



After the liberation of South Vietnam and the country's unification, on Oct 27, 1976 the HCMC University of Economics (HUE) was established under the PM's decision. Along with other universities of economics, the HUE is tasked with training bachelors of economics doing jobs involving in macro-management, administration of enterprises and State agencies in the south.

In 20 years of construction and development, in addition to great efforts in training with many various forms and levels, the university paid full attention to the task of scientific research and combining it with production, considering it as one of two major duties. Especially in recent years, to execute the Politburo's Decree 26-NQ/TW concerning "Science and technology in Vietnam's renovation", the fourth Central Committee's Decree concerning "To continue to renew the national education and training", the seventh Central Committee's Decree on "To develop industry and technology by the year 2000 in the orientation of industrialization and modernization"; with the support of localities, branches and other universities, the HUE has concentrated its energy on making a basic change in R&D activities, really combined scientific research with production, the university with the society and theories with practices.

In the past 20 years, the R&D activities of its staff have made considerable contributions to the university's achievements which truly deserves the Labor Order of First Class granted by the country's President on the university's 20th anniversary.

The following article will summarize major features of the HCMC University of Economics' R&D in 20 years of construction and development.

is the system of subjects and their differences. The university's position in the society depends on its system of subjects and appropriate curricular.

2. Through R&D to raise teachers' qualifications so that they can satisfy requirements of heightening the training quality and serving the society.

3. From the university's R&D, to contribute to settling theoretical and practical issues in the country's renovation, especially socio-economic ones.

4. To speed up R&D through research contracts with a view to helping with renewing economic establishments' management.

5. To strengthen R&D in international cooperation, take every op-

HUE'S R&D ACTIVITIES IN 20 YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

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I. R&D ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

To thoroughly grasp the Party's viewpoints considering science and technology as an important impetus of the renovation, in the past years, the university has determined the main targets of these activities as follows:

1. To enhance R&D activities in order to renew basically curricula, form the system of textbooks including reference documents with the aim to meet requirements of renewing training target and raising training quality.

This target resulted from the condition that the country's economy has changed from central planning into market mechanism. Therefore, the university's training target had to change and the content and disciplines change accordingly.

This is the HUE's urgent problem before requirements of the renovation. The objective to research into

portunity to have funds for R&D activities, make access to and studies of foreign R&D experiences with the aim to raise the research qualifications and facilitate scientific activities of the university.

From these above-mentioned targets, the university's R&D activities have been carried out on the following aspects:

1. R&D serving the renewal of contents of subjects, curricula and textbooks

In this field, the university has implemented the following operations:

a. To encourage professors, doctors, teachers to compile textbooks.

In the renovation period, especially when new subjects take up big share, the encouragement of teachers to write textbooks aims at facilitating students' learning.

To support for this task, the university has made regulations on writing, translating, printing textbooks. With open regulations, the univer-



sity's teaching staff have improved their initiatives in translating and writing textbooks.

b. To make mechanisms to finance the writing of textbooks.

Based on the funds of "the university's textbook program" headed by Vice Minister Trần Chí Đáo, in combination with the university's self-accumulated funds, the HUE had early financial incentives for writers, as follows:

- Giving loans without interest in five to six months for each textbook based on the printing cost, authors will enjoy the profits caused by sales of these textbooks.

- Paying training fee according to course, overhead costs,...

These above advocations really have opened a new stage in the task of writing the university's textbooks in recent years. With about 230 printed textbooks including reference documents, teaching plan, exercises...which met the studying for 27 subjects of the first stage and over 200 curricula for 11 specialized disciplines of the university.

Based on regulations of writing textbooks, the university formed committees specialized in evaluating these documents. It also assigned this task to professors, doctors and lecturers, those having high qualifications and experiences.

With the above performance, many HUE's textbooks are recognized by the society. They satisfy learners' studies inside and outside the university. The conference of rectors of universities in August 1994 affirmed: "the HCMC University of Economics has made great efforts and considerable achievements in the writing and publishing of textbooks for students' learning".

2. Scientific research serving the Party and Government's policy making.

This is a major content of the HUE's R&D in the past twenty years. The determination of top priority for scientific research in the study and consultation of the Party and Government's key policies derives from the economics university's targets and position in the region.

By research registration or "bidding" in major programs, projects of the State in each period, the HUE has attracted almost scientists to the studies.

In the period 1976-1980, the HUE participated in the State program concerning survey on features of newly-liberated areas, master plan on natural resources, sources of southern provinces, especially HCMC and provinces in the Mekong Delta.

Based on investigation and analysis of each district's potentials for its appropriate plan of production, Prof. Dr. Nguyễn Tấn Lập took charge of the topic on building districts of HCMC, provinces of Minh Hải, An Giang, Tiền Giang...in the period 1978-1980. This topic started the HUE's R&D on large scale. It had scientific significance and practical benefits and was highly appreciated by the local governments and related agencies. This was also the HUE's R&D achievement in this period.

The following were topics: "General survey, analysis on the Mekong Delta's socio-economic situation" in the program 60-B headed by Prof. Đào Công Tiến; "Renovation of management in the rubber sector" in the program 40-A, headed by Dr. Trần Đình Thêm...which gradually affirmed the reputation of the HUE's teaching staff in the South.

As for State-level programs, in addition to registration or bidding, the university has been appointed to do researches by the Party and Government.

In 1990, the HUE was one of six establishments which the Party and Government appointed to do researches on "the strategy of socio-economic development by the year 2000", "the Platform of building socialism in the country", "Renovation of national salary scale". In July 1995, the HUE was assigned to give opinions about some socio-economic issues for the draft reports of the Party's VIIIth Congress. The university gathered round 50 leading scientists to contribute to drawing lessons from 10 years of renovation, putting forward pressing problems to solve, removing obstacles and troubles in the time to come.

In addition, the HUE's teaching staff also took part in other researches on the State programs as follows:

- Topic 07 in the project KX.03-06 headed by Prof. Dr. Trần Văn Chánh on: "Renovation of enterprise management in the multi-sectoral economy".

- Topic 11 in the project KX.03.21C headed by Dr. Trần Đình Thêm.

- Particularly, the project KX.03.21C "Economic measures in management to develop production of commercial agro-products with the aim to speed up alteration of economic structure in the southern rural areas" headed by Dr. Đào Công Tiến was evaluated as an excellent achievement.

All topics carried out by the HUE in the State programs have been approved and attained good quality.

The number of topics has increased from 2 in 1976-1986 to 10 in 1986-1996.

The HUE's topics are regarded to be original in accordance with the vital economic region in the South.

In addition, the HUE has also

completed some projects at ministerial level, helping with the Party and Government's policy making in each period, especially appropriate policies for the South.

3. Studies on theoretical issues of management.

R&D activities involving in this content are the topics at ministerial and university level realized within one to two years. The ministry-level topics are regarded one of major and regular tasks of the HUE's staff. In the past years, the research topics covered almost contents for the socio-economic development of HCMC, southern provinces and branches, meeting the requirements of management renovation, teaching and learning.

The ministry-level topics have increased in terms of quantity and quality, from 12 in the period 1976-1985 to 67 in 1986-1995.

The completion of these topics with good and excellent results have proved capabilities of the HUE's staff. At the same time, the HUE's position has been raised in the society.

4. Studies on issues arising from socio-economic activities

This content was implemented through research contracts signed between the university with agencies and enterprises. These contracts had been rising considerably in the past years from 8-10 topics in 1976-1986 to 20-25 topics in 1991-1995. Many topics were highly appreciated and accepted as follows:

- "To determine reasonable cost for a tonne of petroleum sold at the Nhà Bè petrol depot" headed by Prof. Dr. Nguyễn Thành Xương.

- "To form the Party's economic model of the District 8" headed by Prof. Dr. Võ Thanh Thu.

- "To make a techno-economic study to develop Bình Dã industrial estate in District 8" headed by Dr. Lê Thanh Hà.

- "To apply computers to determining and selecting socio-economic plans for HCMC" headed by Dr. Lê Văn Phi.

These contracts required the HUE's researchers to penetrate into the practice, use scientific theory to analyze the reality for suitable solutions.

5. Scientific research in international cooperation.

The HUE carries out international cooperation to boost up its scientific research and contrarily, R&D will help develop its international cooperation.

On the basis of the Party and Government's open policy in the past years, the HUE has taken initiative

to make many bilateral and multilateral relations in international cooperation with a view to receiving funds from overseas sources so as to strengthen and develop teaching and learning facilities as well as to foster the HUE's staff.

To enhance R&D in international cooperation is a proper decision. It not only raises the capability of research, improves the staff's standard living, but also creates conditions for them to get access to foreign universities' scientists and the world's modern advanced science.

In relation with ESCAP, the university has taken part in the topic: "The issue of female laborers moving to cities in the process of urbanization" headed by Prof. Dr. Nguyễn

international cooperation have attained fruitful results and they have made significant contributions to the teaching, writing of textbooks concerning new subjects.

6. Students' scientific research

The University has created conditions for students to do researches. This advocacy is paid special attention in the period 1986-1996, that is:

- Increasing forms of specialized topics in students' learning.

- Making conditions for students to take part in teachers' researches.

- Stimulating students to make independent studies.

In particular, to raise students' capability of doing researches, the university issued regulations on students' scientific research as a basis to



Thành Xương. This topic was completed in 1991 and highly appreciated and published in foreign languages as an ESCAP's official document.

The HUE has received an order from the South Korean Yonsei University to do research on the topic "Development of agricultural economy and rural areas in the Mekong Delta" headed by Dr. Đào Công Tiến.

In addition there are other noteworthy topics as follows:

- "Rural credit" contracted with the Philippines' Center for Development of Asian Rural Manpower (CENDHRA).

- "Credit with small enterprises" realized with the funding of Canadian universities.

In addition to cooperation in research, the HUE also organized many "research tour" for overseas teachers and students to understand Vietnam's society and economy such as: Ohio University (the US), Nghee Ann Polytechnic (Singapore), Erasmus University (the Netherlands).

Just because of this, the HUE'S R&D activities in combination with

organize R&D for students with the university's funds, a topic will be funded from VNĐ 2 to 5 million on average.

The HUE combines students' regular researches with specific programs of the University, HCMC Youth League and the Ministry of Education and Training.

From 1988 to 1996, the number of students' studies have been soaring, especially topics attached to the students' graduation topics. Among them are topics selected to attend the youth contest of creativeness. In particular, two students, Ngô Anh Vũ and Phạm Du Liêm has won the second prize of the contest of students' scientific research organized by the Ministry of Education and Training in 1990-1991. In 1995, the university's three students has been awarded by the Ministry of Education and Training.

7. Scientific research in production

Based on Decree 35/CP issued by the Prime Minister and Decision 901/GD-ĐT by the Minister of Education and Training, the HUE carries

out R&D through its centers and Kinh Tế Printing Company.

The Center for Economic Studies and Applications (CESAIS) was established in mid-1989 with the function of making studies contracted with domestic and overseas establishments and consultation for projects calling for foreign investment.

In its function, the Center has attracted contributions of many scientists inside and outside the university, especially energetic participation of teachers and students. The Center has made profits and payment to the HUE's budget.

Recently, Cesaais has carried out 22 topics according to contracts signed with domestic and foreign companies with a total turnover of VNĐ855,073 million and US\$53,500.

Apart from Cesaais, the HUE has also centers of informatics, population and labor, employment for students. These centers have really executed requirements of Decree 35, Decision 901 and acted as bridge linking the university with social activities.

Along with achievements in R&D activities, the HUE also paid attention to supplying and exchanging scientific information, the staff's studies. The *Phát triển Kinh tế* magazine and the Economic Development Review (EDR) are published monthly. In particular, the Economic Development Review has taken part in the internet of the German Chamber World Network (CWN) from October 1995 and now the British Financial Times Information (FT) from September 1996 when the CWN was merged into the FT. In each EDR issue, there are 50% of total articles written by the HUE's staff. The magazine has become a forum where the staff's studies and scientific matters are exchanged. The Magazine's quality and reputation have been raised increasingly and so the number of its readers are also soaring.

II. SHORTCOMINGS AND LESSONS IN THE PAST YEARS

We can affirm we have made sustainable progress in our R&D activities. That is a ground for us to keep on striving for new achievements. However, we also have shortcomings which need our concerns and solutions. In the time to come, the HUE will focus its efforts on:

1. Streamlining the HUE's intellectual sources for R&D.

We can see our R&D is not performed proportionally between units and individuals. The researchers are mainly small part of the teaching staff. The rest did not pay full attention to this task. They only wrote textbooks for their teaching programs

because of the following reasons:

- They did not take into account the university's R&D.

- R&D is not developed uniformly, intensively, the university lacks in incentives, tight control and supervision.

- The payment for teaching is higher than that for doing research, so teachers prefer teaching to making studies.

- The funds for studies are not enough and do not meet the requirements.

2. The quality of studies: this will determine the HUE's position and reputation in the society.

3. Institutionalizing scientific research: Giving details in decisions of the Party Committee, Board of Directors, Labor Union... and systemizing the R&D activities based on regulations issued to ensure the deadline of studies, rewarding properly and timely.

In the past, our University was one of pioneers in making regulations on R&D activities. Nevertheless, we have not systemized these regulations, therefore we need overcome our deficiencies.

4. Lessons of taking opportunities:

In recent years, we have succeeded in taking opportunities in R&D. For example, when the Ministry decided to grant loans for writing textbooks, the HUE has given incentives and implemented a feasible policy. Thereby, within five years, the university has made and published over 200 textbooks serving the teaching and learning. We have made the best use of overseas funds for great studies (as mentioned above).

However, we have not taken full advantage of domestic and foreign relations with domestic and overseas organizations as follows:

- We have relations with 50 foreign universities, institutes, socio-economic organizations but we have made only 10 topics in international cooperation, so that is a big waste.

- We also have tens of thousand graduates working in all southern provinces and techno-economic sectors, but we have not exploited this great advantage.

5. Settling effectively financial issues to speed up the university's scientific research.

In the past years, our achievements were limited due to lack of funds for R&D. Just because of this, the HUE's staff did not pay full attention to this task and we have only over ten studies annually although our staff number over 350. Our staff really prefer what topics have higher

funds.

Since the university decided to grant financial support for ministry-level topics, the number of ministry-level and State-level topics rose to 11 in 1995 from 3 in 1993 and 1994.

As a result of this, to boost up the HUE's R&D, we have to make our staff's incomes from doing research equal or higher than those from teaching.

III. R&D ORIENTATIONS IN THE PERIOD 1996-2000

In the time to come the university will focus its studies on:

1. Basic theories in economics
2. State-level programs and topics:

The University will take initiative in making access to the central agencies and branches with the aim to know R&D requirements in the period 1996-2000, thereby making plans on the university's R&D and actively attending bids for designing State-level economic topics and programs.

3. Ministry-level topics:

The university will put forward the R&D orientation in the system of ministry-level topics, especially studies on basic economic issues serving the renewal of textbooks and studies on practical application with a view to raising quality of teaching and learning.

The HUE also does researches on the economic development of areas, localities, branches and enterprises in the national economy.

4. University-level topics:

The system of curricula will be built for stages, disciplines and specialized disciplines as a basis for the task of writing textbooks on the renovation conditions.

5. Developing the HUE's R&D centers:

The University will strengthen and expand operations of its R&D centers, especially those operating effectively. This is an advantage of the University towards economic organizations, domestic and foreign enterprises. Through contracts signed with these concerns, the staff's capability of scientific research will be improved.

6. Topics in international cooperation:

The HUE's international cooperation will be boosted up and expanded so as to exchange and receive technology of training, management, and basic theories of market economy. At the same time the international cooperation will also raise the staff's potentials in scientific research.