

**Annual report
Academic year 1997-98**

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Introduction

Year after year the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya follows the path and objectives that were set in the Law of Recognition, the Regulations of Organisation and Operation and the orientation offered by the Board of Trustees and Governing Council of the Foundation for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. In other words, to provide a quality distance education to the citizens of Catalonia, whose only obstacle is their capacity to gain access to the studies of their choice, to increase the number of university degrees in accordance with the programme planning established by the Inter-university Council of Catalonia, and to work in co-operation with the other Catalan universities to encourage the introduction of the new technologies into higher education. On the pages of this annual report you will find a description of all the activities that were carried out at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya during the 1997-98 academic year in order to achieve these objectives. As Chairman of the Board of Trustees, it is with great personal satisfaction I can attest to the achievements of our university.

The success of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is also the result of the UOC's noteworthy level of participation in the international arena, which not only benefits the University itself but the entire Catalan university system. Without doubt, the UOC's participation in international projects has brought Catalonia to occupy a truly preferential place within the international market of higher education. This is just as it should be in a day and age when national and language borders have ceased to be an obstacle but rather a way of protecting our university models. We must move forward on this path, study it in depth and foster it. And we must do so for the progress of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, for the entire Catalan university system, and for the prestige and cultural growth of the whole Catalan society.

Joan Albaigés i Riera
Chairman of the FUOC Board of Trustees

A year in the life of our university does not seem to coincide with the usual passing of time; it seems more like a fleeting acceleration of the 365 days that reduce it to weeks. At the same time, however, in light of the work that has been done, a year at the UOC seems to have consumed half a decade. It must be for this reason that the four years gone by since the founding of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya seem to be a much shorter period of time and the progress made in this time can be compared to the progress which is normally made at an educational institution over an entire decade. The Annual Report wants to take an objective look at the time and work at the University throughout the 1997-98 academic year. By doing so, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya wants to give credit to the university community and the educational administration for the work that has been achieved thanks to their support and trust.

During the 1997-98 academic year, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya saw over 3,000 new students enrol, introduced two new educational programmes - Technical Engineering in Computer Management and Technical Engineering in Data Systems- with an overall offer of 6 courses of study, increased its educational offer regarding continuing and open education, and, in general, tried to achieve, in a rigorous and extensive way, the objectives with which the University was recognised by the Parliament of Catalonia: "to make university education available to all people".

In order to achieve this objective and turn our goal into a reality we created and fostered a network of business initiatives -Xarxa Virtual de Consum, SCCL, EDIUOC, SE-d- which were designed to increase the number of services the University has to offer the society and, at the same time, make it possible for the University to count on supplementary financing in the future, and, finally, to distribute the benefits -both methods and technology- of the UOC's educational alternative.

Those people who have made all of this possible should be truly

contented: the Generalitat of Catalonia, the FUOC Board of Trustees, and, if I might say, all citizens of Catalonia. However, the people who should be especially proud of their contribution are, first of all, those who work at the UOC, because without them none of this would have been possible, and, of course, our students, who are, when all is said and done, the real beneficiaries and heroes of this university.

Gabriel Ferraté i Pascual
Rector of the UOC

Unfortunately, the Annual Report cannot count upon a text by Carles Ferrer Salat. Instead, and as a tribute in his memory, we would like to replace it with a text written by the rector shortly after being told that Ferrer Salat had passed away. It contains all the grief felt by the University at the loss of the chairman of the FUOC Council and all the emotion expressed by Gabriel Ferraté for the death of his friend.

Upon the death of Carles Ferrer Salat

When I was asked to suggest a name for the Chairmanship of FUOC Council, there was no doubt in my mind: Carles Ferrer Salat was the person we were looking for.

Our friend Ferrer Salat, like all of the members of the Social Council of Universities, was a man of prestige; however, it was not simply friendship or prestige which would determine his eventual election. Ferrer Salat was the most appropriate person for the job, because he fit in perfectly -owing to his character, conviction, and preparation- with the desire to build a university that would affront the obligations of a public service institution and would be organised by following a rational and efficient management structure which would boast having both a university and business mentality.

I became aware of this in 1967 when, as a young professor at the Industrial Engineering School, Carles Ferrer Salat, who was in charge of Ferrer Laboratories and a new electronic instrumentation company, spoke to the school in an attempt to find technological backing for his company and to set up a collaboration agreement with the school. I think both sides - Ferrer Salat's company and the University- ended up benefiting from this co-operation: Ferrer Salat found the technology he needed while the University was given the opportunity to integrate its knowledge into a creation process of useful things making up part of the productive system (we are talking about the 60s...!). From that point on, collaboration with Carles Ferrer never ceased. Nor did the friendship.

As Chairman of the FUOC Council, Ferrer Salat did not want to be (as we had known from the very start) a simple figurine: he prepared, in the time he was allotted, the working sessions of the Council, brought to the meetings a sense of urgency of one who expected results and not simply debates, and put his prestige at the University's service whenever it was necessary. He was proud of the University and was sure to let others know how he felt.

Carles Ferrer meant the world to me, as a friend, as an organiser and as a man of ideas, but as the chairman of our Foundation Council I can only express my deepest gratitude and I would like to share this gratitude with the rest of the members of the UOC university community.

Gabriel Ferraté i Pascual

Governing Bodies

The Foundation for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya operates through its Board of Trustees, the highest authority at the University. The Board of Trustees is made up of its founding entities, the Catalan Federation of Savings Banks, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation, Television of Catalonia, Ltd. and Catalonia Radio, and the Generalitat of Catalonia, which holds the majority stake.

The main functions of the Board of Trustees with regard to the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya are to approve and, if necessary, modify the Regulations of Organisation and Operation of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, name and dismiss the rector and managing director of the University, approve the UOC budget and year-end balance, and approve the University's plan of action, which is put forward by the rector, and evaluate the results thereof.

The FUOC Standing Committee is the permanent management and administrative body of the Foundation. The Board of Trustees delegates some of its functions to the Standing Committee and ultimately ratifies all decisions made.

The FUOC Council is the consulting body of the Foundation. The Council has to provide information on the budget, the programme planning and the naming of the rector of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. The council is made up of, apart from the UOC rector and chairperson of the FUOC, members of: the Parliament (2), public universities (4), employers' organisations (2), and trade unions (2), as well as various people from the areas of research and culture (5). The Council is therefore widely representative of Catalan society which the University, as a public service organisation, has the desire and duty to serve.

Internal organisation of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is led by the Governing Council -

made up of the rector, vice-rectors, and managing director- which is the University's maximum collegial governing body and whose function is to orient, plan and evaluate the University's activity and to determine the UOC's general plans of action in all areas.

Regulations of Organisation and Operation

In the 1997-98 academic year the Regulations of Organisation and Operation were put into practice. These regulations govern the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and establish the following general action criteria:

General Action Criteria

1. **Quality.** Given the functions with which it is assigned, the University is obliged to demand of itself the highest possible degree of quality in its education, research and in all of the educational services it has to offer.
2. **Information and Education.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya understands that the service it provides its students with is not only of an informative nature but also educational and, therefore, the University will work towards achieving an educational model that responds to the singularity of its students and strive to complete the preparation of its students with a global human education.
3. **Continuing Education.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya believes that university education has to instil in students the conviction that educational training has to continue throughout one's entire life in a recurring and unceasing way. That is why the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is not only dedicated to the field of initial education but also to continuing education.
4. **Innovation and Research.** The objective of each sector of the University's activity is to incorporate any necessary innovations so that the services they offer society is in a constant process of improvement. This position is particularly important to research activity. For this reason the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya encourages academic research to be done by its

teaching staff as well as educational and technical research in which all sectors of the University take part.

5. **Participation.** Personal initiative and council from all members of the university community is essential to the proper functioning of the University, and that is why the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is equipped with the necessary consultation, assessment and co-ordination bodies that make such participation possible.
6. **Open-mindedness.** The University is aware of the international dimension of its activity and the evolution of a world in which distances and differences between persons are becoming more and more relative; therefore, the University
 - a) is obligated to provide its students with an education that prepares them for this global dimension in the workplace;
 - b) has to encourage a climate of tolerance between people, and believes that university education must strive to achieve this collective awareness;
 - c) asks all members of the university community to be open to the changes and innovations that transform and enrich the world in which we live.
7. **Community Service.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is aware of its role as a public-service organisation and consequently:
 - a) works for the Catalan society and, therefore, is rooted in the cultural, social, scientific and linguistic reality of Catalonia, and closely linked to its industrial, commercial, artistic and service needs. The Catalan language is thus the official language of the University without detriment to what is stated in article 3.2 of the Statutes of the Autonomy of Catalonia; therefore, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya will encourage the use of the

Catalan language in all areas and provide the means to ensure its use by students and management personnel.

b) must ensure that the achievements of the University benefit all people equally, and

c) must be endowed with a rational and efficient management structure.

8. **Co-ordination.** In order to ensure the quality of the services provided by the University, the current organisation regulations are intended to guarantee the integration and efficiency of all University activity. Therefore, the University:

a) assigns the highest academic responsibilities for the governing of the University to the rector and the Governing Council, in addition to the other responsibilities with which they are entrusted;

b) provides each sector of activity with the necessary initiative and management autonomy so each sector can carry out the responsibilities assigned to them in an efficient and professional way;

c) considers teaching, research, technology and management to be instrumental functions in the education of its students and these activities are not in themselves the ultimate goals of the University;

d) does not assign hierarchical degrees to the different activities. Therefore, each sector of activity at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is given its area of action which must be co-ordinated with the other areas of activity. Responsibility for this co-ordination belongs to the rector and the Governing Council.

9. **Efficient Management.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya wants to administer the public resources which are invested in it with austerity and efficiency. Therefore, the University will work with the organisational structure that is strictly

necessary in order to achieve the objectives with which it is assigned. In addition, as a social responsibility and in order to ensure the viability of the UOC's educational project, the University will work towards finding alternate sources of financing which will include, among others, the profitability of its shares in the area of distance education.

10. **Evaluation.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya confirms its commitment to permanent institutional evaluation as a way to guarantee the progress of the University.

The Regulations of Organisation and Operation also provide for:

-A governing structure - **individual governing bodies**- centred around the figure of a rector. The rector is assisted by a managing director, who is in charge of the day-to-day functioning of the University, and vice-rectors.

-Internal organisation -**collegial governing bodies**- which have as their highest authority the Governing Council (rector, vice-rectors, managing director), two specific committees for each of the University's major areas: educational (Academic Affairs Committee) and management (Management Committee), and a Co-ordinating Committee, which is presided over by the rector who brings the two previously-mentioned committees together.

-Student participation in university life (**university community**) which implies on-line democratic elections, participation in committees on the Virtual Campus, systematic opinion polls, and other activities directed at using the opinions of students, the ultimate users of the University, as a means of evaluating the service they receive from the University.

-The commitment on behalf of the University to systematically evaluate the results of its activity as a way of guaranteeing the progress of the University.

The UOC Professionals

All of the information presented in this annual report is the result of the contributions made by all the people who take part in a university project that looks to the future both in the way it conceives the rendering of student service and in the utilisation of the new educational, communications and organisational technologies.

The University's team of professionals is organised in a way that allows the University to be both agile and flexible, and the University counts on the sufficient number of people in order to achieve its objectives in an efficient and effective way.

At present, the University offers 5 courses of study, which are made up of an educational team that includes the UOC's own teaching staff and the collaborating teaching staff (counsellors and tutors). The management team is grouped into 8 areas, 2 departments and 14 units. All fall under the direction of the Governing Council, which is headed up by the rector, the vice-rectors and the managing director of the University.

UOC activity is based on offering mutual services and on obtaining common results with regard to both the professionals who work at the University and their relationship with the students. The UOC has been endowed with a management structure that makes itself responsible for the results, continuous improvement, mutual satisfaction and openness to change. This, in turn, makes consensus, trust and implication the principal values in the construction of an innovative and distinguished university.

The total number of people who currently work exclusively for the UOC is 188. Their average age is 33 and 82% have university degrees.

Educational Activity

The UOC educational methodology can be characterised by certain psychopedagogical options that carefully consider the special circumstances of distance education and the inclusion of the new technologies. These options can be specified as follows:

- **The teaching staff who act as mediators and guides throughout the learning process.** The teaching staff helps students during their learning process by acting as mediators between the students and the learning materials (printed texts, multimedia material, web pages) provided on the Virtual Campus. This is the main function of the tutor and is determined for each subject in the study programme that students receive at the beginning of each semester. This function is carried out through the various planned activities and the assistance students receive from individual consultations with their tutors. The tutors are co-ordinated by the UOC's own teaching staff and the directors of studies.

- **Active student participation.** The basic function of the study programme is to decide in what way interaction between students and the teaching staff should take place through the different planned activities. A good part of these activities is made up of the on-going evaluation process, a key element in the UOC's educational methodology strategy designed to ensure student success.

- **Personalising the teaching-learning process.** The teaching process can be adjusted to meet the different needs and pace of each student. For this reason the counsellor plays an important role in orienting the student before enrolling at the beginning of each term. The tutor helps the student to select the appropriate study load according to his or her necessities and/or possibilities and gives the student guidance in choosing an educational

itinerary in accordance with his or her interests.

- **The new technologies as part of the teaching-learning process.** For the UOC, research and innovation of the new technologies in order to find ways of improving the teaching-learning process is a priority and the most characteristic feature of the UOC's contribution to the renovation of university education in Catalonia.

Regulated Studies

During the 1997-98 academic year the UOC increased its educational offer to include the following courses of study: Technical Engineering in Computer Management and Technical Engineering in Data Systems, both of which are part of the Computer Science and Multimedia course of study.

These new educational programmes along with the addition of 64 new subjects to the courses of study already being offered have produced a noteworthy increase in the number of the UOC's own teaching staff and tutors. Additionally, the increase in the number of students who have adhered to the UOC's innovative model of learning has caused the number of professors who work as counsellors to increase as well. The regulated courses of study offered at the UOC have the following study programmes:

Economics and Business Studies

Study Programme

Diploma in Business Studies

Homologation date: 22 December, 1995 (BOE from 17 January, 1996)

Length: 3 years, divided into six semesters*

This diploma consists of 203 credits, 155 of which are obligatory, while 24 are optional and 24 are of free choice.

*In accordance with the flexible nature of registration, each person can adjust the length of studies to meet his or her own needs.

Education and Psychology

Study Programme

Degree in Educational Psychology

Homologation date: 22 December, 1885 (BOE from 17 January, 1996)

Length: 2 years, divided into 4 semesters*

This degree consists of 150 credits, 117 of which are obligatory, while 18 are optional and 15 are of free choice.

*In accordance with the flexible nature of registration, each person can adjust the length of studies to meet his or her own needs.

Law

Study Programme

Degree in Law

Homologation date: 14 February, 1997 (BOE from 7 March, 1997)

Length: 4 years, divided into 8 semesters*

This degree consists of 300 credits, 228 of which are obligatory, while 36 are optional and 36 are of free choice

*In accordance with the flexible nature of registration, each person can adjust the length of studies to meet his or her own needs.

Humanities and Language and Literature

Study Programme

Degree in Humanities

Homologation date: 14 February, 1997 (BOE from 7 March, 1997)

Length: 4 years, divided into 8 semesters*

This degree consists of 300 credits, 222 of which are obligatory, while

48 are optional and 48 are of free choice

*In accordance with the flexible nature of registration, each person can adjust the length of studies to meet his or her own needs.

Computer Science and Multimedia

Study Programme

Technical Engineering in Computer Management

Homologation date: 14 February, 1997 (BOE from 7 March, 1997)

Length: 3 years, divided into 6 semesters*

This degree consists of 210 credits, 162 of which are obligatory, while 24 are optional and 24 are of free choice.

*In accordance with the flexible nature of registration, each person can adjust the length of studies to meet his or her own needs.

Study Programme

Technical Engineering in Data Systems

Homologation date: 14 February, 1997 (BOE from 7 March, 1997)

Length: 3 years, divided into 6 semesters*

This degree consists of 210 credits, 162 of which are obligatory, while 24 are optional and 24 are of free choice.

*In accordance with the flexible nature of registration, each person can adjust the length of studies to meet his or her own needs.

Non-regulated Studies

During the 1997-98 academic year the UOC also started up the UOC Continuing Education pilot programme, initially offering specialisation courses and seminars which were designed to meet the needs of people working in the business world and who needed to bring their skills up-to-date.

Personalised education was also in great demand during this year. The University's expertise in the utilisation of the new technologies to develop highly efficient systems of distance training with solid educational results at a reduced cost caused the business world to take notice of the UOC and the excellent opportunity it offers for businesses to increase the educational level of their human resources.

What's more, the UOC, through the Active Classroom programme, a business initiative that was promoted by the University itself, began to offer high quality university-extension courses, which are meant to give people who do not meet the legal requirements for university entrance the chance to gain access to classes at the university level.

Another initiative that began its activity at the end of the 1997-98 academic year was the Summer Open University programme, which came about in an attempt to break with the system of traditional universities that divide the academic year into semesters and then close down for the summer. Now students have the opportunity to take advantage of their summer breaks to continue with their studies or even to sign up for a course that simply interests them.

Finally, and within the area of non-regulated studies, the UOC continues to offer the UOC Entrance Preparatory Course for People over 25 Years of Age. This course has been very well received and the number of participants has increased as well as the number of courses of study they can enter once they have passed the corresponding entrance test.

Continuing Education

Forever striving to ensure educational quality, personalised attention and professionals of renowned prestige, the UOC's Continuing Education programme offers people, organisations and institutions an appropriate response to the professional challenges of the twenty-first century.

The main goals of the Continuing Education programme are:

- To ensure educational quality with professionals of renowned prestige who are in charge of creating the educational materials and who watch out for the orientation and effectiveness of the learning process, while providing permanent quality assessment.
- To offer personalised attention on an individual basis and through permanent contact, all of which provides students with the constant encouragement and support which are necessary if the success of the UOC's educational system is to be guaranteed.
- To use the technologies, in which the UOC is a leader, to provide students with easy access to university studies without space or time boundaries.
- To centre the learning process on the student's own personal desire, effort and perseverance.

The UOC's Continuing Education programme is divided into three areas:

Postgraduate Studies

The Postgraduate Studies programme offers postgraduate and master's programmes to students who want to study a specialisation, learn new skills or bring what they already know up-to-date. These studies are open to all university students and professors with experience.

Within this programme there are the following possibilities:

- Master's degrees
- Postgraduate degrees
- Specialisation courses
- Refresher courses
- Seminars

In November of 1997, the first four postgraduate educational programmes were started:

- Trainer training
- How to prepare a marketing plan
- Accounting and finances for non-experts

-Total quality service management

These same programmes were repeated in April of 1998. The total number of students enrolled in both sessions was 297.

The UOC also organised refresher courses for students from areas of the University's regulated studies. These courses are designed for people who need to consolidate their knowledge and skills, which in turn will help them to more successfully follow certain subjects that make up part of their university studies at the UOC.

In February of 1998, the following courses were started:

- Introduction to business mathematics
- Special mathematics for computer engineering
- English 0.1

A total of 208 students enrolled in these courses.

Personalised Education

Institutions and companies need time in order to train competent workers and teams of workers and to motivate them to effectively carry out the professional activities required of them.

The aim of Open Campus is to create a distance-training space that addresses the individual needs of different organisations. This programme is based on the innovation and development needs that are particular to each organisation by appraising the state of individual and collective talent with regard to professional skills and by focusing on the participants, whether they are individuals, teams or a community.

The following entities and organisations placed their trust in our system of training and took part in UOC distance-training projects during 1998:

- Ceprom, CCOO
- Uoctrans, Trade Union of Transportation Co-operatives
- Olympic University Institute of Sports Science (Instituto Universitario Olímpico de

Ciencias del Deporte), Complutense University of Madrid
-Ikastolen Elkartea
-Sarrià Chemical Institute (Institut Químic de Sarrià)
-Town Council Federation of Catalonia (Federació de Municipis de Catalunya)
-Hospital Consortium of Catalonia (Consorti Hospitalari de Catalunya)
-Department of Education, Generalitat of Catalonia
-Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Barcelona
-Chamber of Commerce of Valencia
-"La Caixa" Foundation
-Pere Tarrés Foundation
-Inèditos Viabls
-Cetemmsa
-Repsol, Ltd.
-Public School of Administration of Catalonia
-General Council of Judicial Power of Catalonia
-PISTA

Open Education

In the area of open education, the 1997-98 academic year saw the start-up of the Open Classroom pilot programme, which receives support from the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

Open Classroom is a system of distance education that makes the UOC's model of university education available to the whole of society, granting access to knowledge to all those people who wish to participate, especially in the areas of professional improvement and culture.

Open Classroom classes are divided into two categories:

- University-extension courses
- Complementary courses

In university-extension courses, once students have passed a written examination, the UOC awards participants with a university-extension diploma and the credits obtained from these courses may be accepted as free-choice credits or core or obligatory credits and transferred to the courses of study offered at the University.

Complementary courses are of a more professional nature. Upon successfully completing any of the complementary courses, participants are awarded with a certificate from the Permanent Education Committee of the Foundation for Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

A total of 1,085 students enrolled in these courses.

Summer Open University

Included within postgraduate studies are the activities of the Summer Open University programme, a new UOC initiative. The first sessions of this new programme were initiated in July and August of 1998 and were designed to make higher education available to the society during the summer months when universities traditionally close their doors.

In this first edition, the students who successfully completed the UOd'E had the option of validating the credits obtained as free-choice credits.

The following courses were offered in the first summer session:

- Investment funds
- Environmental economics
- Electronic project-writing
- Research strategies and information processing on Internet
- Project management: activity planning
- Problems relating to the world economy
- The Iberians
- Benchmarking
- Introduction to conflict management in the areas of volunteerism, NGOs and sociocultural movements
- Practical suggestions for the analysis and adaptation of material
- Organisational conflict resolution strategies in schools
- Playing with the mathematics of diversity

A total of 314 students enrolled in these courses.

UOC Entrance Preparatory Course for People over 25 Years of Age

The main goal of this educational option is to ensure that future UOC students who take the UOC entrance preparatory course for people over 25 years of age receive adequate training and that this training will help them to pass the UOC entrance examination and subsequently be able to integrate into the university community and successfully follow their studies.

The educational materials have been specifically designed and created for the course and for each subject by following the most appropriate self-study criteria. The guidelines for their creation put emphasis on the solidness of their contents and the specific educational aspect of each subject, and, at the same time, focus on their educational role as facilitator in the learning process. The selection of subject matter and its subsequent development are assigned to the corresponding UOC directors of studies. In this way students are ensured of being prepared in a way that is consistent with the studies they plan to follow at the University.

In order to improve the services and resources that the preparatory course offers, evaluation questionnaires are given to the students and teaching staff to fill out. These allow the University to analyse the general evolution of the course and other aspects of a more specific nature with regard to the functioning of the course.

Educational Resources

Educational materials

From the very start, the UOC has striven to obtain educational materials of the highest quality with one fundamental goal in mind: to ensure that students achieve the objectives they are given, in other words, to learn and absorb the new information being taught in each subject, which is part of the overall course of study. Upon successfully completing their education, students will be awarded the corresponding degree or diploma.

In order to ensure that this dedication to quality becomes a reality, the UOC has designated the creation of materials to the most prestigious university professors from Catalonia and, with time, from all over the world. All of the co-ordinators and authors who have taken part in the creation of the educational materials received support from all of the UOC's technical units involved in the process.

The Virtual Campus

The UOC's Virtual Campus (VC) is an application oriented at tele-education and developed in an intranet format and, therefore, exclusively uses Internet standards.

The VC manages student access to the different spaces of the Campus by means of a database system. From the register of activities in the database, counsellors and professors are provided with all the information they need in order to follow their students' work. This is a fundamental characteristic of the VC and is what differentiates it from other alternative systems which base their educational function on the simple transfer of static web pages or e-mail messages.

The binomial telematics/database system is a key factor in the success of the UOC as it allows counsellors and professors to track the students' work at all times in a transparent way and, at the same time, allows them to give their students constant encouragement whenever they may be losing

steam or have simply slacked off in keeping up with their work.

Access networks

Students and professors working out of their homes are able to use practically any type of access network to connect up to the UOC's intranet servers.

-BTN: basic telephone network, the most conventional of the different access networks; it requires at least a 32-speed modem which supplies 14.4 kbps.

-ISDN: Integrated Services Digital Network, supplies 64 kbps with the possibility of expanding to 128 kbps. This option offers two separate channels which allow the user to be connected to the intranet without blocking the telephone line.

During the 1997-98 academic year, the UOC replaced its own network, which was made up of different access routes, with Infovia. Infovia is Telefónica's access network. The main advantage to using this system is that all calls cost the same as a local telephone call. Access to the Scientific Ring has also been changed from DQDB technology to ATM technology.

Evolution of the services and functions of the Virtual Campus

It is worth mentioning the incredible evolution of the VC during the 1997-98 academic year, which is, without doubt, the most striking feature of the UOC's entire system of computer services. In its third year of existence, the VC has benefited from the maturity of the educational methodology and the experience acquired in the handling of the information, secretary and administration services it offers to students. This evolution brought about the implementation of two new versions, Version 2.3 and Version 2.4.

The Virtual Campus and its educational function

During the 1997-98 academic year, the Virtual Campus concentrated a big part of its educational innovation effort on two different aspects: on the one hand, the functions related to educational communication were optimised, in particular, within the spaces of interchange and teacher training; on the other hand, emphasis continued to be put on the design of interactive educational materials that are able to be accessed through the Virtual Campus. In this way, the UOC continues to reinforce the importance of the Virtual Campus as a virtual environment of learning and the most significant part of the University's educational model.

Attended Meetings

Attended meetings play an important role in the UOC's educational model. The purpose of the attended meetings is to help students make contact with each other and with their professors so that posterior interaction on the Virtual Campus can be as personal as possible. Attended meetings are held twice a semester: once at the beginning to introduce the professors and the syllabus for each subject, and again at the end of the semester in order to help students to synthesise the subject matter they have worked on over the semester and to prepare for examinations. Upon request, students can meet individually with their counsellors and tutors.

The attended meeting is also a way in which students get to know the Universitat Oberta better. That is why it is not uncommon for the rector to welcome the students and inform them of the progress being made at the University. At these meetings different activities of a more general nature are planned, such as specialised workshops, cultural offerings (conferences, music, theatre, cinema), the opportunity to get to know the different UOC associations, etc., and various complementary services are made available as well. As part of the many services offered, it is worth pointing out a children's play area specially

designed for the children of UOC students and teaching staff.

First-semester introductory meeting

Venue: Bellaterra Campus (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

Date: 4 October, 1997

Inaugural Speeches:

Mr. Joan Josep López Burniol, Notary Public
Mr. Pere Botella, Dean of the Computer Science Faculty at the UPC (Polytechnic University of Catalonia)
Mr. Vicenç Villatoro, General Manager of Cultural Promotion of the Generalitat of Catalonia
Mr. Joan Francesc Pont, Director of the University School of Business Studies at the UB (University of Barcelona)
Mrs. Isabel Solé, Professor in the Department of Evolutionary Psychology and Education at the UB

Cultural activities:

Play *The Lover* written by Harold Pinter and performed by the Artenbrut Company with the actors Mercè Arànega and Mingo Ràfols

First-semester round-up meeting

Venue: Bellaterra Campus (UAB)

Date: 10 January, 1998

Cultural activities:

Afternoon cinema: *The Beginnings of Cinema*, a trip through the world of cinema at the beginning of the century
Catalan cinema
Westerns
Chaplin

Second-semester introductory meeting

Venue: North Campus of the UPC (Polytechnic University of Catalonia)

Date: 7 March, 1998

Introduction:

Mr. Gabriel Ferraté, Rector of the UOC

Mr. Jordi Vilaseca, Director of Studies of Economics and Business Studies at the UOC
Mrs. Anna Pagès, Professor of Education and Psychology at the UOC
Mr. Joaquin Bisbal, Director of Studies of Law at the UOC
Mr. Isidor Marí, Director of Studies of Humanities and Language and Literature at the UOC
Mrs. Cristina Nogués, Director of Studies of Computer Technical Engineering

Cultural activities:

Conference "The University and the Cyberculture" led by Mr. Pierre Lévy
Classical music concert with the Empordà Chamber Orchestra conducted by Carles Coll

Second-semester round-up meeting

Venue: Polytechnic University of Barcelona

Date: 6 June, 1998

Cultural activities:

Cinema at the UOC. Buster Keaton cycle: *The Astronaut*, *Coney Island*, *The Navigator*, *Cops*, *The Blacksmith*, *The Paleface*, *The General*

Support Centres

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has made a network of support centres available to its students with two main objectives. On the one hand, they are student resource centres which give students access to the different UOC services at a place close to where they reside. On the other hand, these centres are the way of making the UOC available throughout the entire Catalan territory.

For students, a support centre is a place where they can meet or study, where they find a library, computer material and equipment, meeting halls, and an information point, and these centres also give students the opportunity to carry out administrative steps and academic procedures.

Support centres work in collaboration with local

institutions in order to give as many citizens from the area as possible the chance to take part in the activities offered by the University and to facilitate the information they ask for and respond to their suggestions, requests and needs.

The UOC is progressively spreading out to the different regions of the country in accordance with the General Territorial Plan of Catalonia in an attempt to achieve the territorial re-balancing of the country.

Support Points

Support points are UOC information centres located at a local regional institution, which is directly responsible for the support point. The creation of a support point is the result of a direct collaboration agreement between the UOC and the institution in charge of running the support point. These points offer students from the area a variety of services (meeting halls, information, access to the Virtual Campus, etc.) in addition to information and management services for the general public.

The UOC Point in Brussels

The UOC has reached an agreement with the Catalan Pro Europe Association to open a support point in its head office in Brussels in order to make the UOC more accessible to Catalan citizens living in different parts of the European Union. In addition to offering information and access to the Virtual Campus, this support point is also where students can take exams and register for courses.

University of the Balearic Islands

A collaboration agreement has also been established with the University of the Balearic Islands so students can take exams in Majorca, Menorca and Eivissa.

Library

The main goal of the UOC Library is to provide the university community with services that help them in their studies, education and research, and to give its members the computer resources they need in order to carry out their activities in the most efficient way possible.

The Library was designed to offer as many library services and on-line documents as possible through the Virtual Campus. The 1997-98 academic year was a year of consolidation of the library model and the services of the Virtual Library, which provides users with the most suitable tools and material to meet their individual needs.

We should point out the Documentation Service as one service that stands out as being particularly useful. The Documentation Service allows users to carry out personalised searches of a bibliographic nature on the topic they wish to research and then receive in their personal mailboxes the documents that were found as a result of the search.

One of the most important tools the Library has to offer is the database of the UOC's own electronic documents, which brings together a selection of electronic texts related to the University's courses of study: complementary documents or documents that are related to the different subjects, summaries and abstracts from the support libraries, and magazine summaries. A searcher, similar to those used on Internet, has been applied to this database and the other pages of the Virtual Library.

During the 1997-98 academic year the University also began subscribing to remote databases, which can be accessed through the Virtual Library. With these databases the user can find unabridged texts, references, and abstracts from a large number of magazines which specialise in the most important academic disciplines, from art and literature to economy and the sciences. Users also have within their reach complete versions of state and

autonomous legislation as well as state and autonomous laws.

User assistance

Following the institutional model of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, the Library offers services at the different support centres to complement the Virtual Library. These services represent 13.66% of the total number of users of the UOC Library. In the 1997-98 academic year the Library received a total of 70,130 virtual users, which represents an increase of 148% with respect to the number of consultations made the previous year.

During the 1997-98 academic year support libraries from the Vallès Occidental centre in Sabadell and the Segrià centre in Lleida were opened and the services at all the support centres were reinforced with the figure of an itinerant librarian whose function is to provide the different libraries with specialised training and assessment on the tools and services of the library. By introducing this new service the Library has consolidated its user-training activities, which are traditionally carried out in person by way of workshops (Internet, Library, Studies Library, etc.) and at the support centres (Databases, etc.). In 1997-98 the UOC followed the trend started in other academic years to make sure that 76% of potential users receive library and documentation training.

In addition to these in-person training activities, users of the UOC Library also receive virtual training through their e-mail or on-line.

Institutional Evaluation

Institutional evaluation is an important part of the UOC's commitment to constantly improve the quality of its services. In addition to the importance of evaluating new courses of study with pilot groups, the mechanisms of institutional evaluation have become part of the University's daily activity. Through the analysis of student performance and student opinion polls, it is possible

to receive feed-back on the quality of the UOC education and the services the University offers the members of the university community.

Conclusions

The institutional evaluation process has shown that the quality of the UOC education and services was maintained over the 1997-98 academic year. This is particularly significant at a time when the University has ceased to move in the experimental phase with various pilot groups and begun to work in its generalisation and consolidation stage.

Finally, the data that is intended to provide the University with information on the level of student satisfaction demonstrates that favourable student opinion increased with regard to the previous academic year and most students stated that their expectations concerning the University had been met.

Research

Research activity was consolidated during the 1997-98 academic year and the increase in the number of projects and their turnover have made the University a point of reference in the domain of the new technologies and their application to distance-education environments throughout Europe. This is easily demonstrated by the fact that practically all of the research projects in which the University has participated were part of competitive public announcements from the IV Programme Framework of the European Union. It must also be pointed out that the University has encouraged the progressive inclusion of the different courses of study in UOC research activity thanks to the University's strategy aimed at promoting the emergence of pre-competitive research groups with support from the Commission for Universities and Research.

Research Projects

Data and Communications Systems Area

IMMP, Integrated Multimedia Project (European project, Head: Nokia)
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 (European project)
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 (Ministry of Promotion, General Manager of Communications)
Design and development of a tele-training tool in intranet/Internet support (educational intranet) to teach and manage training and recycling courses.

Socio-economic Research

Educational Policies (Ministry of Education and Culture)
Educational systems and the crisis of the welfare state.

Documentation and Library Systems

GALA (European project)
Project for the application of the information and communications technologies to better citizens' access to the public services that their local town halls and other public institutions have to offer.

LAURIN (European project)
Project to strengthen the key role that media archives play in the information society with the application of the new technologies.

EQUINOX (European project)
Project that answers to the needs of libraries with regard to the adaptation of their functioning in the new electronic network environment, with emphasis on quality management.

New Learning Models and Methods

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

ERMES, European Multimedia Educational Software Network (European project)
Network for the promotion of multimedia educational software.

Physics (CICYT aid)
Creation and publication of innovative educational materials for the teaching of basic scientific-technical subject matter in first-cycle university studies (Physics).

Computer Basics I and II (CICYT aid)

Creation and publication of innovative educational materials for the teaching of basic scientific-technical subject matter in first-cycle university studies (Computer Basics I and II).

Programming Basics I and II (CICYT aid)

Creation and publication of innovative educational materials for the teaching of basic scientific-technical subject matter in first-cycle university studies (Programming Basics I and II).

Applied Computer Science in Social and Human Sciences (CICYT aid)

Creation and publication of innovative educational materials for the teaching of basic scientific-technical subject matter in first-cycle university studies (Applied Computer Science in Social and Human Services).

Indicators for the evaluation of training necessities (FORCEM programme)

Development of an auto-evaluation tool on training necessities, directed at the textiles sector in Catalonia.

Methodology and contents of a training course for distance educators (FORCEM programme)

Development of strategies and methodologies for the learning process in distance-education environments and their application to permanent education in businesses.

Author's tool for case-study design (FORCEM programme)

Development of case-study methodology and its theoretical base. This project considers different types of case-studies and the advantages and disadvantages associated with this methodology.

Design of a study on the needs of distance educators in a rural environment (FORCEM programme)

Project on the design of an instrument and a research methodology that can be applied to future fieldwork in relation to the study on the needs of distance educators in the Spanish rural sector.

Services

Xarxa Virtual de Consum, SCCL

La Virtual (Virtual Consumer's Network) is a consumer's co-operative that came about from an initiative of the FOUC and makes up part of the UOC's service policy. The goal of this co-operative is to offer products and services at an interesting price to the people who are or have been part of the UOC community (students, teaching staff, management personnel).

La Virtual was legally constituted as a consumer's co-operative, demonstrating the University's desire to create a community service without any direct interest in financial gain and which reinvests all earned profits in its customers, basically by lowering prices. This initiative also favours the corporate identity of students and the other members of the community since the co-operative formula helps to establish stronger bonds between users and the University, which is of particular relevance in a system of distance education.

La Virtual wants to offer products that go a step beyond the strict needs of the University (computer products, books, writing material) and its primary goal is to become a point of reference when purchasing any product or service (music, travel, bank services, etc.) which might be of interest to the university community. The co-operative's activity takes place in an electronic commercial environment that makes up part of the Virtual Campus.

On-line General Assembly

Between the 21st and 25th of May, 1998, the first on-line assembly of a legal entity, the General Assembly, was held on the Virtual Campus.

This assembly was followed by representatives of various Catalan institutions, who collaborated in writing a document citing the different concepts that would have to be considered and further developed with regard to electronic democracy.

In the first meeting of the Rector's Council, which was elected during the Assembly, Raquel Masnou i Muro, a Business Studies student, was re-elected as president of the Virtual.

Associations

The UOC Association Service has been in operation since January of 1998 when the UOC Associations Regulations were approved in the first semester of the same year. The purpose of the Association Service is to promote and regulate association activity; however, it is also designed to channel the work of the different interest groups in such a way that the activity carried out by the members of the UOC community will be an enriching experience for everyone at the University.

During the second semester of the 1997-98 academic year, the Service was consolidated and began handling requests for the founding of associations. The Service promotes the formation of interest groups and assesses the members of these groups.

The first association of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, the UOC Student Association, was founded in the first semester of the 1997-98 academic year and during the first few months over 100 members joined. In the same semester, both the Balear and Pitiuses Island Association (ABIPI) and the Law Students Association (AEDU) began operating. In addition, more than a dozen different groups have begun the process to be recognised as official UOC associations.

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has inaugurated an association space on the Virtual Campus where each association has one space to carry out their activities and another space to display their web pages to the entire university community.

Sports

One of the University's goals is to promote sport. It is a healthy 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.

With regard to competition sports, in both semesters of the 1997-98 academic year, UOC participation experienced a notable increase with respect to previous semesters. A total of 42 people signed up for different activities and 27 athletes took part in inter-university sporting events in Catalonia and the rest of the State. Eight of these athletes took home the gold. Jordi Alcubierre, a business student, and Maggie Alonso, secretary of the Computer and Multimedia Department, won trophies as the top athletes in the skiing and sailing competitions, respectively, at the 1998 Catalan University Championships.

Another important accomplishment was the University's first-time participation in team sports. The UOC Indoor Football team was started from an initiative of the Barcelonès Support Centre and has continued working towards becoming a consolidated team and a stable athletic group. This team has taken part in a series of scrimmages against the Polytechnic University of Catalonia.

The Sports Service co-ordinates the athletic services from the UOC support centres by coming to agreements with other universities and public or private institutions in different cities or towns throughout Catalonia.

Projects

Activities

Rector's Office

14 October, 1997 Presentation of the Open Classroom project (Aula Oberta) at Barcelona's Contemporary Culture Centre. The following people assisted the presentation: Jordi Vilajoana, General Manager of the Catalan Corporation for Radio and Television, Javier de Godó, Count of Godó and Editor of the *La Vanguardia* newspaper, Ricardo Rodrigo, President of RBA Editores, and the rector, Gabriel Ferraté.

3 November, 1997 Inauguration of the academic year of the Virtual University of Andorra. The following assisted the inauguration: the head of the Government of Andorra, Marc Forné, and the rector, Gabriel Ferraté.

4 March, 1998 Inauguration of the Segrià Support Centre with a conference led by Jorge Wagensberg, Director of the "La Caixa" Foundation's Museum of Science.

16 April, 1998 Appearance of the rector before the Cultural Policy Committee of the Catalan Parliament.

11 June, 1998 Presentation of the Law Department's Open Parliament project to the Catalan Parliament under the presidency of the Parliament's president, Joan Reventós.

21 June, 1998 Inauguration of the Sabadell (Vallès Occidental) Support Centre with a conference led by Mr. Juan Luís Cebrián, the appointed counsellor for the PRISA group.

10 September, 1998 The rector travels to Mexico (CRE sessions) and Australia (ICDE sessions) to present the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and the Metacampus project.

Courses of Study

With the desire to bring the University closer to the society, the

UOC is preparing a series of activities related to the courses of study which generally take place at the support centres with the collaboration of different local institutions.

- Conferences

18 November, 1997 The New Technologies and their implications in the motivation and access of information
UOC Head Office

Leader: **Troy Duster**, professor at the University of California

4 March, 1998 Progress: is it over or on the rise?
Segrià Support Centre

Leader: **Jorge Wagensberg**, Director of the "La Caixa" Foundation's Museum of Science
Presentation: **Jaume Porta**, Rector of the University of Lleida

25 March, 1998 Communication, information, and education in tomorrow's society
Berga Support Point

Leader: **Gabriel Ferraté i Pascual**
Participant: **Jaume Farguell**, Mayor of Berga

21 May, 1998 Security aspects on the Internet
Barcelonès Support Centre

Leader: **Jesús Ruiz**, tutor of Data Management Systems

2 June, 1998 The impact of the new technologies on society
Vallès Occidental Support Centre

Leader: **Juan Luís Cebrián**, journalist, writer and member of the management personnel for the PRISA communications group

29 June, 1998 Perspectives of the new world order: contradictory technologies of economic liberalisation and the consolidation of democracy
UOC Head Office

Leader: **Carlos H. Waisman**, professor of the Department of Sociology at the University of California at San Diego

- Colloquia

16 October, 1997 Educational psychology in the world of publishing
Barcelonès Support Centre

Participant: **Rosa M. Guitart Aced**, Vice-rector of *Guix* magazine and Director of Graó Publishers

21 October, 1997 Educational psychology in the world of teaching
Gironès Support Centre

Participant: **Josep Grifé**, educational psychologist for the EAP from the Alt Empordà

22 October, 1997 Educational psychology at the university
Segrià Support Centre

Participant: **Eulàlia Soler Martínez**, Head of the University Extension Service of the University of Lleida

22 October, 1997 Educational psychology in the legal system
Bages Support Centre

Participant: **Manel Capdevila**, Head of the Emergency Services Area of the Child Assistance Administration of the Generalitat of Catalonia

27 October, 1997 Educational psychology in the social services
Baix Camp Support Centre

Participants: **Josep Joan Vallès i Llaberia**, educator at the EAIA
Rosa Bovell Nové, counsellor at the UOC

24 November, 1997 Educational psychology in the world of teaching
Barcelonès Support Centre

Participant: **Olga Adroher Boter**, Head of the Educational

Psychology Assessment Area of the Educational Legislation Administration of the Department of Education of the Generalitat of Catalonia

24 November, 1997 Educational psychology in the social services
Segrià Support Centre

Participant: **Anna González Ballarín**, psychologist

25 November, 1997 Educational psychology in the legal system
Baix Camp Support Centre

Participant: **Manuel Capdevila**, Head of the Emergency Services Area of the Child Assistance Administration of the Generalitat of Catalonia

25 November, 1997 Educational psychology in the media
Sabadell's Civic Centre and district head office

Participants: **Anna Ribas**, Director of Club Super 3
Mercè Vilaseca, Co-ordinator of Club Super 3

27 November, 1997 Educational psychology in the world of publishing
Gironès Support Centre

Participants: **Rosa Marzo i Castillejo** and **Margarida Falgàs i Isern**, authors of a variety of materials from Teide Publishers

27 November, 1997 Educational psychology at the university
Bages Support Centre

Participant: **Robert Ruiz Bel**, professor at the University of Vic

21 May, 1998 Educational psychology and teaching
Baix Camp Support Centre

Participant: **Olga Adroher Boter**, Head of the Educational Psychology Assessment Area of the Educational Legislation Administration of the Department of Education of the Generalitat of Catalonia

27 May, 1998 Educational psychology and the media
Bages Support Centre

Participant: **Mercè Vilaseca**, Co-ordinator of Club Super 3, Television of Catalonia

4 June, 1998 Educational psychology and sports
Support Point at the High Performance Centre (Centre d'Alt Rendiment)

Participant: **Joan Arnau**, Director of the Secondary Institute of the High Performance Centre

• Day Sessions

Debate sessions with students from the UOC Humanities Department, Necnum '98:

– **11 February, 1998** Cultural crisis or "garbage culture"?
Barcelonès Support Centre

Participants: **Miquel Calçada**, journalist
José Ribas, Director of the *Ajoblanco* magazine
Mònica Miró, Latin tutor at the UOC

– **18 February, 1998** Does religion have meaning nowadays?
Barcelonès Support Centre

Participants: **Màrius Serra**, writer
Joan Estruch, professor of Sociology at the UAB
Agustí Boadas, Doctor of Philosophy and Educational Science and UOC tutor

3 April, 1998 Session on the rights of authors and the new technologies
UOC Head Office

Participants: **Adolf Dietz**, professor at the Max-Planck Institute in Munich
Antonio Delgado, lawyer for the SGAE (General Society of Authors and Writers)
Alberto Bercovitz, professor of Commerce Law

José Miguel Rodríguez Tapia, professor of Civil Law
Agustín González García, Director of SGAE Legal Services
Pere Vicens Rahola, Vice-president of the Publishers' International Trade Union

- Other cultural activities:

The UOC support centres arranged cultural visits to the Manresa Museum, Serinyà, Besalú and the Monastery of Santes Creus.

Business Initiatives

Xarxa Virtual de Consum, SCCL

Diputació, 219
Manager: Carles Soler
08011 Barcelona
Foundation date: 25 November, 1996
Tel. 93 253 24 27
Founding capital: 863,000 pesetas.
Fax: 93 453 94 84
www.lavirtual.es

Electronic commerce: the Webtiga and the Virtual Gallery

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

The Webtiga has been part of a larger commercial initiative since September of 1997 when the first virtual university commercial centre, the Virtual Gallery (www.lavirtual.es), was inaugurated. This is a space managed by the Virtual and where interested businesses can make direct contact with the UOC community. In addition to this electronic commerce space, a wider range of products and services is made available to Virtual Campus users.

On 31 July 1998 there were 3,150 members.

During the above-mentioned period of time, more than 1,200 orders from nearly 1,000 customers were handled at the Webtiga, which generated 64,500,000 pesetas worth of business.

EDIUOC

Av. Tibidabo, 45-47
Director: Isaias Taboas
08035 Barcelona
Foundation date: 18 September 1996
Tel. 93 253 57 64
Founding capital: 500,000 pesetas
Fax: 93 211 01 26
www.ediuoc.es

In the period of time being taken into consideration, which corresponds to a development stage of the initiatives that were started when UOC activity began, EDIUOC directed attention on three plans of action: publishing activity, specialised services, and the creation of business alliances for the further development of activities.

As for publishing activity, the UOC's own collections have been consolidated allowing for the growth of the TUB collection with the possibility of acquiring works in PDF format, the Manuals collection published six works more, which make 12 in all, the Open Library collection began to accept works coming from UOC subjects, and the works making up part of the Open Business and Web Book collections were published.

As for specialised services, EDIUOC took over the handling of the author's contracts for regulated studies and continuing education.

Finally, with respect to business alliances for the development of activities, EDIUOC founded, along with other members, Active Classroom, Ltd., whose objective is to provide open education to all people within Spanish territory.

SE-d

Rbla. Catalunya, 2, 4t
Director: Joaquim Daurella
08007 Barcelona
Foundation date: 31 January 1997
Tel. 93 317 15 40
Founding capital: 10,000,000 pesetas
Fax: 93 318 95 91

The joint company Servicios para la educación a distancia, S.A. (SE-d), which is made up of the FUOC (60%) and the Grupo Telefónica (40%) has continued to evolve since it was first created. The company has gone from the application of UOC methodology and technology in all its projects to the design of a distinct global strategy for each individual project.

During the 1997-98 academic year, various activities were carried out following three basic plans of action:

1. The "virtualisation" of the educational activity of organisations that currently provide conventional education, distance education, or education with multimedia systems by designing an individual telematics educational programme for each specific case. This system was well received in the market due to its high degree of interactivity, the assessment of the educational activities and the impact it had on the results the organisations were hoping to achieve.
2. The creation, design and management of virtual communities, which have become a point of reference for new areas of business in already established companies and newly created companies in Spain.
3. The incorporation of information management in companies, which has achieved a high degree of acceptance by large organisations, the main consulting firms and companies dedicated to human resources.

Throughout the entire development process, the existence of a running unit was of utmost importance and provided the initiative with essential support. It is hoped to achieve optimal dimensioning in the 1998-99 academic year.

Aula Activa

Av. Tibidabo, 45-47
 Director: Vicens Vives
 08035 Barcelona
 Foundation date: 3 February 1998
 Tel. 902 101 810
 Founding capital: 100,000,000 pesetas
 Fax: 902 115 139
www.aulaactiva.com

The purpose of Aula Activa is to create and provide university extension-courses and is therefore directed to all those people who want to evolve professionally or personally regardless of their educational level or any previous official degrees. Aula Activa follows the distance teaching

methodology of the UOC. In order to ensure methodological coherence and content quality, the UOC plays an important role in the company's academic direction.

The social capital is 100,000,000 pesetas, which has been distributed in the following way: 26% Ediuoc, 50% RBA Editores, 24% Vang3 (a company founded by the *La Vanguardia* newspaper and TV3, the Catalan television station, as equal shareholders).

Aula Activa managed the pilot programme for Aula Oberta during the 1997-98 academic year.

The activity of Aula Activa was to begin in October of 1998.

Financial Report

In the section that follows we will point out the most relevant aspects of the analysis of the financial information from the Foundation of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya during the 1997 financial year.

As in previous years, Bové Montero and Co. audited the Foundation's yearly books and presented the following favourable data to the Foundation's Board of Trustees, which approved the report in the session of 23 March, 1998.

- As predicted, the ordinary budget for the 1997 financial year increased with respect to the previous financial year by 36% in order to cover the costs of increased university activity.
- The investment budget dropped by 10%. The UOC's educational modules represented 44% of the University's overall contribution to investment.
- The result of activity in the 1997 financial year was positive and figured at 4,184,900 pesetas. The profit and loss account was settled -by adding the results of the earned interests, extraordinary results and taxes- with a final positive balance of 753,304 pesetas, which was applied to university funds.
- With respect to the table of origins and applications of funds, we see that the finance structure has made notable improvement.

Circulating assets went down by 20% despite the increase in activity.

Short-term debt was replaced by long-term debt in a credit operation authorised by the Generalitat of Catalonia in order to finance, in part, the investments made in the 1996 and 1997 financial years.

Appendices

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Regulations of Organisation and Operation

Approved by the Standing Committee of FUOC's Board of Trustees on 22 January, 1997

Ratified by the Government of the Generalitat of Catalonia on 1 April, 1997

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Preamble

The *Law 3/1995 of the Recognition of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya*, from 6 April, 1995, states (article 8.6) that the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya will be governed in accordance to regulations of organisation and operation which are to be ratified by the Government of the Generalitat.

For this reason the Board of Trustees of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Foundation have approved the *Regulations of Organisation and Operation*, which will need to be ratified by the Government of the Generalitat.

These *Regulations of Organisation and Operation* have been established in defence of what is stipulated in articles 1.1, 1.2, and 8.6 of the *Law of Recognition of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya*, and anything that is not accounted for in these articles will have recourse to what is stated in the *Law of Recognition of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya* and the *Statutes* of the Foundation for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, and, in the last instance, to the functions designated to the Board of Trustees of the Foundation for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

In addition to the already-existing *Regulations of Organisation and Operation*, the University has the power to assign any additional *domestic regulations* that the rector deems necessary after being heard by the Governing Council and approved by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

Objectives and Action Criteria

Objectives

The ultimate goal of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is to provide students with a university education and to promote both academic research and research with a special focus on methodologies applied to distance education. The activity of all people who work at the University will be dedicated to the fulfilment of these objectives.

Instruments

The singularity of the UOC's educational model implies that educational quality can be ensured only when the quality of the following is also guaranteed: **educational and research quality** (teaching staff, research projects, library, educational materials, personalised student assessment), **the suitability of technical resources** (the technical quality of materials and the technical quality of the means by which members of the university community are able to communicate) and the **efficient management** of the University.

Notwithstanding, to ensure that this multiple activity is co-ordinated and at the same time able to achieve the objectives of the University, the current regulations conform to the following criteria:

General Action Criteria

1. **Quality.** Given the functions with which it is assigned, the University is obliged to demand of itself the highest possible degree of quality in its education, research and in all of the educational services it has to offer.
2. **Information and Education.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya understands that the services it renders its students is not only of an informative nature but also educational and, therefore, the University will work towards achieving an educational model that responds to the singularity of its students and strive to complete the preparation of its students with a global human education.
3. **Continuing Education.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya believes that university education has to instil in students the conviction that educational training has to continue throughout one's entire life in a recurring and unceasing way. That is why the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is not only dedicated to the field of initial education but also to continuing education.

4. **Innovation and Research.** The objective of each sector of University activity is to incorporate any necessary innovations so that the services they offer society is in a constant process of improvement. This position is particularly important to research activity. For this reason the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya encourages academic research to be done by its teaching staff as well as educational and technical research in which all sectors of the University take part.

5. **Participation.** Personal initiative and council from all members of the university community is essential to the proper functioning of the University, and that is why the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is equipped with the necessary consultation, assessment and co-ordination bodies that make such participation possible.

6. **Open-mindedness.** The University is aware of the international dimension of its activity and the evolution of a world in which distances and differences between persons are becoming more and more relative; therefore, the University

a) is obligated to provide its students with an education that prepares them for this global dimension in the workplace;

b) has to encourage a climate of tolerance between people, and believes that university education must strive to achieve this collective awareness;

c) asks all members of the university community to be open to the changes and innovations that transform and enrich the world in which we live.

7. **Community Service.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is aware of its role as a public-service organisation and consequently:

a) works for the Catalan society and, therefore, is rooted in the cultural, social, scientific and

linguistic reality of Catalonia, and closely linked to its industrial, commercial, artistic and service needs. The Catalan language is thus the official language of the University without detriment to what is stated in article 3.2 of the Statutes of the Autonomy of Catalonia; therefore, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya will encourage the use of the Catalan language in all its areas and provide the means to ensure its use by students and management personnel.

b) must ensure that the achievements of the University benefit all people equally, and

c) must be endowed with a rational and efficient management structure.

8. **Co-ordination.** In order to ensure the quality of the services provided by the University the current organisation regulations are intended to guarantee the integration and efficiency of all University activity. Therefore, the University:

a) assigns the highest academic responsibilities of the governing of the University to the rector and the Governing Council, in addition to the other responsibilities with which they are entrusted;

b) provides each sector of activity with the necessary initiative and management autonomy so each sector can carry out the responsibilities assigned to them in an efficient and professional way;

c) considers teaching, research, technology and management to be instrumental functions in the education of its students and these activities are not in themselves the ultimate goals of the University;

d) does not assign hierarchical degrees to the different activities. Therefore, each sector of activity at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is given its area of action which must be co-ordinated with the other activities. Responsibility for this

co-ordination belongs to the rector and the Governing Council.

9. **Efficient Management.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya wants to administer the public resources which are invested in it with austerity and efficiency. Therefore, the University will work with the organisational structure that is strictly necessary in order to achieve the objectives with which it is assigned. In addition, as a social responsibility and in order to ensure the viability of the UOC's educational project, the University will work towards finding alternate sources of financing which will include, among others, the profitability of its shares in the area of distance education.

10. **Evaluation.** The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya confirms its commitment to permanent institutional evaluation as a way to guarantee the progress of the University.

Governing Bodies

Individual Bodies

• The Rector and Vice-rectors

– The rector is the highest authority at the University and is therefore responsible for representing and administering the University.

– The rector is named by the FUOC's Board of Trustees, heard by the FUOC Council, and his or her election and dismissal must be ratified by the Government of the Generalitat.

– The rector presides over the Governing Council and any other governing body of the University which he or she attends.

– The rector is assisted by vice-rectors, the number of whom he or she decides. The naming, assigning of functions and the dismissal of the vice-rectors is the rector's responsibility.

– In case of absence, illness or vacancy of the rector, a vice-

rector designated by the rector will take on his or her responsibilities. If a vice-rector has not been previously designated, responsibilities will be handed over to the vice-rector with greatest seniority.

– The vice-rectors are full members of the Governing Council.

• The Managing Director

– The managing director is in charge of the day-to-day management of the University.

– The managing director is named or dismissed, upon proposal of the rector, by the FUOC's Board of Trustees of which by rights of the position he or she is the director.

– The managing director is a full member of the Governing Council.

– The managing director may have assistants, whose naming, dismissal and assigning of functions correspond to the rector upon proposal of the managing director.

Collegial Bodies

• Governing Council

– The Governing Council is made up of the rector, managing director and vice-rectors. The secretary of the Governing Council is the vice-rector who has been previously designated by the rector.

– The functions of the Governing Council are: to orient, plan and assess the University's activity by establishing general lines of action for all areas of the University.

– The Governing Council can create any standing or temporary committees considered necessary in order to study specific areas of university policy-making.

– The Governing Council as the highest collegial body of the University has to approve:

- UOC regulations (enrolment regulations, permanency, etc.);
- study programmes;
- academic calendar;
- the equipping of the management, research and educational structures, and the establishing of educational degrees, fees, and the conditions for participating in selection processes. Decisions taken on equipping and establishing educational degrees and fees in all events have to fall in line with the General Action Plan which is created and approved by the FUOC's Board of Trustees and the University's budgetary limits,

and has to debate and approve before being presented to the Foundation's Board of Trustees for their ultimate approval:

- modifications to current regulations;
- agreements in which the University wishes to take part;
- the University's budget and end-of-year balance;
- the University's plan of action;
- the comprehensive annual report on educational and investigative activities carried out at the University;
- administrative rules and regulations;
- fees for university material and services;
- proposals for carrying out new studies;
- the University's entrance requirements for students.

As for budgeting and programming, the FUOC Council previously has to submit a report in accordance with the Statutes of the Foundation and the Agreement of 28 December 1995 of the Government of the Generalitat of Catalonia, in which the membership and functions of the FUOC Council were approved.

• Co-ordinating Committee

– The Co-ordinating Committee is made up of the rector, who calls together the committee and presides over its meetings, the managing director, the vice-rectors, the directors of studies, and the area heads. The secretary of the Co-ordinating Committee is the vice-rector

who has been previously designated by the rector.

– The functions of the Co-ordinating Committee are: to assess the rector by recommending specific actions, to work towards the successful co-ordination of the different sectors of the University, and to ensure that all members of the University receive all of the necessary information.

• Academic Affairs Committee

– The Academic Affairs Committee is made up of the vice-rectors, the managing director, the directors of studies, and the head of Academic Affairs, who acts as secretary.

– The Academic Affairs Committee is called together and presided over by the vice-rector who has been previously designated by the rector.

– The functions of the Academic Affairs Committee are: to ensure the co-ordination of the University's educational and research activity, to inform on the activity of each course of study, and to evaluate the results thereof.

• Management Committee

– The Management Committee is made up of the managing director, who calls the committee together and presides over its meetings, the vice-rector in charge of Academic Affairs, the area heads, and the managing director's assistant, who acts as secretary.

– The functions of the Management Committee are: to ensure the co-ordination of the day-to-day management of the University, to inform on the activity of each area, and to evaluate the results thereof.

• Campus Committee

– The Campus Committee is the participatory body that is summoned in order to achieve what is stated in article 8.6 of the Law of Recognition of the

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

- The functions of the Campus Committee are: to inform on the academic programme planning of the University before being presented to the Governing Council, to assess the functioning of the University and, in particular, the services and activities of the Campus and channel the opinions and proposals of the members of the university community.
- The Campus Committee is made up of the vice-rector who has been previously designated by the rector, who calls the committee together and presides over its meetings, one professor from each course of study who is elected from among the teaching staff of each course of study, one student per course of study, and the area head in charge of the services and activities of the Campus, who acts as secretary.
- The Campus Committee will normally hold its meetings on the Virtual Campus.
- The Campus Committee can study the possible creation of other debate groups or commissions which will normally meet on the Virtual Campus.

Once created, all collegial bodies will be provided with the necessary rules and regulations for their proper functioning.

University Community

The Students

UOC students are all those people who are enrolled in any of the University's official educational programmes.

• Rights and Duties

- Students have the following rights: to receive academic training for the studies in which they have enrolled, to be evaluated in a fair and objective way, and to take part in the proper functioning of the

University with their own initiatives and opinions.

- Students have the following duties: to fulfil their academic obligations, to make good use of the resources the University provides them with, in particular those related to the Virtual Campus, and to take part in university life in the best interest of the University.

• Participation

Given the special characteristics of distance education and the possibilities that the Virtual Campus offers, different means of participation, representation and association have been created in order to guarantee that the opinions, interests, and contributions of all UOC students can effectively influence the progress of the University.

For this reason the following possibilities of student participation have been established:

1. Representative bodies: the Campus Committee and Study Committees.
2. Participation in the territorial structure of the University.
3. Opinion surveys.
4. University associations.

Representative Bodies

- Election of students to participate in representative bodies is carried out by secret and universal vote on the Virtual Campus, as determined by the corresponding *domestic regulation*.

Campus Committee

- The Campus Committee, described in these regulations, is the participatory body for professors and students as part of the University's academic programme planning, as well as other functions put forth in these regulations.

Study Committees

- A study committee will be created for each course of study taught at the University and whose function is to direct

student participation in the day-to-day functioning of the different courses of study and to make student opinions and suggestions concerning academic questions reach the directors of studies.

- Each committee will be presided over by its respective director of study. This committee will function through the Virtual Campus or at face-to-face meetings when necessary.
- The number of students in each committee, no fewer than 4 and no more than 8, will be determined by the corresponding *domestic regulation*.

Support Centre Committees

- In order to encourage student participation throughout the entire Catalan territory, a student committee will be created at each support centre. The purpose of these committees is to propose activities to the people in charge of the support centres and to provide assessment on the functioning, services and activities at each centre.
- These committees will be made up of a representative from each course of study from all of the students who reside in the region for which the centre is responsible. These committees will be presided over by the head of the centre. Elections will be carried out according to regulations. The meetings of these committees will be held preferably in the support centre.

Surveys and evaluations

- By taking advantage of the possibilities created by the Virtual Campus, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya will systematically provide surveys directly to students in order to learn about their opinions on the different aspects of the University.
- The results of these surveys will be made available to the public,

whenever they do not directly affect specific people.

- The University will periodically carry out an institutional evaluation process, which will include, among other things, student surveys.

UOC Associations

- The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya encourages the creation of student associations of a cultural, academic, professional, entertainment and athletic nature.
- The Virtual Campus will be the preferred means of carrying out the activities of these associations. A set of rules and regulations will determine the procedures to be followed to start up an association and the use the necessary computer support material.

Educational Personnel

The educational personnel of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is made up of the UOC teaching staff and the collaborating teaching staff. The UOC teaching staff will count on the appropriate number of professionals and divisions in order to meet the educational and research needs of the University.

• UOC Teaching Staff

- The UOC teaching staff is responsible for guaranteeing the quality of the teaching and learning processes and will be in charge of ensuring the suitability of the study programmes, subject matter, and educational materials. They will also watch out for the co-ordination of the student learning process.
- The UOC teaching staff must also take part in research on methodologies and techniques applied to distance teaching as well as in projects that are related to their own particular areas of specialisation.
- The UOC teaching staff is organised by courses of study, each of which is managed by the respective director of

studies. The director of studies will periodically bring together all the members of the department in order to more effectively co-ordinate the activity of their respective academic area.

- The UOC teaching staff takes part in the activity and general orientation of the University through meetings with the other professors from the same course of study and by participating in the Campus Committee, if selected.
- The UOC teaching staff is hired to work on a full-time or part-time basis and are normally assigned to a single course of study.
- Selection of the UOC teaching staff is based on works published, capacity, suitability and academic and scientific merits. This selection is handled by specific committees which inform the rector of their proposals. The rector is the one who decides the composition of these committees.
- The University's Governing Council decides on the titles and educational degrees of the UOC teaching staff.

• Directors of Studies

- The director of study is responsible for the direction of the department he or she has been assigned, the direction of the UOC teaching staff within the department, and the collaborating teaching staff.
- The director of studies is named by the rector from among the UOC teaching staff.
- The director of studies represents the University at the acts he or she attends given the nature of the position and in all other areas of responsibility that are designated to him or her.
- The directors of studies are full members of the Academic Affairs Committee and Co-ordinating Committee.

• Collaborating Teaching Staff

- The collaborating teaching staff is responsible for carrying out tasks other than those of the UOC teaching staff. These tasks include subject tutors and student counsellors for the University.
- Selection of the collaborating teaching staff is takes place through a public selection process. This selection is handled by specific committees which inform the rector on their proposals. The rector is the one who decides the composition of these committees.

Management Personnel

The management personnel are made up of professionals who are specialised in areas that are necessary for the proper management of the University.

- Management personnel are normally organised into areas which are under the control of the respective area head, who periodically brings together the people working in the area so as to better co-ordinate the area for which he or she is responsible.
- Management personnel take part in the activity and general orientation of the University through area meetings.
- Management personnel are selected following criteria which concentrates on the person's professionalism and suitability for the job.
- Management is divided into areas which are professionally specialised and have to be organised in such a way that guarantees an efficient and fluid operation and the optimum use of resources.
- In order to function properly, management personnel are organised in accordance with the following chain of command:

• Area Head

- The area head is responsible for direction and co-ordination of the area to which he or she is assigned.
- The area head is named by the rector upon the managing director's proposal.
- The area head represents the University at the acts he or she attends given the nature of the position and in all other areas that are designated to him or her.
- The area head is a full member of the Management Committee and Co-ordinating Committee.

• Department Head

- The department head is responsible for the planning and follow-up of the sector of activity with which he or she is entrusted.
- The department head is named by the rector.

• Unit Head

- The unit head is responsible for the co-ordination of the unit to which he or she is assigned at the site of the area to which he or she belongs.
- The unit head depends on the area head. He or she is named by the managing director upon the proposal of the area head.

• Support Centre Head

- The support centre head is responsible for the co-ordination of the activities and services of the centre.
- The support centre head depends on the determined area head and is named by the managing director upon the proposal of the area head.

The management personnel who have no specific chain of command are normally assigned to a work unit. They depend on the unit head.



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