



Universidad de las Américas, A.C.

Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary Strengthening Students Professional Skills and Abilities for the Undergraduate Mass Media Program

Background

In the late nineties and the beginning of the XXI Century it was found that higher education in Mexico did not entirely responded to the professional preparation required by the productive sector, thus creating a permanent professional shortage that has contributed to increase the unemployment indexes.

Forecasting this in the future years, a large number of undergraduate programs graduates will not find easily a job in their field of study. This is especially true in the Mass Media industry where a large number of graduates are not working in their expertise area

Topic

To enhance the students' quality of learning through the incorporation of professional practicum experiences, allowing to adequate their professional competencies accordingly.

Goals

- To integrate the different fundamental theoretical concepts of the discipline to practical cases of professional character (directly linked to the competencies)
- To demonstrate the integration of the theoretical and methodological knowledge into the resolution of specific problems from their own profession within real contexts.
- To develop and make evident social and teamwork skills that will be achieved through the professional and field practices aforementioned.

Major Interventions

- Didactics were strongly oriented to the promotion of professional competencies. The resulting learning scheme process emerging from that stage was the following: first in the classroom conceptual learning is acquired and then in laboratories where conceptual and procedural learning starts to be integrated; continuing in simulated contexts that can be adapted in institutional spaces or in real controlled scenarios and real scenarios in working sets.

- Seven courses were identified where the learning of practical abilities is a must since they belong to the Professional Practicum Area and imply the application of the competencies learnt at the University.
- New qualitative approaches were incorporated, such as the development of qualitative instruments (portfolio assessment)
- A strong Advisory Council for the Mass Media program was appointed, consisting of Mass Media leaders, including CEOs, newspaper editors, anchormen, film producers and senior executives in both international TV networks and the advertising business who delivered a series of conferences about the past and present situation of their respective field of expertise building a new cooperation scheme with representatives of Mass Media Mexican market.
- Signature of 5 agreements with top newspapers, TV networks and an international newswire service that has allowed over a third of the program's students to have their first professional experiences.
- Creation an enterprise within the University (E-MID) that is a Web Site devoted to link international companies, private investors and UDLA students to provide useful information such as economic indicators, Mexican laws and regulations, day-to-day important news, etc. This enterprise is intended to provide UDLA's Mass Media students a space for professional practices that is real and similar to working settings.

For more information please contact:

Ramón Pedrosa-López, M. Sc.
Dean, Department of Mass Media
ramonpedrosa@udla.mx