



UNICA DECLARATION

**MAYAGÜEZ CAMPUS
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
NOVEMBER 15, 2007**

The member institutions of the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA), meeting at the Mayagüez Campus of the University of Puerto Rico on the 14th and 15th of November 2007, are committed to strengthening the universities as instruments of academic excellence. Working towards that purpose, they stress the importance of promoting mechanisms for cooperation that will propitiate the academic mobility of both students and faculty.

We respond to the academic demands that arise from the context of global development, thereby minimizing frontiers, approaching societies where universities have the commitment to accept a broader exchange of ideas, information, projects, and resources. By allowing the free flow of knowledge and promoting academic networks, academic mobility contributes to the integration of the Caribbean region.

We understand that academic mobility permits and facilitates the optimization of human and material resources. New technologies as well as emerging areas of research constitute a challenge to the universities, since institutions of higher learning must keep up with new developments knowledge and incorporate cutting edge findings in their projects. By means of academic exchanges, identifying common ground that will allow academic offerings to be multiplied using the available resources throughout organized university networks, both goals can be attained.

We also understand that universities have the obligation to support the development of their own country as well as of their region. This objective can only be achieved through academic excellence. Promoting academic mobility we advance toward this end, using the best intellectual resources of each participating institution.

In order to foster contact and collaboration between universities and research centers, specifically promoting student and faculty exchanges, and

collaboration among groups of investigators and professionals, the institutions affiliated to UNICA state their intention to establish an Agreement of Academic Mobility to include students, researchers, and professors, thereby turning this agreement into an effective and relevant of academic instrument.

AGREEMENT OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY

Within the framework of this Agreement of Academic Mobility, the institutions affiliated to UNICA wish to lay the groundwork for carrying out academic, scientific, and shared cultural experiences among their teaching faculty, researchers, and students. The Agreement is conceived as a document for fostering social vision and academic objectives. It will provide a structured strategy to allow greater mobility for both students and faculty. The strategy will include promoting inter-institutional cooperation by sharing faculty resources and facilitating student exchanges, and by validating academic degrees, grades, and credits.

Exchanges of teaching staff and researchers will be carried out for the purpose of strengthening theoretical and applied knowledge, among UNICA member institutions in the different fields, and will take place within the following parameters:

- Institutions will nominate participating professors to be selected by the host university in accordance with the established rules or procedures of each member institution.
- Aspects pertaining to expenses, duration of the exchange, service fees, number of participants in each project, housing, publications, intellectual property rights, patents, and trademarks will be dealt with in specific agreements.
- In planning for their programs of visiting faculty the institutions will provide special consideration to projects that entail the mobility of professors and researchers of universities that are members of UNICA.

This agreement establishes student exchanges with the object of enriching the academic experience, adding value to it and providing for an expanded socio-cultural dimension. This in turn will allow greater awareness of diversity and promote increased solidarity within the Caribbean region. Student exchanges must be set within the framework of institutions committed to validate undergraduate as well as graduate degrees, and to uphold a homogeneous appraisal of hours of attendance to lectures, seminars, and courses, and to grades and degrees; resulting in an exchange that is both compatible and of high quality.

Student exchanges between the institutions affiliated to UNICA will be carried out within the following parameters:

- Students may participate in exchange activities of several weeks, a semester or a full academic year's duration.
- Equivalency tables for courses among the participating universities are to be established prior to the student exchange. The equivalencies must be honored by the university of origin upon the student's return.
- Course sequences will be established for diplomas, certificates, joint programs or other means that accord recognition to the studies carried out in an institution other than the university of origin, and validated towards the conferral of a degree from the university of origin.

The following matters will be covered in specific agreements:

- Requirements to qualify for participation in exchange projects
- Student selection process
- Tuition and financial aids that form part of the exchange
- Housing, health insurance and transportation
- Number of students that the participating institutions will send or receive
- Course equivalency tables by area of study among the participating institutions
- Grade point average equivalency tables among the participating agencies

Student mobility for the purpose of obtaining degrees between UNICA member institutions will be simplified by using the following guidelines:

- Admission procedures must be followed as established in the academic programs of the participating institutions.
- Special enrollment quotas will be set for graduate students.
- Orientation procedures will be designed for students from universities affiliated to UNICA, taking into account the specifics of the university of origin.
- Financial aid will be identified for the benefit of increased student mobility leading to a degree.

The goal of achieving a vigorous program for attaining greater academic mobility in the Caribbean region by the signing of this Agreement by the institutions that form part of UNICA is framed within the following common objectives:

- To foster cooperation among universities and research institutes in the Caribbean.
- To foster a sense of heightened value regarding the culture of the region.
- To achieve, by means of inter-institutional academic exchanges, a scientific, cultural, and intellectual development that will contribute to finding solutions to the challenges posed by contemporary society

A UNICA Commission for Academic Mobility will be established in order to promote, facilitate, and give continuity to what is hereby agreed to. It will be responsible for carrying out the program for Academic Mobility within the framework of UNICA. The Executive Committee of the Association will select three members who will constitute the Commission and determine its specific functions.

After careful consideration of this document, and in agreement with its content and scope, as defined herein, the following institutions hereby agree to it: