

secuted. This situation has given the universities a dream-like atmosphere, with teachers and subjects disappeared. Real issues are no longer raised there. But where universities still survive and where it is possible to raise issues, considerations such as those put forward in this article have not been dealt with consistently or clearly. Moreover, considerations along these lines have not been accompanied by another component of vital importance: the development of a culture based on dialog, ideological pluralism, a new distancing and objectivity achieved through committed intellectual activity which is not locked into one doctrine, school

or party to the exclusion of all others, but which is open to all humanist currents of thought, aspiring to make connections between the formal and the informal, between politics, ethics, and power, to achieve a new democratic hegemony of working people and the vast majority of the population.★

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(The Spanish original of this article was published in the magazine **Universidad de México**)

The 1986 Budget

	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
1. Teaching	\$88,906,474,471 pesos \$U.S. 238,355,159	63.97%
2. Research	\$24,523,087,174 pesos \$U.S. 65,745,542	17.64%
3. University Extension Services	\$8,206,545,295 pesos \$U.S. 22,001,461	5.90%
4. Administration	\$17,351,959,519 pesos \$U.S. 46,519,998	12.49%
TOTAL	\$138,988,066,459 pesos \$U.S. 372,622,162	100%

¹ At the beginning of 1986, the peso's rate of exchange was 373.00 per U.S. dollar; during the year, it underwent a devaluation of approximately 127.3%

(Information from the *Agenda Estadística 1986*, National Autonomous University of Mexico UNAM), Department of Planning, Mexico City, 1986.

The Challenge: To Renovate University Education

The university's hopes and aspirations must be analyzed in the context of autonomy which, according to Ezequiel A. Chávez, "...results from the university's very nature, from the role the institution is expected to play in society, by the nature of its work... (which is) the fruit... of historic forces that cannot be disdained,... (but that) does not and cannot mean an absurd rending of the University from the society it forms part of, a ridiculous pretension of sovereignty, a monstrous estrangement from the very society in which it finds its own worth."¹

The problems framing the debate around higher education also set the limits for analyses on the subject. In the first place, planning in higher education must take into account the

University's specific conditions, since any attempt to confront current university problems, stripping them of their historic and even political origins, implies danger, foreshadowed in our institution's recent experience with leaving aside either the search for academic excellence or its social commitment. However contradictory they may seem, these factors are not mutually exclusive. To the contrary, our strong democratic roots should always be present in the university classroom, as well as in the rigorous practice of teaching and research. Unless this last idea is taken into account it will be impossible for higher education to go beyond the endless monolog of cloistered ideologies.

This idea is clearly present in the training of

proposal. Rector's reps, on their part, reject CEU counterproposal. Discussions are broken off.
January 20: Rector Carpizo addresses University community in televised broadcast. Rector's Commission refers to University Council the two proposals on which Rector's Office and CEU had been unable to reach agreement.
January 21: Thousands-strong CEU march to Mexico City Main Plaza. That morning, a smaller rally is held in support of Rector's Office position.
January 22: CEU and STUNAM sign solidarity pact.
January 23: Resumption of public discussion between reps of CEU and Rector's Office.
January 24-27: Rector's Office commission agrees to holding of a University Congress, but refuses to accept that such a Congress

professionals, and it is also tremendously important in the case of scientific and technological research which should be geared toward clearly defined social goals and adapted to the country's problems. It must also contribute to the development of a national consciousness of how scientific practice generates new options and of how their application implies changing productive and social practices. Yet at the same time we must understand that science and technology cannot take the place of historical change in the society as a whole.² It would seem equally wrong to assume that the way to improve higher education is through even greater emphasis on technical or administrative measures, over political conditions and academic projects. On the other hand, it is incorrect to believe that these kinds of more technical measures can be ignored and that in itself the demand for democratic and mass-oriented higher education, lacking in serious academic projects, can achieve changes that guarantee a commitment to the poor.

Keeping history in mind, the great challenge is to find the ways to sculpt a vision of the university we will need tomorrow. In the process, we should recognize that the search for truth and knowledge must move forward freely, hand in hand with the criticism of prejudices, delusions and ideologies. Criticism must be part of the unobjectionable core of university activity, which should in turn transcend its own conditioning factors to guarantee responsibility in relation to its own values and the social commitment essential to the Mexican university.³

The reform-minded renovation of higher education is increasingly necessary, and it must answer both to current conditions and to the future. This slow and difficult process of change cannot emerge from the narrow point of view that regards training professionals as the university's essential, substantive function, thus limiting research, the generation of new knowledge and cultural expressions and their extension to benefit the population. To proceed without recognizing that all of this requires the

Science and technology cannot take the place of historical change in the society as a whole



Science School assembly discussing end to strike.

should have decision-making powers, as demanded by the CEU. The two parties to the negotiation fail to reach agreement. On the 26th, the CEU declares a pre-strike alert.

January 29: Strike begins. Students occupy campuses and close down activities. Law, Dentistry, Medicine, and Engineering Schools call on students to attend classes off-campus. CEU organizes pickets.

February 5: CEU calls for day of protest in defense of the UNAM. Three-day National Student Congress starts.

February 6: Formation of the University Academic Council, in a meeting of academic staff members. The new body announces its solidarity with CEU.

February 9: CEU organizes a second march on Main Plaza. Thousands participate, including academic staff and

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responsibility and efforts of the university community, is to make the same mistake that has been made in other Latin American universities and which can only contribute to their further degradation.

The challenge is to develop a university in which democracy, the needs of the majority, academic excellence and rigor in every-day tasks are all combined. The best legacy the Mexican university received from 1968 (the year of large-scale student protests) was the practice of criticism and of questioning a social process which was actually ushering in today's crisis. This was done not only on the basis of a youthful passion for freedom, but also through the imaginative and creative use of intelligence and the search for knowledge useful to society as a whole.

In order for the university to contribute to the nation's scientific and technological capacity (as part of a richer national culture and to further Mexico's possibilities to determine the path of its own development), these principles must be transmitted as part of a scientific practice aimed at improving people's welfare. This determines the democratic character of such a process. The great challenge of transforming the university must be linked to a scientific and cultural practice that permits us to develop our own capacity for generating knowledge and making it available to the population as a whole, both as a means for producing and appropriating wealth, as well as for assuring the constant critique of the use of science and culture.

As an additional factor in this challenge, I'd like to recall the words of Alfonso Reyes, relevant to the University's situation today: "I want leftists to take Latin because I see no sense in loosing previous conquests."... "Refrain from entering if you don't know geometry: Plato used to say of the Academy."⁴

Geometry and Latin are but two examples. Mathematics and the roots of our language, basic science and the humanities, transforming nature and philosophical speculation —along with our ties to the nation's problems— will all continue to be the tasks that nobody studying in our classrooms, involved in the University's daily life, should ever forget.

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¹ Ezequiel A. Chávez, *Obras IV*, UNAM, p. 8.

² Enrique Leff. "Dependencia científico-tecnológica y desarrollo económico". En González Casanova, P., y Florescano, E. *México hoy*. México, Siglo XXI, 1979, p. 276.

³ Paul Ricoeur. "Perspectivas de la Universidad contemporánea para 1980". *Deslinde, cuadernos de cultura universitaria*. México, UNAM, Núm. 7, 1972, p. 7.

⁴ Alfonso Reyes. *Universidad, política y pueblo*. México, UNAM/IPN, Textos de Humanidades, Colección Educadores Mexicanos, 1985, p. 43.

University Research To Serve Society

For many years, I have been following closely the development of scientific research in the UNAM. Since the end of the fifties, when the first computer was installed at the University, till now, when any researcher who so desires has his or her own personal computer, I have been observing the vicissitudes of University science. During the sixties, there were only a few dozen scientists at the UNAM interested in doing serious work. Their discussions, carried on with praiseworthy conviction, took place in the context of an uncomprehending society, and even of an uncomprehending University. Then came the years of abundance, of suitable salaries, of major equipment purchases, floods of scientific visitors. Institutes and schools sprang up, the number of researchers increased; and by 1980 the UNAM had become, together with the Sao Paulo University in Brazil, the chief scientific center in Latin America.

During this quarter century, and in spite of the obvious progress made in university

research, there is one question that has never ceased to trouble me: Whom does my scientific work serve? And if I obtain results from it, whom do they serve? I believe that this terrible question affects all who are doing, or trying to do, scientific work in the Third World. It is a problem that has nothing to do with the lack of funds or financial support, or with economic or technical problems. It is, rather, a deeply-felt emotion affecting all scientists working anywhere outside the great centers which dictate scientific fashions. It is, to a certain extent, a sense of guilt stimulated by government and academic authorities, by some of our students, by colleagues who lay claim to a social conscience, and even by our own family and friends: Who are you working for? Our researchers cannot produce a pat answer to this question, and end up becoming inefficient, losing interest in their work; in many cases, this feeling forces them to shift to other activities, and even to other countries.

In what follows, I would like to propose a

students' parents.
February 10: University Council meets off-campus. Rector Carpizo proposes holding forums in all UNAM schools: holding a University Congress whose resolutions would be adopted by the University Council; and forming an organizing committee for said Congress, to be composed of staff, student, worker, University Council, and Rector's Office representatives. Council members propose suspension of Sept. 11-12 amendments. Both motions are passed.
February 12: In CEU campus-by-campus votes, 29 are against ending the strike, and 11 in favor.
February 15: CEU Plenary session decides to end strike. The CEU invites Rector's Office representatives to meet February 16 to discuss conditions for handing back campuses to University