

## Profile: Marcelo Paladino

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While many of the world's business school deans have been thrown into confusion over the economic crisis, Marcelo Paladino remains calm. As dean of [IAE Business School](#) in Argentina he has seen much of this before.

Though he only became dean of the school in January 2008, he has been connected to the school since its inception, 30 years ago. He joined IAE in 1983 as professor in operations and technology, after seven years in industry, and chaired that department between 1985 and 1999. And living in Argentina over those 30 years he has experienced everything from military government and war to hyper-inflation and recession.

All of which means that while many deans are fighting fires in the present, his focus is fixed clearly on the future. And, he has some decided plans for the development of the school. "Our vision is to be identified as a business school with expertise in developing economies," he explains. "We have a lot of expertise in management in the developing world."

He believes IAE, which is located an hour's drive outside Buenos Aires, could work with other business schools in the US or Europe to address issues faced by leading corporations who have operations or joint ventures in developing countries. IAE already works with several top business schools, notably [Harvard](#) and the Spanish business school [Iese](#), – the latter was instrumental in setting up IAE. Like Iese, IAE is an Opus Dei business school and the Catholic prelature influences the values of the school, says the dean, though not the strategy. He is swift to point out that he is not an ordained priest: "I have 10 children!"

The school is closely following the pattern of development that Iese pursued when it was established 50 years ago, in particular in developing faculty. When it identifies potential faculty members it sends them to study for a doctoral degree at a top business school – Prof Paladino earned his PhD at Iese. At the moment the school is sponsoring PhD students at [Wharton](#) and [Columbia](#) in the US and [Insead](#) and the [University of Bath](#) in Europe. But it is considering launching its own PhD with its own particular character. "We are exploring when to launch a PhD, but a PhD with a focus on developing faculty for emerging economies," says the dean.

Developing its own faculty is particularly important for IAE as many of the founding academics of the school, such as Professor Paladino, will retire in the next 10 years. At the moment the school has 50 faculty and the dean is acutely aware that he needs to train faculty to expand the size of the school as well as replace retirees. "We have 10 years to consolidate our ideas in the new generation and we have to do it with or without a recession. We (the retiring faculty) have the next 10 years to develop the institution, not our personal careers."

One reason for the need to increase the faculty relates to the growing number of programmes the school would like to run both inside and outside Argentina. In particular the dean wants to launch programmes in Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia as well as in Brazil and Mexico, where IAE already has strong links. The plan is also to develop institutional links with other European business schools.

Currently about a third of the business of IAE is in customised corporate programmes, with a further third in open enrolment programmes, where it ranks 31 in the world in this year's Financial Times rankings. The remaining third of the business is in degree programmes, including the full-time MBA and the executive MBA. Prof Paladino says the school's aim is to be a general management school, rather than one that specialises in areas such as technology, marketing or innovation.

In that it is like both Harvard and Iese, and like these two business schools, IAE is a school which relies heavily on case studies as a method of teaching and research – Professor Paladino himself has written more than 100 cases. The dean intends the school to become one of the leading case publishers on developing economies. To do that the school is working heavily with its 9,000 alumni in the region, notably Chile, Mexico and Brazil, as well as those in Argentina.

Of particular interest to the faculty is writing cases on Latin American companies, and in particular on ethical issues – “What CSR really means in latin America” as Prof Paladino puts it. A case study on the effects of the global economic downturn on the continent may well prove to be a particular winner.

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