Department of State
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MOET

Ministry of Education and Training
Socialist Republic of Vietnam

U.S. - VIETNAM

EDUCATION TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER, 2009

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U.S.-VIETNAM EDUCATION TASK FORCE
SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

Contents

Executive Summary **3**

- Context 3
- Core Recommendations 4
- Further Action 5

Introduction **7**

American Task Force Members and Representatives **8**

Vietnamese Task Force Members and Advisors and Secretariat **9**

Recommendations in Key Areas **11**

I. Encouraging More and Deeper Linkages and Joint Programs between American and Vietnamese Universities **11**

A. Roadmap to Establish an American-style University in Vietnam 11
B. Vietnamese "Advanced Program" 16
C. Steps to Clarify and Simplify Procedures to Establish New Programs in Vietnam 18

II. Increase the Number of Vietnamese Studying at American Universities and Colleges, Especially Ph.D. Students **19**

Ph.D. Study for Vietnamese Students 19

III. Promote Education Programs Designed to Help Vietnamese Students Acquire the Skills Needed in Vietnam's Modernizing Economy **21**

A. General Skills and Knowledge 21
B. English Language Acquisition 23
C. Accreditation and Testing 25
D. Public-Private Partnerships 27

Appendix **28**

- Task Force Memorandum of Understanding 28
- Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 1: Roadmap to Establishing an American-Style University in Vietnam 30
- Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 2: Vietnamese Advanced Program 35

- Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 3: Ph.D. Study for Vietnamese Students 44
- Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 4: English Language Acquisition 48
- Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 5: Accreditation and Testing 52
- Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 6: Public-Private Partnerships 54

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S.-Vietnam Education Task Force was created in June 2008 by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Vietnam and the Government of the United States. The Task Force was charged with producing a set of recommendations for both governments by January, 2009 on ways to strengthen U.S.-Vietnamese higher education cooperation, especially in three principal areas:

1) Encouraging more and deeper linkages and joint programs between American and Vietnamese universities;

2) Increasing the number of Vietnamese studying at American universities and colleges, especially Ph.D. students, and

3) Promoting educational programs designed to help Vietnamese students acquire the skills needed in Vietnam's modernizing economy.

The Task Force was composed of senior representatives from the two governments, from the higher education communities in the two countries, and from the business sector. The Task Force convened six advisory groups on key issues to draw in additional expert knowledge and provide stakeholder input to the Task Force as it formulated its recommendations.

Context

In addition to specific recommendations in the three principal areas, which are summarized below and detailed in the following sections of the report, the U.S.-Vietnam Education Task Force also stipulated a number of general findings addressing the larger institutional context in which the recommendations for strengthening higher education cooperation between the two countries should be understood.

First, the Task Force strongly endorses the value of increased higher education collaboration for students, faculty, and researchers at all study levels, in all fields, and in all institutions of both countries. Educational exchange enhances academic achievement, builds mutual understanding, and strengthens ties of lasting friendship between the people of the United States and the people of Vietnam.

Second, the Task Force recognized the pressing need for significant modernization of Vietnam's higher educational system, including fundamental changes in governance, institutional autonomy, financing and administration, faculty hiring, promotion and salary structure, as well as in curricula and the modalities of teaching, evaluation, and research. In the view of the Task Force, not only are these changes needed to prepare students for employment in the modernizing Vietnamese economy with market relevant knowledge and critical thinking skills, but systemic and fundamental educational reform is indispensable to creating an environment in which viable and sustained cooperation between American and Vietnamese universities and colleges can take place.

Third, the principal author of higher education modernization and reform in Vietnam, and its financing, must be the Government of Vietnam. The need for institutional reform will surely benefit from the counsel and collaboration of foreign experts, including U.S. experts, in a range of educational fields, but such engagement will lead to systematic improvements in performance if and only if it is supported by both governments.

Fourth, while the recommendations offered will benefit from the commitment to strengthening higher education cooperation by the governments of the two countries, in a competitive international environment, the autonomous higher education community in the United States and the independent private sector, whose expertise and resources are essential to sustaining a vibrant higher education relationship, will invest only where they find a mutually beneficial partnership.

Fifth, the Task Force understands that the way forward will entail multiple challenges; that it will involve both government and non-governmental actors in a range of fields, disciplines and institutions; and that the way forward will require a deft mix of both urgency and patience, and a recognition of what is both desirable in the long-term and what is immediately achievable.

Sixth, these recommendations are interrelated, and progress in any one of them will necessarily require progress in the others. Higher education is a complex system within any society, the whole consisting of many interrelated parts.

Core Recommendations

1. Immediate steps must be taken to clarify and streamline the processes necessary for U.S. institutions of higher education to collaborate effectively with their Vietnamese counterparts.

2. Vietnamese institutions must be able to operate with greater autonomy as well as greater accountability if an increase in cooperation between Vietnamese and U.S. institutions, as well as systematic and lasting improvements through the Advanced Programs, are to be achieved. To sustain the cooperation of American institutions, partnerships must operate with greater transparency, flexibility, and predictable systematic support.

3. Attracting American higher education and private sector partners to invest in the successful establishment of an American-style university in Vietnam will require presenting a realistic and mutually beneficial vision and a commitment to the principles of governance, autonomy, accountability, funding, operation, instruction, and quality identified by the Advisory Group in its report (see Appendix). An anchor partner or consortium of potential stakeholders must be identified to lead the development of a strategic plan with achievable steps for realizing the long-term desired results. The Task Force recommends focusing as a first step on the creation of an American-style research college serving undergraduates.

4. Increasing the number of Vietnamese students studying in the United States at the Ph.D. level will require greater preparation at the undergraduate and M.A. levels to produce candidates who are able to study successfully at U.S. universities. In order to provide a pool of strong candidates for PhD study, appropriate M.A. level programs should be developed. To attract U.S.-trained Ph.D.s to return to Vietnam to take positions in academia and to strengthen the domestic research and higher education system, reforms must be enacted to create an enriched and open teaching and research environment.

5. Assurance of academic quality is a pre-requisite to the prudent allocation of funds to higher education institutions by the government, foundations, corporations, or other sources. Establishing an independent accreditation process in which judgments about institutional and program quality are based on informed and objective academic peer-reviewed assessments would be an effective step helping to achieve internationally accepted quality.

6. Adoption of an effective national plan to develop English language skills, which are essential if Vietnam is to compete successfully in the global economy and attract international investment. Such a plan will require the cooperation of international education institutions and the private sector.

7. The business and non-profit sectors must be directly engaged on an ongoing basis to effectively promote stronger higher education collaboration between the two countries. Regular consultation and increased interaction between Vietnamese universities and the private sector is essential to advance common interests in producing an educated workforce in Vietnam with the skills needed to compete in Vietnam's modernizing economy.

Further Action

The Task Force, in this Final Report, has provided commentary and recommendations on the areas stipulated by the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two governments. The Final Report, however, should not be the last word on these issues—it should in fact promote further discussion and follow-up, and inform dialogue and action by both public and private partners and other stakeholders. We believe that several issues in particular need further attention, and recommend that several advisory groups similar to those that submitted Reports to the Task Force remain in existence after the Task Force itself expires in September, 2009. Among these are:

- An advisory group to further develop the American-style University Roadmap, including advising MOET on drafting a proposal that could be used to generate interest among potential American university partners and funders.

- An advisory group on private-public sector cooperation to identify steps that can be taken immediately to address the unmet demand of Vietnam's growing economy for workers and managers with internationally competitive skills.

- An advisory group to review sources of funding to support the recommendations and roadmaps in this Report. Such a review would enable potential funders to direct investments to priority areas where gaps in funding match their interests, such as improving the Advanced Program, expanding English language instruction, or investing in an American-style university in Vietnam. Such an approach could encourage private industry to fund educational endeavors in focused projects that will deliver measurable results.

- An advisory group on regulatory reform to ensure broader understanding of the types of reforms needed in the Vietnamese educational system to strengthen higher education cooperation with the United States, and the roadmap being planned to implement these reforms.

During the course of the Task Force discussions, members proposed using U.S. State Department educational exchange programs to generate progress toward a number of recommendations in the Report. Those efforts include sending American professors to Vietnam to train faculty or improve university administration practices, and organizing professional development exchanges to help Vietnamese officials set up university accreditation and educational testing bodies. The Task Force recommends that American education experts travel to Vietnam to work with U.S. Embassy and MOET officials to develop a plan for maximizing the impact of these exchanges.

Respectfully Submitted
September 30, 2009
by

Ambassador	Vice Minister of Education and Training
Michael W. Michalak	Pham Vu Luan
For the United States of America	For the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

FINAL REPORT
U.S.-VIETNAM EDUCATION TASK FORCE

INTRODUCTION

The U.S.-Vietnam Education Task Force was created by a *Memorandum of Understanding* signed in Washington, D.C. at the United States Department of State on June 25, 2008 by James K. Glassman, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, and Pham Vu Luan, Vice Minister of Education and Training, Ministry of Education and Training, of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The signing was witnessed by Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

The Task Force was charged with producing a set of recommendations to both governments by January 2009 on ways to strengthen U.S.-Vietnamese higher education cooperation in general, and specifically in three key areas:

- Encourage more and deeper linkages and joint programs between American and Vietnamese universities,

- Increase the number of Vietnamese studying at American universities and colleges, especially Ph.D. students, and

- Promote educational programs designed to help Vietnamese students acquire the skills needed in Vietnam's modernizing economy.

Following the Task Force's first meeting in Hanoi on September 22, 2008, six advisory groups were established with additional experts and stakeholders in the higher education community and private sector to explore issues related to and make recommendations on (1) establishing an American-style university in Vietnam, (2) increasing Ph.D. study by Vietnamese students in the United States, (3) supporting the 'Advanced Program' for curriculum development in Vietnam, (4) capacity building in English language acquisition, (5) improving accreditation and testing, and (6) establishing public-private partnerships.

These advisory group recommendations served in turn as the basis of the discussion at the Task Force's second meeting, which took place via Digital Video Conference on November 18, 2008.

Those two meetings of the Task Force, together with a meeting by teleconference on December 18-19 and the Task Force's final meeting in Ho Chi Minh City on January 14, 2009, served as the basis for this Final Report.

AMERICAN TASK FORCE MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Association of American Universities

Robert Berdahl – member
President

John Vaughn – representative
Executive Vice President

General Electric

Ferdinando "Nani" Beccalli-Falco – member
President & Chief Executive Officer of GE International

Stuart L. Dean – representative
President, GE Southeast Asia

Intel Corporation

Craig Barrett – member
Chairman of the Board

Rick Howarth – representative
General Manager, Intel Products, Vietnam

The Johns Hopkins University

Kristina Johnson – member
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Pamela Cranston – representative
Vice Provost for International Programs

The New School

Bob Kerrey – member
President

Ben Lee – representative
Senior Vice President for International Affairs

Embassy of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Ambassador Michael W. Michalak (ex-officio member)

U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Goli Ameri

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Academic Programs Thomas Farrell
(ex-officio members)

VIETNAMESE TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)

Banh Tien Long – member
Standing Vice Minister

Higher Education Department, MOET

Tran Thi Ha – member
Director General

International Cooperation Department, MOET

Tran Ba Viet Dzung – member
Director General

University of Da Nang

Bui Van Ga – member
President

Can Tho University

Nguyen Anh Tuan – member
Rector

Advisors

Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the United States

Ambassador Le Cong Phung

Ministry of Education and Training

Nguyen Xuan Vang
Director General, Vietnam International Education Development (VIED)

Nguyen Van Ngu
Director General, Financial and Planning Department

Bui Manh Nhi
Director General, Personnel Department

Nguyen Ngoc Hung
Deputy Director General, International Cooperation Department

Nguyen Thi Le Huong
Deputy Director General, Higher Education Department

Tran Van Nghia
Deputy Director General, Testing and Education Quality Accreditation Department

Secretariat:

Nguyen Thi Le Huong, Deputy Director General, Higher Education Department, MOET, Head of Secretariat

Nguyen Van Huu, Senior Officer, Higher Education Department, MOET

Le Duc Long, Senior Officer, International Cooperation Department, MOET

Ha Van An, Senior Officer, American Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

RECOMMENDATIONS IN KEY AREAS

I. ENCOURAGING MORE AND DEEPER LINKAGES AND JOINT PROGRAMS BETWEEN AMERICAN AND VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES

A. Roadmap to Establish an American-style University in Vietnam

Background and context

Establishing an American-style university in Vietnam is a top goal of the Ministry of Education and Training. Under MOET's original plan, the Ministry is looking to American partners to provide administrators and faculty for up to ten years, while it is prepared to invest in the building and infrastructure costs, possibly through borrowing 100 million U.S. dollars or more from multinational lending institutions. Features of this university under the initial MOET plan are:

- The university will be a public multi-disciplinary world class research university comparable to the best in the region with ties to international schools and enterprises.
- By 2020 it should be one of the leading universities in Vietnam, and serve as a model for other Vietnamese universities, as well as a spur to other universities to improve their administration and the quality of instruction and research. It should also serve as a training institution for staff and faculty.
- The university would provide research based on the needs of the national economy as well as the province where it is located.
- The Government of Vietnam is willing to provide funds to construct the university, which would belong to the Government of Vietnam.
- The university would require the involvement of American universities for staff and additional support for its first ten years.
- The university would follow an American curriculum, American teaching style, and have American management. Faculty would be recruited and evaluated on a competitive basis.
- To increase the participation of American faculty in the development of the university, activities would be held in Vietnam during summers when American professors can more easily take leave.
- The university would have a high degree of autonomy in the areas of management, budget, human resources, and hiring and promotion of faculty
- The university would also have to fulfill its social responsibility to Vietnam, and follow regulations determined by the Prime Minister.
- Proposed faculties would include those appropriate for a multi-disciplinary world class research university, including technology, health, economics and business.
- Proposed timeline: 2010 – set up initial structure. 2011 – enrollment and classes begin. 2012 – construction finished and enrollment of MA and Ph.D. students begins.

The Task Force discussed the feasibility of MOET's initial approach for establishing an American-style university and possible alternatives towards achieving the intended goal.

Recommendations

Development of a Roadmap for the creation of an American-style university, which would include the following steps to be taken by MOET with U.S. advice as requested:

- Identify an anchor university or consortium of universities interested in moving the vision forward. MOET has already discussed this possibility with the California State University System, with the University of California System, and with other individual universities.
- Prepare a proposal or prospectus for presentation to potential donors and American educational institutions. Proposal should include a detailed and workable plan and a statement from MOET guaranteeing autonomy for the university.
- Create a list of potential investors to be approached. Such a list might include universities, foundations, NGOs, multilateral institutions, and private sector companies.
- Reach out to these and other potential investors with information on the benefits of such a university for Vietnam and the United States.
- Create a website to make the American university proposal easily accessible by all who are interested.
- Establish an advisory group to develop a more detailed roadmap, to provide input to MOET on drafting a proposal or prospectus, and to use the resulting documents to generate interest among potential American university partners and funders.
- Establish performance indicators such as time to degree and completion rates, employment ratios of graduates, and faculty publications in international, peer-reviewed journals to further ensure accountability, and then evaluate university leaders by their success in achieving them.
- Implement recommendations in other areas of this Report, which are important prerequisites for the success of the American-style university in Vietnam. Progress in implementing the broader set of recommendations is needed to convince American partners and investors of MOET's seriousness in improving the quality of Vietnam's system of higher education.

Steps the U.S. government can take to help establish an American-style university:

- Advise MOET on how to craft the most effective Proposal and website noted above.
- Approach American universities to generate awareness of and participation in the American university project.
- Approach American foundations and others that might be interested in investing in the University.
- Act in an advisory capacity to stakeholders from both countries, organize meetings between American organizations and MOET, and provide other facilitative assistance.

- Work with the universities MOET has already approached with the possibility of serving as founding institutions for the university to ensure they understand MOET's goals and the feasibility of all aspects of the project.
- Look for ways to use existing U.S. government-sponsored programs to support the American-style university, including the Fulbright Program and the Vietnam Education Foundation.

Other factors to take into account

- Consider for the initial phase of the university an undergraduate "research college" that focuses on providing a general undergraduate education and could over time become the nucleus of a university with graduate programs and professional schools. By providing a quality undergraduate education, the college would provide a flow of skilled technicians and managers to the Vietnamese economy. Its graduates would also be well-prepared for graduate study overseas, and—perhaps most importantly—the college would provide an institutional home for returning Vietnamese scientist and scholars. The impact of an institution like this would be felt far beyond the individuals it educates and employs; as a model of good governance and a healthy competitor, the college would serve as a beacon for change and a model for other Vietnamese universities to learn from and emulate, as well as providing a concrete example for the Vietnamese government of an effective target for Vietnamese higher education.
- Consider the experience of other universities started with the backing of the U.S. government in recent decades that might be instructive as models, including the Middle East Technology Institute (Turkey) and the Indian Institute of Technology – Kanpur (India). These universities were successful because:
    - The U.S. government did not solely fund these schools but was rather a partnership with U.S. universities, foundations such as the Ford Foundation, and U.S. AID that provided support.
    - A consortium of universities was involved.
    - Initially these institutions focused on science, technology, and engineering. They were not initially established as multidisciplinary institutions.
    - They were created in settings where their autonomy was protected, rather than operating under the control of government.
    - Faculty could compete for both promotions and grants; considerable faculty mobility existed; a system of peer review was established for purposes of research grants and publications; and there was sufficient investment in undergraduate education to prepare students for graduate study.
    - The business sector was also engaged for its expertise on what is needed to meet the country's human capital development needs.
- Ensure that all stakeholders agree with the "business plan" under which the university would be formed.
- Guarantee autonomy to American university partners. Similar guarantees should exist with regard to governance of the university, curriculum, salary structure to reward faculty, and other policies.

- Break the project into different steps that can be considered independently and simultaneously (funding, recruitment of universities, beginning with one faculty or department and expand from that core program, etc.) to ease the difficulty of such a large-scale undertaking.
- Recognize that an American-style university is a long-term project, with many components that will proceed at different speeds. American universities that might consider involvement would need time to consult with their individual Boards of Trustees, which could be a lengthy process.
- Create conditions that will attract American universities, whose primary objectives in their international activities are creating enriching learning opportunities for their students and research opportunities for their faculty.
- Recognize the amount of painstaking, unglamorous but essential administrative and managerial stewardship that will be involved in laying the foundations for a new university. For example, designing and assembling the operating systems—administration, finance and accounting, admissions, development, libraries, etc.—that modern universities depend upon will require that American partners deploy scarce human and institutional resources.
- Create incentives to attract American faculty, which will be the lifeblood of the university, including persuading young, foreign trained Vietnamese scientists and scholars to return. Such incentives might include hybrid career paths through dual appointments or incentives such as research fellowships, travel grants, etc.

Funding

- A credible and achievable roadmap is essential in any proposal presented to potential institutional partners and possible investors.
- Several misperceptions about higher education financing must be dispelled.
    - First, it must be made clear that universities cannot achieve quality outcomes and financial sustainability solely on tuition-based revenue models. Even in the United States, tuition accounts for only a portion of university operating budgets. A second financial myth is that U.S. universities will self-finance their participation in institutional development endeavors in Vietnam. With the exception of some profit-oriented programs in fields like business administration and basic IT, reputable American universities will only take part in institutional development projects if they are funded externally in a sustainable fashion. As the global economic downturn squeezes endowments in American private universities and reduces state support of American public universities, and as other countries elsewhere lure American universities with lucrative financial packages, the need for realistic funding mechanisms will only grow more acute.
    - Significant funding for both capital and operational costs will need to be secured by the Government of Vietnam, perhaps through a multilateral lending body like the World Bank or the Asia Development Bank. With time and a proven track record, funding may be raised from the private and philanthropic sectors.

For more information and recommendations, See Appendix – Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 1: Roadmap to Establishing an American-style University.

B. Vietnamese "Advanced Program"

Background and context

One of Ministry of Education and Training's (MOET's) most ambitious efforts to improve the quality of higher education in Vietnam is its Advanced Program (AP). Through the AP, MOET provides funding to selected universities, which then choose foreign partners. The AP, in effect, involves transplanting a foreign degree program into the Vietnamese university, including curriculum, course design, teaching materials, and teaching methodologies. The foreign university partner sends faculty to its Vietnamese university partner to teach courses and train faculty, and accepts Vietnamese professors for training in the United States. The goal is to provide a world class education in one particular field at one particular Vietnamese university. Twenty-three Advanced Programs are now operating – 20 involve partnerships with American universities, and three with universities in the UK. (For complete list, see Appendix –Summary of Advisory Group Report 2: Vietnamese Advanced Program for more details.)

While the Task Force found a number of promising examples of successful collaboration under the Advanced Program, the overall effort would benefit from a more systematic approach that would identify, evaluate, communicate, and replicate the best practices among the partnerships.

Recommendations

Support for the Advanced Program

- Create a teaching environment comparable to those at American universities, including rewarding faculty for excellence in teaching, research, and publishing.
- Improve facilities, equipment, and laboratories, and develop annual budgets for purchasing new equipment.
- Admit only students with the English language abilities needed to succeed in Advanced Programs. Students without adequate English language abilities lower the quality of the program for all students. All students should continue to study English throughout the program.
- Admit only students who are academically prepared for the program.
- Grant greater autonomy so that the program can shift funds to meet priority needs, from the purchase of books, to lab supplies, to other items needed.
- Advertise the Advanced Programs to attract the best students. Currently, many students do not know they are in a program that is more demanding than a typical program at a Vietnamese university.
- Upgrade the knowledge and teaching abilities of faculty in Advance Programs. Give faculty teaching these course more opportunities for professional development.
- Seek new models and incentives to attract American professors to teach in these programs and to train Vietnamese faculty for longer periods of time, ideally for a minimum of one semester. Currently many American professors are in residence for only two weeks because of demands on their time at their home universities.

- Promote more joint basic and applied research projects between Vietnamese universities and companies.
- Ensure that both American and Vietnamese partners better understand the program's goals and their respective roles and activities.
- Encourage American students to participate in the Advanced Program in Vietnam. Building capacity in the Advanced Program can increase the attractiveness of Vietnam as a study abroad destination for American students.

Curriculum development

- Restructure the curricula to give students greater choice of courses, as graduates will work in many different jobs within the same field.
- Establish a credit-based system in which general education courses can be transferred from one program or field of study to another. This is already a top MOET goal, but it needs to be achieved much more completely and quickly.
- Restructure curricula to match the jobs available in Vietnam's economy today.

Expansion of the Advanced Program

- Increase the number of Advanced Programs at Vietnamese universities.
- Consider the idea of establishing many Advanced Programs at the same university.
- Achieve economies of scale by having one American university department establish Advanced Programs with more than one Vietnamese university.
- Expand the areas in which Advanced Programs can be established. Advanced Programs are currently restricted to six priority areas – finance, banking, tourism, business, biology, and information systems – but programs are also needed in other fields, including the social sciences.

Funding and long-term support

- Longer-term support is needed to continue American support for the program and to continue professional development of Vietnamese professors to realize the full potential of these programs.
- Provide a reliable and predictable funding stream to support Advanced Programs. Reliable funding is critical to enable American universities to plan and implement their programs.
- Evaluate the needs of the private sector, and tailor programs to attract private sector support. The Advanced Programs that are strategically aligned with private sector interests, facilities, and workforce needs will provide the private sector the most flexibility in how they are able to target their support.
- Conduct evaluations of programs regularly, and disseminate information to both Vietnamese and American university partners so that adjustments in programs can be made where necessary. Greater transparency is needed if these programs are to be implemented most effectively.

For more information and recommendations, See Appendix – Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 2: Vietnamese Advanced Program.

C. Steps to Clarify and Simplify Procedures to Establish New Programs in Vietnam

Background and context

Many American educational organizations have programs in Vietnam, and others are considering establishing such programs. Yet the processes they must go through to establish offices in Vietnam and manage their programs are opaque, confusing, and time consuming.

Recommendations

- Draft and make available a document that describes the process through which foreign organizations can register their offices, including identifying the steps in the process, who at which Ministry should be contacted at each step, and which documents are required for submission at each step.
- Expedite processing of applications at each step.
- Issue visas to American professors working at Vietnamese universities more quickly, and create a more streamlined and transparent visa application process.
- Clear textbooks from the United States more quickly through customs, and eliminate the customs charge for books donated to Vietnamese educational institutions.
- Allow non-profit foreign colleges and universities to register as non-profit educational institutions rather than as businesses subject to taxation.

II. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES, ESPECIALLY PH.D. STUDENTS

Ph.D. Study for Vietnamese Students

Background and context

As part of Vietnam's 2020 Strategic Education Plan and efforts to promote the comprehensive reform of its higher education system, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) aims to develop a new generation of high quality faculty for teaching and research. One of the Ministry's strategies to reach this goal is to train 20,000 Ph.D.s over ten years – half in Vietnam and half abroad. 250 per year would be trained in the United States.

The Fulbright Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State currently sends 25 Vietnamese students for Master's degree programs each year. The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF), established by the U.S. Congress, has sent approximately 40 students a year for Ph.D. study in the basic sciences.

MOET is working with the U.S. National Academies to set up a program, funded by the Government of Vietnam, through which Vietnamese students would apply for American Ph.D. programs in a variety of fields. MOET received nearly 2,000 valid applications for Ph.D. study worldwide in 2008. 663 PhD level candidates and 200 MA level candidates were selected; its goal is to send 900 abroad worldwide in 2009, of which 700 would be for PhD and 200 for MA degrees.

Recommendations

- That the Government of Vietnam contributes funding to the Fulbright Program to increase the number of scholarships offered for graduate level study in the U.S.
- Focus on improving the quality of Vietnamese higher education system to produce 10,000 talented students enrolling the Ph.D. degree in overseas.
- Focus more on training master's degrees in many cases rather than Ph.D.s. Advantages of M.A.s over Ph.D. are the much larger number of graduates and the much quicker time frame in which they would return to Vietnam. Graduates with M.A.s could then return to revamp university departments and administration, thus bringing change much sooner to Vietnam's system of higher education.
- Recognize that a national program supporting Ph.D. study in the United States must be open, competitive, rigorous and transparent selection and placement processes. Ph.D. students must be matched with specific university programs that have a need for the particular research interests of each individual student.
- Ensure that the selection process identifies outstanding candidates whose English competency can be improved through intensive training after selection.
- Recognize that many candidates selected for this program will require significant in-country pre-academic training.

- Recognize that the visa issued for this program could be a J1 rather than an F1. This would require all grantees to return to Vietnam for at least two years.
- Establish policies, teaching and research conditions, and salaries suitable for newly trained Ph.D.s who have returned to Vietnam.
- Recognize the value of additional fields of high relevance to Vietnam's future development, including natural resources, environmental sciences, and education (e.g., higher education administration, curriculum development, educational counseling and psychology, etc.).

For more information and recommendations, See Appendix – Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 3: Ph.D. Study for Vietnamese Students

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III. PROMOTE EDUCATION PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO HELP VIETNAMESE ACQUIRE THE SKILLS NEEDED IN VIETNAM'S MODERNIZING ECONOMY

A. General Skills and Knowledge

Background and context

To improve the quality of instruction at Vietnamese institutions of higher education, MOET plans include the following steps.

- Teaching methods: It is important to move to teaching methods in which students actively participate in classroom activities and discussions and develop critical thinking and analytic abilities.
- Credit based system: Vietnamese universities are in the process of switching to a credit based system, in which courses can be transferred between faculties similar to the general education system at U.S. universities.
- Legal environment: The first 100% foreign owned educational institution was authorized in Vietnam in 2000. The first Law on Education was issued in 1998.
- Mentors: MOET envisions students who have returned with advanced degrees from studying abroad to serve as mentors for students and other professors.
- Ph.D. Centers: MOET has set up 3 Ph.D. centers in Vietnam. These Centers will run programs to prepare students for advanced study abroad, and provide training in English and research skills. Foreign professors will be welcome at these Centers.
- Vietnam Government's Student Loan Program: In 2008, 780,000 students (accounting for more than 50% of total students nationwide) received loans of 800,000 VN dong per month per student. ($50)
- Curriculum development: Curriculum should be changed to match courses with industry needs.

Recommendations

- Tie educational plans to economic development plans. Ensure that curriculums provide graduates with the skills needed in the local economy.
- Vietnam should consider the training models of the US: Community colleges in the U.S. serve as the centers of lifelong learning and skills enhancement for the majority of U.S. higher education students; nearly half of all U.S. undergraduate students enroll in community colleges. They have an outstanding record of flexibility in developing curricula that respond to changing needs in the communities and economic sectors which the colleges serve, and they are recommended by 95% of the U.S. organizations that employ community college graduates.
- Recognize the need for two different types of trained employees to meet the demand of the workforce: technical employees and management employees. Technical employees hired directly from vocational schools are doing a good job, but managerial staff need much more training and experience in problem solving.

- Provide incentives to increase the number of American companies involved with curriculum development at Vietnamese universities to ensure the most relevance of university programs to industry needs.
- Match between community colleges and skills needed in local communities and provinces. American companies, with extensive knowledge of Vietnam's business environment, including the supply and demand for workers with specific skills, can provide information about which skills are most in need by international companies.
- Create stronger links between different levels; i.e., community college graduates should either have marketable skills or be prepared to transfer to a university.
- Change curricula that are overly-theoretical, lack practical applications. Need to change curriculum to prepare students to work in companies.
- Ensure that graduating students have mastered the core curriculum. Ensure that test methodologies promote learning, and require that students attend classes and prepare for them. Focus on providing students with acquired skills in the workplace, and creating more opportunities to use laboratory to develop practical skills.
- Move away from teaching methods that focus on memorization toward those emphasizing problem solving. Provide greater hands on experience so that students are prepared to work in industry after graduating. Ensure they have thinking and analytic skills needed to find optimal solutions, develop multiple options, analyze situations.
- Increase the competitiveness in funding allocation for research projects.
- Examine U.S. models of public and private universities and how they are funded.
- Compensate faculty for time spent outside of class learning and mastering new learner-centered teaching practices.
- Recognize the importance of competitive standards and professional organizations to help faculty maintain skills, pass information on skills needed in the current economy to schools so that they can adjust degree programs. Education system must provide for today's needs.
- Explore the possibility of U.S. AID projects in the area of education. A U.S. AID assessment team recently visited Vietnam to explore which levels of education in Vietnam might be most suitable for AID programs.

B. English Language Acquisition

Background and context

Vietnam needs a workforce that is able to communicate in the global language of business, technology, and science. As Vietnam welcomes more international companies and continues on its trajectory of engaging in the global economy, employees will need the necessary English language skills to compete and advance and this applies specifically to technical and managerial staff.

The Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam has built a project "Reforming and Improving the Effectiveness of Teaching and Using English in Vietnam's National Education System" with the ambitious goal of achieving enough progress in English language ability that in 10-15 years this would give Vietnam an advantage over other countries in the region.

For such goals to become reality, a significant investment must be made by the Government of Vietnam. Expertise and resources need to be pursued through individual technical experts, partnerships with the private sector, and collaboration between education institutions and NGOs as well as with businesses with a shared interest.

Recommendations

- Set up English Resource Centers to train high quality teachers.
- Focus on lifelong learning of English, including through programs on TV and radio.
- Create an English Language Teacher Network for Secondary School Teachers in every province in Vietnam.
- Develop, expand, purchase and promote English programs on national TV and radio
- Create and promote community English projects and programs.
- Support intensive English training for professors in the United States
- Reform and renovate English language teaching pedagogy, curriculum and testing.
- Lower the grade level and age at which English is introduced as a compulsory subject in schools.
- Increase the frequency of hours of English language instruction in schools.
- Reduce class size for English language instruction at all levels.
- Create Study Abroad opportunities for Vietnamese students as a way to increase English language proficiency

Projects deserving special attention:

- Establish English Resource Centers at some Vietnamese universities to train high quality English teachers.
- Send Vietnamese lecturers in the Advanced Programs for intensive professional training in the United States.

- Reform and renovate English language teaching pedagogy, curriculum, and testing.
- Send professionals to the United States to study English for specific purposes.
- Develop, purchase, and promote on-line ESL products.

For more information and recommendations, See Appendix – Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 4: English Language Acquisition.

C. Accreditation and Testing

Background and context

The goal of accreditation is to provide quality assurance and quality improvement. An informed, objective assurance of quality is necessary for the prudent allocation of funds to higher education institutions from the government, foundations, corporations, and other sources. Such quality assurance is also necessary for students enrolling in those institutions; for companies, government agencies and other entities that hire the graduates of those institutions; and for the public at large. Accreditation does not provide a ranking of institutions, but an assurance of acceptable quality.

Creating an effective, objective, academic-based system of accreditation of higher education in Vietnam is a critical component of the process of improving Vietnamese higher education to serve the nation's goals and to position Vietnamese higher education to compete effectively among the well-developed systems of higher education worldwide. The U.S. accreditation system might serve as a model for a system that serves educational institutions, their patrons and constituents, and the broader public.

Recommendations

- Establish a Vietnamese-American Advisory Group to develop nationwide standards in the areas of testing, accreditation and quality assurance.
- Establish an accreditation system that examines and certifies the quality of Vietnamese universities.
- Send study tours to the United States to understand the essential elements of the U.S. accreditation system, which include:
    - A voluntary, non-governmental accreditation process in which judgments about institutional and program quality are based on informed and objective academic peer-reviewed assessments.
    - A recognition process that identifies accreditation agencies capable of carrying out the above accreditation process.
    - Policies that stipulate the roles and responsibilities of, and the relationships among, the federal government, the academic coordinating body, and the accrediting agencies.
    - Policies that stipulate the relationships between accrediting agencies and the institutions they accredit.
    - Standards of accreditation that clearly specify the standards on which institutions will be judged and the basis on which accreditation will or will not be granted.
- Approach the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) about how to design the structure of an accreditation system.
- Support training officials to create and manage accrediting bodies needed to operate the accrediting system.
- Support the training of academic administrators and faculty to conduct the peer-reviewed accreditation process.

- Send teams to the United States for short-term professional development in the area of educational testing.
- Send teams to the United States for short-term professional training in how to set up and operate a university accreditation system.

For more information and recommendations, See Appendix – Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 5: Accreditation and Testing.

D. Public-Private Partnerships

Background and context

Ambassador Michalak proposed convening an Advisory Group to examine the issue of Private-Public Partnerships – partnerships between companies and universities – and how they can help ensure that graduating students have the skills needed in Vietnam's developing economy. This Industry Advisory Group should be chaired by the Vietnamese government or universities, which would solicit feedback from Vietnamese and American companies. Vice Minister Long welcomed the efforts by American companies to help improve the development of human capital in Vietnam.

Recommendations

- Establish an advisory group on private-public sector cooperation to identify steps that can be taken immediately to ease the severe shortage of workers and managers with the skills needed to work at American companies in Vietnam.
- To meet the immediate needs of American companies in Vietnam, identify American experts to work with MOET to establish a training school for students after graduation the university to help them acquire the skills needed now, including better English communication, presentation skills, critical thinking skills, and problem solving skills.

For more information, See Appendix – Summary of the Report from Advisory Group 6: Public-Private Partnerships.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between

the Department of State

of the United States of America

and

the Ministry of Education and Training

of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

on

Establishment of an Education Task Force

to Promote Cooperation in Higher Education

The Department of State (DoS) of the United States of America and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, hereafter referred as "the Participants:"

- express their wish to enhance friendship and cooperation in the field of higher education;

- are aware of the importance of higher education in the support of economic development; and

- recognize the importance of public-private sector partnerships between American and Vietnamese universities, colleges, and other organizations that support training and education projects.

In order to develop suggestions on ways to further deepen cooperation with regard to higher education, including contacts between educational institutions, the two Participants intend to establish an Education Task Force.

The Participants intend the Education Task Force to:

1. consider and make recommendations on the future direction of U.S.-Vietnam education cooperation;

2. have a membership not to exceed ten people, with equal representation from each side; and

3. specifically consider and make recommendations about the ways the Participants can:

a) encourage more and deeper linkages and joint programs between American and Vietnamese universities (including Vietnam's suggestion to establish a Vietnam-American University involving American education institutions, and the United States interest in clarifying and simplifying procedures to establish new programs in Vietnam);

b) increase the number of Vietnamese studying at American universities and colleges, especially PhD students (including the United States' initiative to facilitate an increase in the number of Vietnamese students studying in universities in the United States at all levels, and the Vietnamese interest in seeing more Vietnamese receiving United States graduate degrees); and

c) promote educational programs designed to help Vietnamese students acquire the skills needed in Vietnam's modernizing economy.

The Participants expect the Task Force to present a summary of its activities and its preliminary findings to the leaders of the two nations in January 2009.

Signed at Washington, in duplicate, this 25th day of June 2008 in the English and Vietnamese languages.

For the Department of State of the United States of America:

James K. Glassman
Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

For the Ministry of Education and Training of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam:

Pham Vu Luan
Vice Minister of Education and Training

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP 1: ROADMAP TO ESTABLISHING AN AMERICAN-STYLE UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

Chaired by: - Thomas Vallely, Director, Harvard Vietnam Program, Harvard University
- Tran Thi Ha, Director General, Department of Higher Education, MOET

I. Introduction

Advisory Group 1 was asked to comment on the idea expressed in the MOU to establish an "American-style university" in Vietnam. However, in light of the huge demand for reform of educational institutions in Vietnam and the many American higher education institutions interested in pursuing initiatives there, the Advisory Group looked at the prerequisites for successful academic partnerships in Vietnam more broadly, and recommended starting with an American-style college serving undergraduates

II. Towards a Conceptual Framework

A. The Higher Education Ecosystem

Modern society's diverse human capital needs can best be met by a *differentiated system* of higher education composed of institutions defined by reasonably distinct but complementary missions. This "ecosystem" includes: research universities, regional universities (including community colleges), professional schools, and vocational schools. Today, the central objective of Vietnamese education policy, articulated in statements like Resolution 14, is the development of a differentiated system. American institutions can and should be active at every level in support of this objective. The specific strategies adopted in each case will depend upon the type of institution in question and the resources of the American partner(s). The Education Task Force can make an important contribution to higher education reform by recommending some of the forms that U.S.-Vietnam institutional partnerships might take.

B. Governance

Defining governance as "the formal and informal arrangements that allow higher education institutions to make decisions and take action," an effective governance mechanism would help Vietnam's higher education realize appreciable improvements in quality. Key elements of good governance including autonomy, academic freedom, meritocratic selection, accountability to stakeholders, and regular testing of standards.

The Advisory Group observed that support from American universities will have far greater impact if they focus on stewarding a new Vietnamese institution rather than strengthening an existing one. Tsinghua University and the Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur exemplify the power of the former approach while the latter approach can only produce substantive improvements if sufficient freedom of action exists to overhaul governance and incentive structures.

III. Prerequisites for Partnership

The Advisory Group identified the following prerequisites as necessary to effectively link American universities with development of higher education in Vietnam.

A. Ensuring Autonomy and accountability

In order for efforts from U.S. counterparts to succeed when involving in the setting up of the American-style university, the Vietnamese education institutions need more autonomy and accountability. Recent policy statements like Resolution 14 indicate increased assurance of greater autonomy. New institutions have autonomy in their personnel systems and possess the authority to hire, promote, and terminate faculty members and determine how much they are paid. Because the long-term success of any academic institution will hinge on its ability to attract and retain talented Vietnamese scientists and scholars, power over faculty appointments must extend to Vietnamese faculty. Similarly, new institutions must have broad authority over academic requirements and course curricula. At present these issues are being finalized in Vietnamese higher education institutions.

Autonomy must be accompanied by accountability. The Advisory Group suggested considering appropriate mechanisms for ensuring the accountability of new institutions to outside stakeholders including the government and the private sector. The American higher education experience can be fruitfully mined for accountability-creating structures that may be transplanted, with appropriate modification, to Vietnam. One of the most important proofs is the existence of the board of trustees. A Vietnamese university's board of trustees might include representatives of the following stakeholders: government (national and/or local); the Vietnamese intellectual and scientific community; international scholars and scientists; American academic partners; industry and core funders. A set of mission-specific performance indicators should be developed (these might include test results, employment ratios of graduates, faculty publications, etc.) and university leaders should be evaluated by their success in achieving them.

B. New Paradigms of Academic Cooperation

If an American-style university is set up, the Government of Vietnam estimates that the period of engagement from partners would likely last for a decade or more, with the nature and intensity of the their involvement diminishing over time. The unique challenges of institution building in Vietnam will likely require a paradigmatic shift in the way American universities pursue international projects. The Advisory Group observed that, for most American universities, the primary objectives of international activities are creating enriching learning opportunities for students and research opportunities for faculty.

However, building American-style higher education institutions will require a commitment that is larger than individual students and faculty interest. Laying the foundations of a new university will undoubtedly require a great deal of support in administrative and managerial stewardship. For example, designing and assembling the operating systems—administration, finance and accounting, admissions, development, libraries, etc will require that American partners deploy scarce human and institutional resources that are not typically involved in international exchange and outreach.

In Hanoi, the Education Task Force discussed the difficulties of convincing American faculty members to spend time in Vietnam. Creative incentives must be devised to overcome this obstacle. Assembling the Vietnamese faculty that will be the lifeblood of a Vietnamese academic institution will also demand innovative personnel policies: persuading young, foreign trained Vietnamese scientists and scholars to return may require American partners to offer hybrid career paths through dual appointments or incentives such as research fellowships, travel grants, etc.

C. Dispelling Financial Myths

The Education Task Force should dispel two misperceptions about higher education financing. First, it must be made clear that universities cannot achieve quality outcomes and financial sustainability on tuition-based revenue models, as many Vietnamese university business plans assume. Even in the US, tuition accounts for only a portion of university operating budgets; in Vietnam, where the ability to pay is extremely low, tuition revenue will certainly account for an even smaller share of operating expenses. A second financial myth is that US universities will self-finance their participation in institutional development endeavors in Vietnam. With the exception of some profit-oriented programs in fields like business administration and basic IT, reputable American universities will only take part in institutional development projects if they are funded externally in a sustainable fashion. As the global economic downturn squeezes endowments, and other countries in the Gulf and elsewhere lure American universities with lucrative financial packages, the need for realistic funding mechanisms will only grow more acute. The U.S. government is unlikely to provide significant financial support. Realistically, this means that funding will need to be provided by the Vietnamese government through a multilateral lending body like the World Bank or the ADB. With time and a proven track record, funding may be raised from the private and philanthropic sectors.

IV. One Way Forward: The American-style Research College

The Advisory Group offered the idea of an American-style research college for the Education Task Force's consideration because it would address a major—though by no means the only—issue in the Vietnamese higher education system and could have a catalytic impact at the system level.

A. Defining the institution

As noted at the outset, Task Force will need to prioritize where in the higher education ecosystem American universities might focus their efforts. Given the particularly moribund state of undergraduate education, setting up a new institution at this level should be the focus.

At the same time, mindful of the experience of the Indian Institutes of Technology that providing research facilities is critical to attracting talented faculty, the Advisory Group proposed to set up an "American-style research college" that focuses initially on providing a general undergraduate education but could over time become the nucleus of a university with graduate programs and professional schools.

Such a college could have a transformative impact. By providing a quality undergraduate education such a college would provide a flow of skilled technicians and managers to the Vietnamese economy. Its graduates would also be well-prepared for graduate study overseas, and—perhaps most importantly—the college would provide an institutional home for returning Vietnamese scientist and scholars. The impact of an institution like this would be felt far beyond the individuals it educates and employs; as a model of good governance and a healthy competitor, the college would serve as a beacon for change and a model for other Vietnamese universities to learn from and emulate. It could also help to demand or develop high school courses that adequately prepare its entering students.

B. Selecting anchor academic partners

While a consortium of American universities may ultimately participate, in the crucial design and start-up phase, in the interests of efficiency and accountability, one American university should be selected to play the role of lead or anchor partner. This institution would be primarily responsible for designing the institutional blueprints of the new university. It might host a working group or task force composed of interested U.S. institutions and Vietnamese partners. It will be necessary to identify one American university that is willing to play the role of lead or anchor partner in the establishment of the American-style university. Vietnamese colleagues have contacted several universities about this role.

C. Securing anchor financial partners

The American-style research college will require at least one anchor financial partner that is willing to finance the initiative, including the American partner universities. The Vietnamese government should bear primary responsibility for securing the needed financial resources. Funds borrowed by Vietnam from a multilateral institution like the World Bank or the ADB seems to be the most realistic source of funding. However, American and Vietnamese participants might enter into a discussion with private philanthropists and foundations, especially those with an interest in higher education, Vietnam, or development.

V. Conclusion

The objective of this report has not been to offer a blueprint for the establishment of a new institution but rather to consider the basic prerequisites for the success of any institutional development initiative. Representatives from American and Vietnamese universities need to discuss any of the issues raised here in greater detail.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP 2: VIETNAMESE ADVANCED PROGRAM

Chaired by: - Joe Hobbs, Director of the Vietnam Institute, University of Missouri
- Nguyen Thi Le Huong, Deputy Director General, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Training

Introduction

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has established an ambitious set of goals to reform the higher education system. This reform includes a complete renovation of university curricula, with the expectation that improved research and scholarly output will follow.

One of the most significant components of educational reform to date is MOET's "Advanced Program," the goal of which is to transplant curricula from particular American programs into counterpart departments in Vietnam. To date, MOET has given large grants to 9 Vietnamese universities to set up 10 programs in which specific departments or faculties are intended to adopt the curriculum, courses, materials and teaching styles from their American partner universities. This program, which MOET is set to expand, aims to be an effective way to enhance education quality in Vietnamese universities

This report reviews the Advanced Program's concepts, procedures and potential by addressing questions in three key areas: context, goals and principles of future cooperation, and implementation.

The Context

Up to now, after sometime implementing the advanced programs, especially in the areas of engineering, science, basic content of the curricula has been considered rather good to prepare Vietnamese students after their graduation. However, we see an opportunity for improvement industry field related curricula in the 4th year. Our assessment concluded that the curriculum is generally outdated and narrowly focused. Adopting U.S. industry field related curricula in the 4th year would be beneficial.

Implementation situation of the advanced program and lessons learned:

According to MOET these are the objectives and dimensions of the project.

Since late 2005, the first phase of the advanced programs in the disciplines of Sciences, Technology, Business, and Agriculture from high ranking U.S. universities has been implemented at several Vietnam universities with all instruction in English. It is not only the content of the curriculum to be used but also the technology procedure, learning materials, learners' and instructor's evaluation, and management being applied. The facilities of labs, libraries, and classrooms at these universities have been upgraded to

meet the requirements of the programs. Instructors from U.S. universities have been invited to give lectures in a number of disciplines of the programs. Vietnam also sent lecturers to United States for supplementary training in lecturing and management. Several U.S. universities have agreed to award degrees to Vietnamese students pursuing advanced programs; many U.S. education institutions agree to support the quality assurance of the training programs of Vietnam. In late 2007, the 2nd phase with 13 advanced programs at 13 Vietnamese universities began. In addition to U.S. higher education institutions, the second phase also has the participation of U.K. and Australian universities.

Following is the list of Advanced Programs supported by MOET in HEIs in Vietnam:

TT	VN University	Major	University Partner	First Intake
1	Hanoi University of Sciences, VNU Hanoi	Chemistry	University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign	2006-2007
2	Hanoi University of Sciences, VNU Hanoi	Mathematics	University of Washington	2008-2009
3	University of Sciences, VNU HCM City	Computer Science	Portland State University, Oregon.	2006-2007
4	University of Technology, VNU HCM City	Electrical and Computer Engineering (major in Power and Energy System)	University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign	2006-2007
5	University of Information Technology, VNU HCM City	Information System	Oklahoma State's University, USA	2008-2009
6	Cantho University	Biochemistry & Molecular Biology/ Bio-technology Major	Michigan State University	2006-2007
7	Cantho University	Aquaculture	Auburn University, Alabama State	2008-2009
8	Hue University	Physics	University of Virginia	2006-2007
9	The University of Danang	Electronics Engineering	University of Washington	2006-2007
10	The University of Danang	Embeded System	University of Washington	2008-2009

11	Thai Nguyen University	Mechanical Engineering	State University of New York at Buffalo, USA	2008-2009
12	National Economics University	Finance	California State University - Long Beach	2006-2007
13	Hanoi University of Technology	Mechatronics Engineering	California State University - Chico	2006-2007
14	Hanoi University of Technology	Material Science and Engineering	University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign	2006-2007
15	Hanoi University of Technology	Biomedical System Engineering	Duke University – Durham, USA	2008-2009
16	Hanoi University of Agriculture	Plant Science	University of California – Davis	2006-2007
17	Hanoi University of Agriculture	Agricultural Business Administration	University of Wisconsin – Madison, USA	2008-2009
18	The University of Architecture of HCM City	Urban Planning	University of Oxford Brookes, UK University of Hong Kong, Erasmus University of Rotterdam	2008-2009
19	Nong Lam University	Food Science and Technology	UC Davis, USA	2008-2009
20	Water Resources University	Water Resources Engineering	Colorado State University, USA	2008-2009
21	Foreign Trade University	International Economics	Colorado State University, USA	2008-2009
22	University of Transport and Communications	Civil and Transport Engineering	University of Leeds, UK	2008-2009
23	Hanoi Architectural University	Architecture	University of Nottingham, UK	2008-2009

During the implementation of the program, it is observed that:

Student's English language proficiency is not good. Their comprehension seems to be higher than their ability to communicate. If students had better English, they would understand the lectures better, especially taught by native faculties. Vietnamese lecturers' English language proficiency is also limited.

Another aspect that such Advanced Programs should do is to make clear to the students what their future might be. This did not appear to be much emphasized by Vietnamese faculties

One particular worrisome aspect of the program is the lack of funds to equip undergraduate laboratories.

Another issue of great importance is the need to have long term commitment so outputs can be predicted.

Last but not least, the advertisement of Advanced Programs appears to be poorly done. Modern PR techniques could be suggested to the university in charge. In this case, there would be a wider body of students, including those coming from far away.

Difficulties in adopting U.S. curricula and adjustment needed for Vietnam's conditions as well as commitments of the two sides.

The main problem is that there are not enough lecturers who must satisfy both criteria: teach in English and strong capacity (professional knowledge). The second problem is strong investment to build and upgrade labs. There is a fact that the amount of lab courses (practicing) at all Vietnamese universities in general is very low in comparison to the one the U.S. universities. Students do not have enough labs or modern instruments to practice or to master theory courses. Therefore, this results in low capability in doing research for not only students but also academic faculties.

So, for this issue, it is suggested that we should

- Create better environments; give more chances to academic faculties to update their professional knowledge, and improve English skills
- Enable more young lecturers from the Vietnamese universities to be educated with doctorates and postdoctoral positions at well-known international institutions
- Put more investment into building modern labs
- Promote more joint scientific/applied research projects between industry and universities, and between international universities and Vietnamese universities. This is very important to support education tasks and to improve faculty capacity as well as student research abilities.

- *Practical issues to be considered in inviting U.S. professors to teach in Vietnam*

  This is very much related to the issue above. U.S. professors usually just spend 2 weeks (sometimes even 1 week) in Vietnam. This is too difficult for students to master a course (theory, lab, assignments) in too short of a period. However, it is not easy to be solved. U.S. professors are normally very busy with their work at the university. It is not easy for us to find professors for specific courses who want to travel to Vietnam. Furthermore, there is not enough money to pay for invited U.S. professors (as they should earn if they teach at their university). As a compromise solution, we try to find and invite professors who really want to help, and to visit Vietnam, or prefer to have a short holiday in Vietnam to teach for the Advanced Program. In principle, Vietnamese side should pay them airfare, accommodation, living costs and teaching costs. Sometimes, some of professors

just need ask payment for accommodation, per diem or airfare, but not teaching fees.

So for this issue, it is necessary

- to invite more U.S. professors from U.S. funded programs such as scholars in Fulbright, VEF, etc.
- to have them spend at least one month per course at our university
- to have more budget (from MOET, from U.S. support) to pay for the expenses.

Current instructors in the Advanced Program now

It is impossible to operate the Program by inviting 100% U.S. lecturers. Vietnamese professors who are very good in English and professional knowledge are also invited to teach for the program. At present, the ratio between the number of U.S. professors and the number of Vietnamese professors is about 70/30. MOET wants to improve faculty capacity through this program by asking the universities, which are implementing the program, to send their faculties to the U.S. for professional development. Vietnamese universities are encouraged to invite U.S. professors as much as possible at the beginning period of the program. In the meantime, more Vietnamese professors should be trained so they can teach for the program later on.

Goals and Principles of Future Cooperation

The underlined principles for mutually beneficial partnerships in the Advanced Program.

The essential assumption that U.S. university curricula can successfully be transplanted wholesale and instantaneously into the Vietnamese context should be reconsidered carefully. It is probably more appropriate to ask how successful programs in the United States can be *adapted* to the realities and needs of the situation in Vietnam generally, and to the specific settings of the departments, divisions, and universities involved.

The approach of the Advanced Program could be expanded from one to three tracks:

1. In the first track, already in place, American professors can teach some or most of the essential courses in the Vietnamese university. This is effective to the extent that it will help meet the Advanced Program's goals for one class and one term at a time. However, progressing one short course at a time is not the most efficient way to effect change in such a large and diverse country as Vietnam. The second and third tracks thus focus on the critical long-term element of faculty development.

2. The second and perhaps most effective track would be a "train the trainers" approach. In this model, U.S. educators would work with Vietnamese educators to develop and adapt American approaches generally, and specific, selected curricular content. Even a

four week or one semester commitment by an American professor to this effort, working with Vietnamese instructors rather than students, could be far more effective than investing that same time and effort in working directly with students. Another important part of this process is for the American counterpart to help introduce new course materials, methods and even equipment into the Vietnamese system. The culture of research, writing and publication, while not the foremost consideration in this collaborative effort, can be worked in at the same time. In this way, curriculum reform can be one of the essential building blocks of the overall education reform effort in Vietnam, which also aims to address the dearth of scientific research and publication.

3. The third track would facilitate new, and build upon existing, experience by Vietnamese students and faculty in U.S. universities. In addition to the current graduate studies funded by MOET, VEF, Fulbright, etc., there could be a specific funded training initiative for the Advanced Programs, targeting Vietnamese faculty as well as selected students.

The experience in U.S. universities must not be an end in itself. There is abundant evidence that scholars who return to Vietnam with Ph.D.s find little support for their research, either in equipment (for the sciences) or in time (for writing). Thus, many leave academia for other pursuits shortly after returning. This is a serious problem. For this program to accomplish the ultimate goal of improving the quality of research and scholarship, there needs to be systematic follow-up support for returning graduates to fund equipment needs and allocate time for research. These accomplishments will feed back into a stronger curriculum and educational system overall.

English language training -- which has its own prominent place in the Task Force efforts -- is an indispensible element of the curriculum reform effort. It should be built into the process at every level. The temporary transplanting of an American professor into a Vietnamese classroom represents a welcome and very challenging opportunity for the Vietnamese students, but the key to success is helping to create large ranks of Vietnamese professors who are highly proficient in English. MOET already has some of the infrastructure in place for such training, through its partnership with SEAMEO and equivalent organizations. There are many opportunities here, as the Task Force team will elaborate upon.

Particular programs that Vietnam should pay attention to

Regardless of the field of study, the curricula transferred to the Vietnamese context should include foundation courses that will promote critical skills to help the students make better-informed decisions about their own future." Social sciences and humanities should receive special attention, to assist in Vietnam's overall development. MOET may need to dedicate additional funding for these fields.

Implementation

Next necessary steps in adopting U.S. or U.S.-style curricula

At present, the Advanced Program lacks a coordinated, cohesive strategy to help achieve long-term, nationwide higher education reform in Vietnam. It consists of several discrete agreements between particular academic units of each country. It would be best to assemble a bilateral team to draw up a coordinated plan for partnerships and implementation. Team members should work together to enlist the support of the targeted departments and institutions, and map out the appropriate steps.

Here are some recommended procedures. This is a long-term process, in which each step must be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis through formal mechanisms.

Review current curricula of Vietnam: U.S. consultants need to do a thorough assessment of the current curriculum and identify gaps to international standards and then provide solutions to close those gaps. This step requires expert groups to review curricula of different disciplines. These evaluators will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the curricula and propose plans for improvement.

Encourage Vietnamese partners to do their parts. This project can best achieve its goals if Vietnamese partners identify areas of concern and begin to address them; U.S. consultants can provide guidance where appropriate:

- Focus more attention on improving the domestic teaching environment (e.g., by introducing more innovative methods of on-going school based teacher development, reducing teaching hours; developing quality evaluation systems; identifying teachers needing further training; improving library systems to ensure that new resources come on a regular basis; addressing corruption problems; and increasing salaries and salary incentive structures, based on merit).
- Restructure most of the curricula. At present, there are few elective courses; they are all required. During this phase, there can be a focus on developing and improving the base for each discipline, rather than attending to details of the curricula. This will lay the groundwork for more successful implementation of the Advanced Programs.
- Train teachers: The training should focus on motivating instructors to improve their teaching styles and meet the new requirements of the university. New requirements may include visual aids and other teaching resources, reading materials and regular homework assignments, etc. There are several options for teacher training, including apprenticeship abroad and bringing consultants from the United States to Vietnam
- Improve facilities, equipment, and management. There is an essential need in improving equipment and facilities. Perhaps with U.S. assistance, MOET needs to develop annual budgets for managing, maintaining and purchasing new equipment.
- Reevaluate funding procedures and allocations for the Advanced Programs. It is recommended that MOET review the administration of the currently granted programs. Full funding is critical to allow the Vietnamese universities and their respective U.S. counterparts to adequately plan and implement their programs.

Moreover, there is a need to conduct and disseminate evaluation information to the participating Vietnamese and U. S. universities so that adjustments in programs can be made, where necessary. More transparency is needed to ensure that advanced programs jointly conducted by U.S. and Vietnamese institutions are to be most effectively delivered.

Limits in terms of a commitment in human and financial resources from U.S. universities, the U.S. government and/or the business sector in the advanced program.

Vietnamese universities and leaders in MOET express their expectations to have stronger commitments in many aspects, including financial one, for the whole process of program implementation from foreign counterparts.

Some of the fundamental differences between the countries' higher education institutions shed light on why these expectations are not easily realized.

The U.S. university has a merit-based system based on scholarly productivity, with teaching as a regular component of the scholar's activities. Instruction often reflects the scholar's particular research interests and findings. Promotion and tenure are fundamental concerns for every scholar, department, and college. The largest question in contributing American faculty to the Advanced Program is how much the individual's commitment to work in Vietnam will add to or detract from the individual's scholarly progress. Another principal consideration is how to cover the professor's teaching load when he/she is working in Vietnam. Two to four week sessions are not as effective as semester or year-long visits, and for these positions tenured professors will in most cases be the best candidates to work in Vietnam.

With the available and appropriate candidates identified, the major challenge of funding them remains. Each professor can apply for the usual opportunities such as Fulbrights and internal development leave awards. However, this will result in piecemeal participation in the Advanced Programs. A more comprehensive and dedicated funding pool can be made available. The most appropriate sources of funding are the Vietnamese and U.S. governments, with the former providing the majority share.

Domestic and transnational private corporations working in or planning to work in Vietnam should also be consulted to support these education efforts. Emerson Electric and Intel are among the companies already investing in international collaboration in Vietnam's educational system. More joint scientific/applied research projects between industry and universities will provide important support to the education task and improve faculty capacity as well as student research abilities. Intel's Task Force Advisor member appealed that "Industry must be willing to provide capstone projects for student engagement," adding that there must be extensive upgrading of existing laboratories and development of new labs that currently do not exist. Emerson's Advisory Group member reports that such measures are already under consideration:

Emerson supports and sponsors initiatives to develop human resources, and has a successful history in developing programs with universities throughout the world. We see the need to improve the industry field related curricula. Emerson is currently discussing a program with a major university in Vietnam to establish a research center on the campus. The research center will be equipped with Emerson's equipment and technologies, and staffed with Emerson engineers who will work closely with faculty members and students on research projects funded by Emerson through research grants. In addition, Emerson will work closely with the university on curriculum, and is evaluating internship and scholarship programs.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP 3: PH.D. STUDY FOR VIETNAMESE STUDENTS

Chaired by: - Allan E. Goodman, President and CEO, Institute of International Education
- Nguyen Xuan Vang, Director General, Vietnam International Education Development, Ministry of Education and Training

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

- As part of Vietnam's 2020 Strategic Education Plan and efforts to promote the comprehensive reform of its higher education system, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) aims to develop a new generation of high quality faculty for teaching and research. Vietnam is also facing difficulties in reforming its higher education system.
- The Ministry's new higher education agenda has three main components that are essential to addressing these problems: training Ph.D.s in Vietnam, the United States and other countries; improving the curriculum at key universities; and developing a new high quality university based on the U.S. model.
- MOET's plans and programs can build on successful initiatives to promote the U.S.-Vietnam educational exchange, including:
  - The expansion of the Vietnam Fulbright Program, which has enabled over 700 Vietnamese students and scholars to study in the United States since 1992.
  - The Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (FETP), which trains 55-60 Vietnamese mid-level managers in market economics each year.
  - The Vietnam Education Foundation, which has placed 270 Fellows in U.S. Ph.D. programs since 2003.
  - Expanding the number of U.S. English teachers in Vietnam.
  - Numerous linkages between Vietnamese and U.S. universities.
  - Increasing educational advising for Vietnamese citizens interested in studying in the United States.

Within the proposed U.S. Ph.D. initiative:

- MOET proposes that 2,500 Vietnamese Ph.D.s be trained in the United States as part of a larger plan to train 20,000 Ph.D.s, half in Vietnam and half abroad, over ten years.
- The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) currently funds the U.S. study of about 70 Ph.D.s per year, but mostly in the hard sciences. Vietnam is thus asking for U.S. assistance in creating a system to identify U.S. schools and secure cost reductions or find funding for an additional 160 doctoral candidates each year.
- Current Vietnamese programs would fund some or all costs for some of these students.
- Priority fields for faculty development are engineering, technology, sciences, civil engineering, architecture, business and economics.
- Some grantees will be sent overseas to earn master's degrees, depending upon the field of study and the candidates' ability or level of preparation.
- Almost all of the Ph.D. students will be from Vietnamese universities and colleges and will have a letter from their institution stating that they will be recruited as

faculty/staff after graduation. They will be required to work at these universities for 6-12 years. Others will be placed in, or will be assisted in finding, an appropriate position at a higher education institution with the same conditions.

Additional considerations for MOET to enhance program success

- The new program would be ten times the size of the current Vietnamese Student Fulbright Program and three times as large as the Vietnam Education Foundation program. The Advisory Group observes that measures are needed to prepare and produce as many as 10,000 students who could win admission to internationally-competitive Ph.D. programs abroad
- Additional fields of high relevance to Vietnam's future development should be considered, including natural resources, environmental sciences, and education (e.g., higher education administration, curriculum development, educational counseling and psychology, etc.).
- In certain fields, focus should be given to masters level; preparing candidates who will then pursue a Ph.D. in the United States; opportunity cost of training Ph.D. students over a course of four to six years is a long time to get a return on such an investment.
- It will be essential to create a rigorous, open and transparent selection process to identify outstanding candidates whose English competency can be improved through intensive training after selection in-country pre-academic training should also be provided to candidates.
- The visa issued for this program could be a J1 rather than an F1, following the model of the Vietnamese Student Fulbright Program. This would require all grantees to return to Vietnam for at least two years.
- A challenge will be to induce the newly trained Ph.D.s to return to Vietnam. They are most likely to return if they can pursue the research for which they have been trained, and if they can live as middle-class professionals on their academic salaries. Making these conditions possible will require major investments in laboratory faculties, the funding of research projects, and improvements in faculty compensation, teaching loads, and working conditions, while also inspiring the faculty to make a long-term commitment to teaching, research, and service.

Strategic recommendations

- There is a need to clarify the total cost of the initiative, the amount of funding that MOET can provide, and the amount that will be needed from other sources.

- MOET should consider a range of public-private partnerships as it considers how to fund the initiative. There are a growing number of models for collaborative partnerships between academia, government, and business in developing economies.

- It will be critical to understand the unique, decentralized nature of the U.S. system of higher education. These considerations will especially inform whether partnerships are developed with public or private institutions, as well as the feasibility of the cost-share that these institutions are able to provide.

- Given that the 2,500 students attending programs in the United States are part of a larger initiative to train 20,000 total students, and given the assets of the U.S. system of higher education, it will be important to clarify which fields of study will be best pursued in the United States and which in other countries.

- The full range of doctoral-granting institutions in the United States should be considered for eventual placement of grantees. The initiative should build on existing linkages and the development of new ones between U.S. and Vietnamese universities.

- The competition should create an easily accessible application process that uses an online application with detailed instructions and technical support.

- The competitive selection process should be transparent, rigorous, and merit-based with clearly defined eligibility requirements, including:
  - *Statement of Purpose/Commitment to Scholarship:* A compelling statement should outline strong academic objectives, fit with the program goals, and a commitment to scholarship and teaching at the university level.
  - *Academic Potential:* Candidates should possess strong academic credentials based on coursework completed and grades achieved; research, publications, awards, and professional achievements; and a strong writing sample so that reviewers can ascertain the level of preparedness of the student and likelihood of the individual to persist to degree and contribute to the program.
  - *Future Leadership:* The selection committee should provide a strong supporting statement about why each individual was selected and how he or she will ultimately contribute to the goals of the award and the greater good for Vietnam. Strong letters of recommendation from professionals who know the individual very well should also be required.
  - *Standardized Tests:* Candidates should demonstrate strong English language skills based on performance on the TOEFL and verbal scores on the GRE. Strong scores on the GRE are also needed, with exceptionally high scores on the quantitative section of the GRE for all science and technology fields.

- To ensure successful placement in U.S. institutions, following selection, awardees should prepare in English a clear, succinct and articulate statement of purpose to ensure a strong match between the individual's study and research objectives and the faculty in U.S. programs.

- To successfully place individuals at U.S. universities, it will be critical to provide professional advising services and assist the awardees through the preparation, research, and application phases. The process will require early intervention strategies to assist individuals in identifying five to six programs best suited to their needs, as well as to improve English communicative competence and build stronger skill sets in certain academic areas (e.g. quantitative preparation for those entering doctoral business and economic study). Given that competition at the doctoral level in general, and particularly in the biological sciences and professional fields such as business,

public policy and law, is quite high, individuals will need to present the strongest qualifications. Following enrollment, ongoing monitoring of academic progress will be essential.

- In order to prepare the high number of students who will attend Ph.D. programs in the U.S., it might be necessary for MOET to launch a comprehensive national initiative that brings even more native English speakers to Vietnam as TOEFL instructors.

- A realistic estimate of sponsor funding is also vital. In many doctoral programs, tuition costs decline dramatically after the individual has completed required coursework. In addition, it is anticipated that a number of institutions would provide institutional cost-sharing, which could include tuition and fee awards, as well as assistantships and fellowships. Currently an estimated average cost-share of $15,000 per individual can be anticipated but this will vary dramatically based on field and institution. Types of counterpart university funding could include:
  - Tuition awards, both full and partial, for the first two years of study.
  - Additional support for living expenses, conferences, or research.
  - Assistantships throughout the doctoral course of study.
  - Research Fellowships in the final years of study.

- Accessing many forms of financial support, such as Teaching Assistantships, will heighten the need for admitted students to have a high level of English proficiency, as well as a command of their field, in order to teach undergraduate students.

- The Advisory Group recommends that MOET consider instituting a system—possibly in the form of summer institutes—that promotes ongoing circulation and interaction between the Ph.D. students and academic life in Vietnam. One possible approach would be to have professors from participating U.S. institutions teach summer institutes in Vietnam, with the Vietnamese Ph.D. candidates involved as students and teaching assistants. This would also raise standards and contribute to the reform of the Vietnamese higher education system.

- MOET might consider ways that the faculty trained through the program can maintain their connection with research and academic life in the United States, so that the required 6 to 12-year commitment to teaching in Vietnam does not seem like a disincentive to participating in the program. One option could include providing faculty with the opportunity to return to the United States for a year of research after serving five years at a Vietnamese institution.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP 4: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Chaired by: - Anthony (Bud) Rock, Vice President for Global Engagement, Arizona State University
- Tran Ba Viet Dzung, Director General, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Education and Training

The Importance of English Language Skills to Vietnam

English is widely perceived to be a global language. In his book, English as a Global Language, Crystal (1997, Cambridge University Press), points out that "A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country." Around the world English is serving in one of four capacities: a native language, a priority foreign language, an official language, and/or a language of professional, academic, and scientific discourse. In regard to the later, David Nunan (2003, TESOL Quarterly) says that "English is currently the undisputed language of science and technology" and refers to the study of applied linguists who note that in a wide variety of specific disciplines English appears to be the universal language for communication, journals, and academia.

Vietnam needs a workforce that is able to communicate in the global language of business, technology, and science. As Vietnam welcomes more international companies and continues on its trajectory of engaging in the global economy, employees will need the necessary English language skills to compete and advance and this applies specifically to technical and managerial staff.

If there is, in fact, considerable need in Vietnam for English language skills, has English as a global language been recognized and manifested in Vietnam? According to a 2003 comparison of English language education in seven Asian Pacific Countries (China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam), Vietnam lagged significantly behind in terms of frequency of instruction and the grade level at which English is introduced as a compulsory subject. Although there is a growing awareness in Vietnam of the need for "communicative" English language skills, the prevailing practice appears to be a grammar, reading, and memorization approach in public schools.

The Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam has developed a project entitled "*Renovating and Upgrading the Effectiveness of Teaching and Using English in Vietnam's National Education System"* with an ambitious goal of making English an advantage for Vietnamese people so they can integrate proactively in the regional and international economy, and Vietnam's human resources competitiveness would be enhanced in the next 10 years. This would mean that Vietnam goes from last place in seven-country comparison of English language skills to a place of prominence and high achievement.

Vietnam's Five Recommendations

1. Establish Vietnamese Centers for Excellence in English Education at Vietnamese Universities

1.1. These Centers of Teaching Excellence serve many purposes, including

a. Providing teacher-training programs for High School, Middle School and Elementary School teachers
b. Offering graduate degrees in TESOL, Linguistics, and Applied Linguistics
c. Arranging/hosting regional conferences for English Teachers
d. Alternating the arranging and hosting of an annual national English language teachers conference in Vietnam
e. Introducing new teaching methodologies in the country

1.2. Create an English Language Teacher Network for Secondary School Teachers in Every Province of Vietnam

a. To network teachers and activities and to organize teacher training workshops
b. To establish language clubs for teachers, including Reading Circles, Conversation Clubs, Movie and Discussion Clubs, etc.
c. To Introduce new English language teaching methodologies
d. To assist subject teachers in curriculum development and material selection for teaching subjects such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Computer Science in English
e. To promote curriculum renovation and material design, selection, and adaptation

2. Send Vietnamese Lecturers to the United States for Professional Development

2.1. Send 20 Ph.D. candidates to the United States every year for the next 10 years

a. For intensive English language study in University IEPs
b. To departments in American Universities in areas such as
    - Linguistics and Applied Linguistics
    - English Language Acquisition
    - Curriculum Instruction and Design

2.2. Send Vietnamese Lecturers who teach in Advance Programs in English to the United States

a. To participate in 16-week intensive English language programs at American Universities
b. To meet counterparts for research and presentations

2.3. Send Young Superstar Professors to Universities in the United States

a. To meet counterparts for research and presentations in English
b. To participate in 16-week programs to develop English Language skills and teaching methodology.

3. Renovate English Language Teaching Pedagogy, Curriculum and Testing

3.1. Renovate English language Teaching Pedagogy, Curriculum and Testing

a. New English teaching pedagogy must be developed to include workplace engagement practice
b. Continue to advance Communicative Language Teaching
c. Emphasize communicative language use in University entrance examinations

3.2. Lower the grade level and age at which English is introduced as a compulsory subject in schools

3.3. Increase the frequency of hours of English language instruction in schools

3.4. Reduce class size for English language instruction at all levels

3.5. Create minimum TOEFL Requirements for Admission at Vietnamese Universities where English is the language of instruction

a. Graduate Students (80 iBT/213 CBT/550 PBT)
b. Undergraduate Students (61 iBT/133 CBT/500 PBT)

3.6. Create minimum TOEFL Requirements for Concurrent Enrollment at Vietnamese Universities where English is the language of Instruction and where an Intensive ESL program exists

a. Graduate Students (71 iBT/197 CBT/ 527 PBT)
b. Undergraduate Students (53 iBT/ 153 CBT/477 PBT)

4. Send Professionals to IEPs in the United States to Study English for Specific Purposes

a. Vietnamese Nurses to learn English and international medical standards for new International hospitals that will be built in Vietnam as international investment and international employees increase
b. Vietnamese Pilots and Mechanics to learn and improve Aviation English
c. Vietnamese Engineers to practice and improve English for Science and Technology

5. Develop, Purchase, and Promote On-line ESL Products

5.1 Develop, Purchase, and Promote On-line ESL products

a. Podcasts, websites,
b. On-line training
c. ESL websites
d. Inexpensive one-to-one training via SKYPE and other face to face and voice to voice technology
e. ESL chat rooms

5.2 Develop, Expand, and Promote English Programs on National TV and Radio

a. English language teaching on TV and Radio for all audiences.
b. Music and Film with English subtitles on VTV.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP 5: ACCREDITATION AND TESTING

Chaired by: - Tom VanEssen, Executive Director, Research Department, English Testing Services (ETS)
- Tran Van Nghia, Deputy Director General, Department of Testing and Education Quality Accreditation, MOET

The goal of accreditation is to provide quality assurance and quality improvement. An informed, objective assurance of quality is necessary for the prudent allocation of funds to higher education institutions from the government, foundations, corporations, and other sources. Such quality assurance is also necessary for students enrolling in those institutions; for companies, government agencies and other entities that hire the graduates of those institutions; and for the public at large. Accreditation does not provide a ranking of institutions, but to encourage universities to provide an assurance of training quality, and to meet set objectives.

Creating an effective, objective, academic-based system of accreditation of higher education in Vietnam is a critical component of the process of improving Vietnamese higher education to serve the nation's goals and to position Vietnamese higher education to compete effectively among the well-developed systems of higher education worldwide. The United States has a lot of experience in higher education accreditation, from which Vietnam can learn and adapt in the development of its own higher education accreditation and quality assessment system.

<u>Properties of a U.S. Model Accreditation System</u>

1) A voluntary, non-governmental accreditation process in which judgments about institutional and program quality are based on informed and objective academic peer-reviewed assessments. This process requires a structure of accrediting agencies and a coordinating body that oversees the operation of those agencies. Within the U.S., that coordinating function is served by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

2) A recognition process that identifies accreditation agencies capable of carrying out the above accreditation process. In the US, accreditation is a strictly voluntary, non-governmental activity of the academic community, but the recognition function that designates agencies authorized to conduct accreditation is carried out in the public sector by the federal government and in the private sector by the academic community. Within the academic community, CHEA is the coordinating body that oversees the recognition and operation of accrediting agencies; the U.S. Department of Education carries out the government's recognition role.

3) Policies that stipulate the roles and responsibilities of, and the relationships among, the federal government, the academic coordinating body, and the accrediting agencies.

4) Policies that stipulate the relationships between accrediting agencies and the institutions they accredit.

5) Standards of accreditation that clearly specify the standards on which institutions will be judged and the basis on which accreditation will or will not be granted.

In order to develop an accreditation system in Vietnam, creating conditions to enhance higher education accreditation, some version of the following steps would be necessary:

1) CHEA would be the right organization to coordinate the U.S. engagement in the cooperative effort to build the Vietnamese accreditation system, drawing from its staff, from accrediting agencies, and from colleges and universities as appropriate. Vietnam could designate a group of officials to work with the US group in the implementation process.

2) As a first step, the two groups could work jointly to design the structure of the accreditation system and the necessary documents that would implement and guide the operation of the system. The Vietnamese group could prepare documents, and the US group could provide advice and guidance in helping shape the documents to achieve the desired result.

3) Two broad categories of training would be required:

   - Training officials to create and manage the accrediting bodies that would operate the accrediting system,

   - Training academic administrators and faculty to conduct the peer-reviewed accreditation process.

4) Funding necessary to carry out these activities would have to be identified.

Conclusion: This proposal includes only the basic dimensions of cooperative U.S./Vietnamese collaboration in building a Vietnamese accreditation system. Many aspects of the implementation plan based on this proposal clearly still need to be developed.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP 6: PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Coordinated by: - Rick Howarth, General Manager, Intel Products, Vietnam
- Nguyen Van Ngu, Director General, Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Education and Training

It is necessary to improve the quality of human resources to support Vietnam's open door policy and international economic integration, and to meet the needs of international companies operating in Vietnam.

Graduates from Vietnamese universities are strong in theory but lack practical skills and experience. Closer partnerships between universities and industry will help universities upgrade their training programs, give students more practical experience, strengthen their skills, and enable them to secure good jobs after graduation.

A number of American companies, such as Cisco, Intel Vietnam and GE, have supported improvements in human resources by providing career advice, leadership programs, joint training programs with universities, and programs to train trainers. They have also provided internships to help students become better acquainted with business environments and build essential skills.

Recommendations

In addition to strengthening the linkages between universities and enterprises, universities in Vietnam should also:

1. Update curriculums and training programs. Ensure that programs maintain a suitable balance between theory and practice and provide practical experience, perhaps through internships at industries.
2. Improve English language standards.
3. Encourage university students intending to work in industry to work on industry problems as part of their curriculum.
4. Improve remuneration for university professors and ensure they are promoted based on quality of teaching versus quantity of courses taught.
5. Institute an independent Higher Education Accreditation Program.
6. Build up university infrastructure and facilities to provide better studying environments and conditions.

Specific recommendations to encourage U.S. business to improve their relationships with Vietnamese universities:

1. MOET should convene an annual conference with key industry partners to seek input on industry's needs.
2. In terms of technology usage, MOET should consider working with MIC (Ministry of Information and Communications) to review IT implementation and

draft plans for a national education network. Students should be exposed to technology and tools as early as possible.

3. Launch more joint programs between universities and industry to give students the opportunity to apply theory to practical problems in a modern business environment.