

## SPbPU Days in Cuba: renewed cooperation and opening of the Russian Language Center

The Days of St. Petersburg in Havana and Santiago de Cuba, dedicated to the 50th anniversary of fraternal relations between St. Petersburg and Santiago de Cuba, were held in Cuba. Representatives of Polytechnic University visited the island of freedom as part of a large-scale delegation of St. Petersburg headed by Governor Alexander Beglov, took part in the general business program and held joint events with the Technological University of Havana.



Polytechnic University has a long history of partnership with Cuba. In recent years our cooperation has been actively renewed. The past events are in line with the national agenda aimed at activation and renewal of close ties between the two countries, including in science and education.



As a follow-up to the initiatives outlined at the governmental level, SPbPU came to the Republic of Cuba with concrete proposals in the field of science and education. At the opening ceremony, Dmitry Arseniev, Vice-Rector for International Affairs, presented a report on the opportunities and potential of SPbPU for the development of scientific and educational cooperation between Russia and Cuba in the field of engineering training, experience and competencies in the training of managerial personnel for priority industries and proposals for the development of engineering projects in Cuba.



A broad discussion of the initiatives proposed by Polytechnic University was continued at a round table held at the Technological University of Havana (CUJAE) and at a meeting with members of the CUJAE Academic Council. One of the main objectives of the bilateral partnership is the maximum use of the system of grants and scholarships (Rossotrudnichestvo quotas, International Olympiad «Open Doors: Russian scholarship», grants for participation in summer and winter schools), allowing Cuban students to study free of charge at SPbPU on basic and additional programs, including joint programs. Polytechnic University offered Cuban students a system of specialized webinars, information days, online meetings on how to apply for studies in Russia, how to apply for quotas, the procedures of the Open Doors Olympiad, the deadlines and peculiarities of the application process, and the specifics of the selection process. Such measures will help motivated students of the Republic of Cuba to enter the leading universities of the Russian Federation.



One of the important proposals that the parties discussed at the round table was the project of a joint online portal of open education. The initiative proposed by Polytechnic University is aimed at overcoming geographical barriers and expanding access to educational resources.



At the heart of the project will be the Polytechnic University's «Center for Open Education», which already has more than 160 online courses and all the necessary infrastructure for their implementation. The Center is equipped with special studios for recording and editing educational materials, as well as its own software platform for hosting courses.

Representatives of Polytechnic University offer Cuban partners to create a separate space where students will be able to get access to up-to-date online courses in demanded areas. Within the framework of cooperation, it is planned to discuss which courses will be translated into Spanish and which will remain in Russian or English. It is also envisaged to organize filming and recording of courses of Cuban teachers using SPbPU infrastructure and to conduct trainings for specialists in the field of online education.



The key event of the SPbPU Days was the signing of a partnership agreement on cooperation in education and science with the Technological University of Havana and the opening of the Joint Center of Russian Language of SPbPU — CUJAE, which will work, among other things, as a center for training for engineering education in Russian. It is planned that the center will not only provide Russian language teaching, but will also focus on the specifics of training for future engineers, which will help to integrate language knowledge into professional practice. As the first joint activities on the basis of the Center it is planned to hold regular master classes in the Russian language for CUJAE students, to invite Cuban teachers of the Russian language to participate in methodological seminars of HS IEP, as well as to conduct joint cultural activities online.



As part of the business program, the SPbPU delegation made an official visit to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Cuba, where negotiations were held with the Deputy Minister of Education Dr. S. Reynaldo Velasquez. Reynaldo Velasquez Zaldivar and heads of the international department, including those responsible for cooperation with Russia.



These days we have held important events at the Technological University of Havana, met with the leaders of the Ministry of Education of Cuba. We are not just negotiating and signing agreements on cooperation — we have a full understanding of the directions in which our partnership should be built. I am confident that a well-built policy of bilateral cooperation with our Cuban colleagues will allow us to see the actual result next year in the form of Cuban students enrolled in SPbPU, joint scientific publications, and the activities of the joint Russian Language Center, which opened today, summed up the results of the SPbPU Days in Cuba Dmitry Arseniev.

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