



Memorandum of Understanding between Illinois College and the University of Cuenca

The parties of the present Memorandum of Understanding, which include Illinois College (United States of America) and the University of Cuenca (Ecuador), based on the mutual conviction that the expansion and strengthening of scientific and educational cooperation is of value to the respective institutions, hereby agree to sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

1. Purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding:

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to facilitate the development of concrete educational and research-oriented cooperative activities and to develop contacts between academic personnel, specialists, and students of the two institutions with the goal of promoting the conservation of common species which are threatened with extinction.

This Memorandum establishes the principals and conditions under which the cooperative relationship will take place. Concrete cooperative activities and projects will be the object of bilateral agreements, whose scope is specified in article 3.

2. Areas of Cooperation:

Upon mutual agreement, the cooperation will include areas and programs that the aforementioned institutions deem desirable and feasible and that they believe will contribute to the promotion and development of a cooperative relationship.

Cooperation can take place across such activities as:

- Academic exchanges in areas of common interest.
- Exchanges of both undergraduate and graduate students.
- Participation in seminars and scientific exhibitions.
- Creation of joint publications.
- Joint research and development projects.

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The Orchid Center of the School of Chemical Sciences of the University of Cuenca and the Orchid Recovery Program of Illinois College have collaborated continually since 2014. In this context, there has been an exchange of researchers along with research methods and results. With the goal of strengthening this collaboration, following Project is proposed, which is oriented toward areas of common interest, focused on the conservation of orchids:

Objectives:

1. Contribute to the conservation of threatened orchid species through ex situ and in situ strategies.
2. Strengthen the participating groups' research through exchange and training.
3. Implement a mycorrhizal fungi bank and evaluate fungi's effect in the different stages of orchid development.

Expected results:

- Collection of seeds and roots from at least 5 species of orchids identified as threatened
- Map of the distribution of these species. Establishment of priority places for conservation.
- Attempts at germination, symbiotic multiplication, and rooting of orchids.
- Isolation and characterization of mycorrhizal fungi associated with different orchids and evaluation of their potential as a critical factor in germination and growth.
- Co-directed theses by academics that form part of the international network of tropical orchid conservation.
- During the period of this agreement, at least two workshops will be held, one in the United States, another in Ecuador, to train researchers and students.
- At least two researchers and two students per year (two from each institution) will develop internships, with the creation of joint publications.

3. Terms (Clauses) of Cooperation:

The terms of cooperation for each specific activity to be implemented under the present memorandum of understanding, including budgeting and financial obligations, should be discussed and agreed upon in writing by each party before the initiation of the activity. Any agreement initiated will refer to this memorandum.

Each institution should designate a "Cooperation Group" that will be responsible for the development and coordination of the cooperative activities agreed upon.

The institutions will work together to identify and secure external financing for cooperative activities. As a general rule, if there are no external resources, each party will be responsible for financing its own costs.

In order to optimize this relationship, on an agreed upon date each institution will provide a detailed description of research interests and strengths, long term goals, and channels of financing for development of activities that are agreed upon by all parties.

We hope that this collaboration between our institutions will be a model for cooperation between both countries and will provide the opportunity to share and compare data from our research in order to fill knowledge gaps and to promote the conservation of unique life-forms that are of interest to Ecuador and the United States.

In order to promote cultural knowledge and understanding between the United States and Latin America and to inspire a new generation of specialists and students interested in becoming the guardians of the environment, Illinois College and the University of Cuenca formally announce, through this document, their interest in carrying out mutual collaboration and the development of research on elements of biodiversity of interest to both nations as described in this document.

4. Changes, Termination, and Emendation:

The present Memorandum of Understanding will be in effect for a period of five years from the date of the last signing, with the understanding that it can be changed by appropriate authorities, with a six-month prior written notification. However, the parties may agree to terminate this agreement immediately without such notification. The Memorandum can be corrected or extended in writing with mutual consent. Six copies of this memorandum will be printed, three in English and three in Spanish. In case of discrepancies between the versions in different languages, the English version will prevail.

5. Coordination:

In order to facilitate the development of this agreement and to monitor its correct execution, the Directors of International Relations at Illinois College and the University of Cuenca will facilitate the communication between the parties and will assess and evaluate the activities carried out.

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6. Legal Representatives:

Dr. Barbara Ann Edwards Farley, President of Illinois College, appointed by the Trustees of Illinois on June 1, 2013.

Dr. Pablo Fernando Vanegas Peralta, President of the University of Cuenca, according to article 48 of the Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior.

Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding by Illinois College, United States of America:

Serving as Authorized Representative:

President

Name of Authorized Representative:

Dr. Barbara Ann Edwards Farley



Date: October 15, 2019

Signature:

Barbara G. Farley

Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding by the University of Cuenca, Ecuador:

Serving as Authorized Representative: President

Name of Authorized Representative:

Dr. Pablo Fernando Vanegas Peralta

Date: _____

Signature:

Pablo F. Vanegas Peralta

