The country’s current situation fails when meeting its people’s demands for higher education. The lack of budget, along with the insufficient number of universities and the scarce job opportunities, often nudges youths, who would wish for their studies to continue, into a life of crime.

Before this problem, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) has come up with a solution: the Open University and Distance Education System (Sistema de Universidad Abierta y Educación a Distancia), the SUAyED, -a system where the Bachelor’s courses are independently learned by the student, with an optional tutoring on certain days, and are graded based on a single test for each course. This system was implemented by UNAM on February 25th 1972.

The School of Law joined this system three years later, on February 1975. This year, 2010, the School of Law’s Open University System celebrated its 35th Anniversary of educating and graduating new generations of lawyers who would, otherwise, have found it difficult to earn a college degree.

The Opening Ceremony for the celebrations of the DUAyED’s 35th Anniversary took place last Thursday, March 25th, with the chorus’s rendition of Canto a la Universidad (A hymn to the University) under the direction of Marco Antonio Ugalde.
Once it concluded, Dr. Ruperto Patiño Manfer, Dean of the University’s School of Law, addressed the audience. Sitting also on the presidium were Francisco Cervantes, Ph.D., Chair of the CUAED; Pablo González Casanova, Ph.D., conceiver of the Open University System, and Alma de los Angeles Ríos Ruiz, Chair of the School of Law’s SUAyED.

Dean Patiño heartily thanked both students and academics for their joint efforts throughout the past three decades. In spite of the several doubts surrounding the education’s quality at this system, he continued, the past thirty-five years stand as proof that the SUAyED indeed represents an option to access a higher education without diminishing the excellence the School’s traditional model holds. After this concise message, he officially declared opened the 35th Anniversary Celebrations.

Cervantes Pérez, gave a brief account of the challenges surmounted, in this system, throughout the past years, and also remarked its importance, “It has helped us reassert the national role and presence of the University,” he said.

As of recently, the SUAyED’s statue has been revised, ever since it had remained the same from its inception in the early 70’s, Cervantes continued. The amendments are related to improving certain courses of action in order to offer a better education each day. The Distance Education System was also added, bringing the University to places where before it was not.

After the chorus’s second rendition, González Casanova explained how personal computers and the use internet have revolutionized education, opening the door for new materials, both didactic and technological.

“We want and we can make this a better University, and proof of that is the DUAYED’s 35th Anniversary,” explained Casanova.

To conclude the Opening Ceremony, there was a video projection of the DUAYED’s activities over the past thirty-five years.