

Institutional Horizons And Educational Aims. A Study Of Curriculum Management At A Public University

Audin Aloiso Gamboa Suárez¹, Raúl Prada Núñez², Cesar Augusto Hernández Suárez³

¹ Facultad de Educación, Artes y Humanidades, Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander
Cúcuta, Colombia, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9755-6408>

² Facultad de Educación, Artes y Humanidades, Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander
Cúcuta, Colombia, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6145-1786>

³ Facultad de Educación, Artes y Humanidades, Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander
Cúcuta, Colombia, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7974-5560>

Abstract

The objective of the study was to characterize the curricular structure of the various undergraduate and postgraduate programs offered in the six faculties of a public higher education institution domiciled in Colombia. The study had a mixed approach adopting a cross-sectional descriptive level. A semi-structured interview was applied to two directors of academic programs who voluntarily agreed to be part of this process. The findings of the study reveal that there are elements or characteristics of academic programs that are considered essential in their functioning process, such as having a mission, vision or training objectives, but they also consider that there are aspects that begin to vary in coherence. with the regulation defined by the Ministry of National Education of Colombia, so a permanent review of the curricular proposals must be carried out so that they are always in line.

Keywords: Curriculum management, public university, academic programmes.

Introduction

When approaching the term curriculum from Gómez (2020), it allows us to easily relate it to administration, as he states that this concept refers to actions such as structuring, ordering, controlling, determining styles, contents, times and ways of grouping subjects has been synonymous with structuring and order, as well as with "regulation" and standardization of the contents and structures involved in learning. Likewise, the curriculum has been an essential part of the control devices through which educational institutions themselves have

determined the styles and modes of teaching and learning, as well as the contents, times and ways of grouping the subjects that interact in the educational process.

The foregoing gives us an idea of what is the administration understood from Torres & Mejía (2006), in whose three concepts reviewed from the documentary, an organizational strategy is suggested that aligns the integration of knowledge, individual skills and collective capacities to give continuity to organizations thanks to the processes of adaptation to conditions of uncertainty in the environment, where you can appreciate that implicit process, which Torres & Mejía call social, of integration and generation of knowledge, in addition to the acquisition of roles within an organization, where tangible and intangible resources are used. Also control, if we stop from the classic administration, occupies an important role within such process in terms of the collective activities for the fulfilment of certain organizational objectives (Torres & Mejía, 2006).

Given the presence of curricula that are not articulated to the needs of students and their different contexts and, therefore, to an institutional horizon that is coherent with it, we begin to detect, through research, factors such as the absence of construction and socialization mechanisms with and towards the educational community (Hoyos et al., 2016), which are the cause of this difficulty in articulating the curriculum with the institutional horizon. In addition to the above, with this same author we find that, although institutional pedagogical models are proposed, they are not always applied in practice, in addition to the fact that teaching strategies, methodologies and evaluation processes are fragmented and, it could also be said, that relevance, so present in the approach of this study, is measured according to the satisfaction of parents and students (Hoyos et al., 2016). In this regard, Castañeda et al. (2020) agrees and adds that each teacher, from his or her expertise, must implement pedagogical strategies inspired by the institutional pedagogical models and the IEPs of their universities, which allow them to understand the world from their disciplines, so that future professionals can apply them in their regions and contribute to the construction of society in an ethical manner, with a sense of responsibility and social co-responsibility.

According to Garbanzo (2001), university administrative processes are immersed in educational management, the importance of which, for this author, lies in self-evaluation for quality accreditation. We also find from this author that the role of relevance requires the curricula to be coherent with what the current context needs and with the demands at national, regional and global level: It is the responsibility of higher education to enact and act with relevant and innovative policies in terms of curriculum management, consistent policies, covered by strategic planning, between social needs and the training of future professionals, so relating relevance with strategic planning is appropriate in the present research area. Without further ado, systematic learning, its objectives and suggestions for training resources

are present in the current definition of curriculum, and teachers and managers are responsible for its administration according to this author.

The aforementioned educational administrators, in the search for the development of educational action, guide institutional resources, based on the principles and aims of education, the satisfaction and aspirations of the individual and society (Venegas et al., 1986); but they also guide and advise in the teaching-learning process and improve the teaching work through supervision, so that the supervision of other instances linked to the teaching-learning process, such as parents, the student himself, the principal, the advisor-supervisor, specific advisors and members of the community, must be conceived (Venegas et al., 1986).

The authors cited in the preceding paragraph also bring us closer to public curricular policies, which must be rationally determined by the aforementioned authorities and administrators. Therefore, and based on the above, we will focus more specifically on the subject that concerns us in this document, starting with the review of Agreement 006 (2003) of the University of Francisco de Paula Santander (UFPS hereinafter), which establishes guidelines on the design, development, and evaluation of the curriculum and defines the curriculum policy of the University of Francisco de Paula Santander, given the need for this normative document. This agreement, considering the General Statute of the UFPS (Agreement 091, 1993), illustrates that there is more than one way of learning, that general curricular orientations must be established in philosophical and methodological aspects, in addition to a system of curriculum administration, for which there are certain structural units; that, according to the organic structure of the Institutional Educational Project (Agreement 021, 2021), there is an orientation towards curricular administration by study plans and an organization of human talent in academic departments by areas of knowledge, supporting the educational, research and social projection work.

Well, this agreement, in its article 1, defines the curriculum as a mediating and strategic link between the training purpose defined and the learning that is effectively expected and achieved in students; while curriculum management is assumed as a set of elements that allow to fulfil the training purpose of each academic programme, which makes it necessary to interpret, abide by and execute the policies" (art., 32.) established in this agreement.

Article 32, recently cited in Agreement 006 (2003), located in Chapter VII, on the administration of the curriculum, where we find that, to assign a training programme to a faculty, there must be a correspondence between its training purpose and the mission and social function of the field of knowledge of this or that faculty (art. 33, par. 1) and that the other faculties must contribute to the development of the new programme, according to

paragraph 1, of the same article. Furthermore, in its article 34 and in accordance with article 93, paragraph, of Agreement 091 (1993), it states that the curriculum committees are responsible for the administration of the curriculum in each training programme and according to paragraph the curriculum directors are responsible for the activities of the curriculum committees and the curriculum administration of the students of the programme. (art., 93)

In addition to the above, according to the Organic Structure, stipulated in Agreement 126 (1994), in the UFPS, the Assistant Vice-Rector for Studies is also responsible for the coordination and support of the university's curricular activities at the different levels and modalities of training (art., 77), whose work supports the administration and logistics in the work of the Curricular Committees of Study Plans, for example (art., 79). Likewise, the heads of the Divisions of the Assistant Vice-Rector's Office for Studies provide administrative support for the coordinated work of the curriculum committees and the use of institutional resources (art., 90).

Well then, taking up Gómez (2020), in the organizational process of curricular proposals, higher education must recognize the times in which we are and the social, political and educational contexts, as well as the way in which the different educational reforms have been carried out in scenarios permeated by political and social struggles, as well as the changes in educational norms and laws that will structure the curriculum. The above, for the UFPS, is evidenced in different legal documents, such as those cited above, which will be seen throughout this study.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the evidence of the coherence between theory and practice, described in previous lines, for the case of a UFPS programme (Nursing), through the study by Gamboa et al. (2017), where it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the statements of the educational policies of the programme and the accounts of the subjects under study, i.e., the educational actors of the aforementioned programme. In addition, it is worth highlighting the role of research in the training highlighted by these authors, stating that this will allow the impact of students beyond the academy, thus ensuring the social function from research; which is another factor to consider in the development of the curriculum within the UFPS.

Likewise, within the UFPS communication programme, we also found a study (Urbina & Agudelo, 2016) that validates its social projection in programme contents, with its methodologies, concepts, bibliography and technical learning concepts, where the proposal for the academic scenarios are conceptual studies that allow the development of inclusive concepts and with a view to community development. In this sense, such a study, oriented

based on the competences for the training of these professionals, shows strengths in their academic profiles in areas such as research, analysis or the execution of communication projects, but lacks basic communication tools applicable to communication for development and social change, in terms of updating their knowledge and skills in the field of communication for development and social change, in terms of updating the bibliography and in the coherence of this with this or that subject, in addition to the fact that the theoretical contrasts generated recently are being forgotten. Considering the above and among other things, these authors propose 5 specific purposes for directing, from the competences, the training process of social communicators at the UFPS that can be considered in the development of other micro-curricula, namely the first aims to promote theoretical and practical skills related to the concept of Communication and Social Change, secondly, to guide the student to interpret and understand the socio-cultural phenomena of a context (local or global), thirdly, to train professionals capable of interacting and mediating competently through social research processes in different public spheres, fourth, to strengthen critical thinking through spaces for participation, dialogue and debate, where it is possible to propose and evaluate actions that contribute to communication and social change, fifth, to contribute with research tools to provide follow-up and continuity to field work in the area. (Urbina & Agudelo, 2016)

Methodology

This process of educational enquiry conforms to the characteristics of the mixed approach by adopting a descriptive cross-sectional level, with data collection directly from the primary source. As stated in Hernández (2018) mixed or hybrid methods represent a set of systematic, empirical and critical research processes and involve the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as their integration and joint discussion, to draw inferences from all the information gathered.

A sequential process is followed that starts with a documentary review of the elements that guide the curricular management of the various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes belonging to each of the six faculties of this university, to identify the existence of this information. The existence of this information was verified on the web portal of each academic programme during the first semester of the year 2022; subsequently, a semi-structured interview was conducted with two academic programme directors who voluntarily agreed to be part of this process so that they could share their experiences in the construction of these elements associated with the curricular process of the programme they coordinate.

The data collected in the documentary review phase are organized in an Excel template and then exported to SPSS v25 for descriptive processing. The interviews are digitized and then

analysed from their argumentative process to identify the processes followed by these programme managers in this construction.

It is important to clarify that this report becomes a diagnosis of the current state of the curriculum management process that prevails in the university and that contributes to the process of continuous improvement that is part of the institutional philosophy within the framework of the Institutional Accreditation of High Quality that the institution has.

Results

Quantitative Phase: General characterization of the academic offer. This process of academic characterization begins by mentioning that of the 46 programmes that form part of the academic offer of this higher education institution, curricular information has been found for 36 of them, that is to say, 78% of the programmes of the academic offer have published partial or total information on their various curricular characteristics. Assuming as the universe of this report the 36 programmes whose information has been published on the institutional website, 42% of the academic offer is concentrated in the Faculty of Education, followed by the Faculties of Engineering and Agricultural Sciences.

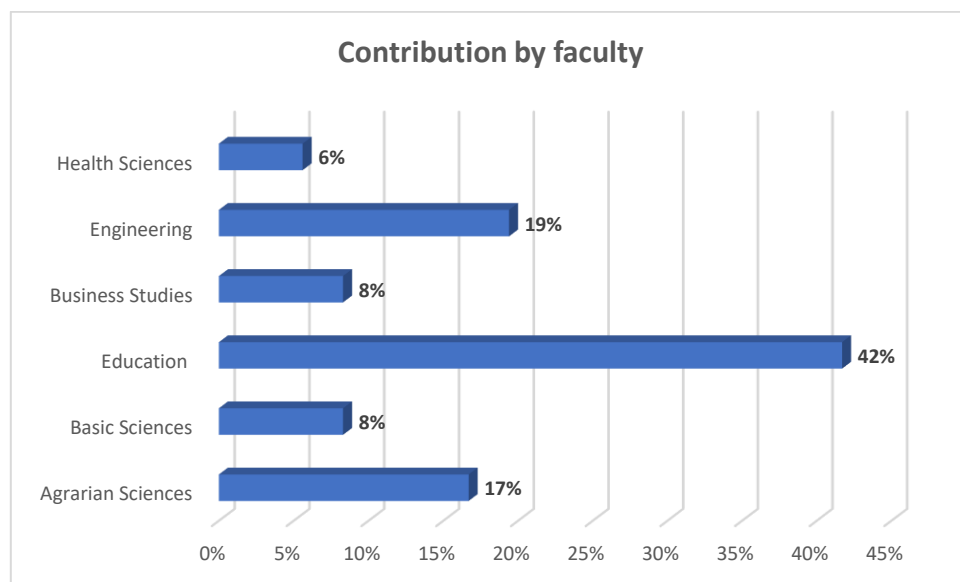


Figure 1. Distribution by faculties of the curricular information associated with the various academic programmes

Since the academic offer is concentrated in programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, Table 1 shows the distribution of the programmes within each faculty according to this criterion, highlighting, for example: a) at a general level 72% of the

academic offer is concentrated in professional training programmes; b) the Faculties of Education, Agricultural Sciences and Basic Sciences have academic programmes at both levels of training; c) the Faculties of Business Sciences, Health Sciences and Engineering concentrate their academic offer in undergraduate programmes; d) the Faculty of Education leads the academic offer of the university regardless of the level of training.

Table 1. Academic distribution according to level of education by faculty

		Level of education		Total
		Undergraduate	Postgraduate	
Faculty	Agricultural Sciences	14%	3%	17%
	Basic Sciences	3%	6%	8%
	Education	22%	19%	42%
	Business Science	8%	0%	8%
	Engineering	19%	0%	19%
	Health Sciences	6%	0%	6%
	Total	72%	28%	100%

Table 2 below presents a detailed report of the findings within the three faculties (Education, Agricultural Sciences and Basic Sciences) that have programmes at both levels of training, in terms of their curricular management characteristics. In all the academic programmes of the three faculties, it is observed that they have a curricular proposal in which the training axes or components can be seen, followed in order of recurrence by the training objectives, the occupational profile, the mission, the professional profile and the vision of the programme. It can be seen that, on average, one out of every two programmes in these three faculties have defined generic and specific competences. Regarding the graduate profile, it was determined that very few programmes have it defined, which is an activity to be included in the improvement plans, since it becomes the navigation chart towards which all training efforts are directed.

Table 2. Curricular diagnosis of faculties with undergraduate and graduate programmes

Aspect evaluated	Compliance	Education	Agricultural Sciences	Basic Sciences
Mission	Yes	60%	83%	67%
	Average	70%		
Vision	Yes	60%	83%	33%
	Average	59%		

Professional Profile	Yes	67%	67%	67%
	Average	67%		
Occupational Profile	Yes	80%	83%	67%
	Average	77%		
Graduate Profile	Yes	20%	17%	33%
	Average	23%		
Training Objectives	Yes	87%	83%	100%
	Average	90%		
Generic Competences	Yes	47%	50%	67%
	Average	55%		
Specific Competences	Yes	53%	33%	67%
	Average	51%		
Axes/Components of training	Yes	100%	100%	100%
	Average	100%		
Curricular Structure	Yes	100%	100%	100%
	Average	100%		

Table 3 presents a detailed report of the findings within the three faculties (Engineering, Business Sciences and Health Sciences) whose academic offer is concentrated at the undergraduate level. In all the academic programmes of the three faculties, it can be seen that they have a curricular proposal in which the training axes or components can be seen framed within a clearly defined mission and vision. In eight out of ten programmes in this analysis group, it was found that they set out the professional and occupational profiles together with the training objectives, in contrast to the absence of the graduate profile and competences (generic and specific) in the same proportion.

Table 3. Curricular diagnosis of faculties reporting only undergraduate programmes

Aspect evaluated	Compliance	Engineering	Business Studies	Health Sciences
Mission	Yes	100%	100%	100%
	Average	100%		
Vision	Yes	100%	100%	100%
	Average	100%		
Professional Profile	Yes	100%	67%	100%
	Average	89%		
	Yes	100%	100%	50%

Occupational Profile	Average	83%		
Graduate Profile	Yes	14%	67%	0%
	Average	27%		
Training Objectives	Yes	100%	67%	100%
	Average	89%		
Generic Competences	Yes	14%	33%	0%
	Average	16%		
Specific Competences	Yes	14%	33%	0%
	Average	16%		
Axes/Components of training	Yes	100%	100%	100%
	Average	100%		
Curricular Structure	Yes	100%	100%	100%
	Average	100%		

Qualitative phase: Experiences of academic programme directors. Based on the panorama set out in Tables 2 and 3, the need arises to investigate much more about what happens within the academic programmes when the curricular proposal of a programme is generated and the considerations that are considered in the framework of the current requirements for qualified registration and high-quality accreditation of programmes.

In this sense, two semi-structured interviews were conducted, in which the central theme was to explore the way in which the curricular proposal of an academic programme is organized. The following are the narratives of two programme directors, one undergraduate and one postgraduate.

Director of the undergraduate programme. Well, the programme initially arose from a study of educational needs for the training of graduates in the city, specifically in the field of early childhood care. Once the need for training was verified, a review of the curricular proposals that were being developed in local and national contexts was carried out to identify training trends in terms of the academic denomination of the programme. From there, an ad hoc curriculum committee was formed to organize the document with all its constituent elements associated with the professional training proposal. For six months this committee worked on the construction of the programme's own aspects such as the name, mission, vision, entry profiles and professional and occupational training profiles, together with the curricular proposal. All these constituent elements were organized in harmony and coherence with the Institutional Educational Project and the Educational Project of the Faculty, while complying with the requirements of the National Accreditation Council and the relevant

current regulations. This document was accompanied, revised and refined by support staff from the Academic Vice-Rectorate until it was ready to be presented to the relevant bodies and, after a visit by peers, it was awarded a seven-year registration.

Three years have passed since the start of the academic offer of the programme to date, during which time successes and failures have been identified in this curricular proposal. Likewise, it must be acknowledged that the regulations governing the operation of undergraduate programmes are undergoing a transformation transition to the so-called Learning Outcomes, which must be articulated with the generic and specific competences that the programme promotes from the development of its curricular proposal.

For the above reasons, the curriculum committee, together with the academic community of the programme, is currently working on this process of adjustment and compliance with new requirements, all with the aim of being able to guarantee Cúcuta society a programme with high professional competences, with environmental commitment that sees in the exercise of the teaching profession a laboratory of constant pedagogical improvement and in line with current regulations. This is why we are working on the construction of other requirements such as the graduate profile, which at the time of the initial construction of the document was not required. As can be inferred, this process of self-evaluation must be permanent in order not to fall behind.

Conclusions

From the process advanced in this research of a pedagogical nature with a focus on curricular management, it was possible to identify that there are elements or characteristics of academic programs that are considered essential in their operating process, such as having a mission, vision or training objectives; but there are aspects that are beginning to vary in coherence with the regulations defined by the Ministry of National Education of Colombia, as in the case of starting to discuss generic and specific competences in response to the objective of determining the added value generated by the vocational training process, taking the training received during the basic and secondary education cycles as a starting point; or, for example, to begin to analyse learning outcomes as an element that makes it possible to demonstrate the quality of training for life, given that this is the central objective, that the person enters a social context with high standards of competitiveness. It is then necessary to recognize the permanent need to revise curricular proposals so that they are always in line with the needs of a local context which is strongly influenced by the national context and which, in turn, is regulated by policies defined by international bodies such as the OECD and the World Bank.

References

- Castañeda, A., Vargas, G., Orduz, M., Acero, O., & Gómez, J. (2020). La formación integral en los posgrados en educación: aportes desde el humanismo, el currículo, la epistemología y la educación 4.0 en América Latina. Fundación Universitaria Juan N. Corpas. Centro Editorial. Ediciones FEDICOR
<https://repositorio.juanncorpas.edu.co/handle/001/53>
- Gamboa-Suárez, A. A., Vargas-Tolosa, R., Hernández-Suárez, C. A. (2017). Investigación formativa: Pretensiones curriculares y representaciones sociales de actores educativos en el programa de Enfermería de la Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander – Cúcuta, Colombia. Universidad y Salud, 19(1), 60-66.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.22267/rus.171901.69>
- Garbanzo, G. M. (2001). La administración curricular en la Educación Superior caso de la Universidad de Costa Rica. Educación, 25(2), 25-39.
- Gómez, J. A. (2020), Transformaciones curriculares en la educación superior en América Latina. En A. Castañeda, G. Vargas, M. Orduz, O. Acero & J. Gómez, La formación integral en los posgrados en educación: aportes desde el humanismo, el currículo, la epistemología y la educación 4.0 en América Latina. Fundación Universitaria Juan N. Corpas. Centro Editorial. Ediciones FEDICOR.
<https://repositorio.juanncorpas.edu.co/handle/001/53>
- Hernández, R. (2018). Metodología de la investigación: las rutas cuantitativa, cualitativa y mixta. McGraw Hill.
- Hoyos, Y., Oviedo, S., Rincón, M., & Serrano, I. (2016). Fortalecimiento de la identidad institucional acorde con las necesidades del estudiante en sus diferentes contextos, como base para la resignificación del currículo (tesis de maestría, Universidad del Norte). Repositorio Institucional Uninorte.
<http://manglar.uninorte.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10584/8037/128314.pdf?seq>
- Torres, S., & Mejía, A. (2006). Una visión contemporánea del concepto de administración: revisión del contexto colombiano. Cuadernos de Administración, 19(32), 111-133. Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander. (1993, 01 de diciembre). Acuerdo 091 de 1993. Por el cual se establece el Estatuto general de la Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander. https://ufpso.edu.co/ftp/pdf/estatutos/acuerdo_091.pdf
- Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander. (1994, 09 de diciembre). Acuerdo 126 de 1994. Estructura Orgánica. https://ww2.ufps.edu.co/public/archivos/reglamentacion/1994-8-Estructura_Organica_2.pdf
- Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander. (2006, 05 de marzo). Acuerdo 006 de 2003. Por el cual se establecen orientaciones en torno a la concepción, desarrollo y evaluación del currículo y se define la política curricular de la Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander.
<https://ww2.ufps.edu.co/public/archivos/pdf/62f181e3cf18e276d9ce5ef65880023f.pdf>

- Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander. (2021, mayo). Proyecto Educativo Institucional Sede Central y Seccional Ocaña. UFPS. https://ww2.ufps.edu.co/public/archivos/oferta_academica/PEI.pdf
- Urbina, D. L., & Agudelo, A. F. (2016). Análisis de las competencias en formación en comunicación para el desarrollo y cambio social a partir de los microcurrículos del programa de pregrado en comunicación social de la universidad Francisco de Paula Santander, Cúcuta (tesis de maestría, Universidad Santo Tomás). Repositorio Institucional USTA. <https://repository.usta.edu.co/bitstream/handle/11634/9898/2016andr%c3%a9sagudelo.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Venegas, P., Campos, N., Carvajal, C. A., Sequeira, A., & Pérez, H. (1986). Fundamentación y lineamientos para la estructuración de un curso de Administración curricular. *Educación*, 10 (1), 147-152.