

UCR researchers strengthen relation with European colleagues through ENLACE travel grant scheme



Manrique Vindas Segura
mvindas@vinv.ucr.ac.cr

The ENLACE Project - Enhancing Scientific Cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Central America (2009-2013) is an initiative of the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Program for Research and Technological Development (FP7). These European funds encourage the cooperation and the dialogue between the EU and the Central American countries about science and technology.

One project activity is the "Travel Grant Scheme" that supports the mobility of Central American and European researchers, facilitating contacts between research institutions in both regions and thereby encouraging joint participation in FP7 calls.

In the course of the second call of the travel grant scheme, 14 researchers from Central America were selected to participate in international conferences in Europe. Among them, Dr. Pablo Hernández Hernández, researcher at the Philosophy Research Institute and professor at the School of Philosophy, and Dr. Jorge Cortés Núñez, researcher at the Center for Research in Marine Biology and Limnology (CIMAR), and Professor at the School of Biology, both of the University of Costa Rica (UCR).

Paper Publications

Dr. Pablo Hernández represented the UCR in the XXXII Congress of the German Association of Romance Studies (XXXII Romanistentag), celebrated at the Humboldt University of Berlin. This event brings together scholars of the romance studies investigating culture, literature and romance languages. Dr. Hernández presented two of his research works: "**The Relationship between Violence, War and Philosophy**" and "**The Visualization of Political Violence in Latin America.**" The latter presentation drew the attention of this section's congress participants for its originality, as it relates to the relationship between photography and guerrillas in Latin America. Due to the qualitative and vivid discussion within the section, the participants decided to publish a book with all the presentations and discussions. Dr. Hernández' paper will serve to present the theme and to connect the various discussions. The book will be published in Germany and in German language.

Award for the "Best Digital Object in Taxonomy"

Thanks to the support of the ENLACE Project, Professor Dr. Jorge Cortés Núñez made an outstanding contribution to the World Conference on Marine Biodiversity 2011, held in Aberdeen, Scotland, where around 1000 researchers from 76 countries participated. He won the prize for the "Best Digital Object in the Taxonomy" for his presentation of a video, describing the study of marine biodiversity done by CIMAR in Costa Rica.

Several contacts with European researchers

In addition to their successful participation in these conferences, the Costa Rican researchers had the opportunity to visit several research institutions and to establish contacts with European researchers with whom they discussed and planned joint academic activities for the future.

Just to illustrate, Dr. Hernández received an invitation in order to involve the UCR in the organization of a joint and public activity on Violence in Latin America and its Relationship to Cultural Production. The event will take place at the University of Potsdam in February 2012, with the participation of researchers from German universities, the UCR and Chilean universities. Dr. Hernández explained that his trip to Germany "has also clearly marked the future of my working efforts towards cooperation, contacts, and academic and scientific exchange between Germany and Costa Rica, but in general terms between Central America and Europe. For the year 2012, I have several invitations to teach in Chile, Nicaragua, Guatemala and the U.S. All this thanks to contributions like the one received by the ENLACE project."

During his trip to Europe, Dr. Cortés had the opportunity to visit the Herriot-Watt University in Edinburgh and the University of Newcastle, in which he gave a lecture on the progress reached by Costa Rica in marine research. "This is a great opportunity for us to participate in international conferences, visiting universities and research centers, to disseminate what has been investigated in Costa Rica and to strengthen cooperative relationships", stated the Costa Rican researcher.

UCR drives the ENLACE project in Central America

In addition to promoting the dialogue between Europe and Central America in the field of science and technology, this initiative aims to raise awareness in both regions about results and benefits for joint research projects. The UCR boosts the ENLACE project as partner and functions as leader of the Central American region.

The UCR's principal investigator of the project is Professor Dr. Henning Jensen Pennington from the Psychological Research Institute, who has also been in charge of the coordination of Central American partners.

Another achievement of the ENLACE Project in Central America has been the appointment of National Contact Points (NCP for its acronym in English). Costa Rica already has a National Coordinator and other five NCPs for different FP7 areas: Health, Energy, Environment, Information Technology and Communication, and People. The Ministry of Science and Technology (MICIT) of Costa Rica nominated Dr. Jensen as INCO National Contact Point (International Cooperation).

The support of the UCR and the MICIT has strengthened the ENLACE project, encouraging the participation of researchers in academic and research activities at the national and international level.

More information on the ENLACE Project: www.enlace-project.eu