

Consortia - the Current Trend in Education

Through the years, various areas of academe have suffered from the same problems, like lack of facilities and teachers who, if not lacking in numbers, are lacking in advanced training and discipline. This has been especially felt in provincial institutions.

Several schools in Manila have recognized this deficiency and have adapted a system of sharing - the CONSORTIUM. Two consortia have been established in Manila. Whether the system is successful in upgrading the level of proficiency of teachers and researchers in the country, as well as increasing their numbers, the coming years and the consortia's future graduates will tell.

The UP-ADMU-DLSU Ph.D. Consortium

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The University of the Philippines-Ateneo de Manila University-De la Salle University Consortium was established to respond to the country's growing demands for advanced technological and scientific capabilities. It had become imperative that a pool of highly trained faculty members be available in the country's various universities and colleges. Combining manpower and resources, the Consortium aims to fill this need by producing highly qualified Ph.D. s in the basic foundation sciences of mathematics, chemistry and physics.

In 1977, the doctoral program in mathematics was launched by the Consortium with support from the National Economic Development Authority and the National Science Development Board. There were five Fellows for the first batch; another five were accepted for the second batch in 1979. The program reaped its first four graduates in 1980.

In 1982, doctoral programs in chemistry and physics were started with exclusive support from the National Science and Technology Authority. The first batch of six chemistry Fellows was accepted in June 1982, a second batch of six taken in June 1984, and a third batch of six in June 1987. To date, three students from the first batch have graduated from the chemistry program.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) presently provides funds for the Consortium's programs. This covers tuition and other school fees, a monthly stipend, book allowance, a research grant to sustain the Fellow's dissertation needs, plus a thesis allowance to cover printing costs related to completion of the manuscripts. There are also funds for

foreign lecturers and local seminars.

The Ph.D. in Chemistry program is a four-year program with the first two years spent doing advanced coursework and the following two years dedicated to the dissertation research. The program is directed by the Chemistry Executive Committee which is made up of representatives named by each of the Consortium universities. It makes use of faculty, laboratories, library, and other resources from all three universities. The doctoral degree itself is granted by the University of the Philippines or the Ateneo de Manila University.

A fellow may choose his own field of specialization. Among the fields already being worked on are: natural products research, electrochemistry, organic synthesis, analytical instrumentation and polymer chemistry. In the course of his research, the Fellow is sent abroad to carry out parts of his work in laboratories carefully chosen by the Consortium. At present, the Ph.D. in Chemistry Consortium maintains active ties with Japan through the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), with Australia through the International Development Program (IDP),

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with West Germany through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and with Great Britain through the British Council. Establishment of such scientific linkages with other countries are continuously being explored.

Fellowships were initially limited to faculty members from Consortium universities, but have since been extended to non-Consortium members in the hope that more Philippine institutions will have highly trained faculty.

The selection of doctoral Fellows is carefully done. Both the faculty member's intellectual capabilities and his usefulness to his home institution and chosen field are important. He should be a faculty or staff member of the institution and should have official sponsorship. To be considered for admission to the Ph.D. program in chemistry, the candidate should have a Master's degree in chemistry.

The home institution is expected to grant the appropriate leave of absence for the duration of the program; the student is expected to devote full time to his studies.

The presence of doctoral students in the Consortium universities enable these institutions not only to attract research-oriented faculty members but also be compelled to do more research. As the Consortium

gradually extends fellowship slots even to non-Consortium schools, the effects of the program will thus find its way into more and more institutions of the land. The local training of Ph.D.'s augmented by the dimension of research work done abroad enables the students to be exposed to research problems both locally and internationally. The students, enriched with international exposure, get involved in areas more relevant to our country and needs. Problems of readjustment and emigration are minimized.

Though the initial number of graduates of the chemistry doctoral program is small, this is an important step in the development of chemistry and the progress of its research programs in the country. Each graduate has a multiplier effect on the improvement of scientific capability by way of the research he generates and the instruction he updates. Though initially geared for teaching needs of universities and colleges, these graduates would not only affect their academic milieu but also that of industry; they can be available for consultancy work.

With continued support of the government through the DOST and all other sectors, these cooperative efforts through the consortium are expected to grow and expand towards furthering national development.

The Mendiola Consortium

Natural Science Subcommittee

In August, 1975, four institutions along Mendiola Street, Manila, signed an agreement to pool their manpower and physical resources together in order to enhance their capability to provide quality education and public service.

These institutions were: Centro Escolar University, College of the Holy Spirit, La Consolacion College, and San Beda College. The respective heads, together with three other members, make up the Mendiola Consortium's Board of Trustees.

The Consortium scheme includes educational programs, faculty exchange, personnel development and the use of libraries and other physical facilities. Four standing committees have been set up to take charge of the Consortium's activities: the Committee on Academic Affairs, Committee on Non-Academic Activities, Committee on Finance, and the Committee on Physical Activities.

Since 1978, the Mendiola Consortium has been funded by the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE) in its major activities. They have awarded

thesis-writing grants to qualified faculty members of the member schools. In 1981, three students of the MS in Chemistry and MS in Pharmacy programs were awarded these grants.

Sub-committees on English, the social sciences, mathematics and the natural sciences, which are all under the Academic Affairs Committee, look for ways to improve the quality of instruction in their respective fields.

In 1986, the Sub-Committee on Natural Sciences established links with Fu Jen University. A group of educators representing the Consortium observed, from October 18 to 29 of that year, the educational system, scientific research programs, instrumenta-

The Natural Science Subcommittee is presently composed of: Segundina Santos, La Consolacion College; Magtanggol Bulzaos, San Beda College; Sr. Ricarde Roa, College of the Holy Spirit; and Betty M. Lantoc, Centro Escolar University.