An Interview with Ms. Angela Yung-chi Hou, Executive Director of Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council (HEEACT)

Ms. Yung-chi Hou serves as editor-in-chief of Higher Education Evaluation & Development (HEED) *and associate editor of the* Journal of Asian Pacific Educational Review (SSCI). *She is also vice president of the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and professor in Higher Education at Fu Jen Catholic University.*

Interview conducted in September 2017 by Brian "Blu" Christopher Kelley, Director, CHEA International Quality Group

Question #1: Whether it's the increase of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), an upsurge in student mobility or collaboration on academic research initiatives, internationalization as a topic has been gaining a considerable amount of interest. Is internationalization meant to change the landscape of quality in higher education? And, what are your thoughts about threats to internationalization?

There are several emerging challenges and threats to internationalization in Asian higher education, including developing international quality assurance (QA) standards, constructing national and regional qualification frameworks, cross-border recognition of professional qualifications and others. These, above all, need the active engagement and commitment of QA agencies and professional bodies such as engineering, medicine or nursing.

Internationalization was my major focus when I was appointed the executive director of the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council (HEEACT) in August 2016. Since then, I have made building HEEACT's global connections a priority by developing partnerships with QA agencies around the world. Additionally, I encourage my staff to join staff exchange programs in order to strengthen their QA professionalism and grasp the international trends in higher education. Yet, language barriers, to some extent, discourage international collaboration and cross-border initiatives by most Asian QA agencies. Fortunately, HEEACT staff not only realize the irresistible trend in international capacity building, but also are eager to rise to the challenge.

HEEACT has agreements and partnerships with more than 15 leading QA agencies, conducts overseas and joint accreditation and hosts annual international conferences. HEEACT publishes the *Higher Education Evaluation & Development (HEED)* journal and the *Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) Proceedings* and maintains a Mutual Recognition Agreement with the Malaysia Qualifications Network (MQA). HEEACT also participates in international QA networks and successful exchange programs with Japan's National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE).

The development of information technology (IT) in higher education has quickly transformed teaching and learning practice and inspired innovations at universities, such as MOOCs and distance learning. QA agencies are affected

both directly and indirectly by this trend. Some QA agencies are beginning to respond to this demand, including the development of specific standards that involve retraining older reviewers and recruiting new reviewers. QA agencies are also fighting to enhance their IT capability, such as constructing a functional QA database and designing more online training courses. It is expected that with increased IT usage, all QA reports and other important information can be systematically analyzed and presented to the public.

Question #2: Since becoming the executive director of HEEACT, what are your thoughts and observations about the challenges to quality assurance and for building quality assurance capacity?

I have been involved in the quality assurance community for more than ten years. And I learned from many QA experts of international networks, particularly in QA of cross-border in higher education as well as other initiatives with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) *Guidelines of Good Practice*, the *CHEA/CIQG International Quality Principles*, the *Asia Pacific Quality Register* and the APQN *Quality Label*. As a professor at a university, I fully understand the challenges they face when delivering good quality transnational programs or building branch campuses. In order to properly implement suitable QA exercises, QA agencies need to respond to the quality issues derived from cross-border higher education quality.

Further, the impact of QA on higher education development is a concern in many Asian countries. The public is starting to ask if QA practices are useful and meaningful since governments and higher education providers invest a lot of money and time on them. In order for there to be appropriate accountability for quality assurance bodies, other higher education stakeholders need to conduct oversight.

高等教育評鑑中心
Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan

Question #3: During your extensive career in higher education and in quality assurance, how have your positions reshaped your thinking about quality and quality assurance? Please give various examples.

For over 20 years, I learned, grew and reflected from different administrative positions, in both university and government settings. Quality is a core part of my daily life. From my perspective, "quality" or "quality enhancement" means an aspiration which would continuously inspire people to review, monitor and exceed their own limits. Often, I reflect this in my goals, within both university practice and HEEACT work. For example, in early 2017, the Taiwan government announced a new QA policy on program accreditation, which would shift from a voluntary model to a compulsory approach. This change means that universities should take major responsibility for providing good quality in education. This means that, as an external third party, HEEACT will need to reshape its role and redefine its relationship with universities, in order to be a future thinker of higher education as well as providing oversight of quality.

The [CIQG Website](#) provides an outstanding resource for information about quality assurance internationally.

- *CIQG Policy Briefs*
- *The CHEA-CIQG Publication Series*
- Issues of *Quality International*, the CIQG Newsletter
- Translations of the *CIQG International Quality Principles* and other publications
- CIQG Annual Meeting presentations
- An *International Directory* of quality assurance bodies, accrediting organizations and Ministries of Education in countries around the world

Visit the CIQG Website

Visit the [CIQG Website](#) whenever you need information on quality assurance internationally or on CIQG activities.

The Tertiary Education Imperative:
Knowledge, Skills and Values for Development

Jamil Salmi, Global Tertiary Education Expert, CIQG Advisory Council Member

Co-published by Sense Publishers and the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College (2017)

Reviewed by Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, CHEA Senior Advisor on International Affairs

One of the world's most eminent commentators on tertiary education, Jamil Salmi, has published a new book: *The Tertiary Education Imperative: Knowledge, Skills and Values for Development*. Reviewers describe it as a comprehensive analysis of how tertiary education might contribute to the attainment of the UN 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unlike the 2000 Millennium Development Goals, which only addressed basic education, the SDGs include accessible tertiary education systems of quality as prerequisites for development. This authoritative publication is brilliantly timed. Co-published by Sense Publishers and the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, the major focus of the volume is on tertiary education from the perspective of developing countries.
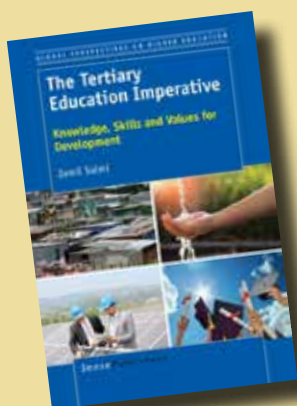
Salmi first examines the current challenges and opportunities that tertiary education faces around the world (Chapter 1). He looks then at the actual state of tertiary education in developing countries (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, he offers guidance on system-wide reforms in the tertiary sector before proposing a sequence for implementing reforms in Chapter 4. Finally, in Chapter 5, Salmi underscores the need for ensuring that reforms are financially sustainable, noting the role of donors. He concludes by reinforcing the book's title: tertiary education reform is "imperative."

In setting the context in the first chapter, Salmi carefully anticipates future developments in tertiary education, noting, for example, that institutions must train learners for jobs that do not yet exist. These jobs will be determined by the ongoing digital transformation (the Fourth Industrial Revolution) and its impacts on the labour markets in different sectors. In these future environments, where robots may replace humans in many professions, he posits that the socio-emotional skills of learners (*character qualities*) will help them adapt to new professional demands.

The author identifies the following key traits in the evolving tertiary education ecosystem:

(a) new tools for measuring the quality of tertiary education through diverse "accountability tools" (quality assurance, accreditation, rankings, student engagement surveys, assessment of learning outcomes);

(b) globalization perceived first through the "fourth age of research" characterized by collaborative research and international research networks; and second through cross-border tertiary education offerings and learning opportunities;

(c) new providers of tertiary education and new education technologies, such as the surge of for-profit providers and distance learning;

(d) alternative modes of delivery, in particular the MOOCs explosion;

(e) open science, big data and open educational resources; and

(f) political commotions affecting tertiary education in many countries (violence against students, reduced academic freedom, tightened visa rules, the refugee crisis).

He concludes the chapter by quoting the French poet and philosopher, Paul Valéry: "The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be."

The great value of this volume, evident in the first chapter, is the abundance of examples from numerous countries and contexts across the world. These make it an indispensable resource for tertiary education academics and practitioners everywhere.

The Tertiary Education Imperative is a sequel to two previous publications by multilateral organizations to which Salmi was either a contributor or lead author. These are: *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise* (UNESCO/World Bank, 2000) and *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* (World Bank, 2002).

CIQG Webinar #3 on Quality Assurance and the Challenge of Addressing Academic Corruption

The CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) hosted a Webinar on October 12, 2017, that focused on the role of quality assurance in combatting academic corruption. The Webinar is part of a series of discussions based on the *Advisory Statement for Effective International Practice* developed by the International Institute for Educational Planning of UNESCO and CIQG in 2016.

Watch the CHEA/CIQG Webinar replay

The third Webinar explored the standards, practices and policies of quality assurance organizations from various countries and regions to address what quality assurance is doing now to fight academic corruption and what it might do in the future. CHEA/CIQG has initiated a research project to develop baseline information on the current role of quality assurance led by Irene Glendinning, Coventry University, who also led the Webinar discussion. Carol Bobby, Immediate Past President and CEO of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs, Peter Okebukola, President of the Global University Network for Innovation – Africa and Colin Tück, Director of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education, made up the distinguished panel.

A Conference on Higher Education for the 21st Century: Diversity, Quality, Improvement

Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo (CINDA) in cooperation with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)

The quality of higher education and its assurance has been a concern of Latin American governments and higher education institutions for over 25 years. The increased demand for higher education has led to diversification, increased presence of private providers and a wide range of quality assurance mechanisms. At this stage, it is necessary not to do "more of the same" but rather, to think about a second generation of quality assurance, emphasizing the role higher institutions themselves must play and focusing on the way in which quality assurance agencies can promote self-regulatory mechanisms.

This is a dialogue that Latin American organizations must have with their counterparts from around the world. CINDA and INQAAHE have invited quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions and policy makers to come together on January 8 and 9, 2018, in Santiago, Chile to reflect on these issues and to move forward to develop strategies for the improvement of higher education for the 21st century.

For more information about this meeting, please email *seminario@cinda.cl*.

International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) Publishes International University Case Studies

The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), an integral part of the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that supports educational policy and development, recently published a series of *eight international university case studies on effective internal quality assurance* that shows how to build an internal quality assurance system to improve academic quality and strengthen employable skills for its graduates.

On another note, IIEP has been offering *online learning courses*; one project is an *e-learning course on internal quality assurance* now being offered to Southeast Asian universities in the fall 2017 (jointly with APQN and UNESCO Bangkok).

Learn more about *IIEP and its programs and research projects*.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

International Institute for Educational Planning

Multilevel Approaches to the European Standards and Guidelines: Contributions from Relevant Stakeholders

Brian "Blu" Christopher Kelley
Director, CHEA International Quality Group

The EQUIP project (Enhancing Quality through Innovative Policy & Practice) was established to support and promote embedding the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG 2015) at the grass-roots level. The project works with stakeholders and policymakers to identify challenges facing higher education and quality assurance and develop, discuss and share innovative solutions to these challenges. Partners of the EQUIP project include the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European University Association (EUA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), Education International (EI), the University of Oslo (UiO), and the Portuguese Polytechnics Coordinating Council (CCISP).

During 2017, six focus groups, including student experts, higher education institutional leadership, academic faculty, quality assurance professionals from universities of applied sciences, quality assurance agencies and national authorities, gathered to discuss quality assurance issues that relate to each respective stakeholder group and the challenges each group faces with regard to the ESG in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The first focus group, which comprised student experts, met on February 16-17, 2017 in Brussels, Belgium, and was guided by the ESU, the umbrella organization of 45 student unions from 38 countries. The student experts were tasked with identifying challenges, such as the lack of student participation, especially in quality assurance. Major emphases were on student involvement in dealing with the ESG, as well as quality assurance practices.

One of the eight partners of the EQUIP project, the EUA, held the second focus group in Vienna, Austria, on March 2-3, 2017 for quality assurance representatives and institutional leadership from universities in higher education, representing 15 countries. While examining higher education and approaches that define quality, the challenge this group faced when developing a strategic plan was trying to differentiate what strategy works in theory versus what actually works when applied. The participants in this group argued that an institutional strategy on paper does not necessarily link to the same strategy that might be put into practice. There was a discussion about applying contextual factors, such as disciplinary practices and type of QA framework, among others that might be used to design different approaches to quality, as well as examine possible innovative solutions on issues that impact quality assurance and the outlook for ESG 2015.

The third focus group that centered on academic faculty met in Belgium on March 15-16, 2017 and was hosted by another partner in the EQUIP project, Education International, a federation of unions that represent organizations of teachers and related employees. The group "devised ways to support and promote a consistent, efficient and innovative embedding of the revised ESG at the grassroots level."[1] The group argued that the higher education sector lacks sufficient resources and that academics and their respective unions need to have representation when it comes to changes that will have an effect on quality assurance.

On March 30-31, 2017, practitioners from the Universities of Applied Sciences met as another focus group. This was organized by EURASHE, a members-based organization that offers programs in applied and profession-related research. The focus of the meeting was on student-centered learning and quality assurance. One of the challenges was defining student-centered learning, because there appeared to be various interpretations from the group. This group "aims at verifying and further consolidating the evidence collected about the implementation challenges of the ESG 2015, sharing good practice, and discussing approaches to solving these challenges and their applicability in different contexts."[2]

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1 EQUIP Focus Groups, retrieved May 8, 2017 at: http://www.equip-project.eu/activities/focus-groups/.

2 Special focus group on ESG 2015 for universities of applied sciences/PHE, retrieved May 19, 2017 at: *https://www.eurashe.eu/equip-focus-group/*.

Quality assurance agencies were the fifth focus group. It met in Oslo on May 3-4, 2017 and was organized by ENQA, an organization that "promotes the enhancement of quality and the development of a quality culture in higher education."[3] Topics included international quality assurance processes, issues about quality and QA approaches, and what quality assurance agencies observe in institutions' QA and strategic management.[4]

The last focus group was held in Prague on October 19-20, 2017 and was attended by national authorities and the European Quality Assurance Register, a registry of quality assurance bodies in Europe that follows "a common set of principles for quality assurance in Europe."[5] The group explored some of the challenges in quality assurance related to meeting the expectations of the ESG that were identified within the EQUIP project, including institutional responsibility for quality assurance and external QA of joint programs, among others.[6]

The next step of this important project is to gather and review all the feedback and results from each of the focus groups that concentrated on the challenges of the ESG 2015 that serves as a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. Based on the outcomes of all participating groups, policy recommendations will be drafted to present to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) ministers responsible for higher education in preparation for the 2018 EHEA Ministerial Conference.

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3 ENQA Mission Statement, retrieved August 15, 2017 at *http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/about-enqa/enqa-mission-statement/*

4 Lessons learnt from yesterday taking things forward, retrieved August 15, 2017 at *http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/EQUIP_ENQA_session4_Tia_Loukkola.pdf*

5 Welcome to EQAR, retrieved May 25, 2017 at *https://www.eqar.eu/*

6 EQAR Members' Dialogue & EQUIP Focus Group, retrieved October 23, 2017 at *https://www.eqar.eu/fileadmin/documents/eqar/Agenda_MD7_Prague_19_20-Oct2017.pdf*

CHEA 2018 Annual Conference
The New Normal for Accreditation:
Practice and Policy for Accreditation
January 29 - January 31, 2018

CIQG 2018 Annual Meeting
Politics and Government: Globalization,
Internationalization and Quality Assurance
January 31 - February 1, 2018

More Information

CHEA/CIQG Publications in Translation

- ***Research on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes: Practical Exploration of the Review of CHEA/CIQG Quality Platform Provider***
  Available in Chinese and English

- ***A New Educational Model to Foster Innovation in China: The DeTao Masters Academy***
  Available in Chinese and English

- ***CIQG International Quality Principles***
  Available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and English

- ***CIQG International Quality Principles: Toward a Shared Understanding of Quality***
  Available in Chinese, French and English

- ***CHEA/CIQG and IIEP-UNESCO Advisory Statement on Combatting Academic Corruption***
  Available in Chinese, French and English

- ***Is Big Brother Watching You? The Evolving Role of the State in Regulating and Conducting Quality Assurance***
  Available in Arabic, Chinese and English

- ***The DNA of a Converging Diversity: Regional Approaches to Quality Assurance in Higher Education***
  Available in Chinese and English

- ***Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education***
  Available in French and English

- ***CHEA/UNESCO Statement on Effective Practice to Discourage Degree Mills in Higher Education***
  Available in French and English