

## **Strategy for Cadre Training in Preventive Work at the University of Camagüey**

Estrategia de superación para los cuadros de la Universidad de Camagüey en la dirección del trabajo preventivo

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Aim:** to design a strategy for cadre training in preventive work at Ignacio Agramonte University of Camagüey, Cuba.

**Methods:** document review was done to determine the different theoretical approaches to this topic; surveys and interviews to executives were carried out to set up the criteria on the object of study; the expert judgment method was used to assess the pertinence of this strategy.

**Results:** this is a training strategy of cadre training for university administrative posts tackling preemptive work. It is based on a system of integrated actions, the creation of spaces for discussion and reflection, the utilization of various resources and tools, participatory techniques, as well as the implementation of workshops or discussion meetings, including the active participation of cadres at different levels.

**Conclusions:** The cadre training strategy implemented at the University of Camagüey was deemed viable by the experts consulted.

**Key words:** cadre; training courses; preemptive work.

### **RESUMEN**

**Objetivo:** elaborar una estrategia de superación para los cuadros de la Universidad de Camagüey *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz*, Camagüey, Cuba, en la dirección del

trabajo preventivo.

**Métodos:** análisis de documentos para determinar el tratamiento teórico que ha recibido el tema desde diversas perspectivas; encuestas y entrevistas a directivos, para establecer los criterios sobre el objeto de estudio, así como el método de expertos para valorar la pertinencia de la estrategia.

**Resultados:** una estrategia de superación dirigida a los cuadros de la Universidad, en la dirección del trabajo preventivo, concretada en un sistema de acciones de carácter integrador, la creación de espacios de debate y reflexión, el empleo de diversos recursos y medios, técnicas participativas, así como la realización de talleres o intercambios, con la participación activa de los cuadros de diferentes instancias.

**Conclusiones:** Los expertos consideraron viable la propuesta de estrategia para la superación de los cuadros en la universidad camagüeyana.

**Palabras claves:** cuadros; superación; trabajo preventivo.

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## INTRODUCTION

In Cuba, managing cadres must have "... a comprehensive and appropriate managing culture; an aspect given high priority by the maximum leaders of the Revolution since its beginning" (González and Gorguet, 2016, p.2). It means that the historical experience accumulated, the new knowledge, and the current demands and challenges of the professional work of a managing cadre, have enabled researchers to analyze all the efforts done in theory and practice to conduct adequate preparation of immediate subordinates, teachers, and students, which require permanent training.

Presently, MES (Ministry of Higher Education) is emphasizing on the need to perform cadre training actions through different ways based on the implementation of strategies that may favor this process.

MES authorities have noted that Higher Education will have to face the ideological challenges, including the growing subversion attempts of the enemy, focusing on the universities as a way to encourage defection and brain drain. Also important, is to consider the economic challenges marked by the international economic and financial crisis, and the internal situation in Cuba. Among the work priorities established, training competent professionals committed to the Revolution is a permanent activity. Strengthening university staffs is equally important to broaden academic excellence (Ministry of Higher Education [MES], 2011).

Accordingly, the introduction of changes in the universities associated to cadre training, and the aspiration that they become successful, must consider the above-mentioned challenges and priorities.

However, despite the efforts made and expressed through the political will of authorities, and the existence of rules on university cadre training, there are still theoretical and methodological gaps in terms of how to conduct thorough preemptive actions in specific contexts that require a particular treatment in each university, as is the case of Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University, in Camaguey, Cuba.

Nevertheless, there is a theoretical and practical interest as part of the Cadre Training System, which includes cadre formation in that research in Cuba, which, according to González and Gorguet, (2016), is realized in a first group that theorizes about the origin, essence, structure, and importance of this system. Some of the related research has been done by authors like Manso (2006); Valiente (2002). Additionally, more recent research has been done by Ramos *et al.* (2015); González and Gorguet (2016), and Pérez, Baute, and Maldonado (2017).

This group has essentially referred to the actions implemented in relation to MINED (Ministry of Education) cadres; training; cadre and reserve formation in Cuba, and advisory to conduct training actions with higher education executives, as part of the fundamental rationale of this study. Other studies were also considered, in terms of diagnosis of cadre and reserve work; the development of managing competences; and cadre and reserve formation in health care.

The aim of this paper was to design a training strategy for managing cadres at the University of Camagüey, Cuba, in terms of preemptive work.

## DEVELOPMENT

### **Theoretical framework of the training process of university managing cadres, in terms of preemptive work**

A basic idea to defend is that cadre training requires theoretical formation, though it is realized in practice, according to a given context, as shown in the current study.

In that respect, authors like Manso (2006); Valiente (2002); Ramos, *et al.* (2015); González and Gorguet (2016), and Pérez, Baute, and Maldonado (2017), have dealt with MINED's cadre actions; training; cadre and reserve formation in Cuba; and advisory to train higher education executives.

Although the works consulted are taken as referents in this research, they do not provide sufficient details about three essential aspects: how to implement strategies based on preemptive work in high school education; the indispensable integrated character of university cadre training in that direction; and contextualization of concrete actions of cadre training.

Concerning cadre training, it is assumed as "... a systematic and continuous process of training and development of cadre and their reserves, which should correspond to strategic objectives and future projections of every organization or entity" (Council of State of the Republic of Cuba, 1999, p. 7). It implies that each entity should contextualize their own cadre training processes.

Moreover, within the diversity of concepts of cadre and executive training, it is considered as a "... systematic and continuous pedagogical and political process oriented to increasing the professional capacity of authorities through constant improvement of their performance, and the results of the organization..." (Valiente, 2002, p. 37). The training process, therefore, must conceive actions in favor of performance, and the implementation of results.

The definition of cadre given by Guevara (1962) is also assumed in this study. He said,

It is an individual with administrative and ideological discipline who knows and practices democratic centralism, and knows how to assess the existing contradictions of methods to take advantage of their multiple facets; who knows the importance of collective discussions, and unique decision making and responsibility in productive scenarios, whose fidelity has been demonstrated, and whose physical and moral values have

developed along with his or her ideological growth, in such a way that he or she is always willing to engage in debate, and to respond for the proper direction of the Revolution, even at the cost of their lives. This person is also an individual with the capacity of analysis, which allows him or her to make necessary decisions, and implement creative initiatives that do not contradict discipline (...) the cadre is the backbone of the Revolution. (p.4)

As can be observed, integrality is an essential factor that must be attained in cadre training to fulfill the above postulates.

Also assumed, is cadre training in relation to prevention, as an active and assertive process, to create personal conditions and/or attributes that promote the welfare of individuals, where preemptive work is a dynamic helping process conducted by the university, family, and the community, in diverse scenarios, with the control and education provided by specialists.

Prevention and its contextualization include several entries that depend on the context, and comprise a global treatment like the one granted by the United Nations Organization (UN), and the ones corresponding to national and institutional interests, like MES (2011). Accordingly, in this study, prevention is assumed from an integrated perspective, as the "Formation and disposition made in anticipation to prevent risk or execute something" (Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, 2014). In other words, the aim of preventing is to avoid the occurrence of potential damage. Additionally, its fundamental end is the formation and education of a supportive, informed, and sensitive individual, in relation to the causes and impacts of social problems. In this particular case, the university cadre.

The objective of the methodological guidelines for preemptive and community work defined by MES is to ensure a personalized diagnosis of each subject involved, then follow-up and adoption of effective measures that tackle individual responsibility, in to establish close coordination with all bodies and organizations that make up the working group. (MES, 2011) Therefore, strategies are necessary to project concrete comprehensive actions in the cadres to encourage active prevention.

Among the features of cadre training are "... a differentiated character, utilization of methods and appropriate ways, a practical character, team work, constant feedback, and permanent assessment" (Maidie, Rodríguez, and Martín, 2011, p.5).

In this paper, a strategy is conceived with contents based mainly on the needs of cadres from Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University of Camagüey, to face the problems associated to preemptive work.

Methods and techniques used to produce results

The methods and techniques used to get results are the following:

Historical-logical: This method enabled in-depth study of foundations, manifestations, evolution, and development of the cadre training process of *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University*.

Analysis, synthesis, abstraction, and theoretical generalization: Used as logical processes of thought, which allowed the authors to interpret, process, and systematize the theoretical and empirical information gathered, and to come to conclusive ideas presented in this paper.

Inductive-deductive: This method allowed researchers to gather regularities, particularly referred to theoretical and methodological requirements for the design of a cadre training strategy, at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University*, in terms of preemptive work, to come to certain generalizations based on logical deduction, and to work out the corresponding conclusions.

Systemic: It was included in order to conceive the components that make up the strategy with a systemic character, in terms of interrelation, dependence, ranking, and structuring, along with relationships and content interdependence.

Document review: This method enabled in-depth study of the theoretical rationale of the topic, the review of normative documents, and theoretical and practical research, worked out to fit different contexts.

Survey to cadres: It was conducted as a way to evaluate the training efforts at the University of Camagüey on this particular topic.

Interview: It depended on the state of cadre training in terms of preemptive work at the University of Camagüey.

Expert opinion was used to evaluate the outcome of this strategy. Also, the Ladov's technique was used as an alternative in each stage to determine the level of interest of the actors.

As a result of the utilization of these methods and techniques, it was found that, in general terms, some cadres lack the necessary experience, the evidence gathered on planning and projection of University cadre training is partial concerning prevention, though some advances have been observed in this regard; actions are

taken essentially to promote cadre education in terms of preemptive activity; the preparation given to executives generally lacks comprehensive and systemic approaches.

The novelty of this proposal lies in the preemptive intentionality given to cadre training based on a comprehensive and contextualized approach.

### **Rationale of the cadre training strategy at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University**

Below is a summary of the strategy as the main result of this research, with the presentation of at least two examples per strategic direction:

In this strategy, the principles of cadre training assumed are the following:

1. Cadre and reserve training and education are part of cadre working system, not an end itself.
2. The main evaluation of the results of cadre training and education will depend on cadre performance, the concrete outcome of the area of management, depending on the social environment, and the manner in which the guidelines from the government and party are realized within their scope of action.
3. The head of every state organization, provincial administration council or entity, is the main body responsible for training and providing education to their staff. It must respond to it as one of the main obligations in the development of cadre-related policies in their institution.
4. Each cadre is responsible for his or her training and education.

Cadre training and upgrading must be conceived from the concept of integrality, and be organized as a system, considering all the components, and combining forms, contents, deadlines, necessary resources to make it continuous, efficient, and specific, aimed to meet the needs of cadres and the development plans of organizations, territories or entities (Pérez, Baute, and Maldonado, 2017, p.5-6).

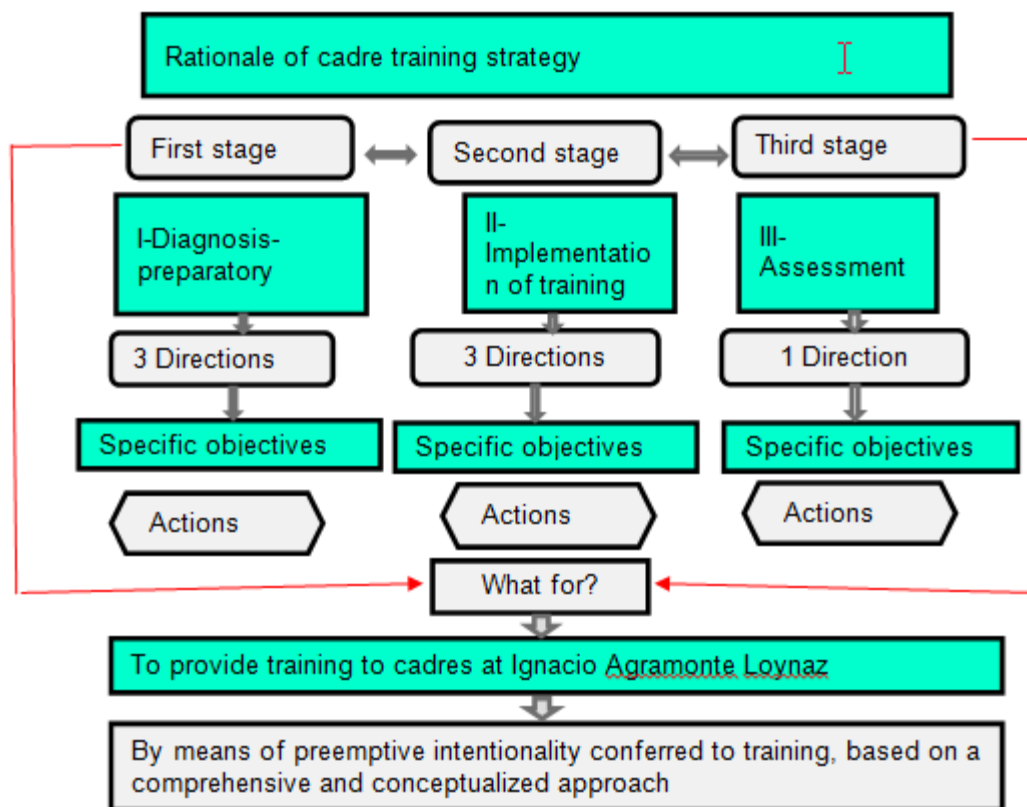
The implementation of new educational models and syllabi in higher education calls for an increase in teaching coverage, and more qualified cadres to offer special and customized attention to the whole school universe. Hence, preemptive work is indispensable to integrate students, teachers, and the general personnel, into life-related performances with the proper orientation to acquire permanent modes of performance, under the systematic influx of managing cadres.

When analyzing the influence of preemptive work on cadre training, this process is observed to move from systematic training, depending on their interests, inclinations, skill development, and capacities. It goes through preparation and orientation of cadres so they can be able to choose proper preemptive strategies within the frame of social needs, to the performance of assignments.

In different previously dealt with topics, there is a possibility of inviting renown specialists who can provide broader knowledge, and help increase the motivation of participants.

The general aim of this strategy is directed to providing training to *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University cadres in the field of preemptive work.

The graph shows the essence of the structure of the strategy, which focuses on three stages with their respective directions and actions, which are targeted into a particular objective, and offers a preemptive intentionality (Fig. 1).



**Fig 1.** Stages of the strategy for cadre training in preventive work at the University of Camagüey

First stage: Diagnosis-Preparatory



Direction 1: Diagnosis of the initial stage of cadre training at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University, in terms of preemptive work.

Specific objective: To diagnose the initial stage of cadre education at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University, for training in preemptive work.

Action 1. Analysis of psycho-pedagogical and sociocultural characterization of cadres at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University, for training in preemptive work.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Participants: Cadres from all levels of the University.

Deadline: September.

Forms of assessment: Quantitative and qualitative assessment of psycho-pedagogical and sociocultural characterization of cadres at the University.

Action 2. Design of instruments for determination of the initial state of cadre education at the University.

Responsible part: Cadre director at the University.

Participants: Executives at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University

Deadline: October.

Evaluation instruments: Surveys and interviews.

Direction 2: Planning of actions that become part of the training strategy for managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Specific objective: To plan actions to be implemented in the training and conclusive stages.

Action 1. Planning of actions to be implemented in the training and conclusive stages.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Participants: Managing structures of the University.

Deadline: November.

Forms of assessment: Quantitative and qualitative group assessment of actions proposed in the plan, and their conception in preemptive work.

Action 2. Determination of deadlines, participants, responsible parts, and forms of controlling each action proposed.

Responsible part: Cadre director at the University.

Participants: Managing structures of the University.

Deadline: December.

Forms of assessment: Collective assessment of suggested deadlines, participants, responsible parts, and forms of controlling.

Direction 3: Motivation for preemptive work.

Specific objective: To provide a favorable atmosphere that enables warm relations among the members of the managing structures and cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University*, to reach an adequate level of motivation for transformation and necessary theoretical reflections associated to preemptive work.

Action 1. Workshop with participatory techniques to promote motivation: including participatory techniques, such as, I am...and Just the group of us.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University*.

Participants: Cadre director and managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University*.

Deadline: January.

Forms of assessment: Assessment of the level of initial interest shown by executives through the Ladov's technique.

Action 2. Discussion on preemptive work in Cuba, particularly, in higher education.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University*.

Participants: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University*, and the corresponding managing structures.

Deadline: February.

Forms of assessment: Assessment of results from technique application based on the Positive/Negative/Interesting (PNI).

Second stage: Implementation of training

Direction 1: Training in preemptive work at different stages.

Specific objective: To analyze different topics of interest in relation to cadre training with the managing structures of *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University*, at a productive level, by means of different documents.

Action 1. Workshops on: Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz Life and work. Education in Camagüeyan countryside. José Martí's ideas about education and the historic legacy of educator Enrique José Varona. Julio Antonio Mella: José Martí Worker's University; Ernesto Guevara de la Serna. Highlights of his life and revolutionary work. *Socialism and man in Cuba*. Preemptive work in educational institutions.

Responsible part: Cadre director at the University.

Participants: cadre director and cadres from different levels of *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Deadline: Monthly (Methodological preparation of managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University).

Forms of assessment: Self-assessment, hetero-assessment, and co-assessment.

Action 2. Reflection and discussion workshop about the pedagogical ideas of Fidel Castro, and the educational work of the Cuban revolution.

Objective: To assess the pedagogical ideas of Fidel Castro, and the educational work of the Cuban revolution on preemptive work at a productive level, by means of the grid technique.

Title: The pedagogical ideas of Fidel Castro, and the educational work of the revolution.

Method: Independent work:

Aids: Still images, videos, and slideshows. Documents about speeches and reflections by Fidel Castro.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Participants: Cadre and executives at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Forms of assessment: Inserted questions, co-assessment, and self-assessment.

Deadline: First fortnight of February.

Direction 2: Theoretical and methodological training in preemptive work to executives at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Specific objective: To assess the theoretical and methodological rationale of preemptive work of MES, with the executives at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University, using different productive aids and methods, at a productive level.

Action 1. Discussion workshop on the main aspects of preemptive work.

Objective: To assess the main aspects of preemptive work, its importance, principles, stages, contents, and rationale, to provide knowledge, motivations, and positive attitudes in terms of preemptive work, by using several teaching aids at a productive level.

Topic: Theoretical and methodological conception of preemptive work: a managing tool at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University

Contents: Definitions, principles, stages, contents, rationale, and importance of preemptive work.

Method: Joint creation

Aids: Still pictures, videos, slideshows, printed material on this topic; thesis on this topic.

Responsible part: Cadre director at Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz University.

Participants: Cadre director and cadres at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Deadline: March

Forms of assessment: PNI technique (Positive, Negative, Interesting).

Action 2. Discussion workshop on the ways of organizing the process to provide knowledge, motivations, and positive attitudes toward preemptive work.

Objective: To assess the mission, the ways of organizing the process, to provide knowledge, motivations and positive attitudes toward preemptive work, by means of reflections and discussions at a productive level.

Title: Preemptive work: mission, ways of organization, manifestation in pedagogical practice.

Contents: Ways of organization, mission, knowledge of preemptive work methodology, abilities to utilize necessary and sufficient information for management of the communication process, diagnosis of the development of the territorial, school, family, and community characteristics, introduction of the content and methodology of preemptive work direction, knowledge of the educational policy, the characteristics and needs of *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University in Camagüey, Cuba, in relation to preemptive work, knowledge of preparation, and the participation of the school, family, and community, knowledge of preemptive work in the work system.

Method: Reflection and debate.

Aids: Ruling documents of the educational policy in Cuba, Ministry Resolutions on preemptive work, and printed material on the topic. Videos, still pictures, and slideshows.

Responsible part: Cadre director at the University.

Participants: Cadre director and cadres at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Forms of assessment: Systematic assessment by means of oral questions inserted, collective assessment of the workshop, and experience record of managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Deadline: April.

Direction 3: Training in preemptive work direction based on the Joint Methodological Training.

Specific objective: To train executives from *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University by means of productive joint Methodological Training.

Action 1. Joint Methodological Training in the application of knowledge acquired by members of managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Specific objective: To demonstrate the manner in which the integrality of previous contents is achieved through effective direction of preemptive work, by means of harmonious and coherent work of managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Participants: Cadre director and cadres at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Contents: Ministry Resolutions that rule preemptive work. Organization and management of different moments of the activity: Orientation, Execution, and Control. Basic elements of the methodology for preemptive work (Methods and procedures to organize and manage the process).

Plan of actions:

First moment: Discussion with members of the managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University of Camagüey, where the event was held, to explain the objectives of the training sessions, and assess the potentialities of each cadre, as well as the main advances and deficiencies in the organization, direction, and development of preemptive work.

Second moment: Review of mastery of the training course contents within the managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University. Review of practical implementation of training contents. Demonstration performed by specialists based on the difficulties found in the trained contents.

Third moment: Discussions with the members of the managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University of Camagüey, to assess the results of training, and to design a plan of action in keeping with the flaws and achievements, defining the responsible parts and deadlines.

Deadline: May.

Action 2. Joint Methodological Training in the psychological categories, communication styles. Characteristics. Abilities of the communication process.

Specific objective: To analyze the psychological categories, communication styles, its characteristics and abilities of the communication process in terms of preemptive work.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Participants: Cadre director and cadres at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University of Camagüey.

Contents: Psychological categories (needs, motives, affective experiences, aspirations, and interests), and their manifestations in preemptive work. Communication styles. Characteristics. Abilities of the communication process.

Plan of activities:

First moment: Discussion with members of the managing and technical structures to explain the objectives of the training sessions, and assess the potentialities of each cadre, as well as the main advances and flaws in the organization, direction, and development of preemptive work.

Second moment: Review of mastery acquired by the members of managing and technical structures of the contents delivered. Review of practical implementation of training contents. Demonstration performed by trainers based on the difficulties found in the contents delivered.

Third moment: Discussions with executives to assess the outcome, and to create a plan of action in keeping with the flaws and achievements, defining the responsible parts and deadlines.

Deadline: June.

Assessment: Intermediate application of the instruments designed and the Ladov's technique.

Third stage: Assessable.

Direction 1. Assessment of cadre training results from different managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University of Camagüey, in preemptive work.

Objective: To assess the preparation levels of the managing structure at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University, according to workshops, training, and other actions implemented within the training strategy.

Action 1. Reflective workshop with participants in the process of training strategy implementation directed to the managing structures at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Participants: Cadre director and cadres at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Deadline: July.

Forms of assessment: Self-assessment, co-assessment, and hetero-assessment of the cadres participating in the implementation of the training strategy.

Action 2. Application of instruments to make final diagnosis of training acquired by cadres in terms of preemptive work.

The instruments designed during the diagnosis-preparatory stage (direction 1, action 2) will be applied in order to determine the final stage of cadre training.

Responsible part: Cadre director at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Participants: Cadre director and executives at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University.

Deadline: July.

Assessment: Analysis and assessment of the application of instruments, along with a last application of Ladov's technique.

The method of expert opinion was used for evaluation of the strategy, to get critical judgment from 15 specialists in this area, using a value scale: C<sub>1</sub> - Very appropriate; C<sub>2</sub> - Quite appropriate; C<sub>3</sub> - Appropriate; C<sub>4</sub> - Little appropriate; C<sub>5</sub> - Inappropriate.

The characteristics below were used to evaluate the strategy: Correspondence of actions with the results of the diagnostic; applicability, flexibility, objectivity, contextualization, and current relevance.

Expert judgment was positive in relation to the contextualized character of the strategy, and its possibilities for use in university conditions, together with its level of relevance, in compliance with the demands of the new Cuban university. A total of 12 experts placed their opinions in the Very Appropriate level in the scale (80%), which revealed a high level of acceptance.

## CONCLUSIONS

Historically, cadre training in the direction of preemptive work has been backed up with strong rationale, making it a high priority topic in today's Cuban universities.

The empirical inquiries conducted enabled experts to perform a diagnosis of the state of cadre training, and to identify the flaws at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University, in the direction of preemptive work.

The set goal was met with the design of a training strategy comprising three stages: diagnosis-preparatory, cadre training, and conclusive-assessable, where the

political and ideological actions are dealt with by means of actions that meet all the requirements of cadre training in relation to preemptive work, within the context of Cuban universities.

The design of a training strategy has a comprehensive character, which embraces the creation of spaces for discussions and reflection, the utilization of several resources and aids, participatory techniques, and workshops or seminars, including the active participation of cadres at different levels, in the direction of preemptive work.

The proposal of cadre training strategy for preemptive work at *Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz* University was considered viable by the experts.

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#### **Conflicts of interest and conflict of ethics statement**

The authors declare that this manuscript is original, and it has not been submitted to another journal. The authors are responsible for the contents of this article, adding that it contains no plagiarism, conflicts of interest or conflicts of ethics.

#### **Author contribution**

Idalmis Sánchez González. Drafting of the theoretical foundations, development, and application of instruments, analysis of results.

Alodio Mena Campos. Redaction of the manuscript, drafting of conclusions, and bibliographic indexing.