

### **PUCE Ibarra strengthens Virtual Dual Immersion (VDI) program with Boston College of Massachusetts**

"Conversing with young people from Boston College, learning about their traditions and culture, and practicing the language. It has been an enriching experience for my education," said Scarlet Yandún, a student at the KET level of English at PUCE Ibarra, who participated in the new virtual exchange program.

The VDI is an international program managed by the Association of Jesuit Universities in Latin America (AUSJAL) and The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the United States (AJCU), designed to promote the development of communication and intercultural skills for language learning, through interaction in real time with native speakers in different parts of the world. At PUCESI these internationalization programs have existed since 2020.

"The objective of these activities is to strengthen the mobility and internationalization programs of our students and, for this reason, the School of Social and Human Sciences extends this academic and learning experience to the International Business degree and English courses, as well as to Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages as a pioneer in this process," indicated Amparo Reascos, Local Homóloga/Counterpart of the VDI PUCESI Network and Academic Coordinator of the School of Social and Human Sciences.

Recently, PUCESI worked effectively with Boston College (BC) of Massachusetts during three VDI sessions on November 7 and 9, 2022, which were created for students specializing in Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages, International Business and at the CIE PET level.

Cynthia Bravo, Director of Boston College's Language Laboratory, expressed interest in continuing these academic collaborations. "They were, in fact, among the very successful exchanges we've enjoyed here at BC through the years. We look forward to next term when we hope our schedules will be compatible to allow for additional exchanges again with you, our colleagues in Ibarra," she commented.

Professors Fernando Bernava and Sheila McIntosh of BC collaborated with PUCE Ibarra Professors Mercy Noguera and Valeria Flores to create conversational spaces for students. Also participating was a representative of Boston College's Office of Global Engagement, an organizer of the university's International Education Weeks 2022 calendar of events which included these VDI exchanges.

"I think it is something very useful and necessary; listening to the accent and pronunciation of a native speaker helps us to improve our listening and speaking in addition to knowing new cultural references and having an updated language," said Camila Vargas, a fifth-level student of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages.

In this way, PUCE Ibarra is committed to providing experiential learning opportunities that allow students to develop their soft skills and test their abilities, as a means of strengthening their professional development.