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Exploring Occupational Therapy Partnership between Chiang Mai University and Angeles University Foundation: Lessons Learned from an International Exchange Program

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Objective

In 2016, the Department of Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences, Chiang Mai University (CMU) in Thailand and the Department of Occupational Therapy, College of Allied Medical Professions, Angeles University Foundation (AUF), Angeles City in Philippines created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the 2016–2021 academic year. As part of the MOU, initial visitations were conducted by both AUF and CMU OT faculty members last August 2016 and November 2016, respectively. Last February 2017, the international internship exchange program commenced where five AUF students with two accompanying faculty members visited CMU for two weeks. This paper aims to explore and analyze the MOU between two universities.

Methods

Using the documentary form of the signed MOU between the universities, a contents analysis summary method was carried out.

Results

The results revealed both universities agree to promote and develop this academic collaboration through the following means: a) exchange of staff members and students; b) staff development; c) visiting professorship; d) executive of joint research projects; e) provision of lectures and seminars; and f) exchange of data, documents, research materials and academic information. Furthermore, the experience gained from these initial exchanges confirms the basic assertion that, on an international level, a major role of an academic collaboration is to support this program. It can be assumed from discussions held between staffs of the two institutions that in both Thailand and Philippines the BS Occupational Therapy curriculum evolves in response to reforms on campus and to changing trends within the higher education system. It was also determined that the modes of occupational therapy



program in both countries may be prompted to change based on ongoing international exchange program and pace of cultural change within each country's academia. Participants in the exchange discovered that there are strengths and weaknesses in both institutions, which allows for mutual learning from one another and adoption of good practices from the other exchange partner.

Conclusion

Furthermore, this could create a global occupational therapy education network within and beyond CMU and AUF through a more structured exchanges of ideas, international activities, and research collaborations.

Keywords: Occupational Therapy Education, Partnership, International Exchange Program, Thailand, Philippines