

An innovative concept for the transformation of Universities and their relation to Cities: the “Educational Campus”.

(Pablo Campos, PhD Architect – www.utoplan.com, professor USPCEU, Sapin)

Education is a spatial act.

This conviction lies on the fact that the human contact that feeds it necessarily must be developed within a physical ambit. Consequently, the built environment plays a transcendental role in the integral formation of the person, which is the true mission of the University. For this reason it is necessary to design the places devoted to Education with an aim for a quality that contributes to the intellectual, affective, and social construction of the university student.

The European University is being adapted academically to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), but it must face a quality leap in the matter of space, both in the Architecture of its precinct and its integration in the City.

As a global solution, hereby I propose the “Educational Campus”.

This concept, which I enunciated for the first time in 2005, creates a universal philosophy capable of evoking in all Universities a process of modernization towards a new excellence.

A Campus will be “educational” if it incorporates and testifies to the values addressed in the following 10 principles:

10 principles of the “Educational Campus”

A Campus will be educational if it integrates and gives testimony of the following values:

1.-Utopia and integral planning. Impulsed by Utopia as a transformative energy, the design of a University environment must be developed using integral planning strategies which translate into tangible form the necessary utopian principles, defining an evolution governed by a sound degree of

freedom and flexibility in space-time. This occurs under the premise that the proper conception of a University precinct is not the formulation of an urban-architectural object but the definition of a whole process.

2.-Learning community. Stimulation of personal contact and functional integrity, fostering the consolidation of an entire learning community where human scale prevails in its spaces, inside which a “feeling of belonging” is generated in the University member. Through an intentional design, the physical scene must set up empathies with the human being who inhabits it, in such a way that Urbanism and Architecture act as incentives for him to develop with motivation his activities of study, research, relation and general living.

3.-Spatial harmony. Crystallization of a global aesthetic for composing urban & architectural spaces, so that it becomes a part of the collective memory of society. The University physical implantation must transcend the mere supply of available built areas, getting involved in the visual education by means of designs which generate coherent arrangements where attention is paid in similar way to built volumes and open areas. The Campus, as embodiment and material reality of the University, will turn to be the first lesson that a student receives, a “three dimensional textbook” with an architectural corporeity.

4.-Affective&intellectual embracement. Performance of a spatial metaphor of the “affective & intellectual embracement”, through an arrangement of the precinct, the conception of which intentionally activates affective impacts, awaking empathies in the community. The layout, volume, shape, and texture of the different architectural pieces within the Campus will have the mission to endeavor the psychological wellness of the University inhabitant.

5.-Nature and Art. Incorporation of Nature as a cultural value, integrating it in a global assembly ruled by the premise of “unity within diversity”, in which the different components, buildings and open spaces, build up a physical scene where its purpose as a cultural product can be expressed, namely its academical content as a locus for study and research. In addition, artistic works can be exhibited either on exterior or interior, to complement through their contemplation the formative quality of the environment.

6.-Image and accessibility. External projection of a sound University image, consistent with its transcendental missions of teaching, research and social commitment, fosters values related to conceptual and physical accessibility and exerts sensitivity towards the culture and traditions of the place. It thereby enhances expression of its full social, geographic, cultural and architectural meanings.

7.-Adaptation to the environment and sustainability. Adequate response of urbanism and architecture to geographical and climate conditions, promotes exemplary solutions in environmental, bioclimatic, and sustainability issues. This goal is achieved through the choice of materials, technical & constructive solutions, and the incorporation of mechanisms that foster the use of renewal energies.

8.-Memory and avant-garde. The urban-architectural paradigms of memory, inherited from the history of spaces, serve as an intellectual resource for design. Accordingly, new plant projects, generated with a high degree of formal freedom, as well as the adaptations of preexisting buildings and uses (testifying to positive change of former functions), must contribute to a sense of contemporaneity and the cutting edge. Their presence invigorates and reinforces the intellectual identity of the University.

9.-Relation University-City. Generation of synergies between University and City, reinforcing the active presence of University people and spaces within social & urban contexts (as well as in a reciprocal sense). It fosters innovation, and invites other Institutions to share the global University project for the achievement of such a goal.

10.-Innovative teaching & learning modalities. Design of spaces which host and foster the application of innovative teaching & learning modalities, housed under a global pedagogic project. This should be done in such a way that the physical spaces that are alternative to the conventional classroom abandon their obsolete role in teaching issues. They are thereby transformed into intelligent places, stimulating a positive change in the attitudes of the relation professor-student.

Pablo Campos Calvo-Sotelo, PhD Architect
Aggregate Professor - University USPCEU
www.utoplan.com