

## The objectives of the university

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The considerations of the sociologist Simon Schwartzman on his article of May 7 2008 (VEJA Magazine) and on the ensuing letters on this subject motivated me to write this editorial.

The Triple Pillar of the University are: Teaching, Research and Extension.

I would add to it:

- Interaction between teacher and student
- Interaction between diversified and specific courses
- Interaction between undergraduate and postgraduate courses
- Interaction between the university and public and private sectors

I believe that, most of all, the University's main activity is to prepare qualified and competent human resources to meet society's needs.

The subject of pure versus applied research always comes up. They shouldn't be considered separately. What matters is the continuous search for knowledge and the consequent scientific production. There are those who support that research should not be restricted to the academy but should be converted into products or services to society (Prof. Schwartzman's article). Others support that the university should practice high level academic research independent or not of practical results that would benefit the public and private sectors (letter from Dr. Geraldo A.S. Passos Jr., PhD, University of Sao Paulo, Ribeirão Preto).

This is the question. The two points of view should not be considered separately.

Postgraduate programs aim qualify teachers and researchers. How does this process begin?

Certainly it does not have in mind a practical product to benefit society. Research, at its initial level, is essentially academic. The role of the university is, before anything else, the qualification of highly competent professionals that, under the supervision of researchers that work on their own areas of research, produce knowledge and qualify other researchers.

Senior researchers in their areas should be apt to cater to the necessities of the market and to register patents. Decisions should be taken individually. They depend on each researcher's point of view. Human beings are complex and so are researchers.

Research supporting agencies such as Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), National Research Council (CNPq) and Sao Paulo State Foundation for Research (FAPESP) demand high quality research which makes researchers invest on their own careers and to progress in their academic ranking. The evaluation system used by these agencies certainly helped to improve the quality of the Brazilian scientific journals along the years.

Acta Cirúrgica Brasileira's main objective is the publication of scientific articles on experimental surgery. This area is of no interest to the public and private sectors. It does not accept commercial advertising. It survives at the expenses of the support offered by CNPq and the support of its subscribers. Articles published constitute pure academic research and it became an indexed journal in the following agencies: SciElo, Medline, Embase, Scopus and Thomson Reuters (ISI).

There are those who say that "all scientific research should have its applicability and a target impact; otherwise, it is worthless and, many times, a waste of resources".

My academic experience, especially on postgraduate level, proved that the effective practice of research (even if it is not applied) has contributed to the qualification of competent professionals to serve the university. It improved teaching and research activities, including the betterment of professional practice.

In addition, it taught every student that medical discoveries and breakthroughs result from painstaking scientific investigation carried by everyday work at laboratories, hospitals and universities.