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CAN CHRISTIANITY INSPIRE A GLOBAL CULTURE?

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UNIV Forum Scientific Committee
Universidad de Navarra

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PREPARING STUDENTS AS GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE NATION-BUILDERS: A KEY DRIVER OF INTERNATIONALIZATION AT THE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

We present the internationalization efforts at the Ateneo de Manila University, a Catholic Jesuit-run modern university in the Philippines considered to be one of the best in the country and in Asia. Internationalization is pursued vigorously in the Ateneo, nonetheless only as a means to strengthening its student leadership formation to prepare the students as globally competitive nation-builders. Literature survey, interviews with key school administrators and thematic analysis of their various speeches, addresses and presentations reveal various drivers, modes and perceived outcomes of an internationalized student leadership formation in the university.

I. INTRODUCTION

Internationalization is “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education”¹. It means creating an environment that is international in character – in teaching, in research, in outreach².

Internationalization is a “major priority” for many universities nowadays. The International Association of Universities, in its 2003 and 2005 Internationalization Surveys, reveals that 73% of HEIs surveyed rank internationalization a high priority³.

Why pursue internationalization? Universities internationalize for various reasons. IAU lists down the top reasons of internationalization. In the list, the desire for increased

¹ Knight, J. “The Internationalization of Higher Education”,
http://www.academicmatters.ca/current_issue.article.gk?catalog_item_id=1234&category=/issues/OCT2008
[retrieved 22 January 2009]

² Paige, M. “Internationalization of Higher Education: Performance Assessment and Indicators”,
<http://www.cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp/publications/journal/no5/08.pdf> [retrieved 22 January 2009]

³ Knight, J. *Internationalization of Higher Education Practices and Priorities: 2003 IAU Survey Report*,
<http://www.unesco.org/iau/internationalization/pdf/Internationalisation-en.pdf> [retrieved 22 January 2009]

competitiveness is the most important rationale driving university internationalization⁴. Universities consider internationalization as an important route to being world-class.

In the Philippines, one such university pursuing internationalization aggressively is the Ateneo de Manila University. Ateneo is one of the best and oldest universities in the Philippines. In 2008, the Times Higher Education Survey of World Universities ranked the Ateneo as the number one university in the Philippines⁵. A Filipino, Catholic and Jesuit private university, it was founded in 1859⁶. In 2009, the Ateneo is celebrating its sesquicentennial year. In its 2007 Strategic Planning Workshop, the Ateneo came up with a new five-year strategic plan for the Ateneo Loyola Schools. The plan includes new elements of the vision: “adopting an Asian perspective, pursuing internationalization more vigorously”⁷. In particular, strengthening “structures and systems to support internationalization efforts” is included at the heart of the university’s strategic plan⁸. In fact, in 2007, Ateneo already has 92 international linkages, spanning many countries in Asia, Europe and the United States⁹.

Nonetheless, Ateneo does not pursue internationalization for its own sake. The university considers student leadership formation and nation-building as its priority, and internationalization is simply a means to this end¹⁰.

In this paper, we present the internationalization efforts at the Ateneo de Manila University, especially those that relate to the university’s main mission of nation-building and total formation of its students. In particular, we present the drivers, modes and perceived outcomes of an internationalized student leadership formation in the Ateneo.

Section II presents the methodology. Section III gives the results, while section IV provides a thorough discussion. We conclude in section V.

II. METHODOLOGY

We conduct thematic analysis of the various speeches, addresses and presentations of key school administrators: the President and the two Vice-Presidents. These are speeches delivered in various conferences and forums¹¹¹²¹³¹⁴¹⁵¹⁶¹⁷.

⁴ Knight, J. *IAU 2005 International Survey*,

http://www.unesco.org/iau/internationalization/pdf/internationalization_2005.pdf [retrieved 22 January 2009]

⁵ <http://www.topuniversities.com> [accessed 18 March 2009]

⁶ www.admu.edu.ph [accessed 18 March 2009]

⁷ “New LS Strategic Plan Presented”, *Loyola Schools Bulletin*, Vol.3, No.1, June-July 2007, p.1.

⁸ *Loyola Schools Strategic Plan, 2007*

⁹ Lolarga, E. “Adapting to the Changing Times”, *Loyola Schools Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No.2, August-September 2007, pp.6-8.

¹⁰ Nebres, B. “A Response to the THES World University Rankings”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 8 November 2008]

¹¹ Cuyegkeng, A. “Comments on the Ateneo de Manila University’s Performance in the 2007 THES-QS World University Rankings”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 8 November 2008]

¹² Nebres, B. “150 Years of Engaging the Nation: Reflections on the mission of university excellence and overcoming poverty in the Philippines”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 18 March 2009]

¹³ Nebres, B. “Ateneo in Ever Greater Service to the Nation”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 8 November 2008]

¹⁴ Nebres, B. “The Changes of Higher Education Towards Globalization”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 8 November 2008]

¹⁵ Nebres, B. “Building internationally competitive institutions and overcoming poverty: Can these two paths converge?”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 8 November 2008]

¹⁶ Nebres, B. “Forming Professionals for Others, Building the Nation”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 18 March 2009]

¹⁷ Nebres, B. “Ateneo of the Future”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 8 November 2008]

We also interview the two Vice Presidents of the university: Dr. Assunta Cuyegkeng (Loyola Schools Vice President) and Dr. Antonette Palma-Angeles (Academic Vice President).

Both of them graduated from the Ateneo in the 1970s and have served the university in various capacities before assuming the vice presidency. We also interview Mr. Glenn de Leon, the Assistant to the Academic Vice President, who is also in charge of the Office of the International Program, the university's service arm for internationalization efforts.

We thematically analyze the speeches and the interviews and identify the drivers, modes and outcomes of internationalized student leadership formation.

III. RESULTS

Table 1 enumerates the three drivers of internationalizing student leadership formation: desire for increased global competitiveness of graduates, multi-cultural exposure of students, and greater excellence in service to the nation. We also include significant excerpts from speeches and presentations of key school officials.

Driver	Excerpts
Desire for increased global competitiveness of graduates	<p>“Unless our graduates can compete effectively with graduates of leading universities in our region, we will not contribute effectively to the leadership needed in a globalizing economy” (Fr. Nebres, <i>The Changes of Higher Education Towards Globalization</i>, 2003)</p> <p>“These programs follow our priority of leadership formation, since we believe that leaders of tomorrow will have to be increasingly global in their perspective” (Fr. Nebres, <i>A Response to the THES World University Rankings</i>)</p>
Desire for more multi-cultural exposure of students	<p>“The presence of international students in Ateneo enriches the atmosphere we have. In the social climate we had before, everything was mostly local. Now, with the presence of the foreign students, there will be new air and there will also be enrichment” (Mr. Glenn de Leon, <i>Guidon</i>)</p>

<p>Desire for greater excellence in greater service to the nation</p>	<p>“We will continue with our efforts to grow in excellence and in linkages with peer institutions internationally. However, our priorities will continue to be the formation of a next generation of leaders who will not only be the best in their chosen professions, but who will place this excellence at the service of others. We seek to remain faithful to the call of Fr. Pedro Arrupe ... to educate ‘men and women for others’” (Fr. Ben Nebres, <i>2007 THES-QS World University Rankings</i>)</p> <p>“Our vision and mission is to build leaders and institutions for the future: able to excel and compete in an internationalizing world; committed to use this excellence and competitiveness to help build a better future for our people; coming from spirituality and a deep love of God and our people.” (Fr. Nebres, <i>Ateneo de Manila Beyond 145</i>)</p>
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Table 2 lists the different modes of internationalizing student leadership formation. The modes take four forms. The first involves academic mobility for outbound students through the Junior Term Abroad and study tours for a month in Europe and Asia. In 2008, 20% of the Ateneo management students have gone on a JTA¹⁸. Ateneo is targeting to increase it by 33% [9]. Students are also sent for summer programs in Kyushu University in Japan, leadership programs in Asian universities, management modules in Hong Kong Baptist University, and numerous tours in Europe.

The second involves imparting student organizations a more international character. These organizations, such as the Ateneo Student Exchange Council, hold campus-based activities with international and multi-cultural component.

The third mode involves students participating in various international competitions, conferences and tours, such as HSBC Business Plan competition, debates, computer programming, and math competitions.

Finally, the last mode is termed as „internationalization at home’s, which means bringing internationalization inside Ateneo itself by encouraging international students inbound to spend in the university for a term. This includes student exchange programs and summer programs for students from several Japanese, Chinese and American universities, including Stanford University.

¹⁸ Palma-Angeles, A. “Student Mobility in Asia: Case of Ateneo de Manila University”, <http://www.ciae.ntu.edu.tw> [retrieved 22 January 2009]

Table 3 details the perceived outcomes of internationalized student leadership formation, which include brain train or increased global competitiveness of students, more tolerance and openness to other cultures, and greater love for the country.

IV. DISCUSSION

Universities internationalize for various reasons. Ateneo de Manila University, however, pursues internationalization vigorously to further its mission of student leadership formation and nation-building. Dr. Assunta Cuyegkeng underlines this clearly: “We do not pursue internationalization for its own sake. We internationalize as part of the holistic formation we impart to the students. The most important thing we do is to help students to be “light in the Lord”. We are always asked, “What is the cohesive force of the Ateneo?” And we always see it as leadership formation. We form students so that they take wing as leaders in the future, leaders with a sense of purpose of building the nation. This is the big picture. Now,

Modes	Description
Academic mobility (Junior Term Abroad and study tours)	The academic student mobility scheme allows Ateneo students to study in a partner university abroad for a semester, or to immerse themselves in the culture of another country for a month.
Internationalization of student organizations	Organizations such as the Ateneo Student Exchange Council, Ateneo Celadon, Ateneo Lingua Ars Cultura offer an international campus-based experience.
Participation in extra-curricular activities such as international competitions, conferences, and tours	Ateneo participates in prestigious international competitions such as debates, business plan competitions sponsored by HSBC, computer programming contests, and math competitions. ASEAN cultural tours and immersion programs with partner Jesuit schools in Asia are also done.
Local Internationalization or ‘Internationalization at home’	“Bringing internationalization inside Ateneo itself” means bringing students from Europe inbound to study in the Ateneo through a year-long or semester-long academic exchange program or a month-long immersion program.

if you want to be a leader, you cannot simply limit yourself to a narrow slice of life, and this is where our internationalization thrust comes in. Internationalization gives our students global perspectives”¹⁹.

¹⁹ Interview with Dr. Assunta Cuyegkeng. 11 March 2009

Ever since Fr. Bienvenido Nebres assumed the Presidency of the Ateneo in 1994, he articulated the institutional mission of the Ateneo as that of closing two gaps: the competitiveness and the poverty gaps. Closing the competitiveness gap means attaining “the needed competitiveness to catch up and keep pace with our East and Southeast Asian neighbors”. On the other hand, closing the poverty gap means “to close the gap between the rich at the top of the social pyramid and the majority poor at the bottom of the pyramid in the Philippines” [12].

This has been the university’s focus: to fuse horizons of academic excellence and social responsibility, that is, to build the Ateneo both as an “internationally competitive institution” and as an institution that engages and builds the nation. Fr. Nebres expressed the mission of the university as that of “university excellence and overcoming poverty in the Philippines” [12].

Today, the Ateneo de Manila has two campuses: the Loyola Schools and the Professional Schools. The former has four schools: the School of Humanities, the School of Management, the School of Social Sciences, and the School of Science and Engineering. The latter has four: the School of Government, the School of Medicine and Public Health, the Law School, and the Graduate School of Business. All of these engage both in academic excellence and social responsibility.

Internationalization: Key to Preparing Students as Globally Competitive Nation-Builders

In forming its students, the Ateneo also combines “education of the heart” and training for competitive professional skills. This thrust is best encapsulated in its motto: “professionals for others”. According to Fr. Nebres,

“In the 1970s, we responded to the call of our Jesuit Superior General, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, to make the formation of ‘men and women for others’ our central goal. We institutionalized programs to bring our students into regular contact with the poor and to ask themselves how they could make a difference in the lives of others, what we call today “education of the heart”.

“In the 1990s, we sought to go beyond “men and women for others”, educating young leaders with a heart, to ‘professionals for others’, young leaders who would use their professional skills and expertise to make a difference for the poor.” [12]

Our formation of students today aims at the education of the heart and mind, but goes beyond that to get them engaged with social and political institutions and invite them to think of how they can contribute later as professionals: to become professionals for others [16].

He also reiterated this in his address to the faculty in June 2008. During his talk, Fr. Nebres noted the four cultures in a modern university such as the Ateneo. These four cultures are prophetic, academic/professional, humanistic, and arts/performance²⁰. Each of these cultures is present in the Ateneo. He said, however, that Ateneo’s focus must continue to be the humanistic culture, which aims for the formation of “professionals for others”, competitive leaders who will contribute to the common good of the country. This is the focus that will unite together the different and diverse cultures within the university [20].

In the end, as what Fr. Nebres pointed out, while Ateneo works on strengthening its internationalization efforts, “we need to do this in a way that does not move us away from our

²⁰ “Faculty Day 08: Ateneo administrators echo university’s role in forming leaders attuned to the times”, www.admu.edu.ph [retrieved 8 November 2008] [21] Interview with Dr. Antonette-Palma Angeles. 11 March 2009.

vision/mission and our traditional strengths: leadership formation and contribution to national development. *These have to continue to be our priorities as a Jesuit university committed to the service of faith and the promotion of justice and as a university in a Philippines whose greatest challenge is overcoming poverty and national development*" [10].

Ateneo's internationalization efforts are not unique. Other universities are doing almost the same things. Dr. Angeles emphasized this: "We might think that Ateneo is nothing different from other universities that internationalize. And that is true. But what we keep on emphasizing is the purpose of what we do: we internationalize in order to form our students into globally competitive nation-builders"²¹.

V. CONCLUSION

We present internationalization as a „main priority“ of the Ateneo de Manila University, especially as it relates to the mission of the university to preparing global leaders in nation-building. We discuss key drivers, modes, and perceived outcomes of an internationalized student leadership formation. The experience of the Ateneo in internationalizing itself is a valuable help for other universities in developing countries which also intend to internationalize themselves.

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²¹ Interview with Dr. Antonette-Palma Angeles. 11 March 2009.

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