



MOET



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE U.S. AND VIETNAM

CONFERENCE REPORT

**Hanoi, Vietnam
January 14-15, 2010**

Contents

Executive Summary

Remarks by Ambassador Michael W. Michalak

Summary of Sessions

Press Conference

**Organized by the U.S. Embassy, Hanoi,
Vietnam National University, Hanoi,
and the Ministry of Education and Training**

With Special Thanks to:



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Results on Specific Sessions	4
Conference Report	5
Welcome Remarks by Professor Mai Trong Nhuan,	6
Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Michael W. Michalak	8
Conference Schedule	12
Grouping of Breakout Sessions	22
Summary of Plenary Session	24
SESSIONS A: Creating American Style Universities in Vietnam.....	26
1-A Government of Vietnam Licensing Requirements for New Universities	26
2-A Launching and Operating New Universities in Vietnam: Experience and Outlook ..	28
3-A International Universities – Which Model is Best for Vietnam.....	30
4-A Accreditation Issues and How the U.S. Can Help	32
5-A Academic Freedom and Autonomy at Vietnamese Universities	34
SESSIONS B: Promoting Development of Vietnamese Universities and Colleges	37
1-B Raising English Language Proficiency in Vietnamese Higher Education – The American Role	37
2-B University-Private Sector Partnerships: The Role for American and Vietnamese Companies, Part- I.....	38
3-B University-Private Sector Partnerships: The Role for American and Vietnamese Companies, Part- II.....	41
4-B Building Partnerships in Higher Education Through Associations	43
5-B U.S.-Vietnamese Cooperation in Developing Soft Skills (Leadership, Teamwork and Analytic Abilities)	44
SESSIONS C: Increasing the Number of Vietnamese Studying in The U.S.	48
1-C Student Perspectives on Preparing Vietnamese Students for Study in The U.S.	48
2-C Attracting and Integrating Returning Vietnamese MA’s and PhD’s into Vietnamese Universities and Research Institutes	50
3-C U.S. Government Educational Programs in Vietnam	52
4-C The Student Visa Application Process: Myths and Realities	54
5-C The Role of Community College Programs in Promoting American-Style Education	57
SESSIONS on Joint Programs in Specific Subjects.....	60
6-A Information Technology Programs	60
6-B Science Programs	61
6-C Economics Programs	63
6-D Education Programs.....	65

6-E Social Work Programs	66
6-F Medical Programs.....	68
7-A Engineering and Technology Programs	70
7-B Environmental Programs	71
7-C Business Programs	72
7-D Short-Term Intensive Executive Leadership Programs.....	74
7-E Programs in the Humanities and Social Sciences	75
7-F Agricultural Programs	77
Press Conference on January 15, 2010	78

***BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE U.S. AND VIETNAM***

**Melia Hotel, Hanoi, Vietnam
January 14–15, 2010**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Education Conference – organized by the U.S. Mission in Vietnam, Vietnam National University, Hanoi and the Ministry of Education and Training – brought together more than 600 American and Vietnamese educators (from more than 250 educational institutions and companies with education programs in Vietnam) for discussions on ways to reach key goals identified in the Final Report released by the U.S.-Vietnam Education Task Force. Those goals included systemic reform of the Vietnamese educational system, especially at the tertiary level, establishing an American-style university in Vietnam, creating more and deeper linkages between American and Vietnamese universities, and increasing the number of Vietnamese studying at American universities and colleges. The Education Conference was one of several initiatives the Mission is implementing to support those goals.

The Conference included 15 breakout sessions focused on those same goals: "Creating American-Style Universities in Vietnam;" "Promoting Development of Vietnamese Universities and Colleges – How the U.S. Can Help"; and "Increasing the Number of Vietnamese Studying in the U.S."

The Conference also included a Plenary Session on "The Impact of Vietnamese and American Collaboration on the Development of Higher Education in Vietnam" and another dozen breakout sessions designed to promote more and deeper joint programs between American and Vietnamese colleges and universities in areas such as information technology, economics, and the environment.

U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Michael W. Michalak, Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan, Minister of Education and Training Pham Vu Luan, President of Vietnam National University Mai Trong Nhuan and Deputy Consul General Angela R. Dickey offered remarks during the Opening Ceremony. Standing Vice-Minister for the Ministry of Education and Training Pham Vu Luan offered remarks during the Plenary Session. As during the previous two conferences, which took place in December 2007 and January 2009, representatives from all major universities in Vietnam as well as more than 130 American universities and companies participated:

	American	Vietnamese	Total
Universities and Colleges	77	104	181
NGO's	21	4	25
Companies	35	30	65
Officials	5	5	10
Misc.			21
Grand Total	138	143	302

Each conference session was presided over by at least one American and one Vietnamese speaker. The American speakers represented a wide range of institutions of higher learning (e.g. California State University System, Loyola University Chicago, Portland State University, Arizona State University, Texas Tech University, Harvard University, George Washington University, Michigan State University, New Mexico State University, Temple University, College of Staten Island-CUNY and Houston Community College) as well as companies with active educational programs in Vietnam (e.g. Intel, GE and Cisco Systems).

In addition to Ambassador Michalak, speakers from the U.S. Government included Department of State's Educational and Cultural Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Alina Romanowski and officers from USAID and the Vietnam Education Foundation. Other speakers represented the Association of American Universities (AAU), the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Institute of International Education (IIE).

Ambassador Michalak hosted two evening receptions to acknowledge his appreciation for the companies who made this conference possible with their financial support; to thank the presenters who run the sessions; and to offer the participants an opportunity to interact in an informal setting.

The two-day Education Conference had an impressive turnout from the Vietnamese academic community and from the American academic, corporate, and NGO sectors. Through intense discussion in more than 30 breakout sessions, this Conference enabled co-sponsoring and participating organizations to discuss many important education goals.

In general, the Conference allowed the Embassy to deepen its relationship with Vietnam National University, Hanoi, and the Ministry of Education and Training. For Ambassador Michalak, it was especially significant to have a chance to work with newly-appointed Standing Vice Minister Pham Vu Luan for the first time. Ambassador Michalak also thanked Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Thien Nhan and MOET, and President Mai Trong Nhuan and Vietnam National University, Hanoi for their excellent cooperation in organizing and carrying out this Conference.

RESULTS ON SPECIFIC SESSIONS

University-Private Sector Partnerships: American and Vietnamese companies
Intel and General Electric presented examples of their programs to improve the quality of instruction at Vietnamese universities. They accomplished this by training faculty and teachers, equipping laboratories, and providing scholarships for Vietnamese students. Intel also described its program at Portland State University where it trains engineering students so that they will have the skills needed to work at Intel after graduation.

The Challenge in English Teaching/Learning

The presenter emphasized the importance of “Learn a little, use it a lot!” as opposed to the prevalent practice of “Learn a lot, use it so little!” Other problems identified were “Too much teaching to the tests” while “results, so far are poor.”

U.S.-VN Cooperation in Developing Soft Skills

A participant exclaimed, “Why is leadership considered a soft skill? In my opinion, leadership is a hard skill.” All participants then agreed that leadership is a skill which can and must be learned if Vietnamese organizations are to flourish in the future.

Accreditation Issues

The participants identified a cultural difference which can affect the prospects for accreditation in Vietnam. U.S. and Vietnamese participants debated the role of accreditation. A U.S. representative said: “U.S. accreditation is based on: a) meeting minimum standards set by independent agencies and b) independent critique and continuous improvement”. The Vietnamese counterpart responded “GVN is actively promoting internal quality assurance (QA) with the goal of establishing external accreditation bodies plus QA standards.” A fascinating discussion on accreditation challenges in Vietnam ensued, with a U.S. presenter stressing year-long critique and self-assessment by all institutions and a Vietnamese participant advocating a slower, step-by-step process.

Academic Freedom and Autonomy at Vietnamese Universities

Dr. Pham Thi Ly pointed out that “Any attempts to impose Western viewpoints – without understanding the ‘root of Asian culture’ - will not succeed.” Presenters and participants then discussed the value of academic freedom.

U.S. Government Education Programs

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs Alina Romanowski laid out various education initiatives of the Obama Administration and described its plans for education exchanges with other countries, including Vietnam.

International Universities and Which Model is Best for the Future?

Presenters and participants debated which university model would best be applied to Vietnam’s unique environment. Vietnamese participants expressed their concern about preserving fundamental Vietnamese values before starting a discussion on new education models.

Conference Report

This report is primarily a summary of discussions and recommendations raised during the conference. While not an official U.S. Government or Government of Vietnam document, our intent was to make the ideas from the conference available to the broadest range of interested parties.

WELCOME REMARKS

Welcome Remarks by Professor Mai Trong Nhuan, President Vietnam National University, Hanoi

*His Excellency Prof. Dr. Nguyễn Thiện Nhân, Deputy Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Minister of Education and Training,
His Excellency Mr. Michael Michalak, Ambassador of The United States of America to Vietnam,
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,*

First of all, on behalf of Vietnam National University, Hanoi, co-organizer of the Conference, I would like to warmly welcome distinguished guests, participants to the Conference “Building Partnerships in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges for the US and Vietnam”. Your presence today is a vivid example of the fruitful collaboration between Vietnam and U.S. universities and shows the importance of our Conference.

We have entered the final year of the 21st century, the first century of the era of intellectual civilization, knowledge-based economy, and globalization. The development realities in Vietnam, in the USA and in many countries of the world have been creating many opportunities and favorable conditions; at the same time they have presented our universities with new demands and challenges. Today, science and technology have become not only the direct forces of production but also the main energy for the development of all nations. And more importantly, the quicker the change in scientific knowledge, the shorter the life cycle of the technologies.

For the reasons mentioned above, universities must reformulate their education philosophy and their missions. They must restructure not only the curriculum, the content of teaching, the mode of training but also the model of governance in order to provide the best educational, scientific and technological products, meeting the demands of each nation and of all nations of the world. Seen from this point of view, universities are not only the place to impart knowledge but also the one to solve complex problems imposed upon by the development realities of each country and its people. This is the basis for the suggestion of a new development strategy – a university-based development strategy.

Furthermore, it is obvious in the era of globalization that there are many problems which demand that they be realized and solved on a global scale. For this reason, each university should possess an international level of academic thinking as well as an international level of cultural vision. Today, increase in cooperation in education, science and technology, and in cultural exchanges between universities in the world has become a crucial point in the development strategy of each university, particularly with those universities in the countries which have different levels of development, and different educational and cultural traditions.

Education in general and higher education in particular have always been the top concern of the Vietnamese State and the Vietnamese people. Articles 35 and 37 of the

WELCOME REMARKS

Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have clearly stated that development of education and development of science and technology are “the nation’s top priority”. The Vietnamese Government has also taken many measures to realize the goal: *by 2020, the Vietnamese higher education will strive to reach the advanced level of regional standard, moving forward to the advanced level of international standard, with high competitiveness, and suitable to the socialist-oriented market mechanism.*

As the largest and the leading tertiary institution in Vietnam, Vietnam National University, Hanoi has been the pioneer in implementing the missions assigned by the Vietnamese Communist Party and the Vietnamese Government in education, science and technology and in renovating university governance. We have successfully renovated our curriculum, changing the traditional curriculum into the credit-based one. We have carried out successfully the Advanced Program – one of MOET’s breakthrough solutions to improving the quality of higher education. We have successfully carried out a number of international standard programs such as VNU, Hanoi’s Honor Programs and VNU-Hanoi’s Strategic Program, serving as the firm foundation for building international standard schools and universities. To fulfill these very important tasks, we have considered international cooperation as one of the top priorities and have developed training and research partnerships with over one hundred prestigious tertiary and research institutions in the world, including those in the USA such as Brown University, Indiana University, Illinois University at Urbana-Champaign, Turf University, etc.

We highly appreciate the brilliant initiative by MOET and the American Embassy in Vietnam in organizing this conference. I hope that the conference today will bring the cooperation between the Vietnamese higher education and the American higher education to a higher level of effectiveness. And as you may be aware of, MOET is determined to establish four public universities of international standard. We really need a university model which possesses both modernity and national culture and national identity. I do believe that with your profound knowledge and expertise, you, the leading higher educational experts in both countries, will bring new ideas to the topics of the conference and will help MOET as well as universities to formulate an appropriate model of an advanced university deeply imbued with Vietnamese national characteristics.

Last but not least, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to His Excellency Prof. Dr. Nguyễn Thiện Nhân, Deputy Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Minister of Education and Training; His Excellency Mr. Michael Michalak, American Ambassador to Vietnam and all of you for your strong support and effective cooperation so far. We highly appreciate and wish to receive more new ideas for developing further the effective and sustainable partnership between Vietnam and the US. Our sincere thanks go to the Organizing Committee, sponsors and everyone who made great efforts for the success of our Conference.

For the New Year 2010, also 1000 years’ celebration of Hanoi, I would like to wish all of you good health and great success for our conference.

Thank you for your attention!

WELCOME REMARKS

Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Michael W. Michalak

His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Thien Nhan
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Training

His Excellency Mr. Pham Vu Luan
Standing Vice Minister, Ministry of Education and Training

Dr. Mai Trong Nhuan
President, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Honored Conference Participants –

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen!

It is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome you to this important Conference – *Building Partnerships in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges for the U.S. and Vietnam.*

I want to say how pleased I am to see so many people who recognize the importance of educational partnerships between America and Vietnam to help meet the educational needs of Vietnam.

I have been told that more than 600 people have registered for the Conference, representing more than 250 educational institutions and companies with educational programs.

This Education Conference is the latest in a series of steps taken since I started my tour in Vietnam to strengthen education cooperation between the U.S. and Vietnam. When I arrived in Vietnam two and a half years ago, I wanted to carry out my promise to double the numbers of students going to the U.S. and to move quickly to respond to Prime Minister Dung's and President Triet's requests for American assistance to help Vietnam train its next generation and modernize its educational system.

To determine just how the U.S. could best help Vietnam, I organized a conference in 2008 that brought together the many American organizations working here in education. From that gathering, we all learned much more about the activities that American organizations in Vietnam were already engaged in to promote education.

In 2009, we organized a Conference in Ho Chi Minh City that brought together almost 400 American and Vietnamese educators for discussions on how they could deepen their joint programs and partnerships. Many new educational partnerships were formed as a result of that event.

Since then, the U.S.-Vietnam Education Task Force composed of senior representatives from the governments, higher education communities, and businesses from both

WELCOME REMARKS

countries, released its Final Report. That Report identified eight priority areas in which our two governments could cooperate – and could encourage cooperation among American and Vietnamese educators – in order to reach three key education goals.

This Conference, by bringing together a large number of American and Vietnamese educators for two days of intense discussions, will help us progress toward those key goals identified by the Task Force.

First, this Conference will enable us to move toward the goal of establishing American-style universities in Vietnam in several ways:

- a) By giving the Ministry of Education and Training the opportunity to describe the licensing process for new universities, making that process clearer to all who are interested in setting up a new university or branch of their university;
- b) By giving those already engaged in establishing new universities the chance to describe their experiences, and by giving everyone the chance to discuss which model for American or international universities might be best for Vietnam;
- c) The Conference also provides a forum for discussion of issues of key importance to academics who might be interested in working at new universities in Vietnam – specifically, the subjects of autonomy, and the related issue of accreditation.

Understanding just how important these issues are for American and other international educators is essential if Vietnam is to create the conditions that will attract American participation in American-style or international-style universities in Vietnam. I know that MOET wants to have in place a system of accreditation to ensure the quality of Vietnamese universities. The independent accreditation system in the U.S. works well to ensure the quality of American universities and colleges, and I am pleased to see a session at this Conference focused on how the U.S. can share experiences and perhaps establish a similar system in Vietnam. Finally, in the U.S. Mission we will do all we can to help MOET recruit American administrators and faculty and we hope that MOET will do its part to establish the autonomy that universities need to convince their managers to set up here.

Second, this Conference will help improve tertiary level education in Vietnam in several ways:

- a) By enabling American and Vietnamese universities with existing joint programs to meet for discussions on how to expand and deepen these programs, and by bringing together institutions interested in establishing new programs, which will bring greater use of international and especially American world class curricula, teaching materials and educational practices to Vietnamese universities.

WELCOME REMARKS

- b) Through presentations on ways that corporations and businesses can work with universities to improve curricula, train faculty, fund scholarships, provide internships, and offer future employment possibilities.
- c) Through presentations and discussions on how educational associations can help build partnerships, and how these partnerships can promote development of soft skills such as improved English language competency, leadership, teamwork, and analytic and problem-solving abilities.

Third, this Conference can help increase the number of Vietnamese studying in the U.S. This is a goal toward which we have already made substantial progress. There are now almost 13,000 Vietnamese students in the U.S. – a number almost three times the number three years ago, and almost four times the number four years ago. Vietnam is now the ninth largest sender of students to the U.S. All of us in this room can take pride in that accomplishment.

This Conference can help increase that number even more in several ways:

- a) By discussing how to strengthen the role that community colleges play in promoting American-style education;
- b) By talking about what can be done to ensure that students are even more prepared for study in the U.S. before they leave;
- c) And last, but maybe most important, by talking about how best to integrate returning Vietnamese with Master's Degrees and PhD's into Vietnamese universities.

Well, enough about educational substance. Let me get into recognizing the hard work of our friends and colleagues!

I want to thank the Co-Organizers of this Conference – Vietnam National University, Hanoi, and the Ministry of Education and Training – who worked hard with the U.S. Mission to organize this Conference. At the Ministry of Education and Training, of course, I want to thank His Excellency Nguyen Thien Nhan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Training, for honoring us with his welcome remarks today, as well as others at the Ministry, especially His Excellency Mr. Pham Vu Luan, for their work to make this Conference possible.

At Vietnam National University, thanks to President Dr. Mai Trong Nhuan, Vice President Dr. Vu Minh Giang and Dr. Nguyen Thi Anh Thu, Director, International Relations Department, for their good ideas and hard work.

I also want to thank Deputy Assistant Secretary Alina Romanowski, for coming all the way from Washington to participate in this Conference. She will have much to say about U.S. government educational programs in Vietnam.

WELCOME REMARKS

We all should thank the speakers and moderators who have invested considerable time in preparing presentations and, in many cases, travelled considerable distances to attend the conference. As in the Conference last year, I trust that speakers will keep their remarks short so that there will be plenty of time for many people to participate in the discussions following their presentations.

No conference welcome could be completed without thanking the sponsors. Without their generous support, this Conference simply could not have taken place.

Key sponsors include:

- Adam Sitkoff and AmCham
- Larry Mercado and CleverLearn
- Mark Harris and English Language Service
- Stu Dean and General Electric
- Mark Deere and the Hilton Opera Hotel
- Daniel Fraley and the Institute of International Education
- Rick Howarth and Intel
- Jocelyn Tran and MAST Industries
- Morton Anderson and the Melia Hotel
- Tung Ho and Oracle
- And, the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and USAID, which provided really big contributions.

My heartiest thanks to these individuals and organizations because, again, without their generous contributions this Conference would not have been possible.

I know that all of the participants are investing considerable time and resources to attend this Conference and I am really, truly grateful for your coming, and hope that you will find the discussions to be informative, productive, and enjoyable. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to help reach Vietnam educational goals.

Thank you very much.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE U.S. AND VIETNAM

*Hanoi * Melia Hotel * January 14–15, 2010*

Conference Schedule

Thursday, January 14, 2010	
8:30 – 9:00	Opening Ceremony Professor Mai Trong Nhuan President, Vietnam National University, Hanoi His Excellency Dr. Nguyen Thien Nhan Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education and Training His Excellency Ambassador Michael W. Michalak U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam
9:00 – 10:15	Plenary Session: Vietnamese and American Collaboration on the Development of Higher Education in Vietnam His Excellency Dr. Pham Vu Luan Standing Vice Minister, Ministry of Education and Training Steve Maxner Director, Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University; Chairman of the Board, Vietnam Education Foundation Vu Minh Giang Vice President, Vietnam National University, Hanoi Nguyen Duc Nghia Vice President, Vietnam National University, HCMC
10:15 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:00	Breakout Session 1: Session 1A: Government of Vietnam Licensing Requirements for New Universities Tran Thi Ha Director General, Higher Education Department, Ministry of Education and Training

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

	<p>Session 1B: Raising English Language Proficiency in Vietnamese Higher Education – The American Role</p> <p>Mark Rentz Director, American English and Culture Program, Arizona State University</p> <p>John Scacco Regional English Language Officer, U.S. Embassy Bangkok</p> <p>Nguyen Hoa President, Hanoi University of Language and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi</p> <hr/> <p>Session 1C: Student Perspectives on Preparing Vietnamese Students for Study in the U.S.</p> <p>Nguyen Xuan Vang Director General, Vietnam International Education Development, Ministry of Education and Training</p> <p>Khoa Pham Founder, VietAbroad Organization</p> <p>Hai Nguyen California State University, Long Beach</p> <p>An Vo Mount Holyoke College</p> <p>Hoang Tuan Dung Business Development Manager, Business and Marketing Organization, Microsoft Vietnam</p>
12:00 – 1:15	Lunch Provided
1:15 – 2:30	<p>Breakout Session 2:</p> <p>Session 2A: Launching and Operating New Universities in Vietnam: Experiences and Outlook</p> <p>Laurence Roberts Dean, International Education, Utica College</p> <p>Dang Thi Hoang Yen Chairman, Tan Tao University Project</p>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

	<p>Tran Huu Nghi President, Hai Phong Private University</p> <p>Madame Ton Nu Thi Ninh President, Founding Committee, Tri Viet International University Project</p>
	<p>Session 2B: University-Private Sector Partnerships: The Role for American and Vietnamese Companies, Part I</p> <p>Gil Latz Vice Provost for International Affairs, Portland State University</p> <p>Rick Howarth General Manager, Intel Products, Vietnam</p> <p>Doan Quang Vinh Vice Rector, Da Nang University of Technology</p> <hr/> <p>Session 2C: Attracting and Integrating Returning Vietnamese MAs and PhDs into Vietnamese Universities and Research Institutes</p> <p>Lynne McNamara Executive Director, Vietnam Education Foundation Ministry of Science and Technology Officials</p> <p>Trinh Thang Center for Support of Social Development Programs</p>
2:30 – 3:00	Break
3:00 – 4:15	<p>Breakout Session 3:</p> <p>Session 3A: International Universities – Which Model is Best for Vietnam</p> <p>Kathryn Mohrman Director, University Design Consortium, Arizona State University</p> <p>Michael Mann Managing Director, Laureate Education Asia, Ltd.</p> <p>Bui Van Ga President, Da Nang University</p> <hr/>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

	<p>Session 3B: University-Private Sector Partnerships: The Role for American and Vietnamese Companies, Part II</p> <p>Stuart Dean President General Electric Southeast Asia</p> <p>Le Quang Minh Vice President, Vietnam National University, HCMC</p> <hr/>
	<p>Session 3C: U.S. Government Educational Programs in Vietnam</p> <p>Alina Romanowski Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs, U.S. Department of State</p> <p>Lynne McNamara Executive Director, Vietnam Education Foundation</p> <p>Frank Donovan Vietnam Country Director, USAID</p>
4:15 – 6:30	Break
6:30 – 8:30	<p>Evening Reception Host: U.S. Ambassador Michael W. Michalak Venue: Thang Long Room, 7th floor, Melia Hanoi Hotel</p>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, January 15, 2010	
8:30 – 8:45	Day #2 Opening Remarks Angela Dickey, Deputy Consul General, U.S. Consulate General, Ho Chi Minh City
8:45 – 9:00	Short Break
9:00 - 10:15	Breakout Session 4: Session 4A: Accreditation Issues and How the U.S. Can Help Tomás Morales President, College of Staten Island, The City University of New York Pham Xuan Thanh Deputy Director General, General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation, MOET Nguyen Phuong Nga Director, Center for Educational Quality Assurance and Research Development, Vietnam National University, Hanoi Vu Thi Phuong Anh Director, Center for Educational Testing and Quality Assessment, Vietnam National University, HCMC <hr/> Session 4B: Building Partnerships in Higher Education – Through Associations John Vaughn Executive Vice President, Association of American Universities (AAU) Arlene Jackson Director of International Education, American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Pham Tiet Khanh President, Vietnamese Association of Community Colleges Helen Huntley Country Director, Institute of International Education, Vietnam

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

	<p>Session 4C: The Student Visa Application Process: Myths and Realities</p> <p>William Weissman Consular Chief, U.S. Embassy Hanoi</p> <p>Martin Oppus NIV Chief, U.S. Consulate General HCMC</p>
10:15 – 10:45	<p>Break</p>
10:45 – 12:00	<p>Breakout Session 5:</p> <p>Session 5A: Academic Freedom and Autonomy at Vietnamese Universities</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Training Officials</p> <p>Ben Wilkinson Associate Director, Vietnam Program, Harvard Kennedy School</p> <p>Phung Xuan Nha Rector, University of Economics and Business, Vietnam National University, Hanoi</p> <p>Pham Thi Ly Director, Center for International Education Exchange and Research, HCMC University of Education</p>
	<p>Session 5B: U.S.-Vietnamese Cooperation in Developing Soft Skills (leadership, teamwork and analytic abilities)</p> <p>Marcus Ingle Director, Center of Public Service , Division of Public Administration, Portland State University</p> <p>Bui Phuong Dinh Acting Director, International Affairs Department, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and Public Administration</p>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

	<p>Session 5C: The Role of Community College Programs in Promoting American-Style Education</p> <p>GiGi Do Director, Office of International Initiative, Houston Community College</p> <p>Rudy Soliz Business Administration Program, Houston Community College</p> <p>Nguyen Van Sau Chancellor, Saigon University of Technology</p>
12:00 – 1:15	Lunch Provided
1:15 – 2:15	<p>Breakout Session 6:</p> <p>Session 6A: Information Technology Programs</p> <p>Christina Anthony Regional Program Development Management, Cisco Networking Academy</p> <p>Hai Tran Associate Adjunct Professor, George Washington University, Senior Level Technologist, Center for Technology and Engineering, U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)</p> <p>Nguyen Ngoc Binh Rector, College of Technology, Vietnam National University, Hanoi</p> <hr/> <p>Session 6B: Science Programs</p> <p>Jeffrey Riedinger Dean, International Studies and Programs, Michigan State University</p> <p>Ha Thanh Toan Vice Rector, Can Tho University</p>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

	<p>Session 6C: Economics Programs</p> <p>Kenneth Curtis Assistant Vice President, International Education California State University Long Beach</p> <p>Pham Quang Trung Vice Rector, Hanoi National Economics University</p> <p>Dang Ngoc Duc Chief, International Financial Department, Banking and Finance Faculty, Hanoi National Economics University</p> <hr/> <p>Session 6D: Education Programs</p> <p>Charles Townley Educational Management and Development College of Education, New Mexico State University</p> <p>Le Cong Thin Head, International Cooperation, Vinh University</p> <p>Hoang Van Van Vice Dean, Graduated School, Vietnam National University, Hanoi</p> <hr/> <p>Session 6E: Social Work Programs</p> <p>Neal A. Newfield Associate Professor of Social Work, West Virginia University</p> <p>Aline Hines Director Social Work, San Jose State University</p> <p>Le Van Phu Director of Social Work, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi</p> <hr/> <p>Session 6F: Medical Programs</p> <p>Gregory Crow Director, Vietnam Nurse Project, University of San Francisco, School of Nursing</p> <p>Truong Viet Binh Director, Vietnam Academy of Traditional Medicine</p>
2:15 – 2:30	Short Break

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

2:30 – 3:30	<p>Breakout Session 7:</p> <p>Session 7A: Engineering and Technology Programs</p> <p>Deborah Chung Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, State University of New York, Buffalo</p> <p>Nguyen Dang Binh Rector, College of Industry and Technology, Thai Nguyen University</p> <p>Bui Viet Khoi Deputy Director, Center of Training of Excellent Students, Hanoi University of Technology</p> <hr/> <p>Session 7B: Environmental Programs</p> <p>Linda Yarr Executive Director, Partnerships for International Strategies in Asia, George Washington University</p> <p>Hoang Van Thang Director, Center for Natural Resources and Environment, Vietnam National University, Hanoi</p> <hr/> <p>Session 7C: Business Programs</p> <p>Hoang Van Chau President, Foreign Trade University</p> <p>Harry Norman Dean, California State University, Fullerton</p> <hr/> <p>Session 7D: Short-Term Intensive Executive Leadership Programs</p> <p>Patrick Boyle Associate Provost, International Initiatives and Global Affairs, Loyola University, Chicago</p> <p>Le Quang Minh Vice President, Vietnam National University, HCMC</p> <hr/>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

	<p>Session 7E: Programs in the Humanities and Social Sciences</p> <p>Philip Alperson Director, Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture and Society, Temple University</p> <p>Nguyen Chi Ben Director, Vietnam Institute of Culture and Art Studies</p> <p>Ho Sy Quy Director, Institute of Social Sciences and Information</p> <p>Nguyen Van Kim Vice Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi</p> <hr/> <p>Session 7F: Agricultural Programs</p> <p>Cary J. Trexler School of Education and College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, University of California, Davis</p> <p>Nguyen Quoc Vong Director, International Relations, Hanoi University of Agriculture</p>
3:30 – 3:45	Short Break
3:45 – 4:45	<p>Closing Session: Other Issues and Wrap-Up</p> <p>His Excellency Michael W. Michalak U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam</p> <p>His Excellency Dr. Pham Vu Luan Standing Vice Minister, Ministry of Education and Training</p> <p>Professor Mai Trong Nhuan President, Vietnam National University, Hanoi</p>

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Grouping of Breakout Sessions

	<u>Thursday</u> <u>10:45-12:00</u>	<u>Thursday</u> <u>1:15-2:30</u>	<u>Thursday</u> <u>3:00-4:15</u>	<u>Friday</u> <u>9:00-10:15</u>	<u>Friday</u> <u>10:45-12:00</u>
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5
A: Creating American-Style Universities in Vietnam	Government of Vietnam Licensing Requirements for New Universities	Launching and Operating New Universities in Vietnam: Experiences and Outlook	International Universities - Which Model is Best for Vietnam?	Accreditation Issues and How the U.S. Can Help	Academic Freedom and Autonomy at Vietnamese Universities
B: Promoting Development of Vietnamese Universities and Colleges	Raising English Language Proficiency in Vietnamese Higher Education - The American Role	Universities-Private Sector Partnerships: The Role for American and Vietnamese Companies, Part I	Universities-Private Sector Partnerships: The Role for American and Vietnamese Companies, Part II	Building Partnerships in Higher Education Through Associations	U.S.-Vietnamese Cooperation in Developing Soft Skills (leadership teamwork and analytic abilities)
C: Increasing the Number of Vietnamese Study in the U.S.	Student Perspectives on Preparing Vietnamese Students for Studying in the U.S.	Attracting and Integrating Returning Vietnamese MAs and Ph.D.s into Vietnamese Universities and Research Institutes	U.S. Government Educational Programs in Vietnam	The Student Visa Application Process: Myths and Realities	The Role of Community College Programs in Promoting American-Style Education

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday: 1:15-2:15

Friday: 2:30-3:30

	Session 6	Session 7
A	Information Technology Programs	Engineering and Technology Programs
B	Science Programs	Environmental Programs
C	Economics Programs	Business Programs
D	Education Programs	Short-Term Intensive Leadership Programs
E	Social Work Programs	Programs in Humanities and Social Sciences
F	Medical Programs	Agriculture Programs

SUMMARY OF PLENARY SESSION

Summary of Plenary Session

Moderator:

Mr. Steve Maxner, Director, Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University; Chairman of the Board, Vietnam Education Foundation

Speakers:

Dr. Pham Vu Luan, Standing Vice-Minister, Ministry of Education and Training

Dr. Vu Minh Giang, Vice-President Vietnam National University Hanoi

Dr. Nguyen Duc Nghia, Vice-President, Vietnam National University HCMC

Key points:

Dr. Luan announced that 2010 would be the first of three years of renovation in the education sector. Although Vietnam's education system has developed into a large and diverse sector in Vietnam, Dr. Luan said Vietnam faces a great challenge in the State management methods for higher education. These methods cannot ensure quality now or improvement in the future while also not providing adequate support for creativity for teachers and students in Vietnam. Vietnam will use international cooperation as one method to improve the education sector in Vietnam. MOET funds 700 students a year to pursue degrees in other countries. Some of the key points in MOET's plan to renovate the education system over the next three years include:

- Promote training based on the demands of society
- Provide additional training to university presidents to make them better managers
- Establish an independent accreditation system
- Promotion of international cooperation, especially in training more PhDs and in obtaining loans from the ADB and WB

Dr. Maxner recounted Texas Tech's (TTU) relationships with Vietnam dating back to 1998. In 2006 TTU hosted a delegation of university managers for training about how to operate and manage a university and how to implement a credit-based system of study. TTU faculty also came to Vietnam to continue the educational exchange in later years. TTU hopes to support Vietnam in the coming years in the areas of accreditation and curriculum development. Although there are a number of challenges as outlined in the Task Force Report, Dr. Maxner also identified a number of opportunities including:

- Team Teaching Model where many different universities collaborate to teach a single course in Vietnam.
- A VEF-style model whereby Vietnamese officials could be placed in the most appropriate university for training in the U.S.
- Leverage talent of U.S.-trained Vietnamese students and find ways to draw them back to Vietnam after completing their studies. These students can participate in summer workshops where they assist Vietnamese universities by writing grants and running workshops.

Dr. Giang said that he views the U.S. as a partner in Vietnam's education goals. The U.S. has a large number of diverse universities occupying the majority of top slots in the

SUMMARY OF PLENARY SESSION

rankings of the world's best schools. For these reasons, Dr. Giang said he hopes to collaborate with the U.S. in the following ways:

- Send more faculty to the U.S. through VEF or Fulbright to get first-hand experience in university governance.
- Bring more U.S. professors to Vietnam to lecture. VNU is already talking with the University of Maryland to this end.
- Modify Vietnam's curriculum to more closely resemble the U.S. model.
- Participate in conferences such as this with the U.S. Embassy and MOET to foster more trust and understanding with these partners.

Dr. Giang also noted a few challenges to achieving the goals listed above:

- The education system in the U.S. is vastly different from the one in Vietnam.
- Balance between quality and quantity—not all U.S. institutions are of high quality, meaning not sufficient for partnering with Vietnam.

Dr. Nghia explained that over the past 10 years, the number of students in Vietnam has doubled. Currently, 20 people out of 1000 are students but this ratio ranks very low within the region. Vietnam still has a long way to become a knowledge-based economy. The first step is to set up an accreditation system and the second step is to create more universities in Vietnam while not losing sight of the quality of education. Working with the U.S. to achieve these goals is essential. Although partnering with U.S. institutions has its challenges, there are also many opportunities. Both the administrative and teaching staff at VNU HCMC are looking to adopt U.S. style systems. The skills of Vietnamese students, educators, and administrators have been raised through partnerships with U.S. institutions.

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

Sessions A: Creating American Style Universities in Vietnam

1-A Government of Vietnam Licensing Requirements for New Universities

Speaker:

Dr. Tran Thi Ha, Director General, Higher Education Department, Ministry of Education and Training

Key points:

- Vietnam is creating four “excellent” [model] universities, in Hanoi (sponsored by France), in Ho Chi Minh City (sponsored by Germany), in Da Nang (to be sponsored by Japan), and in Can Tho (to be sponsored by the United States); financing will come from the Vietnamese government (GVN), the World Bank, and sponsor countries.
- Vietnam’s stated goal is to have one of its universities ranked among the top 200 worldwide by 2025.

Presentation:

Dr. Ha stressed that there is “new momentum for reform” of education and that Vietnam wants to move forward in order to tackle theoretical and practical issues, and enhance Vietnam’s competitiveness. The four model universities, she stressed, *will not* repeat what already exists, and *will* help Vietnam achieve international standards in education and consolidate international cooperation. She laid out a detailed and ambitious roadmap, including:

- By 2012, at least two of the model universities should be operational
- By 2015, the model universities should be “centers of excellence”
- By 2019, the model universities should meet international standards
- By 2025, at least one model university should rank among the top 200 worldwide

Dr. Ha stressed that these universities will do their best to attract top-tier faculty, will offer courses in English, will have a high level of autonomy, and high standards. The French and German partner universities are already underway, while MOET is conducting feasibility studies for the other two.

DISCUSSION:

A representative from the Texas International Education Consortium asked what the procedure was for a U.S. university or consortium wishing to partner on the model university project. Ms. Ha advised him to contact the management unit within MOET and to present a detailed description of the U.S. school(s) and its/their technical capability.

Ms. Thuy, a VNU lecturer, raised several important issues, including MOET’s plans to develop these universities, how MOET defines excellence, how the model universities are different from existing Vietnamese models, and whether the universities will accept talented students with weak English. Ms. Ha responded that the creation of the universities will depend on the effort expended, that “excellence” was defined in her presentation, that the new universities are different in that their presidents will have more

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

autonomy, and that students at the model university will study English for a full year before pursuing their subject-matter study.

Mr. Ha Ton Vinh, President and CEO of Stellar Management, wondered how it happens that the U.S. has been organizing education conferences for the last several years but there is still no U.S. sponsor for the model university in Can Tho. He asked about seeking or obtaining funding from Japan or South Korea (ROK). He also asked whether the new model universities are really “new” or whether they are “new wine in old bottles”. The response was that the GVN is still working on a feasibility study (FS) regarding the planned U.S.-style University and that ROK was funding technical assistance for the FS. Ms. Ha also stressed the new universities’ independence.

Dr. Cary Trexler from UC Davis pointed out that there is currently no [blind or independent] peer review of journal articles or grant proposals in Vietnam. He called into question Vietnam’s goal of creating a university that ranks among the top 200 worldwide since there is no history of/movement toward peer review. This point was reiterated in other sessions.

Mr. Amrit Bart from the Asian Institute of Technology asked why all of the new model universities are public rather than private institutions (response from Ms. Ha: public universities are stronger local partners; private institutions are too new), and how Vietnam plans to create “centers of excellence” which do not include any study of the humanities (response: the humanities will be integrated “later” because science and technology are the priorities).

Dr. Hai from George Washington University commented that MOET may have difficulty in attracting U.S. faculty because they have responsibilities to their home universities (the problem of “publish or perish”/tenuring). He also alluded to Decree 97 [which limits science/social science research] and asked whether the new universities will be subject to it, particularly in the area of macroeconomic research. Ms. Ha responded that she “doesn’t see any limitations”.

A representative from RMIT stated that Vietnam cannot increase its ranking [in the list of the world’s top universities] without improving innovation and research. He also stressed the need for full time staff instead of “visiting professors” and the need for the model universities to be different from the “advanced programs” currently available. Ms. Ha stated that the new universities will be different in that they can set their own direction.

Madame Dung asked if all four universities are going to be evaluated according to the standards set forth in the 2007 Law on Education and/or whether they will apply the standards of the foreign partner. The answer was yes to both questions.

Mr. Long Nguyen from the Vietnam Foundation stated that “interference” from the GVN could “make or break” the model universities. Ms. Ha countered that the GVN will give the new universities a great deal of independence and that their charters will be approved

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

by the Prime Minister himself. The new universities will also be given a maximum of authority, she said, on a “case-by-case” basis.

2-A Launching and Operating New Universities in Vietnam: Experience and Outlook

Speakers:

Dr. Laurence Roberts, Dean of International Education, Utica College

Mme. Dang Thi Hoang Yen, Chairman, Tan Tao University Project

Dr. Tran Huu Nghi, President, Hai Phong Private University

Mme. Ton Nu Thi Ninh, President, Founding Committee, Tri Viet International University Project

Key points:

- Tax-exempt status of nonprofit private education institutions has yet to be recognized by the State.
- Governance of private education institutes should be structured to represent the interests of all stakeholders; not only investors.
- MOET licensing could be more straight forward, rapid and transparent.

Presentations:

Dr. Laurence Roberts introduced Utica College, a small nonprofit university which has been trying to open an independent branch campus in HCMC with Middle States accreditation to increase international understanding amongst their U.S. students, and to offer a high quality American-style education at an affordable price (tuition to be ¼ U.S. rates, \$7000/ year) to bright motivated Vietnamese students (currently the 17 enrolled Vietnamese students are earning an overall GPA of 3.46). After years of discussion and planning, Utica and their Vietnamese partner received a MOET license in under 10 months – a record. However they later realized that the accompanying restrictions were insupportable and endangered Utica’s U.S. accreditation. These included not being allowed complete freedom in determining staff, paying taxes despite their nonprofit status, no legal process for funneling money out of Vietnam back to the home organization to recoup overhead costs (has already invested over \$100,000). In hindsight wish they had hired a lawyer earlier. Utica’s Board of Trustees has shifted from unanimously approving the project to putting it on hold. Constructing a campus, a future intention, will further complicate the process and require changing to a profit status. Utica is not giving up, still working on ways to provide their educational model to Vietnam’s many eager bright students. He recommends that MOET work to make the licensing process faster, standardized and transparent.

Madame Dang Thi Hoang Yen described how Tan Tao University is preparing to be a nonprofit Vietnamese University of American quality – based on a liberal arts model with an infrastructure and facilities capable of achieving U.S. accreditation – dedicated to

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

providing full scholarships to poor rural students and students with outstanding academic records. TTU is the product of 15 years of dreaming and planning with funds provided by Madame Yen and her family, and an advisory board of U.S. higher education administrators. Four buildings (out of a planned 64) are near completion on a 500-acre campus. The university expects to be licensed in April, and enroll their first students this year. One of challenges will be attracting qualified foreign professors because of Vietnam's high income tax, limited research facilities, and dated curricular materials (for example the same textbook Yen used in 1980 is still used in economics).

Dr. Tran Huu Nghi is the president of Hai Phong Private non-profit University which has been in existence 12 years and currently employs 202 teachers and lecturers. Over 90% of its 10,000 plus graduates are employed -- amongst the top 25 universities in the country for employment. Entry is competitive: 30,000 students registered for entrance exam competing for 2,250 slots. It continues to pay VAT and all government taxes.

Lessons to share:

- 1) Provide a high quality learning experience: HPPU offers a standardized curriculum in English emphasizing technical skills; student teacher ratio is 19:1; a friendly open community between staff, lecturers, and students; HPPU provides scholarships for victims of Agent Orange, poor students, orphans, and good academic students.
- 2) Build a private campus; a necessity for maintaining independence. Five years ago, HPPU opened with 100 classrooms, hostels, gyms, wifi campus wide and recreation facilities.
- 3) Offer professional development of teaching and administrative staff: invite lecturers in, recruit good staff, and send them out for training; HPPU has cooperative agreements with universities in China and Singapore.
- 4) Support good governance. This will be challenging: try to be dynamic and to develop a coherent system.
- 5) Develop a brand; in a market economy this is essential.

Madame Ton Nu Thi Ninh described the Tri Viet University Project which will open in 2012 as "a social enterprise," avoiding potential confusion over the term non-profit and reflecting its mission statement: to create, share and apply knowledge and skills; to foster individual development; and to serve the larger community.

Advantages of being private include 1) autonomy making human resource decisions; 2) freedom to set acceptance criteria, TVU plans to look at students' entire school records as well as aptitude and 3) increased capacity to adjust.

Challenges include: 1) countering public – and national assembly-- opinion that private education is profit-seeking and poor quality, 2) clarifying distinct roles for different types of educational institutions: a vocational school versus a university, 3) addressing issues of ownership and funding, cannot create a private university with public funds and there is no tradition of Vietnamese corporation support , 4) creating a dedicated, professional full-time faculty by reducing teaching loads and providing opportunities to participate in research – currently most lecturers moonlight at several institutions to earn a salary. Private institutions are especially well positioned to offer a modern student-centered pedagogy.

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

DISCUSSION:

Question from Dominic Thuan Nguyen, MA Candidate, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies: Do you envision private universities playing a role in grade school education?

Mme. Ninh: I hope MOET will encourage primary and secondary education. At some point we envision opening a secondary school to act as a feeder; or entering into partnerships with grade schools that have similar philosophies.

Question from John Le Van, University of America Foundation: It might be beneficial to put more emphasis on the educational aspect and less on the commercial – can you separate these two?

Mme. Ninh: Presently we are straight-jacketed by our governing structure. Our board of investors is based on monetary contributions. We want to establish a University council that is not directly related to money. We are also continuing to look for the still-rare-in-Vietnam enlightened corporate investor that understands education is one of the best and most strategic of social investments.

Question from Pham Hoang CHK, Hanoi National Economics University: Will the language of instruction at TTU be Vietnamese or English? And what does TTU mean by “American quality” since U.S. higher education institutions are so variable in their quality?

Mme. Yen: Teaching will be in English. We will provide a six-month language course before exams for students requiring this. Our goal is to establish a high quality track record in order to convince the government private nonprofit universities are deserving of tax exemptions. We also want to create an American culture of alumni contributing to their alma mater; this doesn’t presently happen in Vietnam.

3-A International Universities – Which Model is Best for Vietnam

Speakers:

Dr. Kathryn Mohrman, Director, University Design Consortium, Arizona State University

Dr. Michael Mann, Managing Director, Laureate Education Asia, Ltd.

Dr. Bui Van Ga, President, Da Nang University

Key points:

- Vietnam should create its own model for international universities
- Vietnam may be able to adapt best practices and models from other countries

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

- One major challenge will be serving the local community, addressing Vietnam’s national priorities, and maintaining an international ‘flavor’, all at the same time

Presentations:

Dr. Mohrman raised four major questions that Vietnam may want to consider in its quest for a model international university:

1. Which models (stress on the plural) are best for Vietnam?
2. How can colleges and universities best serve Vietnam’s national priorities?
3. How can Vietnamese universities be local and international at the same time?
4. What options does Vietnam have as it moves forward in planning its educational system?

Dr. Ga gave a thorough overview on the University of Danang (UD), which will partner with Japan to create Danang International University (DIU) (one of the four projected model universities). He stressed UD’s partnerships with local industry and the development of shared facilities with the future DIU. Priority areas at the new university will be business management, natural sciences, and English – and a teacher/student ratio of 1:15.

Dr. Mann spoke about his experience as the Australian Ambassador and working for RMIT. He stressed that the ‘international’ in international university generally means ‘Western’ plus ‘English-language based’. He also reminded participants that universities don’t operate like businesses – and that both Vietnamese and Western universities need to be critical and discerning when entering different markets.

DISCUSSION:

A Temple University representative stated that there are various types of ‘models’ available: public/private, teaching/research based, etc., but that the main function of a university is to foster creative, independent thinkers. He asked the audience, “Where is the liberal arts discussion?”

Comment from the floor: The West and the U.S. should not impose a model. He stated firmly that Vietnam must maintain its own traditions in the face of globalization: “Before we talk about changing, we need to preserve what is fundamentally Vietnamese.” He emphasized the danger of adopting any particular foreign model wholesale.

Dr. Cary Trexler from UC Davis again mentioned the lack of a formal system for peer review of journal articles and grant proposals in Vietnam. He reflected that if there is no mechanism for blind review and no culture of independent assessment, he “doesn’t know if the plan [Vietnam’s plan to have one of its universities ranked among the top 200 worldwide] will work”.

Dr. Ga responded that Vietnam “can’t do everything at once”.

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

Comment from the floor about the liberal arts – the participant commented that the GVN is only beginning to look at liberal arts curricula [which includes the teaching of Marxism-Leninism] to be responsive to the changing world.

Comment from a former MOET employee: The question of international models has come up for the last twenty years. He said it is not appropriate to import a foreign model wholesale and added that international universities currently in Vietnam are not successful because of a lack of appropriate leadership. Vietnam needs to develop its own model, which preserves Vietnamese identity. He concluded by noting that a multidisciplinary environment takes time to evolve.

4-A Accreditation Issues and How the U.S. Can Help

Speakers:

Dr. Tomás Morales, President College of Staten Island, City University of New York

Dr. Pham Xuan Thanh, Deputy Director General, General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation, MOET

Dr. Nguyen Phuong Nga, Director, Center for Educational Quality Assurance and Research Development, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Dr. Vu Thi Phuong Anh, Director, Center for Educational Testing and Quality Assessment, Vietnam National University, HCMC

Key points:

- American accreditation consists of institutional and subject-matter accreditation (the latter for specific programs). It is a peer-reviewed process of self-improvement, planning, and professional development for the university and its staff. It ensures that the institution/individual programs maintain high standards, and that students are learning. Accreditation ensures quality and it aids institutions and students involved in transfers; it protects students and safeguards both institutions and students from rogue providers.
- Vietnam needs bilateral cooperation and increased quality assurance (QA) in order to move forward with its adoption of accreditation standards, but a “lack of policies to encourage quality assurance” remains a major issue.
- Vietnam has a law (Decree 75, 2006) to establish accreditation bodies, but there are few qualified evaluators and they lack technical skills. Additionally, current university leaders don’t always see the value of accreditation and lack understanding of QA. As a result, policy implementation has been slow. Nevertheless, the law calls for the creation of public, private, and non-governmental organization (NGO) accreditation bodies.

Presentations:

Dr. Morales spoke extensively about the merits of the U.S. accreditation system, detailing a list of criteria that regional accreditation bodies in the U.S. might use, including

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

everything from formal permissions to operate to the quality of programs and faculty. He stressed that accreditation “creates a culture of evidence” that gives institutions a qualitative report card.

Dr. Thanh, Dr. Phuong Nga, and Dr. Phuong Anh spoke about the need for ongoing collaboration as well as the challenges facing formal accreditation policies in Vietnam, including lack of understanding and lack of motivation to implement it among university faculty. They stressed, however, that Vietnam strives to have GVN, private, and NGO accreditation bodies (as described in Decree 75). They also noted a need for training on internal QA and for additional study visits to the U.S. to learn more about accreditation.

DISCUSSION:

Comment from the floor: It is important not to forget the differences between the U.S. and Vietnam. In the U.S., consumers [in this instance, students] are aware of their rights and there are consumer protection laws. It is also important to include a discussion of business ethics.

Comment from the floor: Since Vietnamese schools choose their students (and not the other way around) there is little “feedback from the Vietnamese market” and schools have little incentive to improve.

Dr. Morales emphasized that academic freedom is a “core construct” and that it allows faculty to be critical without repercussions.

Dr. Cary Trexler from UC Davis raised the question as to whether or not the idea of formal self-critique is “novel” in Vietnam and whether there is a real difference in culture on this issue. He noted that, in self-critique exercises in which he had participated, Vietnamese participants gave responses that indicated their discomfort with the process.

Dr. Thanh stated that there is a real difference in culture: In Vietnam, “people try to be more polite”. He added that Vietnam should “go step by step”.

Dr. Nga added that the situation was improving.

Dr. Laurence Roberts from Utica College: Some U.S. schools, like Utica, have tried to set up programs in Vietnam...but if they were to meet the requirements set forth by the GVN, they would lose their U.S. accreditation [so they pull out].

Dr. Morales underscored the fact that self-assessment is a “healthy process” and that external assessment can be very helpful.

5-A Academic Freedom and Autonomy at Vietnamese Universities

Speakers:

Dr. Ben Wilkinson, Associate Director, Vietnam Program, Harvard Kennedy School

Dr. Ta Duc Thinh, head of MOET's Department of Science, Technology and Environment

Dr. Phung Xuan Nha, Rector, University of Economics and Business, VNU Hanoi

Dr. Pham Thi Ly, Director Center for International Education Exchange and Research, HCMC University of Education

Key points:

- A lack of common understanding of the term “academic freedom.” Dr. Ta Duc Thinh discussed it in terms of at least 25 government regulations and documents that determine autonomy and accountability in Vietnam. Compliance is expected on laws regarding public education. “Autonomy does not mean being free to do what you please but to be subject to the scrutiny of the whole society.” Much discussion dwelled on the right to raise tuition fees as a key feature of “autonomy.”
- Dr. Ly explained that, in Asia, academic freedom is not just an academic, but a cultural issue. Academic freedom is seen differently according to culture and social context; it is not something you can “buy or import from outside.” If foreigners do not understand the “root of Asian culture, attempts to impose academic freedom from the outside “will not succeed.”
- Importance of culture was also highlighted in terms of understanding different perceptions of the concept of time. Americans “want to solve things quickly,” while a lot of time is needed in Vietnam for discussion.

Presentations:

Dr. Ben Wilkinson introduced the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (FETP) which started in 1994 with a one-year program in applied economics and began to offer a two-year Master’s in Public Policy in 2009. FETP has enjoyed “curricular autonomy from day one.” “Implications of our experience,” he noted, include: the importance of reaching shared understanding of goals, i.e. going “much deeper” than signing a MOU; the importance of transparency and accountability; and the importance of shared understanding of the concept of time (a lot of which is needed to operate locally). Those who reach these understandings “would be able to enjoy a similar operating environment,” Dr. Wilkinson concluded.

Dr. Ta Duc Thinh established that, regarding academic freedom, “in Vietnam, autonomy is embedded in the framework of the whole.” And this includes structure and policies on research and admissions, financial autonomy and choices in international linkages. Compliance is expected on laws on public education. There are around 25 regulations and documents that determine autonomy and accountability. The National Assembly, for example, has passed five laws and one resolution. There have been Government decrees and Prime Ministerial decisions specific to autonomy. Decree 34 defines autonomy and accountability through organizational structure, payroll, and finances. Inter- ministerial decisions affect public entities. Dr. Thinh noted the numbers of several decisions and

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

resolutions that impact autonomy and accountability, including one just approved by MOET recently days ago. Dr. Think concluded that “all these regulations and laws are set to enhance autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions in Vietnam.” Different universities have different levels of autonomy: five have “full autonomy” (such as VNU). National and regional universities have more autonomy to decide “payroll, etc.” He said, pay is not merit-based because of “limited budgets.” Universities are free to enter into linkages. There is “lots of freedom in science and technology.” A March 2008 decision says schools are free to plan their “science and technology agenda.” It is intended to enable schools to be more pro-active “to attract faculty.” However, despite achievements in enforcing legal documents on autonomy and accountability, challenges remain. First, schools do not have full fiscal autonomy; tuition levels are set by the GVN. Universities lack resources and have low salaries so they can’t attract strong faculty. Decree 43, for example (see above) needs to be enforced. Taxes need to be reduced. The Ministry of Finance needs to make changes and reform spending. People need to be paid by performance. Businesses should be involved to help develop human resources. Decentralization depends on specific universities. Fees are a big issue. Dr. Think concluded by stating that “autonomy does not mean being free to do what you please but to be subject to the scrutiny of the whole society.”

Dr. Ly thanked her Fulbright experience for teaching her to “see the world as others see it.” In Asian countries, academic freedom is not just a political but a cultural issue; Freedom House rankings of Southeast Asian countries show that Asian cultures emphasize social hierarchy. Social stability stems from reinforcing the social hierarchy. She also asserted that academic freedom is needed for research universities, less so for vocational colleges. Vietnam is at a lower stage of development; with few resources, the focus needs to be on urgent needs. Academic freedom is key but seen differently according to culture and social context. It is not something you can “buy or import from outside.” Academic freedom should be in line with the political and social architecture of the country. If foreigners do not understand the “root of Asian culture”, attempts to impose academic freedom from the outside “will not succeed.” From the Vietnamese side, there is a need to realign values to conform to a changing world.

Prof. Phung Xuan Nha pointed out the importance to recall how different our cultures are; Americans want to “solve things quickly,” while Vietnamese expect to discuss. He showed a slide of OECD “Government Interference Level in Administering Universities” and used that to usher in a discussion of tuition fees. A school can increase tuition fees if it offers a high quality education; if quality is controlled, then you gain more autonomy in human resources and finances. UEB stakeholders include businesses that “use our products.” To gain a good strategy for fund-raising, you need to get good faculty. Focus should be on attracting good faculty, which will attract money.

DISCUSSION:

An American academic asked how political and cultural issues are handled. Dr. Wilkinson said that “we are not told we can’t write or teach something,” but noted that there are barriers to upgrading research and invigorating curriculum. Faculty, for

SESSIONS A: CREATING AMERICAN STYLE UNIVERSITIES IN VIETNAM

example, may supplement their incomes and don't have time to update their courses or get additional training, so curricula "can stagnate."

Dr. Ly interjected that the basic difference is that in the U.S., academic freedom is a "basic right" stemming from the U.S. Constitution, while, in Vietnam, it "is basically decided and given by leaders based on their judgment of society."

Discussion broke on regarding tuition fees, with Dr. Think expressing hope that obstacles to raising fees will be forthcoming, and a MOET official responding that "we have to protect the learners."

Mme. Ninh, Tri Viet University Project, said that autonomy should not differ whether an institution is public or private. She asked who would protect the rights of the students and parents and their "consumer rights." She suggested that associations of teachers should make benchmarks, not MOET.

A MOET official said that the ministry will not micro-manage; it will set the rules and then "sit back."

Dr. Think agreed, saying that for now, MOET and the GVN shoulder the task of protecting students; "it is our duty." Once private institutions are farther along, and have great faculties, then issues of academic freedom and so on can be left to civil society. Right now, the 25 GVN documents alluded to in his presentation encourage autonomy. He added that autonomy was "embedded in the legal framework of those documents and regulations." He reiterated this theme that in the future, MOET will not intervene in daily operations but for now, it is a process of working to "full autonomy" in which, early on, one has "oversight by the state."

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Sessions B: Promoting Development of Vietnamese Universities and Colleges

1-B Raising English Language Proficiency in Vietnamese Higher Education – The American Role

Speakers:

Dr. Mark Rentz, American English and Culture Program, Arizona State University

Mr. John Scacco, Regional English Language Office, U.S. Embassy, Bangkok

Dr. Nguyen Hoa, President, Hanoi University of Language and International Studies, VNU, Hanoi

Key points:

- Agreement on the importance of English as a language of globalization, including business, science, and pop culture.
- Recommendations include the urgent need to diminish language class size, and to improve teaching methods to avoid rote learning and the ubiquitous “teaching to the test” approach.

Presentations:

Dr. Rentz introduced cultural program at ASU and urged language learners to use all four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. He noted that the Education Task Force had 26 recommendations to promote English language learning, including highlighting the cultural aspect. South Korea’s aggressive 10-year plan to promote English was lauded as a possible model for other countries. Of the Task Force’s many suggestions, Dr. Rentz underscored the importance of lowering class size, urging an approach of “learning a little [material] that a student uses a lot, versus learning a lot that a student uses very little.” He closed his introduction with a call for “high individual talking time” in the classroom.

Mr. John Scacco described his role as a Department of State Regional English Language Officer (RELO), specifying key programs he administers in various Southeast Asian countries. His overview of what the U.S. Government offers regarding English teaching included explaining programs like the English Language Fellow (teachers assigned to an institution for 10 months; there are three in Vietnam) and English Language Specialists (to provide short-term, targeted training). Other programs include E-Teacher (e-learning for local teachers) and the English Access Microscholarship program that provides funding for underprivileged youth to study English. The “Access” program was first offered to Vietnam in 2009, and about 20 students in both Hanoi and in HCMC are benefiting. Mr. Scacco noted other RELO activities and resources such as publications (the popular “English Teaching Forum”) and plans to put “Connect with English” on VTV 2.

Dr. Nguyen Hoa broached the question, “where do we go from here?” and began by reviewing the history of language schools in Vietnam, starting in 1955 with the first school which offered Russian and Chinese. He noted that Project 1400, launched September 20, 2009, is meant to innovate foreign language teaching and learning. Until

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

now, English language teaching at the primary level has “basically been voluntary” (except some schools in Ho Chi Minh City which do offer it at the primary level), while compulsory at the lower- and high-school levels. Dr. Hoa lamented that English is taught as a “subject rather than a tool of commerce.” Too often, he said, teachers “teach to the test, and so far the results are poor.” Reasons for current challenges in expanding English teaching include: lack of commitment and will, ineffective methods (passive, rote learning), and acceptance of “teaching to the test.” Project English 2020 is intended for young Vietnamese to become competent in communicating in English. It stresses the advantages of knowing another language and culture. “All can succeed,” Dr. Hoa said, “if they have the right methods and teachers.” The Common European Framework is to be used to provide guiding principles. A top priority is teacher development. Main outputs of Project 2020 will be the launch of a 10-year program starting with teaching English at grade 3. The Project Management Board agreement was signed by the DPM in January, 2010.

Note: Time ran out so there were no questions from the floor.

2-B University-Private Sector Partnerships: the Role for American and Vietnamese Companies, Part- I

Speakers:

Dr. Gil Latz, Vice Provost for International Affairs, Portland State University

Dr. Marcia Fischer, Assistant Dean, Portland State University

Ms. Roma Arellano, Worldwide Community Education Manager Intel

Dr. Doan Quang Vinh, Vice Rector, Da Nang University of Technology

Dr. Jeff Scott Goss, Dean of Faculty Development, Arizona State University

Key points:

- Importance of public private partnership to enhance education in Vietnam, create opportunities for technology transfer, capacity building and long-term, mutually beneficial learning and collaboration.
- Need for educational reform and, in this session in particular, a focus on engineering
- Successful programs require pre-departure training in hard and soft skills and, after participants return, communication, collaboration and assessment.

Presentations:

Dr. Marcia Fischer, Assistant Dean, Portland State University described the productive partnership with Intel which brought its first group of Vietnamese 2 + 2 program for engineering students to the U.S. in 2009 after a six-month selection process. She also made the following points:

- She emphasized the importance of the pre-departure bridge program to prepare students, including soft skills such as collaboration, project-based learning,

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

language skills and pronunciation, U.S. university culture, and laboratory and engineering course preparation. Vietnamese students already have solid math and engineering backgrounds.

- The students are thriving and Portland State and Intel are recruiting the next cohort.

Dr. Jeff Scott Goss, Dean of Faculty Development for Arizona State University, described the Vietnam Engineering Education Excellence Program (VEEE), also a private public partnership with Intel and Portland State to advance engineering undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy through a six week faculty exchange, with a goal of long term capacity building and collaboration:

- ASU is looking to partner with 1-3 Vietnamese universities for the program to sponsor 15-20 faculty staff to go to the U.S for a six-week summer program with a focus on pedagogy for engineers.
- Vietnamese teachers will team-teach in the U.S. and work with an American peer mentor.
- The intended Vietnamese faculty outcomes are learning applied teaching strategies, approach to improving engineering curricula; design multidisciplinary curriculum for students to solve complex engineering process; strong math skills and analytical data; adapt to new knowledge; learn principles of business communication and leadership roles as a global engineer.

Dr. Doan Quang Vinh, Vice Rector, Da Nang University of Technology, described his interest in a multidisciplinary approach to improve engineering education in Vietnam that would include hard and soft skills: technical training; life, team and leadership skills; and incorporating feedback from companies and students to ensure graduates are work-ready. He also spoke about:

- shifting to credit-based training, more testing, diminished class study while encouraging individual study and experiments, improved language skills, and bringing world-class lectures to the school;
- they have 2 programs: a utilization program with University of Washington; and cooperation programs with other U.S., French and German schools;
- interested in quality control and accreditation to meet international standards; engaging with enterprises for support, technology transfer, and internships;
- Boeing did a workshop and Intel provided a wireless system for the university.

Dr. Gil Latz summarized some of the key points and goals of the panel: a shift from theory based to project based learning; a student-focused approach; how faculty develops pedagogy; accreditation; capacity building; U.S./VN agreement on many of this issues; making Vietnamese students work-ready.

DISCUSSION:

Questioner: What kind of follow-up is there from students, faculty and employers after the Vietnamese participants return? What is Intel's role, and do students get jobs there?

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Ms. Arellano said that Intel sponsors the participants in full—fees, housing, books etc - for two years. The students do three or four years in Vietnam first. Then, go on to study junior and senior year at Portland State. They return to Intel after that and work a minimum of three years. What Intel is looking for is long-term leaders.

Dr. Fisher said students get practical experience at Intel, too, while studying in Oregon.

Dr. Goss said that assessment is critical and will include a workshop and publications.

Questioner: How long are the University and Enterprise internship programs? What are the results and what industry sectors are represented?

Dr. Vinh answered that training includes 3 internships: conceptual fieldtrips to enterprises during the third year; University technical workshops; and, most importantly, 15 weeks internship to learn about both equipment and enterprise.

Question from Los Angeles based educator: Have you thought about a longitudinal study to see what happens to the students after they return? Is there a post-return organization to harness them? Dr. Fischer responded that she is interested in outcomes and organizations. It means good learning both ways and looking forward to sharing information. Keep in mind that it is a new program. Dr. Goss wants to link all activities into ecosystem. Assess the impact of community development.

Questioner: Is faculty development at ASU the engine to move education forward? Dr. Goss: ASU is working with universities and education leaders in Vietnam to advance curriculum and pedagogy. Faculty development is one component of a holistic approach.

Follow up question: What is the implementation mechanism in Vietnam? Dr. Goss said that collaboration, partnership on both sides- including public-private -, and academia are key components; both have similar strategic goals. Ms. Arellano said that faculty development is not the only piece, but also a key component. They will also work with administrators but enabling creative faculty to lead to change. Dr Vinh said that the faculty development plan is an excellent idea and that an advanced training program for faculty is good preparation for the U.S.

Questioner: Is your pedagogy theory-based or project-based? What is the value-added of the VEEE program? Ms. Arellano said that theory alone is not enough because engineering graduates are expected to be work-ready and productive upon arrival. There is training on the job, but Intel wants them to apply learning, communication skills, work with multidisciplinary and virtual teams and problem-solve. Vietnam has a good base, but it needs to add some elements. “We want to infuse those skills and practical ‘capstone’ projects”.

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

3-B University-Private Sector Partnerships: The Role for American and Vietnamese Companies, Part- II

Speakers:

Mr. Stuart Dean, President, General Electric South East Asia

Dr. Le Quang Minh, Vice President, Vietnam National University, HCMC

Key points:

- Importance of establishing community partnerships, beginning with Universities
- Vietnam is one of the top five countries bound to be affected by climate change.
- Duke University and National University of Vietnam are cooperating with one another to establish a joint Environmental Protection/Public Policy Program.

Presentations:

Mr. Stuart Dean, President of General Electric, South East Asia introduced the motivation behind establishing a private-public partnership with a Vietnamese University. He explained GE's role in establishing this partnership, as they are a large global infrastructure company, with most of their projects in developing countries. GE tries to be a good corporate citizen by working on education initiatives. GE is finding that having great technology is not enough by itself: community partnerships and investments are essential.

Dr. Le Quang Minh talked about the difficulties he has overcome in getting to the point where he could even begin to talk about establishing a partnership with a U.S. University. During his tenure as President of Can Tho University, the University engaged in several partnerships with private companies, such as Honda. Their activities were limited, however, to equipment donations. When the University started recommending students to different employers, they found out their best students did not have the skills the big multi-national companies needed. He went on to explain the complexity of the Vietnamese university system and the lack of coordination and resources within that system. He spoke of the prevalent tendency among Vietnamese faculty to teach what is before them, without bothering to seek additional information from the private sector. At the same time, employers were confused about where to go to recruit the best and brightest students. He also explained that the members of the University's Board of Governors were usually professors and lecturers of the same university, which contributed to stifling the influx of fresh ideas.

He was excited to report that the Ministry of Education and Training has recently announced new reforms which emphasize University and Private Sector partnerships. He stressed the importance of establishing more triangular partnerships with American Universities which will help increase the trust between the private sector and the Vietnamese University system. This trust will allow both sides to share resources in building a more suitable system which will successfully train and prepare Vietnamese professionals to work for companies in Vietnam. He believes this approach will be more common/ profitable in the years to come.

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

DISCUSSION:

Question: What is the current vision for a Master's Degree? Mr. Stuart responded that the plan will take three steps:

- Look at what Vietnam needs as far as skills and educational background in order to create a public policy environment;
- Identify the types of students who will be interested in such a program and what they'll do after graduation;
- Look at the programs Duke University currently has which could be offered in partnership with Vietnam National University.

Dr. Minh added that it is his intent to bring potential students into the planning phases.

Question: What are the pros and cons of working with a public vs. a private university? Mr. Stuart replied that it was important to find a large school with a good relationship with the government. His group met with several public universities before they found one they felt would match well with a private university in the United States (Duke).

Two audience members asked about working with VNU to train future employees in more technical aspects. How can we best work together so your university can train our personnel? Dr. Minh responded that the University will rely on feedback from employers in order to adjust the program and make it more suitable for the businesses who will eventually employ their graduates.

Question: There are difficulties as you begin to partner with the private sector and the universities need to start changing attitudes at the top. How do you see the progress so far? Dr. Minh responded that everything is changing in Vietnam. There is more awareness about equipping students with actual critical thinking skills, for example, rather than just teaching a single course called "Critical Thinking" in order to meet a requirement. He believes four years is not enough to change the attitudes and learning styles of students who have been raised in a very passive environment. These skills need to be taught earlier on so the students are prepared by the time they reach college age.

Comment: There are problems with student exchanges. In the case of internships, the students coming to Vietnam are expected to pay money to their employer instead of receiving basic living expenses from their employer. For Vietnamese students going to the U.S. on similar exchange internship programs, the problem is English. Their English skills are not on-par.

Question: Do you feel, that you will receive enough bang for your buck with a public university? Don't you think part of the problem is the oversight of MOET and the management of the university itself? How do you explain that the same students with the same education become 5-10 times more productive with U.S. companies than when they work for a Vietnamese company? Mr. Stuart: The payoff is long term. Renewable energy technology is always going to cost more. We need Vietnam to cooperate with a long-term development of public policy. The initial funding for this project is coming from the non-profit arm of GE, we are building a "best Practices" green building on the

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

grounds of the HCMC branch of Vietnam National University. Dr. Minh added that the leadership of a university is where the environment for change can be created. The role of leadership is very important and at the center of reform. He pointed out that his generation was trained in a top-down mentality, and that core attitudes will need to change in order for true reform to occur.

4-B Building Partnerships in Higher Education through Associations

Speakers:

Dr. John Vaughn, Executive Vice President, Association of American Universities

Ms. Arlene Johnson, Director International Education, American Association of State Colleges and Universities

Dr. Pham Tiet Khanh, President, Vietnamese Association of Community Colleges

Ms. Helen Huntley, Country Director, Institute of International Education

Key points:

- Effective partnerships are institution to institution or professor to professor.
- Associations can also help by bringing groups together, providing information, and working with government offices. Most institutions in the U.S. are specialized in a certain area and these groups should be used to develop partnerships in Vietnam.

Presentations:

Ms. Johnson explained there are 6 education associations at the president level in the U.S. These are non-profit, voluntary organizations serving the presidents of the universities. Although in many countries the ministry of education determines the education policy, there is no such central organization in the U.S. so associations fill part of that gap. She noted that her organization, ASCU, has programs with a number of countries including Japan, Liberia, and China. Over the past 10 years, ASCU has experienced a 98 percent success rate in visa issuance for its Chinese program participants and 100 percent return rate for those same students. ASCU wants to replicate this same type of collaborative program in Vietnam.

Dr. Khanh explained that the purpose of his organization is to assist in the transfer of scientific research to the public sector and to provide training based on the needs of the community. Rather than forcing students to leave home to study in the larger cities, VACC provides training opportunities close to home, thereby supporting families and rural development. This structure is also better suited to support lifelong learning initiatives. VACC also serves as a consultant to assist MOET in establishing a network of community colleges throughout the country. International collaboration is focused in the areas of capacity building, online learning, and teacher exchanges.

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Ms. Huntley explained that IIE is the largest non-profit organization in the education and training sector with a mission to promote education relations between the U.S. and other countries, advance academic freedom, and strengthen and link institutions of higher education. Current statistics show that 72 percent of Vietnamese students in the U.S. are undergraduates, 15 percent are graduates, 10 percent are other and 3.3 percent are on optional practical training (OPT). The U.S. is a desirable destination for Vietnamese students because of the wide range of options for schools, the advanced level of scientific and technology studies, and the availability of scholarships. In Vietnam, IIE focuses its efforts on helping students prepare and take a variety of preparatory tests that enable them to apply for schools in the U.S. IIE also holds two school fairs each year to promote study in the U.S.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Mai Van Tinh, Project Senior Expert, MOET said that associations and community colleges have partnered well with Vietnam to bring short-term and long-term benefits. He said he expected the number of community college students in Vietnam to grow quickly as they cooperate closely with the American Association of Community Colleges.

Visiting Instructor Michael Cull, Nha Trang University asked if any associations were providing summer institutes in the U.S. for international students. Ms. Johnson answered that there is a bill that congress is considering, the Paul Simon's Bill, which would provide opportunities for foreign students to travel to "non-traditional" sites within the U.S. to broaden their experience. If it passes the Senate, it will be called the Paul Simon Fellowship. Dr. Vaughn, Executive Vice President Association of American Universities added that the Education Task Force discussed the need to increase the number of exchanges between the two countries and that summer institute is a good way to do that. He also suggested that using Fulbright alumni to network with foreign students who return to their homes for the summer was an effective method to engage students.

5-B U.S.-Vietnamese Cooperation in Developing Soft Skills (Leadership, Teamwork and Analytic Abilities)

Speakers:

Dr. Marcus Ingle, Director, Center of Public Service, Division of Public Administration, Portland State University

Dr. Bui Phuong Dinh, Acting Director, International Affairs Department, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and Public Administration

Presentations:

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Dr. Ingle's approach to defining "soft skills" was to demonstrate them. He opened the session with an activity that illustrated "soft skills". Staff handed out an informational sheet on the partnership between Portland State University and the Ho Chi Minh Academy (HCMA).

According to Dr. Ingle, all adults come to any event with a set of expectations and "WIIFMs" ("What's In It For Me) and this is an important element of critical thinking; asking questions.

He asked the audience for their WIIFMs. Audience members questioned: What are the differences between formal styles and informal styles of leadership? How can I implement and find support for a soft skills program in Vietnam? Why is leadership a soft skill? In my opinion, it's a hard skill. What can we do to improve soft skills in Vietnam?

He continued saying that a good leader understands what the expectations are. In this session he wanted to model good leadership. "Do most classrooms in Vietnam begin by asking what students want to learn? No. But you must model the behavior you want in order to teach soft skills."

Soft skills are those behaviors that deal with people and relationships with others; they are qualitative in nature: leadership, management, teamwork, emotional intelligence, problem solving, cross-cultural communications, etc.

Dr. Dinh explained that HCMA specializes in training leaders for political agencies and does research for government and party planning. Basic research is focused on Marxism and Leninism. Today, with the demands of joining the WTO and globalization, generally, the leadership training must change. Traditional thinking is top down but a new mindset is needed in order to deal effectively with partners and people in general. As the saying goes, "the party leads and the government directs" - but how will the party lead? The current leaders lack soft skills - such as leadership - to address these complex challenges. The Vietnamese programs lack the ability to cultivate soft skills. What is leadership and how do we teach it? There is a need for a change in mindset.

In 2000, HCMA decided to improve its leadership studies program. By 2006 it was negotiating with PSU. From 2007 to 2009, PSU and HCMA have partnered on several leadership workshops, delegation visits and on-going faculty and student exchanges. In 2009, the Ford Foundation and the Miller Sustainability Foundation at PSU provided 2 years of grant funding for a leadership capacity building program titled *Leadership for Sustainable Development: Creating a New Academic and Applied Discipline for Vietnam*.

When the money runs out, HCMA hopes to create a center for leadership management that is prestigious both in Vietnam and internationally. The curriculum is "co-produced"; then instructors will be trained. The first learners will start in October 2010.

Supplemental outputs include: a Leadership Studies Library at the Academy (including Vietnamese translations of leadership textbooks), Leadership for Sustainable Development Case Studies (6 cases), A Leadership Toolkit, and upgraded HCMA faculty quality.

SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Dr. Ingle shared PSU's perspectives on the partnership. He asked participants to join him in a "thinking outside the box" activity. (Draw 9 dots in a grid – without lifting the pen, use only 4 straight lines to connect the dots.). The activity illustrates that most people see a box in the grid, but if you are able to see a triangle (shift your thinking) you have a new lens. The PSU- HCMA partnership has required an extraordinary vision.

PSU comes to the partnership believing that:

- VN officials can improve their leadership skills through learning;
- The method makes a big difference – active and engaged learning is a must for acquiring and retaining soft skills;
- The work must be a co-production and must include experimenting with practices.

DISCUSSION:

Question: This partnership is obviously the work of tremendous effort. How do you make sure that the changes actually take place after the training? Dr. Ingle: There is a lot of literature on how to teach soft skills. Dale's Cone of Experience says that people remember 90% of what they say as they do a thing. We require our students to reflect on what they have learned and practice, but our methods continue to improve. Dr. Dinh: Are you the one who can make a difference? Many procedures have been reformed, but if they don't have the tools they cannot make the changes. We hope that they will use the tools they are given. Dr. Ingle: Also, we are building a critical mass of change, and it has been occurring.

Visiting Professor Charles Wilson, VNU: After Intel's study, VNU has changed and now students must take half a semester of critical thinking. This is difficult for professors! It is a slow and political process. We are constantly revising our teaching methodology

Comment: I have experience studying abroad; critical thinking is very important. But conditions must be right for us to apply new teaching methods. Response: It is important that faculty staff here has proper incentives to use the new pedagogy. At the University of Science in HCMC we brought students from the U.S. to study here and do community projects. It was the first time ever they were doing engaged learning. They loved it but had no time for it. They are taking 14 classes. The teachers are also overwhelmed and underpaid: have to work at other jobs. Faculty who studied abroad and/or were younger were more successful but it was still very challenging. Dr. Ingle: What happens to faculty when they return properly trained but are not given the appropriate resources? They will not be successful. As for the size of the class, 35-40 students is the reality.

Mr. Elliott Baldwin, Volunteer in Asia, Hong Duc University: I have some experience with critical thinking and it seems there is a focus on the negative aspects and not the positive. How do we prevent this? Answer: There is lots of good literature on how to foster good critical thinking. It takes about as long as learning a foreign language. You have to structure the boundaries of the dialogue in your class to be constructive and reflective.

***SESSIONS B: PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES
AND COLLEGES***

Comment: You must not only train the Doers, the Champions and the Saints! Ask learners what else needs to be changed; then we can assess and form a strategy for change at every level – a “systematic view”. Most Vietnamese do know how to use soft skills but are less familiar with the concept.

Question: This is an exciting co-production. My center is responsible for education development in a mountainous region. Is there any college we can approach to cooperate with us? We were denied cooperation by USAID for our project. Answer: We suggest looking at ways to improve your persuasion skills.

Question: Leadership requires quick decisions but consensus is not always possible – how can you balance this? Answer: We have an effective way to come to a consensus - an idea goes up and down so it isn't one person's idea. In Asia, if a teacher talks, a student listens and that is considered consensus.

Questioner from NY: How do we induce thinking outside the bounds but within the resources? I want to congratulate the sponsors. Nowadays it is impossible to find such a good conference that is free with such a good coffee break and lunch. I congratulate the organizers and sponsors.

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

Sessions C: Increasing the Number of Vietnamese Studying in the U.S.

1-C Student Perspectives on Preparing Vietnamese Students for Study in the U.S.

Speakers:

Dr. Nguyen Xuan Vang, Director General, Vietnam International Education Development, MOET

Mr. Khoa Pham, Co-Founder, VietAbroad

Mr. Hai Nguyen, VietAbroad Student, California State University, Long Beach

Ms. An Vo, VietAbroad Student, Mount Holyoke College

Mr. Hoang Tuan Dung, Fulbright Alumni, Business Development Manager, Microsoft Vietnam

Key points:

- MOET is dedicated to increasing foreign study and higher education exchange opportunities, especially in the fields of science and technology.
- “Soft skill” pre-departure training, as well as English language proficiency and a strong academic background, contribute to study abroad success.
- Matching Vietnamese students to U.S. educational institutions deserves careful evaluation and monitoring.

Presentations:

Dr. Nguyen Xuan Vang outlined his department’s responsibility to oversee student and faculty educational exchanges, and facilitate links and partnerships between Vietnamese and foreign institutions of higher education for MOET. Since its establishment in 2008, the number of government-sponsored students abroad has increased to 740 PhD students in 40 different countries (U.S. is fourth in popularity after Germany, Australia and France) and plans to offer 1,000 PhD scholarships by 2010. His department tracks returnee rates: from 2000 to 2009, 359 of the 486 sent to the U.S. graduated and returned. About fields of study, 52% of the undergraduate scholarships went towards business majors and 38% for science and technology. To prepare students, they offer pre-departure training in English language and academic cross cultural skills; as well as working with host institutions to provide ongoing support including funding for PhD candidates.

Mr. Khoa Pham reported an increasing number of high school students are electing to study abroad. Vietnamese understanding of the different educational options available in the U.S. is becoming sophisticated and selective. Effective recruitment strategies for U.S. institutions include supporting Vietnamese students to return to their high schools and home towns to share their experiences, and translating websites into Vietnamese to make information more accessible to families.

Mr. Hoang Tuan Dung, based on his experiences attending a French high school and an American university, believes planning and support greatly increase a student’s resilience and chances of academic success. He recommends organizations help students with their travel plans (including air tickets, visas, and airport pickup), assist students settling in,

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

and link students to social networks such as international or Vietnamese student groups to help with cultural differences and to celebrate familiar holidays.

Mr. Hai Nguyen attended a community college because the tuition was affordable and the class size small but then transferred to a state university which was both a challenging and extremely rewarding experience, forcing him to become proactive and self sufficient, and giving him access to a wide selection of top-notch relevant courses.

Ms. An Vo argued that small liberal arts colleges and the educational opportunity they offer to discover and develop personal interests are poorly understood in Vietnam and deserve more publicity. She advocated students should master “soft skills” including approaching professors, asking questions, disagreeing, debating, developing independent points of view and taking a leadership role in advance. She benefited from a high school junior year abroad program and wants equivalent opportunities to be offered to more students. U.S. educational institutions vary in quality and must be carefully evaluated, and only qualified Vietnamese students should be sent abroad to benefit from these experiences.

DISCUSSION:

Question from a professor of surgery, LSU Medical Center: What data do you have on returnees being placed in leadership positions? Dr. Vang: No national statistics are available; we are organizing to collect our own. Students are required to return to their original institution and serve three times the time period the government sponsored.

Ms. Tuyet Brown, lecturer and psychotherapist: There is a lack of critical soft skills training. I’ve met students who go to the U.S. and believe they’re no longer Vietnamese and in the process harm themselves and the country’s reputation. We need to support “soft skills training”. Dr. Vang: Ninety percent of the PhD students we send abroad are University lecturers and we are providing them with additional soft skills training before departure. Many Vietnamese universities are also partnering with outside universities to provide student-participatory style pedagogy in their classrooms.

Mr. Dang Ngoc Duc, Chief, International Financial Department, Banking and Finance Faculty, Hanoi National Economics University: We have students who are finding it difficult to complete their educations abroad because of a lack of state funding after two years. Do you have ways of continuing funding? Dr. Vang: If a student’s marks are 90% A’s, he or she is eligible to apply for additional funding.

Mr. Brent Omdahl, Foreign Commercial Service, U.S. Embassy: The role of educational agents and their ability to serve the needs of students is controversial in the U.S. Did any of you use an agent and if so did you find this useful? Dr. Vang: Interesting question; currently there are no regulations and many universities are having trouble with agents supplying misleading information such as claiming they represent MOET. This is untrue; MOET never works with agents. No one on this panel has gone to an agent.

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

Dr. Trinh Thang, VEF Alumni, Center for Support of Social Development Program: Soft skills are very important, I scored top in TOEFL but couldn't contribute to class discussion for six months. I finally enrolled in a public speaking class as part of my PhD preparation. Foreign students coming to Vietnam to study are a good resource for modeling active class participation. Ms. An Vo: I want to clarify that I didn't intend to imply Vietnam has no soft skills programs but only to emphasize the need to introduce these earlier at the high school level since many students go abroad for college.

A college Economist at the National University: Is there any possibility of prioritizing the natural sciences as a field of study? Dr. Vang: We currently sponsor students pursuing 23 different subject areas. We plan to re-evaluate this list. Currently there are no guidelines on selecting majors but we expect to fund few business degrees and welcome science and technology in the future.

2-C Attracting and Integrating Returning Vietnamese MA's and PhD's into Vietnamese Universities and Research Institutes

Speakers:

Dr. Lynne McNamara, Executive Director Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF)
Dr. Luong Van Thang, Deputy Director-General Ministry of Science and Technology, Department of International Cooperation
Dr. Trinh Thanh, VEF Alumni, Center for Support of Social Development Programs
Dr. Phan Hong Son, Executive Director National Foundation for Science and Technology Development

Key points:

- Foreign universities have an obligation to facilitate Vietnamese student return to Vietnam
- Vietnam must provide an atmosphere that welcomes returning students

Presentations:

Dr. McNamara introduced the problem: the most talented scholars of Vietnam go to the U.S. or other countries for a masters or doctorate education and instead of bringing this education back to Vietnam they find more desirable occupation abroad.

Those are the points VEF focuses on to stop "the brain-drain":

- VEF (Vietnam Education Foundation) seeks to obtain commitments from students prior to study abroad that they will use their education in Vietnam.
- VEF organizes presentations by inspirational leaders from Vietnam to the students. They discuss work environment, money, support for research available in Vietnam

Other points to consider:

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

- Foreign Universities: Departments and professors need to encourage students to return home. Remind them of the goal; do not recruit the best students to stay overseas.
- Invite companies that can offer international opportunities to university career fairs.
- Employers in Vietnam need to provide attractive financial packages, assure a work environment that will allow the student to use education to its fullest potential. Confirm the path for advancement.
- Students should seek internships and post-graduate work with companies doing business in Vietnam. Visit potential employers during home visits.
- Further recommendations: Alumni network for students who are educated overseas. Create incubators for start up businesses. Create centers of excellence for researchers.
- Vietnam Embassy/Consulates in the U.S. should keep in touch with student and supply encouragement, not coercion.

Dr. Phan Hong Son represents a new Vietnamese organization for scientific development. His organization provides funding for returning graduates to do basic science research, grants to attend conferences or for overseas research fellowships. They would like to develop centers of excellence in the next year in hopes of attracting alumni.

Dr Trinh Thang is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill in Health Education Research and participated in the VEF program. He is currently an education consultant. His acronym for the concepts to attract students back to Vietnam is MIRRORS, which encompasses: motivation and mutual partnership; inviting and intimate; rights through contract and negotiation; responsibilities and commitment before leaving for the U.S.; opportunities like short-term internships and summer work; results based management; and support, trust, care as well as encouragement.

DISCUSSION:

Question: What support is available for Vietnamese scholars, teachers, or professors? Dr. Son: We have started a program for basic science and plan to begin funding for social science support, for publication and conference attendance. We plan to further develop funding programs. Proposals can be submitted at any time. We are also working with a Vietnamese research foundation in a cooperative relationship with the Belgian government. Funds are available for sponsored research in Vietnamese territory, even for foreign entities. What is the maximum grant? The foundation decided not to put a ceiling for grants. They rely on rules and regulation for the research budget. The average grant in 2009 was US\$30-40,000, eight fold the previous grants. The yearly budget is US\$30 million and they are requesting double that quantity for next year.

Dr. Toi, Professor at International University in HCMC: Can you elaborate on the term 'center of excellence'? Is this a new term for an old idea? Dr. Son: I heard about this several years ago, learned that the initiative fell apart. We are trying to develop a new program; the budget will now allow this to be launched. Why did it fail 6 years ago? No money was allocated. Now, money is available again. The plan is under development but it needs technical support.

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

Dr. Toi: “I came home. I experimented myself to see what it was like. My acronym is VERY HAPPY”. He encourages Vietnamese overseas to return. Dr. Thang commented that access to information is limited; libraries charge US\$35 for each journal article. Dr. Son stated universities are not ready to accommodate returning scholars. Dr. Toi says “We are!” Dr. McNamara gave closing remarks emphasizing the importance of networking and professor encouragement.

3-C U.S. Government Educational Programs in Vietnam

Speakers:

*Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs Alina Romanowski, U.S.
Department of State*
Dr. Lynne McNamara, Executive Director, Vietnam Education Foundation
Mr. Frank Donovan, Vietnam Country Director, U.S.AID

Key points:

- It’s an exciting time for educational exchange, with support from the highest levels of the U.S. Government
- The U.S. Government is actively involved in education and exchange programs that benefit our two countries such as the Fulbright Programs, VEF, and U.S.AID education grants.
- Successful programs must include pre-departure training and preparation, including language and soft skills training; to be sustainable they must continue collaboration, communication and assessment after participants return.

Presentations:

Deputy Assistant Secretary Alina Romanowski described the numerous exchange and education programs she oversees. She noted the continuing growth of international exchange worldwide and between Vietnam and the U.S. in particular, including the following points:

- International exchange creates opportunities for personal growth, mutual understanding and lays the groundwork for the collaboration necessary to find solutions to problems that confront us on a global scale – climate change, public health, food security and human resource development.
- Vietnam has leapt from 20th to 9th in the U.S. international student market with 13,000 students studying in the U.S. U.S. study abroad has climbed 8.5% to 262,000 students including an 18.5% increase in Vietnam, totaling 652 students.
- She touted EducationUSA’s advisors for giving free, comprehensive and unbiased advice to Vietnamese students and to U.S. universities, too. New advisors will work in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and a new website was unveiled in

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

December. The staff will conduct outreach, do workshops and pre-departure orientation and has information on scholarship opportunities.

- DAS Romanowski's bureau has numerous ESL offerings in the region, including an ESL counselor, numerous in-country and online language courses, fellowships and teaching exchange programs.

Dr. Lynne McNamara, Executive Director, VEF, described the VEF program, created in 2000 by Congress to build excellence in science and technology through educational exchange. She made the following points:

- VEF began in 2003, and is funded at \$5 million a year until 2018. Its board features the Secretaries of State, Treasury and Education, two senators and representatives, and six presidential appointees.
- VEF has four main programs: fellowship degree programs (for Vietnamese); Visiting Scholar grants (for Vietnamese); U.S. Faculty Scholar grants (for Americans); and Capacity building projects (in Vietnam).

Mr. Frank Donovan, Country Director for Vietnam, U.S.AID introduced the audience to recently launched education funding programs in Vietnam. Some of the key points included:

- U.S.AID education topics of interest for potential grants include enhancing teaching; improving quality; improving autonomy and improving access;
- 2009-2010 funding totaled \$1.7 million. Most of the funding for 2010 has been obligated, but he hopes that more funding will be available;
- Those interested in participating in the process should provide an initial concept paper when the call comes out and, if requested by U.S.AID, a subsequent full proposal;
- U.S.AID is interested in public-private partnerships, fund matching and multipliers.

DISCUSSION:

Questioner from University of Houston: Are there any plans for summer/short term research programs in U.S. to stimulate Vietnamese undergraduate student interest and development? Dr. McNamara responded that the legislation specifies graduate students only. In Vietnam, research is primarily for post-grads. Those who fail to gain admittance to VEF usually lack practical research experience so it's a good idea to provide it to undergrads. One VEF program that brings U.S. scholars here has a research component.

DAS Romanowski stated that the Fulbright program is for MAs. The Department of State has 1 year programs for undergrads but not yet in Vietnam—it's worth considering. However, undergrads interested in such opportunities in the U.S. can study there and also get advice from EducationUSA advisors.

Deputy Director Tang Nguyen from University of Technology appreciated these programs but thought sending instructors/lecturers from Vietnam to the U.S. and vice-versa would be more effective than just sending 40 people to the U.S. DAS Romanowski said that scholar exchange programs exist and are worthwhile, and while

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

we would want to send more than 40 people, in the context of limited resources it's a start. Dr. McNamara said that if corporations want to donate, VEF can send more people on programs; those audience members wanting to bring a particular scholar from the U.S. to Vietnam or vice versa should encourage them to apply for a grant.

Dr. Tomas Morales, President College of Staten Island, CUNY thanked the panel for their good work and great impact. Dr. Greg Crow from U.S.F asked the panel to consider a nursing program.

A questioner asked about the building capacity for science and technology pedagogy. DAS Romanowski said that there are some teacher training programs. Mr. Matt McMahan, East Asia and Pacific Fulbright Programs said that the Fulbright Specialist Program brings up to 15 U.S. academics a year to help build capacity at Vietnamese universities, hold workshops and assist in curricula and pedagogy. Dr. McNamara said that VEF programs include methodology and pedagogy in study.

A questioner asked about VEF opportunities in social sciences. DAS Romanowski said that Fulbright programs are open to all disciplines, including humanities, and mentioned cultural visitors programs for the arts; VEF is focused on science and technology. Mr. Donovan said that they were wide open to social sciences.

Question from IIG VN: We are interested in U.S.AID funding for English proficiency programs. Mr. Donovan encouraged him to look at the website and to make a proposal. He added as a reminder that the target was undergraduate students and to find U.S./Vietnam partnerships. DAS Romanowski asked the questioner to speak with John Scacco, the regional language officer. Ms. Tuyet Trees, Foreign Commercial Service U.S. Embassy Hanoi introduced the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service and said that they were here to help U.S. universities operate in Vietnam.

4-C The Student Visa Application Process: Myths and Realities

Speakers:

Mr. William Weissman, Consular Chief, U.S. Embassy Hanoi

Mr. Martin Oppus, NIV Chief, Consular Office, U.S. Consulate General (CG) HCMC

Key points:

- Myths and realities facing student visa applicants
- Policy-wide issues involving student visa processing
- Questions and answers about student visas

Presentations:

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

Mr. Weissman, Consular Chief of the U.S. Embassy Hanoi opened the Breakout Session by introducing the speakers and welcoming the audience.

Mr. Oppus followed by providing statistics regarding student visa processing at the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City. He indicated that the number of total visa applications increased by 200% in 2008 compared with 2007. In 2009, due to the economic recession, the number went down by 20%, but it was still a 60% increase over 2007. In 2009 the U.S. Consulate General in HCMC and the Embassy in Hanoi processed over 21,000 and 2,400 student visa applications respectively.

Mr. Weissman discussed the provision of U.S. immigration law which requires a Consular Officer to presume that applicants are intending immigrants. Applicants are therefore required to convince the consular officers that they will return to Vietnam after the completion of their study.

Mr. Oppus dispelled a number of myths surrounding student visa applications:

- Applicants have to prove that they are serious students by presenting how they were doing in school and what they want to pursue in their education. English is not required; however it is fair to request students to have some English.
- Applicants have to demonstrate how they will afford the education tuition and living expenses in the United States. The consular officers will judge the financial situation such as family situation, scholarship, assistance, etc.
- Most importantly, students will have to answer the following question: will you come back to Vietnam. The consular officers will judge whether the whole plan makes sense. If it does, the visa will be issued and if it does not, the visa will be refused.

Mr. Weissman informed the audience of other policy-wide issues such as the visa reciprocity and the renewal program. The U.S. is happy that many students want to study in the U.S. The maximum waiting time for a visa interview, two weeks in Vietnam, is not long in comparison to the two-month wait in many other countries. In the meantime, it is a big challenge for the Embassy and the Consulate General as the number of student visa applications grows annually. The problem is that according to the reciprocity agreement with Vietnam, the maximum student visa length is one year only. “The Embassy is working with the Government of Vietnam to increase the reciprocity to the benefit of Vietnamese students, but so far we have not been successful”. The good news is that the Embassy just launched the renewal program which allows returning students to renew student visas without having to come for a personal interview.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Tapn Bhargarer, Hai Phong University, asked for clarification on short term and long term visas and whether the Embassy will issue visas to those students who want to go for a six or seven months study only. Mr. Weissman answered that the visa length is based on reciprocity and that the U.S.G can only issue the maximum visa length that the GVN

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

gives to U.S. students. The second answer was, of course the students will be issued a visa if they qualify. The length of study does not determine whether or not a visa will be issued.

Mr. Hung, Viet Foundation asked about a specific visa applicant who was refused a visa but did not know why. Mr. Oppus stated that they cannot comment on specific cases. His advice to the students is to make sure they explain themselves well and give specific answers to convince the consular officers that they are qualified applicants.

Ms. Nguyen Hong Ha of Study Link International asked two questions: 1) If applicants are taking a package program, such as English and MBA but have the I-20 for the English course only, do they need the condition letter or do they just need the English course's I-20? 2) Is it a disadvantage for students to have their application prepared by an education agency? On the second question, Mr. Oppus confirmed that it's irrelevant whether the student goes through an education agency: the consular officers are only interested in the student at the interview; if the student is well-prepared, the students' chances are higher. On the first question, he explained that it is good to have both items but the consular officers look at other factors as well. Mr. Weissman added that the condition letter may show that the students have certain plans. He also commented that while it is great for students to study in the U.S., with the U.S. unemployment rate at 10%, consular officers have to be careful about those going to work illegally in the U.S.

A Vietnamese American thanked the consular officers for their hard work and appreciated the difficult situation the consular officers are in. He also asked whether the letter of the dean is required; how many interviewers are there in Hanoi and HCMC; how long does one interview take; what is the maximum number of interviews that one can have; and how long one has to wait before reapplying. Mr. Oppus answered that the dean's letter is not required, but it can help explain about the program in the U.S.; there are between one to three interviewers in Hanoi and four in HCMC; one actual interview lasts three to five minutes, but it also depends on the case. Mr. Oppus and Mr. Weissman commented that it is not a fun job rejecting people and that applicants should be as honest as possible during their interviews.

Ms. Binh from Vietnam Education Fund asked what to do to make sure returning students get on-line appointments on time. Mr. Weissman advised them to start early and not to wait until they are in Vietnam to schedule their appointment, or to renew their visas by courier once they've returned to Vietnam.

Ms. Tran Thi Dan of Sunrise Vietnam shared the difficulty for the high school students to know how much money their parents make. Mr. Weissman commented that the parents should decide whether to tell their kids about their money and how they will pay for their education. Mr. Oppus suggested that if the parents don't want to let the kids know how much they make, they can let the kids know what they do, how many houses, factories or trucks they own. Ms. Tran stated that she was happy to be at this conference and wanted to propose that consular officers give clear reasons as to why a student is refused a visa.

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

Mr. Oppus responded that the consular officers have to assess the entire situation, so it's hard to give specific reasons.

Mr. Chris Ibarra of June First LLC asked about the requirements for J visa applicants. Mr. Weissman informed him that the Embassy and Consulate General process a lot of J visa applications for secondary school students, the summer work and travel students or State Department's scholarship grantees. The requirements are the same as those of F visa and section 214(b) regarding ties to the home country also applies. Mr. Ibarra also commented that many students think that the interviews are scary. Mr. Oppus and Mr. Weissman appreciated the feedback and shared that the Embassy and the Consulate General are doing their best to make the process faster and more comfortable.

5-C The Role of Community College Programs in Promoting American-Style Education

Speakers:

Ms. Gigi Do, Director Office of International Initiative, Houston Community College
Dr. Rudy Soliz, Business Administration Program, Houston Community College
Dr. Nguyen Van Sau, Chancellor, Saigon University of Technology
Graduate Student from Saigon Tech

Key points:

- The importance of Community College education in our everyday lives
- Developing a partnership between Houston Community College and Saigon University of Technology
- Student's statement on the success of Community College education
- Why promote American-style education?

Presentations:

Ms. Gigi Do described the role played in our daily lives by Community College graduates: from firefighters and educators, to construction workers and bakers. She pointed out how unimaginable our lives would be without all these professionals.

- The success of the HCC and Saigon Tech programs showed up in the number of Vietnamese international students enrolled in HCC.
- HCC has a MOU with many countries now. It is a role model of change and innovation for the higher education system

Dr. Rudy Soliz described how the partnership between Houston Community College and Saigon University of Technology developed, touching on accreditation issues, management from afar and faculty credentials.

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

- On accreditation, both HCC and Saigon Tech have to obey the rules of the accrediting agencies. There is a strict process for accreditation issuances and HCC is proud to have it.
- On management from afar, the Houston Community College is based in the fourth largest city in the U.S., with the largest foreign population of students. Now it is present in both North and South America and in Asia. To manage these different geographic areas, they rely on personal relationships and annual visits; sitting in classrooms and listening to students; building relationships with students and administrations; evaluating lecturers.
- On credentials: the faculty in Saigon Tech is composed of local individuals from the HCMC with the same credential's requirements as in Houston. In the classrooms, the only language spoken is English because HCC prides itself for teaching students to go to work. The student's English skills during a job interview make the difference in getting the job. Each HCC student speaks two languages at least. A recent graduate from Saigon Tech gave testimony of this philosophy.

Dr. Nguyen Van Sau explained why American-style Education should be promoted and how to promote the American-style College properly.

- The major advantages of American Higher Education are: accreditation, coordination, articulation and innovation. These are the most cost effective tools to ensure quality in education and the most powerful tools in shaping American-style education. In Vietnam, there was a sense of discouragement about accreditation but now things have changed for the better. Accreditation and coordination combined will bring good results. Articulation can be optimized to get accreditation between colleges. But Vietnam lacks an NGO entity to administer accreditation. And since no coordinating board is handling accreditation, articulation cannot happen. In the U.S., colleges and universities work together so that accreditation can be achieved cost effectively: the bodies of accreditation are the result of coordinated synergy. The major disadvantage of American education is its class system tendency; Harvard, MIT, Stanford.... They are too good for their own good, particularly for the twenty first century education.
- College is part of the higher education system, despite the usual misunderstandings. Vietnam has two different college systems: one administered by MOET and one by MOLISA. Vietnam needs to reorganize its higher education. That means adapting the best characteristics of the American-style model and avoiding the worst ones. This can be done either top-down, changing and improving laws and regulations, or bottom-up, establishing partnership models at the lowest level that can inspire changes.

Dr. Soliz explained the role of different Community College programs in the U.S.: the CC based Higher Education and the CC based Technical Vocation Higher Education.

- The CC today plays the role of change and has been innovating and improving for many years. It is also a gateway for higher education and an excellent model for students, communities, states and countries. HCC continues to bring this model

SESSIONS C: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE STUDYING IN THE U.S.

- overseas. For those students not sure about what to study, the CC offers the possibility to try out different subjects and rethink their choices. They do not lose much time because of the articulation between the systems. When they exit CC they know where to go and they also know that they can return at any given time.
- The Technical Vocational College has become a new thing, what we call Technical Vocational Higher Education. Fields such as computer specialist are an example where vocational careers do not need to go through universities.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Duong Nguyen, John Hopkins University asked about the divisions of responsibilities between HCC and Saigon Tech in terms of autonomy, finances and SAT's. Dr. Soliz answered that they make recommendations during their annual visits but the autonomy and finances of the institution are handled in place. Their curriculum is exactly the same as in Houston. They also promote faculty exchange, seminars and everything that will encourage communication. There is a great deal of hidden support.

Mr. Win, from Arece, asked if HCC was watching which industry sectors would need graduates in the future. As an example, he mentioned how aviation services in HCMC are being developed strongly and whether there is any specific programs to address all fields related to that development. Dr. Soliz confirmed their collaboration with industry. HCC uses the synergy of its partnerships in the U.S. to develop programs needed worldwide. Their advisors can produce a marketing analysis and apply it to Saigon.

Dr. Karl Voss, St. Louis Community College, Meramec asked if HCC would have workshops all over VN. Dr. Soliz explained that HCC has done workshops on clean energy; it has built a center of excellence to bring home new technologies and research on nanotechnology. The results from this research will tell what they need to develop.

Questioner: How does the model from HCC work for the rural areas in Vietnam like rubber plantations and other remote areas in the country? Dr. Soliz answered that HCC has started to develop a model. Other initiatives include the willing partnership of the Vietnamese government, corporate industries and colleges. This will further have an effect on the communities.

Ms. Do concluded the session announcing the project headed by one of her former professors, to develop a fine arts education community college in Vietnam.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

Sessions on Joint Programs in Specific Subjects

6-A Information Technology Programs

Speakers:

Ms. Christina Anthony, Regional Program Development Management, Cisco Networking Academy

Dr. Hai Tran, Associate Adjunct Professor, George Washington University Senior Level Technologist, Center for Technology and Engineering U.S. Government Accountability Office

Dr. Nguyen Ngoc Binh, Rector, University of Technology, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Key points:

- Cisco is engaged in capacity building at sixteen schools in Vietnam, helping Vietnamese students to become part of the “knowledge economy” to make them more employable.
- English training and open courseware can help students gain the skills they need.
- Key challenges in the area of information technology (IT) training are ineffective training methods and micro-management by MOET.
- Vietnam must choose from various international standards to design its own IT training programs and must define “IT” carefully.

Presentations:

Ms. Anthony described Cisco’s eight years in Vietnam, teaching technological skills with new technologies and giving students concrete skills to improve their employability. She stressed that the new generation has experience with new technologies and multitasking and that teachers need to adapt accordingly. She also mentioned major challenges facing Vietnam and its IT sector: a 23% gap between supply of and demand for qualified personnel (supplies are short!), weak infrastructure, and a lack of teachers devoted to teaching IT.

Dr. Hai stressed the utility of open courseware such as that developed by MIT and spoke openly about Vietnam’s challenges: micro-management by MOET, ineffective teaching methods and rote learning, lack of interactive exchange, and focus on knowledge transmission rather than synthesis. He also stressed the need for English skills.

Dr. Binh noted that there are numerous international standards that Vietnam could adopt in designing its own IT training programs, and must define “IT” carefully (to determine whether it encompasses computer engineering, computer science, information science, software engineering, networking...). He stressed the challenges of curriculum development, teaching, standards, creation and standardization of IT terms in Vietnamese and best practices development.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

DISCUSSION:

Questioner: Regarding putting IT terms into Vietnamese, should they be translated, and if so, how? Dr. Binh said that there should be an effort to translate the terms, because Vietnamese is a living language and translation would only enrich it. He stressed that as people introduce suggestions for technical terms, certain suggestions will become standard. Ms. Anthony disagreed somewhat, stressing that lecturers should create a Vietnamese-English IT glossary for student reference, but that the students *need* to learn the English words.

Mr. Brent Omdahl from the U.S. Commercial Service in Hanoi asked what the University of Technology in Hanoi is doing to meet market needs. Dr. Binh responded that the university is inviting overseas partners and local and international industry; expanding programs beyond computer science; and engaging with an international advising board. This board includes the French embassy, IBM, the Japanese Embassy, Japanese corporations, and others. The university sends its curricula to the board to obtain feedback.

6-B Science Programs

Speakers:

Dr. Jeffrey Riedinger, Dean, International Studies and Programs, Michigan State University

Dr. Ha Thanh Toan, Vice Rector, Can Tho University

Key points:

- The partnership between Michigan State University and Can Tho University is a long term model, investing in the next generation of research faculty.
- Success lies in shared goals, long term commitment, numerous avenues of partnership and some autonomy and support from MOET

Presentations:

Vice Rector Toan introduced and explained the partnership between the two institutions. Can Tho University is located in the Mekong Delta in an area populated by 18 million people that produces much of the country's fish, rice and tropical fruit. Biotechnology is a priority in this area to increase agricultural production. Can Tho University was established in 1966 and has no accreditation yet but ranked 38th in Asia, second or third in Vietnam. It has 40,000 students.

In collaboration with Michigan State University, Can Tho University has developed a BS in Biotechnology program. This BS is a 135 credit program and offers three major

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

choices. It takes four or five years and it includes one intensive semester of English. Can Tho University's first class graduates this year.

CTU held four workshops and brought in MSU staff to help create the curriculum. In addition, seven CTU staff members were sent to MSU for training for three months and ten MSU staff went to CTU to teach specialized courses like teaching English or training staff on better teaching methods. The use of new technology has enabled students to have an immediate response during class on a computer interface.

Means to Success:

- **Human Resources:** Can Tho University has 25 Associate Professors and 80 Masters or PhDs in related biotechnology. Four colleges and three research universities work in related fields.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** CTU has received many grants for infrastructure at their various colleges including one from Atlantic Philanthropies.
- **Management Policy:** Prioritize excellent students who have good English skills, strong research abilities and are active; reward teaching excellence; and invest in infrastructure.

As a result of the success, CTU has special support and “autonomy” from MOET. CTU has very clear policies for teachers and students. Graduates have promising job opportunities and excellent contacts. Students are active and eager to learn.

Future Plans: MSU will assist CTU with the accreditation process; MSU will give graduates of the joint program some sort of certificate; MSU will develop summer internships in research labs for CTU students; MSU will recruit CTU grads for MSU graduate school; more staff exchanges and joint research activities; develop on-line courses that link students from both universities.

Suggestions to MOET: Universities need clear policies from MOET regarding these types of partnerships. In addition, universities need more autonomy to carry out projects regarding curriculum, tuition fees and salary.

Dr. Riedinger elaborated: Each partner must ask – what's in it for me? These two partners have a shared interest in aquaculture. MSU runs a Long Term Experimental Research Station which looks at the changing effects of land use on water culture. MSU also benefits by receiving excellent students and gaining access to the Mekong Delta which opens up a whole new world of research possibilities. In addition, they benefit from faculty exchanges, study abroad opportunities - going outbound and recruiting in - and student internships. The quality and skills of the CTU students is very high. MSU sees this as an investment in the next generation of research faculty. It is a long term model.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Mark Rentz from ASU: If you take the best of the best into the CTU program what happens to the rest of the students? Vice Rector Toan answered that the best students get

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

VEF scholarships to attend graduate school; the other students are very employable – CTU has many good connections with companies who would hire their students.

Questioner: How do courses transfer back and forth? Answer: CTU grads would normally receive a transcript but they would like to be able to certify the degree program. Graduates from CTU are on a fast-track for entry to the MSU grad program and, upon return to Can Tho, they are very competitive for faculty positions.

Question: Where does the funding for on-line programs come from? Dr. Riedinger answered that MSU has a successful revenue model that gives their departments an incentive. If they build a program and there is a demand for it, MSU will take 25% of the fees and the department 75% as long as they run the program. This has worked well.

Questioner from Thai Nguyen University: We are trying to begin such a program. How can you afford to send faculty? Vice Rector Toan answered that they receive government support and CTU pays some travel expenses and per diem. Dr. Riedinger added that this plan works if you have very motivated faculty - MSU faculty are offered incentives. Plus you need minimum class sizes and it can be expensive for students paying for the classes.

Dr. Lynne McNamara, Vietnam Education Foundation reminded the group that U.S. faculty members can apply for VEF grants to go to Vietnam for teaching on-site or via video conferencing. She also asked if there were issues integrating U.S. university courses into a Vietnamese university. Answer: CTU has copied or purchased some courses from MSU. Practicum is the responsibility of CTU. The textbook is from MSU and adapted classes are in English. CTU still has not resolved the issue of how to offer a degree from MSU.

Math Professor from VNU: Do you find it difficult to attract good students? The best students seem to want to study Economics and your tuition is double the normal fee. Answer: Biotech is a promising industry; if students have good English skills, the top five to ten students can get scholarships: 100 students apply and 30 are accepted. Dr. Riedinger added that MSU is mindful of making education available to all. They are always looking for scholarships and keeping a high level of eligible students for Pell Grants.

6-C Economics Programs

Speakers:

Dr. Kenneth Curtis, Assistant Vice President, International Education, California State University Long Beach (CSU-LB)

Dr. Pham Quang Trung, Vice Rector, Hanoi National Economics University (NEU)

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

Key points:

- California's three-tier, low-cost high-quality model and CSU's "Access to Excellence" motto are a good fit for what Vietnam wants to achieve.
- Joint CSU/NEU programs have been very successful and beneficial to both sides, but expansion is needed for resources, faculty, and students.

Dr. Curtis of CSU-LB on CSU/NEU collaboration:

- CSU-LB works with NEU on supporting NEU's faculty development, English skills, curriculum, accreditation, library development and pedagogy best practices.
- CSU hopes to increase the number of U.S. students studying in Vietnam and expand faculty exchanges, but acknowledged challenges of massive budget constraints.

Dr. Pham Quang Trung of NEU:

- Over just two years, CSU's programs have increased faculty's development and curriculum materials dramatically. Visits in both directions should expand both in numbers as well as in length of visits.
- Accreditation and quality assessment have been particularly useful, because there are no such guidelines in Vietnam.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. John Hayward, retired CSU-East Bay, living in Vietnam for past two years, asked about CSU-LB's motive; financial viability for this program; faculty incentives to participate; and if standards were lowered for Vietnamese students. Dr. Curtis responded that Vietnam is where CSU-LB's local and global interests intersect because Orange County has a large Vietnamese-American community with existing relationships to Vietnam. Faculty is motivated not by pay but by research and professional development opportunities while teaching in an emerging and dynamic environment. Admissions in California are blind, and NEU students have to meet the same criteria as the American students.

A retired expatriate, working in Vietnam: How does NEU choose which topics to cover in such a broad field, and what kind of students does NEU want to produce? Dr. Trung responded that NEU focuses on business and offers programs on specific areas of microeconomics (banking and financial management). NEU's graduates have a modern approach and are proficient in both analytical and English skills, so they can work at an international level. The first students from the joint program will graduate in 2010 and the measureable result of success will be their job placement.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

6-D Education Programs

Speakers:

Dr. Charles Townley, Education Management and Development, College of Education, New Mexico State University

Dr. Le Cong Thin, Head, International Cooperation, Vinh University

Dr. Nguyen Phuong Nga, Center for Education Quality Assurance and Research Development, VNU-Hanoi

Key points:

- There are no “qualifications” for university teachers in Vietnam.
- Active teaching methods are lacking, and teachers “teach from sitting at their desks.”
- Concerns expressed about the “top-down” hierarchical approach in education, including the use of only one set of approved MOET textbooks throughout Vietnam.

Presentations:

Dr. Charles Townley briefly described New Mexico State University’s international programs and then invited Dr. Le Cong Thin to talk.

Dr. Thin introduced Vinh University, noting that it has over 500 international students from China and elsewhere, as well as links with schools in Poland and Australia.

Cooperation with New Mexico State University began in September 2009.

DISCUSSION:

A Vietnamese participant asked if teachers need to be licensed in the U.S. Dr. Townley confirmed that they do. Dr. Nguyen Phuong Nga, said this marks a big difference as there “is no real license” in Vietnam for teachers but the Asian Development Bank is helping to set standards. For university teachers “there are no qualifications at all.” Problematic issues included uncreative teaching approaches and styles. A Singaporean teacher agreed that “delivery is very poor” in local classrooms.

An American asked about access to education for students with disabilities. Dr. Nga said there are schools for the blind. Vietnam National University admitted a student with disabilities, who is thriving. But there is no such thing yet as a specialized training to teach students with special needs.

Questioner: How can we assure the integrity of online courses? Dr. Nga said that teachers have to “detect it and recognize it,” when they see it. Dr. Townley noted that some U.S. schools are increasing the in-person, visual component of online training. Summer institutes were discussed as a good avenue for teacher training.

Questioner: Are courses taught in English in Vietnam? An official said the language of education is Vietnamese and legal permissions would be needed to use any other. Only “special courses” can be taught in English. Teachers can only teach MOET approved textbooks.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

A questioner called for each province to have their own textbook instead of having one national book imposed from above. Several audience members agreed on “top-down” issues in education, including the use of one set of textbooks for all of Vietnam. However, a MOET official said that different curricula were not needed for different provinces. A textbook was compared to a bible; if a teacher doesn’t use it, “they are violating the law.” Others argued that a text should be for reference only and needed to be supplemented by different teaching materials.

6-E Social Work Programs

Speakers:

Dr. Neal A. Newfield, Associate Professor of Social Work, West Virginia University

Dr. Alice Hines, Director, Social Work, San Jose State University

Dr. Le Van Phu, Director of Social Work, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Key points:

- In order for social work to be successful in Vietnam, a top down and bottom up education and capacity building process which includes NGOs needs to happen.
- There is an increasing need for Social Workers in Vietnam; there are some limited educational programs but the government’s lack of recognition for this profession has limited graduates from these programs to find work.

Presentations:

Dr. Newfield commented that this was the first of the three Education Conferences offering a breakout session focused on Social Work. .

- He noted that social work is culture bound and it was critical that social work in Vietnam be uniquely bound to the culture of Vietnam.
- He stated that economics required partners to work together. U.S. universities could not carry the economic burden of supporting initiatives on their own and that partners should determine funding solutions together.
- Studies estimate that Vietnam will need an additional 8,500 social workers in the next ten years. This demand requires an increase in options for Social Work programs offered at university level but, at the same time, it requires working with NGOs and government agencies to help develop social work skills for non-professionals already working in this field.

Dr. Alice Hines discussed the opportunities and challenges of international collaboration. She made the following points:

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

- Due to the rapid economic growth and its accompanying social problems - such as children at risk and care for the disabled and elderly - Vietnam needed a systematic and scientific solution to these problems: social work.
- Educational exchanges have taken place between Vietnam and many other countries in the area of social work. Exchanges provide resources, experience, information and consultation on development programs relevant to Vietnam's unique cultural and historical context.
- While there are several areas to collaborate, challenges continue to remain. A lack of materials available in Vietnamese and the need for professional translators familiar with the technical vocabulary was still the norm. She recommended the creation of a professional organization for social workers and educator.

Dr. Le Van Phu made the following points:

- His university's partnership with San Jose State University had many challenges with regards to language, culture and the different educational systems between the two countries. But despite these challenges, in August the first class of this partnership would graduate.
- His school was one of tradition, but had the potential to make this exchange a fruitful one. Partnerships required the effective use of government and donor funds. He noted openness to expanding social work studies in Vietnam.

DISCUSSION:

Questioner: I am very concerned about Social Work students. After their course work is complete where will they work? This is such a new and special field: most people do not understand the specialty of the work. What is the purpose of obtaining a Master or PhD when those with a Bachelor's degree cannot find work? Dr. Le Van Phu replied that this was a shared concern. The full potential of this field has not been realized and his students had this same question. He noted that the government of Vietnam has recognized social work and social workers as a profession, just like any other government field. But a professional code has not yet become a reality and he did not know when that would change. But this situation did not invalidate the need to train these students. Dr. Neal A. Newfield stated that this was the top down problem. But that social work could also be taught to those individuals already working in different areas that might not have social work training, but still needed these skills.

Comment: The social work field has grown rapidly in the past seven years. Many schools or training programs have opened once the area of study was recognized by MOET, but there are not enough teachers for these programs. Many programs are forced to use part-time teachers who work for NGOs or lecturers with training in other disciplines.

Comment: An overarching professional association of social workers and schools needed to be established in Vietnam. A network to share information was really needed. Additionally, the government has also provided funding to bring lecturers from abroad.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

Comment: Social workers needed to be empowered as case workers. They must understand the policy and the powers they derive from that policy. Case management requires skills, power and understanding.

Comment: I am concerned that the recipients of these services do not have a voice in how social work is being developed here in Vietnam. Social Work programs should reflect their needs and opinions as well.

6-F Medical Programs

Speakers:

Dr. Gregory Crow, Director Vietnam Nurse Project, University of San Francisco, School of Nursing

Dr. Truong Viet Binh, Director, Vietnam Academy of Traditional Medicine

Key Point:

- This presentation outlined the process of a successful collaboration between a U.S. university and the Vietnamese government to bring high quality nursing education to Vietnam.

Presentations:

Dr. Crow introduced the Vietnam Nurse Project. Its mission is to improve the health of the people in Vietnam. Currently, nurses in Vietnam are under-utilized. Physicians need re-training to allow nurses to use their skills effectively. The University of San Francisco (U.S.F) School of Nursing will be opening an English language masters program in nursing in Hanoi. Goals include raising the curricular standards in nursing education, improving teaching skills of nursing faculty, assisting faculty with computer based learning and ensuring that nurse education at the master's level is tailored to the needs of Vietnam. No country can increase the capacity of its healthcare system without increasing the capacity of the nurses who practice there. He and Dr. Binh met at the Vietnam consulate and have cooperated to proceed with the project. The eventual aim is to have a baccalaureate program in nursing (BSN) but there are no qualified teachers. Thus, master's level nurses will be trained first and then become faculty for the BSN program. All aspects of the U.S.F nursing program will be taught in Hanoi. Graduates will be able to be credentialed in the U.S. Applicants must have BSN and English proficiency to participate. Expenses for insurance and travel will be covered by a grant. U.S.F is discounting tuition for participants. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health have shown approval for the plan with letters of intent.

Dr. Truong Viet Binh explained that the academy was established on February 2, 2005 and has already made great progress. 4,000 students have been trained in disciplines such as acupuncture, pharmacy, and traditional medicine. Strong emphasis is placed on

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

quality to improve training and, as a result, healthcare. A cooperative agreement with a Chinese university for traditional medicine had its first graduates in 2008. For nursing, the U.S. programs are the most advanced. The academy made contact with U.S.F through the consulate, sent a mission to U.S.F, and then issued a letter of intent. Students will receive a 100% scholarship. To implement the program, they have searched for donors and instructors and prepared documents for training licenses. They have invested to set up a training lab for nursing programs. They asked MOET to approve another training academy and utilize graduates of the Masters in Nursing program (MSN) along with their lecturers. Two big challenges for them are funding and English language skills: the quality of the U.S.F programs is very high and so is the tuition - they need donations; they have developed a program for training in English.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Diep Huong, U.S. PEPFAR-RN: What is the plan so that this curriculum will meet international standards as well as meeting the needs of Vietnam? What type of master's degree is offered? Dr. Crow: The masters program must be conformed to U.S. standards, but will also integrate aspects unique to Vietnam. The MSN they offer is Clinical Nurse Leader. It is a general degree. At this time, physicians manage the nursing programs in Vietnam but we hope this will shift to nurses leading in the future. Dr. Binh: We want a 100% U.S. nursing program: we hope to have similar equipment, materials and human body simulators. Nursing is a new concept in Vietnam and we are licensed to cooperate with the U.S. We hope that our graduates will be qualified. We want to have this program in Vietnam - instead of sending the students to the States - to decrease the expense of living in the U.S. and invest into increasing the number of students that can be trained here. Vietnamese students are hard-working and smart and have a sense for taking care of other people.

A Doctor from Hanoi Medical University said their institution is 108 years old. It also has nurse training - 200 nursing graduates each year. He explained the need for nurse lecturers and English training. They have permission to import advanced programs to improve their curriculum. They are already in cooperation with Australia, Canada and the Netherlands and would like to collaborate with the U.S.F. Dr. Lawrence Roberts, Dean of International Education Utica College explained his experience with opening a campus in Vietnam. His institution wants to bring a nursing branch to Vietnam but has not been successful. His university also offers programs in occupational therapy and physical therapy. They would like to develop a similar collaboration. Dr. Binh: Our academy can help. We proceeded quite fast with this program because of the strong interest in U.S. nursing. We were looking for partners. A door has been opened for us.

Dr. Chu, Associate Professor of Surgery from the U.S.: Can the cost be decreased by using open course ware? Lectures can be recorded and distributed this way. Dr. Crow stated this is part of the plan: using video conferencing and Blackboard. There are some limitations to this. Mr. Chris Ibarra rep UC Berkeley Law School: Medical and nursing programs in the Philippines have cooperative agreements in Cambodia, these may be more cost effective.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

Ms. Diep Huong: Any thoughts on resorting to the Vietnamese overseas community? Many are approaching retirement age and would welcome the opportunity. Dr. Binh: We have approached the Vietnamese community in California and we would welcome any assistance.

7-A Engineering and Technology Programs

Speakers:

Dr. Deborah Chung, Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, State University of New York at Buffalo

Dr. Nguyen Dang Binh, Rector, College of Industry and Technology, Tay Nguyen University

Dr. Bui Viet Khoi, Deputy Director, Center of Training of Advanced Students, Hanoi University of Technology

Key points:

- Engineering and technology programs need to be designed with the goal of training students for long-term professional success and the “real world”
- Globalization offers both opportunities and challenges for Vietnam
- The public universities’ advanced programs can help Vietnam develop.

Presentations:

Dr. Chung stressed that engineering is a robust and innovative discipline: it can lead to discovery, invention, solutions to technical problems, design, technology transfer, and new directions for research. She stressed that engineering programs all over the world need to focus less on a standard curriculum and more on independent study, soft skills, practical applications for research and student-faculty interaction.

Dr. Binh emphasized the opportunities from globalization: international technical assistance; development; experimental/practical work in engineering; modern products; and the possibility of exchanging faculty. He also noted challenges that Vietnam faces in competing in the globalized world: not having a university ranked among the world’s top 200 institutions; an imbalance between the number of students and the amount of resources available to train them; weak design capacity; the tendency to “inherit” existing models of how to do engineering, etc. He suggested that Vietnam should build a new model in order to develop the country.

Dr. Khoi discussed the advanced program in engineering at the Hanoi University of Technology (HUT). He stressed that a country “cannot be a model as an isolated island”. Today’s Vietnamese engineering graduates have top-level training - as HUT borrows the best practices of the top 200 universities worldwide - and the curricula are designed with the labor market in mind.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

7-B Environmental Programs

Speakers:

Dr. Linda Yarr, Executive Director, Partnerships for International Strategies in Asia, George Washington University

Dr. Hoang Van Thang, Director, Center for Natural Resources and Environment, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Key points:

- Successful partnerships allow plenty of time for consultation: they create a broad base framework for scientists, policy makers and local people to integrate their opinions, for exchange at all levels to improve input data and exchange information.
- There are several types of programs available to study environmental sciences in Vietnam, many of which were identified through a RAPID assessment.

Presentations:

Dr. Yarr focused her comments on how to successfully establish partnerships that creatively work together to develop solutions to the world's problems. During her presentation, Dr. Yarr presented the "three C's" to establishing a successful partnership:

- First, *consultation* – the process of patiently identifying mutual needs, resources and establishing a broad framework to expand participation and identify key people to facilitate the maturation of the relationship.
- Second, *continuity* – the need to establish mutual trust and respect. Projects require the broadest possible participation. It is also important to agree to a broad and flexible framework of interests. One should expect and prepare for gaps in communication and therefore identify a motivated point person to keep the process' momentum.
- And, third, *creativity*. With global climate change "taking us to uncharted waters," resolving these issues will take innovation and problem solving.
- Vietnam remains a most vulnerable country to the effects of the global climate change such as sea-level rise, severe weather, salt water invasion and changes in rainfall patterns. The educators' role is paramount to an effective and creative dialogue in order for decision-makers to make informed decisions. Joint research programs pave the way to the solutions for these challenges.

Professor Hoang Van Thang presented on environmental training programs and the capacity building of these programs in Vietnam. Professor Thang stated the following:

- There are 42 institutions in Vietnam training in environmental studies. Ten are colleges and 32 are universities. Students may study environmental science, management, and technology. Depending upon the university or college, an undergraduate, Masters or PhD programs are available in the Environmental Sciences. A new Master in Climate Change degree will soon be offered.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

- An educational needs RAPID assessment has been conducted with the Ministries most likely to hire these students: first, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment for its land, marine and island responsibilities; second, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development which is responsible for 128 protected areas, six biosphere reserves and six world heritage sites; and third, the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Ministry of Tourism.
- Two types of programs have been since developed. The first type consists of short training courses that last six months to a year: upon course completion a certificate is issued which can be transferred to a master's program. For the second type, more formal graduate degree programs have been established. Since the program's inception 10,000 individuals have completed the short term training programs, 18 have received master degrees and 16 have received PhDs.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Randy Sutherland from UC Davis asked if other than those areas of study mentioned in professor Thang's presentation, were there any other such programs in Vietnam? Professor Thang responded that there were some institutes that had specific fields of study such as Human Ecology or Microbiology in relation to waste management. But most programs were focused on natural resources as opposed to environmental protection.

Questioner: What type of jobs do graduates go into? Professor Thang: Most graduates obtain work in local or provincial departments of the above mentioned ministries. Some graduates are able to come back and work at the national level of these ministries.

Questioner: In California, there are many public/private partnerships in education. Especially in technology areas which benefit both organizations. Some of this technology would be very useful in Vietnam, especially in the short term, such as solar and wind power. Where do these private partners have to go to establish these partnerships? Professor Thang: Private partners would have to contact both our school and the Ministry of Education and Training in order for them to better understand what the private partner is seeking to accomplish and then decide which partner would be most appropriate. Professor Thang noted his school was currently working with BP Petrol to help in building the capacity of their staff as one example of this type of initiative. A representative from the HCMC Foreign Commercial Service Office also noted that the companies hoping to partner in Vietnam can contact the trade offices from the U.S. Embassy and other offices such as AmCham to assist them in their search.

7-C Business Programs

Speakers:

Professor Hoang Van Chau, President, Foreign Trade University (FTU)

Dr. Harry Norman, Dean, California State University, Fullerton (CSU-F)

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

Key points:

- Meeting all the requirements for multiple funding sources is very challenging (GOV, World Bank, FTU, CSU, etc.).
- Joint CSU/NEU programs have been very successful and beneficial to both sides but expansion is needed for resources, faculty, and students.

Presentations:

Professor Hoang Van Chau spoke about collaborating with international universities for baccalaureate, masters, and faculty programs across FTU's three campuses.

- He sees international cooperation as a long-term strategy, not just for training.
- Successful cooperation in training faculty and in high-quality English-language programs.
- Challenges: meeting the terms/standards of World-Bank-funded programs; and limited opportunities for students to study in the U.S.

Dr. Dean Norman of CSU-F:

- CSU focuses on accreditation, pedagogy, and faculty exchanges.
- The Vietnamese-American MBA alumni group of CSU-F has been instrumental in helping overcome challenges (such as housing/funding) for FTU students visiting CSU-F.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Ken Duong, School of law Golden Gate University, asked about future plans for CSU-F students to study in Vietnam. Speakers responded that it's a future goal, and that the economic slowdown has reduced the number of U.S. students studying abroad.

Mr. Tri, Hoa Sea University asked how CSU-F guarantees seats for international students with caps on budget and enrollment numbers. Dr. Norman responded that international students do not compete with U.S. students for financing: all students must meet the same standards.

Mr. Desler, retired professor of trade policy from University of Maryland, asked if FTU had reduced its focus on trade and become a business school, and if there were courses on the WTO (World Trade Organization). Professor Chau said FTU has changed its programs to meet the rapidly changing demands of the country since it started in 1960. FTU currently focuses on Vietnam's integration with foreign markets and the global economy. FTU has offered courses such as Global Trade, U.S./Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement, trade-in services, trade policy, and international environmental treaties, as well as seminars on WTO, BTA, and others.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

7-D Short-Term Intensive Executive Leadership Programs

Speakers:

*Dr. Patrick Boyle, Associate Provost, International Initiatives and Global Affairs,
Loyola University, Chicago (“LUC”)
Dr. Le Quang Minh, Vice President, VNU-HCMC*

Key points:

- Most higher education leaders were trained in Russia, France, and Vietnam and have very little experience of “internationally common practices.”
- Vietnam’s higher education system is hierarchical and rigid. It is also highly fragmented: only 30% of universities report to MOET while the rest report to their line ministries (Transport, Construction and Mining), as was typical of the Soviet Union. In addition, there are over 300 research institutes.

Presentations:

Dr. Boyle described LUC’s University Management Training Program, “what it is, and how it came about.” LUC invited ten leaders in higher education to spend 11 days meeting in HCMC and Chicago (October, 2009). The purpose was to learn best practices in higher education management and to assess their applicability in Vietnam. Modules were arranged in three broad management areas spanning the technical and human dimensions of management. The instructors were LUC administrators and faculty. Participants also designed and ran their own problem-solving sessions. Most popular subjects were strategic planning, strategic management, and university finance.

Dr. Minh noted that one of the first questions out of a participant’s mouth was, “what is a provost?!” He explained that the majority of leaders in higher education studied before the reform period that started in 1990, which followed the periods of: colonization (before 1954), the Vietnam War (54-75), reunification (75-90), and reform (90-2010). Reform is a kind of continuum, Dr. Minh asserted, leading over time to broadening curriculum and promoting the practical over the theoretical. The term ‘standard’, for example, “fell from the sky” only recently, along with “academic freedom” and other terms. Underscoring the influence from the pre-reform years, Dr. Minh pointed out that there are over 100 mono-disciplinary universities. About 30 private universities have sprung up. This created a higher education system that is fragmented, with only 30% of universities reporting to MOET and the rest to their line ministries (Transport, Construction, Mining...). In addition, there are over 300 research institutes. Education reform should train university leaders; otherwise “nothing will happen.” Right now there is a “very much centralized-in-power rigid hierarchy environment.” Most education leaders studied in France, Russia and Vietnam. Many have very little experience of “internationally common practices.” Basic concepts remain undefined, such as academic freedom. Thus, you may end up “measuring inches by centimeters.”

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Boyle was asked how the participants reacted to the program. He said, initially there had been concerns about lack of participation or dialogue but that was quickly put to rest by the degree of participation. Dr. Boyle was also asked why the training took place in

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

the U.S. He explained that the purpose was to allow leaders to get away and reflect. Dr. Minh added that having participants stay in a dormitory at LUC and visit the library, etc rounded out their experience. Dr. Marcus Ingle of Portland State University asked how the problem-solving sessions were arranged. Dr. Minh said they asked participants to come up with problems while still in Vietnam and to prepare for discussion. Dr. Minh said having those sessions in Vietnamese was vital to their utility.

7-E Programs in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Speakers:

Dr. Philip Alperson, Director, Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture and Society, Temple University

Dr. Nguyen Chi Ben, Director General, Vietnam Institute of Culture and Art Studies

Dr. Ho Sy Quy, Director, Institute of Social Sciences and Information

Dr. Nguyen Van Kim, Vice Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Key Points:

- The concept of Liberal Arts, and what it means to a university education system
- Three major collaborative projects between Temple University and Vietnam
- Challenges and successes in collaboration

Presentations:

Dr. Philip Alperson opened the session by setting a foundation for understanding the concept of Liberal Arts, where it came from, and what it means in a university education. There are two key skills that come from a Liberal Arts education: public speaking, which includes grammar, rhetoric, logic, and literature; and mathematical thinking, which includes arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. These foundational skills are the basis of academic excellence and prepare students to return to society and serve, and to be good citizens. He introduced the three main projects which were approached in more detail by the Vietnamese facilitators of each project.

Dr. Ho Sy Quy spoke about his project to digitize and preserve the ancient Han Nom script of Vietnam. He emphasized that this is a long-term project, and that in reality not much has been achieved to date. He believes that cooperation in social sciences will help Vietnamese students, especially in the area of research.

Dr. Nguyen Chi Ben spoke about his organization's practice of receiving American students and Fulbright Scholars to work within a cooperative framework. These students are working on a visual anthropology project to produce video materials about Vietnam and its culture. With the cooperation of Dr. Alperson's Center at Temple University, they are working with over 70,000 hours of video material. They put special emphasis on research on ethnic minorities in Vietnam.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

Dr. Nguyen Van Kim, Vietnam National University, spoke about the development and popularity of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities at VNU. The University consists of 15 faculties and departments and 13 different Centers, including the newest center for Vietnamese Studies. There are numerous M.A. degree programs, including tourism, political science, history, management science, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and linguistics. They plan to add new M.A. and PhD programs every two years. The University believes strongly in partnership and currently partners with Thailand, China, Japan, Netherlands, the UK and, recently, with several U.S. universities. Their primary goal is to host conferences and exchange programs. They have received support from the Ford Foundation and the Asia Foundation to develop additional programs. Dr. Kim identified three main challenges his university has experienced as they have developed their partnerships with the United States: for American students coming to Vietnam, it is difficult to obtain sponsorship; the geographical distance keeps many from choosing to come to Vietnam; and, for potential students going to the U.S., English is the biggest barrier.

DISCUSSION:

An audience member made a plea for the teaching of Oriental Studies, rather than Western philosophies.

Another audience member indicated he believes Temple University's plan is workable and suitable for Vietnam.

An employee of MOET who has been researching methodology for 20 years commented that reform of methodology has been very difficult in Vietnam. He sees many problems Vietnam must fix in order to advance into the third millennium: the Vietnamese education system must delve deeper into its heritage and teach deeper level concepts; it also has a lot to learn from more advanced countries in order to have better Vietnamese students with more rational thinking ability. Otherwise, technological advances will come and go, and Vietnam will continue to lag behind.

A representative of Da Lat University encouraged more research into the social sciences, stating that Vietnam is 6-7 years behind in technology and science, but 20 years behind in social sciences.

Dr. Ho Sy Quy wrapped up by pointing out that the reason this group could sit here today and talk is because the amount of cooperation has increased. Social sciences have advanced in integrating into the modern world more than science. The other panelists added that cooperative work must continue and grow and that Vietnam must step up efforts in order to compete in the world. Someone added that it is not enough to simply emulate or copy other cultures, but rather that Vietnam needs to apply the principles of social sciences within a Vietnamese context.

SESSIONS ON JOINT PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

7-F Agricultural Programs

Speakers:

Dr. Cary J. Trexler, School of Education and College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, University of California, Davis

Dr. Nguyen Quoc Vong, Director, International Relations, Hanoi University of Agriculture

Dr. Brent Hueth, Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Visiting Faculty, Hanoi University of Agriculture

Presentations:

Dr. Cary J. Trexler spoke about UC Davis's experiences becoming involved with the educational system of Vietnam. He mentioned three key points that are important to the success of an educational program in Vietnam:

- A little grant can have a big impact. UC Davis's first grant that allowed them to work in Vietnam was less than \$10,000 but it sparked enough collaboration to foster an extensive program in three universities in Vietnam.
- Things move a lot slower than expected. If your professional experience in the U.S. causes you to expect it will take one month to accomplish something, budget for three months in your work plan when working in Vietnam.
- Personal relationships and constant follow-up are the key to getting things done.

Dr. Nguyen Quoc Vong spoke about the challenges facing Agricultural education in Vietnam. He listed three main challenges faced by Agricultural universities in Vietnam that are seeking to expand their international programs:

- Lack of English skills among students
- Limitations on facilities such as modern labs, reliable computers, internet access
- Difficult to convince the students to engage in 'American' style teaching. Vietnamese students are often more comfortable memorizing and recalling information. U.S. teachers often ask students to synthesize information and create a new idea or proposal. This change in style is sometimes difficult for students to deal with.

Dr. Brent Hueth explained he had just arrived in Hanoi to begin a short term teaching assignment paid for by a grant through the University of Wisconsin. He found the English language abilities of his students at Hanoi Agricultural University surprisingly good. The students are eager to learn and approach each class session as a chance to gain a valuable commodity, knowledge. Dr. Hueth found this especially refreshing since it is very different from the attitude many university students in the U.S. bring to the classroom.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Press Conference on January 15, 2010

Ambassador Michael W. Michalak, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam

Dr. Vu Minh Giang, Vice President, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Ambassador Michalak: We have just finished a very successful two-day education conference *Building Partnerships in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges for the U.S. and Vietnam*. The conference was organized by the U.S. Mission in Vietnam, Vietnam National University Hanoi, and the Ministry of Education and Training.

I was really impressed. We had over 600 participants both from the United States and from Vietnam, and these 600 participants represented over 250 educational institutions and companies with educational programs in Vietnam.

We had more than 30 breakout sessions, all of which were designed to discuss many of the important education goals of Vietnam and how the United States could help in achieving those goals.

There were several important outcomes of the conference, but *the* most important outcome was the chance to deepen our relationship with Vietnam National University as well as with the Ministry of Education and Training.

Again, I want to thank Dr. Vu Minh Giang as one of the contributors and one of the members of the organizing group to put on this conference. We could not have done it, of course, without the active support and participation of the Ministry of Education and Training, in particular, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Dr. Nguyen, who participated and made opening remarks.

I think the conference enabled American and Vietnamese universities with existing joint programs to discuss how best to expand and deepen them, and to enable universities and colleges interested in establishing new programs to find partner universities.

We talked about creating American style universities in Vietnam, promoting the development of Vietnamese universities and colleges and increasing the number of Vietnamese students studying in the United States. We heard a number of interesting discussions of new partnerships between American companies and Vietnamese and American universities as well. We talked about accreditation, we talked about academic freedom, we talked about autonomy, we talked about U.S. government education programs and we talked about Vietnamese education programs. We talked just about everything during this conference.

This was the third conference that the U.S. Mission in Vietnam has put on and, once again, we could not have done it without the help and participation of the government of Vietnam and the universities here. I think that many of the subjects we discussed we will

PRESS CONFERENCE

continue talking about throughout the year. We can get into specifics later on, but let me have Dr. Giang make some opening remarks.

Dr. Giang: I would like to thank U.S. Ambassador Michael Michalak. I would like to speak a little bit more about the significance of this conference.

To Vietnam, the importance of education is not questionable any more. But there is another issue which many people have talked about but no good solution has been found, which is how to improve the quality of education and training in our country. We all know that Vietnamese people can easily accept the notion that the U.S. is a strong power in the education area.

About the notion of the super power in education, the U.S. has the biggest number of colleges and universities in the world, and it also has the most diverse system of education in the world. There are many U.S. universities and colleges among the top 100 highest ranking.

The U.S. also has many inventions in training techniques and they are a pioneer in this field. For example, the [inaudible] is a field that the U.S. pioneered in.

It is a phenomenon that many Vietnamese students go to the U.S. to study but that is a spontaneous phenomenon. It means that Vietnamese families recognize the value, the quality of the U.S. education system and they send their children to the U.S. to study. But it is not an organized activity and there is no guidance from the government or the Ministry of Education and Training. So it is an issue that the Ministry of Education and Training has realized.

On another aspect, many American universities have expressed their interest in cooperating with Vietnam. And the U.S. Ambassador here - I call him Ambassador of Education, Collaboration and Relations between the U.S. and Vietnam universities - has very high interest in promoting the cooperation between the two countries in the education area.

So what we need to do now is how to promote this cooperation to benefit both sides and see what needs to be done - that is also the reason why we have held three education conferences.

This conference is the biggest one with the highest number of participants. We also had the highest number of breakout sessions. And as Standing Vice-Minister Pham Vu Luan said in his final remarks, it is a very successful one.

Questions from Vietnam Television:

I have two questions for the Ambassador. Three years ago, before you came to Vietnam you promised to double the number of Vietnamese students in the U.S., so my question is how far have you gone in achieving your promise?

PRESS CONFERENCE

The second question is that you are very interested in furthering education cooperation between the two countries. So what plans do you have for the next ambassador to take on your mission?

Ambassador Michalak: Thank you very much for your questions. Let me take the one about the number of Vietnamese students first.

I did promise to double the number of students going from Vietnam to the United States during my three year tour here in Vietnam. We have done that. In fact, there are almost three times the number of students going to the U.S. compared with three years ago, and almost four times the number of students going to the U.S. compared to four years ago. Vietnam is now in the top ten countries sending students to the United States.

The percentage increase of students going to the United States last year was the biggest of any country sending students to the United States.

The second part of your question talked about the next ambassador to Vietnam. Why should I talk about that? I'm still here. [Laughter] I don't know when I'm going to leave, and I don't know who the next ambassador is going to be. So I'll tell you this. I will do my best to make sure that the United States remains engaged with Vietnam on education issues forever.

Question from Education and Time Newspaper:

I am interested in the assistance from American universities to help Vietnam in the area of accreditation. So what are the results from the conference?

Ambassador Michalak: We'll both answer that one. I think we had a very good discussion on accreditation in this conference. This is a discussion that's going to continue, so there was no sort of absolute conclusion that was reached at this conference.

The United States, we presented some of our experience and noted that U.S. accreditation is based on meeting minimum standards set by independent agencies and independent critique and continuous improvement. We heard that the government of Vietnam is actively promoting internal quality assurance with the goal of establishing external accreditation bodies plus quality assurance standards. The United States will be sending three or four experts on accreditation to come to Vietnam this year to continue our discussions with the government of Vietnam, to share experiences on the U.S. accreditation system and give whatever assistance we can to help Vietnam set up its own system.

Dr. Giang: The Vietnam National University Hanoi pays special attention to the issue that [inaudible] has asked. It is one of the few universities that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Training asked to build an accreditation system. The most important thing now is what is the view about working toward accreditation?

PRESS CONFERENCE

There was a time when many universities were worried that accreditation may be an assessment by superior levels. But after some time they gradually realized that accreditation is just like the work of a doctor examining the health of people. So, the more objective it is, the better it is.

This is an issue that this conference paid a lot of attention to and we reached an agreement that the accreditation system of the U.S. is very advanced. The Vietnam National University Hanoi and the Ambassador will work together and we will hold more seminars on this issue and the U.S. will send experts to Vietnam to help to build the accreditation system.

At first we will build some criteria which will be in accordance with international standards but it must also be suitable to the Vietnamese context.

One of the most important results of this conference is that we reach an understanding that accreditation is very important to raising the quality of education. And along with that, the accreditation system of the U.S. is reliable.

Question from Vietnam America Magazine:

I would like to ask about the efforts to establish American-style universities in Vietnam. What is the result after the conference? And if American-style universities can be established in Vietnam, how can they affect, what effect do they have on the efforts to raise the quality of education in Vietnam?

Ambassador Michalak: I think that we had a number of sessions on establishing an American-style university here in Vietnam. We had people from Utica College which is seeking to set up a branch operation here talk about their experience. And we had someone from Tan Tao University down in the south talking about their efforts to establish an American-style university there. And we had someone from Tri Viet International University Project talking about their efforts to establish an American-style university.

So, I think that we have a number of efforts underway now to try to set up American-style universities here in Vietnam. I think that these universities will be examples. They will be examples of what American-style education is like. And I believe that American education is among the best in the world and I think that this will be a good example for Vietnamese students as well as for other universities in Vietnam.

I hope that it will encourage other Vietnamese universities to continue to cooperate with American universities and I hope it will draw more American universities to cooperate with Vietnamese universities. It also helps to promote Vietnam's objective of integrating Vietnam into global society.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Many countries have international universities in their countries, and I think that the more different systems you have the more choices the students have as to where they would like to study.

Question from Investment Newspapers.

I am interested in specific results of the conference. I know that many American businesses participated in the conference. What did they gain, what did they receive from the conference?

Ambassador Michalak: We had a number of American companies there, but at least two, Intel and General Electric, actually made presentations on some of their programs that they're implementing in cooperation with Vietnamese and American universities.

General Electric is working with Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City to set up leadership programs for Vietnamese students. In cooperation with Duke University in the United States, they're now in the process of working out the exact detail of that project which we hope is going to start later this year.

Intel Corporation has two different projects that they're working on here in Vietnam. One project is to train Vietnamese students that later on will come back to work for Intel in its new factory down in the south of Vietnam. They recently had the first group of 28 students go to Portland State University in Oregon. Those 28 students are taking 50 or 60 different courses at Portland State. And the first quarter about 95 percent of the grades were A's. And the ones that were not A's were B's. So if you want to know what Intel is getting out of that project, they're going to get some very smart workers for the Intel factory.

In the second project, Intel is working with many provinces in Vietnam. I want to say it is 16, but I can't remember the exact number. They're actually taking some of the teachers from those provinces to go to courses to improve teaching methods and improve their ability to work in their schools. They have said that they have trained dozens and dozens of teachers already and would like to do more here in Vietnam.

So, many of the companies at the conference were talking to Vietnamese universities and talking to American universities and looking forward to setting up more projects here in Vietnam. The U.S. government is also looking to work with American companies and Vietnamese and American universities to try to set up education projects for the future.

Dr. Giang: The Investment Newspaper reporter is interested in the interest by American companies, but I would like to add that Vietnamese businesses are also very interested in the development of education. Today VNU had a discussion and we came to the conclusion that [inaudible] cooperation, is ready to provide some investment to invite American experts to come and help set up accreditation system centers in Vietnam.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Question:

Are there any Memorandums of Understanding or any agreements that have been signed between American businesses and Vietnamese schools, universities?

Ambassador Michalak: Well yes. The Intel project was one Memorandum of Understanding and the GE project is another one where they signed an MOU. I'm sure there are others but I just don't remember which ones they are. I think Oracle Corporation and Microsoft Corporation also have MOUs with various [universities].

Dr. Giang: I would like to remind reporters, please do not mention only the signing of MOUs between American businesses and Vietnamese universities because several American universities and Vietnamese universities have also signed MOUs. It may not be a part of this conference but I can say that many American universities have become partners with Vietnamese universities.

Ambassador Michalak: Absolutely, absolutely.

Dr. Giang: I would like to remind you that there were representatives from 75 American universities and 80 Vietnamese universities that participated in this conference.

Questions from Vietnam Net:

The first question is with regard to the plan to increase the number of Vietnamese students in the U.S. Do you have any specific plans, any new plan for this?

The second question is for both of you, during this conference what did the Vietnamese and American participants share with each other about the experience to attract people who go to the U.S. to study and come back with Master's degrees and PhD degrees to work in Vietnam?

The third question is, what commitment does the U.S. have to help Vietnam in the efforts to establish international universities in Vietnam?

Ambassador Michalak: First, on increasing more students going to the United States, I think that we have set in motion a process that is going to continue throughout the years. There are now almost 13,000 Vietnamese students now studying in the United States. When those students come back, they are the best ambassadors for education that the United States could have. When they come back, they tell their friends about their experiences, and we find that that excites Vietnamese students and is the best advertisement that we have for American universities.

So, I believe the numbers are going to continue to go up and I don't think I need to set another target for this.

We did have a session in the conference on attracting Vietnamese students who get PhDs and MAs to come back to Vietnam. Everyone recognizes that this is a necessary step, and there are various ideas like working with universities to assure people of positions

PRESS CONFERENCE

when they come back. Some of our companies are also looking at what kind of programs they can put forward to assure people of jobs when they come back.

This is an issue that the government of Vietnam pays great attention to and it's one that we're all going to keep working on into the future.

In terms of helping set up American universities here, we are trying to facilitate more contacts between American universities and Vietnamese universities. We believe that is the way that American style universities will be set up here.

In addition there will be some private universities that would want to set up by using an American-style. Again, we've tried to introduce those projects to American universities, to get any assistance from those American universities. We're also providing assistance, as we said earlier, in accreditation and by holding these conferences.

Dr. Giang: I would like to add some of my points to the question you asked about how to attract people who come back with Master degrees and PhD degrees to work in Vietnam. VNU is carrying out our policy to attract people we regard to have very good training and education to work in our university. I think that in order to attract people to come back to Vietnam, to our country, there are four factors.

First is the feeling, the compassion for the country, for their families. So, that is something that no one can replace them, no one can do for them. But I think that people all love their families, and come back. VNU cannot have an impact on that.

Secondly, there are administrative measures - for example, regulations. But it is something that VNU cannot do. It's beyond VNU's capability.

So, there are two other factors. These are working environment and salaries. People with high education, with excellent training, they need excellent academic environment, a good environment for them to be creative, to innovate. We try to create an attractive environment, but we cannot do it in all areas. We focus on some areas where we really need talent.

With regard to salaries, we cannot, we have no right to pay very high salaries to people who come back from the U.S. We realize that the income is important, but salary is not all. We realize that the income must reach a certain amount and we have done [inaudible].

So, we try to mobilize resources from different sources, and we have a policy of priority, and we try to pay at least about \$1,500. With that amount of income we think we can attract PhDs who come back from the U.S. and of course if we can provide them with a very good academic environment and good respect, we can attract PhDs. We have so far been able to attract some PhDs to work with us.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Question from the World and Vietnam Weekly:

My question is for the Ambassador. As the number of Vietnamese students in the U.S. is increasing, what is the view about their contribution? I mean the contribution from the Vietnamese students to people-to-people diplomacy.

Ambassador Michalak: It's fantastic. Every American university that I speak to says we would love to have more Vietnamese students at our universities. Vietnamese students increase the diversity on campus and, because they are so good, they tend to raise the entire academic level of the university.

We very warmly welcome Vietnamese students coming to American universities. I think we give them an excellent education but they also help improve our universities. So it's a win/win situation.

Thank you all very much.
