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Oldest UFRGS unit, Faculty of Pharmacy celebrates its 125th anniversary

Professional and academic training in the area is the utmost contribution of the Unit that started activities in 1895

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Still in the 19th century, the first Academic Unit to be integrated into what today is the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) started functioning. Exactly on September 29, 1895 the Faculty of Pharmacy (FacFar), called the School of Pharmacy, was founded. Given the current circumstances of the new coronavirus pandemic, the anniversary celebrations are postponed and will be held during the next year, according to the director of the Faculty, Helder Ferreira Teixeira. For him, the moment can be summed up like this: "Looking back and seeing what we have built: it makes us very proud".

In 125 years of history, the Faculty of Pharmacy has been playing an important role in professional qualification, not only in Rio Grande do Sul but also in Brazil. Until the 1930s, it was the only undergraduate program in the state, when a similar program was created in Santa Maria, to be later linked to the Federal University of Santa Maria, and the program in Pelotas, linked to the Catholic University of that city. In the metropolitan area, new graduate programs only appeared in the 1990s. The contribution of the alumni is praised by the director: "In the professional field, our former students and teachers have contributed over the years to the Presidency / Board of the Regional Pharmacy Council, the Pharmacists of the State of RS and the Union of Pharmacists of Rio Grande do Sul," highlights Helder.



Photo: Nádia Volpato (Disclosure)

Currently, the Pharmacy undergraduate program offers 120 annual vacancies, 84 of which through the UFRGS entrance exam (Vestibular) and 36 through the Unified Selection System (Sisu). In addition, the unit has three graduate programs: Pharmaceutical Sciences (Master's and Doctorate), Pharmaceutical Nanotechnology (Doctorate) and Pharmaceutical Assistance (Master's and Doctorate). The Unit's oldest program, Pharmaceutical Sciences, obtained a maximum score in the evaluation of Capes. The other programs are carried out on an interinstitutional basis, in partnership with universities from various regions of the country. There is also a graduate specialization in Clinical Analysis.

Several research groups and community outreach services are also offered by FacFar. Among the community outreach projects, the director highlights the broader ones, which are carried out in agreements with the Porto Alegre City Hall: the Laboratory of Clinical and Toxicological Analysis and the Collaborating Center for Pharmaceutical Services, to assist patients of the Unified Health System.

Information on FacFar's actions can be found on the website: <https://www.ufrgs.br/farmacia>.

Perspectives

Currently, director Helder Ferreira Teixeira points out that the main challenges are the monitoring of emergency remote education activities and the plan of returning to classroom activities, "especially to practical classes and research, without putting our community at risk". For the future, the director's indication is that the Unit "shall continue to collaborate for the formation of qualified and committed graduate and postgraduate professionals and keep the community – formed by professors, administrative technicians and students – united in the development of teaching, research, community outreach and innovation projects with excellence". And he adds: "The challenges for the years to come are big, especially with regard to the maintenance and modernization of the research infrastructure installed at our Faculty, given the current scenario of budget restrictions and of disinvestment in universities".

History

Founded in 1895, the School of Pharmacy is the pioneer among all teaching units at UFRGS. In 1898, there was the integration of the teaching staff of the Childbirth Course and the Congregation of the School of Pharmacy, resulting in the foundation of the Free Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy (in 1911, the term Pharmacy is removed). Thus, between 1898 and 1952, the unit was linked to Medicine, even though other arrangements were established during that period. In 1916, it was recognized by the name *Escola Anexa*. In 1936, the creation of the University of Porto Alegre incorporated, among other units, the Faculty of Medicine, with the attached Schools of Dentistry and Pharmacy.

Between the 1940s and 1950s, the University of Porto Alegre became the University of Rio Grande do Sul, with the integration of courses from other cities in the state, and followed the federalization process, when it took on the official name of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. In 1952, the Faculty of Pharmacy became a Technical-Administrative Unit and was renamed the School of Pharmacy. Subsequently, Faculty of Pharmacy of Porto Alegre, Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry of Porto Alegre and, finally, Faculty of Pharmacy of UFRGS.

In 1970, the Postgraduate Program in Pharmacy was implemented, following the pioneering spirit of this unit, as the first master's program in the field of drugs and medicaments in Brazil. This program, which is about to turn 50, was, according to Helder Teixeira, very important in the training of teachers who began to work in the various courses throughout Brazil. Since its foundation, the interaction of the Faculty of Pharmacy with society has been prominent in the Unit, since it establishes partnerships with governmental sectors in the health area at the federal, state and municipal levels, in addition to meeting the specific demands of the population in the area of laboratory analysis and pharmaceutical assistance.

As a way of recovering this history, in the past management of the administration, which ended in 2019, the project for the restoration of the Historical Pictures of the Faculty of Pharmacy was carried out, with the organization of the then director José Angelo Zuanazzi, the vice director Ruy Beck and the administrative manager Ana Jussara Duarte de Souza.

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