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Chile Adventist University

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Chile Adventist University (Universidad Adventista de Chile or UnACh) is a higher educational institution in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that operates in the territory of Chile Union Mission. It is located at the intersection of Camino and Tanilvoro Km. 12, Zip Code: 3780000, in the village of Las Mariposas, Chillán Commune, Diguillín

Province, Ñuble Region, Republic of Chile. Coordinates are latitude: -36.637428 and longitude: -71.996259¹

The university campus takes up 25 acres and is near an agricultural property of the Seventh-day Adventist Church corporation. In 1990, the University obtained approval of the statutes from the Ministry of Education to open, and in 2002, gained full autonomy. Two other institutions coexist on the same campus: Chile Adventist University Academy and the Adventist Professional Institute (Instituto Adventista Profesional or IPA).²

Currently, UnACh offers in its four universities more than 20 university degrees and postgraduate and advanced programs.³ By 2019, the number of enrolled students in this institution increased to 2,131 in undergraduate courses and 94 in graduate courses. In order to guarantee the quality of the education provided, it has more than 60% of its professors working part-time and full-time, of whom 59% are postgraduates.⁴

In UnACh, as an Adventist educational institution, its “educational project is based on a biblical Christian worldview that aims to train competent professionals and graduates, create and transmit knowledge, and link with the environment, in order to contribute to cultural, social and productive development of the region and the country, as well as the Adventist Church.”⁵

Developments that Led to the Establishment of the School

History records that “the first recognized members of the Adventist Church in Chile [and South America] were Claudio Designet and Antonieta S. de Dessignet. These French citizens emigrated to Chile in 1885.⁶ Ten years after their arrival, the first canvassers appeared: Fredrick W. Bishop, Thomas H. Davis, and Clair A. Nowlen. In 1895, Granville Henderson Baber landed in the city of Valparaíso as the first Adventist pastor in Chile.⁷ Later, in 1899, there was a need to establish a university in Chile to prepare future workers in the country. So, to help with this project, an offer was made for the educational work. In 1901, Carlos E. Krieghoff, noticing that he could help, offered his 20-hectare property and, in 1902, he donated it to the West Coast Mission for the construction of the school in the village of Púa, Malleco Province, Araucanía Region.⁸

By 1904, the project had the support of Pastor Frank Westphal, who raised donations from the United States and Argentina, and also set aside the money received from the sale of 22 books for the future school.⁹ This occurred when, upon returning to Chile after a period in the United States, he realized that the school project was at a standstill. So, along with his Brother, Pastor Joseph, they started raising money to carry on the construction. In response to the request, Brothers from the cities of Crespo-Diamante promised to donate 510 Argentine pesos--260 for the school in Chile and 250 for Argentina.¹⁰

The School foundation

UnACh was the third school established by Adventists in Chile, although it was the first one to be built with the intention of being a higher education school. This institution was officially inaugurated on April 15, 1906, with the name of Escuela Adventista de Púa [Púa Training School] in the village of Púa, Malleco Province, Araucanía Region.

¹¹ In fact, since the beginning of its first year of operation, the school founded by Carlos Krieghoff, promoter of the project and its first director, had on average an attendance of 17 students, six of them in the preparation course for the Canvassing work. Facundo Olavarría was the first student to graduate from a short Canvassing course, and he received his diploma in late 1909; however, Emeterio Arias and Juan Cameron were the first to graduate from a regular program after having fully completed the normal course.¹²

The purposes for the beginning and development of education in Chile were to train missionaries, evangelize indigenous peoples, and subsequently initiate the educational system in the country. The aim was also to “educate families in the surrounding areas, in addition to educate their own children and the children of other Adventists.”¹³ With this educational and missionary vision, the first steps were taken for the foundation of the school in the locality.

The school history

After the school was established, its name would change several times over the years. In 1913, in English publications, it was called The Pua Training School. In the prospectus for 1917, it was called Colegio Adventista de Púa [Pua Training School] and, in 1919, Colegio Adventista Chileno [Chile Training School].¹⁴ When F. L. Perry assumed the post of president of Chile Conference, he requested the Austral Union Conference (presently the Argentina Union Conference) and the South American Division conduct a pertinent study on the development of Púa Training School. In response, the board realized that Púa was not the best place for the advancement of the educational work¹⁵. So, it was decided to change the location of the institution. The chosen property was “Fundo Las Mariposas” (“Las Mariposas Farm”), located 12 km east of the city of Chillán, Bío Bío Region (now Ñubles). The farm was bought at the end of 1921, the school was transferred on April 17, 1922,¹⁶ and the activities with the students began in that same year (1922) despite the fact that the buildings were not finished yet.

The school gradually assumed the character of a higher institution. The process of moving and setting up the school in the new location was carried out by its principal, Mr. E. U. Ayars, who had been recently appointed to the position.¹⁷ Shortly after the institution was set up in Chillán, administrators started to doubt about the effectiveness of the projects that could be installed in support of the educational project in that place since the economic sustainability of the institution was a primary concern. In 1925, the administration had the idea of moving the school to a place near

San Bernardo, south of Santiago, called “Cerro Negro,” which was more accessible and advantageous for a commercial farming operation. Finally, in 1926, legal problems in property deeds prevented the sale of “Las Mariposas,” so the transfer project to Cerro Negro was canceled. This episode confirmed the conviction of the administrators of the Institution and the Chile Conference that the idea of selling the farm in Chillán, in fact, would not be ideal. Thus, they continued to definitely seek their development and future projection only in Chillán. In this way, once the decision to stay in Chillán was made, it was immediately stipulated to expand the property with the purchase of a neighboring property.¹⁸

The school, once consolidated in Chillán, received the official name of “Colegio Adventista de Chillán” [Chillán Training School]. However, as the administrators wanted to underscore the productive nature of their educational project, they named it “Colegio Industrial Adventista” (“Adventist Industrial School,” but in English, it was still called Chillán Training School) in 1927. This change represented a new period in the Institution, which began to emphasize the manual and practical training aspects.¹⁹ In Chillán, the problem of financial sustainability was addressed from the beginning. Consequently, multiple productive activities of an agricultural nature were established, and they allowed the Institution to have food production as a source of income in addition to providing work to students who needed to pay for their studies. At this time, the Institution aimed not only to attract students from the Ñuble province, but also Adventist youth from Chile and South America.²⁰

The first agricultural enterprises were a vegetable garden, an artisanal industry of canned blackberries, a poultry establishment, a vineyard, fruit trees, and a dairy. However, over time, these productive ventures served more for internal consumption than for commercialization. This was due to the precarious conditions of the highway that led to the city. Other problems that affected the Institution were the low number of students and the great expenses for the installation and development of infrastructure for basic services, including drinking water, hydroelectric power station, animal warehouses, workshops, dorms, offices, and houses for teachers. This financial vulnerability was the result of events such as the “Great Depression,” and the January 1939, earthquake, that caused serious damage to the school’s infrastructure.²¹

From the 1930s on, the Institution sought to adjust the study plans to the parameters of the State educational training, and it started to offer three-year-courses in the ministerial (Theology), normal, and commercial areas in addition to the last two years of the secondary or Humanities course (six years long). It was not until the end of 1945 that the School received the name with which it is currently recognized, “Colegio Adventista de Chile” (Chile College).²² The following year, in 1946, it was authorized to complete primary and secondary education by Decree No. 5322 of the Ministry of Public Education on June 18, 1946.²³ This fact allowed access to a state subsidy and an authorization from the Ministry of Education so that, at the end of each year, students could have their studies recognized at the Liceo de Hombres de Chillán [Chillán Men’s Lyceum].²⁴

In 1952, the tertiary studies (higher education) in the Normal or Teaching, Theology, and Commercial courses lasted two years, being offered after the completion of the secondary level. Later, the Theology and Commercial courses were extended to three years. During 1955, the institution had a total enrollment of 294 students, of whom 64 were in higher education, a record number at that time. The other students enrolled belonged to the other education levels.²⁵ In general, the number of students at the tertiary level was quite small. In the year that the College turned 50 years of institutional life, it had a staff of 25 teachers and 241 students at the beginning of the year, with 39 of the students in higher courses.

In the 1960s, the institution moved definitively towards the standardization and homologation of school education. Within 1961 and 1965, the primary and secondary levels obtained the respective State Decrees as cooperators of the teaching profession. This prompted the adjustment and reorganization of the higher courses, which would later also seek official recognition, extending their duration to periods of three to four years. A relevant event occurred at the end of the 1962-1966 term when Chile Adventist College obtained the recognition and status of “Colegio Superior de Teología” (“Senior College Status”) from the higher bodies of the Adventist Church. This is the highest category of Theology at the tertiary level, and with it, the theological course was homologated to the four-year standard.²⁶ In that same period, an interesting uniqueness was revealed in relation to the persistent low proportion of Adventist students at the institution since in 1966, only a third of the college’s students were Adventists. This led the administration to understand that the institution, “genuinely missionary,” should focus on internal evangelization.²⁷ Likewise, many years later, the statistics indicated that the number of Adventist students of the first years at UnACh were still 33 percent.²⁸

Once again, the way towards the homologation and normalization of higher studies in the institution had an important advance when the state recognized the programs of Pedagogy in Basic General Education and Commercial Education.²⁹ Likewise, during that decade (the 1970s), there was another significant advance. In order to guarantee the academic excellence of the teachers’ program, Chile College signed an agreement with the University of Concepción. The objective was that, under its academic supervision, it could provide the basic general education teacher training program. Due to this agreement, the College was able to take the first steps to becoming a university center. For this reason, at some point it was called “Centro Universitario Adventista de Chile” (“Chile Adventist University Center,” but in English, it was still called Chile College).³⁰ “In 1979, the extension of this agreement allowed the Institution to create programs and offer degrees in Early Childhood Education, Pedagogy in Music, and Pedagogy in History and Geography.”³¹

In order to offer professional careers, the DFL (Decree with Force of Law) No. 5 of 1981 of the Ministry of Public Education was established by the government, a new legal framework that allowed individuals to be supporters of higher education institutions.³² In this context, after almost 20 years of experience in teacher training, in an agreement

with the University of Concepción in 1982, the Instituto Adventista Profesional - IPA (Professional Adventist Institute, but in English, it was still called Chile College) was created. The IPA initially offered degrees in Pedagogy in Basic General Education, Early Childhood Education, Pedagogy in History and Geography, Pedagogy in Music Education, and Theology. Other pedagogies and many professional degrees and higher techniques would be offered later. The IPA was initially supervised by the University of Concepción until it obtained its full autonomy through Exempt Resolution No. 644 of December 21, 1994.

The creation of the IPA meant the transfer of all the College's tertiary educational programs to this new entity. However, for internal and/or denominational purposes, the parent institution would continue to be Chile College.³³ The first rector of the IPA was Sergio Olivares Peña, who was already general director of Chile College. The IPA is a relevant antecedent for the creation of the University since UnACh represents the next stage of institutional development of higher educational institutions. The creation of the university is linked to the expectations of a university education with an Adventist identity of young people and members of the national Adventist community, according to the plans of the Church Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International Chile (ADRA Chile).

In this way, UnACh was officially organized on February 6, 1990, constituting itself, in accordance with the law, as a non-profit private corporation. UnACh is entered in the University Register Folio C - no. 42 of the Ministry of Education, and its official recognition is registered in certificate no. 6/119, which was published in the Chile's Official Gazette in September 2002 and obtained full autonomy through Decree no. 11.285 of the Ministry of Education. The first rector of UnACh was Segundo López Villalobos who, at the same time, held the position of general director of Chile Adventist Educational Center (CEACH). Since then, the motto of the Institution is: *propter Deum et Humanitatem* (At the service of God and humanity).³⁴

Among other institutions originated through the school, the University started a radio station known as Radio UnACh 106.9 FM, which today transmits quality information for the entire Nuble region and has a range of approximately 80 km.³⁵ This media interacts with the University and serves the needs of faculties and degrees extension. As for the graduate courses, the Master's degree in Public Health,³⁶ started in 1992 in the form of a joint program with the university of Bio Bio, was the first offered by UnACh. It should be noted that in 1996, UnACh started to offer the degree of Higher-Level Technician in Nursing, a program designed at the school, making it the first higher education institution in the country to offer it.³⁷

The University was created based on four undergraduate programs: Agronomy, Commercial Engineering, Agroindustrial Civil Engineering, and Auditing. Three of them are undergraduate professional degrees. From its foundation and until the moment of achieving its autonomy in 2002 (MINEDUC Exempt Resolution No. 11.285 of September 26, 2002), UnACh was subjected to examination processes focused on these degrees by three prestigious traditional universities, all of them regional: University of Concepción (Concepción), University of Talca (Talca), and University of La Frontera (Temuco).³⁸ At the end of 2002, the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences was created, so they added eight pedagogy programs and the Social Work degree to the University's academic offerings as of 2003. The undergraduate programs created from 2005 onwards include: Nursing (2005), Theology (2007), Pedagogy in Physical Education (2007), and Psychology (2010).³⁹

In 2005, the Master's in Education graduate program began and, in 2012, UnACh restarted the Master's in Public Health, now as its own program. In addition to starting its own graduate programs,⁴⁰ the University established agreements with other higher educational institutions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the incorporation of external courses, due to strategic reasons. The following programs were awarded in this modality: Master's in Public Health, in association with Loma Linda University, California, U.S.A. (2001); Master's in Family Relations, with the University of Montemorelos, Mexico (2001); Master of International Development and Administration, with Andrews University, Michigan, U.S.A. (2008); and Master's in Religious Education, in association with AAIAS (Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Philippines) (2012).

However, in 2005, UnACh voluntarily joined the institutional accreditation process promoted by the National Commission for Undergraduate Accreditation (CNAP) without being able to obtain their accreditation. Two years later, the University carried out a deep organizational restructuring and implemented a set of policies and quality assurance mechanisms that allowed it to achieve, in 2009 for the first time, Accreditation in Institutional Management and Undergraduate Teaching for two years. Accreditation is a public quality certification granted by the National Accreditation Commission, an autonomous state entity in charge of certifying the quality of higher education institutions.⁴¹

As it is seen, UnACh was incorporated into the progressive accreditation plan of its undergraduate and graduate programs called "Accreditation Council." Due to that, in 2010, all of its educational programs (pedagogy area) were accredited, the equivalent of 50 percent of the academic offerings for graduation that year. In a second stage (within 2013-2017), accreditation was expanded to programs in other areas of knowledge (Nursing, Higher-level Nursing Technician, Psychology, Social Work). As a result, in June 2016, there were 12 accredited careers with an average of 5.2 years of accreditation.⁴² Due to these accreditations from the government, the institutional image of the University was strengthened and valued both in society and in the academic environment in addition to transmitting confidence in the choice of its students by offering quality education.

From 2007, the University rigorously prepared its strategic development based on five-year plans that were executed within the framework of its own design Control and Quality Assurance System (SCAC). The SCAC incorporated the concepts of a balanced scorecard, quality cycles, integrated planning and computer tools for management. In 2011, UnACh was submitted to a new evaluation process, obtaining four years of accreditation. Five years later, there was

the incorporation of secondary school and, as a result, a three-year accreditation was obtained. In addition, UnACh is accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA) for five years.⁴³

Besides giving attention to accreditations, the administration also focused on the institution's structure. An important building at UnACh is the institutional library "Mariano Renedo Lucero," a three-story and 2,140 m² building, inaugurated in 2012. The library works under the "open shelf" modality and has an average collection of 49,391 physical volumes and about 168,948 volumes and publications in addition to their virtual databases. The library subscribes to the ProQuest, E-Books, and Ebsco databases, allowing maintained and updated information in the main areas of knowledge. Also, the University campus is over an area of 25 hectares, containing classroom buildings and functional infrastructure alternates with park and garden spaces. Thus, academics and students carry out their activities in a cozy, natural environment. In addition, the campus has many places for outdoors and indoors recreational and sport activities.⁴⁴

A survey conducted by the Advanced Studies Group at Universitas-El Mercurio in 2015 showed that UnACh was ranked 23rd out of the 44 accredited universities in the country. It obtained first place in the group of teaching universities, and the fourth general place in the formative process parameter, increasing every day its reputation as a Christian institution. In turn, enrollment in that same year reached a total of 1,811 university students. Since its establishment, the Institution has graduated more than 3,800 university students, most of whom now work for Church institutions.⁴⁵

In January 2016, the University was reaccredited by the National Accreditation Commission for three years in the areas of Institutional Management, Undergraduate Teaching and Link with the Environment.⁴⁶ During 2016, the total enrollment was 1,853 students in undergraduate courses and 107 in graduate courses. Its educational offerings include 25 active, attached undergraduate programs, according to the areas of knowledge. There are four faculties: Education and Social Sciences, with 11 programs; Health Sciences, with three programs; Engineering and Business, with 10 programs; and Theology, with one program. At the graduate level, UnACh offers two programs: Master's in Public Health and Master's in Education. The academic staff is composed of 201 teachers, 62 percent of whom are postgraduate teachers (Master's and doctoral degrees).

In March 2016, the Canvasser Student Development Institute (IDEC) building was inaugurated, the first of its kind on a university campus of the Seventh-day Adventists and the world. Its existence is related to promotional tasks, training, Student Canvassing preparation, and management of incentives for students who finance their studies through the canvassing work.⁴⁷ In this same year, two important trends were observed in relation to the total number of enrollments within 2009-2016: first, an increase of 40.7% in students enrollment--that is, 1,317 students in 2009, and 1,853 in 2016; and second, the sustained increase in students in health degrees.⁴⁸

Also during that year (2016), the process of gradual implementation of the curriculum adjustment or innovation began, which was proposed in the framework of updating the university educational model, focused on the axes of Adventist curricular identity, the competency-based curriculum and the affiliation to the Transferable Credit System (SCT Chile). Today, in the context of this curricular proposal, UnACh allows entry to undergraduate and graduate courses as well as to areas of scientific research. In addition to working for the cultural, social, and human development of its students, it has a general coordination unit called Centro Educacional Adventista de Chile [Chile Adventist Educational Center].⁴⁹

In order to achieve the pedagogical and missionary objectives, strategic planning is based on the following guiding values: respect for God, neighbor, and the environment; academic and management excellence; university social responsibility; solidarity; and personal and corporate integrity. The institutional vision aims to contribute through its graduates, and its distinctive confessional perspective aims to the cultural, social, and productive development of the regional community and of the national and Latin American Adventist community.⁵⁰

Thus, the affirmation and development of its Adventist identity is a priority. For this reason, the concept of University Ministry was adopted to refer to the entity that leads and coordinates the Master Plan for Spiritual Development within the university and provides spiritual assistance to the members from the university community through a team of chaplains. To protect these purposes, the University Ministry became a unit linked to the Theological Seminary.⁵¹

The School's Historical Role

Since its establishment, UnACh, as a Christian institution, has directly assisted in the work of spreading the Gospel. As an example, on September 10 and 12, 2015, the institution was present at the third international volunteer meeting "I Will Go" held at Brazil Adventist University, campus Engenheiro Coelho.⁵² This participation makes its students extend and improve their relationship skills, not only acting as missionaries in their locality, but also all over the world.

At the same time that it seeks to contribute to the evangelization of the world, the institution also actively participates in missionary work in its own environment. For this, UnACh has a radio station that continues a tradition in educational radio broadcasting. Since its foundation (1992), it was related to the experimental radio station "Conservatorio de Música" [Conservatory of Music] of the IPA. Its programming reflects the religious identity of the university project, whose essence is faith, culture, and reflection.⁵³

UnACh seeks greater interaction with other educational institutions for missionary purposes in addition to the aim of associating the areas of entrepreneurship and social innovation, all of which will bring benefits to the community.⁵⁴

Always active in social projects, UnACh worked in collaboration with the city of Chillán in the project “Feria de reciclaje 2018” [2018 recycling fair]. The objective of the institution was to promote popular participation and provide explanations on how to recycle in a right way.⁵⁵

As an institution that aims to provide an education that prepares students for life and also for eternity, UnACh is always connected to Adventist missionary projects. In 2020, for example, educational activities began in the context of the “10 Días De Oración y Ayuno” [10 Days of Prayer and Fasting] project, held February 6 and 15, 2020. The project aimed to strengthen the spiritual life of teachers and students through better communication with God so that everyone feels encouraged to pray and work for the well-being and salvation of others.⁵⁶

Finally, UnACh is a continuation of a long and “prolific educational tradition of 114 years of history” that began in Púa when a school was established in order to prepare religious ministers and teachers for the Adventist community of believers. Today, with this as a priority institutional objective, it still seeks to offer educational standards of excellence and quality. In order to do this, it relies on the dedicated work of professionals committed to promoting the Adventist mission of service and salvation.⁵⁷

List of Administrators⁵⁸

Colegio Adventista de Púa [Púa Training School] (1906-1920)

Directors: Carlos E. Krieghoff (1906-1907); G. W. Casebeer (1908-1910); R. W. Airey (1911); G. W. Casebeer (1912); C. E. Krieghoff (1913-1915); J. C. Brower (1916-1917); Nels Johnson (1918); W. W. Wheeler (1919-1920).

Colegio Adventista Chileno [Chile Training School] (1921-1926)

Director: E. U. Ayars (1921-1925).

Colegio Adventista de Chillán [Chillán Training School] (1927-1934)

Directors: J. M. Howell (1926-1930); Walter Schurbet (1931-1932); G. B. Taylor (1933-1934).

Colegio Industrial Adventista [Chillán Training School] (1935-1945)

Directors: J. H. Meier (1935-1941); W. E. Aeschlimann (1942); C. D. Christensen (1943-1945).

Colegio Adventista de Chile [Chile College] (1945-1983)

Directors: W. E. Aeschlimann (1946-1947); Merardo León (1948-1953); A. J. Alva (1954-1956); J. N. Pérez (1957); José Torres (1958-1959); D. H. Rhys (1960-1963); Mariano Renedo (1964-1966); Juan Tabuenca (1966-1969); Juan Fernández (1969); R. A. Itin (1970-1974); Enrique Becerra (1975-1978); Sergio Olivares (1979-1982).

Academic Directors: Sergio Olivares Peña (1975-1978); Mario Ochoa (1979-1980); Víctor Soto (1981-1982).

Colegio Adventista de Chile [Chile College] (1983-1985)

President: Sergio Olivares Peña (1983-1985).

Academic Director: Víctor Soto (1983-1985).

Instituto Profesional Adventista [Chile College] (1986-1990)

Presidents: Sergio Olivares Peña (1986); Segundo López (1987-1990).

Academic Directors: Víctor Soto (1986-1987); Edgar Araya (1988-1990).

Centro Educacional Adventista de Chile [Chile Adventist Educational Center] (1991-1999)

Presidents: Sergio Olivares Peña (1991-1995); Abraham Acosta (1996-1999).

Academic Directors: Edgar Araya (1991-1995); Abraham Acosta (1996); Edgar Mayr (1997-1999).

Universidad Adventista de Chile [Chile Adventist University] (2000-Present)

Presidents: Gamaliel Flórez (2000); Abraham Acosta (2001); Juan Millano (2002-2003); Bolívar Alaña (2004-2006); Edgar Araya Byshop (2007-2010); Ricardo A. González (2011-2015); Mauricio Comte Donoso (2016-Present).

Academic Directors: Enoc Iglesias (2000); Magdiel Pérez (2001-2002); Marcelo Carvajal (2003); Madgiel Pérez (2004-2005); Enoc Sandoval (2006-2008); Ramon Pérez (2009-Present)⁵⁹

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2. *Portal de la Universidad Adventista de Chile* [Chile Adventist University website], “La Universidad - Reseña histórica” [“The University - Historical Review”], accessed March 9, 2020, <http://bit.ly/33224h4.7>
3. *Dirección de Registros Académicos y Admisión* [Academic Records and Admission Directorate], “Carreras UnACh” [UnACh Degrees], accessed March 27, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3azRLE9.7>
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