



Preparing the Leaders and Innovators of Tomorrow: Research and Higher Education, Bridges to Prosperity across the Americas

This document presents a description of the CAIE's thematic proposal, from original recommendations to the final wording of the Conference's main theme and subthemes.

General Background

The Conference of the Americas on International Education (CAIE), created in 2009, has quickly consolidated its reputation as the leading forum for the internationalization of higher education across the Americas. True to its mandate, the CAIE provides a common space for the stimulation of an open dialogue while fostering networks and strategic alliances at the bilateral, regional and multilateral level.

During its past four editions (Canada 2010, Brazil 2012, Mexico 2013 and Ecuador 2015), the CAIE initiative has brought about outstanding results ratifying its relevance as a valuable tool for the advancement of sustainable collaboration across the continent. The development of the fifth edition, to be held in Montreal in 2017, will once again offer a participative and inclusive academic space in which to discuss the challenges of our times and project the roadmaps to the future.

In preparation for the challenge ahead, the OUI-IOHE's report "Results of CAIE 2010 – 2015 and future orientations for 2016-2017" (p.45) concluded that the main conference theme for CAIE 2017 should "focus on the following elements:

- Comprehensive Internationalization
- Internationalization of higher education: Linkages and research
- The internationalization of research
- Research, innovation and doctoral training in the process of internationalization
- University management and internationalization
- Government, Academia and Private Sector: allies for the internationalization of higher education
- Governments and their national agendas for the internationalization of higher education
- Common agendas for the internationalization of the curriculum".

Main Conference Theme

Guided by these recommendations while remaining aware of the most current issues facing our countries, the CAIE Secretariat carried out a consultation with advisors and main stakeholders to define the main theme of CAIE 2017. From this first brainstorming exercise we were able to tabulate the results in produce the chart below, which summarizes and illustrates the main findings:



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Topics	Actors	govt → policies	government	strategic	private	foundations	incidence
		federal / local	funding agencies	partners (organizations)	enterprise	(private - other)	
1	Developing Knowledge and Innovation Ecosystems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6
2	Basic & Applied Research, Pillars of Innovation	✓	✓	✓	✓		5/6
3	Higher Ed Institutions, Lifelong learning and Employability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6
4	Innovative Educational Models and the Development of Life-long Competencies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6
5	Equity and Inclusion: Creating Opportunity through Higher-Education	✓	✓	✓		✓	5/6
6	Societal Evolution and the Adaptability of HEIs	✓		✓	✓	✓	5/6
(Inter-American) Internationalization / Collaboration							
Quality Assurance							
Sustainable Development							

On it we find the proposed theme of the Congress (across the top), the various subthemes listed on the left hand column and heading each one of the cross-columns we find the name(s) of the actor(s) directly implicated in each matter. Finally, at the base of the chart, we also find three crosswise bars (in different colours) of what we believe to be base conditions we can no longer do without: (Inter-American) Internationalization / Collaboration, Quality Assurance and Sustainable Development.

So based on the original input from the Steering Committee, and supported on a series of consultations with advisors and main stakeholders, as well as the Academic, Advisory and National Committees, we can now propose the main theme for the CAIE 2017:

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With this statement as our main guideline, we shall strive to foster an open and frank discussion on how best to collaborate across our diverse academic traditions and is so doing, align our research priorities for the development of leaders and innovators conscientious of their role as promoters of a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous continent.



Conference Subthemes

The CAIE Canada - 2017 will address the main Conference Theme from several different angles in order to gain a better understanding of the diverse realities of the nations of our continent, the national and regional priorities, existing capacities, the main actors and players involved and ultimately, the intended outcomes.

These subthemes will be the basis for the Call for Proposal and will also determine the choice of speakers for the Plenary Sessions and Conference Workshops.

Consultations with the National Committee comprised of the 5 Montreal universities, other advisors and stakeholders brought about the following event subthemes.

1. Developing Knowledge and Innovation Ecosystems

We all agree that HEIs do not exist in a vacuum or dissociated from their environment. Continuous interactions between academia, government entities and industry bring about unique opportunities for the promotion of broad based initiatives that can result in the advancement of our societies through innovation and development of human capital.

We are thus increasingly called upon to articulate environments that promote greater interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration building upon our particular strengths and proven performance.

2. Basic and Applied Research, Pillars of Innovation

The prevailing dissociation between basic and applied research casts a shadow over our ability to understand innovation as a continuum of scientific and academic endeavour that may result in prosperity. Given this premise, we are challenged to define how best to bridge the existing capacities and experiences both in basic and applied research to propel innovation across the continent. Can we articulate a mechanism to identify complementarities that may not only potentiate the results of our research but also exert a positive incidence in our societies?

3. Higher Education Institutions(HEIs), Lifelong Learning and Employability

An important part of the academic activity across the continent is dedicated to the development of graduates with labour-oriented skills that respond to the demands of an industry driven economy. In general, trends are determined by governments, employers and employee organizations. Within that context, what is thus the contribution of HEIs to the development of Human Capital and work skills for future graduates? Are we inclined to



deepen the differences or take on the opportunities for articulation between the traditional University and the Technical and Technological sector? How are we going to integrate social, economic and environmental policies that encourage greater participation of the local industry while responding to the diverse needs and priorities of our communities?

4. Innovative Educational Models and the Development of Life-long Competencies

Amassing knowledge in a given discipline or developing skills for a specific job no longer seems sufficient for today's graduates. Our students need also to develop transferable soft skills that can be used across a broad range of occupational fields and beyond their national borders. Work-based learning or experiential learning is just one example of a non-traditional educational approach that has proven to be successful in the pursuit of such goals. The differences in the academic sectors and work environments across the continent have brought about numerous innovative approaches to education and collaboration in pursuit of life-long learning and innovation.

5. Equity and Inclusion: Creating Opportunity through Higher Education

Opportunities to access quality education are still unevenly distributed among and within our countries. Gender, origin, ethnic background, linguistic differences, disabilities and traditional attitudes towards certain groups in society are some of the factors that promote inequity and discrimination. In order to target marginalization these aspects must be addressed simultaneously, beyond local initiatives and on to a broader approach involving communities, educational policies, teachers, curriculum and effective financing for education.

6. Societal evolution and the Adaptability of HEIs

Our societies have been experiencing important challenges in the recent years. Our understanding of the roles traditionally played by different actors in our communities has evidently evolved, be it as a result of economic transformation, internal political changes, external drivers or global trends and challenges that now determine our futures. Throughout this process, have we managed to keep up with the rate of change exerted on our societies? Have we successfully facilitated better communication between academia, government, civil society, donors and private enterprise? How have we adapted our academic programs and research activities to ensure that we are indeed training the leaders and innovators of tomorrow?