

Education

UNAL students take a Harvard University Certificate

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- ✉ The National University of Colombia (UNAL) in Tumaco –
- f through its Center for Thought on Strategic Affairs of the
- 🐦 Colombian Pacific – and the Institution's Directorate of
- 🌐 Foreign Relations (DRE), in alliance with the Afro-Latin American Research Institute (ALARI), award 15 full scholarships to UNAL students to take the Certificate in Afro-Latin American Studies at Harvard University.

The Certificate seeks to facilitate the study of the experiences, contributions and challenges of the Afro-descendant population in Latin America from colonial times to the present and to provide tools on issues of racial justice.

For Professor Amanda Lucía Mora Martínez, director of the UNAL Tumaco Campus, "this is a great opportunity for our students and for the Colombian Pacific territory, as it contributes to comprehensive

training from the exchange and appropriation of knowledge with the communities Of the territory".

For her part, Professor Melba Libia Cárdenas Beltrán, director of the DRE, states that "we welcome this opportunity for our students with great interest, since it allows them to acquire intercultural knowledge that they can apply in their social context, in addition to identifying opportunities for internationalization offered by the University, thanks to inter-institutional cooperation".

In this fourth cohort of the Certificate, offered by the ALARI, the participants will take the course "Introduction to Afro-Latin American Studies", two specialized seminars, a workshop and a final project, which can be an academic article or a replica with local Afro-descendant communities or nationals.

To develop the different activities, the participants share virtual training spaces in which, from various disciplines, they study the origin and evolution of racial inequalities and how to combat racist practices and ideologies.

The discussion forums are particularly enriching, since they are nourished by experiences, knowledge and concerns woven in very different spheres of action. As Dr. Alejandro de la Fuente, director of ALARI, points out, "if something defines this initiative, it is polyphony, how much we have learned together".

Ángela Yesenia Olaya, academic coordinator of the Certificate in Afro-Latin American Studies at Harvard University, expresses that "we are sure that the fellows will be multipliers of the knowledge acquired. It will be an opportunity to build collectively with the communities".

The DRE's academic mobility advisor, Hugues González Mieles, explains that this initiative responds to component 4, "Cross-border relations for the transformation of the regions", of the DRE's mother project of the Global Development Plan (PDG) 2022-2024 , which is led by UNAL Tumaco Headquarters.

In the call, coordinated by the DRE and Tumaco Headquarters, 85 applications were received and 15 full scholarships were awarded to UNAL students, 12 of whom are Afro-Colombian, 11 are undergraduate

and 4 postgraduate, from the areas of science humanities, economic sciences, agricultural sciences, law, medicine, and engineering at the Bogotá, Medellín, Manizales, Palmira, and Tumaco campuses.

For Farly Andrea León, a professional in social innovation at the Tumaco campus, "diversity is the word that describes this call, since it is interdisciplinary, intersemester and inter-site, which fosters the dialogue of knowledge and strengthens historical, ancestral, cultural and political knowledge. of the Colombian Pacific, and allows students to be agents of change and active citizens".

Opportunity to contribute to communities

Scholars will be able to focus their final work on one of the lines of action of the Center for Thought on Strategic Affairs of the Colombian Pacific: territorial and environmental development; economic development; social and cultural development; food security and sovereignty; and rural education and health, with which it seeks to contribute to the construction of public policies on key issues for the region.

For Jackson Duván Caicedo, a student in the Special Program for Academic Admission and Mobility (Peama) enrolled in the undergraduate Law program at the Bogotá Campus, "the Certificate is an opportunity to contribute to the vindication of the social fabric of Afro-Colombian communities."

The student Catalina Rodríguez, linked to the Master's Degree in Food and Nutritional Safety at the Palmira Campus, comments that she signed up for the Certificate to learn more about her roots.

There will be six months of virtual study – from September 12, 2022 to March 15, 2023 – with asynchronous and synchronous classes and discussion forums, where participants will receive guidance from international academics from Harvard University and will be able to interact with participants from 26 countries of America, Europe and the United States.

"Actions like these show the collaborative work and harmonization of missionary functions in our University, for the comprehensive education of our students in an international context," concludes Professor Amanda Mora.