

# Current International Networking for International Administration Officers at National Tsing Hua University

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**Abstract** — *With the rapid progress of internationalization at National Tsing Hua University (hereafter, NTHU), administration officers in charge of international affairs have gradually played a pivotal but challenging role in assisting the promotion of international affairs. Under this umbrella, the cooperation and communication with administration officers worldwide has become obviously essential. Substantial and IT-application practices to enhance the frequencies and efficiency of networking will be shared. Current and future difficulties and challenges will also be addressed.*

**Index Terms** — *International networking, education internationalization.*

## INTRODUCTION

With the rapid progress of internationalization at National Tsing Hua University (hereafter, NTHU), administration officers in charge of international affairs have gradually played a pivotal but challenging role in assisting the promotion of international affairs. Under this umbrella, the cooperation and communication with administration officers worldwide has become obviously essential. Substantial and IT-application practices to enhance the frequencies and efficiency of networking will be shared. Current and future difficulties and challenges will also be addressed.

## SUBSTANTIAL NETWORKING PRACTICES

The Office of International Affairs at NTHU was officially established in year 2008. Since its establishment, it has been actively reaching out to assist its university in the process of internationalization. The arrangements of overseas academic and administrative visits and the participation in international conferences, educational exhibitions, and organizations create the face-to-face communication opportunities for our administration officers in charge of international affairs.

Regarding the plan and execution of overseas academic visits, our administrative officers have been arranging some trips to Europe, Japan, India and Germany for our upper-level officers. Taking the academic trip to India as an example, our upper-level officers paid a visit to five top-notch universities and one private sector in India. These visiting arrangements would not be able to successfully carry out without the efforts taken by our administrative officers to contact and communicate with the counterparts in these universities.

In addition to the academic visits, the avant-garde administrative delegation visits to our sister universities in Japan and Korea provided more networking opportunities for our administrators. To make this first-ever administrative delegation happen, the staff in the Office of International Affairs first of all needed to start the contact with the corresponding parties in the to-be-visited sister universities. It initiated a precious chance for our staff to work with these counterparts in their Offices of International Affairs on the logistic arrangements together. The visit to these sister universities in Japan and Korea were a very successful trip as it broadened our administrators visions and offered a face-to-face occasion to exchange viewpoints on their administrative affairs.



FIGURE 1  
ACADEMIC VISIT TO EUROPE



FIGURE 2  
ACADEMIC VISIT TO INDIA

Furthermore, participating in international educational exhibitions and conferences also offers a path to interact with other administrators overseas. We currently actively attend three vital education exhibitions hosted by three leading educational associations, i.e. Asia Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) in Asia, National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) in North America as well as European Association for International Education (EAIE) in Europe. These three educational exhibitions with conferences supply a very comprehensive platform for our international administration officers to network with other administration officers in charge of international affairs worldwide. They are the platform that we could communicate in-depth with our active sister universities when they also participate in these expositions. Besides, they are also the platform that we could seek new partners to build up more cooperative opportunities in the aspect of academics.



FIGURE 3  
NTHU ADMINISTRATIVE DELEGATION VISIT TO JAPAN



FIGURE 4  
NTHU ADMINISTRATIVE DELEGATION VISIT TO KOREA

Participating in international organizations is also one of the channels that we network with international officers. NTHU is one of the members of Association of East Asian Research Universities (AEARU), a regional organization aiming at forming a forum for the presidents of leading research-oriented universities in East Asia and of carrying out mutual exchanges between the major universities in the region. Moreover, the establishment of European Union-Framework Program (EU-FP) National Contact Point (NCP) Mid-Taiwan Office in NTHU, supported by the National Science Council, and participation in Washington Accord for Engineering Accreditation give rise to a plenty of international networking occasions.



FIGURE 5  
NAFSA 2009



FIGURE 6  
EAIE 2009

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS

Attending international events creates the substantial opportunities for international administration officers to network with each other. While this style of networking indicates the most direct means, we also capitalize on other tools to maintain the relationship with corresponding parties in our sister universities. Thanks to the advancement of contemporary information technology (IT), we could overcome the barriers of distance and time to keep the contact effective all the time. For instance, the application of e-mail to deliver our season's greetings is one of the most common methods we utilize to show our appreciation to our worldwide partners. By taking advantage of some other electronic tools, such as Skype and Fax, could tremendously save the operation cost. The application of Skype in our office enables our administrators to go through job details with their worldwide counterparts without the worry of communication cost. To keep abreast of global trend, we also plan to establish other popular networking tools, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, etc, to increase the frequencies of international networking.

## DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES

In the rapid progress of internationalization, it also brings some potential impacts to our administration officers responsible for international affairs. First, language barrier is one of the obvious challenges faced by non-native international officers when they need to work with native international officers. For non-native speakers, they are afraid that they might have difficulty delivering their message explicitly. The other way around, native speakers' intonation, accent, velocity of talk, etc, might also lead to miscommunication at times. Besides, the concern of intercultural sensitivity also exists when our administration officers deal with administrative procedures or international students. It becomes one of the challenges for our officers to pay particular attention when they work with international officers and students. The last challenge is concerning the management of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). It is inevitable that universal higher education make enormous efforts in signing MOU with universities worldwide in order to expand their collaborative opportunities. However, it also generates the issue of management of MOU. The issue of how to keep the MOU updated and effective is seemingly becoming a common discussion topic for worldwide international officers. For us, we currently post all signed MOUs on our website and categorize them by regions. To be user friendly, we also indicate which MOUs offer exchange student or exchange scholar opportunities. By this categorization, students or scholars could easily find the universities they are interested in. To be more effective and efficient, we also conceive to develop an electronic system that could assist us to keep all of the MOUs up-to-date and alive.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, the participation of international events assists our international officers to have the face-to-face communication opportunities with their counterparts worldwide. In addition, the wide applications of IT also tackle the barriers of time and distance to keep communication efficient. Language barriers, intercultural sensitivity and management of MOU are the difficulties and challenges that our international officers are encountering and need to overcome gradually.