

O273

Paper

Huei-wen Hsu

Ministry of Education, R.O.C.

contact:

hueiwen@mail.moe.gov.tw

Restructuring Higher Education and Academic Research in Taiwan, R.O.C.

Global competition is becoming increasingly intense as a result of the development of knowledge-based economies since the advent of the 21st Century. The outcome of this development will be determined, to a very large degree, by the research and innovative capacities of universities and other institutions of higher learning.

In view of this development, the ROC Ministry of Education has formulated a university-integration program aimed at fostering the growth of research-oriented universities through both intra-and inter-university integration processes. It hopes to upgrade scholarly research and raise pedagogical standards by pooling resources and bringing together talented people at home and abroad.

Specific recommendations include intra-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary integration, the establishment of inter-university research centers, the formation of university systems and the amalgamation of smaller universities and colleges into larger, full-fledged universities.

Inter-university research centers will be built around research domains and open to universities and institutions of higher learning, whereas university systems will each be established by combining several research-oriented universities. While the independence and policies of universities participating in university systems will be respected, university system committees overseeing participant universities will screen and consolidate their integration proposals before submitting them to the MOE.

On the other hand, the MOE will invite both local and overseas academic leaders to form an ad hoc committee to evaluate the integration proposals submitted by the universities, in an attempt to ensure the proposed initiatives are indeed important, innovative, feasible, far-sighted and soundly based on all-round considerations.

The MOE will offer financial assistance to help finance the purchase of equipment and installation of infrastructure and organize international exchange programs (such as teacher, student, and post-doctoral student exchange programs) deemed necessary for qualitative improvements in both teaching and research. Funding will also be available for the recruitment of local and overseas eminent scholars, experts, and technical personnel.

The MOE's goal is to form internationally competitive research teams in the most promising domains and those in which Taiwan has made a head start, laid quite a solid foundation, or has potentials, such as biotechnology, optic-electrical technology, electrical engineering and nanotechnology. It is hoped that the MOE's university integration program will help forge competitive mechanisms through selective incentive offers and that in due course, the resulting higher academic and pedagogical standards will benefit higher education in the country in its search for excellence.