

**Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-Day Adventists**

**Faith and Learning at Institutional Level: An Integrative Approach
The experience of the University of Montemorelos**

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Part I: Background of the model

The beginning of the Seventh-day educational system

The history of the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church shows that the educational system emerged during the last years of Ellen White's life. *Education* was published in 1903 (she was 76 years old); *Ministry of Healing*, 1905; *Counsels to parents, teachers and students*, 1913, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 1923 (a compilation published after Ellen White's death).

Ellen White was 45 years old in 1872, when she wrote the first testimony on education, entitled *Proper Education*, which is published as the first chapter of *Fundamentals of Christian Education*.

In 1849, the work of publication was established (Ellen was 22 years old); the church was organized in 1863 (she was 36); the health work in 1866 (she was 39); and in 1872 Mr. Bell established the first Adventist school. However the educational system as we know today did not begin until the first years of the twentieth century.

Adventists were not interested in schools because they firmly believed that Christ would be coming soon, therefore it was not necessary to get involved in schools. By 1872, church leaders were interested in opening schools for the training of preachers. However, in the first testimony that Ellen White wrote on education, she established the basic principles of the SDA education system: clear distinction between education and training, the difference between discipline and self control, the need for a useful and practical education, and the need for balance among the different aspects of education: physical, mental, spiritual.

Based on the outcomes of the General Conference Session held in 1888, in 1891 Elder Prescott called a conference for Adventist educators. They gathered that summer (July, August) in Harbor Springs in a teachers' convention. Ellen White presented six lectures about the following topics:

- Need of a personal relationship with Christ
- Importance of spiritual revival among teachers
- Ethical and Academic needs to set aside the authors of the classic Literature
- Centrality of the message of Christ in education

As a result of the convention, Adventist schools started to study the Bible, and History was taught from a Biblical perspective. This was the first attempt to integrate faith into learning in SDA education.

Ellen White traveled to Australia three months after Harbor Springs' convention. She lived in Australia from 1891 to 1900. During those nine years she worked on the establishment and development of Avondale College.

From 1880 to 1890 the system of SDA education expanded from 1 to 9 schools, from 1 to 15 teachers, from 15 to 350 students.

From 1890 to 1900, Ellen White wrote several messages promoting the establishment of elementary schools to foster balanced and integral education of the youth, specially in the formation of church leaders.

As a result of her vision, by 1900, the church had 220 elementary schools, 250 teachers and 5,000 students. In 1910, 594 schools, 758 teachers and 13,357 students.

The expansion of these three decades continued, and by the end of 2005, the Church had 6,700 educational institutions (5,257 elementary schools, 1,316 secondary schools and 99 universities), 66,000 teachers and 1.257,000 students.

After Ellen White returned from Australia, and during the last 15 years of her life, most of her writings and compilations were on education. Her writings are a treasure of inspired messages for the Church.

The history of Seventh-day Adventist curriculum models

Battle Creek College curriculum. The first Seventh-day Adventist educational institution was Battle Creek College, founded in 1875. The first Ellen White messages about education (1872-1881) were mostly addressed to Battle Creek College, which offered secondary and higher education.

Many of her messages addressed to Battle Creek College promoted the role of this school as a model for Adventist education. According to Ellen White, the problem of this institution was the curriculum. What needed to be included in the course plan? What is valuable enough to be included in the curricula? Leaders at Battle Creek College supported the same curriculum as secular colleges. Bible classes were optional. Physical education, manual work, and missionary training were not included in the curriculum. Ellen White was not in favor of a school where the

Bible was the only object of study, but of a school where the Bible was the foundation of the whole curriculum. Due to different problems, Battle Creek College closed his doors in 1881, but opened it again in 1882.

Ellen White spoke and wrote many testimonies to teachers and students of Battle Creek College, but the changes she proposed never happened. She identified the reasons to hold back the reforms:

- Many years of error
- Fear of unpopularity
- Doubts and questions
- Need of more students
- Imitation to the world

After the Harbor Spring' Convention, Battle Creek College included at least some Bible classes, but increased the course plan in one year.

If the study of the Scriptures is made a secondary consideration, great loss is sustained. The Bible was for a time excluded from our schools, and Satan found a rich field, in which he worked with marvelous rapidity, and gathered a harvest to his liking. (White, 1923, pp. 129, 130)

In 1893, while Ellen White lived in Australia, she mailed another message to teachers and students of Battle Creek and other SDA educational institutions:

The Lord opened before me the necessity of establishing a school at Battle Creek that should not pattern after any school in existence. We were to have teachers who would keep their souls in the love and fear of God. Teachers were to educate in spiritual things, to prepare a people to stand in the trying crisis before us, but there has been a departure from God's plan in many ways. (White, 1923, p. 221)

Ellen White was not only concerned by what teachers and students were doing, but the influence that the colleges have on churches and believers.

There needs to be a higher, holier mold on the school in Battle Creek, and on other schools which have been taken their mold from it. The customs and practices of the Battle Creek school go forth to all the churches and the pulse heartbeats of that school are felt throughout the body of believers. (White, 1923, p. 224)

During the 1890s, Ellen White continued sending testimonies to Battle Creek College promoting a reform. There are many testimonies about the essential knowledge and the role of the Bible as foundation of curriculum

Avondale College curriculum. On the other hand, Avondale College was a revolutionary institution that sets a model for Adventist education.

Ellen White arrived to Australia in 1892. In 1894, she traveled the country with some brethren to look for a piece of land to build a college. The place must be far from the cities, but not too far, so the school may have some influence on the city. Finally, in 1895, the church bought a wonderful piece of land with fruit trees and a garden.

Avondale College was a new beginning for Adventist education. Her testimony on work and education, written in February 1894, included as a chapter of *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, which was a starting point to establish the school.

In a letter addressed to Emma White on August 19, 1895, Ellen White wrote:

About twenty-six hands--students--have worked a portion of the time felling trees in clearing the land, and then have their studies. They say they can learn as much in the six hours of study as in giving their whole time to their books. More than this, the manual labor department is a success healthwise for the students. For this we thank the Lord with heart and soul and voice. The students are rugged and the feeble ones are becoming strong. Wild young lads such as _____ are becoming men under the discipline of labor. He is becoming a Christian, transformed in character. Oh, how thankful are his parents that he is blessed with this opportunity! (Letter 126, 1895, pp. 1-5. To J. E. and Emma White, August 19, 1895)

The first years that the plan of work and study were implemented at Avondale College were 1895 and 1896. In 1897, formal programs of study were implemented. The curriculum combined study and work, and used the Bible as a foundation of all learning. Avondale College was, by then, the paradigm of Adventist education.

Tensions in early Adventist education. As George Knight (2001) says, the health of SDA education depends on its capability to maintain its spiritual identity and its mission. With both elements it will be a dynamic force for the world

At the beginning of the XX century, tensions appeared in Adventist education. One of the most important tensions was the beginning of accreditation requirements for professionals. The

first profession to require accreditation was medical training. In 1911, the College of Medical Evangelists in Loma Linda, CA, received their accreditation to certify their graduates. Without this accreditation, graduates would not be able to practice their profession.

The medical school at Loma Linda is to be of the highest order, because those who are in that school have the privilege of maintaining a living connection with the wisest of all physicians, from whom there is communicated knowledge of a superior order. And for the special preparation of those of our youth who have clear convictions of their duty to obtain a medical education that will enable them to pass the examinations required by law of all who practice as regularly qualified physicians, we are to supply whatever may be required, so that these youth need not be compelled to go to medical schools conducted by men not of our faith. Thus we shall close a door that the enemy would be pleased to have left opened; and our young men and women, whose spiritual interests the Lord desires us to safeguard, will not feel compelled to connect with unbelievers in order to obtain thorough training along medical lines". (White, 1913, 480, 481)

Herbert Douglass (2000) in his book *Messenger of the Lord*, reviewing the first 50 years of Adventist education, presents the following conclusions:

- The closer the school is to the inspired instruction, the more productive the program
- Educational administrators that firmly believe in Ellen White inspiration opened successful innovations in educational institutions
- Students responded positively to administrators and teachers that taught by precept and example

Ellen White counsels as a foundation of a model for Adventist education for the XXI century

There are some questions to be asked: Do Ellen White counsels on education constitute an educational model? Does this model come from God? Is the model valid for the XXI century?

To find the answers for these questions, it is necessary to review the common threats that unify the different models of education that God provided to humankind: model of Eden, model of patriarchs, model of the school of the desert, model of the school of prophets, model of the school of Jesus, and model of the school of Heaven. These are some of the common threats:

- God's revelation. God and His word are the center of history

- Conflict between God and Satan. The Redemption plan
- Useful work
- Study and care of nature
- Difficulties of life

The amazing pattern that goes through the different models of education in all ages and the consistency of Ellen White counsels with these models, provide confidence to Adventist educator of the XXI century in the development of contemporary model of Adventist education.

Actually, the Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Philosophy of Education (2003), describes the profile of graduates of its tertiary institutions

“Students completing the tertiary level at an Adventist institution should—

- Have had the opportunity to commit themselves to God and, therefore, live a principled life in accordance with His will, with a desire to experience and support the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- Exhibit proficiency in critical thinking, stewardship, creativity, appreciation of beauty and the natural environment, communication, and other forms of academic scholarship toward fulfillment of their vocations and lifelong learning.
- Manifest social sensitivity and loving concern for the well-being of others in preparation for marriage and family life, citizenship within a diverse community, and fellowship within the community of God.
- Maintain a consistent lifestyle that demonstrates a commitment to optimal health practices essential to effective adult living. This includes careful use of time and discriminating selection of music, media, and other forms of entertainment.
- Answer God’s call in the selection and pursuit of their chosen careers in selfless service to the mission of the Church, and in building a free, just, and productive society and world community.

From 1990’s Christian educational institutions have been looking for an educational model that focuses on the needs of children and youth. Several researchers (Hughes and Adrian, 1997; Benne, 2001; Lyon, Beaty and Mixon, 2002; Ream, Beaty and Lyon, 2004; and Schaefer, 2005) have identified what a successful Christian institution does.

Part II: Adventist Philosophy applied to campus life: History of an Experience

The University of Montemorelos, an Adventist university that serves to the Inter American Division decided to line up its beliefs to its curriculum. The planning process lasted two years (1998-2000) for undergraduate level, one year (2001) for senior high school level, and two years (2001-2003) for graduate level. The implementation process lasted the first four to six years for undergraduate level, two years for senior high school level and three years for graduate level. During the implementation period constant evaluation and feedback were developed to improve the innovation.

The planning process

Definition of a clear philosophical foundation that supports the operation of the institution. An Adventist educational institution has to make a decision about what it believes, which gives it identity and a sense of purpose. The institution's beliefs determine its commitments. This is the only way the educational process can make sense and the institution can fulfill its unique, distinctive mission in the confusing environment of higher education.

The core belief around which the Adventist university revolves is its faith in a God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. All true knowledge and development have their origin in Him. Serious and legitimate research puts human beings in touch with the Supreme Being.

Next, the Bible, Word of God, is the means by which God has revealed himself to humankind. The Bible offers the frame of reference for understanding reality. Its study activates the resources of the soul: faith, hope and love. From the Word of God comes the fundamental doctrines of the Adventist Church. These provide a consistent frame of reference that offers answers to questions about the origin, nature and destiny of humanity.

Furthermore, the Seventh Adventist Church believes that God inspired the writings of Ellen White as a revelation of His will to human beings. The elements that orient the organization of our educational system to meet contemporary challenges can be found in those writings.

The success of an Adventist university is related to its commitment to this nucleus of beliefs: its commitment to God, to Scripture and to the doctrines and fundamental principles of education that spring from the Spirit of Prophecy. The educational commitment of an institution is measured by its willingness to stand on, and be defined by, this nucleus of beliefs.

An educational process centered on core beliefs is the great heritage of Adventist education.

The institution finds its defining center point in its beliefs; the operational phase starts with its vision. On this stage, the institution finds its mission in meeting the needs of its environment and a vision that inspires all the processes and provides the dynamics and mystique of the institution.

From there, its curricular message is drawn. This is the message that defines its courses of study and organizes their implementation that allows the curricular message to acquire a dimension of the campus so that it touches and permeates the educational experience at every point.

The curricular message becomes a delivery commitment, using every available means of communication to carry out this message to the largest possible number of people.

There must be an evaluation plan that guarantees achievements and ensures that the operational orbit of the institution is kept in consonance with the great educational heritage. This is the outline that informs the educational project, an integrative model for the entire academic experience. When the institution is centered on its beliefs, an integrative dynamism is generated.

Components of the integrative curriculum

How can we get students and the entire university community involved with the university beliefs?

How can the university bring the ideals into the business of everyday living and bring everyday living up to the level of the ideals?

How can the university emphasize the importance of a healthful life style in the midst of unending academic activity?

How can the university teach such things as the value of unselfish service, the importance of an intimate, growing and continual relationship with God, the importance of acquiring the skills and attitudes to meet the hardships of life, the importance of developing the ability to appreciate an art work, and the importance of getting a solid professional preparation needed in a competitive world?

In view of these great challenges, an educational institution needs to find answers to this important question: what are the learning experiences that will enable the students to become this kind of professionals?

This is the critical point at which the beliefs meet the vision in the matter of curriculum.

In 2000, the University of Morelos established a new curriculum designed to offer students learning experiences that can strengthen their relationship with God and revelation, offer knowledge and professional skills, preparation for life, and an ability to appreciate culture. It is intended to be an integrated curriculum for the formation of students.

The university commitment is to provide to the students with a curriculum that intentionally includes the learning experiences that allow the students to achieve their goals. This means to expand the concept of curriculum to include selected extracurricular experiences into the formal curriculum. A curriculum that brings together learning experiences organized in four main components. For undergraduate level, these components are presented as follows:

Relationship with God and revelation. This is the essential component. It promotes an experience that goes beyond mere knowledge and becomes a living experience with the Creator, Sustainer and Savior. It promotes a study of the Word and a daily and personal communion that transcends in an attitude of gratefulness through unselfish service to others. This living and constant connection with God is what give sense to Christian education and provides direction to all knowledge and action.

- Learning experiences: a) A Bible class every semester throughout the entire program. This gives the student the opportunity to cover the entire Bible through a study that challenges their capacity for critical thought. Further the study of the Bible will strengthen the intellect and foster personal communion with Him. b) A minimum of 30 hours of outreach service per semester throughout the entire program. By this experiences, the student is led to new methodologies of witnessing through projects in campus ministry, literature ministry (canvassing) and special projects selected by the University church and the different academic departments.

Professional training. Every student who registers at the University looks for a professional education and hopes to leave its doors with an academic degree that will enable him or her to exercise his/her profession successfully. This is why the second essential component is professional competence. Through this component the University provides the knowledge and basic tools for the professional performance needed for the XXI century as well as the specific abilities for each profession. It also develops positive attitudes toward change, academic excellence, and commitment toward the profession and service.

- Learning experiences: Learning experiences are organized in general and specific components. The general ones are required for all students because they provide tools in the search and application of knowledge. The specific ones are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for each major area of study. a) General components: written and oral communication, computer skills (Word processor and Internet for academic purposes), reading comprehension in English, and research skills. Areas a, b, c, are prerequisites for the second and third year of study. If these are not met, then remedial courses are required. b) Specific components of each program. Each program has its own areas of classes in the specialty or career choice of the student, which make up approximately 75% of the credits.

Preparation for life. Success in professional performance is not an isolated and independent factor in the life of an individual. It is intimately bound with the capacity of the person to meet life's vicissitudes. This is why the third essential component, preparation for life, offers basic knowledge and develops indispensable habits and attitudes, to meet life's difficulties with success and happiness. It specifically addresses care of health, preparation for family life, development of manual skills, abilities for leadership and a strong emphasis in unselfish service.

- Learning experiences: a) Health: It offers the student knowledge about how the body functions and how to keep it healthy. Furthermore, a class in healthful lifestyle during the first semester of study helps the students acquire good habits. Along with the class, the student has a diagnostic evaluation of his/her physical condition and a follow up evaluation each semester. It is expected that the student will improve or maintain his/her health if he/she has a good performance. A student with poor results in the diagnostic evaluation is given an individualized follow-up with special programs of physical conditioning. b) Home and family. Development of positive attitudes toward courtship, marriage and responsible parenthood. The student has two classes in Home and Family during the second year of study. These classes address fundamental aspects of marriage and parenting and practical issues of home economics. c) Manual labor. This learning experience has a two-fold purpose. It balances the sedentary daily activities and allows the student to acquire manual skills with which to earn a living if it were necessary. This experience of 30 hours per semester is organized in the following way: First year. The students experience work with the soil (farm, gardens). Second

year. Ladies experience homemaking (cooking, sewing, home decoration). Men get basic skills in maintenance and safety in the home (electricity, plumbing, auto mechanics, painting, refrigeration, construction). Third and fourth year. Apprenticeship of a trade of the student's choice. d) Leadership. A leadership experience for one semester. This experience is to be related to some aspect of the student's career choice.

Cultural heritage. God is the author of all beauty and has given humans an attraction toward the beautiful. Nevertheless, sin and its consequences have distorted this desire so that the most beautiful manifestations of culture are disdained. The fourth essential component, cultural heritage, gives students knowledge and ability to identify valuable and beautiful artistic cultural manifestations. These learning experiences favor a participatory attitude in cultural artistic manifestations according to their talents, and the valorization of such from a Christian perspective.

- Learning experiences: Attendance at 80% of the weekly chapels. Some of these chapels (once a month) are cultural artistic programs; attendance at four of the cultural events that are programmed each semester (concerts, recitals, literary works, art exhibits, etc.); and participation in some type of artistic activity during one semester of the last two years of the program.

The process of developing the integrated curriculum

The school year 1998-1999, started with the traditional faculty meetings. The topic for discussion was the mission of Adventist education, its historic development in different institutions, and the commitment of the University of Montemorelos to this mission. At the end of the meetings an Institutional Curriculum Committee was formed. The majority of its members were faculty. This committee had the mandate to study how the university was fulfilling its mission, and how could it do it better through an integrated curriculum.

Responsibilities of the Institutional Curriculum Committee. The committee started to work on the first stage of the project between September and December of 1998. General weekly committee meetings were established. Furthermore, specific tasks were assigned to smaller groups that functioned as subcommittees. Responsibilities assigned to the committee were the following: a) To revise the beliefs, values, philosophy, mission and general objectives from the institutional planning document "Corporate Commitment"; b) To incorporate in the "Corporate Commitment" document the new curriculum with the purpose of making it part of the complete and integrated

institutional message; c) To develop evaluation instruments to measure the success of the institution in the transmission of its message to the students; d) Based upon the results of the three previous items, we identified essential components and the weight they should have in the new College level curriculum.

The work of the committee. First, the beliefs, values, philosophy, mission and general objectives were revised. The criteria used for the revision was the educational principles derived from the Bible, the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church and the Adventist educational philosophy. The committee also took upon itself the task of reading Ellen White's counsels on education. To develop an educational model, the main ideas were organized in the following areas: a) context of education, b) purpose of true education, c) the learning environment in the teacher-student interaction, and d) teaching and learning. The result of this analysis was the development of a synthesis of the foundations of the Adventist educational system.

The committee recommended the incorporation of the curriculum to the University's planning document "Corporate Commitment," as the institution curricular message.

A smaller group, a subcommittee on evaluation, was assigned by the committee the task of identifying the impact of institutional action upon the student's professional, family and mission life.

A survey instrument was developed with 61 institutional actions for the integral development of the students. Responses indicated the percentage of student participation. They also revealed, in the students' opinion, the contribution of each activity to their professional, family and mission life. This instrument was applied to the seniors.

The committee identified essential components for the design of the new curriculum. It first revised the profile of the graduate and it developed from there the profile of the mentor and the institution. After elaborating the profiles, the committee determined that in order to fulfill the profile of the graduate some of the learning experiences could not stay in the informal curriculum, but needed to be an integral part of each student's formal curriculum. In order to give attention to the total formation of the student the following components were identified: a) Relationship with God and His revelation, b) Professional formation; c) Preparation for life, and d) Cultural heritage. By identifying these essential components, the institutional curriculum committee fulfilled the first part of its work.

Development of the curriculum. In the second part of the committee's task the Deans of schools and Chairs of programs were incorporated into the work. Small committees were formed to study in which ways the four components could permeate all learning experiences.

Finally, the Institutional Curriculum Committee presented a proposal to revise the curriculum for all programs in order to incorporate the four essential components. The University Council approved the proposal in May of 1999. The University Board of Trustees voted it on the same month.

Work of the Academies. From May 1999, the faculty from the different programs initiated the revision of the professional formation component. For this work the faculty was divided by academies formed by specialists of related areas. To revise the professional formation component of each program they used the following criteria: a) Higher educational trends of the new millennium, b) labour market needs, c) alumni opinions, d) profile of the graduate.

Attention was also given to the need of making certain that students will acquire the following critical skills: a) Tools for self-regulated learning, b) professional competencies, c) critical thinking, enterprising spirit, and unselfish service, d) research tools applied to their specialty.

Development of the proposal. The process for the development of the proposal for curriculum review was initiated after the content of the professional formation component was revised. The entity responsible for this process was the Curriculum Development Office, which reports to the Vice President for Academic Administration. Each program received the advice of a faculty member expert in curriculum design. The proposals were considered and approved by the faculty of each School in the respective School Council and then by the University Council. After this, they were sent to the Secretariat of Public Education of the State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico, for government approval.

Participation of students and alumni in the curriculum development. Different groups of students participated both in the whole process of the institutional curriculum committee's work and in the design and revision of the professional formation component of each academic program. In the "Tomorrows' University" program, where seniors take over the leadership of the University for one day, the group of student leaders reviewed the project of the new curriculum and offered suggestions for improvements. Other groups of students and alumni were assembled with the specific purpose of listening to their opinions about the design of some of the components.

The implementation process

The following aspects were included in the implementation process: (1) university personnel qualification, (2) preparation, application and evaluation of a pilot program, (3) adaptation of human, financial and physical resources, (4) review of academic legislation and records, (5) freshmen orientation, (6) evaluation process.

Personnel qualification. Personnel qualification had two phases: a) preparation of the general personnel toward the new curriculum through a seminar on the meaning and scope of the Educational Commitment, b) qualification of the faculty through a certificate in university teaching for the new curriculum. The certificate program has 130 hours of instruction in the following areas: planning of the teaching-learning process, instructional strategies, teaching and research, educational technology and evaluation of teaching. The program was started in January, 2000 and ended in the summer of 2001.

Elaboration, application and evaluation of a pilot program. Different pilot programs were implemented with the novel aspects of the new curriculum: manual labor, physical fitness, reading comprehension in English, Oral and Written proficiency in Spanish and computing.

Manual labor: The School of Education implemented a pilot experience with the undergraduate education students in the area of manual labor throughout the school year. They organized the class schedule in a way that made a half-day available for manual labor. Teachers that had manual abilities (gardening, sewing, cooking, plumbing, electricity) offered workshops on those specialties. Even though participation of teachers and students was voluntary, 98% of them were involved in manual labor activities. At the end of the school year, the students evaluated the experience through a survey. They expressed the opinion that the workshops gave them useful tools for daily living and the opportunity to serve others. The teachers involved expressed the opinion that the opportunity to work with the students in an informal setting and of developing manual abilities themselves was a very valuable experience.

Physical fitness: The pilot program in physical fitness included the development and validation of a physical fitness test that is applied to each student once each semester. In the 1999-2000 school year, 169 freshmen students participated in the diagnostic evaluation of their physical fitness. Besides validating the instrument, this pilot test made it possible to obtain information about the physical fitness of the students and to make plans to take care of their needs. Teachers

from different programs chosen to be the mentors for the students received theoretical-practical training on physical fitness care.

Reading comprehension in English, Oral and written proficiency in Spanish and Computing: Proficiency with the computer for academic purposes, proper use of the Spanish language and reading comprehension in English are pre-requisites to start the sophomore and junior years. Proficiency tests were developed to measure those abilities. The tests were validated with the participation of 402 students that finished high school in the school year 1999-2000. The results of the pilot program helped in the development of remedial courses needed for the students that did not pass the proficiency tests.

Adaptation of human, financial and physical resources. A program review implies adaptation of human, financial and physical resources. To that end, an inventory was made both of the requirements for the different aspects that needed attention and the way to organize them. Institution wide coordinators were appointed for the following areas: Bible Classes, Missionary Service, Manual Labour, Health, and Cultural Heritage. Each program assigned a teacher as coordinator for the following areas: missionary service, manual labor, health, home and family, and cultural heritage. This organizational model gives coherence and follow-up to the students learning experiences.

The institutional budget also had to be revised to make provision for the novel aspects of the program. Spaces needed to be equipped for the physical fitness test and for the homemaking activities.

Review of academic legislation and records. The academic legislation was developed by the Undergraduate Academic Policies Committee and approved by the University Council. New systems and registration forms for the new academic components were also developed.

Freshmen orientation. Freshmen orientation was initiated with the information sent with the admission packet. Information packages had all the details needed by students admitted to the university and their parents about the new curriculum. The whole university was sensitized to the plan since students that were in the program for the previous two years had received information about the curricular modifications at the beginning of the implementation program. They had also been offered participation as volunteers in the pilot programs.

Evaluation process. The document “Educational Commitment” establishes that evaluation will be performed from different perspectives. First, it should be based upon the profile of the

graduate. It should also consider the knowledge, competencies, and attitudes acquired and developed by the student. Then it should ascertain that there is balance in the development of the physical, mental and spiritual faculties. Finally, it should include a follow up of the graduates to evaluate their contribution as professionals to the mission of the institution.

Instruments for evaluation were developed to follow-up the students as they go through all the learning experiences of their student life. Each semester, changes were made to adjust the implementation to the goal originally perceived.

Final remarks

Our philosophic framework holds that “Adventist education imparts more than academic knowledge”, and “it fosters a balanced development of the whole person” (Statement of Seventh-day Adventist Educational Philosophy). Therefore, it is simply a matter of consistency to bring our plans and activities in harmony with our convictions.

In this context, the University of Montemorelos has developed an institutional curriculum that is congruent with the convictions and beliefs that hold regarding higher education from a Christian Seventh-day Adventist perspective.

The curricular model of the University of Montemorelos is not “the” model. It constitutes an attempt to fulfill in a more effective way the educational commitment derived from our convictions and beliefs.

The outlines may vary. The designs may take on shapes and forms that can be best adapted to regional, cultural and institutional realities that characterize and distinguish each Adventist educational community.

Leaders in Adventist higher education institutions must not miss the opportunity to organize the curricular offerings in such a way as to produce the appropriate impact on the students. As a result, they will be enabled to reflect on their life and destiny in the world and society; they will adopt a goal, a mission, and a course in life of which they will not be ashamed and upon which they will act, run risks, live, struggle, and commit themselves unconditionally. By their own decision, they will surrender themselves fully to love and serve God and His cause. A decision of this nature must make a difference in the influence exercised by the graduates in their family, church and professional lives.

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