

## Presentation

After only a few years the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) has managed to multiply the number of graduates and university degree holders – more than one thousand; it has disseminated continuing education across a great number of collectives that previously had very limited access to it; it has made its mark internationally; and it has increased its prestige and that of Catalonia.

At the root of all these successes, however, there is research – in other words, reflection on the methods and the instruments that have been placed at the service of teaching; technological experimentation applied to training; a wide spectrum of resources devoted to making higher education more efficient; and the setting up of training networks aimed at specific collectives. A great deal of work has indeed been done.

Within this context of research and reflection on the information society and its impact on society and the various spheres of knowledge, we at the UOC, aware of having full institutional support, considered it apposite to launch the Catalonia Internet Project (Projecte Internet Catalunya). This is a programme of interdisciplinary research that is structured around seven sectorial studies and which deals with the information society in Catalonia, under the co-ordination of Professors Manuel Castells and Imma Tubella. The programme is led and executed by the team of researchers in the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3), the UOC's research institute, currently funded by the Catalanian Autonomous Government (Generalitat de Catalunya).

This is only one aspect, but it is indeed an important and symptomatic one, of all that the UOC can do for the country. To make possible a rigorous analysis of the way in which the information and communications technologies are applied – and must be applied – to enterprise, to Public Administration, to the university network, to Catalanian schools, and to healthcare, is of enormous importance for the future.

### **Andreu Mas-Colell**

*Chairman,  
Board of Trustees,  
Foundation for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC)*

This has been a productive academic year, which is a good thing, since for a university such as the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), consolidation requires a high degree of productivity – in other words, objectives, strategic projects, planning, and cohesion. Now that the time has come to report to society about what the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has accomplished during the academic year 2001-2002, it is worthwhile to recall this reality, as behind it there is the effort and the work of the collective of students, lecturers and management staff of the UOC, and this collective deserves everybody's acknowledgement.

The life of this university – which is involved in a constant dynamic process – has oriented itself toward attaining six basic strategic objectives, namely, to go more deeply into teaching innovations, especially in regard to continuing education; to carry out research by means of the IN3 in its double function of providing support to programmes promoted by UOC lecturers and promoting alliances and international research projects able to turn the University into an outstanding point of reference in the sphere of the information and knowledge society; to develop initiatives for the dissemination of knowledge in the specific spheres of the UOC; and to incorporate and progressively integrate English as a vehicular language of study at the UOC, together with Catalan and Spanish.

It is not possible to summarise here all that is being achieved day by day and is expressed in the number of goals attained – new degree-holders, international projection, publications, research projects, the growth of the education offer – and which characterise us as a university. I would, nevertheless, stress three symptomatic and significant facts concerning our activity: the first PhD degree awarded at the UOC, a logical and natural culmination of the educational university cycle and a symbol of the more than 200 students from all over the world who take part in the doctoral programme; the launching of the Graduates' Club, which will enable us to maintain links with and receive stimuli from all those who have been trained at the UOC; and the success achieved by *Lletra*, the virtual space of Catalan Literature projected from the UOC, a success which can only be understood from the standpoint of the interaction and collaboration among institutions regarding the projection of Catalan culture into the world and from that of the placing of the new technologies at the service of the Humanities. Our gratitude is extended to all the people who have made this possible, which is everything that we have made possible among us all.

### **Gabriel Ferraté i Pascual**

*Rector,  
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)*

A bid for international projection is inherent in the very nature of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC). This has been one of the strategic approaches of the Universitat which have characterised the academic year 2001-2002. In fact, a distance university such as the UOC must transcend the territorial and physical limitations which often condition other models.

The information and communications technologies (ICTs) have enabled many people who could not otherwise have had access to university education at the UOC to obtain it. Distance training and the full integration of the ICTs are the basis of the task of world-wide dissemination and projection of the UOC education model. In this respect, the UOC has launched some basic types of activity.

First, the generation of a teaching offer in Spanish addressed to the rest of the Spanish state and to Latin America. Second, the establishment at the UOC of the joint headquarters of the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE), the international body that promotes distance education in order to favour as much as possible the greatest degree of access to education throughout one's life, with special emphasis on enabling methodologies and technologies.

Finally, we would like to emphasise the impulse given to the UOC's presence in Europe, Latin America and Asia by means of the construction of a network of alliances – currently more than one hundred – with other universities and educational and research institutions in the national, regional and local spheres of each country.

Such an orientation on the part of the UOC, which finds in this international projection both prestige and resources, should come as no surprise. But what the UOC finds in it above all is the best way to accomplish its vocation as a university by disseminating education and taking it anywhere that it may be needed.

### **Josep Vilarasau**

*Chairman,  
The FUOC Council*