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An Analysis of Graduate Studies in Venezuela

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## An Analysis of Graduate Studies in Venezuela

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## Introduction

In Venezuela, graduate studies are fast becoming an integral part of the system of higher education which should be a main element in the preparation of the faculty members and the professionals in several fields.

The purpose of this study is to explore the need for the expansion of graduate study programs as a basis for improving the quality of higher education, which should be the key for holding the creation of advanced technology appropriate to the nation's needs. This paper will begin with a review of the historical development of Venezuelan graduate studies. Finally, an attempt will be made to introduce some possible changes. Recommendations will be made for future action and/or study.

## Chapter I

### An Historical Review

Graduate education appeared in Europe in the medieval period, but most wide development was at the beginning of the last century as a result of the industrial, social, and political developments which occurred at that epoch in the main European countries.

Because of the economic-industrial revolution of the eighteenth century, the society required professionals to be well-trained, and as a consequence, people exerted pressure upon universities in order to realize a level of education concurrent with the social requirements.

The first manifestation of graduate studies were born in Germany.

The purpose of German graduate studies was to develop mature scholars and professional men and to provide a workshop for theoretical scientific research. The educational philosophy of *Lernfreiheit* (freedom of learning) and *Lehrfreiheit* (freedom of teaching) in graduate studies, where the students were permitted to take courses of their choice and the professors were free to investigate any and all problems in pursuit of their research, was a sharp contrast to the rigid structure of the undergraduate college. 1

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1David A. Trivett, "Graduate Education in the 1970's,"  
Higher Education, Clearinghouse Reports Research Report No. 7  
p.4

Latin America received from Spain "...the state, the church, and university, institutions reflecting the old medieval division of into the temporal, the spiritual, and the academic." <sup>2</sup> As a result, the Latin American universities are the institutions which have inherited the characteristics of the European models, and this influence also reflected upon the graduate studies.

In Latin America, the Masters and Doctors degrees, which are associated with graduate studies, are as old as the university institution itself. The medieval universities conferred the higher degree of Licentiate, Master in Arts, or Doctor of Theology, Law or Medicine. For instance, the Central University of Venezuela, called at that time the Real and Pontifical University of Santiago de Leon de Caracas and which was founded originally as a Catholic Seminary in 1696, conferred those degrees. (See Table 1, Degrees Conferred by the University of Caracas 1810)

As soon as Venezuelan independence was declared in 1810, Simon Bolivar initiated a series of decrees proclaiming compulsory and free education at all levels.

The revolution was particularly good and encouraging for higher education. The people from Merida took advantage of the political change in 1810 in order to upgrade its San Buenaventura Seminary to the university level, with the new name of Real University of Merida.

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<sup>2</sup>Mario Gongora, "Origin and Philosophy of the Spanish American University," The Latin American University Edited by Joseph Maier, University of New Mexico Press Albuquerque 1979 p.17

In 1824, the University of Caracas started a law school and divided its medical school into Theoretical and Applied Medicine. One year later, they recommended the creation of Political Economics and Modern Language.

The new statutes for acceptance of students put an end to social, racial and religious discrimination. From the point of view of the faculty, the reforms included more courses in medicine and mathematics, better salaries, and exemption from the military draft. The new programs were oriented more toward general education (humanities or liberal arts) than toward specialization. They required classes in French, English, Art and Physical Education for all students of Medicine.

In 1827, Simon Bolivar put at the head of the University of Caracas a scientist from England, and thus ended the domain of the Church in the administration of the university. At this time, the University of Caracas changed its name to Central University of Venezuela, where the curriculum was integrated by four "facultades" \* - Law, Theology, Medicine, and Philosophy- preceded by Latin and Literature. The courses of philosophy were integrated by metaphysics, grammar, logic, physics, mathematics, ethics and natural law. The only degree conferred was licentiate. (licenciado)

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\* In American terms, the "facultad" can best be compared to a school or college within a university. In Venezuela, however, a facultad often contains several schools and these contain their own departments.

TABLE 1

## Degrees Conferred by the University of Caracas

1725-1810

Faculties	Bachelors	Licenciate	Masters	Doctors	Total
Philosophy	1,028	107	117	---	1,252
Theology	191	128	---	112	431
Civil Law	170	29	---	30	229
Canon Law	203	57	---	49	309
Medicine	33	7	---	0	40
Total	1,625	328	117	200	2,270

Table 1 contains a summary of degrees conferred by the University of Caracas during the period of 1725-1810. "The population of Venezuela at the end of the eighteenth century was 388,895 inhabitants, with 50% white, 12% Indian, 38% mixed, and 24% black, two thirds of whom were slaves." <sup>3</sup>

Source: Idelfonso Leal, History of the University of Caracas (1727-1827) Central University of Venezuela, 1963 p.18

<sup>3</sup>Freddy Mulino, "Historical Development of Mathematical Education in Venezuela During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." Thesis Doctor of Education, Oklahoma State University, July 1974



The history of Venezuela from 1830 to the present has been substantially a history of a succession of strong men overthrowing one another and grabbing the Presidency. During that period, the universities experienced economic and academic problems. In 1849, the government did not pay the budget. The Federal War imposed the suspension of the universities several times. It was a period of stagnation. With each political crisis and change of government, the expelling of professors from the universities was common and frequent. When the war was over, Juan C. Falcon, declared the nullity of all decrees, orders and resolutions given. "New authorities and teachers for the universities were designated by the President. The incomes of the universities were practically non-existent during the five years of Falcon's presidency. The government did not make payment to the universities and its building was expropriated to the public market." <sup>4</sup> During that time, the only universities which were established were Marabobo University (1833) in Valencia, and Zulia University (1891) in Maracaibo. Those universities were closed in 1904 and posteriorly reopened in 1958.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was a stage of consolidation of the advancements attained in the Guzman Blanco era. "As an omen for a brilliant new century, new universities emerged, but at the turn of the century, Venezuela was under a new dictator who by 1904 had closed universities reducing the excessively large number of law-

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<sup>4</sup>Idelfonso Leal, Historia de la Universidad de Caracas, Caracas 53 p.362

cs, physicians, and engineers who... may drive us, through the intellectual proletariat, to a degeneration of the national spirit." <sup>5</sup>

In education, three important events occurred during the administration of Guzman Blanco: the decree of mandatory and free instruction of 1870, the creation of the Ministry of Public Instruction, (today's Ministry of Education) and, the decree of higher education of 1874 and 1873. One of the most important points of the law was the direct intervention of the government in the universities. The direct interference of the government was the result of the unpopularity of Guzman among the students who were the most enthusiastic statue-wreckers in the mobs of 1878.

A strong centralist tendency extended over the decree. The degrees of licentiates were abolished and only the Central University of Venezuela could issue the degree of Doctor. The students who graduated from the University of Merida received a diploma certifying the completion of the studies to be presented in Caracas for the doctorate.

It is convenient to recall that, according to the Spanish tradition and law, preserved in Venezuelan legislation, the university degree gave the legal right to practice a liberal profession and qualify for certain public positions. In this sense, the university diploma was, and still is, a title of this right, and the corresponding Spanish words are used interchangeably. With this disposition, a distinc-

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<sup>5</sup> Idelfonso Leal, Los Origenes de la Universidad de Caracas  
Caracas 1967 p. 58

ion was introduced to centralize in Caracas the granting of titles.

While, in Venezuela, the development of higher education was limited and slowed, in North America, the idea of graduate education as normal instruction was becoming an important component of higher education. An important event occurred in 1876, which was the founding of John Hopkins University. According to John Brubacher, this event represents "... the most important innovation in graduate instruction launched during the whole period between the Civil War and the First World War." <sup>6</sup>

Referring to the establishment of John Hopkins University in America, Abraham Flexner pointed out: " John Hopkinns made it possible for the first time for the scholar's life in America to be unified. Scholar could now combine teaching and creative research in their own specialized fields." <sup>7</sup>

In the middle of the twentieth century, an important institution of higher education was founded in Venezuela, the National Pedagogical Institute (now University Institute of Pedagogy), specifically located in Caracas. Its main objective is to train teachers for all kinds of intermediate schools. It was distinct from the other universities, but did comparable work within the pedagogical field. By 1940,

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<sup>6</sup> John Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition Harper & Row, New York 1976 p.178

<sup>7</sup> Abraham Flexner, "The Graduate School in the United States", Proceedings of the Association of American Universities, 1931 pp. 114-

iversity autonomy was something particularly highly cherished by Latin American universities. During 1945-48, Venezuela lived a short liberal, democratic period, but, from 1948-58, the dictatorship returned. The universities were periodically closed and their work was subjected to political interference. The budget for education which had been almost 7% in the short democratic period, was down to less than 6% when the dictator was ousted. At that point, for every thousand children who started elementary school, there were 95 finishing primary; at the same time fifteen pupils were completing secondary, one student was finishing at the university, and some 40% of the country were illiterate.

Graduate education had a limited development. The author considered that the neglect of research in its proper and modern scientific sense was also a reflection of the traditional literary, verbal culture of France and Spain from which so much Venezuelan culture stems. According to Victor Moreles Sanchez, the idea of graduate studies during that time only referred to short duration seminars in the different universities for the professionals in the different fields of study.<sup>8</sup>

The first recognized courses for graduate students in Venezuela were organized in 1948, many years after the initiation of such in the United States, by the Central University of Venezuela, specifically in the medicine and health fields. Those courses were directed to the specialization of professionals. Later, there were other courses called

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<sup>8</sup>Victor Morles "La Política Venezolana en Materia de Post-gradados" Papeles Universitarios, No.1 1976

eminarios de doctorado" with academic purposes. (See Table 2, Degrees granted by Central University of Venezuela during the period 1901 - 69)

In 1958, Venezuela broke with its past of tyranny. A popular revolution overthrew the military regime of Marcos Perez Jimenez and set out to build modern democratic nation. "Industrialization and land reform were twin pillars of the revolutionary movement, designed to diversify the economy and extend social justice to the hitherto neglected interior." <sup>9</sup>

Education under those circumstances has acquired exceptional importance. In the process of change "... education was propelled to the forefront as a key to modernization and equally important as an instrument for consolidating a democratic order and forging national identity." <sup>10</sup> According to Luis M. Penalver, "Venezuela has the opportunity to launch itself forward in a daring way to make up the lost time and lay the base for future development." <sup>11</sup>

As a consequence of the democratic environment, the enrollment of students in higher education has been growing from 1958 until the present time. (See Table 3, Enrollment in Venezuelan Higher Education)

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<sup>9</sup>Robert F. Armove, Student Alienation: A Venezuelan Study Tanager Publisher, New York 1971 p. 12

<sup>10</sup>Ibid

<sup>11</sup>Ministerio de Education, Memorias 1976 pp. VVI - XVII

Table 2

Degrees Granted by the Central University of Venezuela  
1901 - 1969

Facultad	Titles		Percentage
	Totals	Doctorates	Doctorates
Agronomy	885	70	7.9
Agriculture	789	0	0.0
Science	463	42	9.0
Economics	4,191	64	1.5
Veterinary	485	188	38.7
Law	5,077	1,999	39.3
Pharmacy	1,246	594	47.6
Humanities	2,352	22	0.9
Engineering	3,982	690	17.3
Medicine	7,901	2,259	28.5
Odontology	1,422	417	29.3
Totals	28,794	6,345	22.0

Source: "Aporte de la Universidad Central de Venezuela a la Oficina Nacional De Recursos Humanos" Division de Planeamiento U.C.V. Caracas 1972

Table 3

## Enrollment in Venezuelan Higher Education

Years	Enrollments
1958-59	16,795
1960-61	24,907
1961-62	30,489
1962-63	33,571
1963-64	36,999
1964-65	40,427
1965-66	45,879
1966-67	50,366
1967-68	56,137
1968-69	62,449
1969-70	70,816
1970-71	85,675
1971-72	95,294
1972-73	115,462
1973-74	129,269
1974-75	154,213
1975-76	201,582
1976-77	221,581
1977-78	265,675

Source: OPSU Consejo Nacional de Universidades, Caracas 1977

Planning began on a national scale with the passage of the Law of Universities of 1970. This law, a reform of the 1958 Universities Law, attempted to regain for the Ministry of Education some control over the autonomous universities that had been given up in earlier legislation.

It provided a basis for the current strength of the National Council of Universities (Consejo Nacional de Universidades), one of the most important organizations of higher education within Venezuela. The Council is charged with assuming that the Law of Universities is obeyed, with coordinating relations among universities and other institutions of higher education, with adjusting educational plans to meet national needs, and with advising in matters of budget.

As a consequence of the establishment of University law, the succession of stable democratic governments, the quantitative expansion at all educational levels, the nationalization of oil and iron industries, and the increased international demands for those materials, the graduate education has acquired exceptional importance, in order to train a well-qualified human resources that permit Venezuelan people to benefit from economic development, while saving them from alienation.

In 1962, the "Consejo de Estudios para Graduados" (Council of Studies for Graduate Students) was created, with the participation of all universities and institutions of higher education. As a result of the establishment of that institution, post-graduate studies development began in different universities. Among them, in 1961, the private



atholic University Andres Bello, established the first courses in psychology. According to Victor Morles Sanchez, in 1971, this university bestowed graduate degrees upon 61 specialists, five Doctors in Psychology, and in the Law field, 24 specialists and three Doctors.<sup>12</sup>

The University of Zulia developed its first courses of graduate studies in 1965, training professionals in Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Pathology, and Gynecology.

On the other hand, the University of Oriente, which was founded in 1958, initiated the post-graduate courses in Hydraulic Engineering and Mine Science.

The University of Andes established its first formal courses for graduates in 1968, in Forestry and Agronomy Engineering. In the same year the Simon Bolivar University was founded, which trained the first professionals in Computer Science and Engineering.

It is important to note that in Venezuela an interesting plan was instituted in 1970. Through it, Venezuelan universities, together with American universities, have an agreement to develop graduate studies. An example of this agreement is the graduate studies program established between Oklahoma State University and the University of Carabobo at the masters level. During the same year, the University of Carabobo established the graduate courses in Mechanical, Industrial, and Electrical Engineering.

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<sup>12</sup>Victor Morles Sanchez, OP.Cit. p.5

In summary, the development of graduate studies in Venezuela is different, while in the United States, who has been considered a leader in the development of graduate studies, this area of study has been significant for many years.

At this point it is important to point out the statement given by Orlando Albornoz who wrote:

Today the North American research oriented university is to the Latin American university what the German university was to the U.S. around 1900. The spread of industrialization, the influence of the United States and the needs of the more progressive sector of society, both private and public, required trained personnel equipped to carry out the plans of social and economic development. Thus, the United States has had almost no competition. 13

Venezuelan educational leaders feel that the expansion of graduate education is extremely important for the economic and social development of the country.

In order to obtain a more complete picture of Venezuelan graduate study programs, the writer will next present an analysis of its current situation.

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<sup>13</sup>Orlando Albornoz, "Models of the Latin American University" in Latin American University. University of New Mexico, 1979 p.129

## Chapter II

### The Current Situation of Graduate Studies

Venezuela in some senses is an old country, with all its dignity and traditions, but, in an educational sense, it is a young country with tremendous growth and complexity in a political and economic development. However, the democratic government has offered broad support and assistance to the universities and other institutions of high education, and it has created a great number of research institutions after 1958, in which Masters and Doctors degrees could be awarded.

According to Victor Morles Sanchez, the first purpose of graduate education in Venezuela should and must be the instrument that substantially contributes to reach the solutions to Venezuelan problems such as dependency and development.<sup>1</sup> The writer agrees with this statement because the development of the country should be the primary concern in graduate studies, which could help to reach the goals of a developing country. The level of development and progress could be greater through them.

The term "graduate education" has had a broad meaning in Venezuela

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<sup>1</sup>Victor Morles Sanchez, "La Política Venezolana en Materia de Postgrado" Papeles Universitarios, No. 1 Oct 1976 p. 60

has meant any courses of study taken after the first university level degree, including extension courses, "refresher courses taken by professional persons, training courses for teachers, week or day long seminars for business executives, and courses leading to advanced degrees."<sup>2</sup>

It is important to note that graduate study programs have not been restricted to universities or other degree granting institutions.

In 1973, Venezuelan graduate studies were characterized by one educational authority as "unplanned" and "uncoordinated", adding that actual system of graduate education could not be said to exist.

What did exist was a simple transplanting of the foreign norms to Venezuela with no apparent relationship between the number of graduate programs in certain fields and the educational priorities of the nation. <sup>3</sup>

The writer agrees with this assessment since the history of Venezuelan education was one of long periods of empiricism followed by periods of intensive planning. Not all of the empiricism has been wisely translated into practice. "The empiricism has been associated with the period of dictatorship and the planning with the last years of democracy."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Gary Hoover, Venezuela, Publication of the World Education Series. 1978 p.53

<sup>3</sup>G.E.R. Burroughs, Education in Venezuela, Archon Books, Connecticut, 1975 p.97

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.17

In 1977, educational planners called for the formal creation of a National Commission on Postgraduate Education which could coordinate graduate study on an "interinstitutional basis".<sup>5</sup> The main purpose of this commission was the development of this area of study in order to create an advanced technology appropriate to the nation's particular needs and permit the abandonment of the technological models currently borrowed from other countries.

The agency which has probably done more than any other to unify and to systematize graduate education in Venezuela, is the National Council for Scientific and Technological Research (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas y Technologicas/CONICIT). It was created in 1967 and is responsible for advising the executive branch of national government on all matters relating to science and technology. Its Division of Human Resources (Division de Recursos Humanos) gives scholarships to select graduate students for studies in areas of national priorities.

In addition to CONICIT, there are other entities, which are not universities, offering or sponsoring graduate studies; among them are: the Venezuelan Red Cross, the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho, the Ministry of Defense, Education, Health and Welfare. (See Table 4, Venezuelan University Institutions or Agencies offering graduate studies, 1976)

The Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho program is the Venezuelan scholar-

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<sup>5</sup>Consejo Nacional de Universidades OPSU. Proyecto General de Revision de Politicas y Estrategias para el Desarrollo de la Educacion Venezuela, 1978 p.55

p fund, which was established in 1974. The main objective of the titution, created officially on July 1, 1975, is to train both at e and abroad, the human resources that are essential in priority as in the country's present stage of development. The Gran Maris- de Ayacucho Scholarship Program provides for some 80,000 students be trained in a number of foreign countries, particularly in the ted States. The principal objective of this program, as it was tioned before, has been to increase the number of scientific and hnological personnel employed in petroleum engineering, petrochemi- s, metallurgy, mining, agriculture, animal husbandry, oceanography fisheries, aeronautics, education, and shipbuilding. The program ports students at associate, undergraduate, and graduate level.

Actually, there are many graduate study programs in operation in ezuela. Among them, the writer can mention the following:

Institute of Higher Studies of Administration. This institute was nded with the cooperation of Harvard, Chicago University, and the d Foundation. It offers only graduate level courses, and it is al- committed to research on the part of its faculty and students in as related to the economic and social development of Venezuela. This titute is located in Caracas, being recognized by the Ministry of cation in March 1976. Students in this masters program are required complete 24 courses, and "grading at this Institution follow a 4 nt scale, where "S" means outstanding, "B" - good, "A" - approved, "M" - poor." <sup>6</sup> The students, in order to graduate, must have a

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<sup>6</sup>Gary Hoover, Venezuela. Publication of The World Education Ser- . 1978 p.56

Table 4

Venezuelan Non-University Institutions or Agencies  
Offering Graduate Study 1976

Institutions	Field of Study	# of Programs
Venezuelan Red Cross	Medicine	1
National School of Public Administration	Administration	3
Foundation for the Development of the Central Western Region	Agronomy	1
Institute of Higher Studies of Administration	Administration	3
IVIC	Biology	8
	Chemistry	1
	Engineering	1
	Mathematics	1
	Physics	1
Ministry of Education	Biology	2
	Education	3
	Literature	1
	Mathematics	1
Ministry of Defense	Medicine	1
Ministry of Health	Medicine	1
	Psychology	1

Source: Directorio Nacional de Postgrado (Caracas, CONICIT 1976  
pg. 243-44)

A average of "B", at least.

. Central University of Venezuela. (Universidad Central de Venezuela  
e graduate studies at the Central University of Venezuela are divide  
to three areas of study:

- a) Amplification (refresher and extension programs)
- b) Specialization (Masters programs)
- c) Studies for Doctors degree

The first of these is not recognized for credit. However, parti-  
pants get a certificate of completion.

Specialization programs have as their purpose a "profound and  
stematic study in a specific field of the Humanities or Sciences, in  
ler to obtain high levels of academic and professional preparation."  
e duration of this program varies from two to three years, according  
field of study.

The doctors degree is designated to produce "scientists and human-  
rians capable of undertaking original research of a higher level."<sup>8</sup>  
e general requirements for the doctors degree is a completion of a  
imum of 45 units of postgraduate study in not less than three semes-  
s, and knowledge of at least two languages different than Spanish.  
ission requirements to all types of graduate programs at U.C.V. are  
riable.

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<sup>7</sup>Universidad Central de Venezuela. Direccion de Planeamiento,  
atalogo de Planes de Estudios, Caracas 1976 p.16

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



3. Simon Bolivar University (Universidad Simon Bolivar U.S.B.)

This University offers types of graduate study programs:

- a) Specialization Programs
- b) Scientific and Humanistic Preparation Programs

The term specialization used at Simon Bolivar University is different from the same term used at U.C.V.. Specialization in the former institution means that the course of study does not award a master's degree, but it awards a certificate of specialization and requires completion of an integrated plan of 24 units.

The term scientific and humanistic preparation is used by Simon Bolivar University to cover those graduate programs leading to the degrees of Masters and Doctors. Requirements for the Masters are completion of a total of 32 units and a thesis. It is also required that a student maintain a GPA average of 3.60 on a 5 point scale, and must demonstrate knowledge of two foreign languages. Admission to graduate programs at U.S.B. is reserved to students graduated from universities or other institutions of higher education.<sup>9</sup>

4. Catholic University Andres Bello (Universidad Catolica Andres Bello U.C.A.B.)

This university is the only private institution of higher education which offers graduate degree programs, with the exemption of the Santa Maria University, which offers a Doctors degree in Penal Science.

The U.C.A.B. offers two degree programs for lawyers, which do not require a thesis, and awards the degree of Specialist. This univer-

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<sup>9</sup>Universidad Simon Bolivar, Boletin No.119 Caracas 1976

also offers a Doctors degree in Economics, which requires a minimum of one year of study and a written dissertation. On the other hand, one Masters degree in Economics Engineering is offered, requiring four semesters of study and a thesis.<sup>10</sup>

5. University of Carabobo (Universidad de Carabobo U.C.)

Diverse courses at graduate level are offered by the University of Carabobo, which confers Masters and Doctors degree in Science, in diverse professional specialities such as; mathematics, education, human resources, engineering and economy.

Requirements for graduate programs vary according to the field of study. The study program for the Masters in Education requires a completion of 33 credit units and skills in some of the following languages: English, French, Italian or German, in addition to Spanish, in order to be capable to award the degree in Masters in Science (Education).

The credit units earned by students through the post-graduate education program offered by the Carabobo University will be recognized by the University of Kansas (Lawrence) and Oklahoma State University (Stillwater), if the requirements of evaluation, admission, and enrollment imposed by those universities have been accomplished.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Hoover, op., Cit., p.58

<sup>11</sup> Universidad de Carabobo. Area de Estudios de Postgrados. Master en Ciencias, Doctorado en Ciencias. Educacion. Agosto 1978 p.2

On the other hand, Ohio State University (Ohio) will recognize the credit units completed by students in postgraduate human resources programs offered by the University of Carabobo, if they want to continue their studies at Ohio State University. However, students must adapt themselves to the admission and enrollment conditions imposed by Ohio State University. <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Universidad de Carabobo, Area de Estudios de Postgrado, cursos Humanos, Marzo 1976 p.5

## Chapter III

## The Process of Change in Graduate Studies

The nature of the graduate study enterprise in the United States reflects a stability of purpose and structure that has long persisted. According to the National Board on Graduate Education, graduate education has three basic purposes which are: (1) the education and development of skilled individuals, (2) the production of knowledge, and (3) the preservation and transmission of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> These purposes remain viable. Other related purposes include the furtherance of understanding of mankind and the universe, continued technological advancement, the production of advanced manpower, and the improvement of the quality of life for all members of society.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these purposes, graduate education can also be understood as a socialization process;

that process by which individuals acquire the values, attitudes, norms, knowledge, and skills needed to perform their roles acceptably in the group or groups in which they are or seek to be members... By extension, professional socialization (including graduate academic education) is socialization to a particular role in society, the role of the professional. It

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<sup>1</sup>National Board on Graduate Education, "Minority Group Participation in Graduate Education" Report No. 5, Washington D.C. National Academy of Science, June 1976 p. 10

<sup>2</sup>Education Commission of the States. "The States and Graduate Education" Report of the Task Force on Graduate Education, Report # 59 Denver, Colorado, Education Commission of the States, Feb. 1975 p.11

is the acquisition of the specialized knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, norms, and interests of the profession that the individual wishes to practice.<sup>3</sup>

Considered in the light of graduate education in the United States the primary problem existing in present graduate education in Venezuela is the lack of a coherent and well-defined system of its purposes, in accordance with social needs. (both the individuals and collectively)

Graduate programs in Venezuela have arisen as a result of individual initiatives without taking into account the national needs. The writer believes that the activities of graduate studies have been initiated for two reasons: (1) the individual interest which Venezuelan professionals have taken to improve their knowledge and their economic, social or academic position, and (2) the interest of higher education institutions to improve the qualities of their faculty.

The courses of graduate studies have been established without coordination and planning. However, this does not mean that those activities have not been useful. On the contrary, the writer thinks that educational activities are assets to a developing country, but, these activities would be more beneficial if they would be the result of coordinated planning in relation to the educational objectives and needs of the country. According to Victor Morles Sanchez, the education of post

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<sup>3</sup>Ann Kieffer Bragg, "The Socialization Process in Higher Education." ERIC/Higher Education Research, Report # 7, Washington D.C. American Association for Higher Education, 1976 p.6

duates in the country is qualitatively speaking very heterogeneous quantitatively speaking insufficient for Venezuelan needs.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that higher education is not guided by a centralized planning authority makes the task of planning graduate studies difficult.

Another critical issue in the development of graduate education is the relationship that exists between higher level human resource priorities and the actual distribution of courses and graduate students, too low. For instance, at the Central University of Venezuela, there is a large concentration of studies in the Health Science field. As a result, there is a concentration in one institution (UCV), and in one city (Caracas). On the contrary, in professional areas such as petroleum and metalurgical engineering, and agriculture, which are very necessary to the country, the graduate area of study is low.

The proportion of Venezuelan graduate activities has been growing very fast since 1958, when there existed in the country about 11 courses of post-graduate studies. In 1970, there were 130 courses with 100 students enrolled. In 1971-72, the number of courses for post-graduates was 142 in different specialities in the institutions of higher education and other entities. (See TABLE 5, Post-Graduate Courses Offered in Venezuela Between 1971-72.) According to Constantino Quero Morales, "During 1980, the situation for enrollment in graduate study programs is about 25,570."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Victor Morles Sanchez, "La Politica Venezolana en Materia de Post-Grados" Papeles Universitarios, No.1 1976 p.60

<sup>5</sup>Constantino Quero Morales, Imagen-Objetivo de Venezuela. Tomo I. Banco Central de Venezuela 1980 p. 692

Table 5  
Postgraduate Courses offered in Venezuela  
1971-1972

## ESPECIALIDADES

	INSTITUCIONES	ESPECIALIDADES																	TOTALES	
		1 Físico	2 Química	3 Biología	4 Ciencias Médicas	5 Ciencias Marinas y Atmosféricas	6 Matemática y Estadísticas	7 Ciencias de la Ingeniería	8 Ciencias Agrícolas	9 Economía y Sociología	10 Psicología	11 Derecho y Administración	12 Demografía	13 Educación	14 Filosofía, Lógica y Ética	15 Planificación	16 Literatura y Lingüística	17 Asuntos Militares		18 Otros
1	Universidad Central Venezuela			1	23			8	2	11						1				52
2	Universidad del Zulia			5	12		1	7		1				1						29
3	Universidad de Los Andes					3		1	2				1	1						8
4	Universidad de Carabobo						1	2					1							4
5	Universidad del Oriente				1	7								1						9
6	Universidad Simón Bolívar							3							1					4
7	Universidad Católica Andrés Bello									1	3									4
8	Inst. Pedagógico de Caracas	1				1	2			1						2				7
9	Ministerio de Educación												2							2
10	Ministerio de la Defensa																			(?)
11	Inst. Venezolano Inv. Científicas	1	1	1	1															5
12	Comisión Adm. Pública										6				2					8
13	Inst. de Est. Sup. Administ.										1									1
14	Colegios Profesionales														2					8
15	Otros					2														2
TOTALES		2	1	7	37	13	5	21	4	12	2	26	1	4	1	5	2	(?)	0	142

ccer: Victor Morles Sanchez. "Notas para la Educación de Postgrado en Ven  
ista Universitaria. No. 2,000. 5. pp. 4-7.

(See TABLE 6 Evolution of Enrollment of Enrollment in Venezuelan Graduate Studies 1975-80)

It is important to point out that the larger number of Venezuelan people who realize graduate studies are in the United States and Europe, especially in England and Germany.

The Venezuelan Constitution establishes in its part No. 8, "the right of the Venezuelan people to be educated and the state will provide the means to create a free education and access to the culture, to form the human resources that a country needs to get full and autonomous development."<sup>6</sup> As a consequence, tuition is non-existent from pre-school until higher education. The government supports all public education systems. "Support from the private has been hard come by, in contrast with the United States where private support has been a key factor in university growth, including even the state universities."<sup>7</sup>

Free education does not include graduate studies. The student does not pay tuition. However, the budget of institutions of graduate studies is low and deficient; only 1.86% of the National Budget is designated for graduate education.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Constitution Nacional de Venezuela. Articulo 79

<sup>7</sup> G.E.R. Burroughs, Education in Venezuela. World Education Series, Hamden, Connecticut, 1974 p.28

<sup>8</sup> Ministerio de Educacion, Oficina Sectorial de Planificacion presupuesto, 1975



Table 6

Evolution of Enrollment in  
Venezuelan Graduate Studies

1975-1979

Year	Enrollment for graduate studies
1975	3,234 students
1976	5,100 students
1977	9,653 "
1978	14,345 "
1979	19,717 "

Source: Constantino Quero Morales, Imagen-Objetivo de Venezuela, Tomo I Banco Central de Venezuela 1980 p.693

may seem strange that in an oil-rich country educational facilities and institutions suffer from inadequate financial support. The government should foresee in its national plan the kind of professionals which will be needed, and expand graduate education in universities.

Institutions of higher education should be among the most important participants in the execution of national plans. Since the expansion of graduate programs is needed for the development of the country, the educational budget should be increased and the private sector should participate in the financial support of this important part of higher education.

The writer considers it necessary to point out that graduate activities in Venezuela give little importance to research and investigation. Carlos Alberto Moros, a prominent Venezuelan educational leader states that the next step to be taken by the modern universities of Venezuela should be research and investigation, in order to establish these universities as a harmonious and integral part of the system.<sup>9</sup> Today, 80% of graduate education is centered in the training of specialists; thus the interest for research has been low in some fields.

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<sup>9</sup>Carlos Alberto Moros, "La Universidad no Puede Mas" El Nacional, No. 13549 May 22, 1981 p.c9

## Recommendations

a. In Venezuela, the courses for graduate study are offered by different kinds of institutions of higher education, as was mentioned earlier. However, among those institutions there exists an incompatibility in academic planning of goals and objectives. In other words, one sector of higher education makes decisions by itself without taking into account other sectors of higher education in the country.

The writer recommends the implementation of an operational mechanism which works on the graduate level with the purpose of focusing graduate courses on the ideal of education for the development of the country. That mechanism could be developed by a Council for Graduate Studies integrated by a representative of each institution of higher education, by a representative of the Ministry of Education, and by a representative of the private or industrial sector.

The main goals of this Council would be: 1) to analyze the different necessities of each sector in reference to getting well trained personnel to work in specific fields, 2) to investigate the possible financial resources for graduate studies within or outside the country. In this way, the members of the Council for Graduate Studies will analyze the possibility that the joint efforts of both the public and private sectors could cover the financial requirements of that part of the student body interested in graduate studies.

The Council for Graduate Studies would promote participatory planning and effective cooperation among the institutions of higher education. 4) The Council would also seek assistance (from both the private and public sector of the country) of personnel, well-trained to work in specific areas, in order to foment, to orient, and to evaluate graduate studies programs in Venezuela.

Through the Council for Graduate Studies, there will be a stimulus to integrate the dispersed functions of each institutions of higher education, to consolidate the administrative structures which work in the same area. In general, all these initiatives will tend to reduce costs, to integrate efforts, and to provide the country with well-trained professionals in the most relevant areas of national interest.

The writer believes that the Council for Graduate Studies could receive the benefits coming from developed countries, such as technical assistance in graduate studies. These benefits could be in the form of recommendations given by experts in this subject. These recommendations need to be adapted to the social, political, and economic reality of the Venezuelan society. Recommendations from countries where graduate studies are well established could be a resource of great interest for Venezuelan graduate activities, but it is important to adapt those recommendations to the current situation of the nation.

In actuality, the Law of Universities does not include a paragraph pertinent to graduate studies. Each institution of higher education offering courses for graduates in Venezuela has its own regulations to direct the development of those studies.

The writer recommends that the Law of Universities include a new chapter where the following aspects should be considered: 1) The organization, rights and duties of the Council for Graduate Studies, The purposes and objectives of graduate studies, and 3) Transitory and Final Dispositions.

In the writer's opinion, an amendment to the Law of Universities is needed in order to adapt this same law to the needs of graduate studies which are required by the economy, the society, and the spirit of the Nation.

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