

Academic Mobility Strategies and Challenges : The T.I.P. Experience

Dr. Cynthia C. Llanes
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Technological Institute of the Philippines

This paper presents the strategies and actions taken by the Technological Institute of the Philippines (T.I.P.) to meet the challenges of academic mobility, specifically, its participation in the SEAMEO SEA-TEACHER program.

T.I.P. envisions itself to be a leading professional technological institution through outcomes-based education, and a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, and an institution whose graduates contribute to the welfare of society.

In support of the programs' educational objective to produce graduates who are globally competitive, T.I.P. has partnered strategically with local and international colleges and universities and has kept close alliances with professional organizations, government agencies, and industry. Through these linkage partnerships, various areas of cooperation were realized to enhance the institution's capability in the delivery of its functions of instruction, research, production, and extension. Major areas of partnerships include cooperative education, capacity building, collaborative research, industry commissioned projects, among others.

The varied organizations that T.I.P. has forged linkages with contributed in the improvement of its curricula and education processes to become more relevant to the needs of society. Thus, the attainment of the institutional intended outcomes for T.I.P. graduates.

T.I.P. continues to expand its cooperation with international partners , with the end-in-view of strengthening faculty competence and enhancing academic learning and excellent performance through academic mobility.

1. Government Policy on Academic Mobility

The Philippine government programs on academic mobility are expressed through the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 55 s. 2016 otherwise known as the Policy Framework and Strategies on the Internationalization of Philippine Higher Education. The CMO aims to 1) articulate the Philippine higher education internationalization policy to provide a national perspective and context for various initiatives related to the subject of internationalization; 2) guide the Philippine higher education sector's internationalization efforts bearing in mind Philippine national interests, security and identity while also contributing to the improvement of the countries competitiveness; 3) define the strategies that underpin the various modes of internationalization; 4) set the principles to guide Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in pursuing internationalization programs; 5) encourage Philippine HEIs to adopt a programmatic approach to internationalization; and 6) serve as basis for improving programs , policies and standards on internationalization activities, cognizant of the need for appropriate government regulation for a cohesive internationalization

thrust and in affirmation of the Philippines' efforts in upholding its global higher education reputation

2. T.I.P Programs on Academic Mobility

In support of the government's thrust along academic mobility, T.I.P. has implemented both home-based and cross border internationalization activities. Academic partnerships with local and foreign universities were established for the sharing of resources, students and faculty exchanges, and other collaborative undertakings.

2.1. Home-based Internationalization

The lack of financial capacity is a major challenge for outbound faculty members and students of T.I.P..Majority of T.I.P. students belong to lower economic bracket families and the availability of government funding is very limited. Thus, only a few can afford to finance an academic mobility activity.

With the constraint for cross border initiatives , T.I.P. has intensified the conduct of home-based or campus based internationalization over cross-border education through the incorporation of international dimensions in the curriculum and the learning process. Without the need of going out of the country, international learning experience is provided through:

- 2.1.1. the *alignment of the programs' curricula to meet international standards*. All engineering programs and computing programs of T.I.P. are accredited by ABET, a US-based accreditation agency. T.I.P. is also an ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) associate member. AUN is an international organization that promotes regional cooperation among HEIs in Southeast Asia and around the globe focused on student and faculty exchanges, promotion of ASEAN studies, information networking, and collaborative research.
- 2.1.2. the *integration of international teaching and learning materials* in selected programs, such as CISCO, SAP,ORACLE, ICDL, among others.
- 2.1.3. the *conduct of joint projects with international content*. International partnership allowed T.I.P. students and faculty members to collaborate with the California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), Jeju National University (JNU), Korea, Chung Yuan Christian University (CYCU), among others.
- 2.1.4. the *holding of international conferences , seminars and workshops* allowing opportunity for a larger T.I.P group to listen to lectures given by international resource speakers.
- 2.1.5. *visiting professors from international academic partners* to conduct lectures on specialized topics in selected professional courses.

2.2. **Cross-border education** activities involving mobility of T.I.P. students, faculty and researchers are limited to benchmarking activities and student exchange for internship.

- 2.2.1. Benchmarking activities with foreign universities is undertaken to learn international best practices including new technology, innovative approaches (e.g. Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning of City University of Hongkong, University of Sydney, Melbourne University , and Monash University), novel student services (Career Services of Stanford University and UC Berkeley) , and

innovations adaptable to the culture and core competencies of T.I.P (e.g. Technopreneurship of National University of Singapore and UC Berkeley).

The T.I.P.'s vice president for academic affairs is among the 39 college and university administrators and government officials from 22 countries who participated in the inaugural round of the EducationUSA Leadership Institutes to increase understanding of U.S. higher education and provide a unique opportunity for reciprocal knowledge exchange between the United States and participating countries.

The T.I.P. Career Center director recently went on a benchmarking visit to Stanford University and UC Berkeley to gather more insights and career center best practices, with the aim of further strengthening the capability of T.I.P. in managing its own career centers.

Key T.I.P. officials had a benchmarking visit at top ranking universities in Australia, University of Melbourne, University of Sydney, and Monash University. They also met with experts from the Institute of Engineers Australia, Assessment Research Center, and Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The visit allowed the T.I.P. participants develop capability on Competency Based Education (CBE)/Outcomes-Based Education (OBE); gain learning insights on CBE/OBE from the selected top Australian universities; identify good practices on the development of CBE/OBE teaching and learning systems; and establish network with higher education institutions visited.

Another team of key T.I.P. officials had a benchmarking visit on the implementation of outcomes-based teaching and learning (OBTL) at the City University of Hong Kong (CityU). The best practices on OBTL that were generously shared by the CityU OBTL Implementation Group are now being used as template in the full implementation of outcomes-based teaching and learning at T.I.P. Another benchmarking visit was conducted to learn about the CityU's facility for interactive teaching and learning.

Members of the T.I.P. Academic Council visited the George Washington University in Washington, DC and learned best practices on student services and graduate program administration.

- 2.2.2. T.I.P. became a signatory partner of the SEAMEO SEATEACHER Program in 2016. Since then, it has been actively involved as a sending and hosting student interns to and from universities in Thailand and Indonesia.

3. Challenges Faced in the SEATEACHER Program

As earlier mentioned, the lack of financial capacity is a major challenge for outbound students of T.I.P. Thus, the number of students applying for internship under the SEA-TEACHER program is very minimal. Security risk is another barrier for students who are deployed as interns

in foreign countries that are susceptible to manmade and natural calamities. Parents are hesitant to send their children for fear of their safety in dangerous places. Language barrier is always a problem for inbound students who have difficulty communicating using the English Language. Gender issue is another constraint for inbound students because T.I.P. has no facility for mixed gender housing. Students of different genders cannot be accommodated within the same apartment. Therefore, only exchange students of the same gender can be accommodated at a given time.

4. T.I.P. Implementing Guidelines for the SEA-TEACHER Program

With the relatively short period of participation of T.I.P. in the SEAMEO SEA-Teacher program, the following implementation guidelines have been adopted: 1) A more rigid screening process for inbound and outbound students to ensure that only those who are intellectually and emotionally mature students with financial capability can be considered; 2) Pre-deployment orientation for all outbound students; 3) The conduct of orientation on Filipino culture and a crash course on English conversation for inbound students; 4) The provision of a dedicated student buddy and faculty mentor for each inbound student; 5) Tapping of student organizations to assist international students in adjusting to Filipino culture; 6) Participation of inbound students in local cultural trips and other related activities; among others.

5. Closing Statements

The T.I.P. participation in the SEA-TEACHER program opened opportunities for local and international employment with attractive compensation packages for its graduates. In the February 2018 Jobstreet.com survey, T.I.P. was in the top ten most preferred schools by employers to hire fresh graduates from, placing 7th in the survey.

Realizing the benefits of academic mobility, T.I.P. commits to positively respond to improvement opportunities raised through assessment and evaluation results, formal internal monitoring, and external reviews. It shall continue to explore possible sources of funds to allow more student participants in the SEA-TEACHER Program, to further improve the program's implementation at T.I.P., and expand its cooperation with international partners with the end-in-view of strengthening student competence and enhancing academic learning and excellent performance through academic mobility.

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