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Faculdade de Medicina Graduate Committee: its history and prospects

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A medical journal being published for 100 years is unusual in Brazil, adding to this the fact that it is coordinated by students of a medical school. To have a journal with these characteristics is a reason to be proud of and, in my case, it is a great pleasure to be able to collaborate with this special issue, bringing some of the facts of the *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP) Graduate system.

Doctorates at the *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP) started prior to its founding in 1934, the year in which the higher education schools merged. Among these schools was the *Faculdade de Medicina* (FM), founded in 1912.

Effectively, the Graduate program in the FM was established on February 24, 1970, meeting the provisions in Ordinance GR 885 of August 25, 1969, which authorized the operation of the masters and doctoral courses as we know them nowadays.

As early as 1970, the Luiz de Queiroz College of Agriculture (Escola Superior de Agronomia Luiz de Queiroz, ESALQ) proposed the designing of 7 Graduate programs with these new features. The first Graduate program in FMUSP was devised on February 21st, 1972, in the Surgical Clinic field. The first degrees were bestowed in 1976. Since then, FMUSP has bestowed 3671 Masters degrees and 5300 Doctors degrees. To this number we must add 633 students who have been granted their titles before restructuring of the system.

FMUSP's Graduate system currently features 560 advisors and over 1800 students distributed in 26 programs. We are responsible for much of the Brazilian scientific production in the medical field published in international indexing journals, and we are also the national institution that qualifies most researchers and Professors in this area of knowledge. The Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Coordenadoria de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES) is a federal funding agency that evaluates all the Graduate programs in Brazil, grading them with scores going from 3 to 7. Programs graded as score 5 are considered to be of national excellence and those graded 6 and 7 are considered to be of international excellence. We now have four level 4 programs, and efforts are being directed to restructure them, since FMUSP is a unit oriented towards being a “creative scholarship” – an educational institution which qualifies human resources with the challenge of scientific research, where it is expected at least that the programs are rated as national excellence.

Some very important actions have already been implemented to strengthen Graduate programs. The first was the foundation of the Medical Sciences Program in 2006, which gathered different areas of knowledge and is now graded 7 by CAPES; the second action was the merging of the Digestive System Surgery and Clinical Gastroenterology programs in 2011, comprising the

President of the Graduate Committee of *Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de São Paulo* (FMUSP).

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Sciences in Gastroenterology program.

For a positive evolution of the Graduate Committee of *Faculdade de Medicina* (CPG/FM), new actions as these must be developed in order to reduce the current number of programs. It is worth mentioning an example of a simple and efficient Graduate program organization: the USP Institute of Physics has only one Graduate program with more than 300 students, and is graded as international excellence by CAPES.

Recently, USP Graduate Committee has been strongly stimulated by the USP Provost for Graduate Studies to propose professional master courses. At first there was great resistance to this request because it was not clear how this type of degree, which is different from the academic Masters and Medical Residency. After a long debate in which many doubts were cleared, in 2015 we had the first professional Masters program approved at FMUSP: Infections Related to Health Care – area of concentration of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases.

CAPES is the main funding agency funding the Brazilian graduate programs. However, in 2015 it dramatically reduced resource transfers, reducing greatly the student scholarships program, and compromised the entire lecturer and student mobility in Brazil and abroad. In FMUSP there was less of a problem because there was an encouragement for the request for resources to be made through other funding sources, especially to the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). At FMUSP there was also the necessary investment in technology so that dissertation and thesis defenses could be held with non-present members, maintaining high quality our Board of Examiners with few endogenous participants, an initiative that collaborates with the prospect of increasing the number

of international members in the evaluation of our theses and dissertations.

In the future, despite the momentary crisis our country is going through, the prospects are really promising. We now have bilingual courses, some with teachers from abroad, and there is an exponential growth trend, which can act as a facilitating agent for receiving foreign students, and to provide our students with a greater mastery of a second language, providing to everyone the possibility of a greater international exposure. “Sandwich” and double degree Doctoral programs are increasing, contributing in a significant way to FMUSP’s internationalization factor. Teaching techniques from the 21st century such as distance learning are already in use in the FMUSP Graduation programs, which includes courses that have the participation of foreign professors. Also, the physical area it is being equipped to suit these demands in order to contribute to the formation of our students and researchers from Latin America.

FMUSP graduate programs, which already have great partnerships with the greatest international research and education institutes and produces impact science, qualifying high-quality researchers and professors. In the near future, the function of aiding in qualification of professors and researchers from Latin America will be incorporated, this joint action will further contribute to FMUSP excellence.

Works Consulted

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