

Rodolfo is 70 years old this year (at least for a few weeks). When he was 60 we had another conference and I gave a talk about the physics he had produced. At the end I was asked to talk about his institutional contributions. I was not prepared and hoped some of the locals would take it up, but they didn't. So tonight I thought I would make up for that day by noting some of the institutional influences of Rodolfo in Uruguay.

First a bit of history: Rodolfo was the first person to get an undergraduate physics degree in Uruguay in 1972. The paper of his undergraduate thesis is listed by SPIRES as the 6th paper coming out of Uruguay. He went to Paris to do his PhD on gravitational waves with Achille Papapetrou. While in Paris the government in Uruguay was overthrown by a military dictatorship. Rodolfo's position at the university was terminated and the hiring was frozen. So when he finished his PhD he accepted a position in Venezuela. There he rose through the ranks of the Simon Bolivar University and met Catalan physicist Antoni Trias with whom they invented the loop representation.

The military dictatorship ended in 1985 and in 1987 Rodolfo returned to Uruguay. At the time there was no College of Science (the Physics degree was in the College of Arts and Sciences) and there were few faculty members. There was no government funding. There was a program created by the United Nations Development Program agency called Pedeciba that

helped get organized science in Uruguay back on its feet. Rodolfo spent some time as Academic Director in charge of Pedeciba. He later became the head of the government's funding agency Conacyt, an agency that had failed to gain significant funds before, got a 24 million Dollar grant from the Interamerican Development Bank. Rodolfo was instrumental in founding the Uruguayan Physical Society and was its first president. He was also instrumental in the creation of a College of Science, which got its own building. A Masters of Science and PhD program in physics were created. He was one of the main actors behind the creation of the National Researcher System, analogous to the systems in Argentina and Mexico that provide support to researchers and was its president.

Then the economic situation started to improve at the beginning of the 21st century and eventually a full functioning funding agency was created called the ANII, with parallels with the National Science Foundation of the US, including programs for academics to have their own startup companies, a postdoctoral program and seed money for innovative businesses. Rodolfo was a member of its Board of Directors. More recently, he was involved in the creation of the National Academy of Sciences of Uruguay in 2012 and became its first president.

His work has been recognized by several international and local institutions. He is a fellow of APS, AAAS,

received the ICTP Physics Prize and prizes from the President of Uruguay and was made an honorary doctor by the University of the Republic.