international standard, in 1934, the University of São Paulo (USP), nearly four centuries after the foundation of the first universities in Spanish-speaking America (Mexico and Peru, in 1551). Despite this late onset, USP has become one of the most important universities in Latin America, owing to the exceptional tenacity of Brazilian science, of the university graduate programs and, in particular, of the state of São Paulo to promote research and higher education. The creation of Unicamp (1966) and the consolidation of isolated state faculties, which had been evolving over the decades from 1950 to 1960 in the interior state of São Paulo, under the State University of São Paulo (UNESP) in 1976, resulted from a move towards internalizing higher education and research and providing the state of São Paulo with a complex, coordinated and high quality system, envisioned in Law No. 161 of 1948, which provided for the expansion of USP to Campinas, Ribeirão Preto, São Carlos and Bauru.

The intervention of the coup d'état and the subsequent dictatorship period (1964-1985) would make this scenario even more complex. The creation of the State University of Campinas (Castilho & Soares, 2008) involved an innovation plan in the scientific and social approach, with the ambition to allow the institution to stand out for its dedication to research and specialization in some areas, differently from the universalist model of which the best example in Brazil was and still is the University of São Paulo. Therefore, the number of students per class was lower, graduate programs became, from the second decade onwards, the focus of particular attention, and faculty and student productivity was one of the main objectives of the new institution. While at the University of São Paulo, as well as at other universities specifically targeted by the military regime such as the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), faculty members had their contracts revoked or were constrained into retirement, Unicamp opened its doors to persecuted scholars and therefore began to gather the works of master minds persecuted by the military regime, among them Paulo Duarte (Funari 1994; Mendes, 1994), founder of USP, and Sérgio Buarque de Hol-

anda, a USP historian and one of the great thinkers about Brazil (cf. http://www.Unicamp.br/siarq/sbh/produdos_pesquisa.html).

Today Unicamp is the second Brazilian university in scientific production, in absolute terms, and the first if we consider the scientific production per student and per faculty member, in addition to boasting the highest average grade in graduate programs in the country (Levy, 2011), ranking first in absolute and per capita numbers in patents filed by universities (Cornachione, 2011, p. 61).¹³ In this context, the creation of the Center of Advanced Studies at Unicamp (CEAV) in March 2010 on the initiative of its current dean, Professor Fernando Costa, is proof of the institutional commitment to provide the university with a body capable of meeting the challenges ahead, starting with the choice of topics and their academic relevance, and especially to our country: Higher Education; Sports; China-Brazil Relations; Humanities. These are important issues in both epistemological and social terms, particularly at a time when Brazil is facing the challenges resulting from its increasing international integration, economic growth and reduced inequality. Moreover, they are in line with the discussions held in other Institutes of Advanced Studies for their scope, timeliness and scientific and social impact, as well as for addressing issues that generally cross the borders of departmental structures and traditional areas of academic knowledge.

CEAV publishes the online journal *Estudos Avançados Unicamp (Advanced Studies Unicamp)* (<http://www.gr.Unicamp.br/ceav/revista/index.php>; ISSN 21797552) and the quarterly journal *Ensino Superior Unicamp (Higher Education Unicamp)* (http://www.gr.Unicamp.br/ceav/revistaensinosuperior/ed03_junho2011/index.php; ISSN), both on hard copy and electronic format. In the first case, the publications include articles resulting from lectures or speeches by professors engaged in study groups, as well as small articles on events and activities of the Center. It is, therefore, a fast and dynamic means of dissemination, focused on digital media. *Unicamp Higher Education*, in turn, is a specialized publication with journalistic editing and academic depth, and sections devoted to short notes, interviews, feature articles, history, key texts and reviews, all geared to the analysis of higher education, both nationally and internationally. Published on hard copy in Portuguese, it is currently available on the Internet in Portuguese and will soon be available in English as well. CEAV is also responsible for the program *Temas de Estudos Avançados (Topics of Advanced Studies)* (<http://www.rtv.Unicamp.br/>) produced by RTV Unicamp and available on demand on the Web. The program features interviews with experts like John Douglass (Berkeley - USA); Liz Reisberg (Boston College - USA); Eric Dunning (Leicester - UK); Iris Litt (Stanford - USA); and Colling Higgs (Memorial University - Newfoundland - Canada). These programs are available to be downloaded from the internet on both the RTV Unicamp website and on YouTube.

CEAV is organized through its study groups, and at this point it would

be appropriate to briefly describe each of them. The Study Group on Higher Education (Grupo de Estudos em Educação Superior - GEES) (http://www.gr.unicamp.br/ceav/content/grupos_ensinosuperior.php), active since the first half of 2010, has developed several activities, including two international seminars: one on General Education (http://www.gr.unicamp.br/ceav/content/eventos_educacaogeral.php) and another on the Bologna Process (http://www.gr.unicamp.br/ceav/content/eventos_processobolonha.php). Furthermore, it brought for longer periods of time professors John Douglass, from the Center for Studies in Higher Education at the University of California, Berkeley, and Liz Reisberg, from Boston College, associated with the Center for International Higher Education of that institution. By invitation of the editor of *International Higher Education* Philip Altbach, group members have published three essays on various aspects of higher education in Brazil (https://htmldb-prod.bc.edu/pls/htmldb/CIHE.cihe_public_rpt2.download_issue?issue_id=114609). The group participated actively in the drafting and editing of the first issues of the *Higher Education Unicamp*, then linked to the dean's office, and took full responsibility for its edition from the third issue onwards. Besides these activities, the GEES is bringing two international projects to Unicamp and the Metropolitan Region of Campinas. The first is the application of a survey of student life in a university dedicated to research, such as Unicamp, conducted by a consortium of public American universities led by the Berkeley campus of the University of California known as "Student Experience in the Research University." The second will be the development of a project on the impact of higher education on the Metropolitan Region of Campinas, under the auspices of the State Secretariats of Metropolitan Development and of Economic Development, Science and Technology, which will include consultancy to be provided by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an entity that gathers the major economies of the world and whose objective is to develop studies on economic planning and development. The project will also seek to provide the state government with input for policies to develop higher education in our region, aiming at its economic, scientific and technological competitiveness. Another project in progress includes an international school on higher education management, which is expected to occur in mid-2012, as well as international events on access to higher education and on indicators in the field of science and technology.

The Advanced Study Group on Sports (http://www.gr.unicamp.br/ceav/grupo_esportes.html) has been in operation since 2010. In this context, the university has held a series of events and received visiting specialists, whose papers are published on the online journal *Advanced Studies Unicamp* (<http://www.gr.unicamp.br/ceav/journal/>). The topics covered include the training of young athletes, types of sports and scenarios post-Olympic games. In May 2011, the university was visited by Prof. Eric Dunning, from the University

of Leicester, UK, a worldwide reference in the sociology of sport, violence in sports and the Holocaust. As a result of his presence at CEAV, three books will be published - two in Portuguese, in Brazil - *Hooliganismo e Violência no Esporte* (Hooliganism and Violence in Sport) and *Estudos sobre o Processo Civilizatório* (Studies on the Civilization Process) and one in English, in the UK - *Civilisation, Sport and Violence*. Sport sociologist Kimberly Schimmel from Kent State University in the United States has worked with the Study Group to address the social effect of major sporting events like the World Cup and the Olympics, and is writing a book on this topic to be published in 2012.

Two new study groups have been active since 2011, one on Brazil-China relations coordinated by Prof. Carlos Pacheco (Institute of Economics), and another on the challenges of the Humanities, under the coordination of Prof. Alcir Pécora (Institute of Language Studies). China has become Brazil's main trading partner and the second world economy, and there is a growing mutual interest of both countries. The Brazil-China Study Group is comprised of scholars from Unicamp and an external advisory board. It started its public activities with a cycle of seminars in the second half of 2011, with lectures by scholars such as ambassador Amaury Porto de Oliveira. A book with the participation of Unicamp and foreign scholars is currently under construction on four major topics: economic, social, environmental and scientific. In parallel to the establishment of a Confucius Institute at Unicamp, the Group aims to strengthen integration and cultural academic cooperation with China. The Humanities represent another topic of the highest relevance for the direction of the country, from the expectation of better informed citizens' education in relation to values, traditions and criticism of the broad spectrum that comprises the knowledge of human kind, literature, history, philosophy and even art. People's education is accompanied by concerns about the limits of human knowledge, one of the great challenges of the Humanities in recent decades, with clashes between the certainty of the transience of what we know and the wish to overcome this inevitable relativity. This leads to a third aspect: the social relevance of the Humanities or their potential to provide elements for individual freedom and collective well-being. As discussed during the meeting in Freiburg, the relevance of the Humanities cannot be linked to financial returns. Unbiased humanistic and even risky research is the core element to the creativity that permeates every activity seeking knowledge in any area of science (Frick ET al., 2011, p.21). The discussion of these and other issues is among the objectives of the Study Group on Humanities.

Conclusion

During the opening session of the First International Symposium on Advanced Studies, Professor Fernando Costa, dean of Unicamp and the creator of CEAV stressed the efforts under way for Unicamp to enjoy the benefits of advanced studies for both the university and Brazilian society in general. There is no world class university without advanced studies as one of its pillars. The ex-

perience of the University of São Paulo - a pioneer and leader in Latin America – shows how advanced studies can play a vital role in promoting both cutting-edge science and social inclusion. Prof. César Ades, current director of the IEA-USP, has pointed out how significant progress for the university have derived, in the last quarter century, from the innovative action of advanced studies.

Prof. Fernando Costa approved the construction of the CEAV headquarters, a 1,000 sq. meter three-story building. Advanced studies at Unicamp underscore a decisive commitment of the university in both the academic and social areas, whose benefits are being felt now, but will be felt even more in the medium and long term. The seminar on the challenges of an Institute of Advanced Study at the Brazilian University, held at Unicamp in 2010, demonstrated the heat of the debates and the relevance of advanced studies as an action-inducing factor in the long term for both the university and society. The event in Freiburg indicates the global importance of advanced studies, and the participation of Unicamp in this process demonstrates the commitment of the university to act always in the forefront of science, attentive to the demands of Brazilian society. On the initiative of Prof. César Ades (IEA-USP), CEAV has participated in the coordination of a network of institutions of advanced studies in Brazil, in cooperation with the Institute of Interdisciplinary Advanced Studies of the Federal University of Minas Gerais - UFMG (http://www.gr.Unicamp.br/ceav/revista/content/pdf/funari_reuniao_de_estudos_avancados_na_usp_01072011.pdf). CEAV, therefore, starts its activities in close cooperation at the national and international level. The first outcomes indicate a future path fraught with results for the State University of Campinas and national science.

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Notes

- 1 Such as the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut, created in 1917, which had Einstein as one of its researchers.
- 2 Such as the All Souls College, Oxford.
- 3 Originally published in 1937, available at: <<http://library.ias.edu/hs/da/usefulnessofuselessKnowledge.pdf>>).
- 4 See Abraham Flexner in the same article entitled “The usefulness of useless knowled-

ge”: “*Institutions of learning should be devoted to the cultivation of curiosity and the less they are deflected by considerations of immediacy of application, the more likely they are to contribute not only to human welfare but to the equally important satisfaction of intellectual interest which may indeed be said to have become the ruling passion of intellectual life in modern times*” (originally published in 1937, available at <<http://library.ias.edu/hs/da/usefulnessofuselessKnowledge.pdf>>).

- 5 See <<http://www.casbs.org/introduction/?PHPsessId=ua75qcd3knqpuh297u8f5qedn7>>, about the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, Palo Alto.
- 6 See Henk Wesseling (2002, p.21): “*international and interdisciplinary are thus the keywords for an institute for advanced study. But to encapsulate the idea of an institute for advanced study I would prefer to use two other notions: freedom and community*”
- 7 As suggested by Flexner’s mottos: “*no duties, only opportunities; teach best by not teaching at all*”.
- 8 See Steve Batterson (2006, p.174): “*For years Flexner had subscribed to the Gilman Philosophy that availability of personnel drove the choice of programs*”.
- 9 See Steve Batterson (2006, p.174): “*It was art history and archaeology that were at the core of Flexner’s plan*”.
- 10 For example, Institute of Advanced Studies, Department of Science and Aerospace Technology, Ministry of Defense of Brazil <<http://www.ieav.cta.br>>; Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh <<http://www.ias.ed.ac.uk>>.
- 11 At the pioneer meeting of Freiburg, the Institutes for Advanced Study of universities met for the first time ever, totaling 32 from the five continents and 19 countries, four of them developing countries (South Africa, Brazil, China and India). Latin America attended with the pioneer Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of São Paulo, established in 1986 by the bold initiative of the then dean José Goldemberg, and with the newly created Center for Advanced Studies of Unicamp, CEAV (www.gr.Unicamp.br/ceav), an impressive project of the dean of the university, Professor Fernando Ferreira Costa
- 12 On March 23, 2011, Unicamp hosted the first international symposium on advanced studies in Brazil, with the participation of the directors of the institutes at Princeton, Stanford, Jerusalem, and the IEA/USP and the Center of Advanced Studies - CEAV/Unicamp, with comments by Fapesp’s scientific director, Prof. Brito Cruz and Prof. Marcelo Knobel (assistant dean for graduate studies at Unicamp). This pioneer initiative in Brazil followed the September meeting of 2010 in Freiburg, Germany, attended, also for the first time ever, by Institutes for Advanced Study from universities in all continents and where CEAV-Unicamp and IEA/USP represented Latin America (Journal of Unicamp, March 15, 2011, p.2).
- 13 Between 2000 and 2008, Unicamp filed 446 patents; USP filed 312; UFMG filed 218; and UFRJ filed 177 (Cornachione, 2011, p.61).

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