



MULTICULTURALISM AT MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY, THAILAND

Chariya Ratanarat Brockelman and Alexander Korff

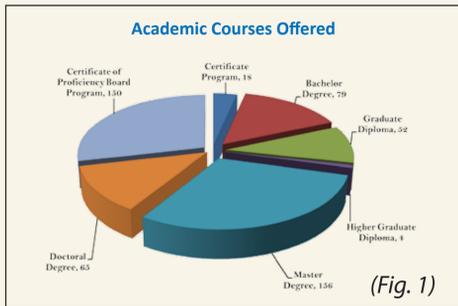
Mahidol University International College
Salaya Campus, Nakhon pathom 73170
icchariya@mahidol.ac.th



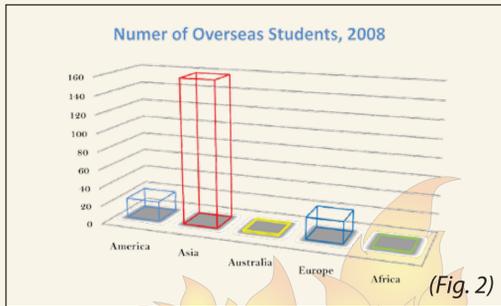
Abstract: World Class Higher Education must include international component that creates multiculture awareness among local and foreign students. Mahidol University provides all facilities for activities to promote multiculturalism. All students fully participate in cross culture events so as to understand and appreciate diversity of belief and traditions. Thus the graduates are instilled with cross culture sensibility, a crucial factor for graduates to live and thrive in an ever-increasing globalized world.

Since its establishment as a medical school in 1888, the University has been enjoying the involvement of foreign faculty members that has become a tradition in teaching, learning and cooperative research. With the founding of the Faculty of Graduate Studies in 1950, offering more than 150 international degree programs of a total of 565 (Fig. 1), the university sees a steady increase in number of foreign students. Presently, there are 341 overseas students of 42 nationalities from five continents (Fig. 2). The university has further developed Thailand first premier International College "Mahidol University International College - MUIC" in 1986 that presently offers 19 majors with over 1,000 courses taught in English at undergraduate level. The college is active admitting foreign students as well as enjoying formal exchange agreements with 37 universities

throughout the world. Its inbound international students constitute almost 20 percent of the 2,250-member student body (Fig. 3). The college faculty are composed of members from 12 countries.



(Fig. 1)



(Fig. 2)



(Fig. 3)

With the presence of these faculty and students the university recognizes the necessity to promote multiculturalism so as to instill students with cross culture sensibility in order to create a peaceful living and to produce graduates with the skills and humanity to live and thrive in a globalized world. Students are encouraged to discuss cross culture issues and participate in activities that aim at understanding Thai, oriental, and western cultures. Students enjoy easy access (Fig. 4) to practise their religious rites. Thai students enjoy opportunities to learn and respect other beliefs. MUIC facilitates foreign students to fully participate in all Thai festivals (Fig.5) and celebrations and to organize their social events allowing them to share their cultural heritage (Fig. 6). The College also observes Christmas, Ramadan and Chinese New Year.



(Fig. 4)



(Fig 7)

The Annual Multicultural Day has become a trimester event that celebrates all nationalities represented at the College focusing on their histories and traditions, cuisine, art, music, and national costumes (Fig 7).



Field trip and excursions are also included, not only to the more celebrated tourist attractions in Thailand but to orphanages, community centers and hospices for patients with chronic diseases (Fig 8).



(Fig 8)

Extracurricular activities enhance opportunities to students to work and enjoy partnership such as the Debate Club, Diving Club, Sports Club, to name a few.

The Debate Club, for example is represented by students from Asia Europe and North America. The members practise debating and travel together overseas to take part in international debating arena.

References: "Mahidol University Facts and Figures 2007"

Student Database, Mahidol University International College, 2008

OASIS: MUIC- Online Assisted Student Information Services

International Degree Programs at Mahidol University, 2008,

a publication of the Office of International Relations.