

EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO SAVE THE EARTH

Dr. Clement Chang, the Founder of TKU, was extremely proud of Lanyang's achievement of having won a Green Building Certificate and a silver rating at the fifth Green Building Awards held by the MOI. "Global warming, a result of human activities, has triggered climate change. How to deal with this change is a grave challenge we are facing in the 21st century," he points out. Constructing environmental friendly campuses with ecological sound new buildings or remodeled old buildings, to him, is an important step towards overcoming this challenge. He insists that all designs in the future should follow ecology, energy saving, waste reduction, and health recommended by the Green Building Promotion Program (GBPP).

Lanyang Campus (LC), a brand new campus that recruited its first students in 2005, is modeled on an Oxbridge whole-person educational system. To foster a global vision and futuristic thinking, 90% of the lectures are taught in English with all third year students required to study abroad for one year. All classes are small as the university will only take on no more than 2,000 students when full, making the faculty-student ratio at a comfortable 1:10. These unique features have made LC a "wild card" when competing with other universities in Taiwan, and with winning the Green Building certificate, its wild card status has even been further enhanced.

LC was born out of ecological attuned concepts right from the beginning in 1989. Energy conservation and waste reduction had been carefully incorporated into its design years ago. Today LC is fitted with systems of solar energy, natural ventilation, waste water reuse, and recycling of kitchen leftover, just to name a few, expressing good stewardship of both the natural environment and campus life. In this environment, it is hoped

to instill a keen sense of responsibility in TKU students to protect and conserve nature.

What sets LC apart from several other green buildings in Taiwan, according to Dr. Chang, is that LC is not just about one building. It is about a whole campus that includes several building complexes and landscaping. To date, it is the only university campus in Taiwan that is built on energy conservation principle, which cost 10 to 20 per-cents higher than regular buildings.

To keep the campus green, there will be a review every three to six months in the next three to five years, according to Dr. Chang. The university will keep track of its soil conservation, garbage disposal, and other environmental impacts the campus has on the surrounding ecology. He has also plans for Tamsui and Taipei campuses which are older and thus less environmental friendly to be remodeled to meet future challenges.

Dr. Clement Chang' s futuristic vision has always led TKU to embrace cutting edge ideas. Of course, being ecologically conscious is not just about being "cool," it is about saving earth and creating a better world for future generations. Hence, having campuses built on ecological sound concepts can allow students to understand that ecological issues do not exist in textbooks and on television only. Protecting the environment is practicing what one believes in, Dr. Chang asserts. His vision for LC is to create a campus that is similar to those of Vassar College, Smith College, and Wellesley College, which balances humanities training with professional development. At present, the course design of LC concentrates on social sciences and IT, but may integrate landscape design or agricultural related courses into its curricula in the future. (~Ying-hsueh Hu)

