

# Philosophy Statement

*and Manuel F. Ayau's  
Inaugural Address*



**UFM**  
universidad  
FRANCISCO MARROQUÍN

UNIVERSIDAD FRANCISCO MARROQUÍN

# Philosophy Statement

*and Manuel F. Ayau's  
Inaugural Address*

ufm

## *contents*

Foreword	5
<b>I.</b> Theory and Practice	7
<b>II.</b> The Crisis of Human Reason	11
<b>III.</b> The University Facing the Crisis	15
<b>IV.</b> The University and Politics	19
<b>V.</b> The University and Social Service	23
<b>VI.</b> Academic Freedom	29
Manuel F. Ayau's Inaugural Address	31

*Universities need to place themselves beyond the conflicts of their time so that science and academic freedom—which humankind will need at all times—may be preserved.*



## *foreword*

*O*ur institution is coming to life in a world of conflict. Everywhere—under the inspiration and guidance of certain philosophical, economic, political and sociological doctrines—are people bent on the violent destruction of men and women and their institutions.

What should be the role of an institution of higher learning coming to life in such a world? It certainly should not be to attempt to pacify groups in conflict, much less to join any of them. The commitment of universities everywhere is not to the passing aspects of human life, rather to the permanent. As such, universities need to place themselves beyond the conflicts of their time so that science and academic freedom—which humankind will need at all times—may be preserved.

What we suggest here is that the traditional ivory tower not be abandoned by scholars seeking to join the heated discussions of the political arena, but that it be transformed into a new and transparent crystal tower that will allow scholars—professors and students—to watch, think about and critically study present conditions in an effort to discover the probable shape of the future.



*The purpose of emphasizing theory is not to separate theory from practice; rather it is to provide the necessary foundations so that practice becomes flexible, more thoughtful, freer and more effective.*



# Philosophy Statement

## *theory and practice*

## I

**U**niversidad Francisco Marroquín will emphasize the theoretical rather than the “practical” or “occupational” aspects of higher education.

The disdain in universities throughout the world for the study of theory is due, in part at least, to an incomplete understanding of the fact that all human thought finds its *raison d'être* in some form of action or practice. In the final analysis ***all knowledge***, whether the most general and abstract or the most specific and concrete, consists of knowing ***how*** to do something.

However, it does not follow that practice ought to *replace* the study of theory. Indeed every practice involves the application of one theory or another, whether or not this is

known by the person who acts. The difference between those who learn to apply a theory without knowing what theory they are applying and those who apply it knowingly is that the latter are in a position to look for alternative methods compatible with the theory.

Obviously the purpose of emphasizing theory is not to separate theory from practice; rather it is to provide the necessary foundations so that practice becomes flexible, more thoughtful, freer and more effective.

Those who are not aware of the theoretical foundations of their professional activity will not be able to go beyond the methods or techniques they learned to apply, nor will they be in a position to discover anything new in their professional field. They

will not have received, strictly speaking, a higher education; they will simply have acquired the necessary skills to perform certain tasks. It is not necessary for universities to teach these skills since technical schools exist throughout the world to do precisely that.

---

*What is important is to reexamine and reformulate theories and principles rather than train technicians in their application, for it is the validity of the principles themselves that is in question.*

---

Theoretical education, which necessarily involves practice, attempts to provide the basis for a vision that goes beyond the present in space and time; a vision that widens horizons instead of narrows them, and that makes for intellectual modesty rather than arrogance and intolerance, products of a narrow outlook and limited knowledge.

The disdain for theory and the emphasis on the “practical” have had a decisive influence on university instruction and on the contemporary academic philosophy in many universities. For instance, many believe that humanistic studies ought to be

replaced by technical studies that have an immediate application to social development. This thinking has contributed to the idea that universities are centers for the study of specific techniques.

Human society has always felt the need to create and support institutions of higher learning, dedicated to teaching and to the search for principles or theories whose practical consequences may contribute to a better way of life. We believe that although the training of technicians in different fields is an important function that centers of higher learning must perform, it is not less true that universities by definition and universal tradition are and have been much more than centers for the training of technicians.

Research is essential to academic work, and the teaching of techniques is essential to the work of technical schools. Since principles and theories do have practical consequences that are important for society to take advantage of, it is critical for society to teach techniques of application.

In the field of the natural sciences, the advance of knowledge has been so great that most universities in Latin America could dedicate themselves less to research in the natural sciences and more to the training of technicians in the application of the principles of those sciences—without greatly harming the advance of knowledge in these fields. After all, the majority of people

ple in the world live in under developed societies where a great many practical applications of scientific principles (discovered long ago) have scarcely been put into practice. In these countries the application of old scientific principles rather than the search for new ones seems to be the more urgent task.

In the field of social sciences the situation is quite different. The difference is not merely that progress in the social sciences has been small when compared to the natural sciences, or that the principles of the social sciences are not applied to advantage, as evidenced by the poverty, uneasiness and convulsions that plague many regions of the world today. The fact is that, unlike the case of sciences such as physics and chemistry, there is disagreement as to the *very nature and scope as science* of philosophy, economics, sociology and politics. Disagreements concerning specific theories are no less notorious. Under these circumstances, what is important is to reexamine and reformulate theories and principles rather than train technicians in their application, *for it is the validity of the principles themselves that is in question.*

For this reason, and by way of example, the curriculum of the School of Law will emphasize the study of human rights—their nature and foundations, or philosophy—rather than the

study of legislation and auxiliary sciences such as sociology. Likewise, the curriculum of the School of Economic Sciences will emphasize the study of economic theory rather than accounting and other disciplines auxiliary to economics.

---

*Unlike the case of sciences such as physics and chemistry, there is disagreement as to the very nature and scope as science of philosophy, economics, sociology and politics.*

---

Through its teachings and publications, the new University will try to critically and objectively examine the theories that have had a decisive influence on contemporary social organization. It is the University's hope that as a result of a broad, free and rigorous training its graduates will contribute to the adoption by our society of policies of collective improvement within the framework of the fundamental values of Western civilization.



*Today's university must face  
the challenge of the universal crisis  
of human reason. When reason's  
voice is weak, everything is  
threatened.*



All education, from elementary to higher, tries to provide human beings with what they need to fully develop their constructive capacities and thereby prepare them to be able to search for their own satisfactory way of life. One of these capacities, the sum total of the rest, is the potential to live peacefully among other human beings. However, peaceful coexistence requires that we all make an effort so that reason is paramount in all aspects of human life. This means, among other things, that we all make an effort that the ideas of others be respected, since no one holds a monopoly on truth. We must also be willing to respect the rights of others—as human beings and citizens—as the only way to live in peace.

The violence of our time constitutes evidence of the decline of human reason throughout the world and, consequently, of the worldwide failure of education. As we have suggested, the rational capacity of human beings is manifest not only in their search for adequate means to certain ends.

*The violence of our time constitutes evidence of the decline of human reason throughout the world and, consequently, of the worldwide failure of education.*

It is also manifest in the value they assign to those ends. It is not necessary

It is also manifest in the value they assign to those ends. It is not necessary to argue that not all that a person is in a position to reach is valuable, for it would be enough to recall that from the very beginning humankind has had at its disposal adequate means to destroy itself.

Today's university must face the challenge of the universal crisis of human reason. When reason's voice is weak, everything is threatened. Liberty, peace, civilization are threatened. Indeed, the very life of man as a species is threatened.

As we have pointed out, the crisis of human reason reveals itself through violence. Violent actions, especially those that are political in nature, are motivated by specific interpretations and valuations of given social conditions; they do not spring from social conditions themselves, as some suggest. A person cannot act unless he does so on the basis of an interpretation—no matter how rudimentary—and all interpretations are in principle capable of being mistaken. To assume that a person can react automatically or instinctively (that is without the mediation of an interpretation or valuation) not only to simple physical stimuli such as rays of light and changes in temperature, but also to such complex stimuli as a whole social environment, is to make an evidently false assumption. Persons react in identical or almost identical ways

to physical stimuli, but to social, political, artistic or religious conditions their reactions vary considerably.

---

*All education, from elementary to higher, tries to provide human beings with what they need to fully develop their constructive capacities and thereby prepare them to be able to search for their own satisfactory way of life.*

---

The crisis of human reason is also revealed in the rejection or unthinking abandonment of some of the fundamental values of Western civilization, such as peace, the infinite value of the person, freedom and the respect for property. As sources of rights and obligations, it is these values that have made peaceful coexistence possible. Such values, contrary to what some think, have been discovered rather than invented, by persons of great wisdom. Thus, it is neither through arbitrary decisions of rulers nor the pressure of ruling groups that they have become instituted. And their validity has nothing to do with the age in which they have been discovered. For example, many features of the Greco-Christian philosophy of man and life have greater significance

for our time than some of the later experiences of humanity including, undoubtedly, certain aspects of our contemporary experience.

However, just as it is not the antiquity of the classical experience that determines its validity, so it is not the contemporaneity of ours that determines its invalidity. Perhaps the contemporary experience of man and life will become “classical” for coming generations. That will depend on our achieving greater depth and scope in our understanding of humankind.

---

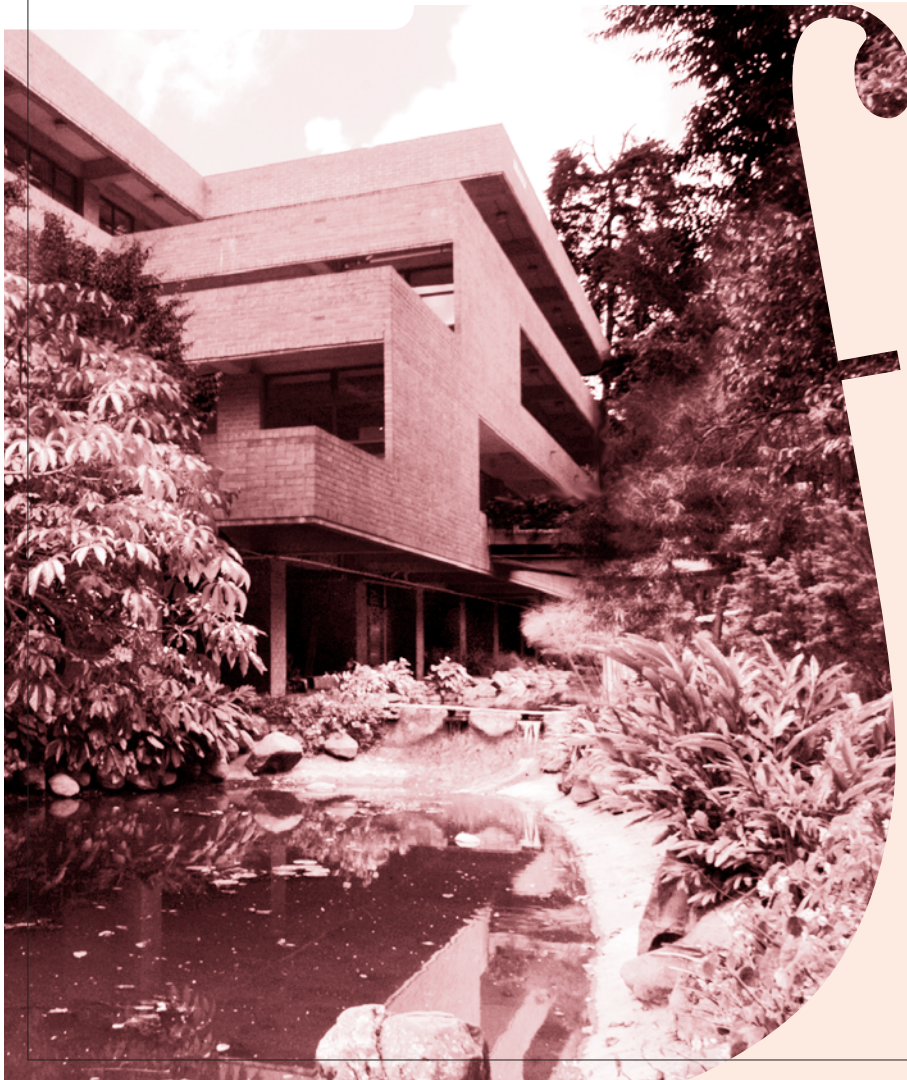
*The crisis of human reason is also revealed in the rejection or unthinking abandonment of some of the fundamental values of Western civilization, such as peace, the infinite value of the person, freedom and the respect for property.*

---





*The endeavor to attain self-perfection is the only task under the effective control of each individual, and that necessarily benefits others. It is also the end toward which education, at any level, can contribute.*



## *the university facing the crisis*      **III**

**H**ow can a university face the challenge of the universal crisis of reason? We are convinced that it can do so only through serene and rigorous academic work in an environment of absolute intellectual freedom.

In most contemporary societies, the young are under pressure to become involved in collective movements of one kind or another. For this very reason it is important that they have the opportunity to discover the why and wherefore of their involvement. Youth is combative, youth is enthusiastic. However, few things can be more harmful for a social conglomerate than the alliance of belligerent enthusiasm with ignorance.

If due to their nature young people are enthusiastic and idealistic, it is the job of those who once were young to guide them so that their enthusiasm may be beneficial rather than harmful to themselves and to society at large.

---

*Youth is combative, youth is enthusiastic. However, few things can be more harmful for a social conglomerate than the alliance of belligerent enthusiasm with ignorance.*

---

The endeavor to attain self-perfection is the only task under the effective control of each individual, and that necessarily benefits others. It is also the end toward which education, at any level, can contribute. Education that seeks to contribute to the search for human perfection must be an education that guarantees the free analysis and discussion of diverse ideas and values. It must be an education in which learning is fundamentally a process of self-discovery rather than the mechanical absorption of ideas or principles. In short, it must be a process that strengthens and guides the natural inclinations of men and women in their attempt to understand themselves and their surrounding world. Poor education—that is the process that does not allow the free exercise of the rational capacity of those that are to be educated—is worse than the absence of systematic education. Common sense left to itself has a better and deeper reach than common sense that has been deformed by poor educational institutions, something we see confirmed in all aspects of life.

Higher education has always fought against prejudice and ignorance and has subjected popular myths to rigorous rational analysis. Its function has been fundamentally of an intellectual nature. We believe that higher education cannot have any other function in our time. What is more, we believe it to be urgent that it have this function.

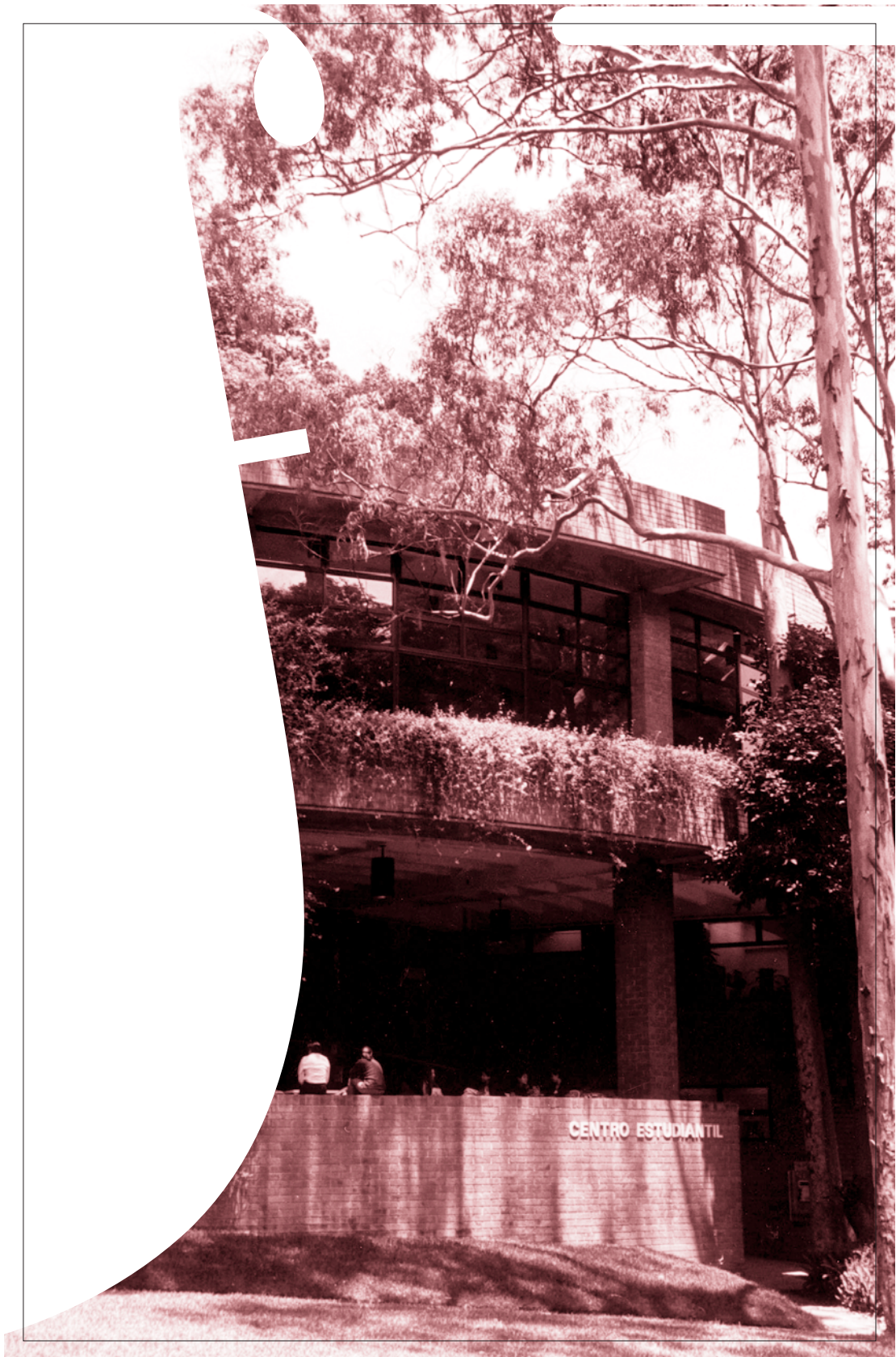
---

*Education must be a process that strengthens and guides the natural inclinations of men and women in their attempt to understand themselves and their surrounding world.*

---

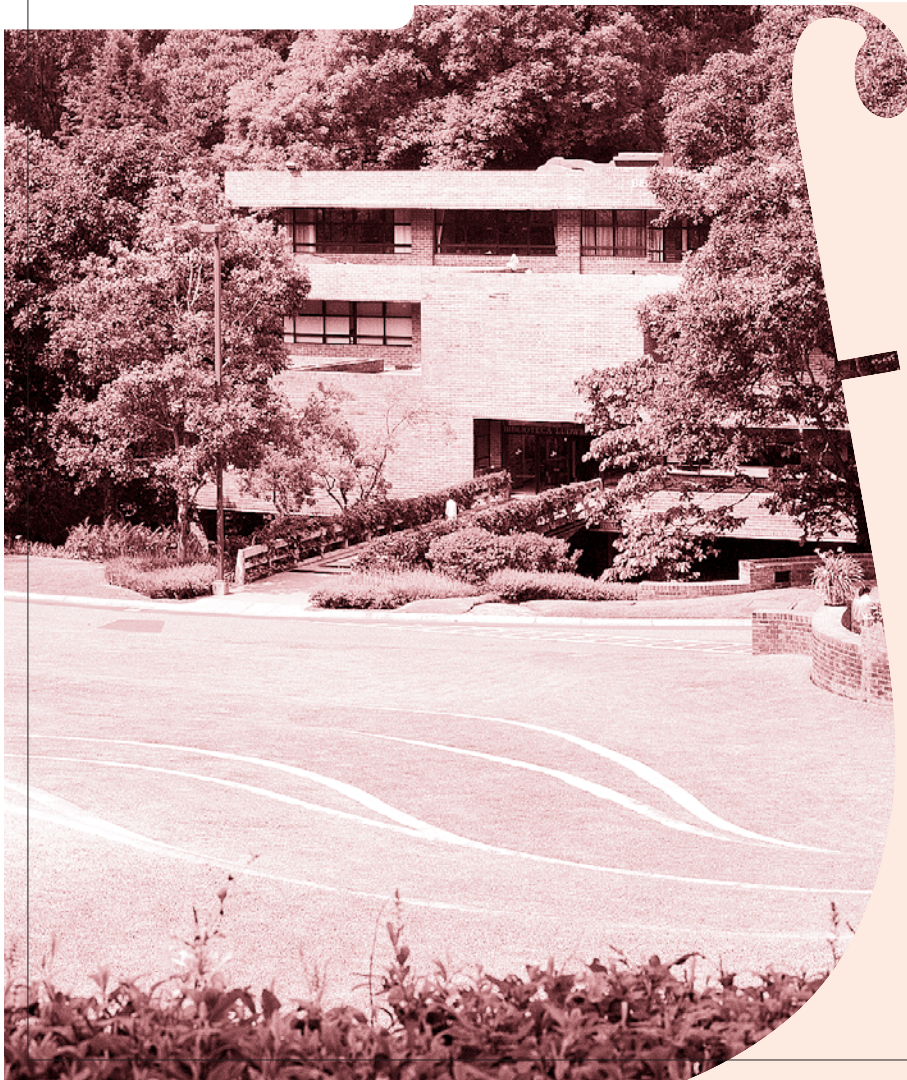
Contemporary tendencies to weigh universities down with moral and political responsibilities reveal the crisis of our time. And those tendencies, besides being erroneous in principle (as will be pointed out below), jeopardize the work of the Academy, for they can easily transform classrooms from laboratories in search of truth into soap boxes for one or another political faction. The moral responsibility of universities does not go beyond cultivating the love of the search for truth and for academic freedom.







*Universities, because of their nature, are beyond the deliberate search for solutions to the social problems of the moment.*



*T*he contentious world we live in demands that we return to the classical or fundamental idea of a university: an institution of learning, teaching and research dedicated through its organization, orientation and function to academic excellence; one that has nothing to do with the deliberate search for solutions to the social problems of the moment.

Since this statement can so easily create misunderstanding, no sooner has it been said than it is necessary to offer some explanations. Why is it necessary to emphasize that universities, because of their nature, are beyond the deliberate search for solutions to the social problems of the moment? The belief that it is the business of universities to look for

solutions to these problems necessarily leads to the idea that it is the function of universities to carry out activities that correspond to government offices, which is evident even through a superficial analysis of the phrase “solutions to social problems.”

---

*It could even be said that the social efficiency of academic work has been inversely proportional to the concern by scholars for the social conditions of the time in which they live.*

---

The concept of solution does not have the same meaning within the context of social problems as it has within the context of scientific problems. Scientific problems are solved when someone presents a true description or theory. This is not so in the case of social problems. The solution to social problems requires, (besides the pertinent information) the concerted action of groups or parties and, thereby, direct or indirect participation in a political process. It is not hard to imagine that even if the universities throughout the world found solutions to the scientific aspects of the principal social problems, the world would remain underdeveloped because the required political action to solve them was lacking. For example, many believe that the science of economics long ago discovered the road that people must follow if they want to improve their lives; nevertheless, people have not traveled that road.

---

*A university that is “politicized,” externally or internally, is in danger of increasingly taking on the characteristics of a political party and losing those of a place of higher learning.*

---

Therefore, if one insists that it is the direct or indirect function of universities to concern themselves with the solution of social problems, one is saying—though not explicitly—that the function of the university is political as well as academic. This idea has the most harmful consequences for academic work, some of which will be discussed below.

On the other hand, when one asserts that universities ought to worry about the solution to social problems, if all one wants to say is that they should study economic, political, legal and sociological questions that have a direct bearing on the solutions to social problems, then it is really not worth saying.

The history of higher education shows that universities have always made important contributions to social welfare; and additionally, that such contributions have never been the result of the “social sensitivity” or the concern of university people with solving the problems of their society. Such contributions have always been the result of “scientific sensitivity”—the devotion to the search for truth—as is clearly shown by the history of science. It could even be said that the social efficacy of academic work has been inversely proportional to the concern by scholars for the social conditions of the time in which they live.

It is not hard to find the reason for this. As we have suggested, the idea that it is the business of universities to worry about solving social problems necessarily involves the confusion of politics and academics. This confusion, which has been evident in most public universities in Latin America for more than half a century (and which threatens to “politicize” universities in other parts of the world), has only prevented universities from being socially efficient. By adopting political methods and criteria for selecting personnel, administration and evaluation of academic work, these universities have notoriously harmed teaching and research—precisely those university activities that are of collective benefit. The external or internal “politicization” of universities not only threatens the advance and diffusion of knowledge, it also threatens academic freedom.

As everyone knows, the political mind is basically concerned with group or party action. This type of action cannot be carried out without common criteria, whatever the nature of such criteria. Politicians engage in “dialogues” in order to make deals, to agree upon courses of action, to see to it that a certain policy is adopted. However, they are not interested in “dialogues” to understand or discover truth. Politicians assume that they know the truth; their very profession demands this. Politicians, *qua* politicians, are interested neither

in science nor art. Thus “academic politician” is a contradiction in terms.

For these reasons a university that is “politicized,” externally or internally, is in danger of increasingly taking on the characteristics of a political party and losing those of a place of higher learning. This is especially true if political activity is the main source of employment and social prestige, as is often the case in Latin America.

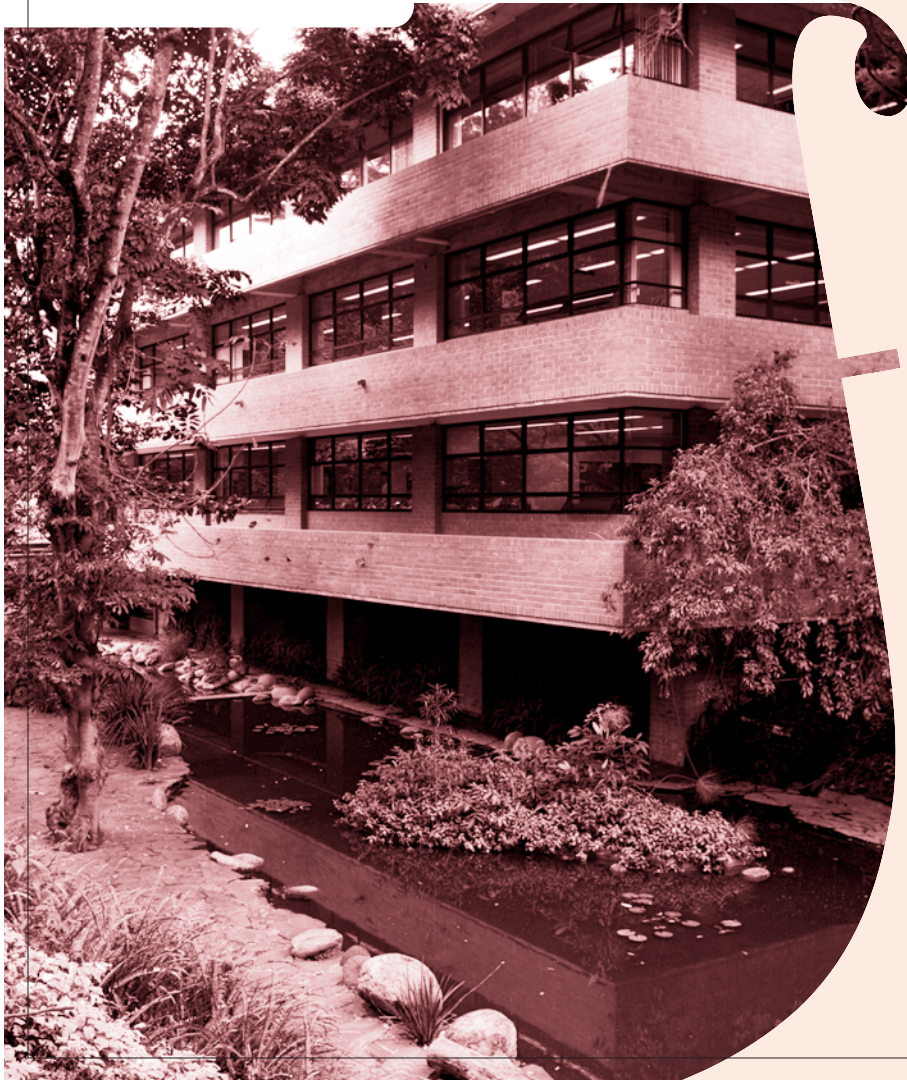
---

*The external or internal “politicization” of universities not only threatens the advance and diffusion of knowledge, it also threatens academic freedom.*

---



***Universities** are not created to  
serve their community—despite the  
fact that they do serve the community  
when they efficiently perform their  
academic function.*



## *the university and social service*    **V**

**A**s we have seen, if one believes it is the responsibility of universities to worry about solutions to social problems, one is naturally led to confuse the categories of politics and academics. We have already pointed out some of the implications this idea has for academic work. In addition, the idea that it is a primary or secondary function of the university to worry about solutions to social problems naturally implies the notion that universities are centers of social service—dispensaries of culture instead of centers of opportunity for individual improvement and for the training of leaders in science and culture.

The implications of conceiving universities as centers of social service are as clear and harmful as the impli-

cations of thinking that universities have political responsibilities or that they should carry out activities that belong to state offices.

---

*The implications of conceiving universities as centers of social service are as clear and harmful as the implications of thinking that universities have political responsibility or that they should carry out activities that belong to state offices.*

---

Centers of social service are created to give various types of assistance—according to clearly defined criteria—indiscriminately to those who request it. On the other hand, universities (whether or not they are state institutions) are not created to serve their community—*despite the fact that they **do** serve the community when they efficiently perform their academic function.*

---

***A moment's reflection is enough to make clear that it is only in an indirect or derived sense that universities exist to serve their community. Indeed, when they fulfill their function well they do serve their community.***

---

What is being denied when one asserts that universities do not exist to serve their community? One is denying that universities can both fulfill their academic function and, at the same time, respond to a will that assigns them a specific service. If we asked ourselves the reason for their being or the *what for* of their existence, we would have to answer that universities exist to transmit and search for advanced knowledge; to advance and strengthen the arts and sciences; to

raise the cultural level of the community—all guided by the conviction that scientific and cultural progress result in collective benefit, as evident from the positive impact of universities on their societies and the world at large.

However, the following could be argued:

Granting it is true that, in general, universities are at the service of the arts and sciences, why can it not be equally true to assert that they exist to serve their community? Why do people search for and transmit knowledge? Is it not to benefit their community, to serve it? Is it possible to justify the existence of universities in any other way?

Those who assert that universities exist to serve the community are not really answering the question concerning the reason for the existence of universities. Instead, what they have in mind are the benefits that university work provides society as a matter of course. A moment's reflection is enough to make clear that it is only in an *indirect or derived* sense that universities exist to serve their community. Indeed, when they fulfill their function well they do serve their community.

Consider the following example: Judicial power exists to administer justice, and we would all agree that

the administration of justice benefits everyone. However, what would happen if judges believed that their function was not merely to administer justice impartially but also to “serve” the community? Would they be, by virtue of such motivation, in a better position to administer justice? What would happen if the judge *qua* judge were motivated by considerations regarding the consequences of his judicial decision for society—considerations that are foreign to the law? Is it not reasonable to think that the criteria of impartiality, universality and certainty—essential to the administration of justice—would be weakened or diluted when mixed with the criteria logically more distant and far less clear and precise? Is it not equally reasonable to think that because of this the administration of justice would suffer and, consequently, so would social well being? Justice serves society, but the judge serves justice.

The application of these considerations to the function of universities, and especially to the work of professors, seems to us clear and straight forward. Science serves society, but the university serves science.

There are also other reasons, both theoretical and practical, for holding that it is a mistake to think that universities exist to serve their community. The concept of “institutional obligation” (implicit in the idea that

at least part of the mission of universities is to provide social services, and explicitly expressed in ideas about the obligations of abstract entities) originated in the attribution of obligations to personalized collectives such as *The State*, *The Church* or *The University*. These obligations, however, are primarily those of individuals.

---

*Science serves society,  
but the university serves  
science.*

---

It is evident that, strictly speaking, only individuals can have obligations. The personification of abstract entities, so common in ordinary language, can be seen in expressions such as “The State ought to try . . .,” or “The Church is concerned about . . .,” or “The University wants to make it known . . .” This is a logical mistake that ordinarily goes unnoticed because it generally does not create any confusion. In most cases it is simply a question of inexact use of language and does not generate any theoretical inferences or have any practical consequences.

On the other hand, when this type of personification provides the starting point or basis for a doctrine, it is worthwhile noting; especially since

it appears that the personification of *The State* and *The Collective* lies at the ideological root of totalitarian doctrines and contemporary ideas about the obligations of society.

As we have suggested, the value of the social service rendered by universities is and has always been in direct proportion to their academic excellence and *not* to their “social sensitivity.” And it is precisely academic excellence that is placed at risk when institutions of higher education are conceived as institutions of social service.

The concepts of “service,” “redemption” or “liberation” of the people or society presuppose the existence of someone who deserves our compassion; someone from whom little ought to be asked and to whom it is necessary to give generously. Social service is, fundamentally, the fulfillment of moral obligations by the person who serves. It does not imply the fulfillment of requisites or the exercise of responsibilities by the one being served, as is the case with higher education.

If, as it seems, even the fulfillment of moral and social obligations involves some kind of selection or choice, one must not be surprised at the fact that the opportunity to receive a higher education is selective by nature. We all know that universities throughout the world differentiate

between those who are capable and those who are incapable of taking advantage of the opportunity for personal improvement that higher education represents.

Consequently, if one is to accept the idea that social service is a basic function of universities rather than an indirect and derived one, then one would have to reduce the inevitable differentiation to its lowest level, offering the opportunity of university study to all who fulfill minimum requirements, such as having a high school diploma.

---

*Those universities that are conceived fundamentally as centers of social service will have to sacrifice the ideal of academic excellence.*

---

University work would also have to be adapted to the conditions and interests of students, instead of asking the students to satisfy the requirements of the university. The university would have to lower itself to their level instead of fixing a level at which students must aim.

It is well known that excellence in the sciences and the arts is not something everyone seeks, and that not all who seek it can attain it due to the



inclinations and limitations of each individual. In order to be consistent with their orientation, those universities that are conceived fundamentally as centers of social service will have to sacrifice the ideal of academic ex-

cellence. Paradoxically, in their attempt to live up to a mistaken ideal of social service, they will thereby diminish their chances of being socially effective.



*Universidad Francisco Marroquín*

*has the right to decide the contents of the  
courses it offers in view of what it holds to  
be true, false, useful or irrelevant.*



## *academic freedom*

## VI

**B**y academic freedom we understand the right of persons or groups of persons to teach any art or science. Thus, Universidad Francisco Marroquín has the right to decide the contents of the courses it offers in view of what it holds to be true, false, useful or irrelevant; and which can be taught within the time the students have to complete their degree requirements.

As is to be expected in any private institution, the professors to whom the University has assigned such an important task enjoy the confidence of its authorities because their academic and teaching views are similar to those of the University and the course content that they teach has its approval.

The Board of Trustees, the highest authority of the University, evaluates

the faculty from time to time in order to ascertain if what the University teaches is in accordance with what the Trustees wish to offer to those who choose to enroll.

Professors are free to teach or not what the University requests. Those professors who agree to teach what the University wishes become members of the faculty.

Universidad Francisco Marroquín recognizes the academic freedom of any faculty member to teach what is contrary to the University's philosophy or its policies, as long as this is done elsewhere and under someone else's auspices. Consequently, only those professors who choose to teach what the University requires of them become and remain members of its faculty.



*We firmly believe in the capacity  
of imperfect human beings to be better  
able to realize their destiny when free  
and not when compelled by the collective  
entity personified by the State.*





## *inaugural address*

**Presented at the inauguration of  
Universidad Francisco Marroquín,  
Guatemala City, on January 15, 1972  
by the president of the University,  
Manuel F. Ayau.**

**W**e begin today the realization of a dream, long cherished and enriched by each of the founders of Universidad Francisco Marroquín. Some have generously donated part of their assets; others have sacrificed time from their vital activities; and others have given the University the form and structure necessary to bring about its birth. All have strengthened the dream with their faith in the youth and the future of our country. To all of them, our profound gratitude.

*Those who refuse to argue  
with people of good will forgo  
an opportunity to develop  
their intellect.*

I would like to focus on the relationships between the institutions and the ideologies of those who direct them, but first I would make some general observations.

It is an accepted fact that a person does not knowingly deceive himself. He attempts to use pure reason to avoid the contamination of prejudice. He knows that prejudice leads a person to adopt the wrong means, and that the wrong means cannot lead to the right ends.

No one has a monopoly on truth. Men and women of good will who are working not only for their own benefit or for rewards in an afterlife, but also for the welfare of humankind, have many differences of opinion, due not to ill will but to sincere disagreement over complex ideas. Such differences are constructive so long as they do not degenerate into violent intransigence. They afford us the opportunity to analyze our own convictions. Unless you understand the argument of the person who disagrees with you better than he does, you cannot be sure that you are right. Of course those who argue with people of ill will waste their time. But those who refuse to argue with people of good will forgo an opportunity to develop their intellect.

In the history of humankind, freedom of belief has been defended with life itself, innumerable times. This is

ample proof of the value that human beings have always placed on freedom of conscience, thought and expression.

Peace becomes impossible to obtain when someone tries to impose common beliefs on all. It is sometimes said that the differences of opinion are in themselves the cause of conflict and must be eliminated, by force if necessary, in order to preserve peace. I believe that the reverse is true. Conflicts occur where diversity of ideas is not tolerated because, as an illustrious Mexican statesman said, peace is achieved through respecting other people's rights.

---

*In the history of humankind, freedom of belief has been defended with life itself, innumerable times.*

---

Certain ideological positions are mutually exclusive, such as socialism and liberal democracy. Nevertheless, both positions are defended by men and women of goodwill. These differences of opinion among people will necessarily be reflected in the character of the institutions that these people create.

Many institutions, such as universities, are directed by persons who, rightly or wrongly, believe in the validity of

their convictions. Should they come to realize that it is some other theory that is valid, and if they are intellectually honest, they will change their opinions and once again find themselves in the position of defending as valid those opinions they thereafter hold as true.

Because every institutional hierarchy will judge new members according to the beliefs considered valid by those called upon to do the judging, it is only natural that in institutions there prevails community of beliefs based on fundamental values. The converse situation would be as incongruous as a religious institution directed by atheists, or a socialist institution by liberals (believers in liberty). In either case, the authorities would consider unqualified those persons who did not share the convictions “of the institution.”

We, the founders of the Universidad Francisco Marroquín, hold as valid certain convictions; although some of them are shared with us by directors of other universities, we have considered it necessary to found another. We believe that there should exist an opportunity for pursuing academic excellence different from those already in existence; an opportunity that differs regarding the philosophy of social order and the type of professional training conducive to the peaceful progress of civilizations.

Many of these ideas have already been published in the *Philosophy Statement* of the University; however, on this occasion, as president I must be very frank about those convictions I personally hold. This personal declaration is of interest for two reasons. First, because of the reasons I mentioned earlier, it is inevitable that the hierarchy of this University will be influenced by these convictions and, as a consequence, in some measure will serve to anticipate the character of the University. The second reason is that since I have been honored with the responsibilities of this office, such delegation implies that the founders have made their choice taking these convictions into account, which even if not shared by each and all with perfect uniformity do reflect the spirit in which the University has been created, a spirit that must be made known to all of those who participate as donors, professors, administrators and students.

---

*Peace becomes impossible to obtain when someone tries to impose common beliefs on all.*

---

**We firmly believe** in the capacity of imperfect human beings to be better able to realize their destiny when free and not when compelled by the collective entity personified by the state.

**We believe** in individual rights. Freedom and property must always be respected, not only because they are innate to the human being, but also because of their utilitarian value to society. We do not think, therefore, that there exists any conflict between individual rights and social interest, such as could exist between individual interest and general interest.

---

***It is only natural that in institutions there prevails a community of beliefs based on fundamental values.***

---

**We believe** that truth or justice cannot be discovered by counting votes. We believe in democracy, but we also hold that, whereas the suffrage is an adequate method of determining the wishes of the majority and of deciding on matters of procedure, it is not the way to discover truth or justice.

**We believe** in the rule of law and not of persons or groups of persons, be they a minority or a majority. We believe in lawful government based on abstract general rules of just conduct that do not discriminate because of race, religion or economic position and that allow people to plan their lives in the certainty that results of their acts, when within the law, will be respected.

**We believe** that the spontaneous order that arises when persons act freely and peacefully to achieve their common material and spiritual ends is far superior to a designed social order imposed deliberately—a type of organization proper only to a business, a government or an army.

**We believe** that only responsible persons create prosperous and peaceful civilizations and that where there is no freedom, responsibility does not flourish.

**We believe** that there exists only one justice; that justice which gives to each his own. And we believe that any attempt to qualify justice tends to cause conflicts and to destroy justice itself.

**We believe** that a pluralistic and democratic society will always offer the greatest opportunity for progress and peace. In such a society the only possible means to gain acceptance of an idea is through persuasion and not coercion, through respect and not through violence. In such a society, precisely because people are free, diverse and multiple, experimentation has ample room to supplement the lack of human omniscience.

We are on the threshold of a difficult and important task. The youth of our country, like the youth all over the world, is anxious for improvement.



Guatemala has a long history of university education. Ever since the time when the illustrious Bishop Francisco Marroquín founded the college of Santo Tomás, the study of science and the arts has had a home in our land. Each new institution of higher education must feel duty bound to preserve and strengthen this long academic tradition.

May God help us and show us the road to the truth.

---

*These convictions reflect the spirit in which the University has been created, a spirit that must be made known to all of those who participate as donors, professors, administrators and students.*

---



Universidad Francisco Marroquín  
6 Calle final, zona 10  
Guatemala, Guatemala 01010

Telephone (+502) 2338-7700  
Fax (+502) 2334-6896

[inf@ufm.edu.gt](mailto:inf@ufm.edu.gt)

[www.ufm.edu](http://www.ufm.edu)

# Philosophy Statement

*and Manuel F. Ayau's  
Inaugural Address*

