3. History of careers in the modern world

In our time, productive processes and services, factory and government administration, public health issues, recreation and solace, etc. have been performed through a specialized knowledge system, acquired and accredited by formal documents; this is what is called “professional.”

The peculiarities of the industrialized social development in which we live are attributed to professional work. The professional is one of the fundamental social subjects in nowadays social structure. To this person is given the responsibility to achieve an environment increasingly more favorable for a happier existence.
3.1 Intellectual’s work and career

Often, to identify the feature of the intellectual and the intellectual’s work connected to the idea of career, it is also common to find distinctions between careers, such as:

- Intellectual or intellectualized careers, whereby the intellectual’s operation such as in humanities, social sciences or in arts prevails.
- Non intellectualized careers, which involve primarily organizing chores and the coordination and execution of manual labor, such as in engineering, medicine and natural sciences.
3.2 Occupations and profession

Occupation refers to expertise which is the result of a systematic process of education, but the understanding of theory is not necessarily present. One who displays an occupation is an expert in practical aspects but not in its interpretation and scientific explanation. An occupation means a job skill as a result of practice but without academic credit to validate the training.
3.3 Definitions of Profession

According to Alvin Gouldner, the professional is considered as the technical intelligence ("inteligentzia técnica") of society, with the main character of showing a new way of culture: critical speech. It also guarantees that professionals are distinguished by the political, technical direction role assumed by always subjecting their considerations about the world to collective debate and scrutiny. Gouldner states that professionals “adhere to the culture of critical speech.”
For José Joaquin Brunner, the modern intellectual is seen as a “debate specialist” because he assumes debate as the means to gain advantageous ubiquity.

Talcot Parsons considers society as a “merit critic,” wherein the fundamental values that rule society have to do with schools promoting them, and with academic goals. He expressed that careers are the major achievement in an educational level that can be aspired by an individual in society.
For our social environment, economy and social characters are the elements used as criteria to determine the individual’s positional status. An especially important role in society is that of the professional. Its importance is based on how well the individual functions to guarantee the development and functionality of society in the most treasured aspects such as in economy and its material welfare.
Acquisition of a role or function in society can be described by two different types of situations or instances:

**Formal:** such as in school systems, union groups, associations, and other institutions.

**Informal:** appears non-systematically as a means of communication, personal associations, personal experience in job and other like these.

A professional functions in institutions, most of them with an economic character. Productive organizations are an expression of such institutions, which favor the development of its two most basic characteristics:

**Efficiency,** by getting the most out of its resources.

**Effectiveness,** by attaining its goals.
4. Careers in Mexico: Economic, cultural and social conditions

The appearance of careers in Mexico is mostly related to the development of a scientific technical vision of the world and their applications for the economy. Therefore, we can only speak of them here as modern careers. In the XXth century, industrial development and resulting socio-cultural changes stimulated increasingly more of such scientific - technical vision of the world, and consequently the proliferation of careers.
4.1 The emergence of careers and the university institution in Mexico

Conquest was the route that our country underwent to enter into modernity. In being colonized by Spain, Mexico became incorporated into an impeded, limited modernity, so full of elements of the medieval vision of the world that persisted in southern Europe. Along with the conquest and colonization of the Americas arrived the university institution. However, ecclesiastic control was imposed on the formation and development of higher education in the Spanish colonies.
University or higher education during the colonial times consisted on teaching selected knowledge about: philosophy, Latin, and arts; the goal after this sort of education was:

1. To preserve and promote the Catholic dogma.
2. Strengthen royal and Church authority; keeping its truth and accepting it as absolute and definitive.
3. Promote the Latin language and set all erudite works in its understanding.
5. Preserve their class’s privileges even when promoting culture.
Teachings were extended to Creoles and half-breeds (or better mixed-race individuals???) around the first decade of colonization at religious institutions. In 1553, the Virrey Don Luis de Velasco founded the University of “la Nueva España.” Later on, because of its colonial character, it was re-founded several times. Despite that it answered to a nationalist and anti-monarchy type of government, the Mexican university was unable to adapt. Therefore, it was classified as a “university for lawyers,” for this career was the main access to working in government and rise to high cultural elite of the country.
4.2 Challenges for the formation of professionals in the contemporary world

Over the last 15 years, great and important changes have taken place in the world. Socio-cultural and economy models that have been stable for the last century, have undergone crises. The most critical reason is the globalization and internationalization of economic processes.
UNAM survived a drastic revolution on the grounds of socially useful knowledge. The obsolescence of knowledge in every career is reached increasingly sooner. The amount of knowledge from ancient times up to the industrial era took 2000 years to be developed, and during the industrial period knowledge doubled only every ten years. Later, this occurred every five years, and nowadays it takes only two years to be duplicated. Therefore, long lasting employment expectations in the same activity by the same subject is reduced markedly.
Based on the framework of internationalization and globalization of economic processes, professional labor is not valued in the same way as during the industrialist period of the XIXth century. For the same reason and for this motive, the formation of professionals in the XXIth century must respond to the following demands:

- The way education is perceived confronted by society and the labor markets has changed.
- There are major changes in the organization of labor.
- There is an establishment of plain interactive open networks.
- Factories must be flexible and adaptable to changes in volume and specifications in order to change market demands.
- There must be continuous improvement in production lines, instead of maintaining an optimum production.
As a consequence of all of the preceding, educational institutions have seen the necessity to make their institutional functions and their norms adequate, and must be worried about continuously revising the state of the art and knowledge development in their respective fields.

The challenge that educational institutions of higher education have to answer is managing to communicate the leaving profile of their alumni with the following elements: 1) the changing character in economic processes; 2) competitive demands and updated developments, with new professional applications in their fields; 3) expectations and interests of those who arrive at their classrooms; 4) articulate the changes with those of the institutional goals and responsibilities for social and cultural development, in the theory of traditions and necessities of the human nature in the curricular process of their academic programs.
Most educational institutions have entered a process of change, where the main tendencies are as follows:

Curriculum flexibility.
Integration of theory and practice in their teachings.
Accentuate the profile and specialization of their alumni.
Establish distinctions for their professional practice, for the practice of teaching, and for research.
Augment and diversify the education offered.
Exploit technology resources with a didactic direction.
Incorporate competitive factors.
THE “UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE NUEVO LEON” FACES CHANGES

The UANL which was born as a cultural development and professionalizing project in 1933, has shown concern for the need to transform its institutional life, as have other universities. Therefore, UANL has initiated a large number of projects through which it attempts to answer the challenge.
The proposal for change is being gathered in the making of the exit profile foresighted in the document “Vision UANL 2006” in which the institution guarantees at least ten fundamental characteristics for its alumni:

1. Competitiveness in a worldwide environment.
2. High degree of human sense.
3. Honesty
4. Responsibility
5. Civic spirit.
6. Commitment to the university and its surroundings.
7. Leadership.
8. Sense of enterprise and global vision.
10. Knowledge of technology and information systems.