Foreword

The bustling, progressive city of Ho Chi Minh City proved the perfect setting for the inaugural meeting of FICAP-1. Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, has gone by several different names during its history, reflecting settlement by different ethnic, cultural and political groups. The richness of the city’s history was matched by the diversity of the conference participants. Contributors traveled from Denmark, Hong Kong (representing Uppsala University, Sweden) New Zealand, China, Thailand, the United States, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. This range of disciplines, cultures and belief systems united around a central theme: Collaborative academic programs as a contribution to developing nations, with a sub-focus on Intercultural Competence.

The focus of collaborative ventures is no longer just on learning to communicate with our foreign neighbours, but in gaining the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness that allow us to operate across cultural boundaries wherever these boundaries may be found. While globalization affects us all, many nations still continue to traverse internal boundaries between colonist and indigenous peoples. The world is full of interactions between people, groups, and nations who think, feel, and act differently. At the same time these people, groups, and nations are exposed to common problems that demand cooperation for their solutions.

The papers presented in this publication are a representative selection of the wealth of ideas discussed and savored during two days of intellectual debate, punctuated by Vietnamese hospitality. This publication presents a sample of this debate: moving from philosophical, socio-political discussion of globalization to concrete examples of international collaboration at its best. The papers explore how academic partnerships driven by academic values rather than commercialism can draw on cultural diversity as an opportunity for growth and learning. Their authors critically examine the values and assumptions underpinning cross-cultural collaboration and explore notions of success that suggest new avenues for research. The result is a significant contribution to the international knowledge base on how collaborative academic programs contribute to the development of nations.
In her keynote address, Dr Hoang-Oanh Duong, of Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City presented the findings of two case studies, one at a university in Australia and one at a university in Vietnam, that used a qualitative ethnographic approach combining a questionnaire and in-depth interviews conducted with administrators, groups of students and teachers. The research sought to discover how the participants differed in their view of globalization, internationalization in education, and their impacts, both negative and positive on their teaching and learning practices. The comparative aspect of the study served to see if it is possible that both a developed country (Australia) and a developing country (Vietnam) could benefit from the internationalization of education. The study was seeking to identify lessons in both cases leading to better collaboration for sustainable development in the context of globalization. The findings indicate that in both cases, the participants had a rather general and diversified understanding of the contrasting concepts of globalisation and internationalization. In the case of Vietnam, their responses can be classified as “Idealism.” In the case of Australia the responses might better be classified as “Instrumentalism” and “Educationalism.” These classifications are in terms of internationalisation ideologies with explicit and implicit visions, foci, goals and strategies as suggested by Stier (2004). The participants gave insights into both the positive and negative impacts of internationalisation in education, with the Vietnamese responses being directed towards being accepted and integrated with the international communities and the Australian responses concerned about working more effectively and beneficially in both domestic and international contexts. One of the Australian efforts involved internationalising the curriculum with many elements to be adopted and adapted in a more inclusive manner in terms of policy, curriculum design, teaching staff and teaching materials. Both cases offer experiences and recommendations aiming for more effective policy-making and implementation procedures, with the objective of achieving a more integrated, reflective, balanced, and applicable series of approaches for international development through education.

The notion of ‘going global’ was explored by our contributor from Keuka College in the United States of America. Keith Lasota argues, one of the most important strategic trends for colleges and universities today is international education and the creation of multifaceted partnerships. His paper looks at global leadership and its educational implications today and in the years to come. He presents the need for a Global Higher Education (GHE) ecosystem of innovative entities that can embrace ideas and trends to help meet the potential and demand for international education around the world.

Similar themes are discussed in Dr Norman Muir’s paper “Global Education: Transnational Competencies for the Twenty-first Century”. The paper explores the birth of a new global order, fraught with forces of unification and interdependence and of division and disintegration. Dr Muir argues globalization has also unleashed powerful forces of conflict and division and features a popular global political wakening often fueled by a sense of hatred, envy, and a sense of injustice, and a rising tide of political, ethnic, and religious nationalism that frequently fosters conflict, competition, and xenophobia. He concludes that collaboration to produce graduates with transnational competencies “seems a good place to begin”.

The Vietnam government obviously agrees, and it actively encourages and facilitates prestigious foreign partners in the higher education sector, strengthening their expansions in cooperation with local partners. Our hosts presented examples of how successful international collaboration has played an important role in developing higher education in Vietnam.

Once such example can be seen in the three advanced international programs run at Duy Tan University with Carnegie Mellon University, Pennsylvania State University, and California State University. In a paper which provide insights into how international programs should be run in Vietnam, authors from Duy Tan University explore how difficulties such as social perceptions, tuition fee determination, student retention, English proficiency, student service maintenance, personnel planning, teaching and learning practices, and program “cannibalism” impact on intercultural
collaboration. They suggest that the ultimate solution should depend on the strategic goal of international programs to develop capabilities and reputation rather than only as a shortcut to revenues or profits.

In another example, the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City (UEH) has expanded international collaborations and created a development strategy for 2020 with partners from universities in Asia, the Americas, Europe, and the Oceania. Their paper describes their efforts to improve scientific research and the teaching methodology through international collaboration programs. In future, UEH hopes to contribute, as well as transfer economics knowledge and scientific achievements to human resources training for the Vietnam economic development process through international collaboration activities.

The final example from Vietnam is the story of 174 joint academic programs that were officially approved and publicized by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training in 2011. These programmes are descriptively analyzed to examine the present status of in terms of foreign partners, level of education, field of study, and others. The paper discusses trends of development of such joint academic programs of Vietnamese partners within a transitional period of Vietnamese economy.

The hopes, challenges and successes of other international collaborative educational activities were presented, with passion, throughout the conference. In their paper exploring “The Sino-Swedish Master Programme in computer Science” our contributors from Hong Kong/Sweden present Chinese students’ experiences of joint educational programmes between universities. The researchers interviewed Chinese students studying in Sweden and identified the differences in learning and living in China and the challenges that Chinese students faced in Sweden. The paper offers recommendations for improving learning experiences and discusses the benefits and challenges of joint education programs.

From New Zealand, Dr Stephen Thorpe considers the threshold competencies needed by group leaders to effectively facilitate online aspects of these communication activities within intercultural collaborative exchange. Drawing on a number of facilitated online discussions, involving 60 practicing group facilitators from 13 countries, his paper presents an initial series of online facilitator competencies that were synthesized from in-depth conversations held within a series of online facilitation skills training programmes held over four years. These competencies provide a new framework for expanding the awareness of the complexity and skills required of group facilitators in intercultural collaborative programmes. His new framework presents seven areas of online facilitator competencies and the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to demonstrate those competencies.

Also from New Zealand, Leo Hitchcock pointed out that since 2000, the HEI landscape has changed, and still is changing dramatically, especially in Asia. Initiatives to retain student talent in the country of origin and to increase entrants to HE within Asia is creating a need for considerable expansion of HE infrastructure, creating opportunities for foreign HE collaborative partnerships. Vietnam’s HE needs are huge with an expected doubling of their intake into HE undergraduate programmers by 2020, and China has an substantial unmet demand for HE. Collaborative partnership models are many, varied, and limited mainly to respective governmental policies and HEI and HEI department policies and resourcing. It is important to dedicate the best academic and faculty resources, and risk mitigation and management become essential factors. Cross-cultural competencies are also important in agreement negotiation, relationship building, and ongoing relationships between partners. Knowledge, skills, and an understanding of local culture symbols, rituals, and values systems become valuable tools in the cross-cultural academic traveler’s kit bag.

From Singapore, Petteri Kaskenpalo gave a thought provoking presentation on academic collaboration between institutions and individuals and associated risks. A delicate process, the efforts of the authorities in developing requirements for institutions can help in providing better programs for
students and to reduce the reputation risk for the countries. However, existing regulations may lure institutions into a false sense of security if they view the compliance with regulations as the only and sufficient means of risk management. While regulations serve to set minimum expectations for collaborative education programs and their providers, institutions aiming to set themselves apart with higher success and reputation in collaborative education will need to invest in implement internal risk assessment and management practices.

The use of computer technology was also explored by our Sri Lankan contributors in their exploration of E-Tools. Hirimburegama et al argue education through e-learning tools provides a means for universities and higher education institutions to be actively involved in their social responsibility. They present the case study of the University of Colombo Institute for Agro-technology and Rural Sciences implemented ICT based farmer education program for providing, which caters to individual and social needs by taking education through e-learning tools to the doorsteps of the community who have never dreamt of entering the portals of higher education. Their paper shows how E-Learning has also opened this rural Sri Lankan community to the entire world.

From Thailand, Pornculee Achava-Amrung contends “knowledge is a value in itself; it is what makes a man or a woman a fully human being”. She argues that prioritizing partnership and/or collaboration is a key component to the success of academic networks among universities of the world, and warns of the dangers of “educational colonialism” which values the educational reforms of the west and tries to implement every aspect of them without realizing the cultural implications upon Eastern nations.

REFERENCES


ORGANISING COMMITTEE

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- Petteri Kasklempalo (global academic partnerships pte ltd, Singapore)
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Status and trend of the development of joint academic programs in Vietnam

A case study on 174 approved by Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training

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Abstract— Globalization is occurring and influencing almost all countries in the world nowadays. The effects can be significantly recognized on many areas of society such as economy, culture, politics, and education. The Vietnamese government, since 1986, has conducted many innovations in education in parallel with launching open policies in economic management and other fields of national management. Data from the list of 174 joint academic programs that were officially approved and publicized by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training in 2011, were descriptively analyzed to examine the present status of these programs in terms of foreign partners, level of education, field of study, and others. Some discussion on trends of development of these joint academic programs of Vietnamese partners in the transitional period of Vietnam economy is also covered.

Keywords- joint academic programs; higher education; education renovation; Vietnam

I. INTRODUCTION

The year of 1986 is often mentioned in papers as the initiation of the renovation process in the economy of Vietnam that had great effects on the whole country. As a result, many changes happened which affected not only the economy but politics, culture, and education also. On the other hand, the year of 1990 is often mentioned as the beginning of the wave of foreign direct investment in Vietnam as well as the beginning of education renovation in the transitional period in Vietnam. Calls for urgent renovation of education to correspond with the economic changes in the transitional period gradually became greater, not only from experienced educators but from the public also. The government, therefore, introduced many policies and strategies concerning renovation of education, for example, the National strategy for educational development from 2001 to 2010, the Policy encouraging socialization towards activities in the fields of education, vocational training, health, culture, sports and environment (Government, 2001; 2008). The term in Vietnamese “Xa hội hóa giáo dục” (i.e. socialization of education) was first mentioned at this time and gradually became popular in the country later. Activities of teaching, studying, investing, donating, cooperating, scientific applying, and technology transferring in the education field from both foreign individuals/organizations were encouraged by the country (Education Law, 2005). The positive attitudes of the Vietnamese government towards quality education had attracted many foreign investors to come to Vietnam and run FDI projects in education (Ngoc Anh, 12 Oct 2011). Consequently, there have been many foreign-owned institutions and joint academic programs newly established in Vietnam since then.
The Vietnam International Education Department (VIED), belonging to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), functions as a state agency governing international education and training programs established in Vietnam. Its mission includes evaluating applications for joint academic programs, proposing state approval, and inspecting these programs. However, there is an exception to the two national universities and three regional universities who are given autonomy in establishing their own joint academic programs. According to the Director General of VIED, the joint academic programs have positively contributed to the development of national education and meet a great demand of studying from society. “Joint academic programs”, he said, “have given opportunities for Vietnam universities to obtain valuable experience in education management, renovation and improvement of system, contents, curricula, teaching methodology, evaluation and assessment methodology from advanced universities in the world,” (Hong Hanh, 2010b). Furthermore, they have also brought opportunities for Vietnamese institutions to improve both teaching quality and management in education. In the other hand, many negative effects in these also programs came out. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Training have paid much attention to enhancing the efficiency of managing joint academic programs to ensure the rights of all sides concerned and to ensure that they comply with the objectives of renovation in higher education (Hong Hanh, 2010a).

In order to support people in clarifying the legislative status of such programs in terms of state approval, MOET has recently introduced a list of approved joint academic programs every year. Joint academic programs in higher education in Vietnam are sometimes mentioned by the daily press, however, mainly the focus is on state administrative problems and teaching quality issues of the programs. It would seem that there are not many studies about the joint academic programs in the transitional period with global emerging changes in economy and culture in Vietnam so far. Comments on joint academic programs (other names are Offshore/Cross-border/Transnational academic programs) might only recently be seen in papers about Vietnam education renovation. Therefore, in order to offer an overview of the joint academic programs in Vietnam, this study applied descriptive analysis on data from the last list of approved joint academic programs by MOET. In addition, the distribution and trend of international collaboration in education and training of Vietnamese partners in connection with the global emerging changes in economy and culture in Vietnam is also assessed.

II. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The list of 174 joint academic programs in Vietnam approved by MOET was introduced and updated on 5 Oct 2011. The list includes 58 Vietnamese institutions, name of foreign partner, name of joint academic program, level of education, field of study, awarding body, and number of Decision (i.e., Approving License). The list shows that in most cases, one Vietnamese institution collaborated with one foreign institution to establish a joint academic program. In other cases, one Vietnamese institution collaborated with some foreign institutions to establish several joint academic programs. It seems that the joint academic programs in the list are indexed by level of education rather than field of study. For example, the joint bachelor’s degree program between the Hanoi University of Industry and Hunan University, China includes Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, and Information Technology as well as Business Administration. However, the list indexes it as one program. Therefore, in order to simplify the data analysis, such programs are coded as a “Field unknown” in term of field of study. Similarly, only the highest level of education is chosen for coding and analysis in the case where two, three or more levels of education exists evenly in one joint program listed (e.g., the joint program of Business Administration between Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Utica University, United States).

The descriptive analysis conducted aims to examine the status of joint academic programs that were officially approved by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training since 1998 up to date. The date of issuing Decisions of approving programs is regarded as the date of implementing programs. In the case where two or more Decisions of approving have been issued for one program, the earlier dated
One is chosen for coding and analysis. Vietnamese institutions are coded into 4 categories: Academy (i.e., “Hoc vien” in Vietnamese), University (i.e., “Dai hoc” in Vietnamese), College (i.e., “Cao dang” in Vietnamese) and Centre (i.e., “Trung tam” in Vietnamese). Foreign partners are coded using 2-character Internet Country Code and categorized into 5 groups of continents: America, Asia, Australia, Europe and Oceania. Levels of Education are divided into groups of Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor, Master and Doctor (i.e., corresponding to “Trung cap”, “Cao dang”, “Cu nhan”, “Thac sy” and “Tien sy” in Vietnamese. Using the classification of field of study by CSO Standard Fields of Education Classification (Central Statistics Office, 2012), these programs are coded from 1 to 9 including fields of Education, Humanities and Arts, Social Sciences, Business and Law, Science, Mathematics and Computing, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction, Agriculture and Veterinary, Health and Welfare, and Services. As mentioned above, the coding as “Field unknown” denotes the joint programs which cover a “mix field” of study.

III. FINDINGS

A. Trend of Program Development

From 1998 to 2011, there were 174 joint academic programs approved by Vietnam MOET. Details of the number of programs established and approved by MOET each year are shown in Table 1.

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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of program</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The trend of development of the number of joint academic programs is depicted in Fig. 1. It is easy to recognize the upward trend in the development of number of programs established and approved from 1998 to 2011.

FIGURE 1: TREND OF ESTABLISHING AND APPROVING JOINT ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FROM 1998 TO 2011

The trend of the development of joint academic programs is almost similar to the trend of the development of foreign direct investment (FDI) projects in Vietnam approved from 1998 to 2011 that is illustrated in Fig. 2. However, those trends change since 2008 in which the line of development of
joint programs is continuously upward while the line of FDI development is downward. Table II presents the statistics of number of FDI projects in Vietnam approved from 1998 to 2011.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of FDI project</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>1544</td>
<td>1557</td>
<td>1208</td>
<td>1237</td>
<td>1091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B. Distribution of Programs Correspondingly to Countries and Continents**

There are 58 Vietnamese institutions in collaboration with 140 foreign partners from 26 foreign countries. Table 3 shows the statistics of the number of joint academic programs associated with foreign partners of Vietnamese institutions.

**FIGURE 2: TREND OF ESTABLISHING AND APPROVING FDI PROJECTS IN VIETNAM FROM 1998 TO 2011**

**TABLE 3: NUMBER OF JOINT ACADEMIC PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH FOREIGN PARTNERS’ COUNTRIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of program</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to see the distribution of joint programs that is against the category of continents, countries from the same continent are first grouped together and then the number of programs is distributed against these groups of continents correspondingly. Table 4 presents the number of programs added correspondingly to different continents.

**TABLE 4: NUMBER OF JOINT PROGRAMS ADDED CORRESPONDINGLY TO DIFFERENT CONTINENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>America</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Oceania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Program</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3 depicts the percentage distribution of joint programs correspondingly to different continents. The pie chart shows that joint programs from European partners take the largest portion while ones from America take a smaller portion.

**FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF JOINT PROGRAMS CORRESPONDINGLY TO DIFFERENT CONTINENTS**

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C. Levels of Education

The joint academic programs are also grouped correspondingly to the levels of education ranked from lower to higher level: certificate, diploma, bachelor, master and doctor. Table 5 indicates the distribution of programs against levels of education.

**TABLE 5: STATISTICS OF LEVELS OF EDUCATION OF JOINT ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Certificate</th>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Program</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The distribution of programs against levels of education is illustrated by the bar chart in Fig. 4. The figure shows the longest bar is associated with bachelor programs while the shortest bar is associated with doctoral programs.

![Figure 4: Distribution of joint programs against levels of education](chart)

**D. Fields of Study**

The statistics of field of study of joint academic programs are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Statistics of field of study of joint academic programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of study</th>
<th>Number of program</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and Arts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences, Business and Law</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Mathematics and Computing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Veterinary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Welfare</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field unknown</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of programs against fields of study is illustrated by column chart in Fig. 5. The Figure shows the highest column is associated with programs that major in the field of Social Sciences, Business and Law while the lowest column is associated with programs that major in the Services field.
E. Certificate/Degree Awarding Body

There are four types of the awarding of the certificate/degree: (1) either Vietnamese partner or foreign partner, (2) only the Vietnamese partner, (3) only foreign partner, and (4) both Vietnamese partner and foreign partner. Statistics concerned is shown in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Either</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Foreign</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of program</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics in Table VII shows that a majority of joint academic programs’ certificate/degree are conferred by foreign partners. Distribution of programs against types of certificate/degree awarding bodies is illustrated by pie chart in Fig. 6. It is easy to recognize that joint academic programs in which certificate/degree is conferred by foreign partners take the majority portion.
F. About Vietnamese Institutions

According to the list, there are 58 Vietnamese institutions in collaboration with foreign institutions establishing joint academic programs. Table 8 presents the statistics of these Vietnamese partners with the number of joint academic programs associated with this type of institution.

TABLE 8: STATISTICS CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF PROGRAMS AND VIETNAMESE PARTNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Vietnamese institution</th>
<th>Academy</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of program</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows that most of the Vietnamese institutions are universities (43). There is only 1 center. The rest of the Vietnamese institutions include 9 academies and 5 colleges. These statistics are also depicted in Fig. 7.

V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Joint academic programs in Vietnam actually have positive development with the continuously upward trend. That is almost similar to the trend of FDI development from 1998 to 2008. The trend of program development seems to trend continuously upward in the future despite the opposite movement of FDI development that has occurred in recent years. The analysis also shows that the majority of foreign institutions in joint academic programs are from Europe. The second majority are foreign partners from Asia. Although American education is very famous in the world, partners from the United States take a small amount in total of the number of joint academic programs in Vietnam. The study indicates that there are various levels of education in joint academic programs, from undergraduate to the graduate level. A majority, nearly half of joint programs, are Bachelor’s degree programs. The next majority is Master’s degree programs. Doctor’s degree programs are few.
Social Sciences, Business and Law are popular fields of study in joint academic programs. It seems that institutions prefer these fields of study over others because they match the current social demand in the transitional period of the Vietnamese economy. The next least popular field of study is Science, Mathematics and Computing. Health and Welfare and Services, the fields of study which should be more developed in modern society, however, takes a very small portion in joint academic programs. Similarly, the number of programs in other fields of study that are so critical to the national economic development, such as Science, Mathematics and Computing, Engineering and Manufacturing and Construction constitute just a few.

Almost all joint academic programs in Vietnam follow a pattern in which foreign partners are mainly responsible for conferring the Certificate/Degree. There are a small number of programs in which Vietnamese partners are responsible for conferring the Certificate/Degree. There are some programs that follow a model of conferring dual Certificates or Degrees for graduates. This trend perhaps reflects the view and ambition of Vietnamese students and their parents in applying for joint academic programs. Vietnamese partners are almost all universities. It seems that Vietnamese universities are dominant in establishing joint academic programs with foreign institutions rather than Vietnamese academies and colleges. Centers in Vietnam are rarer in establishing joint academic programs.

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International collaboration: the door opening to modern higher education at the University of Economics - Ho Chi Minh City

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Abstract—International collaboration plays an important role in developing higher education in Vietnam. In recent years, the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City (UEH) has expanded international collaborations and created a development strategy for 2020 with partners from universities in Asia, the Americas, Europe, and the Oceania. Now, globalization and international integration in higher education create favorable conditions for strengthening academic research, learning, knowledge exchange, and sharing of best teaching practices. This paper describes UEH's efforts to improve scientific research and the teaching methodology through international collaboration programs. The information and data are summarized for the academic year 2010 - 2011.

Keywords- Achievements; Higher education; International collaboration; Collaborative scientific research; Teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

International collaboration is considered one of the key tasks in field of higher education. Therefore since establishment, international collaboration activity of the UEH is always taken seriously considerations and continuously development. Over 35 years of development, international collaboration activities in UEH have marked a transition in policy as well as the way in cooperation. In recent years, UEH leaders have always tried their efforts to expand cooperation to other countries in Asia, Europe, the Americas and Oceania. Besides, UEH has successfully organized many international seminars that have invited scholars and politicians, both local and from all over the world. In the trend of integration context, UEH has focused on its efforts to expand and develop collaborative research programs, and bilateral and multilateral training in order to meet social needs. Meanwhile, those also contribute to the quantity and quality in updating curriculum, improving teaching staff and scientific research activities.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS IN THE UEH DURING RECENT YEARS

A. Training

Teaching, a core mission of a university, has been improving through collaborative projects. Programs for teaching bachelor and master's level students are benefitting from cooperation with U.S. partners including the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (FETP) and the Bachelor in Economics program with the University of Houston, Clear Lake, Texas; France (CFVG Center); New Zealand (Bachelor in Economics program with the University of Victoria in Wellington, and Master of Management (Finance) associated with Massey University; the Netherlands (collaborative program with
the Institute of Social Sciences - ISS); South Korea (KOVIT Center - Woosong University), and the Doctorate in Business Administration project (DBA) in coordination with the University of Western Sydney (Australia), among others.

International collaborative programs bring modern learning opportunities to students, faculty, and staff. The university has signed many memorandum of understanding (MoU) for teaching collaboration, faculty and student exchange, scientific research, and workshops and conferences with university partners from nations such as the U.S., U.K., Canada, South Korea, Taiwan, China, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia. As a result, there have many delegations of professors and students from prestigious international universities visiting UEH.

Since 2006, the university has been working with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in Japan to research "A comparative case study of teaching an MBA in Vietnam". This project has changed teaching methods, and improved the quality of MBA training in UEH and across Vietnam. With the cooperation of professors from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, the project has attracted more than 50 MBA programs and completed 30 business case studies in English and Vietnamese. The articles have been published and used from March 2009.

With support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UEH is one of four universities in Vietnam participating in the project "Teaching Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in business administration classes". This project was coordinated by the Kennan Institute Asia in Thailand, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), the University of London in the UK, and the University of North Carolina (UNC) in the U.S. The main content of the project is training lecturers on CSR and writing CSR case-studies.

B. Collaborations in faculty and student exchange

In recent years, the university has cooperated with the World Learning organization in the U.S. to facilitate student exchange, called the School of International Training (SIT). Students study and do research on the Vietnamese economy and culture. In addition, there have other short-term faculty and student exchange projects with the following university partners:

- **Japan**
  - Osaka Sanyo University
- **South Korea**
  - Woosong University
  - Chosun University
  - Chongnam University
  - Incheon University
- **Singapore**
  - Singapore Polytechnic
  - Ngee Ann Polytechnic
  - Singapore Management University
- **Taiwan**
  - Chaoyang University
  - Kaohsiung National Applied Science University
  - Leader University
- **China**
  - Shanghai University
- **United States**
  - The College of William & Mary
  - West Florida University - California State University - Dominguez Hills
  - California State University - Fullerton
o Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

o The University of California at Irvine

• Thailand
  o Chiang Mai University
  o Phranakhon Rajabhat University

o Spiraturn University

• Canada
  o Capilano University

• Indonesia
  o Jakarta National University

Similar to the European Union’s Erasmus Mundus project, the university has received many students from undergraduate to postgraduate coming from nations in the European Union to research the Vietnamese economy. The university has organized hundreds of student exchanges between Vietnamese students and international students for understanding Vietnamese history and culture as well as introducing university’s activities. These networking sessions have left good impressions about Vietnamese people in the minds of foreign lecturers and students, especially about UEH students.

C. Collaborative scientific research and teaching programs

The Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (FETP) regularly sends professors, lecturers, and subject experts from Harvard University, the World Bank, IMF, UNDP, and U.S. Consulate General to discuss topics such as developing economics, public investment projects, foreign direct investment (FDI), local marketing, and public policy. In 2011, UEH co-hosted with The Wall Street Journal and Dragon Capital (Vietnam) two workshops on Vietnam’s economy and financial system. These seminars and short courses attract many of local government officers, policy makers, entrepreneurs, managers, and UEH lecturers.

UEH hosts corporate extracurricular activities such as presentations for the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants – ACCA (UK), professional career development, and soft-skills training for students. The Certified Public Accountant Australia (CPA Australia) organization recently signed a comprehensive cooperation agreement with UEH for training students in accounting, auditing, and corporate finance majors to become an Australian CPA.

To expand its relationships with universities around the world, the university has welcomed hundreds of international university delegations coming to work and exchange information. Most university partners are located in Asia, Europe, and the United States. Our collaboration enhances the reputation of the university throughout the region and around the world. It facilitates specific academic collaborations in the future. Visits from foreign academics have helped improve the foreign language and research skills to faculty, students, and staff.

Many graduates from the joint training programs hold senior management positions in Vietnamese and foreign companies in Vietnam.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training levels</th>
<th>Professors, lecturers, staff and managers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Foreigners</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>152</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

A. Advantages

In context of global integration, exchanges not only open the door to economic cooperation, they also facilitate academic cooperation and receiving advanced training technology. Vietnam universities need to quickly take advantage of new collaboration opportunities made possible by the IT revolution.

The current trend of top universities in the United States and Asia is to spin-off research into new companies and develop working relationships with the government and NGOs. These organizations are willing to provide the money for advanced technology to local universities in order to take advantage of the universities' expertise. Well-known multinational corporations create excellent opportunities for students and faculty in training and professional development.

Joint training programs have been implemented following the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) regulations. Teaching staff at UEH are recruited from prestigious universities in across Vietnam and from accredited universities in the world. Teaching and program management are professionally conducted in order to encourage active participations from students and trainers. Support comes from MoET and foreign diplomats.

In the overall national development strategy, the Vietnamese government prioritizes education and science and technology. Vietnam has been reforming its education system in order to achieve the goal of having an advanced education system by 2020. This strategy will increase the autonomy and self-responsibility of universities.

B. Disadvantages (Challenges)

The limited state budget restricts investment in higher education. The competitive capabilities of local universities are still weak and have a long way to go in developing into modern universities.

Vietnamese universities lack flexibility or academic training in some fields. An outdated teaching environment, both physically and pedagogically, is one of the difficulties facing Vietnamese universities.

The working conditions of faculty are still poor in term of facilities and equipment. For example, there are few fully equipped laboratories or meeting and seminar rooms equipped for web-conferencing. Foreign languages barriers exist, and computer skills in teaching staff are insufficient. Many lecturers have not adapted to teaching and learning advanced methods and are not fully capable of using electronic teaching tools.
Management staff does not have sufficient professional training or management experience in international collaborations.

C. Threats

Globalization creates challenges and opportunities for higher education and science and technology development.

When expanding international collaboration, Vietnamese universities have to work with different cultures, customs, norms, and ways of working. Vietnamese universities must develop their own unique identity to distinguish themselves among their peers.

International collaboration activities in Vietnamese universities are still under-developed despite many foreign universities wanting to partner with Vietnamese universities. Joint training programs remain rare.

D. Opportunities

Vietnam's universities are an attractive sector to many interested international partners and foreign investors.

The Vietnam national government is prioritizing investment in major universities. The government has also set up scientific research programs and high quality training programs.

UEH has established nearly 100 partnerships with international universities and research institutes for promoting collaborative training, research and faculty and student exchange. The university has accumulated much experience in funded international projects, organized and co-organized conferences and undergraduate and postgraduate academic seminars.

UEH has sent many lecturers and students abroad on Vietnamese government and other scholarships. Most of them, after finishing their programs, usually come back and serve for the university in developing its profession.

IV. SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AT UEH

A. Establish a system of training centers with practical components.

These create a sustainable network in higher education system from input to output. Training centers, institutes under UEH's umbrella become strategic units that should be appropriately invested in.

B. Develop online training to supplement traditional courses.

Singapore has become the leading Asian nation in online higher education. UEH can fully implement this approach as the first step in a system for southern universities.

C. Encourage faculties to collaborate more with international universities.

D. Reform education to attract and retain top academics.

UEH should commit to providing a high quality academic environment to researchers. Academic freedom is essential to attracting and retaining the best researchers who might otherwise go to Western countries. Researchers want the freedom to research and publish as they see fit, free from interference from non-academic officials.

E. Increase the effective coordination between faculties.

For example, one academic faculty can act as host for a research project with foreign partner.
F. Increase funding.

Additional funding can support additional training, exchange, and research programs.

G. Move towards the "Educational service export" development outside border.

In particular, the university holds specialization faculties, research-based institutions, domestic training and transferring technology experience. The focusing on advanced scientific research, enhancing continuous training quality will create particular products that foreign institutions will need to their reference as well as pay license for their applies.

V. Conclusion

As a developing country in the era of modern technology, inherited and applied of the world scientific achievements, Vietnam and UEH in particular is attracting much attention of the world community. UEH is gradually building modern infrastructure for serving training and scientific research activities. Its curriculums have also been updated with the world and enhanced international collaboration in higher education. Furthermore, the Vietnam government usually encourages and facilitates prestigious foreign partners in the higher education sector, strengthening their expansions in cooperation with local partners. In future, UEH hopes to contribute, as well as transfer economics knowledge and scientific achievements to human resources training for the Vietnam economic development process through international collaboration activities.

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