

Since its beginnings, Universidad de La Frontera has included the promotion of research among its fields of development. To that end, the Research Directorate was created in 1981, dependent on the Academic Vice-Rector's Office.

Since then, Universidad de La Frontera has maintained its position as the principal institution of Higher Education in the Araucanía Region. The development of scientific and technological research in Universidad de La Frontera is one of the fundamental pillars of its progress as a Higher Education institution in the Araucanía Region.

As part of its efforts towards the consolidation and development which have allowed it to attain a position as a leading Higher Education institution in southern Chile, the university has opted to attach great importance to scientific and technological research, as well as promoting innovation. Our University stimulates the harmonization of scientific-technological productivity with areas of interest for the region.

In compliance with the faculty conferred by article 16 of D.F.L 156 of 1981, which empowers the Governing Body of the university to create posts of Higher Direction, the Vice-Rector's Office of Research and Postgraduate Study, on which the Research Directorate presently depends, was created on 15th February 2006.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH DIRECTORATE IN UNIVERSIDAD DE LA FRONTERA

Jorge Pinto (2002) "History of Universidad de La Frontera", Ediciones Universidad de La Frontera

In 1981, with the creation of the UFRO, Dr. Fernando Romero assumed responsibility for the Research Directorate, as recorded in the minutes of the first meeting of the Academic Council. This Academic Council took special interest in the activity of the Research Directorate, whose work was overseen by Professor Dr. Eugenio Vogel, responsible for the Council's Research Committee. The Research Directorate financed Research Projects according to strict, exhaustive evaluation processes, with external peers and review of the curricula of the researchers who applied for projects.

Year by year, the number of proposals approved increased. In 1984 every faculty had its projects, reflecting the interest that had been aroused in research. In 1985, the new mode of financing initiation projects for young researchers was started.

In 1986 the Research Directorate concentrated its efforts on strengthening the existing research groups with defined lines of development. Special support was offered to the basic sciences and the interaction of projects in technological areas related with social development and improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of the Araucanía Region. In 1987 the UFRO won 4 FONDECYT projects.

After that there was little growth in research in the UFRO, reflecting the diagnosis made by Rector von Baer in 1987 that the UFRO was essentially a teaching institution. This situation compromised the future of the university, since the possibility of gaining a space in the national and international arena depended on the possibilities of making progress in various fields,

including research. Consciousness of this fact led to the further strengthening of research, and between 1991 and 1995 there was clear development. Between 1991 and 1992, 6 FONDECYT projects were approved.

In 1994, an effort was made to rationalise resources, support young researchers and continue to stimulate high quality research. In 1995 a historic figure was achieved with the approval of 11 FONDECYT projects. At the same time a total of 60 research projects were financed by the University in 1995, at a total cost of 100 million Pesos, making the UFRO the leader in research in the region.

At the start of the 1990s, 223 members of the academic staff were linked to internal research, the fruit of planned policy. The areas supported were diversified, with preference being given to young researchers, and help to those joining the university. The idea that quality must predominate in the UFRO was fostered, and that in the case of research this should be measured through publications in ISI, FONDECYT projects, and international projects legitimising high level academics.

A policy was developed tending to the formation of new working groups, made up of young researchers willing to promote renewed research in the vanguard. Rewards were instituted for scientific publications and recognition for winning external projects. Stress was laid on publications in ISI and the need to regulate quality norms by which work could be evaluated.