

An interview with

Giulio Gavini

- » Professor of Endodontics at Faculdade de Odontologia da Universidade de São Paulo (FOUSP) and at Universidade Santa Cecília (UNISANTA).
- » Advisor of the Endodontics Area of the Postgraduate Program at FOUSP.
- » Coordinator of the Specialization Courses in Endodontics at FOUSP and UNISANTA.
- » Vice-director of FOUSP.
- » E-mail: ggavini@usp.br



Interviewer

Murilo Priori Alcalde^{1,2,3}

¹ Doctor, Master and Dental Surgeon, Universidade de São Paulo, Faculdade de Odontologia de Bauru (Bauru/SP, Brazil).

² Universidade do Sagrado Coração, Endodontics area (Bauru/SP, Brazil).

³ Universidade de São Paulo, Faculdade de Odontologia de Bauru, Endodontics area (Bauru/SP, Brazil).

1) Professor, tell us how you started your academic career (your background, trajectory etc.).

I graduated in Dentistry in 1986, from FOU SP, and started teaching a year later in the Endodontics Discipline at Faculdade Zona Leste, currently UNICID, coordinated by Prof. Dr. Carlos Eduardo Aun, team that I joined until 2004. I got my master's degree in Endodontics in 1991 and my Ph.D. in 1994, both at FOU SP. I entered the University of São Paulo in 1993 and, since then, I have worked in undergraduate and graduate programs, training specialists, masters, doctors and post-doctors. In 2001, I organized the Endodontics course in the Dentistry course at Santa Cecilia University, which I still coordinate today. I was promoted to full professor at FOU SP in 2006 and two years later, I won the competitive examination for full professor of endodontics at FOU SP, which was undoubtedly my greatest academic challenge. Currently, I hold the position of Vice-Director of FOU SP.

2) The academic career in a public university means that the professor assumes administrative positions, such as head of department, head of graduate studies, and directorate. Therefore, what is the biggest challenge for the professors in managing to conciliate these positions with teaching?

From my point of view, the big problem we face when taking on administrative positions is our inexperience in managing, especially people. This even motivated me to take an MBA in this area. At the other hand, it is important to point out that administrative functions demand time, and it is not easy to reconcile them with teaching and research. In recent years, the University of São Paulo has promoted courses for managers, which has helped them understand the different administrative spheres that make up such a complex environment.

3) Today, you are vice-director of FOU SP. How do you see the future of the public university in face of the economic scenario of federal and state universities?

The greatest achievement of São Paulo State Public Universities was the university autonomy, which completed 30 years in 2019 and guaranteed its own budget for universities, fixed from a percentage of the Tax on Circulation of Goods and Services (ICMS), applying in practice what the 1988 Federal Constitution ensured for all Brazilian univer-

sities: didactic-pedagogical, administrative, and financial management autonomy. If today USP, UNICAMP and UNESP are recognized nationally and internationally as Research Universities, university autonomy played a preponderant role. Preserving it is fundamental to guarantee the future of our universities. And I'm not just referring to the financial issue; we need to preserve the autonomy of knowledge management in relation to the state, society, and the market.

4) The pandemic period brought great challenges for the faculty and the administration of universities and colleges in the country. What is the biggest challenge faced by managers in this period?

Contrary to what one might imagine, the biggest pandemic challenge was not budgetary, but preparing the physical spaces, especially the laboratories and clinics, for the return of classroom activities, as well as establishing biosecurity protocols for a safe return and minimizing the risks of infection. Another major challenge was to ensure vaccination for our community formed by students, servers and faculty.

5) São Paulo's universities occupy an important space in the national scientific production, although the budget is more and more restricted. This being so, how have the managers and professors managed to maintain the quality and level of the scientific production? What is the way out for public universities to increase funding for research?

Undoubtedly, it has not been easy, especially when, in a premeditated way, the importance of science is discredited and empiricism is valued, adopting a negationist posture. Evidently, the construction of knowledge is not linear. However, it should always be based on scientific evidence. Funding agencies will continue to play an important role in financing quality research. Hence the importance of guaranteeing the autonomy of these institutions. Partnerships with private institutions can also become an important source of resources, as long as the ethical limits of the established relationships are preserved. An example to be highlighted is INOVA.USP, a space that aims to aggregate and integrate laboratories and various initiatives in a multidisciplinary environment dedicated to the development of research and innovation.