

THE RESEARCH PROCESS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN THE PHILIPPINES: A RETROSPECT

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1. Background

With globalization, it is necessary for the Philippines to unrelentingly pursue and produce knowledge-intensive goods and services as the key to economic development and poverty reduction. Basic to the realization of this potential is knowledge, which can be gained through a well-educated, technically-skilled manpower.

This paper sums up the research process of the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) which has the potency to contribute well to economic progress. In particular, it attempts to i) provide a perspective on how research is done in the state universities and colleges (SUCs) with particular focus on the university as it relates to SUC leveling, normative funding, and performance-based bonus, ii) discuss the research processes, and iii) identify the elements of research dissemination and utilization.

2. The Research Perspective: The Philippine Context

Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of 1994” created the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Among its functions is the mandate relative to research (Section 8, RA 7722). Hence, CHED has created the Zonal Research Center (ZRC). In line with these developments, the National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA) Phase-1 (1998-2008) was established. It was in 2001, three years after the implementation of NHERA-1 when the ZRC, as a component, was founded.

The CHED is, therefore, mandated to enhance the research functions of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines. Pursuant to this, CHED created nine ZRCs to decentralize the promotion and management of research. In 2011, a total of 14 ZRCs have been established by CHED throughout the Philippines. A bigger amount for Research and Development (R&D) have been allocated to key government research agencies such as the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of

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Agriculture (DA), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to produce high-value, knowledge-intensive goods and services aimed at uplifting the well-being of the people (Angara, 2008).

3. Relevant and Responsive Research, Development and Extension (RDE)

CHED supports the conduct of SUCs RDE aimed at generating, adapting and transferring or applying new knowledge and technologies for improving productivity and livelihood, promoting peace, empowering women, protecting the environment, reducing disaster devastation, and alleviating poverty.

ZRCs and seven (7) research program component implementers were identified and mobilized by CHED to help improve research capability and enhance research productivity among HEIs. These research centers, in turn, established networks/communities of researchers that are now actively implementing CHED-funded R&D programs/projects that are aimed at generating/adapting knowledge/technologies that could be transferred to/applied by end-users for enhancing productivity and quality of life, particularly the disadvantaged sector of the communities.

It is the purpose of this paper to provide a perspective of the initiatives being undertaken in fulfilling the Zonal Research Program (ZRP) that is based on the Region's development vision and goals.

4. CHED Research Agenda

The Medium-Term Higher Education Development and Investment Plan (MTHEDIP) 2001-2004 outlines the research agenda to address the concerns on higher education. Said research agenda is further supported by RA 8292, known as "Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997" which provides the establishment of research and extension centers of the SUCs to promote the development of the latter. The focus, are as follows:

1. Quality and Excellence
2. Relevance and Responsiveness
3. Utilization of Information and Communication Technology
4. Access and Equity
5. Efficiency and Effectiveness

5. SUC Leveling

The SUC leveling is base on the total point scores earned/obtained in the four Key Result Areas. The Department of Budget and Management, and the Commission of Education through a Joint Circular No. 1, Series. 2003 outline the SUC Leveling, as follows:

Key Result Area (KRA)	Maximum Points	Minimum Points			
		IV	III-A	III-B	II
A. Quality and Relevance of Instructions	17	14	10	8	6
B. Research Capability and Outputs Within the Last Three (3) Years	8	6	4	6	3
C. Relations with and Services to the Community	5	4	3	3	1
D. Management of Resources	5	4	3	3	1
Total	35	28	20	20	11

The UEP being a HEI undertakes the functions of a state university primarily its legal mandate to conduct research. At the same time faculty keeps with the development in their discipline through their personal study and the and the faculty development programs, which aim to upgrade and update their knowledge, skills and competitiveness. The four (4) KRAs represent the major indicators that would measure the stages of development and institutional performance of the SUCs (Joint Circular No. 1, Series. 2003). UEP has met the minimum points for KRA-A (10 points) and KRA-B (6 points) for Level III-A.

6. SUCs Normative Funding Formula

The application of the normative funding formula has resulted in UEP's greater reliance on internally generated income through various fund generation sources. However, the implementation of the NFF has not exhibited the desired effect on (i) shifting SUC enrollment toward priority courses, and (ii) improving the quality of instruction (Manasan, 2012). The per student SUCs receipts from school fees is not related with ability to pay of households. Together with the low overall level of schools' fees it tends to indicate some scope for SUCs to increase tuition and other school fees.

7. Performance-Based Bonus

SUCs want to determine the reasonable balance between faculty/employee loyalty and commitment, and performance of the SUC. Toward this end, President Aquino seeks to determine the sensible balance between employee's commitments vis-a-vis performance. The Performance-Based Information System (PBIS) consists of the PhP5,000 across-the-board bonus in the form of the existing Productivity Enhancement Incentive (PEI) and a top-up bonus known as Performance-Based Bonus (PBB) which is given annually to government personnel in accordance with their contribution to the accomplishment of their department's overall targets and commitments (Memorandum Circular No. 2013-01) and other items factored in by CHED.

8. The Research Process at the University of Eastern Philippines

8.1 Generation of Research Proposal

Research in the university takes into account the National, Regional, and Institutional priorities as provided for in the Science and Technology Agenda for National Development (STAND). The Visayas Coordinated Agricultural Research Program (VICARP), a Visayas State University-led, and the Eastern Visayas Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development (EVCIERD), are the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) regional Network for research.

The University In-House Review is the venue for the review of proposals by the Technical Working Group (TWG). The results of the proposal is returned to the researcher for improvement, taking into account the suggestions and recommendations of the committee. The revised proposal is presented to the University annual Final Research In-house Review. Suggestions are introduced to deepen the proposal before it is endorsed by UREC for external funding either to DOST, PCARRD, and BAR while the rest are submitted to CHED. All research proposals approved during the In-house review will be recommended by the UREC to the Board of Regents for approval.

8.2 Periodic Monitoring and Submission of Progress Report

There is a periodic monitoring on the progress of research by the UREC. The TWG is tasked to do the monitoring of the research projects vis-a-vis the plan of action in the approved proposal. Similarly, the researcher is required to submit a monthly progress report through the UREC to keep track of the progress of the research. A terminal report of the study is required to windup of the research.

8.3 Evaluation and Final Review

Upon completion of the research work, the researcher will have to present the outcomes through a scientific research forum of the final review (University In-House Review). The final manuscript will be submitted to the UREC for final editing by the editorial board for publication. The researcher can also present the research outcomes in any regional, national, and international scientific research forum. The researcher may also opt to publish, where appropriate, in any regional, national and international refereed journal of the researchers' choice as long as the research findings meet the scientific rigors.

8.4 Utilization and Dissemination

Dissemination is not synonymous with publication. Simply, creating documents or innovations and sending out information through an article in a scholarly journal, will not create a "utilization". A successful utilization model must rely on effective and well-defined interactions between basic process elements of the potential user, the content of the message, the context required to obtain the message, the medium of the message, and the source of the message/research result(s).

9. Concluding Remarks

SUCs and research institutions play a key role in research processes. Basic research, trials and tests should and must be done. There is a need to establish working linkages with industries and businesses and collectively produce an enabling environment of networking and exchange in a global perspective. Innovations or inventions should be translated into commercial goods and services designed to uplift people's lives.

A research and education network should be created to allow collaborative R&D among academe, government, and research institutions and provide leadership to SUCs. In the same way, national and local governments, policymakers, and research institutions, media, industries, and the private sector have to forge strong and functional partnerships to support and strengthen competitiveness.

It will take time to heighten the S&T. It needs imaginativeness, resolute government leadership, sustained funding and commitment among scientists to achieve the strategic perspective to create a future where our people can bear the fruits of research outcomes for a quality life of a greater majority.

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