

# In the footsteps of research in the Faculty of Nursing at Universidad de Antioquia

Tras las Huellas de la investigación en la Facultad de Enfermería de la Universidad de Antioquia

Depois das impressões da investigação na Faculdade de Enfermagem da Universidade de Antioquia

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This year, on the 24th of August, we commemorated 25 years since the creation of the Research Center at the Faculty of Nursing (CIFE, for the term in Spanish). Celebrating this date implies visiting the past and rescuing the events that permitted its creation and development.

The Center, a project by Dean Liria Pérez (1983 - 1985), had as main objectives to continue promoting research among professors and editing a scientific journal.<sup>1</sup> It was approved by the Superior Council on 24 August 1987,<sup>2</sup> when Cecilia Soto was Dean.

The CIFE began operating under the direction of Professor Marta Lucía Toro (1987-1989). In 1989, the CIFE Technical Committee (TC) evaluated the state of research in the Faculty and considered it a priority for its advancement the creation of groups to develop lines of research. One of the most important results by the Center, along these years, was when it held the *Forum on Nursing Practices*<sup>1</sup> in 1990, which concluded with the proposal to stimulate the development of research to contribute in the elaboration of protocols for care, validation of nursing models, and which could help in the construction of standards to improve the quality of care at different levels.

Throughout the 1990s, work was enthusiastic in the consolidation of the research lines:<sup>1</sup> care for adults and children in critical state of health, health of ethnic groups, nursing practices within the social context, gender and health, sexuality and clinical care, terminal phase, death and palliative care, and healthcare professionals and reforms to the healthcare sector; many of these grew until becoming the object of the current research

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groups. Also, during that decade, the Faculty of Nursing began being part of the ACOFAEN National Committee on Research,<sup>1</sup> participation that helped with the visibility of our research in the national scope.

As relayed by Professor Cecilia Mabel Restrepo in her book *History of the Faculty of Nursing at Universidad de Antioquia*,<sup>1</sup> during that period: "The Faculty reaffirmed that research and teaching constitute the core of academic life, and both, articulated with community outreach, are the means to accomplish its institutional objectives". In Act 126 of 1996 of the Faculty Council (FC), three important activities were proposed: creation of the Ethics Committees in the Area of Health, hold sessions to transmit the investigative efforts carried out by the professors, and creation of young researchers in the undergraduate to contribute to their formation and prepare the faculty relay.

In 1997, according to TC Act 133 of 1997, some contributions from the technological era were implemented, like the creation of the web page and assignment of e-mail addresses to the heads of the Center, which facilitated the work of disseminating information related to research. Also, the University created the Area Committees, which foster the exchange of research experiences among the faculties, schools, and institutes; said committees, are represented by a coordinator in the Committee for the Development of Research. During 1999, low and medium amount calls for projects were begun with University resources, and TC Act 37 of 1999 emphasizes as needs requiring immediate action: support to the Masters and PhD in Nursing, consolidating the lines of research on care, integration of students as young researchers, evaluation of the quality of research with external reviewers, presentation of the research groups to national merit valuation calls held by COLCIENCIAS, and the consolidation of researcher networks and of the scientific community in nursing. During the same year, Professor Carmen de la Cuesta joined the Faculty; she pushed for the development of qualitative research and, along with other professors, promoted understanding of disciplinary issues

and the need to visualize care through research. During this time, training in qualitative research was carried out with known experts, favoring the consolidation of these studies in this Faculty.

Another important event in the CIFE history at the Faculty of Nursing is the participation of the research groups in the COLCIENCIAS calls, as part of the implementation of the policy on Science and Technology in the nation. In 2000, the group on *Social policies and healthcare services*, coordinated by Professor María Victoria López, was classified in category B; the group on *Nursing practices within the social context*, coordinated by Professor Consuelo Castrillón classified in category C; and the group on *Women's health*, coordinated by Professor Diva Stella Jaramillo, classified in category D. The aforementioned was only the beginning on the path to improving the classification of the groups.

For 2001, Secretary Diana Tamayo was transferred to the CIFE; she has been a key collaborator in the development and accompaniment to research in the Faculty. In 2003, according to FC Act 16, the Faculty Council approved regulations to adjust undergraduate research learning. Also, four texts on qualitative research were translated and edited: *Basics of qualitative research*, by Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin; *Critical issues in qualitative research methods*, by Janice Morse; *Making sense of qualitative data*, by Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson; and *Writing up qualitative research*, by Harry Wolcott. In 2004, generational faculty relays became manifest by hiring of 23 new professors for the research groups. That same year, the Bioethics Committee was constituted (TC Act 14 CT of 2004).

According to the Universidad de Antioquia Development Plan 2006-2016,<sup>3</sup> "Research provides knowledge that permits effective progress in scientific, technological, and innovation spheres; lays the foundation for academic work, inasmuch as it permits quality professional and scientific formation, and enables a path toward constant modernization of teaching. Within this perspective, the Institution's ethical and social

commitment, in promoting research activity, must be closely linked and committed with progress in the disciplinary fields and with the solution to the most significant problems in the region and the nation". To respond to this Development Plan, the Technical Committee on Research, in Act 21 of 2007, agreed to increase the number of research projects, promote research in the evaluation of scientific evidence in nursing and on the priority problems in the Department of Antioquia. To accomplish this, the following strategies were defined: alliances with other Nursing faculties in the country, conduct multi-centric studies, broaden the offer of research courses with quantitative and qualitative focus, peer evaluation of research production, increase the number of articles published in indexed journals, secure fresh resources for research, support graduate programs – especially the Nursing PhD; and, lastly, but perhaps one of the most important challenges: incorporate the knowledge gained through research within the curriculum.

Today, the Faculty is undertaken great effort to offer more support to research as part of professors' daily work, promoting the preparation of projects

to participate in internal and external calls, and – when approved – promoting their execution. Now, although the Faculty is recognized among academic circles for its strengths in research, especially qualitative research, it has other challenges to meet, above all those having to do with improving production and impact factor indicators and with the collegiate work that places research as added value in the development of the human beings we are forming.

## Referencias

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