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## Faculty newsletter (1st issue)

Office of Service-Learning, Lingnan University

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# FACULTY

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## NEWSLETTER

### LINGNAN HITS THE ROAD TO CALIFORNIA

Between June 12th and 20th, thirteen delegates including Lingnan senior management, faculty members, and students agreed to spend 7 days and 6 nights on a quest for one answer: *How to institutionalize Service-Learning at Lingnan University*. This trip was far from leisure as the agenda resembled a boot camp structure, lasting from daybreak to dusk. What the delegates perceived as a simple business trip, slowly unfolded answers to challenging questions, transformed mindsets, and cultivated strong relationships.

Each delegate witnessed that the institutionalization of Service-Learning in 2014-15 would not be a walk in the park. It will require leadership, commitment and a clear solid vision; but it was something that could be done. As Former Assoc. Vice President William Lee simply put it, “if not now, when?” Although it would take a trip across the world, the voyage proved to be a responsive measure to the resistance and hesitancy of key decision makers involved in the institutionalization process.



Despite the fact that Service-Learning represents the core values of a true liberal arts university, some key decision makers and stakeholders needed more evidence to justify the feasibility and value of the program before actually providing the Office of Service-Learning with longterm university funding and instituting administrative policies and procedures to facilitate

the scheme. Therefore, the only way to overcome such hurdles was through “experiential learning”--providing an opportunity for individuals to be directly exposed to successful Service-Learning case studies and to receive retorts to unanswered questions by respectable educators and leaders. With minimum funding for the trip, the Office of Service-Learning sought financial support from private donors to provide full sponsorships for each faculty member. As a strong proponent for Service-Learning, the Lingnan Foundation immediately responded by offering a generous donation. The Lingnan Foundation acknowledged the hardships of institutionalizing Service-Learning without the full support of faculty and university leadership.

There was a large variation among participating delegates, some had little to no experience with Service-Learning; while some were consistent practitioners and advocates. Nonetheless, all delegates exhibited openness and optimism as they met US representatives. Through panel sessions and intensive round table discussions, US faculty, Vice Chancellors, and students delivered a common message--the university should have an obligation to the community and the role of educators is to cultivate a sense of social responsibility within their students. Although faculty at these universities received no formal compensation for teaching Service-Learning and even found it difficult to receive recognition for their scholastic work; they remained fully committed to incorporating Service-Learning practices in their classrooms.



*“The trip offered far more than I expected, I wish more faculty could have witnessed this transformative experience.”*



*-Dr. Red Chan,  
Assistant Prof., Dept.  
of Translations*

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It was clear that the passion of US students and the dedication of US faculty are what fuels the Service-Learning programs at the nine renowned universities visited, starting from the University of California Los Angeles, located in the southern coast, and ending at Stanford University in the northern bay area. The university visits proved to be a prime opportunity to discern how Service-Learning can evolve within Hong Kong. For example, the delegates discovered that cultivating a service oriented culture at Lingnan University is one of the first steps in making the Service-Learning requirement successful at Lingnan. After witnessing creative ways on how to utilize the classroom space as a platform for comprehensive teaching and service, many of the delegates publicly declared how they experienced a paradigm shift and began sharing innovative ideas for their own teaching initiatives at Lingnan.



The Lingnan delegates will likely continue their momentum, as they stand in support of the Service-Learning requirement and assist with the execution process. True commitment does not end once crossing the border back into Hong Kong, but rather it is the moment when it is tested. However, progress does not singly lie in the hands of OSL and the delegates. Progression requires action from both the top down level, in order to create the most suitable model that fits Lingnan University and

address individual departmental concerns. Furthermore, progress depends on constructive feedback from all stakeholders so OSL can improve its services and organizational strategies; moreover, it relies on the development of new university policies in order to facilitate and assess Service-Learning in courses. In addition, it most certainly

depends on an investment in faculty training and student leadership training methods, incentivizing and rewarding faculty members for their work, and most of all, it requires a transformation of minds as we cultivate the spirit of service at Lingnan University.



Through seminars, round table discussions, and panels, the delegates discovered how Service-Learning offers all its stakeholders, including students, program coordinators, service agencies and courses instructors a chance to take part in quality education, while addressing the social issues. The delegation trip revealed how Service-Learning places the institution in a perfect position to be a gateway for

international collaborations among global educators and researchers, which can ultimately improve the brand of Lingnan. The informative trip enabled Lingnan faculty to consider modes for the advancement of Service-Learning practices at Lingnan University. The purpose of this letter is to provide insight about the delegation experience, but the most accurate way to transfer this information would be through the testimonials of the delegates themselves. Throughout the 2013-14 academic years, there will be departmental sharing, retreats, and workshop opportunities to witness how Service-Learning transforms the teaching experience. Some of the delegates have voluntarily agreed to host panels and luncheons, where they will share in detail about their experience in California. For instance, on Sep.23, Dr. Red Chan will host a sharing section, where she will share about her delegation experience and how it inspired her to apply for a Faculty Mini-Grant to pursue a potential research breakthrough.

We invite you to take part in this ongoing learning experience and hope you too will grasp the value of implementing the Service-Learning requirement at Lingnan University. Service-Learning has grown the support of the Lingnan Presidential group, deans and department heads; are you not curious to discover why?

*For information on ways to get involved in Service-Learning, send an email to [chiemelaokwandu@ln.edu.hk](mailto:chiemelaokwandu@ln.edu.hk) ext. 8079.*

*"There is not awareness of the integration of 'service and learning'. This is why it is important for us to educate the professors, so we can work towards service learning as a requirement".*

*-Former Associate Vice President William Lee*



### Delegation Participants

Office of the President:

Prof. SEADE Jesús  
Prof. CHAN Tsang-sing  
Prof. LEE William

Faculty of Arts:

Prof. CHAN Stephen  
Dr. WONG Mary  
Dr. ZHENG Yujan  
Dr. CHAN Red  
Ms. LEUNG Kitty (student)

Faculty of Social Sciences:

Prof. WEI Xiangdong  
Ms. CHAN Sharon  
Dr. CHAN Annie  
Mr. KWOK Danny(student)

Faculty of Business Administration:

Prof. SNELL Robin  
Dr. WONG Ada  
Ms. CHAN Amin (student)

OSL Staff:

Prof. CHAN Alfred  
Dr. MA Carol  
Ms. SIU Chloe  
Ms. PANG Suke  
Ms. OKWANDU Chiemela