

Consolidating Research and the Relationship Between Professionals: A Key Focus of the Meeting between the Fundación Cepsa University Chairs in Andalusia, the Canary Islands and Madrid

- **The vice-rector for Innovation at the University of Huelva (UHU) stressed that these Chairs furthered the relationship between universities, society and the world of business.**
- **Recording of the first audiovisual course on the refining industry has started at the Fundación Cepsa Chair at the University of Cádiz (UCA).**

A follow-up meeting has taken place between the Fundación Cepsa Chairs of Andalusia, the Canary Islands and Madrid. The meeting was held virtually on account of the health crisis. The latest academic initiatives and the most innovative training programs were presented at the meeting. Highlighting the commitment to strengthen and extend research and relationships between Cepsa professionals and university professors within Chairs.

The meeting was attended by the directors of the Fundación Cepsa Chairs at the University of Seville (US), Benito Navarrete; the University of Cádiz (UCA), Francisco Trujillo; the University of Huelva (UHU), Inés Garbayo; the University of La Laguna (ULL) in the Canary Islands, Andrea Brito; and the Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM), Ramón Rodríguez. The coordinator of the Company's Research Center and Fundación Cepsa officials also took part.

The meeting, led by Huelva University, was attended by vice-rector for Innovation and Employability of the UHU, María Isabel Rodríguez, who said that, "These Chairs further the relationship between universities, society and the world of business. They act as a direct line for interaction with institutions and are managed with maximum transparency." Cristina Ortiz, operational director of Fundación Cepsa, said that, "Chairs are a solid strategy for consolidating research and technological transfer, in which we hope to advance even further."

Meanwhile, Inés Garbayo explained that several lines of research were being carried out at the UHU, including the synthesis of high sulfur-content polymers for use in water remediation. She added that the second year of the industrial doctorate on *direct benzene-to-phenol conversion* was being developed in collaboration with the Cepsa Research Center in Alcalá de Henares (Madrid). In addition, she said that the Sapere Aude awards for the best undergraduate and

master's theses had resumed this year at the Fundación Cepsa Chair at the University of Huelva.

Francisco Trujillo highlighted the *Training Path* program, through which Engineering students from the Polytechnic School of Algeciras (EPSA) carry out educational activities related to Cepsa throughout each year of their university course. The director of the Fundación Cepsa Chair at the UCA stressed that, the University and Cepsa already had their first industrial thesis, which was entitled *Valorización de corrientes de la unidad FCC*, (Adding value to FCC unit streams), written by Elena Pérez Guevara and awarded a distinction (Cum Laude). He said that work was underway on two other doctoral theses entitled *Caracterización de la composición química y microbiología de los reactores biológicos en la Refinería Gibraltar Cepsa. Estudio de estrategias de optimización* (Characterization of the chemical composition and microbiology of biological reactors at Cepsa's Gibraltar refinery. A study of optimization strategies.) and *Desarrollo de metodología analítica tanto a utilizar de referencia, como a implementar en análisis rápido e incluso in situ, para la determinación de componentes volátiles y aromáticos en productos derivados del petróleo de uso en la industria* (The development of analytical methodology to be used for reference, as well as to be implemented in rapid analysis and even in situ analysis, for the determination of volatile and aromatic components in petroleum products used in the industry). In addition, the recording of the first audiovisual course run by the Fundación Cepsa Chair, entitled *Industria del petróleo: cuidado del entorno, de la seguridad y de la calidad* (The petroleum industry: taking care of the environment, safety and quality) has begun with the participation of UCA teachers and Cepsa professionals.

In the case of the University of Seville Chair, Benito Navarrete explained that, in order to get the Chair's research off the ground, an intern program and collaboration between professors at the US and the Cepsa production centers were ongoing in order to single out lines of research on which to collaborate. He explained that five teachers were currently assigned to different lines of research regarding topics of interest to the Company. In the case of the Canary Islands, Andrea Brito stressed that, in the field of innovation and energy efficiency a project entitled *Project Lora* had been launched to familiarize students with the Internet of Things and work towards beginning the first industrial thesis on this topic. The director of the La Laguna Chair explained that awards for the best undergraduate and master's theses would begin this year, following the launch of a series of master classes and expert conferences.

Lastly, Ramón Rodríguez, from the UPM Chair, said that, in collaboration with the Cepsa Research Center, work was underway on an industrial thesis, which was already in its third year. The thesis was being written by Miguel Ángel Roncoroni and was entitled *Técnicas Híbridas de Recuperación Mejorada de Petróleo Basadas en Inyección de Gas* (Hybrid gas injection-based improved oil recovery techniques). He also explained that, in order to promote research, the Chair was

planning to launch a call for collaborative projects between students and teachers.

The Fundación Cepsa Chairs

The Fundación Cepsa Chairs at the Universities of Huelva, Cádiz, Seville, La Laguna and the Polytechnic University of Madrid continue going from strength to strength thanks to the continued involvement and efforts of Cepsa professionals and the academic institutions and their commitment to improving research, innovation and training.

The Fundación Cepsa Chairs have allowed thousands of students to gain first-hand experience of a real working environment, while bringing university professors closer to the reality of the energy and chemical sectors. The exchange of knowledge and experience between Cepsa professionals and teachers and college students over the past two decades has been beneficial for all involved. This has made Cepsa a great ally of these universities.

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