

Speech

Guadalajara, November 21, 2017

09:00-10:00: Inauguration – Welcome

Friends, colleagues, presidents of the universities, distinguished guests, fellow deans – it is my honor to welcome you on the Latin American Conference “University Responsiveness to Changing Times” held within the frame of IAUP Semi-annual meeting, here in Autonomous University of Guadalajara.

I would like to sincerely thank our hosts... especially Dr. Luis Garibay Gutiérrez Auditorium. **Conference Co-Hosts:** Dr. Antonio Leño Reyes, President, Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara. Dr. Fernando León García, President, CETYS University. Dr. Tomas Morales, President, California State University San Bernardino. Speaker: Mag. Jaime Reyes Robles, Secretary for Innovation, Science and Technology, State of Jalisco.)

Before we begin the conference over the current chosen theme of “University Responsiveness to Changing Time”, I would like to say a few words.

To begin with, I would like to remind you all that this is the first semiannual IAUP meeting since my inauguration in Vienna. This bears repeating how honored and humbled I feel to be chosen by you for this position and to reaffirm my commitment to the development and advancement of IAUP in the coming years. Once again, I would like to thank my friends and colleagues that have supported me and that had been at my side through it all.

Furthermore, I would like to touch upon the reason of our current gathering, the changes in the education our response to them. It is abundantly clear that this is the new millennium, and the way things are done is changing for everyone. To meet this new era ready and on solid foundation we must look both to the past experiences and the most modern developments. The challenges are many, on both regional and international level and our responses must be alike, internationally sound and made from a cross-regional perspective.

Let us look upon the most obvious and at the same time most comprehensible problems of the 21st century education market, the ones that affects us all. Education system has a curious tendency to generate more problems for the each one it solves and higher education is not an exception. In today’s hypercompetitive environment the number of students is still increasing, while their demands and requirements shift considerably. In tomorrow’s world

we must deliver both Skills and Knowledge to the growing pool of students in ways that are efficient and allow excelling in the most competitive environment. The focus should be on globalization and the increasing importance of knowledge in the development process. Furthermore, this audience will require fundamental as well as advanced skill and knowledge and the avenue of vocational education seems to loom over the horizon of possibilities more and more nowadays and development of this particular sphere of skills and knowledge will demand flexibility and innovation from the side of educators as a fundamental prerequisite to satisfy the future requirements. When in the past an abundance of low skill labor was able to open an avenue to the rapid development of the 3rd world countries, today it is clear that producing high value, knowledge and skill intensive goods and services is the only way to sustainable development. In addition, these goods and services require effective up-to-date, smart management that can efficiently adopt and utilize those tools and compete on international market. If we look at the Knowledge Economy Index of the World Bank and the corresponding research, we can see that knowledge and economy are intrinsically correlated and that market demand is moving towards more expert thinking, high communication specializations.

Unfortunately, the market does take some time to catch up to changing demand and conditions, even in modern age of information and resulting backlog is creating what is called and 'Education Bubble', which by the analyses of some experts promises to be even worse than the housing bubble of the 2008. While the education bubble may seem precarious, it will open great opportunities for the institutions that show integrity, innovation and desire to adapt.

Thus, I see both changes and great opportunities in the coming years and I urge you to look honestly at the demands of the educational market on both international and regional scale, to connect with your colleagues at IAUP for chasing expertise and innovation and to strive to meet the new millennium fully prepared.

Education is a cornerstone of the modern world. Education is a precursor of development. Thus, education will always be in demand. It falls to us, deans and presidents of the universities worldwide to see trends, to change and to adapt and IAUP is here to aid you in doing that.

Let us strive for better future, for better education.

I wish you the most successful and productive day, thank you for Attention!

Kakha Shengelia

President of IAUP