

Regarding your "call for inputs" deadline of March 15 - here it follows below the sketch of an idea, I and other friends have been thinking for a few years, from USA to Portugal, France, Chile, Germany, etc.

It could be implemented - with proper support.

Let me know if having interest in further discuss it/information.

Best wishes,

Paulo Afonso

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An International Space University in Antarctica

Why a university in Antarctica?

The similarities between the space environment and many research activities that are done in Antarctica scientific bases and the very nature of International Space University (ISU) itself converge in the need to have an educational - and international - systematic presence there.

Although the National Science Foundation (NSF) of the USA already promotes 1 month post-graduated austral summer biology courses in the McMurdo base, for about 20-30 students per session, a systematic approach to space related Antarctica studies and research activities does not exist - and they are so many. The University of Christchurch in New Canterbury (New Zealand) has a graduated Antarctica summer program that includes a 10 days stay in New Zealand's Scott Base.

Due to the nature of the Antarctica Treaty ruling human activities in the continent, ISU has a unique role to play not only to protect the continent, but also to show that international co-operation in space education finds in Antarctica a singular place.

Certainly the Arctic has also important scientific and space related issues to explore - that is why Germany, France, Japan, UK, Norway, etc. have bases there.

Also the Treaty of Svalbard, e.g., although it gives economical and scientific equal rights to the citizens of nations that signed it, says that the archipelago belongs to Norway. Antarctica is truly international. There is certainly much more to the Arctic and it should be considered also as a possibility to a polar Summer Session Program and not Antarctica only - the Mars related Devon Island activities are another issue to note. Norway runs in Longyearbyen (around 80° N) the University Studies in Svalbard (UNIS), in what can be considered a good example of what we are looking for.

With all that in mind, we propose the creation of a similar program to the present ISU Summer Session Program - which could be called the Antarctica Summer Session Program.

Antarctica is as large as the North-American continent, having at most 5000 persons living in the 40 scientific bases that about 20 nations manage. Some parts of Antarctica are less known than certain zones of our Moon and plenty of opportunities in research and education are available.

The physical and law natures of Antarctica make it the perfect place to have an International Space University, following the programs already promoted by such University (HQ in France).

In one of his excellent literature masterpieces, Herman Hesse writes in 1943 (in the middle of the Nazi holocaust) about the 23rd century and a sublime University - the book *The Glass Bead Game*. certainly deserved the literature Nobel Prize per se.

The book is about humanity's eternal quest for enlightenment and for synthesis of the intellectual and other parts of life. In the 23rd century, society has provided for the intellectual elite to grow and flourish in a remote place. Cast in a period in which intelligence and knowledge reigned supreme, this fictional novel centres on an abacus-like device, which masters from various disciplines used to synthesize new insights, to go on with knowledge.

Hesse tells of an elite cult of intellectuals occupying themselves with an elaborate game that employs all the cultural and scientific knowledge of the ages. The novel goes about the main personage life evolution in mastering the Glass Bead Game, which requires a synthesis of aesthetics and scientific arts, such as mathematics, music, logic, and philosophy. This he achieves in adulthood, becoming a *Magister Ludi* (Master of the Game) - name by which the book is also known. In the end the personage becomes a *Magister Ludi* - and we can read his written sublime poems. Such University should always be focus of our demands, like a dreamed utopia. We think ISU in Antarctica in a way represents Hesse's book paradigm - the glass bead game here being life and scientific humanistic exploration. What place better than Antarctica can make of us *Magister Ludi* in the game of life?