

## **Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Polytechnic Network: Big Opportunity for DTU Students**

From October 15 to 19, DTU and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) secretariat organized the 6th SEAMEO Polytechnic Network Meeting. The purpose was to evaluate the implementation of agreements concerning the 4th program of the Southeast Asian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (SEA-TVET) student exchange program. The objective of the program is to boost educational, scientific and cultural cooperation among universities in the ASEAN region and SEAMEO partners, and to broaden opportunities for international study and work.



*Ms. Le Nguyen Tue Hang, DTU Vice-Provost, proposed solutions*

160 representatives from 64 educational organizations, in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam attended, as well as delegates from the Malaysian Ministry of Education. They discussed the current exchange program between SEAMEO members and action plans for the SEA-TVET network from 2020 to 2023.

*“Since the beginning of 2018, SEAMEO has successfully overseen the exchange of 1,143 students,” said Dr. Ethel Agnes Valenzuela, SEAMEO Secretariat Director. “It is now time for the ASEAN student and internship exchange network to be expanded to other regions. At the fifth High Officials meeting on ASEAN student and internship exchange in September this year, in Brunei Darussalam, it was proposed to optimize collaboration between member schools from student exchanges to the development of lecturer skills and lecturer exchanges. I hope that we can have a constructive exchange on these issues at this conference and obtain the best possible results. I want to thank Professor Le Cong Co, Chairman of the DTU Board of Trustees, and Dr. Hang Le, Vice-Provost, for their support in organizing this sixth*

*conference, and the DTU logistics team for the hard work and excellent service that has contributed to its success.”*

Hero of Labour and Distinguished Teacher Le Cong Co said that, *“DTU is very honored to host this 6th ASEAN Student and Internship Exchange Network conference. Although we only meet for a few days, we hope that this will be an opportunity for our countries to agree on student and lecturer exchange partnerships between universities and colleges in the region. This will allow us to learn more, to exchange our experiences and work together on serious global issues, such as disease, poverty, hunger and climate change. DTU hopes to gain even more experience on international lecturer, student exchanges and internships through this conference, in order to forging an ever-deepening friendship between ASEAN community countries.”*



*Distinguished Teacher Le Cong Co signs the joint agreement*

Delegates learned a lot at the meeting and put together an orientation plan. *“We need to work harder in promoting more university collaborations to provide more internships and broaden international work opportunities for students,”* said Professor Angeline Basco, from Iloilo Science and Technology University in the Philippines. *“Students will be able to improve their professional and soft skills and learn how to quickly adapt to different cultures.”*

Mr. Mahesorn Pattanarat, Director of Pattani Technical College in Thailand, expressed confidence in the program, which teaches problem-solving and communication skills, and how to work in foreign companies and adapt to the local cultures.

After a protracted discussion about the future of SEA-TVET, Ms. Le Nguyen Tue Hang proposed the creation of a research network, in line with the 4.0 Industry Revolution, which would concentrate on fully

developing specific student skills to prepare for future international careers. These skills would include analytical and innovative thinking, constructive study methods, creativity and initiative, technology design and programming, critical and analytic thinking, complex reasoning and problem-solving, leadership and social activism, emotional intelligence, systems analysis and assessment.

*“We must increase student awareness about the importance of acquiring a broad menu of specialized personal skills and provide them with the educational environment to practice and develop them,”* explained Ms. Le Nguyen Tue Hang. *“At the same time, to facilitate the creation of research groups, we must bring the researchers and students from ASEAN countries together. We have been supported over the years by the Newton Fund and the British Council and DTU has regularly organized international research summer camps and awarded scholarships to students from DTU and other Vietnamese universities.”*

At these summer camps, DTU worked with professors from Queen’s University Belfast in the UK to hold conferences where students could focus on analytical and innovative thinking, a constructive study strategy, and creativity and initiative. We also encourage graduates to continue their studies, and provide information on PhD scholarships and how to apply for them. As a result, 50% of them obtain postgraduate scholarships to study in Europe or the Americas.”



*Delegates at the 6th SEAMEO Polytechnic Network Meeting*

The plan to develop a TVET lecturer skills program was unanimously passed, as well as the creation of a research network. A plan to evaluate TVET member schools individually in 2020 was formulated to determine the basic required standards. In addition, a survey will be carried out in 2022 and a common policy for member schools will be established in 2023. The delegates also kicked off a second batch of the initial ASEAN lecturer exchange program.

Finally, the SEAMEO members signed an agreement for student and lecturer exchanges in 2020. DTU also signed a student and lecturer agreement with nine universities in the ASEAN region, to teach the necessary skills to qualify for international careers and become global citizens.

*(Media Center)*