

## **The International Association of La Salle Universities: Identity Meets Internationalization**

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This essay is unique in comparison to the other essays prepared for publication in a book entitled *Identity and Internalization in Catholic Universities*<sup>3</sup> in that while the other sections of the publication have analyzed single institutions cases, this one hopes to shed light on the identity and internationalization of the Lasallian network of higher education, most specifically through the work of its umbrella organization, the International Association of La Salle Universities (IALU). As a result, both the structure and content of this essay will differ in some ways from other articles to be found in that book.

The main purposes of this essay are three: (1) to identify basic elements of Lasallian identity and to contextualize them as it relates to higher education; (2) to describe the historical progress of the International Association of La Salle Universities; and (3) to provide elements and variables for comparison in future works regarding networks of higher education, specially those which share the same Catholic identity. As a result, the largely descriptive nature of the writing at hand is rather inescapable; but an attempt will be made, particularly as it pertains to the third goal, to provide an analytical and methodological framework for future studies.

To fulfill the goals established in the previous paragraph, the present essay is structured in three sections. The *first section* will provide context and basic historical information regarding the Lasallian mission and its core values so as to present what is specific about the Lasallian perspective within the Catholic identity. The *second section* will offer background to the creation of IALU and its first ten years, as well as some of its early challenges and successes. It will also bring light to the last ten years of the International Association of La Salle Universities, focusing on how the desire of its members for an increasingly active association was translated into action. Finally, the *third section* will attempt to provide elements of the uniqueness of this current Catholic network of higher education and, at the same time, offer preliminary variables that could be used for comparison with other Religious Orders in the future.

### **The Lasallian Mission and Higher Education: A Brief Overview<sup>4</sup>**

When Pope Pius XII named Saint John Baptist de La Salle as Patron Saint of All Teachers of Youth in 1950,<sup>5</sup> he was recognizing the incredible lifetime achievements of an individual that left an indelible legacy in education. De La Salle was born in 1651 in Rheims (France) to a very wealthy family, receiving a classical education before being ordained a priest in 1678 and receiving his doctorate in theology in 1680.<sup>6</sup> After his death in 1719, the Institute he founded received the *Papal Bull of Approbation* in 1725; and he was later beatified (1888) and finally canonized (1900).

Inequality was very significant in De La Salle's upbringing, as wealth was very concentrated. As described by the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools,<sup>7</sup>

Only a few could send their children to school; most children had little hope for the future. Moved by the plight of the poor who seemed so "far from salvation" ... he determined to put his own talents and advanced education at the service of the children "often left to themselves and badly brought up." To be more effective, he abandoned his family home, moved in with the teachers, renounced his position as Canon and his wealth, and so formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In doing so, he created a "new form of religious life, a community of consecrated laymen to conduct gratuitous schools together and by association."<sup>8</sup>

The preference of Lasallian Brothers for teaching the poor and disenfranchised remains clear and derives from the influence of their Founder, who let go of his wealth in favor of those who needed it the most. The Lasallian Brother Superior Robert Schieler, FSC, recently reinforced that notion in an address delivered in the Philippines where he stated that

Coming on the heels of the Second Vatican Council, the Brothers' General Chapter of renewal (1966-1967) and the publication of *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration*<sup>9</sup> clearly affirmed that the poor are our preferential option for our educational service."<sup>10</sup>

Brother Edgar Hengemule, FSC, rightfully noted that "practically the only experience De La Salle had regarding the university was the one he had as a university student."<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, approximately one fourth of all Lasallian students today are educated in institutions of higher learning throughout the world. As a result, much has been written in terms of interpreting how to translate De La Salle's teachings to a higher education environment. To this end, a simple search on *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education*<sup>12</sup> will uncover several works doing exactly that. Former Superior General Brother Álvaro Rodríguez, FSC, summarized it well when he noted that

Lasallian universities will incarnate the Lasallian charism through quality education, social research, and social transformation.<sup>13</sup>

The first institutions of higher learning in the Lasallian Family were founded in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but most of the expansion in the Lasallian university network took place in the last 30 years. In fact, whereas ten Lasallian institutions have already celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> year-anniversary, 25 of the 63<sup>14</sup> Lasallian institutions of higher education have yet to reach 30 years old.<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, the expansion of Lasallian presence in higher education correlates strongly with the overall phenomena of expansion of higher education in general, especially in developing countries, since the early 1990s.

Landeros<sup>16</sup> notes the particular moment in which the General Chapter<sup>17</sup> recognized the transformation through which the Lasallian mission was going regarding its expansion and reach in higher education. It was 1993, during the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter, that such occurrence took

place. Subsequent General Chapters have continued to point toward universities as way of achieving solutions to complex problems brought by the rapid changes in society. The 45<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of 2014 provides several direct references to institutions of higher education, to the International Association of La Salle Universities, and to the relationship between the Center of the Institute, Districts, and universities in fulfilling the Lasallian mission.

Of particular importance was the suggestion brought forth by the 45<sup>th</sup> Chapter of 2014 that consideration be given to the appointment of a General Councilor<sup>18</sup> tasked exclusively with higher education. Chapter Proposition 18 stated that

Brother Superior will appoint a General Councilor to accompany Lasallian Higher Education and recommend his appointment to the Administrative Council of the International Association of Lasallian Universities (IALU).<sup>19</sup>

The evolution of the discussion on universities within the General Chapter noticeably identifies the rise in importance of tertiary education to the Lasallian mission. Should any doubt remain, the words of Brother Superior Robert Schieler, FSC, are as clear as possible in recognizing the role of universities in the twenty-first century:

De La Salle University is part of two Lasallian networks that will be among the main protagonists of our mission in this century. The two networks are our worldwide Institute and the International Association of La Salle Universities (IALU).<sup>20</sup>

The next section will describe the evolution of the International Association of La Salle Universities from its foundation in 1998 to its present.

## **The International Association of La Salle Universities: A Brief History<sup>21</sup>**

### ***Creation and Early Years (1998-2007)***

Officially, IALU was created on June 20, 1998, under the name of International Association of Lasallian Institutions of Higher Education (IALIHE) and with the purpose of creating a network that would enable the perpetuation of the vision of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. The creation of then IALIHE took place during *Encuentro V*, which was held in Rome (Italy). *Encuentro* is how the gatherings of Lasallian university presidents are called. As can be easily inferred, even though an association of higher education institutions was only created during the fifth of its gatherings that did not preclude them from taking place previously. A list of *Encuentros* and their sites can be found below.

Table 1: List of *Encuentros*, 1978-2015<sup>22</sup>

Year	Edition	City/Country
1978	<i>Encuentro I</i>	Cuernavaca/ México
1988	<i>Encuentro II</i>	Cuernavaca/ México
1991	<i>Encuentro III</i>	Rome/Italy
1994	<i>Encuentro IV</i>	Moraga/USA
1998	<i>Encuentro V</i>	Rome/Italy
2001	<i>Encuentro VI</i>	Manila/Philippines
2004	<i>Encuentro VII</i>	Barcelona/Spain
2007	<i>Encuentro VIII</i>	Porto Alegre/Brazil
2009	<i>Encuentro IX</i>	Philadelphia/USA
2012	<i>Encuentro X</i>	Manila/Philippines
2015	<i>Encuentro XI</i>	Bogota/Colombia

From the executive summary of *Encuentro V*,<sup>23</sup> five recommendations could be identified, at the dawn of a Lasallian network of higher education institutions:

- a. the creation of sources of information and lines of communication to reinforce the international network of institutions of higher education;
- b. the promotion of a consciousness of ownership to the international Lasallian university community;
- c. the development of a distinctive image that identifies the universities of the association and all of their graduates;
- d. collaboration for the reinforcement of the institutions by means of exchanges, investigative projects, curricular development, teacher programs, and school meetings;
- e. a promotion in accord with the Mission and the values of De La Salle.

These recommendations were ambitious in nature; and they, in turn, spearheaded the development of several activities in order to achieve the goals set forth above. Aside from the *Encuentros*, one such activity was the creation of a yearly gathering of participants of a particular field in the city of Cuernavaca, México. These gatherings were of great importance in advancing the Lasallian network, as they allowed for key players to spend time together in a retreat-like environment to discuss relevant themes. They came to be known as Cuernavaca Conferences, and a list of their targeted participants can be found below.

Table 2. History of IALU Cuernavaca Conferences<sup>24</sup>

Conference	Year	Participants
Cuernavaca I	2000	Academic Vice Presidents
Cuernavaca II	2001	Faculty Development Directors responsible for Lasallian Formation
Cuernavaca III	2002	Business Deans and Directors
Cuernavaca IV	2003	Campus Ministry Officials
Cuernavaca V	2004	Academic Vice Presidents
Cuernavaca VI	2005	International Programs Directors and Study Abroad Coordinators
Cuernavaca VII	2006	Deans of Schools of Education
Cuernavaca VIII	2007	Technology Directors
Cuernavaca IX	2008	Research and the Lasallian Mission

It is important to note a few important characteristics of the then newly created network of higher education institutions within the Lasallian Family. The first one is that this was and still is an autonomous entity, both financially and otherwise. In this regard, one should note, for example that albeit divided in regions, these regions do not correspond exactly to the same regions as existent in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.<sup>25</sup>

As it relates to the structure of the organization, it was then decided that each of the association's regions would designate a person in charge of coordinating regional activities and interaction with the presidency. Those so designated would later be called regional directors, an expression that remains to this day. Another structural characteristic of the newborn association was that its president would name an association's executive secretary that would be responsible for coordinating its affairs, historically, from the president's own campus.

A multilateral<sup>26</sup> organization such as this is not created without adjustments to complex realities. After only three years of its creation, the then International Association of Lasallian Institutions of Higher Education changed its name to International Association of La Salle Universities. Such change, which took place during a meeting of the board of directors in August 2001<sup>27</sup> was aimed at making the association's name easier, but exposed the difficulties of coordinating more than 20 countries and their systems of higher education in one name. Whereas the association's name was made simpler, the first name was likely more precise as various members are institutions of higher learning but which have not necessarily achieved university status in their respective countries.

### ***Strengthening the Network and Breaking New Ground (2007-2017)***

#### *Programs and activities*

The year of 2007 was of particular importance to IALU. The *Encuentro* which took place in Porto Alegre saw the launch of the International Lasallian University Leadership Program, which was to be held in Rome. This was of singular importance to the development and strengthening of Lasallian identity in tertiary education. To this day, this annual two-week program that takes place at the Institute's headquarters in Rome, has been attended by more than 500 faculty and administrative staff members from all corners of the world.

As indicated by IALU's president Brother William Mann, FSC, in his letter of 2017 inviting participants from Lasallian universities,

The International Lasallian University Leadership Program is targeted for university faculty and administration and is specifically designed to assist universities in their ongoing programs of faculty formation and enrichment. Participants in this formation program will return to their home communities to be resource persons, mentors, and animators of the Lasallian mission.<sup>28</sup>

In similar fashion, a leadership program aimed at Lasallian student leaders was launched in 2012, also to great success. Alternating between a region of IALU and La Salle headquarters in Rome, the program has had approximately 250 participants in its six editions to date. Its goals, as described by Brother William's letter of 2017 to IALU members are three-fold:

Firstly, to enhance the global perspective of our students, in order to develop better understanding and perception of a global society. Secondly, to tackle issues of social justice, which are fundamental to the Lasallian network. Finally, to further develop Lasallian identity amongst students.<sup>29</sup>

Most recently, IALU member institutions have signed the One La Salle Agreement in 2017, after two years of negotiation. One La Salle is an initiative where Lasallian identity meets internationalization in the form of a multilateral exchange agreement for undergraduate students. While respecting the autonomy of each institution to choose its students and exercise its particular criteria for selection, the initiative will allow undergraduate students from any Lasallian institution to apply for and study at another Lasallian institution on a tuition waiver basis. To this end, it is relevant to note that the annual gathering of Lasallian internationalization officers and experts that has taken place since 2015 in parallel to NAFSA<sup>30</sup> has been instrumental to advancing this initiative. In many ways, this is both a return to and consequence of the success of the Cuernavaca Conferences, as allowing for the creation of narrower networks based on topic has been identified as an incredibly successful strategy.

While these are all initiatives and activities which the International Association of La Salle Universities either manages or organizes itself, there are several other events and actions within the Lasallian network that take place with a lesser degree of involvement on the part of IALU. The association either endorses such activities or only communicates their existence to the institutions of the network. Of these, one could note the annual International Symposium on Lasallian Research that takes place every September in Minneapolis, home of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, and which is now in its seventh edition. While gathering more than 100 participants from every corner of the world every year, the event serves as a catalyst for cooperation in research, attending to those key themes identified by IALU's research agenda. Namely, the key themes are: (1) food, nutrition, and health; (2) sustainability and the environment; and (3) education and learning innovations.<sup>31</sup>

Sometimes cooperation takes place on a bilateral or even multilateral basis; and while it would be an exaggeration to suggest that IALU directly engages in such activity, it would not be a stretch to mention that these are a result of people interacting and establishing lines of communication at different IALU managed or endorsed events. Examples of such activity, among several dozens, are: the bilateral cooperation between CESLAS Monterey (Mexico) and Manhattan College (USA) so that the former could support the latter in its Mission Month; the opening of an International Office at Universidad La Salle in Costa Rica with the support of its Latin American counterparts as it relates to documents, procedures and what to do/avoid; the creation of an oil engineering program in La Salle Rio de Janeiro with the support of Unilasalle France, where a successful geology program is run.

### *Structural and Internal Changes*

The increasing number of activities and enhancement of programs, while a welcoming facet of the organization's work, has also forced the network to reflect on necessary internal changes and structural adjustments so that it can continue to fulfill its goal in Lasallian higher education. From 2007 to 2017, answering calls made in Philadelphia (2009), Manila (2012) and Bogotá (2015), the board of directors of the International Association of La Salle Universities has taken several additional steps to strengthen the network.

One pivotal such step was the official registration of IALU in 2012 as a legally recognized entity, with accompanying statutes, bylaws and financial accounts. While a mostly formal procedural, this was important in setting up the following steps in the professionalization of the network and independence of its operation. IALU's board of directors, elected every three years at one of the *Encuentros*, now was formed by a president, vice-president, 5 regional directors (one for each region), and a representative from the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as well as the possibility of the appointment of several ad-hoc members.

Whereas in the past the board met only once a year for one day, increasing work has made it necessary to increase board meetings to twice a year, for two days each time.<sup>32</sup>

The *Encuentro* that took place in Bogotá in 2015 was decisive in providing a clear strategy for the years ahead. IALU's board then decided to hire external consultants to assess the network's performance to date as well as to propose various actions for its strengthening in the future. The produced final document from the consultants pointed toward securing tangible "easy wins," as well as identifying key people who could serve as "champions" to particular causes.<sup>33</sup> They also helped in ascertaining three different priorities for the Lasallian network of higher education: (1) internationalization, (2) mission, and (3) research.

One final suggestion from the external consultants, which was then approved at the *Encuentro* by the General Assembly in Bogotá, was the hiring of an executive secretary. In the past, the position of executive secretary was an unpaid position that was given to a senior officer at the campus where the current president of IALU worked. This was far from ideal, as IALU's executive secretaries had to combine their previous day-to-day responsibilities with the responsibility of coordinating the network's efforts. Admirably and in spite of these difficult

circumstances, the network has evolved greatly. In any case, the hiring of an executive secretary<sup>34</sup> signified another step toward greater professionalization of the association.

### *New Roles for IALU and the Road Ahead*

As IALU approaches 20 years of its creation, new roles for the association have been developed so as to reflect its maturity as a network. The relationship with La Salle Headquarters has never been as institutionalized as it is at present. A change in IALU's statutes, which took place in Bogotá in 2015, formalized what had been the practice until then, assigning a permanent seat on the IALU board of directors to a representative from the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Likewise, when it came to putting together the International Council for Lasallian Association and the Educational Mission (CIAMEL),<sup>35</sup> the Institute recognized the importance of higher education and of IALU by setting forth in its section #4.1.4 that "the Executive International Board of IALU will be invited to propose one member for the Council." Most recently, IALU was asked by Lasallian Brother Superior to create a team that would assess the possibility of a Lasallian university in Ethiopia. The association responded in kind and sponsored such a team; and after eighteen months of negotiation and visits, which were coordinated between the Institute and IALU, the Institute gained a new center of education and IALU was happy to announce its 63<sup>rd</sup> member in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.<sup>36</sup>

The last few years have also seen increasing work in each of the IALU Regions, which in turn has helped to solidify the work of the network. In every IALU Region, university presidents meet at least once a year; and in several, there is more than one meeting per year and other senior officers are involved as well, creating regional networks of experts in a particular field. This bodes well for the future of IALU, as it creates systematic buy-in from institutions on a regional level which in turn will inform much of the decisions that shall be taken at the multilateral level.

There might have been a time when there was doubt as to what the future would hold for a Lasallian network of higher education institutions. If that ever happened, the reality today leaves not much room for ambiguity. This is a statement not only grounded in analysis of empirical circumstances regarding IALU but also in strong theoretical background. Borrowing from the lessons from political science – and most specifically those who can be identified as historical institutionalists – one can highlight the importance of looking at processes over time. The work of Pierson and Skocpol<sup>37</sup> is perhaps the best summary of the basic tenets of historical institutionalism, to which we focus on one of them.

Nothing is more important to historical institutionalists than the notion of path dependence, which refers to the dynamics of self-reinforcing or positive feedback processes in a particular system. As explained by Pierson and Skocpol

a clear logic is involved in strictly defined path dependent processes. Outcomes at a "critical juncture" trigger feedback mechanisms that reinforce the recurrence of a particular pattern into the future. Once actors have ventured far down a particular path, however, they are likely to find it very difficult to reverse course.



The creation of IALU in 1998 surely fits the definition of a critical juncture. We argue that the historical processes that resulted in the creation of IALU, and its subsequent development, have self-reinforced its functioning and made it extremely unlikely that the chosen path will be reversed.

## **Comparing Catholic Religious Orders in Higher Education: Preliminary Notes**

### ***Why Compare: Methodological and Theoretical Considerations***

The uniqueness of the International Association of La Salle networks is two-fold. Its mere existence is something remarkable in comparison to other Catholic Religious Orders. In fact, preliminary research identified few other Catholic Religious Orders with a multilateral<sup>38</sup> network of institutions of higher learning already established, namely, the International Council of Universities of Saint Thomas Aquinas (ICUSTA)<sup>39</sup> and the Salesian University Institutions.<sup>40</sup> It was also identified that advanced discussions for the creation of the International Association of Jesuit Universities are currently under way.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, that in comparison to ICUSTA and IAJU, IALU seems to be the one that has progressed the most.

The aforesaid characteristics make for a very interesting case study. As noted by Yin,

in general, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.<sup>42</sup>

However, a reminder of the shortcomings of single case studies as a method is necessary, as the general explanations that they provide usually are lacking more rigorous methodological breadth, something that is echoed by Van Evera<sup>43</sup> and Creswell,<sup>44</sup> among others.

A simple example could be that with more than 20 case studies from several universities on the issue of Catholic identity and internationalization, any general explanation provided by the book *Identity and Internalization in Catholic Universities: Exploring Institutional Pathways in Context*,<sup>45</sup> as to the issue, is strong as the number of cases allow for considerable variance in the dependent variable. As it pertains to a network of Catholic higher education institutions such as IALU, there is little with which to compare it. As a result, using IALU as a unit of analysis, an attempt will be made (a) to provide elements for comparison between Catholic Religious Orders regardless of the existence of networks of higher education and (b) to provide the groundwork for future studies in the comparison of Catholic networks of higher education institutions.

The literature on the classification of universities has produced two works which are most commonly cited as references: the Carnegie Classification,<sup>46</sup> originally aimed at USA universities; and most recently van Vught *et al.*<sup>47</sup> While somewhat helpful, these are aimed at classifying single universities, not networks. Nonetheless, there are measures that can be applied to single university classification that would be helpful in understanding the nature of a particular network, such as size of student population, for example.

Conceptually, the work of Stockley and De Wit<sup>48</sup> on the increasing relevance of institutional networks provides important analytical background in which to examine institutional networks such as IALU in the context of internationalization. The authors identify the rise of institutional networks as a result of more globalized economies and societies and identify several reasons for such phenomena, such as efficiency, increasing pressure for international funding and social responsibility,<sup>49</sup> among others.

In providing a typology for different types of networks and partnerships, Stockley and De Wit divide the possibilities into three: academic associations, academic consortia, and institutional networks. From such categorization, it is clear that the International Association of La Salle Universities is classified as an institutional network, a type of association that the authors identified in 2011 “to be emerging most recently.” Nothing from 2011 to 2017 appears to lend support to the notion that the situation has changed. In fact, an observational analysis might indicate that it has increased.

It is in light of this perspective that we identify some elements for comparison among networks, using the International Association of La Salle Universities as a starting point. The variables so identified are: (a) geographical location, (b) name and connection to Lasallian and / or Catholic identity, (c) annual income of population where the university is based,<sup>50</sup> (d) years of existence, (e) size and, finally, (f) types of degrees offered.

Table 3: List of IALU Universities by Geographical Location and IALU Region<sup>51</sup>

Region	Universities	City	Country
Asia and Pacific Islands	De La Salle Araneta University	Araneta	Philippines
	De La Salle Health Sciences Institute	Dasmaringas	Philippines
	De La Salle John Bosco College	Surigao del Sur	Philippines
	De La Salle Lipa	Lipa	Philippines
	De La Salle University – Manila	Manila	Philippines
	De La Salle University Dasmaringas	Dasmaringas	Philippines
	De La Salle – College of Saint Benilde	Manila	Philippines
	La Salle College Antipolo	Antipolo	Philippines
	La Salle College of the Arts	Singapore	Singapore
	La Salle University Ozamiz	Ozamiz	Philippines
University of St. La Salle Bacolod	Bacolod	Philippines	
Europe and French-Speaking Africa	Centre Lasallien Africain	Abidjan	Ivory Coast
	ECAM	Lyon	France
	ECAM Rennes – Louis de Broglie	Bruz	France
	École Supérieure Technique La Salle	Douala	Cameroon
	ESAIP	Angers	France

	Unilasalle France	Beauvais	France
	ISFEC La Salle – Mounier	Paris	France
	La Salle – Universitat Ramon Llull	Barcelona	Spain
	La Salle Campus Madrid	Madrid	Spain
	La Salle Open University	Andorra	Andorra
México	Centro de Estudios Superiores La Salle	Monterrey	México
	Universidad De La Salle Bajío	Bajío - León	México
	Universidad de La Salle Noroeste	Ciudad Obregon	México
	Universidad de La Salle Pachuca	Pachuca	México
	Universidad La Salle Benavente	Benavente	México
	Universidad La Salle Cancún	Cancún	México
	Universidad La Salle Chihuahua	Chihuahua	México
	Universidad La Salle Cuernavaca	Cuernavaca	México
	Universidad La Salle Laguna	Laguna	México
	Universidad La Salle México DF	Ciudad México	México
	Universidad La Salle Morelia	Morelia	México
	Universidad La Salle Nezahualcóyotl	México	México
	Universidad La Salle Oaxaca	Oaxaca	México
	Universidad La Salle Saltillo	Saltillo	México
Universidad La Salle Victoria	Victoria	México	
North America, Bethlehem and English-speaking Africa	Bethlehem University	Bethlehem	Palestine
	Christian Brothers University	Memphis	USA
	Ethiopian Catholic University – La Salle	Addis Ababa	Ethiopia
	La Salle University Philadelphia	Philadelphia	USA
	Lewis University	Romeoville	USA
	Manhattan College	New York	USA
	Saint Mary’s College of California	Moraga	USA
	Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota	Winona/ Minneapolis	USA
Central and South America	Universidad De La Salle	La Paz	Bolivia
	Universidade La Salle	Canoas	Brazil
	Faculdade La Salle	Lucas do Rio Verde	Brazil
	Faculdade La Salle	Manaus	Brazil
	Centro Universitário La Salle	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil
	Universidade Católica de Brasília	Brasilia	Brazil

Centro Universitário do Leste de Minas	Coronel Fabriciano	Brazil
Faculdade Imaculada Conceição	Recife	Brazil
Faculdade Católica do Tocantins	Palmas	Brazil
Faculdade La Salle	Estrela	Brazil
Universidad de La Salle	Bogotá	Colombia
Corporación Universitaria Lasallista	Medellin	Colombia
Escuela Tecnológica Instituto Técnico Central	Bogotá	Colombia
Universidad De La Salle Costa Rica	San José	Costa Rica
Universidad LaSalle Arequipa	Arequipa	Perú
Instituto Superior Pedagógico La Salle	Urubamba	Perú
Universidad Tecnológica La Salle	Nicaragua	Nicaragua
Fundación La Salle	Caracas	Venezuela
Fundación La Salle	Buenos Aires	Argentina

In comparing Catholic Religious Orders as institutional networks, likely the most important information is how many institutions are part of the network. In the case of the International Association of La Salle Universities, 63 universities are part of it.<sup>52</sup> What is likely more important is that it is notable that the network is comprised of almost all Lasallian institutions of tertiary education, with the exception of a few Lasallian centers of education where there is still ongoing discussion as to whether the offered programs qualify as higher education.

From a geographical standpoint, IALU is organized in five different regions as demonstrated in the preceding table. We would not suggest that the IALU regions are a good basis for comparison, as there are a few peculiarities to the IALU geographical division, such as México being its own region and the African continent being connected to the European or the North American regions, depending on the language of instruction. For comparison sake, a traditional approach as to the division by continents would surely be more effective.

As it pertains to Catholic identity, it is remarkable that 50 of the 63 institutions<sup>53</sup> that are part of IALU carry La Salle in their names. Of the 13 that do not, only five of them are institutions whose names do not evoke a Catholic identity. This compares to 13 out of 32 in ICUSTA,<sup>54</sup> for example, when looking at institutions of higher education which refer directly to Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Table 4: Classification of IALU Universities by Economy of Country of Origin

Type of Economy	N	%
Low Income	1	1.5%
Lower Middle Income	15	23.8%
Upper Middle Income	32	50.7%
High Middle Income	15	23.8%

In order to classify countries according to the status of their economies, the World Bank uses a criteria that looks at Gross National Income per capita. As a result low-income economies are defined

as of \$1,005 or less in 2016; lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,006 and \$3,955; upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$3,956 and \$12,235; high-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of \$12,236 or more.<sup>55</sup>

Of the 19 countries where Lasallian universities are present, one represents a low income country, five represent lower middle income countries, seven represent upper middle income economies, and five represent high income countries. As a result, the table above is found when taking into account that in some countries there is more than one Lasallian university.

As previously demonstrated, Lasallian presence in higher education did not happen until after 1850, almost 200 years after the work of John Baptist de La Salle began. That trait, together with the rapid expansion of higher education (especially in developing countries) since the 1990s made for several Lasallian universities being fairly young, as can be noted in the table below. More than half of the universities that are a part of IALU are 40 years old or younger, arguably relatively young institutions of higher education. This is relevant to understand the increasing importance of universities to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as well as to note that the growth of these institutions is still ongoing.

Table 5: Lasallian Universities by Years of Existence

Years of Existence	Number of Universities	% of IALU Universities
0 to 20	18	28.5%
20 to 40	17	26.9%
40 to 60	12	19.1%
60 to 80	5	7.9%
80 to 100	1	1.5%
More than 100	10	15.8%

The Carnegie Classification for Institutions of Higher Education proposes that institutions conferring 4-year degrees be labeled very small if they have less than 100 students; small if the student population is between 1,000 to 2,999 students; medium if the student population varies

from 3,000-9,999 students; and finally, large if the student population is over 10,000 students. In the present study segregation was not made as to those institutions of IALU who offer 2-year programs and those who offer 4-year programs. As a result, an assumption was made that each institution offers 4-year programs. The classification of IALU universities by size is presented below and given the young composition of La Salle’s network, not surprisingly more than half of Lasallian universities are very small or small.

Table 6: Classification of IALU Universities by Size

Type of University	N	%
Very Small	15	23.8%
Small	21	33.3%
Medium	19	30.2%
Large	8	12.7%

In looking at the types of degree offerings, one way to navigate the differences in systems of education throughout the world is to identify which are the universities that are allowed to offer master or doctoral degrees in their countries. Almost a third of Lasallian universities do not offer either master or doctoral degree programs and just one in every four offers doctoral degrees.

Table 7: Classification of IALU Universities by Types of Degrees Offered<sup>56</sup>

Type of Degree Offered	N	%
Master Degree	44	69.8%
Doctoral Degree	16	25.4%

As previously explained, the elements here presented are preliminary in order to analyze Catholic Religious Orders’ institutional networks, as well as being easily feasible. One can imagine several other aspects in which comparison could be made. In terms of size, analysis could expand to include number of faculty and staff. Financially, measures of average tuition and amount of financial aid available could be very interesting to observe in relation to Catholic identity. Structurally, different institutional networks could be analyzed to identify the existence (or not) of autonomy from central structures, as well as core structural organization of the association, number of staff and existing programs.

A decision was deliberately made, at this juncture, to present modest, albeit objective measures that could easily be replicated to other groups of universities representing different Catholic Religious Orders whether a formal institutional network exists or not. This was rooted in the belief that preliminary results of other Religious Orders would spearhead other analysis and refined investigation.

In keeping with the idea of “Brotherhood” brought forth by its Founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the Lasallian network of higher education institutions has developed well in the last 20 years. Its purpose – to serve the Lasallian mission in higher education – cannot be separated from the overall theme of Lasallian identity as it is, in fact, a result of it. The process which IALU has

gone through since 1998 has had its challenges and complexities; but nonetheless, progress has been made. Greater academic dialogue between IALU and its counterparts, followed by more in-depth research of the phenomena of institutional networks within Catholic Religious Orders, can only help deepen understanding both of the perception of Catholic identity and of the logic of internationalization.

## Endnotes

1. Presented here is an essay that was prepared for inclusion in a recent publication entitled *Identity and Internalization in Catholic Universities: Exploring Institutional Pathways in Context* (2018). Only an abbreviated and edited portion of the essay was ultimately included at the time of its publication. As the author's essay is an important complement and companion piece to "Some Questions and Answers about Lasallian Higher Education" by Gustavo Ramírez Barba FSC, which appeared in *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 9, no. 2 (2018), the essay is being published here for the first time in its entirety.

2. Carlos F. Coelho has served as the executive director of the International Association of La Salle Universities (IALU) since 2015. He holds a PhD in political science from State University of Rio de Janeiro and a JD from National School of Law in Rio de Janeiro.

3. *Identity and Internalization in Catholic Universities: Exploring Institutional Pathways in Context* by editors Hans de Wit, Andrés Bernasconi, Visnja Car, Fiona Hunter, Michael James, and Daniela Véliz (Leiden/Boston: Brill Sense, 2018).

4. The focus of this essay is the higher education network formed by Lasallians within the context of Catholic identity and internationalization. However, a brief view as to fundamental aspects of John Baptist de La Salle's legacy, central to the identity of current Lasallian work, is necessary. To this end, highly selective information will be provided for historical background. For a more detailed research on De La Salle's works and contemporary comments and interpretation, we suggest the publications section of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools [[www.lasalle.org](http://www.lasalle.org)].

5. At George Thomas Kurian and Mark A. Lamport (editors), *Encyclopedia of Christian Education*, volume 3 (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

6. Cf. Luke Salm FSC, *The Work Is Yours: The Life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle* (Christian Brothers Publications, 1989).

7. This is how the Lasallian Brothers are formally known.

8. Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Rome, 2017) [[www.lasalle.org](http://www.lasalle.org)].

9. *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration* (Rome: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1967).

10. Brother Robert Schieler, FSC's address in the Philippines, entitled "The Lasallian Mission: A Global Educational Network," targets, albeit in a different format, many issues presented throughout this essay, with special attention given to the role of universities and IALU in the work of the Institute. The address can be found online at Robert Schieler FSC, "The Lasallian Mission: A Global Educational Network." <<https://medium.com/@DLSUManila/the-lasallian-mission-a-global-educational-network-80b6d3e11bf6>>.

11. Edgard Hengemüle, FSC, "The Lasallian University" in *Current Opportunities and Future Visions: Reflections on Lasallian Higher Education* (Moraga, CA: Saint Mary's College of California, 2006).

12. As described in its website (<http://axis.smumn.edu>), *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* exists to encourage and share original scholarly and creative works about, and texts of historic significance to, Lasallian Catholic higher education. *AXIS* is a free, open-access, electronic, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary periodical published twice per year.

13. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, FSC, "University Education within the Lasallian Mission" in *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 9, no. 3 (2018). This is the keynote address given in 2004 in Barcelona, Spain, at *Encuentro VII* (IALU).

14. There are now 65 member institutions in IALU.

15. This will be the subject of further scrutiny in the third section of this essay.

16. Joan M. W. Landeros, "Toward the Creation of a Lasallian International University Network: Progress and Promise" in *Current Opportunities and Future Visions: Reflections on Lasallian Higher Education* (Moraga, CA: Saint Mary's College of California, 2006).

17. General Chapters are key moments in the history of the Institute. As described in article #112 of *The Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* (Rome, 2015): "responsible for the whole Body of the Institute, the Chapter is qualified to undertake in its name a periodic evaluation of the life of the Institute, to provide for its continuing adaptation and renewal, and to set out the main guidelines for future action. In addition, the Chapter elects the Superior General and the General Councilors. It has the power to take all suitable legislative and administrative measures that concern the establishments and members of the Institute."

18. Each General Chapter elects a Superior General, as well as a General Council.

19. Cf. Proposition #18 in *Circular 469: The Documents of the 45<sup>th</sup> General Chapter* (Rome, 2014). [[http://www.lasalle.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/07/Circ469\\_Actas45CG\\_eng.pdf](http://www.lasalle.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/07/Circ469_Actas45CG_eng.pdf)].

20. Schieler, "The Lasallian Mission: A Global Educational Network."

21. We have opted for mostly an archival research for this section. For a comprehensive view on the creation of IALU and its early years, the work of Joan Landeros in *Current*



*Opportunities and Future Visions: Reflections on Lasallian Higher Education* is mandatory reading.

22. Cf. Archive of the International Association of La Salle Universities. It should be noted that since the writing of this essay *Encuentro XII* has been held in 2018 in Ciudad México, México.

23. Cf. Archive of the International Association of La Salle Universities.

24. Cf. Archive of the International Association of La Salle Universities.

25. The Institute's regions are: Pacific-Asia, Europe-Mediterranean, Africa-Madagascar, Latin America, and North America. The regions of IALU are divided into: South and Central America; North America, English-Speaking Africa, and Bethlehem; Europe and French-Speaking Africa; Asia; and Mexico.

26. When applied, the term multilateral throughout this essay is meant to imply the participation of three or more institutions in different countries. In doing so, we borrow from the lessons of Keohane and Ravenhill, two renowned scholars who have tackled the issue of cooperation regarding international organizations. Cf. Robert O. Keohane, "Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research" in *International Journal*, 45.4 (1990), 731-764; and John Ravenhill, (editor), *Global Political Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

27. Cf. Archive of the International Association of La Salle Universities.

28. Brother William Mann, FSC, "Letter of Invitation to the 11<sup>th</sup> International Lasallian University Leadership Program" (2017).

29. Brother William Mann, FSC, "Letter of Invitation to the 6<sup>th</sup> Summer Leadership Program for Student Leaders" (2017).

30. NAFSA is, according to its website [[www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)], "the world's largest nonprofit association dedicated to international education and exchange."

31. Food, Nutrition and Health (biochemistry of food products, science and engineering of potable water, cancer risks and cures from food, economic impact studies of nutrition programs in schools); Sustainability and the Environment (dealing with climate change, eco-design of houses and urban centers, industrial ecology, air and water quality monitoring in megacities); and Education and Learning Innovations (access to education among the poor, impact of use of tablets for learning math and science, coping mechanisms among children with learning disabilities, predicting the academic emotions of young learners based on physiological signals). Cf. "Lasallians in the World Solving Real Problems of the World: Research Agenda of the International Association of La Salle Universities" in *Axis: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 7, no. 2 (2016).

32. These meetings take place in a different region each time. When visiting a particular region, the board of directors takes the opportunity to meet with presidents and other officials from that particular region.

33. Confidentiality clauses unfortunately preclude us from citing directly from the commissioned report.

34. The position of executive secretary had its title changed to that of executive director during the IALU board meeting that took place in Rome in 2016, and this change was formally ratified at *Encuentro XII* (2018).

35. Article #1 of CIAMEL's statutes stipulate that CIAMEL is a deliberative and collaborative body of Lasallian Brothers and Partners representing the worldwide Institute. It is established for the animation and direction of all existing and future educational programs that embody the Lasallian mission [[http://www.lasalle.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Approved-CIAMEL-Statutes\\_eng.pdf](http://www.lasalle.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Approved-CIAMEL-Statutes_eng.pdf)].

36. Ethiopian Catholic University – La Salle.

37. Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science" in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* 3 (2002): 693-721.

38. It is important to reiterate the definition of multilateral that is utilized by the present work. We are not oblivious to the existence of several national associations of higher education institutions within a particular Catholic Religious Order and the existence of the Federation of International Catholic Universities.

39. As described by its website (<https://www.stthom.edu/ICUSTA/Index.aqf>), "The International Council of Universities of Saint Thomas Aquinas (ICUSTA) is an international association of Catholic institutions of higher learning that faithfully adhere to the ideals and teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas. ICUSTA's main purpose is to encourage cooperation and collaboration, and international understanding among its members. ICUSTA fosters student and faculty exchanges through bilateral agreements and promotes other collaborative initiatives such as: on-line course offerings related to globalization, faculty lecture exchange opportunities, and faculty collaborative research opportunities."

40. As described on its website (<http://ius.edinf.com/portal/index.php>), "The name Salesian University Institutions stands for all the study centers like the colleges, or centers for higher studies, that are guided and administrated by the Salesian Congregation around the world: 30 centers present in 18 American, Asian and European countries. IUS does not include all the other academic university Salesian centers that are specifically meant for the ecclesiastical formation (philosophy and theology) of the members of the Salesian Congregation."

41. Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (2017), available online at [<http://ajcunet.edu/press-releases-blog/2017/9/14/jesuit-universities-joins-forces-for-eaie-2017-conference>].

42. Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Sage Publications 2013).
43. Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Cornell University Press, 1997).
44. J. David Creswell and John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage Publications, 2017).
45. Hans de Wit et al (editors), *Identity and Internalization in Catholic Universities* (Leiden/Boston: Brill Sense, 2018).
46. Leo S. Shulman, *The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (Menlo Park: Carnegie Publication, 2001).
47. Frans A. van Vught, Frans Kaiser, Jan M. File, C. Gaethgens, R. Peter, and Don F. Westerheijden, *U-Map: The European Classification of Higher Education Institutions* (Enschede, University of Twente: Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, 2010).
48. David Stockley and Hans De Wit, “The Increasing Relevance of Institutional Networks” in *Trends, Issues and Challenges in Internationalization of Higher Education* (2011): 45-58.
49. While a network formed by institutions of higher education from a particular Catholic Order benefits from each of the listed characteristics, there might be no greater incentive than to achieve the latter.
50. Using the World Bank’s country classification method for size of economies.
51. Although there are 63 institutions on this list of IALU universities by geographical location and IALU region, it should be noted that two additional institutions joined the network since the writing of this essay. In the North America, Bethlehem, and English-Speaking Africa region should be added “Christ the Teacher School of Education” of Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya (previously known as “Christ the Teacher Institute for Education” of Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota). In the Central and South America region should be added “Instituto Centroamericano de Ciencias Religiosas” (ICCRE) in Mixco, Guatemala.
52. As noted in the preceding note, there are now 65 member institutions in IALU.
53. As previously noted, the accurate number now is now 65 since two additional institutions joined the network since the writing of this essay.
54. International Council of Universities of Saint Thomas Aquinas.
55. World Bank, *Data and Lending Groups*, available in 2017 online at [<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>].

56. A consideration is being made of those universities with at least one program at the master or doctoral level. Universities that offer both master degree programs and doctoral degree programs count in each of the columns.