

Keep the Fires Burning to Realize: “Duy Tan Dream: in the Top 300 Asian Universities”

Hero of Labor, Distinguished Teacher Le Cong Co, DTU President and Provost, has overcome numerous challenges to make DTU one of the largest private universities in the Central Region, with five strategic goals; teaching English to faculty and staff, computerization, professionalism, internationalization and the energization of top management and faculty. DTU is now recognized nationally and is the first private university to be approved to offer Ph.D. courses in Computer Science, Business Administration and Accounting.

As a dedicated teacher and administrator, Distinguished Teacher Le Cong Co delivered the following speech on the occasion of the 2017-2018 academic year Opening Ceremony to welcome K23 students. *“Today, we are holding the 2017-2018 academic year Opening Ceremony to welcome K23 students. We have been on this journey for 23 years. This Opening Ceremony has the theme “The Duy Tan Dream: to be in the Top 300 Asian Universities”. I want talk about DTU’s achievements and direction”.*

A Board of three people founded the Central Vietnam Private University in 1992. After several months, the Ministry of Education and Training proposed to change the name of the university, as Central Vietnam would later have many more universities. Ms. Nguyen Thi Loc changed it to Duy Tan University. Duy Tan means innovation, and the Duy Tan dream is the desire for innovation to integrate, to develop, to be sustainable, and to move the country forward.



Hero of Labor, Distinguished Teacher Le Cong Co, DTU President and Provost

With this aspiration we started our journey, with only few enthusiasts but no land, without the big capitalization of corporations, and still under the American embargo. But, with our hands, our minds, and our hearts, we made DTU what it is today. These are our achievements. Initially MOET only allowed us to enroll 550 students, but now we can enroll 5,500, ten times more. From being allowed to offer 4 majors, we now offer 21 majors, with 44 minors. From only being allowed to offer a university-level education, we later requested permission to offer both a college-level and vocational education, and, in 2009, the government also finally allowed us to offer postgraduate training.

In keeping with the motto: “Everything for the education, research, and careers of our students”, we have been enhancing the quality of education by expanding partnerships with businesses to broaden student career opportunities. DTU now also has close relationships with many well-known universities worldwide, including Carnegie Mellon University, one of the top four US universities in Information Technology, with Pennsylvania State University, California State, Purdue, and others to develop fourteen new advanced academic programs and we have sent 400 lecturers for intensive training courses in the USA. Thanks to these partnerships, DTU became the second Vietnamese member of CDIO, after HCMC National University.

In research, we started from nothing in 2009, and, when the first accreditation took place, DTU scored a zero for conducting research. Since 2010, however, we have been highlighting research. We have 25 Nafosted projects running and have published 650 international ISI papers. We have built an infrastructure, and, after initially renting, we have grown to five campuses, totaling 70,000 square meters. We have created a team, starting from just a few, but growing steadily to 1,100 employees, of whom 750 are teachers, with 20% holding PhDs or professorial titles, which speaks for itself and enhances DTU’s reputation. We have enrolled a total of 90,000 students and graduated 60,000 skilled students into the community, who all contribute to the development of Danang and other places. We continue to increase our achievements. MOET visits to inspect us regularly, to verify that we are complying with their regulations, and we normally receive positive accreditations.

In 2016, DTU applied for quality accreditation from the Center for Educational Accreditation of the Association of Vietnamese Universities and Colleges. After a thorough assessment, DTU met 52 of the 61 criteria and officially became the first private university in Vietnam to receive a Certificate of National Educational Quality, which is the foundation for us to start talking about the future.

No success is without its dreams. Long-term or short-term success depends on our efforts, but in order to build a university with regional and international prestige, DTU must meet stringent international requirements. As we become more integrated and focused, we can determine the best direction. As this requires significant resources, we must rely mostly on student tuition income to evaluate what is best for them and how to improve the lives of our staff and lecturers. Our view is that each student is a financial unit and being unable to enroll is unacceptable. In Central Vietnam, most students go to public schools, as tuition fees there are lower and these schools have longer traditions. Society is also inclined to favor the public rather than the private sector. However, many of you have luckily chosen DTU for our high-quality education and research and friendly environment, which motivates our students.

DTU has grown step-by-step, and now we are about to apply to several international organizations for further accreditation.

Our current DTU mission is to: *“Work to make DTU a modern and humanitarian educational, research and service institution, to educate global citizens with solid knowledge and skills, patriotism, morals, good community spirit, good health and entrepreneurship spirit, to meet social, regional and international requirements”*.



We hope that, with the intellect and the enthusiasm of the leadership of our university, of the faculties, the relevant offices and the cooperation of staff, lecturers and other employees, the Duy Tan Dream to become one of the top 300 Asian universities will soon come true

Our new objective is international accreditation. Vice-Provost Dr. Le Nguyen Bao is playing an important role in completing the procedures for ABET accreditation. ABET is a famous accreditation organization in the field of Information Technology. We have set ourselves the goal to obtain ABET accreditation by our 25th anniversary, but must do our very best and work hard because international accreditation is extremely difficult. Research student Le Nguyen Tue Hang is also working with the Faculty of Hospitality to obtain international accreditation for Hospitality, and the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Dr. Le Vinh An, for Architecture. Gradually we should be able to achieve this.

When people hear that DTU wants to enter the top 300, many people call to say that we are brave but misguided, although Professor Ngo Bao Chau, during his visit, gave us a start. Why does DTU dare to set an objective that many a time-honored university would not even dare mention? Allow me to say it is called an “aspiration”. We have the right to aspire; it could come true in the near future or in the far future. We aspired to independence and unification and now aspire to join the top 300. Of course, the road

ahead is full of difficulties and will not be easy. World accreditation organizations have specific criteria and standards and are impartial and scientific in their assessments.

The recent ranking of the top 49 Vietnamese universities has drawn many comments. International-type rankings are necessary as we integrate, so there is no reason not to join the race, but we must organize ourselves. We chose the Times Higher Education (THE) ranking system because their criteria and standards suit us. However, each of the five criteria come with several sub criteria. First is educational quality, which requires lecturers, students, and school administrators to work together to create a prestigious educational environment and for graduates to find suitable employment. The second criterion is the lecturer-to-student ratio. DTU currently has over 20,000 students and 1,100 lecturers. Is that ratio satisfactory? Are the ratios of PhDs to students and of PhDs to lecturers and the income of the university sufficient to maintain them? Particularly difficult are the second and third criteria, concerning research. There are two parts: the volume and income generated by research, and incoming citations. As the function of a university is to provide education and research, they should be creative, innovative and provide new ideas. Research cannot be separated from education. Research must be linked with education and business and with international partners, a good infrastructure and learning environment will generate quality research.

High impact factors are essential for international publications. This is still an arduous task, but the crux of the issue is how we can transfer technology to business. Nowadays there are local businesses who very much want bilateral cooperation. What do businesses require from DTU and which technologies can DTU transfer to them? Another criterion concerns the number of foreign lecturers and the number international students studying at DTU. In order to balance this, we should organize our resources like a football team: how do we set up the midfielders, defenders and forwards? Do we attack or defend? This requires a specific strategy and an enthusiastic team, especially of teachers.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Education and Training and other central agencies. In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Danang People's Committee for their timely support. And, most importantly, thanks to all the parents for putting their trust in DTU.

I want to tell K23 freshmen, especially those who come from far away, to motivate yourselves and be grateful to your parents who went through much hardship to pay your tuition fees. Secondly, you should be grateful to the teachers who brought you through primary and secondary school and thirdly, to the DTU lecturers.

And finally, thanks to the businesses, the national and regional press who have accompanied DTU for the last 23 years, you always give us constructive ideas. And to the local companies who welcomed students to internships and jobs.

I want to specifically tell the current DTU team that we must remember how many people have sacrificed their lives for our country's independence, so that we are able to be here in this hall today. You grew up in peace, cared for by your parents, relatives, and friends. We will continue to make the dream of Duy Tan joining the list of the top 300 of Asian Universities come true. I am an old veteran who came back from the battlefield to a poor Central Vietnam. To escape poverty there is no other way but to study. Natural resources may run out but intellect never will. If we know how to get together and share experiences, then intellect will develop, replacing natural resources. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has been set in motion, the world is joining in and DTU must also. I hope that each of us, in our lifetimes, will plant a tree and leave some shade for others when we pass away. That is the "tree of life"; the shade can be large or small depending on each of us."

From his heart, from his concerns about the development of Vietnamese education in general and about DTU in particular, Hero of Labour, Distinguished Teacher Le Cong Co has confided his enthusiasm for the development of many parts of the university, aimed at educating global citizens with good morals, communal awareness, with solid knowledge and skills, adaptable to all working conditions and environments.

Each of us in the "Great Family" that is DTU and should contribute to the glorious and sustainable realization of the Duy Tan dream: to be one of the top 300 Asian universities".

(Media Center)