

Poor assessment for tertiary institutions

Given a budget of 50 billion NT dollars over five years, the Development Plan for World Class Universities and Research Centers of Excellence is divided into two stages. Stage One consists of two parts, from 2006 through 2007 (Part one) and from 2008 through 2010 (Part two), while Stage Two goes from 2011 through 2015. What is the performance on budget implementation so far? The Control Yuan sets up a taskforce to investigate the case. (Case no. 0970800189)

The Development Plan for World Class Universities and Research Centers of Excellence include two projects targeting two types of institutions, namely universities and research centers. The first project aims to have at least one local university to be listed as top 100 universities around the world in ten years and more ambitiously to ascend to the top 50 universities in fifteen to twenty year's time. However, the plan seems to have been marred by failure to differentiate between "world class universities" and "research centers of excellence". Moreover, the Ministry of Education (MOE) seems unable to define "world-class" and "regional (Asia)-class" universities.

The development Plan also promises a ten-year government funding, the first half of which will fund Stage One, saving the MOE from redistributing its budget. However, the Plan has been placed under the MOE budget from 2009 onwards, squeezing educational resources out and undermining the progress. Furthermore, while the MOE does provide assistance to non-beneficiary schools, the funding given to their beneficiary counterparts is enough to create a financial chasm between the two types of schools. This could result in an M-shaped tertiary education, skewed towards academic research, while neglecting teaching and service provision. The investigation has found a lack of SOP for hiring committee members, resulting in disproportionate expertise and representation. There has also been poor consideration for the underlying differences in academic subjects, coupled with failure to include alumni achievement as criteria for measuring school success. It wasn't until the Control Yuan investigation that the MOE began redistributing funding for costly computer peripherals. For instance, following the investigation, there was a 54.47% budget cut for procuring ink cartridge. Lack of standard procedure for managing government property has hindered comprehensive needs assessment within schools.

In response to Control Yuan's recommendation, the MOE has specified the targets for Stage Two and mandated candidate schools to submit proposals complete with strategies, targets, and criteria for review and assessment. The MOE has also agreed to improve the hiring process of committee members by including background,

expertise and representativeness. It will also broaden the screening criteria to take into account differing characteristics of academic subjects and record of post-graduation accomplishment. With regard to funding, the MOE will ensure all beneficiary schools abide by the regulations by identifying non-compliance and cutting funds. The schools will be required to set up an SOP for on-campus inventory control.