

## **MOE TEACHING FOR EXCELLENCE PROJECTS REVIEW IS UNDER WAY**

The on-site review of the Teaching for Excellence projects initiated by the Ministry of Education (MOE) was kicked off with a briefing at the Chueh Sheng International Conference Hall on June 3. Members on the Review Committee were Huang Kuang Chung, the former Director of the National Central Library and Center for Chinese Studies, Chou Yi-herng, the Vice President of National Sun Yat-Sen University, Chen Sun-tien, the former president of National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Liu Ah-rong, the Dean for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences of Yuan-Ze University, and Chiang Wei-ning, the stand-in President of National Central University.

The briefing was delivered by Flora Chang, the President of TKU and Chen Kan-nan, the Vice President for Academic Affairs of TKU, and after which, the committee members started their on-site visit to the following locations: Language Lounge at the basement of the Foreign Languages and Literatures Building, T307, a newly renovated Language Lab, Center for Learning and Teaching, and the Office for Student Affairs, inspecting its computerized databases and video-linked consulting room. Finally their visit was wrapped up by a review meeting discussing feedbacks.

At the meeting, Huang Kuang-chung, recommended TKU to reduce the load of mandatory and major-specific courses which, in turn, will allow students to have more time as well as freedom to select courses in other disciplines. As for the design of the core curriculum, he suggested that courses which enhance overall critical thinking should be emphasized whereas courses merely focusing on passive appreciation should be cut. He rounded up his review with the reminder that TKU should continue strengthening students' foreign language skill so as to broaden their international vision.

Chou Yi-herng, on the other hand, had questions regarding some evaluation tools TKU uses to measure faculty and students' satisfaction. Firstly, he questioned the teacher evaluation system as most teachers on average receive unreasonably high evaluation. He, hence, wondered whether such results had to do with teachers being too lenient on students' passing grades. Secondly, he pointed out a survey that was conducted on Lanyang's students and faculty members shows a low satisfactory rate with the campus overall. Could this, he asked, be improved by implementing more and better facilities, together with more qualified teaching staff? He believed that Tamsui campus should provide more support to Lanyang in both regards.

Cheng Sun-tien, also showed concerns over the way TKU will measure its realization of its future vision (internationalization, digitalization, and futuristic thinking) in terms of quality and quantity. Aside from such doubt, he did express his approval in the design of having a core curriculum for each college.

The remaining two committee members, Liu Ah-rong and Chiang Wei-ning, made suggestions on the followings points: Students' foreign language ability, alumni networking, and resources as well as supervision rendered to freshmen. To the last point, they urged the university to asked more senior and experienced faculty members to be the class adviser for first year students.

In response to some of these suggestions and questions, Flora Chang said that the university is reviewing the teacher evaluation system and will monitor its effectiveness constantly. As for Lanyang, she explained that

new and qualified teachers have been hired and various facilities will be installed slowly but surely. Most importantly, TKU has reduced the teaching load of its assistant professors who should in turn have more time to devote to research.

The meeting was closed on a positive note that, according to the committee members, a survey conducted by MOE on the various satisfaction levels of students to their universities demonstrates some favorable results related to TKU. For instance, TKU students were among those who had the least desire to transfer university or department, with students at TKU's College of Education indicating the lowest desire. That means, committee members concluded, TKU students are content with where they are.

The review results will be announced in July, Chen Kan-nan said. He is confident that they will be satisfactory, and he hopes new projects proposed by TKU for next year will be approved without any hitches by MOE.  
( ~Ying-hsueh Hu )

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