

Going to Cambridge! Mexican wins genetics doctorate scholarship



Juan Carlos Rueda, who recently graduated with a degree in **biotechnology engineering**, has won a **Gates-Cambridge scholarship** to take a PhD in Genetics at the **University of Cambridge**.

The Gates-Cambridge Scholarship Program, which celebrates its **20th anniversary** this year, is the **University of Cambridge's flagship international graduate scholarship program**.

"This scholarship is one of the most prestigious in the world and also one of the most competitive. Only 0.3% of applicants receive it and the selection process is extremely rigorous.

"I'm very proud and excited to know that I was able to compete for and win this scholarship, as well as knowing that I have the ability required to enroll at a university of this status," he explains proudly.

This program was established following a 210-million-dollar grant to the University of Cambridge from the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** in 2000.



The only Mexican to win the scholarship this year

This year, **74 scholarships were awarded to candidates from around the world.** Only two were for doctorates and one of those was for the graduate from **Tecnológico de Monterrey's State of Mexico campus: the only Mexican to obtain the scholarship this year.**

*"I'm very happy to know that I'm going to **be able to continue my research career in a subject that I'm really passionate about.** What's more, it's **hugely satisfying** that doctors who are experts in these areas of life sciences took an interest in my research proposal."*

Juan Carlos, **aged only 23**, will begin his doctorate next October to work on a project that he proposed, which attracted the attention of the **Cambridge University scholarship committee.**

*"During my PhD in genetics at Cambridge, I'll be working on **research into RNA epigenetics and post-transcriptional gene regulation**, piRNAs specifically."*

*"I truly believe that **these areas of research will allow us to better understand how biological systems work and to search for potential treatments for diseases such as cancer**, specifically that of the **brain.**"*



The organizing committee evaluates **four criteria** when awarding the scholarship: academic excellence, leadership, commitment to helping others, and reasons for studying the course and how it relates to future goals.

*“I submitted the application to the program at the beginning of this year, while at the same time **applying to the University of Cambridge** for a graduate degree. It’s a very complicated process,”* he said.

Juan Carlos will be able to pursue a doctorate **without having to study a master’s degree thanks to his passion, research abilities, and skills** developed during his time at Tecnológico de Monterrey.

“It depends a lot on the country and the university’s policies. Several provide the option of doing a doctorate without having completed a master’s degree.

*“You have to show that you have the ability to pursue a doctorate. To do so, it’s important to have done research projects during your degree, have done internships, participated in **iGEM projects**, have experience in independent research, and to show that **it’s something you’re really passionate about**,”* he explains.



An outstanding student throughout his degree

At his graduation in December 2020, he was given a special mention for excellence within the IBT11 cohort and was recognized as a well-rounded student.

“I wasn’t expecting it. It was a bit of a surprise because I know that it’s a very competitive award. The Tec is a very large university, and many people can qualify for the award.”

*“It was really worth all the effort I put in. For example, with **iGEM**, I was working in the lab from 7 in the morning to 10 at night.”*

“There were days without sleep, staying up late, stress, not being able to do things with friends because of having to do the best possible project, not skipping classes, not stopping doing homework. You have to work hard, but it’s very satisfying to be able to say, after everything, it was worth it!”

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