

Some Problems and Issues of Foreign Students

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編按：生物資源暨農學院於今年5月29日邀請外籍生座談，當時擔任外籍生聯誼會會長的Hari於座談會中提出多項與外籍生切身相關之問題，本文乃Hari會後增補之定稿。

National Taiwan University (NTU) is the best university in Taiwan and is one of the best universities in the world. The number of students has been increasing each year, whereas currently there are 341 foreign students from 50 different countries are studying in NTU. The growing presence of foreign students in NTU is an indication of a trend towards internationalization of this university. We foreign students are also proud of being a student of this reputed university. Many students who are presently studying in this university are influencing from its system. They can carry knowledge from Taiwan to their home country as they can contribute to socio-economic development and also return home with Chinese culture. However, there are some difficulties and problems which have been making their student life uncomfortable. Therefore, in this paper only some problems and issues encountered with foreign students in NTU are briefly described and given some suggestions and tips, which may help to overcome some of these problems and enhance quality of education. Other positive aspects of the university are not included here. Hope University will consider these problems and issues for the welfare of interna-

tional students as well as for growth and development of university itself

1. Issuing of Visa

Some of the countries they have no cultural relationship with Taiwan therefore getting visa is very difficult for them. It is because they have to go to other countries to issue visa. Therefore, it would be better to provide them on arrival visa at the airport so that they would not be too worried about getting visa.

2. List of new students

To help the new comers with necessary information before arrival and in the first day of arrival in Taiwan, it is very important to have some one guide and help them. In this regard, it is

■ Hari 從尼泊爾來台大農藝學研究所攻讀博士已有兩年。





crucial to have a list of new comers with email address. That is not only good for new comers but also assist the NTU to take care of their students. That is why many students suggested us that NTUFSA should manage some contact persons to all new students whose application has already been accepted by NTU. That is possible if NTU provide a list of accepted foreign students with their mailing address, allocated dormitory and room number to NTUFSA. After getting this information, it would be easy to taking care of them before arrival and after arrival to NTU, which will be helpful to NTU too.

3.NTU Website, documents and communication

As a worldwide recognized university, it is better to have its information in website in Chinese and English languages for the easiness of web searchers. Recently, some improvement has been made; however, it has not complete information in English yet. In addition, letters and documents sent to them by web mail in their university email are used to be in Chinese that creates problem to understand; therefore many foreign students don't take it seriously whatsoever the important message is. Because of the importance of time and language problem, it is not easy to request to read mail/message to other people (Taiwanese); however, they are very co-operative. In addition, the other problem of web mail is related to course registration. It is because the information available to register the course is in Chinese. Therefore, information and website related to foreign students should be in both Chinese and English language.

4.Courses offered in Chinese

Some students have been facing problems with their courses taught in Chinese. Therefore, it will be better department offering enough related courses in that have foreign students with no Chinese language proficiency. Otherwise it is very hard to them to understand; as a result, they could not perform well in the exam which directly affects to compete or get their scholarship.

Even some courses are offered in English, but surprisingly Professor taught in Chinese language medium. When students find this problem, it is very difficult to choose another course later. It is because students are mentally prepared to take that

course, and have not thinking any other options. Therefore, NTU should take it seriously that if Professor teaches in Chinese, it should not be put under the category of course taught in English. If it goes like this way, students would be in a great problem and mentally shocked too.

5.Orientation program

One day general orientation program to new students has been made by NTU each year; however, it is not sufficient to introduce to their concerned college and department. Therefore, additional one day orientation program if organized by the concerned department/college would also be more useful for the foreign students to familiar easily with their concerned department and college.

6.Overlapping extra curricular activities for foreign students

Any program for the foreign students should not be overlapped at the same time. Overlapped program will not be effective. As for example, if NTU is going to organize sports program, the other program like field trip should not be organized at the same time. If field trip is organized, many students want to go to field trip instead of participating in the short activities. We also suggest that if any event is going to be organized for foreign students, it is better to provide prior information to NTUFSA too.

Regarding the sports activities, more sports must be offered due to the increasing foreigners from different countries. Probably, a considerably part of them doesn't feel attracted with the offering proposed. In addition, International Week Festival is also useful for foreign students. I think it is better to give continuation this program as in the past years.

7.Management of family apartment

Some students are married, therefore, they are together with their family and some are trying to bring their family in the near future. Because of lack of family apartment in NTU, they must stay outside, which is very difficult to manage their life with the limited budget. It is because outside apartment is very expensive that has been making some problem in their studies too. To

■ 台大現有外國學生有 600 多人(含交換生及語言學習生)，圖為本文作者 Hari 與同學們至野柳踏青時合影。



solve this problem, it is better to manage family apartment to married foreign students. In some countries having good university they have this kind of facility therefore students should not face any problem, and they can concentrate their attention only on study and research. In addition, some cultural issues are also inevitable that has created some food problems to some students. Therefore, this problem will be solved if managed dormitory to such students who can cook food there.

8.The Chinese language program

NTUFSA and its members are grateful to NTU for providing free Chinese language course for all new students and executive members of NTUFSA. In total 63 foreign students have been taken this facility in the first semester of the academic year 2005/06. The number of student has been drastically reduced in the second semester, where only 41 students could continue this program and 22 students have left this course. The reasons behind this were: some students have left university; some were busy in their regular course, and class time was also not suitable for all. As far as I'm concerned, learning Chinese is a very important factor on our stay in Taiwan and I hope it be given proper weight for students to take it. However of good course syllabus, the understanding level is very poor because of lan-

guage barrier.

Therefore, I would like to suggest that it would be better if NTU organizes a compulsory condense pre-session free Chinese language course for at least one semester for those who have poor ability in this language, and then non-credited optional in-session Chinese language course for those who are interesting to continue this course. In addition, I would also like to suggest to provide to some old PhD students who have to stay in Taiwan for a long time and have not got this opportunity.

9.Stipends/Scholarships

Scholarship provided by the government and NTU in Taiwan is one of the major attractions for the foreign students. Recently, NTU has made a new provision of providing free ship for 70 foreign students. This is also very positive part for us. However, there are attractive schemes, there are some problems associated with this i.e. about time management for providing scholarship regularly to students. If delays more than one month in disbursing the stipends, they will have a big problem, especially for those who depend fully on the scholarship for their daily expenses. Therefore, it would be better to provide them it regularly. In addition, once students have got scholarship, it would be better to continue their scholarship for other years



too upon the fulfillment of minimum score required by NTU so that student shouldn't think too much about how to manage financial condition.

10. Health insurance card

Some of new students might face this problem and complain about it. Students applied for it before it was 4 months of stay in Taiwan, and now will have been staying for more than half a year already but still have no social security number, which is a great problem because this card is necessary to go to see the doctor shortly. Some one has also mentioned that, what is more I think that these documents got stuck some where because friend of mine went to ministry of health himself and got the card and number after 2 hours!

11. Office of NTUFSA

NTUFSA has not its own independent office to take care of things. Therefore, for effectiveness in work and easy coordination with Centre for International Academic Exchange, it is necessary to have a small place near the CIAE with a PC and other stuffs. We also suggest that a representative of NTUFSA is necessary in helping new students from developing countries that are accepted to NTU get visa. It is because to obtain Taiwan's visa is even harder than to Europe. Therefore, somebody has to take care of that and as numbers of students increases, the need will be even greater.

12. Home stay during vacation

Arrangement of home stay for a couple of days by NTU would be a good way to exchange and expose with the culture, developmental activities, language, social system, etc. so that foreign students could expose more with the Taiwan, agriculture and agriculture system, language, social system, etc.

13. Tour program

If possible, it would be better to organize a joint tour program for all foreign students under the different department and college as for example for the agriculture student to different farmer's field, different agricultural agencies and research farm station so that we could learn and understand the Taiwanese agriculture system and exchange our views too.

14. Interaction program

Interaction program would be useful to understand the university's policy about foreign students as well as problems and issues of foreign students to improve the existing facilities for better education. Participating in two interaction meetings organize by Centre for International Academic Exchanges and by College of Bio-Resources and Agriculture in this year. At least two interaction meeting would be better to held in each semester, which would help to keep good co-ordination between university and students. Upon receiving feed back from the students, it would help university to manage things properly for the welfare of foreign students.

15. Linkage with old students

After completion of study in NTU, students should be linked regularly with a NTU's chain. As Alumni Liaison Office has established liaising with people in 50 countries, it would be easy to handle these issues and also establish good linkage to other countries too, where there is no such office.

16. Work permit

Some students are with their family members, where financial support provided by NTU is not sufficient to cover the whole cost incurred for their survival. Therefore, if NTU has provided some provision of part time job for the student as well as their family would be very effective means of managing such problems.

Lastly, we hope, these points will help university to improve the existing facilities of foreign students, as well as we always expect NTU's bright future with an attraction point in good education system in the world.

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