



*We few, we happy few, We band of brothers;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition;  
And gentlemen in England now-a-bed  
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,  
And hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.*

Shakespeare, *Henry V*: Rallying his troops before the Battle of Agincourt

A small band of researchers at the Center for Scientific Studies (CECs) in Valdivia, Chile, share a daring, old-fashioned dream in this Great Science era – the unfettered quest for knowledge in a small, independent, top quality research institute. Its members have come together over the past two decades to launch an intellectual adventure that is risky, exhilarating, and richly productive.

Nestled between the Andes and the Pacific in this small southern city, CECs is one of the few institutes in the world working at the frontiers of research in multiple disciplines without endowment or affiliation to a host institution. Its researchers are free to do their best science without regard to fashion and without bureaucratic restriction, in an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual support. The result is a steady flow of innovative ideas, highly trained students, and publications in international peer-reviewed journals. The Center has defied assumptions about small size in placing Chile on the world map of science, over-turning the customary research model in Chile, and showing by example how to “achieve more with less.” Its researchers speak in tones of curiosity, wonder, and occasionally pride in describing their thrilling voyage through uncharted waters.

The strategy of CECs is to sustain a scientifically rich environment where science and scientists come first – to attract the best people, and offer them the freedom to follow their dreams.