



RODRIGO CASTRO PALMA

University's IC³ Emphasis Creates Opportunity for Students in Central America

With focus on digital literacy in the curriculum, students have access to new careers

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Rodrigo Castro Palma, president of Colegio Universitario Boston, is a visionary in the field of education. For more than 50 years, the academic institution he heads has worked to create job opportunities in Costa Rica. Complementing Universitario Boston's motto, "We offer an education that gives you a job," Castro recently added Certiport® Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC³®) to the university's curriculum.

"Internationally, IC³ is a highly recognized standard to measure computing skills of the type required by the labor market," Castro said. "Universitario Boston offers its students an integral education, in which IC³ plays an important role. Firms that offer employment opportunities demand a quality certification program for computing skills. Traditional education alone is insufficient to provide the qualifications demanded. With IC³, our students will be more competitive."

A strategic partner with Certiport and a Microsoft® IT Academy, Universitario Boston is a renowned educational institution in Costa Rica and provides high-quality technical and professional programs. At seven campuses nationwide and with a student enrollment of 12,000, Universitario Boston implements programs to provide beginning and advanced levels of certification to its student community.

Castro kicked off the university's IC³ implementation by training and certifying its faculty. Ten teachers earned the certification, and 15 more are working toward it. After they are certified, teachers are prepared to offer IC³ courses and promote the certification among students to make them more competitive in the labor market.

Students enrolled in Computer Operator courses are required to earn IC³. Of nearly 800 students enrolled in the courses this year, 250 have already certified and the remaining students are scheduled to certify at the end of this term. By the end of this year, 1,500 students are expected to register in IC³ courses. In addition, Universitario Boston plans to offer standalone IC³ courses in the near future, affording even more students the opportunity to gradually earn IC³.

Considering Costa Rica's relatively small population of just over 4 million people, Jose Luis Gomez Parra, president of the International Technology Certifications and Consulting Services, said so many digitally literate individuals should significantly enhance the country's position in the global marketplace.

"Digital literacy allows students to demonstrate capabilities that traditional-literacy education is unable to provide," Castro said. "Digital literacy offers students and the general public the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills demanded by employers throughout the world."

Costa Rica has already experienced results from Castro's digital literacy efforts. Several of Universitario Boston's students who earned IC³ have improved the quality of their lives by gaining meaningful employment that would not have been available without their certified computing skills.

Conscious of its social role, Universitario Boston is working to strengthen ties with the Costa Rican Ministry of Education and reach agreements that may allow the opening of its facilities and computer labs to public education students who wouldn't otherwise have these technological resources available. "There are possibilities in the area of





digital literacy for Universitario Boston and the Ministry of Education in Costa Rica to cooperate," Castro explained. He said Universitario Boston is devoting great efforts and resources toward helping education officials understand the value of IC³ as a standard of digital literacy in Costa Rica, in Central America and in countries around the world.

Castro has high hopes for the future of digital literacy in Costa Rica. "Globalization and business competition at the international level, the rapid increase of international relations and the building or strengthening of regional economic blocks throughout the world guarantee the opening of great opportunities for all of us, particularly for those of us who are committed to digital literacy and other innovative educational programs," he said. "The future is here and has already reached us. The future is now."

ABOUT CERTIPOINT

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