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**A comparative analysis of Thai Academic Staff Perceptions of their work and related issues in Research and other Universities** *by Raj Sharma, Wisanu Laughlaor and Wisanu Laughlaor*

## **Education Reform – A Look at Asian Perspectives: A keynote address to the Third SEAAIR Conference 2003 at Bangkok**

*Dr Nirwan Idrus*

This paper reviews the need for reforms in higher education generally and in Asia in particular. It also explores the relationship between education reforms and institutional research. The Asian region is particularly interesting, as it is where the highest growth in higher education is expected. The paper argues that inappropriate educational approach in this region will impact adversely on the global human capital development. In conclusion the paper recommends a liberalizing of educational approach in Asia leading to increased educational understanding and ability to reconceptualize.

## **Institutional Planning that strives to achieve evidence of Teaching and Student Learning – A case study**

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California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) strives to achieve a “culture of teaching and student learning,” whereby, survey and institutional data relating to how effectively the University is achieving its strategic goals becomes the basis for decision making and the impetus for improvement. This case study describes in-depth analysis of two critical components in Institution-wide Strategic Planning: a) Integrated Planning Process and b) Electronic Institutional Portfolio (EI Portfolio).

The study lays out a detailed explanation of all essential components of the entire integrated planning process, which links planning, assessment and resource allocation in the pursuit of continuous campus-wide improvement by a) maintaining the currency of the University’s Strategic Plan; b) reviewing key performance indicator; and c) updating short-term objectives annually, based upon a review of the assessment data.

In addition, the study describes the CSUS EI portfolio as the essential, internet-based, tool of integrated planning that aims to capture information and evidence from across the entire institution, and to assess and improve effectiveness institution-wide. The information gained can easily apply toward designing your own EI portfolio, which can be used as a resource that campus leaders can utilize to make strategic decisions based upon facts and analytical findings.

## **Comparative Study of Educational Participation Rates**

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The OECD Educational Database released in 2000 reveals that the participation rates for all levels of education, measured in terms of School expectancy in years is greater for some developing countries such as Malaysia (12.1 years) in comparison to some OECD countries such as Turkey, (9.7 years). At the other end of the spectrum, the OECD Education data revealed that Australia recorded the highest educational participation rates for all educational levels (20 years). Educational participation rates can and does vary according to a number of factors including gender, levels of study program/education, attendance mode (full time/part time) and socio economic status of students. Possible correlation of participation rates with these socio economic variables and likely implications for South East Asian Countries are amongst the key objectives of this paper.

## **Generic Skills Assessment from Employers' Perspective: A comparative analysis of a Chinese University**

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Quality higher education requires universities to pay attention to transferable skills, and not only those that relate to particular disciplines or professions. These generic skills must meet lifelong learning requirements as well as serving the world of work. The monitoring of generic skills formation is an important emerging issue. As noted by Briggs and Hodgson (2000), recent reviews of the Australian engineering discipline found that Australian Graduate engineers were poor oral communicators, were inadequately prepared to solve problems in the workplace and the like. This study was a continuation of an earlier project that examined academic staff and student's perceptions of generic skills at Wenzhou University in China. It considers the employers' views regarding the importance and accomplishment of generic skills. The findings were compared with the results of the earlier project so as to gain an insight into generic skills development in the case study university from the perspectives of the three main stakeholders.

## **Faculty Perception of Online Learning in a Medical School in Malaysia**

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Members of faculty have an essential role to play in the successful implementation of any educational innovation, in particular, online education. Research indicates that in general, academic staff tends to resist participation in online education. With new information technology (IT) developments, more and more faculty members, however, have been expected to teach in a format that they are not used to. Therefore, this type of learning can be both intriguing and frightening for the faculty. Recognizing that positive attitudes among academic staff are an essential part in the success of any academic program, this study was conducted at the International Medical University where online education complements classroom education, in particular, the Online Learning Interactive System (OLIS). OLIS is a web-based delivery system, comprising some of the learning resources for medical students. It was first implemented in March 1999. This paper will highlight faculty perception of online learning in general and OLIS in particular at the IMU. The findings will suggest implications to other institutions planning to implement web-based delivery system.

### **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THAI ACADEMIC STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORK AND RELATED ISSUES IN RESEARCH AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES**

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 Senior Research Fellow , Swinburne University of Technology  
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There is a dearth of comparative institutional research in the Australasian region. This study attempts to bridge the gap to some degree by comparing and contrasting staff perceptions in a research and what is essentially a teaching university located in a South East Asian country. In particular, it focuses on generating a good understanding of academic workload issues and related conditions. This paper compares academic staff's perception of their teaching, research and other workloads, working conditions and career perceptions, level of commitment of various academic tasks and satisfaction with their salary and work benefits, and changing patterns of academic work in a research and other universities located in Bangkok, Thailand. Universities tend to vary in terms of mission and hence highlighting similarities and differences in their core businesses can only aid in expediting future planning and policy formulation.