

TKU GEARED UP FOR INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Internal assessment for the 2007 academic year was kicked off by the Department of Finance last Monday (4/21). In the same week, the Department of French, E-learning Executive Master's Program of Business Administration in Global Chinese Management, the Graduate Institute and China Studies, and the Department of Chinese, were also assessed. This internal assessment is a preparation for the external assessment conducted by the Ministry of Education between March and June next year. At this stage, departments can invite their own assessors to evaluate them on their performance in the following five categories: "Goals, specialties, and self-reflection," "Curricula design and Teaching quality," "Student Learning and Student Affairs," "Research and Professionalism," and finally "Alumni achievement." There will be a total of 46 departments to be assessed with 18 more to be assessed this week.

The comments for the Dept. of Finance are positive overall, in particular, its efforts in organizing international conferences, which are comparable to some more reputable national universities. However, certain areas require improvement. The first is the databases for research are not sufficient, followed by student-teacher ratio being too high, and space for research students is cramped. In fact, these issues did not escape the department's radar before the assessment: They knew that these areas were far from ideal, according to Dr. Nieh Chien Chung, the Chair of the dept. He and his colleagues will set realistic targets to correct these deficiencies, and will employ more qualified teachers to improve the ratio problem and research quality.

As for the Dept. of French, the evaluators were impressed by the documentation prepared by the dept. and the visit to their facilities.

They found reading activities, singing contests and poetry appreciation as teaching aides very interesting and useful. Finally, they also gave some suggestions for improvement and these are: “Should offer more practical-oriented courses,” “To encourage integrated research among faculty members so as to combine research with teaching,” and “to enhance teaching facilities.”

Positive comments were also given to the cross-strait research in the GICS. In particular, evaluators appreciated the efforts the institute gives to career planning for their students, for instance, the institute has given many workshops analyzing job markets on both sides of the strait. According to Dr. KuoTai-tsung, the Director of GICS, they incorporate regular talks given by Taiwanese business people working in China in their syllabi so that students can feel the pulse of the market development in China first-hand. On the other hand, evaluators proposed that the institute should improve the recruitment of international students as well as offer more courses in English.

Dr. Tsui Cheng Tsong, the Chair of the Department of Chinese, reported that their evaluators were impressed by the harmonious teamwork among staff and positive interactions between faculty members and students. They found students in general were satisfied with the dept. after some lengthy talks with them. Above all, they praised the efficiency and TQM style of operating the departmental affairs.

Although such an assessment event is a nerve wrecking experience for everyone involved, particularly, the Chair of each department and institute, it is beneficial to future development. Dr. Nieh and Dr. Lee said they would take evaluators’ comments very seriously and will turn weaknesses into strengths in the near future. As for Dr. Tsui, he is not

so sure about the comment regarding having courses that meet market demands. As disciplines such as philosophy and aesthetics are neither tangible nor marketable commodities, there should be a different set of standard to evaluate them. Hence, he believes that despite the uniformed criteria, departments that do not fit in them neatly should be allowed to present their uniqueness in other forms. (~Ying-hsueh Hu)

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