

7th QS-APPLE reaffirms participants' commitment to advance Asia-Pacific higher education globally

***Participants from 187 institutions in 33 countries attended;
76 papers on 34 subject areas presented at parallel sessions***

The three-day 7th QS-APPLE (Asia Pacific Professional Leaders in Education) international higher education conference in Manila in November concluded with a firm commitment among the over 500 participants to further advance the global recognition of Asian universities through international partnership and collaboration.

A total of 88 speakers from 22 countries presented many highly engaging papers, while 33 institutions and organisations from 19 countries participated in the attendant exhibition that showcased their programmes and partnership opportunities. Almost all the conference sessions were fully attended, with standing room only for latecomers in some of them.

By all accounts, the event was a resounding success, with the diversity of higher education across the Asia-Pacific being reflected in the conference programme and participants. It has also achieved a number of first's in QS-APPLE's seven-year history.

For the first time, the conference tackled the issues of social justice and challenges of making higher education accessible to all in a developing country, with a separate parallel track in the programme. Topics debated included opportunities for postgraduate study by the disabled (from Thai perspective), public and private scholarships in overcoming barriers to higher education in the Philippines, and university social responsibility (by Saudi speakers).

The winners of the QS-APPLE Creative Awards 2011 competition - three prizes each in four distinct categories that reflect the importance of branding and marketing in international higher education - took the limelight during the opening plenary. Their creativity and deft execution stole the hearts of the judges from the sponsor Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. (See full results at www.qsapple.org/winner.php.)

A special awards ceremony was held during the closing plenary to recognise the pioneering QS-rated Indonesian universities attending 7th QS-APPLE. They were presented with the QS Stars certificate for excellence in education.

Most of the delegates have rated their overall conference experience as above average to excellent. Benefits of attending 7th QS-APPLE cited by participants include: Networking with Asian and global institutions; learning from experts; professional development; QS World University Rankings updates; variety and

content of conference programme; forming global partnerships; and raising profile and awareness.

Here are what some of our international participants have to say:

“I think QS-APPLE is very good for us to share, learn and work with each other hand-in-hand, to promote partnership among universities around the world. The 7th QS-APPLE here in Santo Tomas University in Manila is very successful, I think.”

- *Prof Dr Herry Suhardiyanto, Rector, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia*

“The 7th QS-APPLE was an excellent opportunity to meet people and learn from them.”

- *Ruth Vergin, Ehime University, Japan*

“I find the wide variety of session topics in the conference programme to be most beneficial.”

- *Roy Chan, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

“It has been very beneficial for us to be here at QS-APPLE, as we get to meet with people that we don’t normally get to meet with.”

- *Margaret Wender, Team Manager, Educational Credential Evaluators, USA*

“After two days of exhibition, we have learned a lot from our peers. We think that we have achieved what we had expected as an exhibitor at this QS-APPLE conference.”

- *Assoc Prof Supat Sinawat, Asst President for International Relations, Khon Kaen University, Thailand*

“By participating in this very important conference, we have gained a lot of experience by sharing our knowledge with other universities. We have been able to talk to people who are on the same tracks that can help us advance in QS rankings.”

- *Dr Khalid Al-Nowibet - King Saud University, Saudi Arabia*

“It has been an enriching experience. I have attended many conference sessions, in particular those on globalisation, internationalisation of university education and how to become a world-class university.”

- *Prof Nelson Ijumba – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

“The QS-APPLE conference is a very good opportunity for networking with partners from this part of the world, from Asia, and to learn about new trends and good practices that these universities are doing in this part of the world.”

- *Jose Alberto Sandoval, International Programs Office, Tecnologico de Monterrey, Mexico*

“I am here at QS-APPLE (in Manila) to follow up from QS-MAPLE (in Dubai) to engage with the international academic community.”

- *Dr Mark Brown, Director (Teaching, Learning and Distance Education), Massey University, New Zealand*

“This conference is perhaps the best conference in the education sector where we get the opportunities for networking, exchange of knowledge and sharing of good practices.”

- *Muhammad Ismail, Director-Quality Assurance and International Collaboration, National University of Sciences & Technology, Pakistan*

“Thanks to QS-APPLE, our university is able to develop our relationship with many universities located in foreign countries.”

- *Dr Dong-Ok Chah, Vice President of International Affairs, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea*

“We have found that QS-APPLE provides an excellent platform for us to learn the strategies that other universities use to promote their quality education and research, and to find international partner universities to collaborate with.”

- *Dr Liang-Yo Yang, Director, Neuroscience Research Center, Taipei Medical University, Taiwan*

“I find this conference and exhibition interesting because it helps me to network with the participants here. It’s my job to ensure that I am able to meet with our partners from all over the world here.”

- *Dr Abdul Latiff Mohd Ibrahim, Deputy Director, International Affairs, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia*

In his closing remarks, Prof Nigel Healey, Chair of the QS-APPLE International Academic Advisory Committee, noted the two recurrent themes in this year’s conference - the drive by governments and universities to become “world-class” on the one hand, and the need to make higher education as accessible as possible in order to lift people and communities out of poverty on the other. He offered this poser for participants to ponder over: “Is the goal of creating world-class universities incompatible with the objective of making higher education accessible to the masses?”

Ms Mandy Mok, Managing Director of QS Asia Quacquarelli Symonds, was grateful for the opportunity for QS-APPLE to contribute to the advancement of higher education in developing countries like the Philippines. She commented: “We were glad to have so many participants from Philippine universities – 230 at the last count – and to present our QS Stars certificates to some of the Indonesian institutions that were among the first in the world to be rated by QS for educational excellence.”

Throughout the event, both staff and students of the University of Santo Tomas, which co-hosted the 7th QS-APPLE as organising partner, extended Philippine ‘hospitality’ most warmly. The event capped the university’s celebration of its 400th anniversary this year, with a clear demonstration of its “commitment to the

internationalisation of higher education and to collaborative academic endeavours”, as enunciated by its Rector Fr Rolando V. de la Rosa.

Such collaboration is in line with QS’ well-established tradition of advancing international recognition and globalisation of Asian universities that reinforces its mission to help build world-class universities for Asia Pacific communities through global partnership and collaboration.