Core Research Strengths

Founded in 1966, the University of Campinas (Unicamp) has grown into one of the Brazil’s most important universities. Unicamp is currently responsible for 8% of Brazil’s scientific production and trains 4% of the country’s graduate students. What is really impressive about Unicamp is the Brazilian Research Council for the Study of Research Costs. This council oversees research activity at Unicamp and publishes an annual report assessing the university’s research activities. All three are considered leaders in their respective fields in Brazil and are among the most popular for both domestic and international student applications.

Unicamp is home to extensive technical expertise, but perhaps the most impressive institution in the world is the University of Massachusetts, which ranks among the top ten universities in the world. The University of Massachusetts is the only university in the world to have received a Nobel Prize in Physics. The University of Massachusetts has a strong reputation for its research in the areas of social sciences and the arts, which are also highly respected. However, more so in the Portuguese language than in English, which is the predominant language in Brazil. The University of Massachusetts is the only university in the world to have received a Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

In the field of computer science and electrical engineering, the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering (EECE) is among the top ten schools in Brazil. The EECE is also the top 10 school in the world for computer science. The EECE has established high-tech companies nearby to the university, which provide opportunities for students to work on real-world projects. As one would expect with a university on the scale of Unicamp, interdisciplinary research is a key component of the overall portfolio. The university pioneered the organization of interdisciplinary research centers in Brazil. There are currently 21 such centers, all of which are managed by the Coordination of Interdisciplinary Research Centers (CCDIC).

Main Disciplines

Unicamp’s researchers are making great strides in overcoming some of the world’s most pressing diseases. As part of an international consortium, the university is trying to develop new vaccines for neglected diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis that affect impoverished communities in the world. The goal is to attract the interest of global pharmaceutical companies.

Unicamp is also playing a key role in trying to overcome the Zika virus, which researchers recently developed a diagnostic tool that reduces the timeline of identifying the disease from days to hours. A really interesting side of discovery at Unicamp relates to social innovations. Researchers at the university have been responsible for a number of extremely important policy developments in Brazil. Unicamp researchers developed the famous “Zero Hunger” policy aimed at getting impoverished children to attend school. The Brazilian National Hunger Service was also designed by the academic community. One of the most important groups contributing to this was from Unicamp.

Partnerships, Innovation & Transnational Research

Unicamp’s cooperation as an industrial collaborator is quite extraordinary, and a key point of the university’s character is to emphasize: “A recent survey produced by the Ministry of Science and Technology shows that Unicamp has the highest number of industrial partners and technology transfer offices in Brazil, which is even above the average of US-based universities.”

Professor Costa believes that broader trends in the Brazilian economy and policy environment, combined with Unicamp’s unique strengths make it a collaborative culture an obvious strategic path.

“We are finding that as Unicamp is an alternative for us given the amount of qualified and experienced people in Brazil. This is a relatively new thing for the Brazilian companies, but over the course of the past 10 years it has proven significantly and we have done well to contribute to this growth.”

Since Unicamp was established in 1966, the Campinas area has grown into an industrial and technological heartland. There are over 100 companies that were spun off from Unicamp located in close proximity, their total economic output is approximately US$5 million—approximately 1.5 times the amount of the university’s economic output. Established in 2003 as the first technology transfer office in Brazil, Unicamp helps foster cooperative partnerships for the university, as well as to take new patents and discoveries into the marketplace. It is certainly not short on deal flow. Unicamp produces more registered patents than any other organization in Brazil and has a technology transfer office at the university, which is an enormous state-owned energy company.

Teaching, Learning & Student Life

Approximately 21,000 bachelors and 2200 masters and doctoral students graduate from Unicamp each year. A good indication of how popular the university is with students is by how many bachelors and masters students return to further their education and research interests. Unicamp has the lowest drop out rates for undergraduates in Brazil—7%.