

Universitat Oberta
de Catalunya
Memòria del curs
1998-99

UNIVERSITAT OBERTA DE CATALUNYA
Biblioteca



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Annual report Academic year 1998-99

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Introduction

In this Annual Report it is stated that in July 1999 the Open University of Catalonia (hereinafter referred to by its full title in Catalan, or as the UOC) held a solemn graduation ceremony at Manresa; and I had the honour of attending that ceremony. For me, it is a pleasure to recall the event, because everything to which this Report refers – internal organisation, teaching activities, research, business initiatives, international protection, university services – is oriented, in the last analysis, toward the proper education of the students of the UOC. The ceremony in question symbolised the harvest obtained from the efforts made in recent years by that university. As Chairman of the Board I am glad to be able to say that the UOC offers distance education of the highest academic quality to those citizens who enrol at it under no other limitation than that posed in their native abilities. This is the objective of the undertaking.

Nonetheless, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has fashioned certain instruments – technology applied to teaching and research – and an outlook – business-oriented and at the same time at the service of the public – which have opened it to collaboration with other universities and with the enterprises which have made it unequivocally present in the education market. I am delighted that this is so and I wish to encourage all members of the UOC to consolidate, and to go further along, this pathway which is enriching the entire university system of Catalonia. As the

commissioner of the Government of the Generalitat (hereinafter referred to also as the Autonomous Government of Catalonia) for Universities and Research, I place an especially high value on this educational trajectory.

Andreu Mas-Colell
Chairman of the FUOC Board of Trustees

During the present academic year, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has made a qualitative and quantitative leap of considerable importance. Our 15,000 students, 8 courses of study, 9 support centres, 359 subjects, and the agreements made with universities and enterprises (in particular, that with the Complutense University of Madrid) are the unmistakable signs of a progress of which we are all very proud, and of which we are glad to render accounts to the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, as well as to Catalanian society, which has made that progress possible. Nonetheless, as Rector of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, I also know what underlies the results which figure in this Report: there is a team of responsible teachers and professionals, and a body of students who have forgone hours of relaxation and leisure in order to turn their desire for achievement into learning and into academic results. In all, the matter is undoubtedly one of work.

Nevertheless, as Rector I also know that without the spirit and the leanings which enliven the UOC, this task either could not have been brought to completion or would not have yielded the same

results. A spirit of responsibility and of enthusiasm for this particular educational model which has allowed us to overcome throughout this academic year the difficulties and deficiencies which – personally and collectively – we have had to confront. A leaning on the part of the entire University toward the service of society, and one which has been active in this institution from its beginnings. I feel it a privilege to be at the head of a university organisation such as the UOC, and an immense good fortune to be a daily witness to its professional and human quality.

Gabriel Ferraté i Pascual
Rector of the UOC

To present, in the name of the Foundation Council, an account of a year of the activities of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is a privilege, but also an obligation: the privilege of showing to society the work which the University has done in the course of the academic year (undergraduate degrees, new studies, broadening of the field of activities, agreements with various social institutions and with businesses); and the obligation to render accounts of the use which the University has made of the trust and the funding that it has received from the society of Catalonia.

I am most satisfied with these achievements and with the orientation under which they have been effected, especially sensitive as it is to the education of students and the implication of the University in the Catalanian system of higher education and in the productive workings of this country. As Chairman of the Foundation

Council of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya I know that I can express on behalf of all the members of the Council my congratulations to the University for the work it has been doing.

The world we live in, however, is evolving so rapidly that it behoves us to maintain this creative outlook and way of working if we are to be worthy of the prestige already attained by the University and of the debt which we owe to society. I am sure that we shall do so. From within the Council of the Board, which brings together Rectors of Catalanian public universities, entities from social and business life, and personalities from the world of research and culture, we shall exert the will necessary to that task.

Josep Vilarasau
Chairman of the Council of the FUOC

Governing Bodies

The Foundation for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, created on 6th October 1994, is governed by a Board of Trustees which brings together a wide range of highly prestigious entities established throughout the territory of Catalonia. It is constituted by the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, which holds the majority, the Federation of Savings Banks of Catalonia, The Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Barcelona, Television of Catalonia, and Catalonia Radio Broadcasting Service of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia.

The constitutive process continues with the unanimous approval of the

Law 3/1995, of 6th April of that year, concerning the recognition of the UOC, and the publication of the same in the DOGC (Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya, or Official Bulletin) no. 2040 of 21st April 1995.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FUOC

The Board is the highest representative body in the government and administration of the Foundation, according to the Statutes of the FUOC, section 1, article 149. The principal functions of the Board in respect of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya are to approve – and if need be, to modify – the Norms governing the organisation and functioning of the University; to nominate and to dismiss the Rector and the Managing Director; to approve the budget and the balance of payments, and to approve the plan of action submitted by the Rector and evaluate its results.

STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD

The Board of Trustees of the FUOC delegates certain of its functions to the Standing Committee, which is the permanent organ of the administration and management of the Foundation and whose mission is to carry on the day-to-day business of the Foundation.

THE FUOC COUNCIL

In accordance with the Agreement of 28th December 1995 of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, the Board is assisted by

the FUOC Council, a consultative organ of the Foundation; and it is by that Government that the composition and functions of the Council are given approval (Resolution of 8th January 1996)

The functions of the FUOC Council are to supply information about the budget and programming of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and about the nomination of its Rector. As well as by the Rector of the UOC and the Chairman of the FUOC, the Council is constituted by representatives from the Parliament (2), public universities (4), employers' federations (2) and trade unions (2), and various figures from the sphere of research and culture (5). It therefore contains members from a wide spectrum of Catalanian society, which the University, owing to its dedication to the notion of public service, has both the desire and the obligation to serve.

GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UOC

The internal organisation of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya possesses in the Governing Council its principal collegiate organ of government, which has the function of orienting, planning, and evaluating university activity and of establishing the general approach and stance of the University in all its spheres.

The Rector is the major authority of the University, and to him or her belongs the principal responsibility in its representation, government, and administration. The Rector is assisted by the Vice-Rectors and by the Managing

Director, to whom pertains the overseeing of the day-to-day administration of the University.

NORMS CONCERNING ORGANISATION AND FUNCTIONING

In the academic year 1996-97, the Autonomous Government of Catalonia ratified (on 1st April 1997) the Norms Concerning Organisation and Functioning which the Board of the Foundation had approved. This process was in accordance with what is set out in article 1.1 of the Law 3/1995, of recognition of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

Put into effect in the 1997-98 academic year, the Norms Concerning Organisation and Functioning regulate the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and establish as general criteria of conduct the following:

1. Quality. In respect of the functions which are assigned to it, the University is under the obligation to require of itself the highest quality in teaching, in research, and in all the educational services that it offers.

2. Information and Education. The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya recognises that the service which it provides to students is not only informative but also educative. For this reason, it operates through a model of teaching and learning that is responsive to the singularity of individual persons, and it seeks to complete the professional training of students by an education that aims at human completeness.

3. Continuing Education. The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya holds that higher education must promote the conviction of the necessity of its being pursued in a recurrent and continuous manner throughout life. For this reason, as well as operating in the sphere of initial higher education, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya maintains a commitment to continuing education.

4. Innovation and Research. Each sphere of activity in the University has the objective of introducing the innovations necessary to the constant improvement of the task it carries out in the service of society. This aim is of especial relevance to research undertakings. In this regard, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya encourages the academic research of its lecturers and professors, technical research, and research into teaching and learning, in which activities it is supposed all sectors of the University will take part.

5. Participation. The initiatives and advice of all members of the university community are equally indispensable to the proper functioning of the University, and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is therefore provided with consultative bodies and bodies for assessment and co-ordination aimed at making such initiatives and advice possible.

6. An Open Mind. The University takes as one of its starting-points the awareness of the international dimension of one's activity and of the evolution that is bringing about in the world an ever-greater relativity in the distances between places and the differences between people, and, as a consequence,

a) it holds itself to be under the obligation to provide students with an education which will prepare them for this world-wide dimension of their respective professions;

b) it is incumbent on it to encourage a climate of tolerance among individuals, and it believes that university education must assist in the creation of a collective outlook of such a kind;

c) it requires of all members of the university community the necessary openness to the changes and innovations which are transforming and enriching our world.

7. Service to the Community.

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is conscious of offering a service to the public, and, therefore,

a) it undertakes its task for the society of Catalonia, and as a consequence has its roots in that country's cultural, social, scientific, and linguistic reality, and is an outgrowth of Catalonia's industrial, commercial, artistic and service-sector needs. In this regard, Catalan is the native and official language of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, and without prejudice to what is set out in article 3.2 of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya will promote the full use of the Catalan language in all its ambits, and will establish the means appropriate to ensuring its comprehension and use by the teaching staff and the students;

b) it must guarantee that the benefits of the University shall be equal for all;

c) it is obliged to possess a rationalised and efficient administrative and managerial structure.

8. Co-ordination. As a guarantee of the quality of the services provided by the University, the present organisational norms seek to ensure the efficiency and mutual integration of all the activities of the University. As a consequence, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

a) assigns to the Rector and to the Governing Council the chief academic responsibilities in respect of the governing of the University, as well as all the other responsibilities belonging to them;

b) attributes to every sector of activity in the University an autonomy of initiative and management sufficient to being able to fulfil, with the necessary capacity and professionalism, the responsibilities which may be assigned to each;

c) attributes to teaching, research, technical undertakings, and administration and management a working function in the education of students: hence, those activities are not considered ends in themselves;

d) does not establish a hierarchy in regard to its various activities. Accordingly, each sector of activity in the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has its own field of operations, which of necessity it must co-ordinate with all others. The responsibility for this co-ordination devolves upon the Rector and the Governing Council.

9. Administrative and Managerial Efficiency. The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya seeks to administer both austere and efficiently the public resources which are directed toward it. It will thus provide itself with the organisation strictly necessary to the attainment of the objectives entrusted to it. In the same way, for reasons of diligent social responsibility and in order to ensure the complete feasibility of its educational mission, the University will endeavour to obtain alternative sources of funding which will include, among others, the making-profitable of its shares in the field of distance learning.

10. Evaluation. The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya states that it is committed to the on-going evaluation of the institution as a guarantee of the progress of this university.

Furthermore, the Norms Concerning Organisation and Functioning establish

- a structure of government – unipersonal organs of government – centred on the figure of the Rector. The Rector is assisted by a Managing Director, who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the University, and by the Vice-Rectors.

- an internal organisation – collegiate organs of government – which has at its apex the Governing Council (Rector, Vice-Rectors, and Managing Director), two committees specific to each of the two main areas of activity of the University, namely, teaching (Academic Committee) and management and administration (Managerial Committee), as well as

a Co-ordinating Committee which is presided over by the Rector and which brings together the members of the two committees previously mentioned.

- the participation of students in the life of the University (university community), a reality which supposes on-line democratic elections, involvement in committees in the Virtual Campus, systematic opinion polls, and an activity oriented toward obtaining the positive evaluation by students, who are usufructuaries of the University, of the services provided to them;

- the commitment of the University to evaluate systematically, and as a guarantee of its progress, the results of its undertakings.

Educational Activity

The educational methodology of the UOC is characterised by certain psychopedagogical options which take into account the particular circumstances of distance teaching and learning and the possibilities arising from the new technologies. These options are specified in the following points:

• Teaching Staff as Mediators and Guides to Learning. Teachers facilitate the learning-processes of students by operating as mediators between the latter and the various educational materials provided to them (back-up texts on paper, multimedia materials, web pages) in the context of the Virtual Campus. This is the principal function of the consultative teaching staff, and it is set out in

detail for each subject in the Course Handbook, which is distributed to students at the beginning of each semester and is put into effect by means of the various activities envisaged therein, as well as by responses to the individual inquiries of students. These teachers are co-ordinated by the teaching staff itself and by the Directors of Studies.

- The Active Participation of Students. The basic function of the Course Handbook is to establish, through the various activities envisaged therein, the terms on which dealings between students and the teaching staff will take place. A fair proportion of these activities is made up of on-going evaluation, a key strategy in the teaching methodology of the UOC for the success of students.

- The Personalisation of the Process of Teaching and Learning. The teaching process makes adjustments to the different rhythms and possibilities of students. Hence, the role of the counsellors who orient students before enrolment at the start of each semester is considered of great importance, as much in adjusting the study load to the needs of students as in orienting them toward the educational itineraries most appropriate to their interests.

- The New Technologies at the Service of Learning Objectives. The UOC makes a primary objective of research and innovation in the application of the new technologies to the improvement of the processes of teaching and learning, and establishes that research and innovation as the most characteristic trait of its

contribution to the renewal of university education in Catalonia,

REGULATED STUDIES

As it has done in previous academic years, the UOC has introduced two new study courses in the present year 1998-99. These are a Bachelor's degree in Catalan Language and Literature (first and second cycle), and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management (ADE) (second cycle).

The second cycle of ADE arises from the need for further study on the part of those who successfully complete the Diploma in Business Studies offered by the UOC. This degree-course, therefore, is made available by the Department of Economics and Business Administration. As regards the degree in Catalan Language and Literature, it is among those available to be undertaken in the Department of Humanities and Language and Literature.

As a consequence of the availability of these new degree-courses, there has been an increase in the number of counsellors and tutors involved in the project of the UOC.

As of the present academic year, the students of the UOC who live in the Balearic Isles may sit for examinations in situ, as a result of the addendum signed by the UOC and the UIB (University of the Balearic Isles), which latter will supply classrooms in Majorca, Minorca, and Ibiza.

A further novelty in the present academic year has been the

modification of the academic norms and the norms governing permanency. This modification has been made in view of the fact that those who are engaged in the distance learning courses of the UOC have limited time for study, principally because of their job obligations. Thus, the number of credit-courses that students have to undertake per semester has been reduced, and the number of credits which must be obtained has been modified.

The inclusion of two new degree-courses among those already available for study at the UOC has not caused any decline in the indices of overall academic achievement, but rather the contrary: the levels achieved in recent years have been maintained, with a slight upward tendency.

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS STUDIES

Business Studies

UOC'S TEACHING STAFF

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

- Jordi Vilaseca Requena
Doctor of Economics and Business Administration, University of Barcelona

UOC'S CO-ORDINATING TEACHING STAFF

- Josep M. Batalla Busquets
Bachelor of Economics and Business Administration, University of Barcelona
Areas of specialisation: Economics of Finance, Law and the Fiscal System

- Carlos F. Cabañero Pisa
Bachelor of Business

Administration and Management, University of Barcelona
Area of specialisation: Corporate Organisation

- David Castillo Merino
Bachelor of Business Administration and Management, University of Barcelona
Areas of specialisation: Economics of Finance, Law and the Fiscal System

- Antoni Meseguer Artola
Doctor of Economics and Business Administration, University of Barcelona
Areas of specialisation: Instrumental Quantitative, Theory of Games

- Inma Rodríguez Ardura
Doctor of Economics and Business Administration, University of Barcelona
Areas of specialisation: Marketing, Electronic Commerce

- Enric Serradell López
Bachelor of Economics and Business Administration, University of Barcelona
Area of specialisation: Finance

- Joan Torrent Sellens
Bachelor of Economics and Business Administration, Autonomous University of Barcelona
Area of specialisation: Economics

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS STUDIES

Business Administration and Management

UOC'S TEACHING STAFF

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

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Areas of specialisation: Economics of Finance, Law and the Fiscal System

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- David Castillo Merino
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Areas of specialisation: Economics of Finance, Law and the Fiscal System

- Antoni Meseguer Artola
Doctor of Economics and Business Administration, University of Barcelona
Areas of specialisation: Instrumental Quantitative, Theory of Games

- Inma Rodríguez Ardura
Doctor of Economics and Business Administration, University of Barcelona

Areas of specialisation: Marketing, Electronic Commerce

- Enric Serradell López
Bachelor of Economics and Business Administration, University of Barcelona
Area of specialisation: Finance

- Joan Torrent Sellens
Bachelor of Economics and Business Administration, Autonomous University of Barcelona
Area of specialisation: Economics

EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

UOC'S TEACHING STAFF

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

- Carlos Frade Blas
Doctor of Sociology, University of London
Bachelor of Psychology, Autonomous University of Madrid
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- Anna Pagès Santacana
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Area of expertise: The Foundations of Education

- Josep M. Mominó de la Iglesia
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Area of expertise: Didactics, School Organisation

- Agnès Vayreda Duran
Doctor of Philology, Autonomous University of Barcelona
Area of expertise: Social Psychology

- Elena Barberà Gregori
Doctor of Psychology, University of
Barcelona

Area of expertise: Educational
Psychology

- Carles Sigalés Conde
Bachelor of Philosophy and
Educational Science, University of
Barcelona

Area of expertise: Educational
Policy, Attention to Diversity, and
Psychopedagogical Intervention

LAW STUDIES

UOC'S TEACHING STAFF

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

- Joaquim Bisbal
Doctor of Laws, University of
Bologne
Professor of Mercantile Law,
University of Barcelona
Areas of expertise: Company Law,
Bankruptcy Law

UOC'S CO-ORDINATING TEACHING STAFF

- Ramon Casas Vallès
Doctor of Laws, University of
Barcelona
Senior Lecturer in Civil Law,
University of Barcelona
Area of specialisation: Intellectual
Property

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Lecturer in Theory and Philosophy
of Law, University of Barcelona
Areas of specialisation:
Contemporary Juridical Thought,
Fundamental Rights

- Carles Viladàs Jené
Doctor of Laws, University of
Barcelona
Senior Lecturer in Penal Law,
University of Barcelona

Area of specialisation: Economic
Penal Law

- Raquel Xalabarder Plantada
Doctor of Laws, University of
Barcelona
Master of Laws, University of
Columbia (New York)
Area of specialisation: Intellectual
Property

- Óscar Morales García
Doctor of Laws, Autonomous
University of Barcelona
Lecturer in Penal Law
Areas of specialisation: Computer
Crime, Criminal Misconduct
against Public Administration

- Joan Barata Mir
Lecturer in Administrative Law,
University of Barcelona
Area of specialisation: Public
Services

HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Humanities

UOC'S TEACHING STAFF

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

- Isidor Marí i Mayans
Bachelor of Romance Philology
with Honours, University of
Barcelona
Areas of specialisation:
Sociolinguistics, Literature and
Popular Culture, History of Culture

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- Joan Campàs Montané
Bachelor of Philosophy and Letters,
Speculative Philosophy section,
University of Barcelona
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the Social Sciences, Applications of
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Bachelor of Computer Science,
Autonomous University of
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Science

- Elisenda Ardèvol Piera
Doctor of Philosophy and Letters,
History section, specialising in
Social Anthropology, Autonomous
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Area of specialisation: Social and
Cultural Anthropology

- Glòria Munilla Cabrillana
Doctor of Prehistory, Ancient
History, and Archaeology,
University of Barcelona
Areas of specialisation: Culture and
Management, Heritage

- Eduard Aibar Puentes
Doctor of Philosophy, Logic,
History and Philosophy of Science
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and Science, Technology and Society

TEACHING STAFF OF IN-COMMON SUBJECTS. AREA OF KNOWLEDGE: ENGLISH

- Norman Coe
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Master of Linguistics and English
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- Pauline Ernest
Bachelor of English and French,
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Diploma in the Teaching of English
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HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Catalan Language and Literature

UOC'S TEACHING STAFF

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Cultural Identity

- Joan Pujolar Cos
Doctor of Linguistics, University of
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Areas of specialisation:

Sociolinguistics, Anglo-germanic
Philology

COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MULTIMEDIA

Technical Engineering in Computer Management

UOC'S TEACHING STAFF

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

- Cristina Nogués i Olivé
Bachelor of Physics, University of
Barcelona
Doctor of Computer Science,
Polytechnic University of Madrid

TEACHING STAFF

- Ramon Segret i Sala
Industrial Engineer, Polytechnic
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Polytechnic University of Madrid
Area of specialisation: Electrics

- Eugènia Santamaria
Doctor of Telecommunications
Engineering, Polytechnic
University of Catalonia
Areas of specialisation: Signal
Treatment, Communications
- Joan Manel Marquès Puig
Bachelor of Computer Science,
Polytechnic University of Catalonia
Area of specialisation: Computer
Architecture

- Josep Prieto i Blázquez
Bachelor of Computer Science,
Polytechnic University of Catalonia
Area of specialisation: Computer
Architecture

- Thanasis Daradoumis Haralabus
Doctor of Computer Science,
Polytechnic University of Catalonia
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Intelligence

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Doctor of Electronic Engineering,
Ramon Llull University
Areas of specialisation: Applied
Mathematics, Mathematical
Analysis

- Enric Mor Pera
Computer Science Engineer,
Polytechnic University of Catalonia
Area of specialisation: Artificial
Intelligence

- Francesc Vallverdú Bayés
Doctor of Telecommunications
Engineering, Polytechnic
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Areas of specialisation: Signal
Theory, Communications

- M. Jesús Marco Galindo
Bachelor of Computer Science,
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Area of specialisation: Information
Systems

TEACHING STAFF OF IN-COMMON SUBJECTS. AREA OF KNOWLEDGE: MULTIMEDIA

- Montse Guitert i Catusús
Doctor of Philosophy and
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Area of specialisation: New
Technologies of Education

- Ferran Giménez Pardo
Bachelor of Pedagogy, University of
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Master in Multimedia and
Educational Designs, San Francisco
University
Area of specialisation: Multimedia
and learning in virtual
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COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MULTIMEDIA

Technical Engineering in Data Systems

UOC'S TEACHING STAFF

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- Enric Mor Pera
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Areas of specialisation: Signal Theory, Communications

- M. Jesús Marco Galindo
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Area of specialisation: Information Systems

NON-REGULATED STUDIES

In the 1998-99 academic year the activities of Continuing Education were furthered at the UOC through the offer of postgraduate courses aimed at satisfying the need for keeping up-to-date and making personal progress.

Made-to-measure training was very much in demand throughout the year. The expertise of the University in using the new technologies to develop a highly efficient distance education training system, with notable

results and very reduced costs, has had the result of inducing the world of business to see in the training system of the UOC a singular opportunity for raising the level of training in its own Human Resources departments.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

In this academic year there was a decided commitment made to Continuing Education. In the period it covered, a wide-ranging programme of postgraduate courses was embarked upon, as well as a programme of made-to-measure training, the intention being that individuals, organisations and institutions should find adequate answers to the professional challenges of the twenty-first century; that they should obtain or give guarantees of access to knowledge and professional recycling, and should offer to students and professional people the opportunity to use communication technologies and participate in a virtual community.

The principal objectives of Continuing Education are the following:

- To guarantee the quality of education through professional people of acknowledged prestige who undertake to elaborate the educational materials, and through highly-competent teaching staff who will ensure the right orientation and the efficacy of the educative process by means of continuous and searching evaluation;
- To offer attention to students on an individual basis and through sustained contact, all of which

afford the stimulation and encouragement necessary to guaranteeing the success of the educational system of the UOC;

- To use the technologies in which the UOC is a pacemaker, in order to make university study truly accessible, to free it of the barriers of space and time.

- To centre the process of learning on the learner's own determination, effort, and perseverance.

Continuing Education at the UOC is divided into two areas:

- Postgraduate Education
- Made-to-measure Training

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

These studies treat different aspects of the administration of companies, finances, the publishing world, computer languages, marketing, teaching, and law. The quantum leap made in respect of the postgraduate courses offered in the previous year is a notable one: eighteen specialist and refresher courses directed toward professional people and degree-holders in a number of areas.

These 'post-university' studies have as their objective the specialisation, recycling, or bringing-up-to-date of knowledge already acquired.

As of the month of December, the UOC began to impart the first two Master's courses of its own:

- Safety, Hygiene, and Work Conditions: directed toward graduates who are involved in matters of safety and health in their respective businesses, and to

those who may wish to orient their professional trajectory toward the field of safety and hygiene at work.

- Financial Instruments and Money Markets: this course develops the knowledge and abilities necessary to making one's way in the environment of finances, and uses real situations as the basis of learning activities.

As well as the postgraduate courses and Master's courses, Continuing Education at the UOC offered a number of seminars in the 1998-99 academic year. Each one lasted a month and represented two credits. Each course has available specific learning materials, consisting in a study guide, written materials, and multimedia materials.

As of the present course, seminar participation can be validated as free-choice credits.

REGULATED REFRESHER COURSES

In the 1998-99 academic year, regulated refresher courses were offered for students of the regulated studies of the UOC, with the aim of allowing those students to embark on the study of certain subjects requiring previous knowledge.

In the same year the number of these courses was raised to a total of four through the offer of a new programme:

- Introduction to the Mathematics of Businesses
- Special Mathematics for Computer Engineering
- English 0.1
- English 0.2

UNIVERSITAT OBERTA D'ESTIU

The courses of the Universitat Oberta d'Estiu (Summer Open University) are directed toward those who wish to take advantage of the summer to acquire training in the use of a virtual environment with multimedia tools. Last summer some 30 courses were offered, each one lasting 30 hours and with an academic value of two credits recognised for studies at the UOC and as free-choice credits by the other universities that form part of the summer offering of the Joan Lluís Vives Institute. It is worth noting here the almost twofold increase in the number of courses and students in comparison with those of the first running of the Universitat Oberta d'Estiu.

The methodology of the courses follows the teaching and learning model of the UOC: to promote personal study at the same time as co-operative work. Students participate in forums and debates related to the content of each of the courses, as well as in the carrying-out of activities and the discussion and resolving of doubts.

Assessment is not on a face-to-face basis but rather on that of participation in debates and the doing of exercises and practical work or the examination of cases; and these projects have to be handed in to the relevant tutor.

Registration for the courses was able to be done through the Internet.

The educational offering for this summer was as follows:

- Relations between Entity and Language
- Attention to Clients and Fidelisation
- Tools and Tactics of Direct Marketing
- The Iberians
- Environmental Management as Part of the General System of Management
- Introduction to Conflict Management. Examples from the Spheres of Voluntary Work, NGOs and Animation
- Picasso in Hypertext: Twentieth-century Vanguards
- The Writing of Reports in Electronic Format
- Analysis of Preferences, Opinions, and the Quality of Service: Inquests and Questionnaires
- Violence among Youth: a Psychosocial Approach to its Underlying Elements
- Co-operatives: an Economic and Financial Study
- An Approach to the Information Society
- When the Gods Were Concerned with Man: Religious Sentiment and Ritual Practice in the Roman World
- Analysis and Improvement of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication on the Part of Teachers in Classroom Situations
- Category Management: a New Planning Process at the Sales Outlet
- Marketing Revised for Internet
- The Teacher-psychologist and the Communications Media
- Strategies of Research and Information Processing through the Internet
- Economic Quality Management
- Publishing Co-ordination
- Quality in Logistics
- Quality in Purchases

- Quality Improvement Techniques
- The Museums of the New Century
- Benchmarking
- Conflict Resolution Strategies in Educational Centres
- Project Management: Programming of Activities
- Collective Investment: Funds, Superannuation Schemes, and Investments
- Playing with the Mathematics of Diversity
- Problems of the World Economy
- Practical Proposals for the Analysis and Adaptation of Curricular Materials

Students matriculated in these programmes: 589

Newly-arrived Students at the UOC

The participants in the Universitat Oberta d'Estiu were in the main students of the UOC community – 69% of them, in fact; while the remaining 31% were people who had never done a course at the UOC.

This year there was an increase in the percentage of new students in respect of last year. This increase could be attributable to the fact that this year the majority of universities which belong to the Joan Lluís Vives Institute recognised as free-choice credits for their respective degrees the credits obtained in the Universitat Oberta d'Estiu courses.

Percentage of Passes

The results obtained were highly satisfactory, improving on those of the previous year. Some 78.5% of students successfully passed the evaluations for the respective courses.

MADE-TO-MEASURE TRAINING

On-going professional development is a reality and a necessity that supposes the learning along the way of new abilities and the acquisition of new knowledge. Every organisation and every firm needs professional teams able to achieve its objectives. Training plays a fundamental role in the development of the capacities which will help in the attainment of the goals of the business enterprise. Organisations and professionals need to learn in order to improve.

Time and distance, which often are obstacles to the bringing within reach and making profitable of the training projects of organisations, cease to be so when the technological and methodological systems which facilitate this objective of closeness are used. The application of the technologies of information and communication to the sphere of training allows the bringing closer of training to any person in the organisation and the giving of answers to the needs of any particular situation. Every firm and its professional members need to learn on the basis of the application of knowledge.

Made-to-measure Training arises from a model of distance education training adapted to the variety of needs of organisations and firms, and of those working for them. Its objective is to help to provide the most suitable training option for each situation, and that such an option will encourage the development and growth of organisations and people from a creative learning process applied to a particular context.

The range of services which this form of training places at the disposal of firms has its starting-point in a knowledge of each entity and institution and in a contextualisation of the objectives of the training process. With the desire to make this so, and bearing in mind the nature of the interests and needs which professional life experiences on a daily basis, it is possible to develop projects for firms and institutions.

The following entities and organisations have placed their trust in the services offered in Made-to-measure Training, and elaborated distance education training projects with us between the second semester of 1998 and the first semester of 1999:

- The Catalanian Association of Municipalities
- The Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Navigation of Barcelona
- The Centre of Juridical Studies of the Department of Justice of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia
- Ceprom, Comisiones Obreras Union
- Cad Multimedia Design (CMD)
- The General Council of Judicial Power
- The Department of Education of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia
- The Sports School of Catalonia
- The School of Public Administration of Catalonia
- Fenadiser. Ucotrans. The Union of Transport Co-operatives
- "La Caixa" Savings Bank
- The M. Aurèlia Capmany Foundation
- The Pere Tarrés Foundation
- The Santillana Publishing Group
- Ikastolen Elkartea

- The Joan Lluís Vives Institute – Chamber of Commerce of Valencia
- The University Olympic Sports Sciences Institute of the Complutense University of Madrid
- PISTA
- INAP. National Institute of Public Administration
- IMAF. Madrid Institute of Training
- LABEIN. Laboratory of Testing and Research
- UZAR. University of Zaragoza
- UAB. Autonomous University of Barcelona
- Self-firm Service – Autonomous Government of Catalonia (Employment Service)
- Santillana Bolivia Group – Santillana Publishing
- The General Directorate of Linguistic Policy of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, Department of Culture
- The University Summer School of Terrassa

PROGRAMMES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In the 1997-98 period educational programmes for public school teachers were embarked on under the auspices of the Education Department of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia. The objective of these courses was to guarantee a specialty to the teachers engaged in infant and primary education who, because of modifications in the teacher workforce, had been attached to workplaces demanding such a specialty, even though these teachers had not possessed the one demanded. The courses were also directed toward those who, because of the elimination of their jobs, are obliged to teach a specialty which is not their own.

The Department of Education accredits and commissions from the UOC the made-to measure training of these groups of professionals. Moreover, the UOC gives academic recognition to this training. The programmes carried out are as follow:

- Specialty in Childhood Education
- Therapeutic Pedagogy
- Administration and Management of Public Centres of Education

In the second edition, in the period 1998-99, these programmes had 70 people enrolled in them.

OPEN TRAINING

Aula Activa (Active Classroom) was in charge of instituting its own pilot experience in the course 1998-99. From the month of September 1998, Aula Activa carried on its activity within the framework of the campaigns of September 98 and January 99, and managed to arouse considerable interest. Some 30,000 people manifested their interest in it during the first information campaign.

Students must possess a computer and a modem and are provided with a connection and free access to Internet throughout the course. Those who do not possess a computer are able to follow the courses in the traditional manner. The telematic mode is based on the Virtual Classroom, a web which connects students and teachers of the Aula Activa and which makes possible permanent personal contact without the participants therein meeting either in space or

in time. Another aspect of the experience which should be highlighted is the total flexibility which exists, allowing each student to establish the rhythm of study which will best suit his or her needs and to decide when he or she wants begin on the course or momentarily to interrupt it in order to take it up again later.

Once the course is completed, the student is awarded a University Diploma jointly by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and the Complutense University of Madrid.

The typical student enrolled in Aula Activa is a male (56%) of between 30 and 40 years of age (42%), who has completed secondary studies (60%) and is working (90%). In respect of geographical distribution, 39% of students come from Catalonia, 24% from Madrid, 7% from the Community of Valencia, and 7% from Andalusia, while the remainder are widely spread over the other autonomous communities.

ACCESS COURSE FOR PEOPLE OVER 25 YEARS OF AGE

The Access Course for entry into the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya for people over 25 has as its chief aim that students should reach a level that will allow them to pass the matriculation tests set by the UOC, and, at the same time, to integrate successfully into the university community.

In the period 1998-99 two access courses were offered for those over 25: one in October 1998-99, and one in March 1999-2000. The October course is semi-virtual, that

is, students combine telematic learning with a number of Saturday morning face-to-face classes. The March course is totally virtual. Students work from the Campus, specific for this academic year, and they also have three face-to-face encounters: the first extends a welcome to them; the second concerns on-going assessment; and the third and last involves doing a trial run of the access tests.

In the period 1998-99 there were 640 students enrolled in the totality of university specialities offered by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya: Business Studies, Technical Engineering in Computer Systems and in Computer Management, Humanities, Law, and Catalan Language and Literature.

One of the innovations which have been introduced in the period between 1998 and 1999 is the offer of starting on the course at two different times: in October and in March. In the course beginning in October, 640 students enrolled.

In the same period, entry to Graduate Multimedia studies was added to the Access Course of the UOC for people over 25 years of age.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

In accordance with the methodology of the UOC, educational resources are understood as elements oriented toward facilitating learning and able to stimulate the students themselves in their study activities, or as providing such stimulation through tutors in the teaching

which they supply in support of the learning processes in question.

As is to be supposed of a university such as ours, in which new degree courses and new subjects are introduced in every academic year, there has been a considerable increase in the educational materials available and within reach of the students. By the same token, the Virtual Campus has appeared in a new version, with the aim of being permanently adapted to the needs of those who study and learn at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

Face-to-face meetings have been retained, and these have increased in proportion to the increase in the number of students enrolled at our University. The presence of the UOC has also become more extensive in the territory of Catalonia, given the widespread opening of new centres and support-points. Last, the Library of the UOC has augmented the number of distance services it offers, a factor contributing to its continuing status as one of the foremost virtual university libraries in the world.

TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

The UOC has taken up a particularly difficult challenge: to have available a typology of materials which, on the one hand, will take advantage of the very best among technological and educational innovations, and on the other, will allow to all students, regardless of the computer equipment they may possess, a reasonable degree of access to these materials.

At the outset, the UOC provided its materials in paper format with an innovative didactic structure appropriate to the type of student attending the University. These materials have gone on to include others such as video, audio, and some CD-ROMs. In the last academic year, the UOC began on the development of on-line materials allowing a better integration of these communications tools, more speed and flexibility in their up-dating, and a greater capacity for interaction. At the present time, 40% of subjects at the UOC incorporate some degree of web material, and 10% are being done entirely in web format.

In forthcoming courses, this reality will become ever more the case, and will do so in parallel with improvements in our communication systems, and in particular with a general access to increases in bandwidth, which will allow a faster and better transferral of materials. Nevertheless, that does not imply by any means the discarding of the paper format, for current thought on education advises, in respect of materials, a careful selection, in accordance with the objectives of each subject, of the means to be used.

THE VIRTUAL CAMPUS

The Virtual Campus of the UOC offers a unique and integrated environment of services and tools oriented toward a form of tele-education developed in intranet format and using, as a consequence, the standards of the Internet alone.

By means of a data-base system, the Virtual Campus administers,

for each of those using it, the appropriate privileges and the access allowable to its different areas. On the basis of the register of all actions effected using the data-base, it supplies to counsellors and tutors the follow-up tasks relevant to particular students. This is a fundamental characteristic of the Virtual Campus that differentiates it from the alternatives based on the transferral of static web-pages or on electronic mail.

ACCESS WEBS

Students and teachers have the possibility of using access webs from home in order to connect to the servers of the intranet of the UOC.

- XTB (Basic Telephone Web): the most conventional of the access webs, for which a modem at 28 kbps is necessary.
- XDSI (Digital Integrated Services Web): it provides a capacity of 64 kbps with the possibility of reaching 128kbs. It offers two channels which allow the connection with the intranet to be maintained without blocking the telephone line.

In the present academic year, students have begun no longer to obtain access to the Campus principally by means of Infovia but rather by means of Infovia Plus. The reason for this change is legal, and has to do with the liberalisation of the telecommunications market. The occasion has been taken advantage of to change the access line to the IP web of 2 Mbps with frame-relay technology to 34 Mbps ATM

(Asynchronous Transfer Mode), a change which ensures the growth of our community.

A web has been constructed in order to offer a free connection, by means of dialling a 900 number, to the teaching and administrative personnel of the University.

Pilot access tests to the web of the UOC are being performed with the different services of a number of operators.

Several access-obtaining experiences have been effected using wide-band webs with ADSL technology and cable-modem.

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

The face-to-face meetings in the 1998-99 course evince a tendency toward the growth not only in the volume of activities occurring at them, but also in the quality of those activities. This fact is observable in a series of indicators.

In the first place, in the increase in attendance and participation at these meetings, to which factor may be added a positive response to the various activities, services, and workshops proposed thereat.

In the second place, in the growing offer of services, workshops complementary to academic education, and parallel activities such as the connection point to the Virtual Campus, the photographic service for the Campus, the assessment of Windows and the Library, the workshop for the setting-out of curricula vitae, the PowerPoint workshop, or the games-area service; and this offer is still being amplified.

It is also observable, and more and more so, in the differences between the presentation meetings and those dedicated to synthesis, which are beginning to figure as an important parameter in the organisation. Presentation meetings are envisaged as a framework appropriate to a wide range of activities, such as those related directly to studies, or others like complementary activities, activities of a recreational, cultural, sporting nature, or activities involving associations.

These latter make the meeting into an enjoyable and relaxing session that stimulates the recreational, social and cultural side of the UOC community – a situation which, on the other hand, will undoubtedly be fostered by the UOC Club, which made its social debut at the synthesis meeting in the second semester of the present academic year.

The synthesis meeting is envisaged, nonetheless, as the one concerned with the close of the semester and the preparation for examinations, a fact which underlines the predominance of strictly academic activity.

All in all, these meetings are becoming the most important instrument of face-to-face encounters among all the members of the UOC community, and the essential complement to the educational model of our university.

FIRST SEMESTER PRESENTATION MEETING

Venue: The Polytechnic University of Catalonia (North Campus)
Date: 3rd October 1998
Institutional Activities: Lecture on

“The Universal Forum of Cultures, Barcelona 2004”, given by Jaume Sodupe
Cultural Activities:
Exhibition: A Trip to Egypt
Guitar concert given by Toti Soler

FIRST SEMESTER SYNTHESIS MEETING

Venue: The Polytechnic University of Catalonia (North Campus)
Date: 9th January 1999
Cultural Activities:
Cinema: Documentary Cycle World-wide Industries, Shrinking Worlds (1992). John Allen
The Art of Commerce: between Gods and Men (1988). Colin Cunningham
In Search of Identity (1992). Vivian von Schellin
A Portrait of the Modern City (1992). James Donald, Annette Michelson, John Tagg
Invasion of Mars, or How Orson Welles Terrorised a Nation (1991). Jim Moore
Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy Cycle
The Merry 'Twenties: Anthology of Laurel and Hardy
Night Owls, 1930. Directed by James Parrot
Me and My Pal, 1933. Directed by Charles and Lloyd French

SECOND TERM PRESENTATION MEETING

Venue: The Polytechnic University of Catalonia (North Campus)
Date: 6th March 1999
Institutional Activities: Lecture on “Global Culture and Identity”, given by Josep M. Ainaud de Lasarte
Cultural Activities:
Lecture on “The Immediate Future of the Internet: Novelties on the Web and Key Issues for the Year 1999”, given by Josep Àngel Martos
Direct broadcast by Catalunya Ràdio: The Magazine ‘Suplement’

conducted by Xavier Solà
Audiovisual: Vietnam, the Great Unknown
Jazz in the Square: After Hours Hot Jazz Quartet

SECOND SEMESTER SYNTHESIS MEETING

Venue: The Polytechnic University of Catalonia (North Campus)
Date: 5th June 1999
Institutional Activities:
Presentation of the UOC Club
Presentation of the Universitat Oberta d'Estiu
Cultural Activities: Documentary
Cinema: The Fortified City
Exhibition: The Fortified City

TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

In the 1998-99 course there was a notable expansion of the UOC in the territory of Catalonia, made possible through the widening of the network of support centres in the form of two new centres: one in the Vallès Occidental area, in the town of Terrassa, and the other, in order to reinforce all the area of influence of Barcelona, in the Baix Llobregat area, and located in the town of Sant Feliu de Llobregat. By the same token, the widening of the network of support centres throughout Catalonia was also made possible through the establishment of collaboration agreements with a number of territorial institutions (Town and Shire Councils). This widening becomes concrete in the presence of the UOC in the municipalities of Vilafranca del Penedès, Figueres, Olot, Vic, Valls, Puigcerdà, and Palafrugell, which allows the re-establishment of a balance in the distribution of the University throughout the territory, and its drawing closer to areas which were still distant from it.

Concerning projects for the future, it is appropriate to underline the beginning of works at Tortosa for the establishment there of another support centre, and the negotiations under way for the creation of other such centres in the towns of l'Hospitalet de Llobregat and Ripoll.

THE LIBRARY

Ever since its inauguration, the library at the UOC has fulfilled its basic aim of acting as a service lending support to study, teaching and research, and has made available to the members of the community information and documentation resources.

Within the context of the Virtual Campus, the library has offered the services one normally expects from any university library; but here they have been augmented and improved. Thanks to the good use made of the new technologies, it has been possible to offer library services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The user can have direct access to all its information in an amenable and easy-to-manage environment.

The most outstanding fact of the academic year 1998-99 is the considerable increase in the number of users of all the services that the library makes available to the community. Thus, the number of virtual users (106,583) increased by 152%, whilst that of presential users (22,120) increased by 199%. At this point it is important to underline the 58,929 external users of the library. This can also be checked against the data on visits to the Virtual Library (797,160), which have increased by 206%,

and connections made (305,962), which represent an increase of 254%.

With the aim of offering more and improved services to the community every year, the library of the UOC has launched several new ones which, together with those already existing, have had a high degree of acceptance on the part of all members of the community.

NEW SERVICES

One of the options open to members of the UOC is that of having access to a number of university libraries and of asking for documents on loan, as if they were registered users of them. This has been made possible by the agreements signed among the following universities: University of Barcelona, University of Girona, University of the Balearic Isles, University of Lleida, Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Rovira i Virgili University, and the Complutense University of Madrid.

Similarly, it is also important to point out here the beginnings of the Documentation Service, with its innovative and highly useful suggestions. This service provides the user with the chance to have access to more than one hundred databases on different subjects. The more usual ones are related to the courses being taught at the UOC. At the same time, the Selective Distribution of Information Service (Servei de Difusió Selectiva de la Informació, DSI) was also launched, which allows for the search for information on a specific topic with a periodical update and an electronic distribution of abstracts from journals, including

the option of requesting the article in digital support.

Within the framework of interactivity and the sharing of information which characterises the UOC, the library launched the ‘Add-Your-Own-Resource’ application, a space for users to suggest resources available on the Internet and worthy of academic attention.

USER TRAINING

Through courses taught in support centres and in attended meetings, the library has carried out an active policy of training those who use it by means of the ‘presential’ system; and it has also instituted such a policy in respect of the virtual system, through the different available online courses. There were 3,849 people attending, which represents an increase of 123% as compared with the previous year.

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

The library at the UOC is made up of a number of heterogeneous collections as a result of its status as a virtual library, where digital documents are of the utmost importance. One of the main tools of the library is the digital database, which has grown considerably during this academic year. That notwithstanding, the library also has an important collection of materials on paper and in the form of multimedia support.

NEW LIBRARIES AT THE SUPPORT CENTRES

Two supporting libraries were inaugurated during the academic year, one in Terrassa, in the Centre for the Vallès Occidental area, and

the other in Sant Feliu de Llobregat, in the Biblioteca Popular Montserrat Roig, near the Support Centre for the Baix Llobregat area. It is important to single out at this point the figure of the 'itinerant librarian' who offers in a periodical way assistance and training services to the centres.

INTERNAL PROJECTS

Collaboration with the rest of the UOC community has been very intense throughout this academic year. Thus, several internal projects have developed, among which we could single out the Open Summer University (the making of a selection of resources), Aula Activa (the designing and putting together of a small virtual library, Biblionet) and EDIUOC (the carrying out of a search for digital resources for the Lectus University Library). Collaboration has also been sustained with the various courses of study at the UOC.

EXTERNAL PROJECTION

The library staff have been present at several academic and professional meetings. The following should be singled out: the Jornadas Españolas de Documentación Automatizada (València, Spain, 1998), the Telecommunications for Education and Training (TET) (Norway, 1999), and the World Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education (Vienna, 1999).

The library at the UOC is part of the Consortium of University Libraries of Catalonia (Consorti de Biblioteques Universitàries de Catalunya, CBUC), and of the Network of University Libraries (Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias,

REBIUN), and its presence is an important one. It is also worth stressing the effecting of a consultancy service for the library at the University of Quilmes (Argentina), within the framework of the collaboration agreement signed between the UOC and this Latin American university.

INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

Institutional evaluation is a part of the commitment of the UOC constantly to improve the quality of its services. In addition to the role such assessment plays when new courses are being launched, mechanisms of institutional evaluation have become an integral part of the day-to-day dynamics of the University.

This integration makes it possible to attain a dialogue on the quality not only of teaching but also of the services offered, through an analysis of academic results and student opinion.

CONCLUSIONS

With reference to the Virtual Campus, what is most essentially valued is the fact that it is easy to learn in it and that information is adequately organised. The spaces where access to information can be attained would seem now to be more frequently used (News, Secretary's Office, Information, Agenda, Who's There); and the same applies to those involving general communication (Forum and Short Advertisements).

As regards the different subjects available, the counsellors and tutors, the overall evaluation of

them is good (scoring close on 4 out of 5). Concerning the subjects themselves, we should single out the importance given to the possibility of following the continuous evaluation given. With reference to consultations made, the promptness and relevancy of the answers supplied have been considered valuable; and in regard to tuition, its attention and aptness. It is also apparent that the pedagogical aims of the face-to-face meetings have been fulfilled.

Finally, it should be noted that, above all, the academic year has been considered positive or very positive, with initial expectations met in part or fully. The degree of quality thought to obtain is identical to or higher than that of last year's semesters.

Research

With research activities consolidated, as well as the exploitation of sources of finance for such activities within the spheres of the European Union, the Spanish State, the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, and agreements with firms, it was thought necessary to embark on the construction of a research system which should gather together, facilitate, and foster those same activities.

During the academic year 1998-99, the Vice-Rectorate for Research and International Relations, together with the above-mentioned consolidated research activity, has launched a project to set up the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3), a world reference centre for

the analysis and evaluation of the impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on the different spheres of society. It is hoped activities will start at the end of 1999. Within the framework of IN3, the doctoral programme of the UOC on the information society, of an international and interdisciplinary nature, is also being organised.

The last weeks of the academic year 1998-99 saw the consolidation of several research groups in the different fields of knowledge of the UOC, in methodological innovations in distance education, and in the educational applications of wide-band communication networks.

PROJECTS

COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND COMMUNICATIONS

IMMP: Integrated Multimedia Project (a European project headed by Nokia)

A pilot project on the conduct of the ATM wide-band network in relation to the residential RDSI access network for the distribution of educational multimedia material.

EXE: Extranet Education (a European project)

The development of a series of multimedia applications for the training of educators in the use of telematic resources and hypermedia tools for educational activity.

PISTA (Spanish Ministry of Promotion, General Secretariat of Communications)

The design and development of a

tele-training tool in Intranet/Internet support (educational intranet) to teach and manage training and recycling courses.

GENESIS (a European Project)
This project proposes co-operation between a telecommunications operator and a collection of suppliers of educational and training content and services. Its aim is to make it possible to supply content through an innovative and competitive satellite service in the field of open and distance education, a market where the offer by suppliers taking part in it is found.

DOCUMENTATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

GALA: Global Access and Global Application (a European project)
A project for the application of the information and communications technologies to a better access for citizens to the public services that their local Town Halls and other public institutions have to offer.

LAURIN: Libraries and Archives (a European project)
A project to strengthen the key role that media archives play in the information society with the application of the new technologies.

NEW LEARNING MODELS AND METHODS

ELVIL: The European Legislative Virtual Library (a European project)
The development of a tool for the research into, and selection and introduction to the public of, legal and parliamentary action in Europe. The tool is based on the use of the WWW (Internet). The UOC is

responsible for the creation of a didactic tool designed to make legal and parliamentary action available to the general public, professionals and university students.

ELVIL 2000: The European Legislative Virtual Library (a European project)

The general aim of the project is to create and promote an academic access to European Law and Politics. The project ELVIL 2000 will increase the availability of information on European Law and Politics in many ways. The project will create software access paths into the parliamentary databases of the Czech Republic and Poland.

ERMES: European Multimedia Educational Software Network (a European project)

The European Commission's ESPRIT programme. A network for the promotion of multimedia programmes for education.

COLLEAGUE: Collaborative Learning in Virtual Environments (a European project)

The aim of the COLLEAGUE project is the exploration of a strategy of asynchronic collaborative work using new technologies. The main interest is the exploration of the uses and the potential it may have within virtual learning environments.

PLANET: Réseau Européen pour une Pédagogie Multimédia de l'Environnement (a European project)

Educational Multimedia Task Force Programme. Its aim is the creation of an educational and multimedia resource centre for education on the environment at schools, through the association of scientific research centres, vocational centres and schools.

Services

As regards the services policy of the UOC, one of the most relevant aspects of the year 1999 was the creation of the UOC Club, which is becoming the virtual space that facilitates communication among the different groups in the Open University, channelling services to the university community and allowing for the upkeep of links with the UOC once one's studies are over.

Together with the UOC Club, the Virtual Consumer's Network (Xarxa Virtual de Consum) has consolidated itself as the consumers' co-operative of the UOC, and it offers products and advantageous services for the whole university community. At the same time, the Sports Service and the Associations Service have promoted their activities by means of the Virtual Campus. As regards this latter Service, a number of affiliated services pursuing varied concerns have been launched this year.

The Sports Service organised the Catalan University Chess Championship, an event which was an important moment for the Service.

Finally, the General Information Service and the Student Information Service have attended to, and channelled on, a considerable number of petitions and information requests. These two are considered key elements in the services policy managed by the Information Unit.

XARXA VIRTUAL DE CONSUM, SCCL

La Virtual (Xarxa Virtual de Consum, SCCL, the Virtual Consumer's Network) is a consumers' co-operative that came about from an initiative of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Foundation (FUOC) and makes up part of the service policy of the UOC. The goal of this co-operative is to offer products and services at an attractive price to the people who are, or have been, part of the UOC community (students, teaching staff, management personnel).

The form given under the law to a consumers' co-operative entails the following:

- It shows a purpose of service on the part of the initiative, with no direct interest in financial gain, and the business profits of the co-operative are reinvested in the customers, basically by the lowering of prices.
- It favours the corporate identity of students and the other members of the community, since the co-operative formula offers greater chances of becoming involved in the institutional project, a factor of particular relevance in a system of distance education.

ITS AIM

La Virtual wants to offer products that go a step beyond the strict needs of the University (computer products, books, writing materials); and its primary goal is to become a point of reference when one purchases any product or service (music, travel, banking services, and so on) which might be of interest to the university community. The activity of the co-

operative takes place in an electronic commercial environment within the framework of the Virtual Campus.

ONLINE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Between 22nd and 27th of April 1999 the General Assembly was held on the Virtual Campus. This was the second Assembly of La Virtual, and it meant the consolidation of the holding of online assemblies after the pilot experience of 1998.

Given that in the more than two years of existence of La Virtual there had been an evolution in the knowledge of the characteristics and needs of a co-operative which bases itself on a model of distance relationship, and given also that the original statutes mirrored themselves on those of traditional, presential co-operatives, a motion was put forward to amend the statutes in order to adapt them to realities at the UOC; and it received the approval of 80% of voters.

ASSOCIATIONS

As of this academic year, the Association Service is operational at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, an innovation coming about after the norms concerning associations at the UOC were approved during the first semester of 1998. The aim of the Association Service is the promotion and regulation of associative activity; but as well as that, the Service is designed to channel the work of different interest groups in such a way that the activity carried out by the members of the UOC community may be of benefit to everyone.

During the second semester of the academic year, the Service was fully consolidated and began handling requests for the funding of associations. The Service promotes the training of interest groups and assesses the members of these groups.

The first association at the UOC was the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Student Association (AEUOC), whose aim it is to look after students' interests, take part in the management of the University, and promote relationship and participation among the students constituting the whole UOC community. During the academic year 1998-99 other associations were created, such as the Balearic and Pitiüses Islands Association (Associació de les Illes Balears i les Pitiüses, ABIPI) and the Law Students Association (Associació d'Estudiants de Dret de la UOC, AEDU). All of them have taken deep root and have notably increased their membership.

In addition, the following associations have been launched: Associated Friends of the Cinema and the Theatre (Amics del Cinema i del Teatre de la UOC Associats, ACTUA), the UOC Rugby Club (Club de Rugbi UOC, CRUOC), Oberta al País Valencià (OPV), and the Psychopedagogy Graduate Student Association (Les Llicenciades i els Llicenciats en Psicopedagogia a la UOC, UOCAP). The aim of this last association is to establish links with professionals who have graduated from other universities, to lay down the bases of their work, and to offer international exchanges. In addition, two further associations are currently working on becoming registered.

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya offers space for the various associations on its Virtual Campus, including an exchange mailbox and the possibility of their introducing their own Web pages.

SPORTS

One of the goals of the University is to promote sport. It is a healthful activity that helps to form bonds and group awareness among the members of the university community. The purpose of the Sports Service is to promote sporting activities and UOC participation in inter-university sporting events, and to provide assistance to professional athletes.

During the two semesters of the academic year 1998-99, a sum total of thirty-four athletes took part in the Catalan University Championships, taking six gold, one silver and three bronze medals.

As regards national competitions, the UOC entered six athletes for the Spanish University Championships, and one of them came fourth in the Judo competitions held in Mallorca.

Concerning the promotion of sport, the Sports Service co-ordinated the participation of the Indoor Soccer Team of the UOC in the internal league of the Ramon Llull University.

The most important achievement of the year, however, was the running of the Catalan University Chess Championship on 15th and 16th of March at the Barcelonès Support Centre of the UOC. For the first time, a games database on

the Internet (www.uoc.es/escacs) was placed at the disposal of players, and they could thus analyse on the Student Information Net the different moves made.

STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT INFORMATION SERVICE

Students at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya enjoy an information service distributed over a number of information platforms.

On the one hand, as soon as a student is registered, the corresponding support centre will make him or her feel most welcome, especially during the time he or she is not connected to the Virtual Campus. During the time prior to incorporation into the Campus, the student has access to an open telephone line for general information, can attend specific information talks on the Campus, and has at his or her disposal a service of permanent help on the use of computers (the so-called 'hot line').

On the other hand, once students have connected to the Virtual Campus, they have access to a set of mailboxes which the UOC makes available to them in order to offer some specific and personalised information on particular issues, as well as the possibility of obtaining up-to-date and last-minute information in the various spaces of the Virtual Campus.

In this respect, the Campus facilitates access to information by means of the Campus Guide space.

This section is meant to offer guidance on how to browse through the Campus, find the right mailbox for a specific doubt or need, and search for any information or space not easily found; and it aims to help students in all those technical questions that should be borne in mind for a correct use of the Campus.

ASSISTANCE SERVICE ON THE USE OF COMPUTERS ('HOT LINE')

The Assistance Service on the Use of Computers is open to all users of the Virtual Campus of the UOC. Any doubts or problems regarding computer equipment should be addressed to it. There are two ways of obtaining access to this service:

- Through the Virtual Campus, using the incident form to be found in the Help pages of the Virtual Campus.
- By dialling direct 902 20 50 50. The time-table of assistance is very wide, including week-ends.

This service offers the following:

- Assessment regarding the purchase and configuration of your computer equipment or support point.
- Solution of problems or doubts regarding connection to the UOC and the use of software.
- Diagnosis of breakdowns and hardware problems.
- Attention to consultations regarding the necessary issues and level required to work with the UOC.

During the academic year 1998-99, the Assistance Service on the Use of Computers attended to a total of

38,607 incidents, of which 97% were solved.

ATTENTION TO THE PUBLIC

The main aim of attention to the public is to guarantee the passing on of any relevant information to the 'publics' outside the University: the potential market, institutions, corporations, suppliers, and so forth.

Attention to the public at the UOC is organised around three separate sections: the personal attention granted at the support centres and reception-desks at the buildings of the UOC; telephone attention at 902; and telematic attention by way of the Website's external mailbox.

Each section must ensure a specific level of information, which is determined according to the following: the characteristics of each section; the information needs for each period (a campaign or maintenance); and the type of public requesting the information. Thus a circuit of attention to the public is configured in which both the transmission of information and the obtaining of data regarding the public interested will be ensured. This constitutes a basic element in the development of marketing actions.

During the academic year 1998-99, the information line 902 141 141 attended nearly 20,000 queries and answered some 2,000 electronic messages received in the Internet mailbox (internet + uoc.es).

The basic indicators of activity in the support centres registered a total of 55,000 information actions.

UOC CLUB

UOC Club: an open community reaching beyond degree studies

The UOC has made it possible to form a community of people familiar with information technologies and which uses the Internet as its habitual working and communications tool.

This group of people (graduates, students, teaching staff, management personnel, students in Continuing Education courses, students in the university matriculation course, collaborating teaching staff, etc.) all have something in common, namely, their having been through this university and their knowledge of the Virtual Campus.

The UOC Club makes up a virtual space which facilitates communication among all the members of the community and makes it possible for them to find all that favours their professional progress. The virtual environment of the UOC Club has been conceived of as a welcoming space which will make manifest the human aspect of belonging to a virtual community in which members can relate to one another in a pleasing and orderly way through chat spaces, travel, humour... and theme-based and professional forums, among others.

The following are the services to which Club members have access: library, professional spaces, theme-based forums, spaces for sharing in activities, the professional area – from which you may obtain access to directories, professional associations and shared spaces for

the exchange of experience – positions vacant section, consumers' co-operative, a selection of Internet resources, the notice-board for small advertisements and a varied offer of leisure and culture, plus the services required for re-starting courses and for undertaking academic paperwork and making contact with different associations.

The Club is the answer to recent needs felt at the UOC, such as that for the integration of former UOC graduates; the setting up of a labour market; and the creation of a virtual space to keep all communication channels open with any students not enrolled for a particular semester.

Banca Catalana has made the creation of the UOC Club possible through the signing of an agreement on 2nd June 1999.

More than 12,000 people are current UOC Club members. They make up the largest group of people associated with the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

Management and Resources

MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is coming to the end of its third academic year and has managed to consolidate a professional structure designed to respond to all the lines of training and research activity currently being pursued, as well as to those foreseen for the future.

The organisation is conceived of as a way of facing up to the challenges

brought about by globalisation, flexibility and innovation, these being the strategic axes of the University.

It is for this reason that the professional team of the UOC is made up of young people averaging 35 years of age, all of whom are in professional terms very highly qualified. Eighty per cent hold higher university degrees and have a deep command of and expertise in their spheres of knowledge and in the integration of information technologies and communications into distance learning environments. All these traits are further enhanced by the organisational values of a spirit of service, interdisciplinary contact, constant improvement, and the capacity for innovation.

During this academic year, the UOC has availed itself of management systems based on the organisation and acceptance of responsibility for results in the measuring and improvement of client satisfaction, both with internal clients and external, and in the incorporation of consensus, commitment, trust and involvement. A platform has also been created for the management of knowledge and the training of UOC professionals (Form+uoc).

There are currently 234 staff making up the University's workforce. They are divided into six courses of study ('Estudis') and eight management areas. The studies are in turn made up of two types of teaching staff: the UOC teaching staff and the collaborating teaching staff. Each didactic material production unit, two cabinets and fourteen units have been relocated. All these people are subject to the Governing Council.

MANAGING BY PROCESSES

The UOC has been characterised from the beginning by its high speed of change, which is the result of a convulsion of factors both internal and external. The constant improvement in distance education methodology, the strong pace of technological innovation detected in markets, the discovery of the new working rules deriving from virtual undertakings, the globalisation of markets, and the rapid growth of the UOC itself, have come to articulate an organisation characterised by a changing environment and by constant development.

This academic year 1998-99 has been the most stable in this University's short history, and even so, in terms of percentages, the university has increased its number of students by 48%, its teaching staff by 45.3%, its management personnel by 35.3%, and the number of subjects offered by 26.3%. Looking at this situation, the UOC sees the need to avail itself of a management system which will enable it to adapt to changes at the same rate as that at which they happen. A management model sufficiently flexible and involving little bureaucracy, aiming at people and innovation in order to achieve the quality and competitive advantage needful to success.

We took as our starting-point the renowned model of management excellence put forward by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). Thus, this academic year the UOC is promoting the challenges of bringing into its model of management an orientation

toward results, identifying what processes configure its activity, assigning to each of these a person specifically responsible for it who will take charge of the aims and the results, and attempting as far as possible to delegate in order to ensure that each issue will be dealt with by the persons who know best the way to solve it. A model of management based on the fact that results become results through the satisfaction of people, whether this be at the receiving end of the services or where others are working to provide them.

SECRETARY'S VIRTUAL OFFICE

The main aim of the Secretary's Virtual Office is to provide students with the necessary information and assessment in those issues that relate to the management of their academic record, and to facilitate for them any of the administrative transactions proper to a university secretary's office.

From its beginning, the Secretary's Virtual Office has had a clear mission of service to students, such that it has been conceived of to favour to the utmost both the understanding of the contents it deals with, something which is not always an easy task given the nature of the issues that have to be dealt with, and flexibility in the effecting of the established procedures.

The Secretary's Virtual Office favours a personalised service, without cues or time-tables, and without unnecessary journeys, as it is within a virtual environment. In addition, it goes a step further and organises itself around a very important premise indeed, which

to a large extent will be the key to its workings: the student should have the maximum autonomy at the time of relating to the university administration, and this is possible only if the University lays at his or her disposal sufficient informative tools and tools for the managing of his or her academic record. These will allow him or her to know the possibilities available, to take decisions and to execute them directly.

INFORMATION

If our point of departure is that the right kind of information, adapted to the needs of the user, will facilitate any later transactions and will reduce the impact of the new developments that might affect him or her, and that such information favours the use of telematic resources for the solution of doubts or for transactions in general, this function of the Secretary's Virtual Office becomes one of the utmost importance.

It is essential to know what treatment to give to the information that the whole university community should have at its disposal regarding these issues. Thus, the especially hard nature of the content both of norms and procedures, makes it necessary that some mechanisms should be laid down in order to facilitate the understanding of such norms and procedures for the user.

At a first level, both the information relating to the different degrees offered by the University and the aspects of customary norms and procedures are structured around small blocks which the user can absorb in doses according to the degree of

specificity needed. Again, the search for information can be carried out in different ways: according to a specific theme or by means of the academic calendar, whence it is possible to obtain direct access to the specific information on the university academic transactions (registration, assessment of previous studies, and so on). The possibility exists for the user to save the information where he or she deems appropriate, and to print it as well.

Even if the style in which they are expressed is plain and informal, academic concepts which are not easily understood may be encountered. In order to clear this possible hurdle, the Secretary's Virtual Office has a very useful tool, which is easily accessible from any point within the Secretary's Virtual Office, and whose search system is very simple as well. This is the name search, in which one will find the meaning of all the academic concepts used within the environment of the Secretary's Virtual Office; and they will be described in a language very accessible to the user.

If the user needs a higher level of information, and consequently requires answers to specific questions, the Secretary's Virtual Office makes available to him or her two tools: firstly, it is possible to check the FAQ section, where he or she will find distributed according to themes an updated selection of the most frequently asked questions by students, together with the corresponding answer. The second option, if the question is very specific and has not been resolved after using all the specified tools, is to write the question down and send it directly

to the academic information mailbox, or, if the difficulty consists in the carrying out of a specific transaction, to Academic Transactions, from which area a team of specialists will reply in a personalised way giving the relevant answer.

TRANSACTIONS

Another of the basic elements in the Secretary's Virtual Office is the possibility of carrying out academic transactions within a virtual environment.

The list of transactions available to students is very wide and has been structured in a logical way so as to make it easy for them to identify the service needed, as well as any additional information inherent to this service (whether any special authorisation may be needed, whether it is subject to payment, and so forth). In addition, and depending on each student's personal academic situation, a previous filter is executed of these transactions, so that he or she will have access only to those which he or she may effect. The aim is to avoid unnecessary confusion as a result of an excess of information which does not in the least benefit the good use of the administrative resources available to the student. This control or previous filter is possible thanks to the systems of validation and academic control incorporated into the academic and telematic management programme (Gestió Acadèmica i Telemàtica, GAT) developed at the UOC to give an adequate response to the virtual transaction of this type of actions in a quick and safe way, both for the student and for those responsible for internal

management. They too can organise the management of queries according to the criterion of greatest interest at the time: urgency, issue, courses, and so on.

We could also single out which are the most habitual transactions: semestral registration, petition for assessment of previous studies, the issue of official documents (certified documents, among others), applications for grants and financial aid for studies, configuration of the exam calendar, choosing the preferred days, time-tables and examination halls, and so forth.

These transactions can be carried out with no time limitations, no cues, and regardless of the user's geographic location. In addition, the user has a tool which makes it possible for him or her to monitor and trace the state of his or her applications and of the academic record. An explanation of both cases follows.

THE ACADEMIC RECORD

The academic record is an element of the utmost value, not only because of the information it contains, but also because of the use it has for the university community, especially as regards students and counsellors. It contains different types of information, spanning the more classical type relating to the student's marks, and the most innovative type relating to the state of the applications made by the student or the effect that the application of a university norm may have had on the academic record; and everything, furthermore, in real time. Thus,

through one single consultation the student will know whether the certified document that he or she applied for has been sent or is simply awaiting payment; whether he or she has been sent the information regarding the resolution of the accreditation that he or she requested. It is also possible to check the sanctions included in the record, any authorisations given, and so on.

The Secretary's Virtual Office has other accessory elements to facilitate the transversal dissemination of academic information. One is the academic Calendar, where the key dates for each month are given, as well as the direct access to any necessary information, and where applications can be made to effect any required transactions. Another is the Notice-board, a virtual replica of the traditional notice-board at any secretary's office, which aims at collecting any general information of interest, taking into account that in a virtual environment it is simply a complement to a whole structure of information and management.

THE FACILITIES

Within the section devoted to infrastructures, the new support centres have been set up with modern equipment in order to offer services of higher quality and comfort, multipurpose study rooms, auditoria, air-conditioning as a norm, and a wider area devoted to library facilities.

The Support Centre in the Barcelonès area has got under way at its final location in Barcelona's Avinguda de les Drassanes, after

the completion of all the refurbishing work. The UOC shares the building with the Rosa Sensat Teachers' Association and the Artur Martorell Foundation, located on the second and third floors respectively.

The UOC facilities, therefore, are located on the building's first floor and include a reception area and multipurpose rooms equipped with PCs, in order to study and work both in groups or individually. The ground floor of the building includes all the facilities shared by the UOC and the Teachers' Association: the entrance hall, the auditorium and the library.

During this academic year, the structure of the UOC has expanded with the launching of two new support centres. The capital of the Baix Llobregat area, Sant Feliu, now has a support centre. It is located in the Torre del Roser, a remarkable three-story building surrounded by a large garden area which is available for use. It shares some resources with the town Library, which is next door. The rehabilitation of this space has been carried out by a workshop-school of the city. The University will have the exclusive use of the first and second floors, while the ground floor will be shared by the Town Council and the UOC. On the first floor there will be the reception service and a large study room with PCs and tables where team work and study will be possible. The meeting rooms are located on the second floor. The bibliographic collection of the UOC will be located at the Montserrat Roig People's Library, as this facility is right opposite the building of the Support Centre.

As regards the support centre in Terrassa, in the Vallès Oriental area, it is located on the fourth floor of a building boasting a long cultural tradition in the city: the Centre Cultural de Caixa de Terrassa. It is a space measuring 376 square metres divided into a reception area, four meeting rooms separated one from the other by movable walls – the rooms can be turned into an auditorium- and a library.

The UOC has launched two new Support Points: one in Vilafranca del Penedès, as a result of the agreement signed between the Town Council and the UOC, and another one in Vic, as a result of the agreement reached with the Town Council, the Osona Area Council and the UOC, the latter of the two being located in the Joan Triadú library. The Support Point of the UOC in Olot is located at the La Garrotxa Youth Area Office and has two separate spaces: one for dealings with the public, and another to facilitate individual or team work by any UOC student or students that may ask for the use of it. The Support Point of the Open University in Figueres is located at the Alt Empordà Youth Area Office.

Activities and Relations

During the academic year 1998-99 there have been many visits and meetings held of an institutional character and seeking to further the promotion of the UOC among people in the world of politics, culture and society in general – people like Helmut Hoyer (Rector of the Open University of Germany), José M. Mendiluce, Emilio Botín, Baltasar Porcel, Julia

García Valdecasas, Antoni Comas, José A. Sánchez Asiaín, and others.

INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

September 1998. Creation of the IN3 (The Internet Interdisciplinary Institute)

A tool for the research and study of the social impact of the widespread use of the information available on the Net, it is also a reference centre for the analysis of the impact which the use of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has on any part of society.

5th November 1998. Presentation of the Metacampus. Palau de la Generalitat (Headquarters of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia)

A network of virtual campuses of world-wide reach with automatic language translation. This constitutes a new teaching resource through interconnections among a set of virtual campuses from different universities, and it should allow UOC students to choose optional credits from other universities as part of their studies, and viceversa.

9th November 1998. Creation of Educàlia

An agreement was signed involving "la Caixa", one of the Catalan Savings Banks, the Department of Education of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, IBM, and the UOC to create an intranet that will interconnect all Infant Education and Primary Education centres of Catalonia.

4th December 1998. The congress Towards the Global Virtual University Alliance is held in Barcelona.

A meeting involving leading world institutions in the development of virtual universities in order to create the concept of the virtual global university.

28th January 1999. Collaboration with the four engines of Europe (Baden-Württemberg, Lombardy, Rhône-Alpes and Wales) in the launching of a Metacampus experience, a network interconnecting the virtual campus areas of a set of universities.

The UOC held its first graduation ceremony in Manresa (Bages), the city in which was located the first support centre of the UOC. The act was attended by students from all over Catalonia, who were awarded their degrees in Psychopedagogy (2nd cycle) and their diplomas in Business Studies by the UOC, and also by the Commission for Universities and Research of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees ('Patronat') Andreu Mas-Colell, who acted as the class mentor (to accompany and assess the recent graduates on their graduation day and before they leave University), and finally the Mayor of Manresa, Jordi Valls, and the Rector of the University.

TALKS AND CONFERENCES

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya offers throughout the academic year a varied programme of activities related to teaching activity.

The awareness of the connection between university education and society is an inescapable obligation for any modern-day university. As regards the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, this is even more so:

because of its pedagogical model and its territorial outreach, the UOC prepares every year a programme of activities which brings the approach of the University to its various subjects closer to the professional world and the groups related to that world throughout Catalonia.

This reality is clearly borne out in the programme effected this academic year. The relation between each activity and the degree-courses offered at the UOC makes it possible to give a rigorous treatment to the themes undertaken. The participation of the support centres, often acting as engines and venues for the activities, implies that this University continually maintains a positive dialogue with the different sectors of society.

The activities of the UOC, therefore, have been present throughout the territory and have involved all courses. Their growth, not simply in number but also in quality, is the reflection of a co-ordinated organisation which has thereby been able to prepare for this academic year a joint programme for each semester, thus giving cohesion to all activities.

• Lectures

Activity	Support Centre	Degree	Speakers	Date
The Euro as the Single Currency: the Impact of Its Introduction	Vallès Occidental, Sabadell	Economics and Business Studies	Andreu Vila	25 th September 1998
The Role of the Teacher-psychologist in the Different Sectors of Andorran Society	Estudis Virtuals d'Andorra	Education and Psychology	Meritxell Vidal Mònica Codina Cristina Orduña Anna Insa Cristina Martí	1 st October 1998
Psychopedagogy and Multicultural Education	Gironès, Salt	Education and Psychology	Xavier Besalú Joan Teixidó	14 th October 1998
The Reform of Family Law in Catalonia	Baix Camp, Reus	Law	Isabel Miralles	15 th October 1998
Psychopedagogy and New Career Opportunities: Training at the Workplace	Segrià, Lleida	Education and Psychology	Josep Lluís Boix Sofia Isus Barado	20 th October 1998
New City Models: Citizen Networks	Gironès, Salt	Humanities and Language and Literature	Artur Serra Joan Albesa Martí Olivella	22 nd October 1998
Data mining: Proteins, Red Ferraris and Big Brother	Vallès Occidental, Sabadell	Computer Science and Multimedia	Ramon Sangüesa	26 th October 1998
Safety on the Internet	Bages, Manresa	Computer Science and Multimedia	Jordi Joan Busquets	28 d'octubre de 1998
New Experiences in Electronic Marketing: Plusfresc Supermarkets	Segrià, Lleida	Economics and Business Studies	Antonio Garí Xavier Jové	2 nd November 1998
Psychopedagogy and Social Education	Barcelonès, Barcelona	Education and Psychology	Carles Armengol	3 rd November 1998
Organising and Planning Cultural Activities	Segrià, Lleida	Humanities and Language and Literature	Antònia Jaume	5 th November 1998
Electronic Marketing: the Internet as Advertising Support and Corporate Communication	Vallès Occidental, Sabadell	Economics and Business Studies	Eudald Domènech	10 th November 1998
Road Infrastructures and Economic Activity	Gironès, Salt	Economics and Business Studies	Germà Bel Queralt	11 th November 1998
The Reform of Family Law in Catalonia	Bages, Manresa	Law	Isabel Miralles	12 th November 1998
Telematics Against Social Exclusion: the 'Ravalnet' Experience	Barcelonès, Barcelona	Humanities and Language and Literature	Artur Serra Ricard Faura Enric Basela ('Ravalnet')	23 rd February 1999
Hypertext in Teaching and Learning: the Role of IT	Auditorium, UOC's Central Building, Barcelona		George P. Landow	18 th March 1999
The Rise of the First States in Ancient Egypt	Vallès Occidental, Sabadell	Humanities and Language and Literature	Marcelo Campagno	23 rd March 1999
Selling on the Internet	Vallès Occidental, Sabadell	Economics and Business Studies	Salvador Riera	29 th April 1999
Education and the New Technologies	Baix Camp, Reus Barcelonès, Barcelona	Education and Psychology	Pere Graells	4 th May 1999 6 th May 1999
How To Make Use of Low Interest Rates: Implications for the Financial Policy of Small and Medium-sized Firms	Gironès, Salt	Economics and Business Studies	Lluís Planas	13 th May 1999
Communication, Telematics and E-Commerce: the New Paradigms	Auditorium, UOC's Central Building, Barcelona	Economics and Business Studies	Inma Rodríguez	27 th May 1999
Technology, Politics and Participation	Santa Mònica Art Centre, Barcelona	Humanities and Language and Literature	Wiebe E. Bijker	6 th July 1999

• Conferences

Type of Activity	Venue	Study	Participants	Date
Conference on Cautionary Measures	Auditorium, UOC's Central Building, Barcelona	Law	José Massaguer José Ramón Ferrándiz Carlos Bueren Ignacio Sancho Ariadna Cambroneró Miquel Àngel Fernández-Ballesteros	11 th February 1999
Type of Activity	Study	Title	Participants	Date
Necnum 99	Humanities	<i>Anonymity at the UOC</i>	Alejandro Álvarez Albert Sangrà Josep Riera	18 th March 1999
Anti-war Platform		Literary Creation in Present-Day Society	Jaume Subirana Carne Arenas	23 rd March 1999
		And After the War, What?	Carlos Taibo David Bondia Jordi Bonet Julio Rodríguez	28 th June 1999

• Other activities

Type of Activity	Study	Venue	Date
Monte Testaccio Exhibition	Humanities	C.S. Baix Camp C.S. Segrià C.S. Vallès Occidental, Terrassa C.S. Barcelonès	From 22 nd March to 10 th April. From 13 th to 24 th April. From 27 th April to 8 th May. From 4 th to 12 th June.

• **Virtual Activities**

The UOC organised the first edition of the Virtual Creation Prizes open to all members of its community. The categories in this edition were: poetry, short stories, hypertextual, photography, aphorisms, maxims and sayings. The prizes were awarded to coincide with the festivities of Saint George's Day.

The space Open Parliament aims at bringing the citizens of Catalonia closer to parliamentary activity in a pedagogical and didactic way by making use of information technologies. All in all, the idea is to promote communication between citizens and their representatives in the Parliament of Catalonia. It is a project developed by Law Studies at the UOC, within the framework of the ELVIL European project, which is being carried out by the UOC and by two other European universities. It is organised into three main spheres:

- Presentation, where the main aims of the project are explained.
- The Parliament of Catalonia: a space for documentation and learning for citizens to get to know the history, the structure, and the workings of the Parliament.
- Debate Law: presentation, monitoring and discussion of the passing through parliament of all those norms which, owing to their impact, are thought to be of most interest to citizens.

Activity	Date
Virtual Creation Prizes	February - May 1999
Internet Festival	March 1999
Monte Testaccio Virtual Exhibition	February - June 1999
Virtual Itinerary on St George's Day	23 rd April 1999
Open Parliament	

Business Initiatives

XARXA VIRTUAL DE CONSUM, SCCL

Diputació, 219
08011 Barcelona
Tel. 93 253 24 27
Fax 93 453 94 84
www.lavirtual.es
Manager: Carles Soler
Foundation Date: 25th November 1996
Capital at 31st December 1998: 5,320,000 PTA

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE: THE WEBTIGA AND THE VIRTUAL GALLERY

La Virtual (Virtual Consumers' Network) offers users specifically-designed solutions for the UOC workplace at the Webtiga, a shop on the Internet where users can find computer products and services, the recommended bibliographies for UOC courses of study, and materials proper to the UOC.

The Webtiga is part of a larger commercial initiative, the Virtual Gallery, the first university virtual commerce centre. It is a space managed by *La Virtual* and where business ventures that might be interested can contact the UOC community directly. Thanks to this electronic commerce space, a wider range of products and services is made available to Virtual Campus users.

IMPORTANT DATA

On 31st July 1999 *La Virtual* had 7,917 members.

During this academic year, some 1,100 orders from nearly 900

clients were handled at the Webtiga, generating under this concept an income of 71,000,000 PTA.

EDIUOC

Aragó, 182, 7a. planta A
08011 Barcelona
Tel. 93 452 74 20
Fax 93 451 30 16
www.ediuoc.es
Director: Isaias Taboas
Foundation Date: 18th September 1996
Capital at 31st December 1998: 48,015,000 PTA.

During the financial year 1998-99 the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Press (Edicions de la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, EDIUOC) consolidated its publishing activity both as regards its own publications and joint publications, and widened its catalogue, taking as its basis the didactic materials of the UOC with a new collection in CD-ROM format, the 'Biblioteca Lectus Universitària' (University Lectus Library).

With the aim of opening up new publishing lines which do not have to be based on the didactic material of the UOC, the University has reached an agreement with Gedisa publishers for the joint publication of a new collection of books, the common characteristic of which will be the impact of the new information and communication technologies on Education Sciences and Didactics.

From the point of view of business alliances, EDIUOC has set up a mixed society with the Enciclopèdia Catalana group,

Ensenyament Obert, the social aim of which is to promote and develop university matriculation courses for people older than 25, together with other educational offers. It has also sealed an agreement with the Santillana Publishing Group (Grup Editorial Santillana) for the constitution of another joint society which will be called 'Formación Interactiva de Docentes' (FID), the social aim of which is the telematic continuing education of non-university teaching staff for the whole of Spain and Latin America.

Within the field of services, EDIUOC has widened those formerly offered by the UOC, and has taken charge of the elaboration of teaching and learning materials within the offer of regulated studies and Continuing Education. With a view to carrying out these services in a more efficient way, EDIUOC has created a affiliated firm named Eureka Media, which specialises in the elaboration of didactic materials in any physical or digital support.

GECSA

Rambla de Catalunya, 61, 3r. 2a.
08007 Barcelona
Tel. 93 488 22 99
Fax 93 488 13 18
Director: Pedro Acebillo
Foundation Date: 31st January 1997
Capital at 31st December 1998: 10,000,000 PTA.

Management of Knowledge (Gestión del Conocimiento SA, GECSA) is an initiative of the Foundation for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and of the Spanish firm Telefónica, and offers

a wide range of services within the following spheres:

- Non-formal learning of a virtual character aimed at business firms and organisations.
- The design and creation of virtual communities.
- Communication systems and management of knowledge in organisations.

Some of the activities effected during the academic year 1998-99 ranged from the design of telematic learning and communication environments to the setting up of the final product, day-to-day management, and after-sales service. All this was based on the use of the latest information and communication technologies in an especially amenable environment of users, and one, moreover, which adapts well to the specific needs of the client.

GECSA has had wide experience in the setting up of telematic systems of support to learning and communication initiatives in virtual environments based on the use of telematic platforms and specifically adapted intranets. This experience has allowed us to personalise virtual environments according to the client's needs, and to contribute creative solutions which add a final value to the product.

Among the projects carried out in 1999 we should single out Educàlia, which was the result of collaboration among the following institutions: "la Caixa" Foundation, Telefónica, the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, IBM and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. It is a virtual community for parents, teaching

staff and students of Infant and Primary Education, in which one foresees having up to 500,000 users during the exploitation phase. In this virtual space, the interest in common is non-formal education arising from games, and co-operation and discussion activities.

Another project of great scope carried out by GECSA is 'Solidària', a communication virtual space for NGOs funded by the Telefónica Foundation, and it includes consultancy services, design and content for humanitarian management, and co-operation with non-profit organisations in Spain and Latin America. The sees are in Argentina, Chile, Peru and Brazil.

Star Club ('Club Estrella') is a project carried out by GECSA and promoted by the "la Caixa" Foundation, consisting of a virtual community bringing together older Internet users. During the exploitation phase, it is thought that it will be reached by 70,000 users. This environment is based on three points:

- Adaptation to the characteristics of the object public. This will be shown in some contents which take into consideration the interests of the highest index, a clear and smart design, and a simple and intuitive navigability.

- Emphasis on the participation of users, with the aim of integrating their experience into the content offered, which promotes a sense of community.

- Priority given to dynamism and novelty, building a changing environment capable of attaining the loyalty of its public regardless of the content offered.

GECSA has developed several systems custom-made for the internal management of the knowledge required in financial, insurance, postal communications, pharmaceutical and other firms.

GECSA has developed a number of projects for the various autonomous communities, such as the Autonomous Government of the Canary Islands or the Government of Catalonia. These projects are based on the design of a telematic intranet for the training of young entrepreneurs, in order to lend support to cultural change in organisations through the creation of virtual communities, as well as to train workers and promote total quality systems in administrations.

GECSA has designed and built intranets for the improvement of competitiveness in some groups of small and medium-sized firms, especially as regards the better positioning of the sector of traditional business in respect of the great commercial areas, and in the sector of rural tourism.

AULA ACTIVA

Av. Tibidabo, 45-47
08035 Barcelona
Tel. 902 101 810
Fax 93 211 21 45
www.aulaactiva.com

Director: Vicens Vives (up to March 1999)
Francesc P. de Riera (from June 1999)
Foundation Date: February 1998
Capital at 31st December 1998: 100,000,000 PTA.

Aula Activa's activity started on October 1998 with an ample publicity campaign in the mass

media (TV, radio, general and specialised press) in order to make the brand known, as well as its activities in university extension courses.

Aula Activa has launched its operations in the offer of four courses:

- English Language
- Catalan Language
- Marketing
- Accountancy

One of the most important pieces of news this year is the incorporation of the Complutense University of Madrid into the project, through the signing of a collaboration agreement. This agreement allows that University to guarantee, in the same way as does the UOC, the courses offered by Aula Activa as university extension courses.

ENSENYAMENT OBERT

Diputació, 250
08007 Barcelona
Tel. 93 412 60 63
Fax 93 412 38 51
www.obert.com
Director: Eugeni Sender
Foundation Date: July 1998
Capital at 31st December 1998: 80,000,000 PTA.

Enciclopèdia Catalana and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya have joined their experience and capacity in order to constitute a new educational offer in Catalonia: Ensenyament Obert.

The aim of Ensenyament Obert is to offer distance education courses centred specially on the pre-university sphere and aimed at all

those people who, because of work factors, cannot study in traditional universities and want to advance both personally and professionally. Ensenyament Obert follows the UOC learning model based on personalisation and the new information and communication technologies.

Ensenyament Obert started its activity in October 1998 and it has gradually taken on the virtualisation of the matriculation course to the UOC for people older than 25 years of age. Thus, during the financial year 1998-99, matriculation courses were available for the following degree-courses:

- Business Science
- Law
- Humanities
- Systems Management Computing (Technical Engineering)
- Catalan Language and Literature

In the forthcoming academic years, Ensenyament Obert is planning to carry out and offer courses hitherto unavailable in the pre-university sphere.

Financial Report

In the section that follows we are detailing the financial reporting of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Foundation corresponding to the financial year 1998.

As in previous years, Bové Montero i Cia. audited the Foundation's yearly accounts and presented the relevant positive report to the

Foundation's Board of Trustees, which approved the report in the session of 26th May 1999.

After detailed analysis, we are singling out the most relevant aspects of the financial data as follow:

• The monitoring of the profit and loss report, and the investment sheet, for the financial year 1998 has been done separately for regulated studies (contract programme) and for other training activities.

• In accordance with the forecasts, the ordinary budget for the fiscal year 1998 increased with respect to that of the previous year by 51%, in order to cover the launching of Continuing Education and the increase of activity of 117% in regulated studies.

• The investment budget increased by 39%. The most important items were the teaching modules and computer applications, each of which represented 30% of total investment.

• The target of the FUOC for the year 1998 was to achieve operating results which would allow the financing of investments without specific funding.

The result of the profit and loss schedule was 36,719,989 PTA, of which 35,105,484 PTA were devoted to creating a provision for the funding of investments, and 1,614,505 PTA which were directed to the foundation fund.

• With respect to the previous year, the structure of the balance at 31st of December 1998 had

improved. The target of balancing the fixed assets with share capital, subsidy funds and long-term debt, and the working capital with current liability had been achieved

• An analysis of the source and application of funds schedule reveals the net worth balance. We would highlight the increase of share capital and the partially long-term financing of the working capital.

