

ESSAY STANDARD 1

Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSES

CETYS University was founded in 1961 in Mexicali. Why in Mexicali? Because its founders resided in this city, the state capitol of Baja California, and also to prevent the flight of students to other regions of the country. Why expand to Tijuana (1972) and Ensenada (1975) In order to better fulfil and ensure its institutional purposes and educational objectives state-wide and also to keep up with population growth and student demand.

CFR 1.1

Mission statement and institutional purposes

The Mission Statement of CETYS University (57) clearly describes the institution's humanistic and academic spirit. This is synthesized in three fundamental ideas: 1) the centrality of the person in the educational process; 2) education conceived as an integration process, meaning that student develops all of his/her potential and capacity, including values and ethics; 3) the ultimate goal being the contribution of its graduates to improving the social, economic and cultural life of the community.

The University's educational philosophy emerged with greater clarity during the discussions leading to the first institutional development plan in 1970. The institution's Mission text was approved in 1977 by IENAC (Educational Institute of the Northwest Civil Association), and since then has remained a foundational point of reference for the design of various strategic development plans and all new programs. Changes and amendments to the University's Mission must be approved by IENAC (60).

As necessary over time, changes have been made and reflected in the design of new strategic plans, new academic programs and other existing programs. However, the University's foundational principles and objectives as well as those included in the plans of the different degree programs and support services, maintain consistent clarity regarding our mission as an institution of higher education. The Vision of the institution projects the image of CETYS as a social actor, reflecting its integrated outlook and modelled on the strategic development plan that resulted from the extensive participation of the CETYS community during the CETYS XXI Century Convention (62).

Since 1992, CETYS has sought to more explicitly enrich its philosophy and to make it clearer and give it greater meaning and understanding to all audiences— from students at all academic levels to administrative and service personnel. Specifically, this objective has been pursued through the Program for the Promotion of Its People, designed in the summer of 1993 and implemented since 1994 to the present.

Furthermore, since 2004, critical analysis concerning the institution's philosophy has led to the design of a values-oriented system published in the *Faculty Handbook* (19), which is the product of a collaborative effort by full-time faculty in the Humanities and members of the Academic President's Office, followed by consultation and approval by the President and the Board of Trustees. The aim of this values system is to consolidate a set of values that should guide and permeate the actions and behaviour to all members of the CETYS community.

In practical terms, the educational model (59) is an operative and methodologically structured framework adapted to respond to the reality of the world based on a concrete philosophical foundation. Our educational model consists of three components: 1) philosophical principles providing a conceptual definition of education and the human being; 2) pedagogical principles establishing the way in which the educational process must consolidate itself; and 3) core values integrated into curricular design. To implement this model, general strategies are defined from which specific actions emerge to bring coherence to both the philosophical, as well as the pedagogical principles. Our educational model is published on our Institutional Website and in the *Faculty Handbook*.

CFR 1.2

Educational objectives are clearly recognized throughout the institution

Since its inception in 1961, CETYS University has assessed its development based on six guidelines: a) to accomplish a values-oriented mission, b) a clear image of academic quality and aspirations to excellence, c) a commitment of and to the community, d) increasing access and opportunities to higher education, e) delivering fields and programs of study designed to meet the needs of Baja California and the region, and f) a commitment to planning that guides the institution's future course and direction. These guiding principles are outlined in the *CETYS 2010 Development Plan: 2006-2010 version (4)*, wherein institutional objectives are established, always deriving from and consistent with the University's Mission. These educational objectives are the following:

1. To strengthen the organizational culture of the institution;
2. To develop human potential fully;
3. To achieve an organizational structure consistent with educational mission and goals;
4. To improve institutional effectiveness;
5. To have processes, infrastructure and equipment that respond to institutional needs;
6. To have in place an optimal architecture in information systems for CETYS' adequate administration and operation;
7. To maintain and/or obtain national and international accreditations;
8. To strengthen the institutional educational model;
9. To enhance the link and interaction with the community, including alumni;
10. To improve satisfaction of different audiences and stakeholders;

11. To strengthen institutional image and prestige; and
12. To increase fundraising and revenue streams.

Tied to the development plan and with its respective indicators, these objectives are published in institutional brochures, as well as on the Website, and in the working documents of each campus's General Director's office.

The Generic Profile of the Graduating Student published in the *Faculty Handbook* (19) (pg. 33), consistent with the Mission and the Educational Model, synthesizes the qualities that students, in all undergraduate programs offered by CETYS, must possess upon graduation. This profile establishes, on the one hand, a set of value qualities, and on the other, a set of qualities related to intellectual/academic capacity. This generic profile is a combination of living a humanistic vocation, a vocation that must manifest itself through the development of the whole person in two senses: 1) internally, by achieving a daily and lifetime union with one's capabilities; and 2) externally, by engaging with society and being proactive in a harmonious relationship with the environment of which we are an inseparable part.

Academic programs are designed by the institution's faculty, under the coordination of the President's academic staff, and subsequently, approved by the President and presented to IENAC's Education Committee. All of these procedures are published on the Website (61).

CFR 1.3

The institution's leadership creates and sustains a leadership system

CETYS University has established a General Statute (31) and a functional organizational chart conducive to the achievement of institutional objectives. This functional chart indicates the path to follow for decision-making, allowing for autonomy and communication networks that enable interaction of various units and areas. Of course, autonomy is somewhat relative since these units and areas operate independently while at the same time they manage common processes that come under the supervision of higher institutional authorities. The organizational structure facilitates decision-making and creative leadership in each of the operational areas. At the same time, this leadership must take into account the objectives described in the *CETYS 2010 Strategic Plan* (4) so that all decisions and actions are aimed at moving in the same direction and achieving common goals and objectives.

With great emphasis on the institution's humanistic philosophy, we seek to maintain a leadership team (63) that is devoted to promoting personal and academic development as the foundation of institutional life. Hence, the importance of allowing, indeed expecting, proposals and initiatives in each department to be developed and shared, always in search for continued improvement.

Consequently, we aim for collaboration and trust in decision-making, given that input is obtained according to each department's programs and consistent with institutional objectives. Additionally, an Evaluation System is used to assess the administration's performance at every level; it is composed of both quantitative and qualitative factors, and includes the evaluation of the exercise of leadership by directors and department heads in each area. The annual performance of each member of the administration is summarized in a Productivity Matrix.

INTEGRITY

CFR 1. 4 Academic Freedom

The notion of the human being held by CETYS University places freedom as one of the essential dimensions of the individual; furthermore, freedom is one of the central values in our values system published in our *Faculty Handbook* (19). In this context, CETYS University has designed and published its policy on academic freedom, which consistently results from our philosophical and pedagogical ideology and approach. It is important to clarify that the concept of academic freedom practiced at CETYS University (and at most institutions of higher education in Mexico) differs somewhat from that observed in universities in the U.S. (64).

The scope and application of academic freedom in our institution are as follows:

Faculty: all faculty members have the freedom to recommend academic programs and submit them for review and academic discussion (5). Additionally, faculty are free to express their thoughts, beliefs and opinions, be they philosophical, political and/or religious, under the condition of respecting the thoughts and beliefs of their students. Similarly, each faculty member may affiliate with a political party of his/her choice, but must avoid proselytising within the institution.

Students: at all academic levels, students are guaranteed their freedom of thought, and of political and religious preference. Likewise, they may freely express themselves within the campus and present complaints and grievances of any nature before institutional authorities. This policy is documented in our *Student Code of Conduct*.

Administrative and service personnel: all individuals employed by the institution are respected in their political ideas and religious beliefs, and enjoy the freedom to openly express them while respecting those of others. Also, they have the freedom to present proposals and feedback relating to the improvement of their work.

Nonetheless, it is desirable to improve institutional channels of communication for promoting and facilitating grievance procedures, manifestation of complaints, and submission of proposals with appropriate review and feedback loops.

Concerning the guarantee of academic freedom as noted above, the statement is found in the following published sources: General Statute (31) Article 84 and the institution's Website. The orientation programs for new faculty (65) and the student orientation workshops (46) are examples of avenues employed to disseminate our institution's policy on academic freedom.

CFR 1.5

Institutional commitment to the principles of Diversity

Our social environment is far from being similar to that which characterizes the United States and some European nations, particularly in terms of having large ethnic and cultural groups from other countries. This does not occur in our region, or in our institution, in particular. (*Handbook*, p. 71).

More than 90% of our students are local, with the majority born in the greater community and reflective of the makeup of this community. For example, there is gender equity in enrolment (DT 1.3), and a significant percentage of students profess Catholicism, the dominant religion in the country. Furthermore, programs offered by the institution are open to all students and the community in general, and do not discriminate in terms of race, gender, religion, socio-economic conditions, or other status characteristics (95).

Within the framework of diversity, it is important to underscore that our humanistic philosophy and principles deem imperative openness, tolerance and respect for any type of difference and human variation, be it ethnic, cultural or gender-based. Also, international academic exchanges of students and faculty corroborate our institutional openness to diversity.

Our humanistic values and principles have led us to establish financial aid mechanisms that allow students with limited economic resources to gain access to CETYS' educational programs at any academic level. Currently, for example, 70% of our students receive financial support in the form of scholarships and/or educational loans that are need- and/or merit-based (DT 2.4). This approach is upheld in articles 62 and 146 of the General Statute (31).

CFR 1.6

The institution operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

CETYS University's autonomy in pursuing its mission and accomplishing its primary purpose – providing an education anchored in the values it

upholds – has never been compromised, nor has it been in danger of being subject to undue influences, pressures or interferences, from the Board or any other entity, of a religious, political, or economic nature.

As an institution we are both non-partisan and secular. This does not mean that we are indifferent to the political life of our country and/or the world nor to religious profession

as such, but that we refrain from promoting a determined political ideology or a religious credo within the institution.

Our economic autonomy remains intact, even though IENAC (60) sponsors our institution and makes various economic contributions to it. Additionally, academic and administrative decisions are the responsibility of the different appropriate bodies in the functional organizational chart, in their entirety or jointly and under the President's leadership.

As concerns IENAC members, even when their affiliation to a determined political party or to a religious credo is evident, these preferences are strictly reserved to their personal sphere. Evidence underlying this autonomy is found in: IENAC Bylaws, *President's Annual Report* (66) and *Faculty Handbook*.

CFR 1. 7

Academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion

At the beginning of each academic program an orientation session takes place. Each degree program establishes the required courses for each semester included in a major. The program is flexible enough to allow completion for students behind schedule, so that they may finish their program of study in a period of 4-5 years. The student is made aware of this information during the orientation workshop; additionally, students receive a CD explaining the design of their program of study and what courses will be made available during each semester. For statistics relating to completion and retention, refer to data tables.

Rules are very transparent to the student as they are readily-available through the Student Code of Conduct published on the website and distributed to each student in the form of a CD during their CETYS admissions orientation.

Academic transcripts define credits, and the number of hours attended for each program of study. All official undergraduate and graduate programs offer academic credit; continuing education programs are the only ones not offering credit (67).

To better inform students, prospective students, and the general public of our mission, educational philosophy, educational model and values system, since the beginning of the 1990s, CETYS University has disseminated these foundational principles through different print and electronic sources (61), focus groups and/or conferences and orientation workshops for new students and faculty (37,45). These dissemination mechanisms are extensive and reach both internal and external audiences.

CETYS has sufficient channels for students to express recommendations and/or concerns through different institutional bodies (46) such as technical and educational advisory boards. Additionally:

a) In its search for continued improvement and meeting students' service expectations, CETYS University uses student feedback from results obtained through the *Satisfaction Survey* (43), the *Evaluation and Retribution System for Professors (SERP)* (25), and the humanistic workshops scheduled at the middle and end of every program.

b) Students are organized and represented through the student body association; this also provides a feedback mechanism relative to meeting academic and service goals and objectives.

CFR 1. 8 Integrity

Our institution's integrity is illustrated by four points: a) in that our reason for being is to provide education without seeking profit; b) we strive to deliver solid academic programs as advertised and promised (97); c) we deal with employees and students in an honest and fair way; and d), we provide adequate and transparent management of institutional finances through the management guidelines published in IENAC's Bylaws (60) and the General Statute (31).

Since its founding, CETYS University has held a policy requiring that surpluses from operations at the end of the fiscal year be used to address academic needs such as technical resources and infrastructure for teaching and/or for student financial aid.

Transparency in the management and allocation of financial resources originating from tuition, IENAC contributions, community donations and fundraising events is demonstrated by the annual audit conducted by a professional firm of certified public accountants and auditors – an agency that is independent and external to the institution –, that grants *Annual Certified Independent Audits* (68) which are also published in the *President's Annual Report* (66).

Regarding employees, faculty and staff, it is necessary to establish more precise and efficient policies and procedures that allow better channelling of their complaints and grievances. This is an area where the institution needs and plans to improve.

CFR 1. 9 Commitment to honest communication with the Accrediting Commission

Our institutional principles and values obligate us to act with consistency and rectitude. Therefore, we are conscious of the ethical imperative to be honest during the course of the accreditation process, and beyond, with the different evaluators appointed by WASC. This has been acknowledged in the letter sent to WASC (69), which was enclosed with the candidacy application and was signed by the President of the institution and the President of the Board, stating the commitment adopted by CETYS University to the Accrediting Commission.

Conclusion

Since 1961, CETYS University has defined its mission, its reach and its educational purpose, which together have contributed to its renowned reputation for educational excellence in the State of Baja California and to official acknowledgement by governmental authorities through special recognition from the State Government of Baja California. It has been and continues to be an institution from and for the community, as it has been under the auspices of a group of visionary community leaders (IENAC), and its educational services have been developed in response to the educational and occupational needs of its community.

The institution's integrity has always been characterized by continuous, interruption-free-classes, high quality programs, well-prepared faculty and an alumni corps with high prestige and substantial community participation.

Additionally, the University's mission, vision, educational objectives, educational model, commitment to society, graduating profiles, admissions criteria, financial aid based on students' academic merit and/or economic need, among others, are clear indications of our institutional integrity.

Recommendations:

In addition to all of the other ongoing efforts to continually enhance the educational and employment experiences, CETYS University is well aware of the work that needs to be undertaken concerning the complaints and grievances policies, processes, and procedures. It is necessary to clearly, precisely and firmly establish in their respective handbooks, efficient policies and procedures that allow better channelling of student and employee complaints and grievances. This is an area where the institution needs to improve and is fully committed to doing so (CFR 1.8).