



Universidad del Valle de Guatemala

# Mentor

Newsletter for UVG's donor community

## Excellence that Transcends

### On the Frontier of Science: Fernando Quevedo '79

This October, Dr. Fernando Quevedo '79 was named director of the prestigious Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy. The Centre extends bridges between north and south, east and west and unites physicists from around the world to discuss experiments and exchange ideas.



Laureate Steven Weinberg who was his advisor during his doctoral studies. His career continued at CERN-The European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland, McGill University in Canada, Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, Neuchâtel, a small university in Switzerland near CERN, UNAM - National Autonomous University of Mexico, and finally the University of Cambridge, England.

Founded in 1964 by Nobel Laureate Abdus Salam, the Centre operates under a tripartite agreement between the Italian Government and two United Nations Agencies, UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency. In addition to being a first-class research institute its mission is to foster advanced studies and research in developing countries. It gives researchers and students from Africa, Asia and America the opportunity to visit and get up to date on the latest in their fields and to pursue doctoral degrees in developed countries.

The news that Quevedo was selected as director of ICTP from over 100 candidates is not just an honor but also a wonderful opportunity for Guatemala. The Centre's long-term plans include creating a science and technology institute in the country. Other ways the Centre will contribute to science in Guatemala is by fostering close ties between universities and creating opportunities for Guatemalan students to study at ICTP and abroad. Other possibilities include helping to improve science education at local schools by training middle school science teachers.

Quevedo graduated from Universidad del Valle de Guatemala with a B.S. in Physics in 1979. In 1986, he obtained a PhD in Physics at the University of Texas at Austin. There he had the privilege of working with Nobel

To read an interview with Fernando Quevedo (in Spanish) click on [Magacín](#).

## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS



**Lilian Márquez '97** was the first student to graduate in Forestry Engineering at UVG, and the first woman in the country to do so. She has worked in several communities implementing joint conservation projects. She was part of the Center for the Study of Institutions, Population and Environmental Change and she now works for UNDP - United Nations Development Program. Marquez is the president of the Scholarship Association of Guatemala, helping to provide scholarships for needy students. She is obtaining her PhD with the help of a Fulbright scholarship at the University of Indiana.

**José Miguel Ponciano '98** graduated from UVG with a degree in Biology, now he is a well known neotropical ornithologist. He began his career working in conservation biology which he has now combined with biometrics. He has published several scientific papers and is currently enrolled in the University of Idaho's Bioinformatics PhD program.



## Ten Years of UVG Altiplano

- Robert Moreno, Rector

Almost ten years have passed since that day in December of 1999 that the government of the republic signed an agreement with the Foundation of the University of the Valley of Guatemala to turn the old military base of Sololá into an educational center. The process, framed in the peace accords, enjoyed strong endorsement and determined participation from the community in Sololá who viewed the arrival of a university in the department with high hopes.

This milestone marked the birth of the Altiplano campus of UVG. As of that moment, many people and institutions have contributed to the conversion of barracks into laboratories and university classrooms. What at one time were fields used for military exercises are now scenic paths and agricultural fields.

Capital seed money from MAGA - the Ministry of Agriculture - was instrumental in the first stages of preparing the educational center. Also, the support of the American embassy and the government of Guatemala made it possible to establish an endowment fund that helps cover the basic operating costs of the campus. The government and the people of the United States have continued being key partners for creating diverse programs, obtaining scholarships and renovating the facilities, as have other donors and organizations who have joined this cause.

UVG-Altiplano has become an important point of convergence for different sectors and protagonists in the region who are interested in the activities of teaching, research and outreach that occur today in the village of El Tablón. It has seen several student cohorts march through its classrooms and thousands of people have benefited from the program of informal education "University for All", available to the entire community regardless of their educational level. Since it opened, close to 250 primary and secondary school teachers, technical students in agroforestry, horticulture and tourism have graduated. At present, the academic offerings include secondary education to licentiate and master's degrees.

In October, as part of its anniversary celebration, we recognized posthumously Carlos Enrique Blanco, the first president of UVG Altiplano's board of directors who led the process of opening the campus and played a determining role in its consolidation. His dedication was a testimony of his conviction that education was the best path for the development of Guatemala.



## INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION



UVG is committed to the continuous improvement of its academic programs and institutions. Relevance, quality and internationalization are imperative to positioning the University at the forefront of higher education both nationally and internationally. For this reason, one of UVG's strategic goals for 2015 is to be accredited at the international level.

The process of accreditation is an important opportunity for self-evaluation, renewal and recognition. UVG is seeking institutional accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). This accreditation evaluates the quality with which the university and its external campuses function and operate. The University is also seeking accreditation of its academic programs. Academic programs are evaluated based on the following: curriculum development, students, faculty, support staff, academic management, resources and services related to the program, quality of graduates, employer satisfaction and research produced.

Two majors have already been evaluated and accredited by the Central American Accreditation Agency for Architecture and Engineering (ACAAI): UVG's Industrial Engineering and Chemical Engineering programs were accredited in July 2009.

## Campus Life



A student's experience at UVG is about more than just the education they receive within the walls of its classrooms and laboratories. Just walk over to the cafeteria or the coffee bar and you will see students gathered together, hunched over a laptop watching the latest YouTube video, talking about the weekend, or sharing advice on subjects ranging from homework to dating.

UVG has a vibrant campus life, offering students, faculty and staff the opportunity to attend lectures, workshops and concerts, participate in intramural sports, photography contests and even singing competitions that allow our students to share their hidden talents.

Since the University was founded, several student magazines have been started, some with more success than others. The new publication *El Diferencial* is off to a strong start thanks to the support of an active Student Association, the new Office of Student Affairs and the Journalism workshop.

The magazine is geared to student life, its goal is to give students a window to the world outside the classroom, publish useful information and entertain with various themes that will help maintain communication and unity within the community, also, to highlight the talents of our students and reiterate our slogan "excellence that transcends".



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**Thank you for your support!**

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