



ASEAN establishes world's first virtual graduate program for disabilities

By The Nation

ASEAN's higher learning institute for disabilities has formally opened today in support of the grouping's people-oriented community.

ASEAN Institute on Disability and Public Policy or ASEAN IDPP is the world's first virtual graduate institute to focus on disability and public policy. Students, faculty and staff with and without disabilities from the ASEAN region and around the world would be able to do further studies and research on these areas.

The institute is a collaborative program with Mahidol University, the Lee Kuan Yew school of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, the School of International Service of American University in Washington DC and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester in New York.

"I have been encouraging and supporting this idea since its inception," said Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary General of ASEAN. He also reiterated that the institute would help ASEAN to become a truly people-oriented community in months and years to come.

Developing the IDPP was the brainchild of Shuichi Ohno, Executive Director of The Nippon Foundation: "The IDPP can serve as a regional resource to governments and society in fostering public policies that enable people with disability to compete on par with their non-disabled peers," says Ohno during the launch.

The signing ceremony to launch the institute takes place this morning at the Salaya Campus of Mahidol University in Bangkok.

IDPP is supported by the Center for Research on Collaboratories and Technology Enhanced Learning Communities (COTELCO) at American University and Syracuse University; the Asia Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) in Bangkok; and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI).

"Our vision is to build a network of outstanding universities from all 10 ASEAN countries which uses accessible cyberlearning approaches to enable students with mobility, visual, and auditory impairments to become leaders in the public, private and NGO sectors," said Dr. Derrick L. Cogburn, Dean and Executive Director of the IDPP.

"Fifteen students per year from the ASEAN region in each of these three categories will be awarded full fellowships to study in the IDPP," says Dr. Jim DeCaro, Dean Emeritus of NTID.

The IDPP will offer a Master of International Affairs in Comparative and International Disability Policy. The institute brings together an international faculty of experts to prepare future leaders in disability and public policy. All courses and seminars offered by the ASEAN IDPP will be taught in English. Mahidol University and APCD will host a two-week residency from 18-29 July 2011 for all incoming degree candidates. The IDPP will begin accepting applications from its website on 9 May 2011 with a deadline of 31 May for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Source: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2011/04/04/mekong/ASEAN-establishes-worlds-first-virtual-graduate-pr-30152452.html>