

Leadership Partners in Brazil

International cohort met last month

[Agenda](#) | Posted on February 10, 2015



by Jenna Neil

In January, 50 participants from the South American Division attended an intensive session of the MA in Leadership program in Brazil. This program is a partnership between Andrews University and Brazil Adventist University.

“A request came from the South American Division president,” said Robson Marinho, chair of the Department of Leadership. “It looks like there is a trend in the church to provide leadership training for the administration and they wanted to provide this for their own administration. We prepared the program and hired the faculty.”

Conversations began in 2008 and the first cohort was held in 2010. Faculty from Andrews University go there twice a year in January and July, and there are also local faculty who advise the students.

“The program is job-embedded, which means the participants are required and expected to have a professional career,” explains Marinho. “The program is competency based instead of course driven and the participants demonstrate their competencies in their professional careers. Ideally, the program is open to the community and a majority of the participants are sponsored.”

Each cohort lasts for two and a half years with five intensive sessions and the current cohort is the third. Four out of the five sessions take place in Brazil while the fifth takes place at the Berrien Springs campus of Andrews University. The Brazil program follows the same structure as the Andrews Department of Leadership program. During the semester, participants work with regional groups on projects, working with their advisors and meeting with learning groups.

“We try to keep it a smaller program,” says Marinho. “So far, because of finances, we have agreed that 50 is a good size for a cohort. Though we admit a couple more than that, a few end up dropping out and we end up with 50.”

“Because my first language is Portuguese, I was selected for this role before becoming the department chair,” he explains. “I negotiated the partnership and am the current coordinator for the program. When I became the department chair my involvement became even stronger.”

The program incorporates theories with experience, following David Kolb’s theory of experiential learning. This theory says that you reflect on your past experience, conceptualize what it means for you and your life, and move into active experimentation based on that experience.

“The participants in our program are leaders at work, either as CEOs or middle managers of church organizations like conference presidents, treasurers and department directors,” says Marinho. “Reflection is the key and not memorization. To be a successful leader they must reflect on what they are doing and why.”

John Cosgrove attended the session in Brazil to lead out in a roundtable workshop with the theme of leadership and values. Cosgrove is a PhD student in the leadership program at Andrews, as well as a leadership consultant, and has been the president of several different companies. The roundtable began with Cosgrove speaking during the morning and leading discussions in the afternoon.

The leadership program has an annual roundtable conference at which guest speakers discuss current topics in leadership. Roundtable conferences follow the pattern of having a keynote speaker in the morning and small group discussions, typically about a book, in the afternoon facilitated by a faculty member.

“In their small groups the participants discussed what their values are,” says Marinho. “They discussed how, as a leader and as a person, they can maximize leadership with values, not only for the sake of leadership but leadership based on values. It was a great presentation and we had a great time.”

Marinho began working with the cohort at its founding and is now working to ensure the partnership continues to function.

“We strongly believe,” said Marinho, “that leadership only develops with reflection and building bridges between theory and practice. We’re not here to teach them how to be leaders; rather

we're here to develop the leadership qualities they already have and therefore strengthen that leadership role.”

For more information about the leadership programs available through Andrews University, visit andrews.edu/sed/leadership_dept.