

Administration of International Students In the University of the Philippines Diliman: Policies, Practices, Problems and Prospects



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6th International Administrators Workshop on
“International Student Mobility: Recent
Initiatives and Future Approaches

Kyoto University, Japan

22-23 February 2011

Introduction

- Changing International Student mobility in higher education has been going on in most parts of the world since the last century or even earlier
- In the 2003 IAU (International Association of Universities) Survey Report (2003:8), student mobility ranked highest in the order of importance as an aspect of internationalization among respondents from close to 650 member universities of the IAU, a Unesco-based international non-government organization.
- Exchange programs, cross-registration, international scholarships, joint-programs, twinning programs, offshore campuses, short-term language courses, etc., have greatly altered the educational landscape.

- Universities have been obliged to review and update their academic programs and research priorities and agenda to suit global trends, standards, and needs.
- Facilities have to be upgraded and modernized.
- Admission policies have to adjust to foreign student needs.
- Academic calendar had to be modified and harmonized with schedules of institutions abroad.

- This global phenomenon of internationalization of Higher Education, however, also speaks well of the discrepancies on how it is being conducted in developed and developing countries, in public/state and private universities, given the academic, structural, and infrastructural calibre and capability of those countries.
- In developing countries in South and Southeast Asia, paradigm shifts have taken over the sentimentalism and nationalisms brought about by colonial experiences. Thus, global economic policies of governments have prevailed over cultural, spiritual, social, and educational policies and concerns since the past few decades.
- We can now hear institutions, peoples, and governments talk about global networking, transnational programs, global education agenda, international migration, expatriate workers, overseas workers, higher education agents, knowledge society, global knowledge economy, rather than economic protectionism, economic nationalism, sovereignty, hegemony, national consciousness, national culture, national identity, national language.
- Thus much emphasis has been given to the global rather than the national or local, to corporate economy, and English language education in most if not all Asian nations. Programs and priorities have been geared toward these goals.

Internationalization of Higher Education in the Philippines

- The Philippines has been trying to catch up with Asian neighbors in its program of internationalization. Its Philippines 2000 Global Economic Agenda, similar to Indonesia's Pancasila 2010, Malaysia's Wawasan 2020, Singapore's Concept Plan 2008, established Special Economic Zones in strategic centers in the country.
- These facilitated the establishment of comfortable and modernized communication and transport systems and cultural, recreational, and educational facilities that cater to the needs of local, as well as international tourists, workers, and students.



Internationalization of Higher Education in the Philippines (cont'd)

- Philippine internationalization programs in higher education are primarily motivated by revenue generation, tourism, and foreign currency yield.
- In the US, Europe, and other developed regions and countries, international students are encouraged and recruited to become part of the work force as skilled and highly skilled workers after their studies in these countries (Kritz, 2006) due to decrease in labor force as a result of increase in the ageing population (Sugumira, 2009).
- This objective is not among the reasons for internationalization of higher education in the Philippines.
- The Philippines provide the labor force and it is not an ageing population. Millions of children are born everyday in the country.
- The population increases rapidly. It is predicted that in 10 years time, or earlier, it will reach 100 million. The country is now close to 90 million.



Internationalization of Higher Education in the Philippines (cont'd)

- Public and private schools develop English Language Programs for Asian International students.
- Nursing and medical schools have proliferated as more and more international students have been coming to the Philippines for these programs.
- Low tuition fees, low cost-of-living, English as medium of instruction, cheap tour and medical tourism packages are also attracting international students to the Philippines.
- Lately, short-term culinary arts lessons has its share in the internationalization program of the country.

Internationalization Program of the University of the Philippines



Unlike most public state and private universities in the Philippines, the University of the Philippines (UP) has a major share in the internationalization program being a premier university in the country.

- It has more exchange students, and undergraduate and graduate programs and courses/subjects than any other state universities and big private schools in the country.
- Moreover, it has more funding sources from the government (aside from the subsidized tuition fees, capital outlay, and operating expenses allotted in national budget), more land grants facilities and support services that benefit both local and international students.
- Furthermore, many of its academic programs have been awarded Centers of Excellence by the Commission on Higher Education of the Philippine Government.

The University of the Philippines (UP System) was established in 1908 and during its Centennial Year in 2008 was named the only National University in the country.



- Being a National University, UP is given a privilege to have academic and financial autonomy. It has its own charter and is governed by the Board of Regents as the highest governing body.
- It is a pioneer in higher education through its diverse academic programs (246 undergraduate and 362 graduate programs) accredited nationally and internationally, outstanding researches and researchers, public service programs, and relatively modernized facilities.

The UP System has 7 autonomous constituent universities (CUs) located in 12 campuses in the entire Philippine archipelago, each CU specializing in a particular field

- UP Mindanao - management
- UP Visayas (with 4 campuses) - marine science and fisheries
- UP Manila – medical, dental and health sciences
- UP Baguio – indigenous cultural studies
- UP Los Banos – agriculture and forestry
- UP Open University – graduate program in education and short courses in distance learning mode
- UP Diliman – arts, humanities, social science, science, technology, law, business, economics, architecture, social work, education, labor/industrial relations, home economics, sports, etc.
 - UP Diliman Extension Program in Pampanga and Olongapo – management and industrial psychology
- The UP System has an Office of Institutional Linkages that oversee programs, activities and concerns of exchange students and professors in coordination with counterpart offices in other CUs.

Internationalization and International Student Mobility in UP Diliman

- UP Diliman: The flagship campus and seat of administration of the UP System located in 493 hectares of land in the heart of Quezon City, the former Philippine capital.
 - Services 23,000-25,000 students every school year
 - Manages 86 undergraduate and 159 graduate programs with 3643 undergraduate and 3343 graduate courses/subjects
 - Has 1446 regular and part-time faculty members and 2,158 staff.
 - 27 academic units/colleges housed in 40 academic buildings
 - Around 30 support services and facilities for students, faculty and staff (health center, sports complex, post office, bookstore, radio station (DZUP), dormitories, theaters, film center, student center, banks, hotels and hostels, day care center, S&T park, transport system, coffee shops, churches, shopping center, 300 student organizations.
 - The Office of Extension Coordination oversees the activities and concerns of international students and international exchange programs in UPD



- *(Aerial view of UP Diliman)*

UP Diliman Internationalization Program for Students

- Exchange studentship and exchange professorship with 250 plus partner universities in more than 30 countries (e.g., Osaka University, Tokyo University of Foreign Students, Hannam University, Beijing University, Moscow University, University of St. Petersburg)
- Membership in international research institutions (e.g., SEARCA, SEASREP, SEMEO BIOTROP)
- Joint and twinning programs --e.g., SPRING ASIA, Program of UP School of Urban and Regional Planning and the University of Dortmund, Germany.
- Recruitment of foreign students into the Varsity Team
- Collaborative researches and co-authorship among international graduate students and faculty in peer – reviewed international journals.
- Research partnerships and consortia in science, engineering and technology
- Hosting of international conferences – sending of faculty, students, and staff to international conference and workshops (e.g., Florence, Italy Arts Festival)
- Memberships in global/regional networks (e.g., ASEAN University Network, Association of Pacific Ream Universities.
- International Festivals (e.g., International Women’s Film Festival)

International Students in UP Diliman

Categories of International Students

Undergraduate

Regular – UP College Admission Test (UPCAT) Passers + High school diploma

Automatic Admission –

1. Any of the following:

SAT - Scholastic Aptitude Test

GCE – General Education Certificate

IBDiploma

2. High School Diploma

3. TOEFL (if applicable)

VAAS (Varsity Athletic) scholar

Exchange student (from universities with MOA with UP)

Recipient of International Scholarship

Graduate

Regular-Transcript diploma, exams, interview, TOEFL

Exchange Student

Recipient of International Scholarship

Short-term/Non-regular

Non-degree – units only with credit

Special student – limitless number of units without credit

Transfer from other UP CUs or other schools (local and foreign)

Admission of International Students in UPD

Policies

Undergraduate

- Automatic admission – only for degree programs with slots
- SAT – 1200 minimum aggregate score in Math and Critical Reading only
- GCE (General Certificate of Education) – 3 ordinary level passes and 2 advanced level passes
- Non-major – housed in the college for 1 school year only to enrol in courses, outside of the college to be able to shift later

Admission of International Students in UPD

Policies

Undergraduate and Graduate

- TOEFL – only requirement (500 paper-based, 173 computer-based, 61 IBT) for graduates of non-English medium school and/or national of non-English-speaking country
- No student visa, no student permit, no admission slip, no enrolment
- Tuition fee- UP (government-subsidized tuition + EDF (Educational Development Fund))
- Tuition + Lab + Library, student fees = \$150-\$500/semester
- EDF = \$ 300 - \$ 500/semester
 - February – admission deadline for application

Practices

- Appeals for delay in submission of TOEFL issued after flunking in 1st, 2nd, etc. exams taken -- given temporary admission with signed promissory note
- Appeals for EDF discount – granted 10% - 50%
- Requests for scholarships (via internet) before admission from international students (Asians, Africans, Latin Americans)
- Appeals for late submission of TOR and student visa (conversion from tourist or special investor resident visa to student visa) – working visa, missionary visa and diplomatic visa allowed; no need to convert to student visa.

Problems

- TOEFL – some students fail TOEFL more than twice. Since they are given extension to stay in the University while complying with the requirement, they end up finishing the whole program but could not graduate because of the TOEFL requirement. However, they pass all their courses which are conducted in English.
- Student visa processing – students depend on or expects from the university the processing of their student visa, which the University cannot handle effectively due to lack of resources.
- Even students from developed countries appeal for EDF waiver or discounts and invoke equal rights as the students from developing countries.
- Some graduate students would come with their families and try to enrol without following the proper procedures for admission. They get furious when processing of their papers are delayed.

Retention and Graduation of International Students: Policies, Practices, Problems

Policies

•**Maximum Residence Rule** – maximum period allowed to finish the program

- Undergraduate – 1 ½ times the prescribed period
- Graduate – diploma – 1 yr. extension
- MA/PhD – no more than 5 years of extension

•**Scholastic Standing/Delinquency**

Undergrad

- warning – with cumulative average of 3.0 in 25% to 49% of total academic units
- Probation – failed 50% - 75%
- Dropped from the College – failed 76% - 99%
- Dismissed from the University – failed 100%

Graduate

- Diploma/certificate – 2.0
- Masters – 1.75
- PhD – 1.75

VAAS Scholar – could be dismissed for academic reasons (failing grades) and /or negative evaluation from the team coach

Numerical Grading System

- 1.0 -excellent
- 1.25
- 1.5 - very good
- 1.75
- 2.0 -good
- 2.25
- 2.5 -satisfactory
- 2.75
- 3.0 -pass
- 4.0 -conditional
- 5.0 -fail
- INC. -Incomplete
- DRP -Dropped

4. Transcripts from former schools (if transfer student) are attached with the UP transcript

5. No partial transcripts are issued.

6. Students cannot graduate with honors (cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude) if underloaded for at least 1 semester except for reasons of health, work or unavailability of courses.

Practices

- The committee on Student Admission, Progress and Graduation of UP Diliman has been swamped with appeals for extension of maximum residency due to the following reasons:
 - Health
 - Work
 - Data gathering problems
 - Family problems
 - Financial problems
- Graduating undergraduate students vying for honors who were underloaded for at least one semester appeal to authorities
- Undergraduate students dismissed from the College are given 1 year to scout for another college /program that will accept them; meantime, they take courses outside of their home-college/programs and are classified as non-majors.

Problems

- Some universities and international crediting services do not accept transcripts issued by the last school attended as attachment to the UP transcript – need to be explained by UP in writing.
- Original diploma in Filipino; translation copy as certified translation of original

Prospects for Development

Recent Initiatives

- Review of academic calendar in congruence with schedules of universities worldwide
- Review of admission policies of the University
- List of travel agencies to help in processing of student visas
- One-stop clearance for students to facilitate release of diploma and transcripts.
- Presidential scholarships for International Students
- Construction of monorail system at the periphery of the campus for easy access to the campus and establishments outside the campus
- Adopt a Student Program by some student organizations
- Review of requirements on TOEFL. Recommendation for the college to give institutional disciplinary language proficiency exam in English as substitute for TOEFL.
- Considerations for mentor/mentee system and student assistantships for international students and request for special waiver for working visa from the Philippine government.

Recommendations

Concerns that have just been mentioned regarding administration of international students are also experienced and shared by other universities in other countries, Asia in particular. Macro-level responses are in order.

- It's about time that universities in developing and even developed countries share their thoughts, expertise, responses, and solutions to problems and bring each other to task toward the realization of the goals of internationalization of higher education – that is, intercultural exchange enhancement and improvement of foreign relations among countries east, west, north, south of the equator, and knowledge-sharing among peoples.
- This can be done thru regular fora, conferences, workshops.

Recommendations

- Regional Desks or Commissions should be established, perhaps thru UNESCO, to devise systems to help facilitate processing of visas and other requirements, institutionalization of cultural orientations, accreditation, verification, guidance and counselling services, even protection of students from unwanted individuals, groups or agencies from countries that prey on their countrymen in the guise of facilitating their study in universities abroad.
- Inter-Regional Bodies should also be established to address concerns related to
 - English requirement
 - Grading system
 - International partnerships with private multinational companies concerning scholarships, research, infrastructure projects, and facilities.
 - International Alumni Networking Services via the web.

Sources

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Doumo Arigato Gozaimashita
Maraming Salamat Po
Thank you

