

PERCEPTION OF FULL-TIME COLLEGE ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRIMESTRAL SYSTEM AT DE LA SALLE LIPA

Lanie M. Santos

De La Salle University – Dasmariñas Philippines

laniezm Santos@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study determined the perception of full-time college academic administrators and faculty on the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa in the following areas – curriculum; class schedule; teaching load; students' comprehension; facilities; salary; fatigue; and lifestyle – and was correlated to their profile. Following Miclat's development planning model, this study focused on analyzing the situation once trimestral system is implemented at De La Salle Lipa. Results have shown that there is a significant relationship between profile and their perception. Furthermore, results revealed that there is no significant difference between full-time college academic administrators' and faculty's perception on the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa. The average of the respondents' rate of agreement on the positive effects of trimestral system among the eight areas ranges from 2.22 to 3.14 playing in the middle of disagreement and agreement. Few activities may change the perceptions to either negative or positive side. Therefore, a great effort is necessary to assure that these respondents will support the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa.

Keywords: trimestral system, academics, education

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in national development. The survival of modern society depends on it. Its goal is to produce graduates of different disciplines and professions who are able to efficiently and effectively perform responsibilities using the knowledge they acquired in school accompanied by their values, which was also developed during their scholastic life.

Philippines' education has undergone several stages of development (Department of Education, 2007). The educational ladder in the Philippines has a 6-4-4 structure, that is, six years of primary, four years of high school, and another four to five years of higher education for a degree program (Philippine Embassy Beijing, 2007). The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is responsible for the regulation of the establishment or closure of private higher education institutions, their course offerings, curricular development, building specifications and tuition fees (Philippines, 2007). According to Recto (2005), the Philippine government recognizes formal education as the primary instrument for the achievement of the country's educational goals. Some of the commonly used educational systems are the semestral system, the quarterly system, and the trimestral system. The education system that has been implemented by most schools in the Philippines is the semestral system wherein there are two terms within a year lasting typically from 15 to 18 weeks per semester (About Dictionary.com, 2007). In the Philippines, the first term normally starts in June and ends in October while the second term usually starts in November and ends in March.

The trimestral system has already been adopted by some schools in the United States of America and Europe since the year 1970's. In a trimestral system, there are three terms in a school year consists of about 14 weeks each and trimestral breaks of about two to three weeks each. The first term of the school year normally starts late of May or early June and ends August or early September. The second term starts mid-September and ends before Christmas, and the third term generally starts after New Year's Day and ends in mid-April. Given this, a student should be able to graduate in three or four years for four-year and five-year program respectively (Parents' guide 2006-2007, 2007).

In trimestral system, class meetings are arranged either once, twice or thrice a week. For classes that meet only once, there's three hours per

week per meeting. For classes scheduled two times a week, (i.e. every Tuesdays and Thursdays or every Mondays and Fridays the class meets 90 minutes or 1 hour and 30 minutes. Classes scheduled three times a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) meets for 60 minutes or 1 hour per day. The regular student load is 18 units per term. The maximum allowable units is 21 and the minimum is 12. Faculty, on the other hand, has the normal teaching load of 12 units or less per trimester but has the prerogative to take more or less than the regular faculty load (Llaguno, Ruazol, & Sarmiento, 2002).

Some pros and cons of the implementation of trimestral system that were identified by Pajarillo (2007) are the following: a) enrichment of student life; b) timing synchronization with other universities; c) student work experience d) increase in the OJT hours; e) improvement in cash flow; f) development of new programs/alternative education modules; and g) exchange of faculty.

The big challenge with quarters or trimesters is the increase in teaching-related paperwork. Three times a year, teachers have to come up with syllabi, final exams, and final grades. But considering the number of weeks, trimester would be the best. 10 weeks is just too short. Students don't learn as much, and everything is just too crunched. A semester is just a few weeks too long. By the 16th week, the students and teachers are burned out. 12 to 15 weeks would be ideal. There would be enough time to cover the material comfortably, even if there is a missed class (can't do that in a quarter system, one missed class is a major deal) and it's short enough that people would be just ready to be done, but not so burned out which impedes learning (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2008).

According to Dr. Santamaria, the University of the Philippines succeeded in implementing trimestral system in Clark which had highly encouraging results. Four aspects are identified in the concept of a trimestral system, namely: school calendar, class schedule, student and faculty load, and salary (Llaguno, Ruazol, & Sarmiento, 2002). According to Deluria, as a student, he realized that opportunities for growth often seemed like problems at first. When the trimestral system was introduced, he was forced to accomplish a lot of things within a short period. The faster pace surprisingly helped to his being more resilient in dealing with bigger challenges in the workplace. He further said, 'I believe that Lasallians have been taught to think out of the box and perceive every difficulty as an opportunity to make a difference' (Move to Lead, 2004).

According to Bautista, Ordoñez, and Sanyal (1992), it was in 1971 – 1972, DLSU, then still a college, underwent a thorough exercise of self – analysis and review in preparation for mapping out for itself what it became known as the De La Salle Ten – Year Development Plan: 1973 – 83. The major problems were identified, namely; a) the implications of rising costs and financial constraints; b) ceiling on tuition increases; c) need for higher salaries; d) under – utilization of physical and human resources; e) pressure to accommodate more students; and f) concern for quality. The plan led to several significant developments, including the introduction of the trimester system. This scheme called for transforming the academic calendar of the university from two 18-week semesters (and 1 under – utilized 6-week summer term) to three 14-week trimesters. The implications were as follows: a) facilities would be fully used for 42 instead of 36 weeks; b) faculty and students would spend more hours in the classrooms each year, allowing greater opportunity to earn higher salaries for teachers, and a faster degree completion rate for students who undertook full loads; and c) the possibility to collect significantly increased revenues would be paid three times a year. The trimester design therefore met the objectives of maintaining quality and increasing financial viability without unjustifiably increasing tuition fees, improving physical facilities or hiring significantly more faculty, and without notably increasing student fees or incurring unnecessary cost for the university. However, there were doubts expressed about the ability of students to keep up with an accelerated pace, about curricular revisions, and about sacrificing other faculty functions such as research and professional growth and questions as to salary increases for non-teaching staff.

Reforming the education system is a complex process. Education entails not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills but most specially the formation of values. The revision of curriculum, for example, starts a series of events the results of which can be detected only after many years (Valisno, Arcelo, Cortes, Sta. Maria, & Ibe, 1994). Reformation would help organization in assuring its long – term development. Complexities of changing the educational system must not hinder educational institutions from proposing and/or implementing changes. Now that development is on its fast paced track, colleges and universities must think of improving their system to cope with the changing needs of the society. However, careful analysis and studies should be done to justify its implementation. Any change would create a new environment and will affect several areas of the

operation especially the quality of education.

A particular example of an organization is De La Salle Lipa (DLSL). It is an educational institution, whose primary objective is to provide quality education. The institution's prestige and reputation ensure not just a consistent flow of applicants, but also increasing demands to admit students and provide excellent service. DLSL needs to respond to such increasing demand. To do this, the best faculty should be recruited and retained, facilities have to be improved, and revenue is needed for this. This institution currently uses the semestral system of education and is considering the implementation of trimestral system as a possible solution. Such change in education system will affect several areas, thus, there is a need to conduct an empirical study that would be one of the bases for implementing such change in the education system.

Methodology and Data Analysis

This research was designed to determine the profile and perception of the DLSL full-time college academic administrators and faculty on the trimestral system specifically in the areas of curriculum, class schedule, teaching load, students' comprehension, facilities, salary, fatigue, and lifestyle. The aforementioned areas were identified based on the previous studies conducted. Moreover, they were the chosen respondents since they will be widely affected once trimestral system is implemented at DLSL. It aimed to find out if the perceptions on these areas are related to the respondents' profile. Furthermore, it seeks to determine if there is a significant difference on respondents' perception according to position. Moreover, this research focused on analyzing the situation once trimestral system is to be implemented (based on the respondents' perception) rather than its impact, which can only be realized after several years. It is neither within the scope nor the intention of the researcher to compare trimestral with a semestral system.

Total enumeration with allowance for unreturned questionnaires was employed in this study. The researcher used self-formulated questionnaire based on the concepts of the trimestral system as presented by Llaguno, et.al. and Bautista, et.al. The instrument has undergone validation by non-respondents, whose comments and recommendations on the clarity and directness of the questionnaire were considered. Further, it underwent reliability test resulting to Cronbach's alpha of .982. A four point scale was

designed to help respondents qualify their perceptions, which was labeled as Strongly Agree for (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

With regard to profile of the respondents, frequency distribution and percentage were utilized to measure the number of responses and its magnitude compared to the total population. To determine the perception of the respondents, mean was computed for each area. Significant relationship was determined using chi-square. Moreover, significant difference was analyzed using t-test.

Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between full-time college academic administrators and faculty's profile and their perception on the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference between full-time college academic administrators' and faculty's perception on the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa.

Theoretical framework

According to Miclat (2005), a process is defined as the series of steps of procedures undertaken in doing a particular activity. A planning process model provides proper guidance in what ought to be done in practice for the successful completion of the activities. Development planning is the process of identifying in advance the best probable way of achieving indicated development objectives within given time period at the least possible cost. The first of these models was extensively used in government and its agencies during the 1970s. The model, as presented in Fig. 1 illustrates the development planning model used by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) in 1993. It has six major steps, namely: 1) goal-setting; 2) situational analysis; 3) policy/strategy formulation; 4) plans/programs/projects; 5) implementation; and 6) evaluation.

The first step in the model is goal-setting. A goal is a broad statement of an image of the future of the organization. Objectives refer to the medium-range expectations which are pursued to satisfy the goal. The second step is situational analysis, which requires the conduct of survey and research studies. The data are analyzed and projected in order to identify issues and parameters, constraints and problems, and resources and

opportunities which are used as inputs in planning. Outputs of these activities are the organizational profile and socio-economic profile of the community. After goals and objectives were framed and situations are analyzed, policy statements and strategies are formulated for each area of concern. Programs and projects are identified in order to effectively channel resources to development programs and projects considered strategic in the over-all attainment of goals. Implementation is actually carrying out of priority programs and projects.

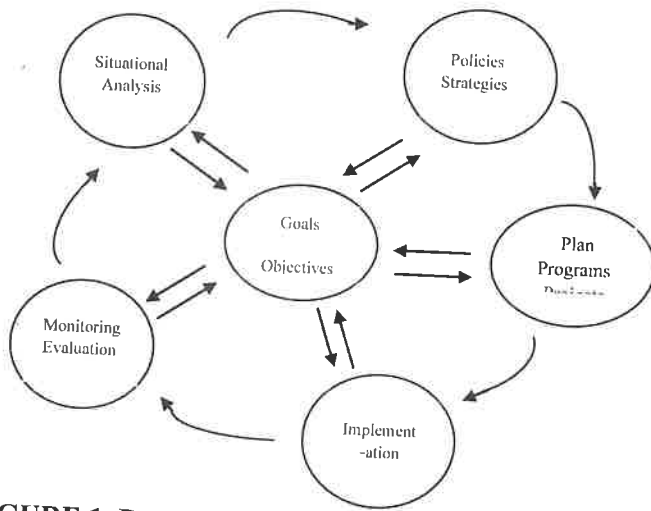


FIGURE 1: Development Planning Model by Miclat (2005)

Operational framework

While there are six stages in Miclat's model, this study focused on the second stage – the situational analysis – for it completes the purpose of this study. This study showed the relationship between the profile and perception on the implementation of trimestral system. Areas to be perceived in trimestral system were indicated in the study of Llaguno, et.al. (2002). They stated that according to Dr. Santamaria, the University of the Philippines succeeded in implementing the new system because the trimestral system in Clark had highly encouraging results. Four features or aspects are identified in the concept of a trimestral system, namely: school calendar, class schedule, student and faculty load, and salary. Further,

facilities, fatigue, lifestyle, and student comprehension were also mentioned to be affected by the trimestral system. The framework also identifies the role and essentials of profile in their perception on trimestral system. The profile determines trimestral system through their perception. If trimestral system is perceived positively, it will lead to an agreeable view of the system and would help in supporting its implementation.

This study is the first step in analyzing the situation of De La Salle Lipa College Department once trimestral system is to be implemented. This will be helpful in the development of the plan for the implementation of trimestral system at DLSL College Department. This would help in determining which of the areas need to be improved, adjusted and given priority. Such perception would help in the formulation of strategies towards the implementation of trimestral system. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

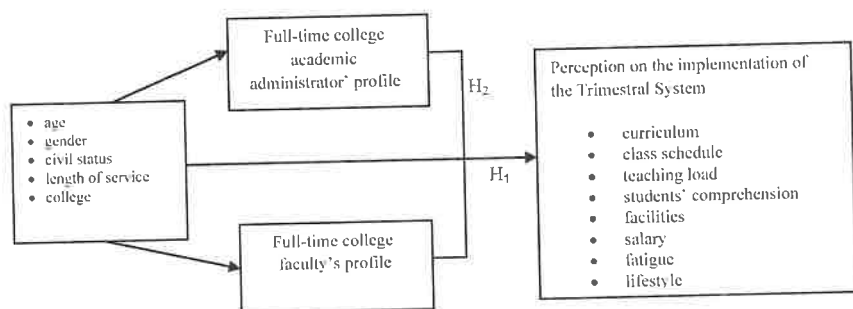


FIGURE 2: Operational framework

Discussion of Results

Out of the 90 full-time college academic administrators and faculty, 86 or 96% responded in this survey. Results revealed that there are many administrators aged between 31-50 and many full-time faculty belonging to the age bracket 21-40 years old, which implies that the administrators are older than the faculty. It was also determined that the female respondents outnumbered male respondents by 34%. There are more full-time academic employees of DLSL (52.32%) who are married. With regard to the respondents' tenure in DLSL, the declared answers revealed that majority of the respondents (60.46%) are on the start of their tenure, ranging from 1-10 years being with the institution, and some (16.28%) have already reached

the middle of their tenure from 11-20 years of service. Few (2.32%) have stayed in the company for a relatively long tenure of 26-35 years. With regard to college, majority of the respondents belong to CEAS and the least are from CNURSING. Moreover, the number of administrators (28) is almost half of the full-time faculty (58).

The findings of the study further revealed that the full-time college academic administrators and the faculty agreed that the implementation of trimestral system at DLSL will result to more positive effects on the areas of curriculum, class schedule, teaching load, students' comprehension, facilities, salary, and lifestyle. They believe that changes and activities will happen in these areas but still they will be able to adjust. Table 1 revealed that among the eight areas, high agreement was on curriculum and facilities. The faculty perceived curriculum, with a mean of 2.81, to have many positive effects if trimestral system will be implemented. Curriculum revision is very evident in the change of education system. They believe that it is a tedious work. However, they agree that the trimestral system will bring focus on more important subject matters. They also believed that with the implementation of trimestral system, there will be fuller utilization of resources and the additional funds will help in the improvement of the facilities at DLSL. These two areas are extrinsic to the respondents; however, with regard to fatigue, the faculty perceived that this will be influenced negatively. It also has the lowest mean from administrators. In general, the implementation of trimestral system at DLSL appears to be agreeable on both groups of respondents. The average of the respondents' rate of agreement on the positive effects of the implementation of trimestral system among the 8 areas ranges from 2.22 to 3.14. It is actually playing in the middle of disagreement and agreement. This means that one or few activities may change or lead their perceptions to either negative or positive side. Therefore, a great effort is necessary to assure that these respondents will support the implementation of trimestral system at DLSL.

TABLE 1: Perception of Respondents on the 8 areas

AREA	MEAN AND VERBAL INTERPRETATION			
	ADMINISTRATORS		FACULTY	
Curriculum	2.85	Agree	2.81	Agree
Class Schedule	2.58	Agree	2.60	Agree
Teaching Load	2.62	Agree	2.61	Agree
Students' Comprehension	2.73	Agree	2.56	Agree
Facilities	2.96	Agree	2.75	Agree
Salary	2.67	Agree	2.72	Agree
Fatigue	2.50	Agree	2.42	Disagree
Lifestyle	2.67	Agree	2.63	Agree
GRAND AVERAGE	2.70	AGREE	2.64	AGREE

Relationship of respondents' profile to their perception

Table 2 presents the relationship between respondents' profile and their perception on curriculum, schedule, teaching load, students' comprehension, facilities, salary, fatigue, and lifestyle. The value in the table shows the probability (p). It was revealed that a highly significant relationship exists between age and curriculum (0.009) and age and facilities (0.002). There also exists a highly significant relationship between length of service and students' comprehension (0.008). Teaching in the institution for a longer period would help faculty in identifying and measuring the students' capabilities. There is also a significant relationship between length of service and facilities (0.027). The respondents' length of stay in the institution would give them ideas regarding the needed facilities of DLSL. There also exist a significant relationship between college and facilities (0.034) and college and fatigue (0.040). Definitely, different colleges have different areas of specialization and therefore require different materials and equipment. Also, each college has its major subjects and activities that require different efforts and preparations. The remaining relationships, however, are not significant. Results have shown that there is a significant relationship between profile and their perception on the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa in some areas. In summary, the following has significant relationship: a) age and curriculum,

b) age and facilities, c) length of service and students' comprehension, d) length of service and facilities, e) college and facilities, and f) college and fatigue. The remaining relationships, however, are not significant. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this study is rejected.

TABLE 2: Relationship between respondents' profile and their perception

Legend: * Significant at the 0.05 level

	Curriculum	Class sched	Teaching load	Student comprehension	Facilities	Salary	Fatigue	Lifestyle
Age	.009**	0.39	0.12	0.565	.002**	0.218	0.804	0.255
Gender	0.466	0.639	0.251	0.061	0.115	0.152	0.498	0.817
Civil status	0.459	0.257	0.89	0.695	0.762	0.18	0.807	0.701
Length of service	0.114	0.095	0.287	.008**	.027*	0.203	0.271	0.526
College	0.62	0.712	0.572	0.122	.034*	0.229	.040*	0.114
Position	0.795	0.825	0.996	0.593	0.649	0.516	0.528	0.619

** Significant at the 0.01 level

Difference on the perception of full-time college academic administrators and faculty on the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa

Table 3 shows the significant difference between full-time college academic administrators' and faculty's perception on the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa. The t stat of all the areas < 2 , t stat $< t_c$, $\alpha > \text{set } \alpha$ of 0.05. It was found out that there is no significant difference on the perception of respondents on the areas of curriculum, schedule, teaching load, students' comprehension, facilities, salary, fatigue and lifestyle. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is accepted. This means that position has no effect on the perception.

TABLE 3: Difference between full-time college academic administrators' and faculty's perception on the implementation of trimestral system at De La Salle Lipa

AREA	t Stat	alpha (α)	t c	INTERPRETATION
Curriculum	0.2523	0.8017	2.0010	Not Significant
Schedule	-0.1068	0.9153	1.9996	Not Significant
Teaching Load	0.0451	0.9642	1.9996	Not Significant
Students' Comprehension	0.9953	0.3232	1.9960	Not Significant
Facilities	1.2614	0.2124	2.0032	Not Significant
Salary	-0.2107	0.8339	2.0010	Not Significant
Fatigue	0.3998	0.6910	2.0076	Not Significant
Lifestyle	0.2136	0.8317	2.0076	Not Significant

Recommendations

Every organization, like De La Salle Lipa, particularly the College Department, must adjust to the changing needs of time. After all information has been analyzed, the following are the recommended strategies:

- Curriculum: The school should ensure that enough time is given to carefully study the revisions. Apparent and real overlaps are to be determined. The number of units to be taken per program should be reviewed. It should strictly follow the set number of hours or meetings for a specific topic.
- Class schedule: There should be workshops on proper scheduling involving all administrators and some faculty of the different colleges. There should be enough class interval. To facilitate convenient and fast preparation of class schedule, it would be a great idea to develop or purchase a formal program for class scheduling.
- Teaching load: There should be reduction on the teaching load to give time for preparation, research and other community service. There should be equal distribution of loads.
- Students' comprehension: Teaching strategies must emphasize more creativity to ensure maximum comprehension and retention. The school should hold more seminars and/or trainings pertaining

to teaching strategies and methodologies. Activities for preparation or mind setting of students should also be conducted.

- Facilities: There is a need for a more rationalized schedule of maintenance and improvement of facilities especially classrooms, laboratories and offices.
- Salary: Review of salary scale should be done. The salary of the faculty should be upgraded to serve as extrinsic motivation for them to perform well. It should be competitive enough so teachers will not look for greener pasture elsewhere.
- Fatigue: There should be fair distribution of loading. The number of teaching load should also be decreased. Additional competent full-time faculty are expected to be hired. Breaks or class intervals should be planned carefully. It is also recommended to hold physical activities like aerobics or exercises to employees at their free time to improve the physical strength of their bodies. The school can also allot a venue inside the campus for these activities.
- Lifestyle: The six-week summer break should be free of activities for the faculty. Proper scheduling of subject loads (intervals between subjects) should be done. The school should also conduct extra-curricular activities like family day or team building to give faculty and administrators a break in their work.

The researcher recommends having a pilot experiment either in selected programs or one college before implementing trimestral system in the whole College. More preparation and studies should to be done before implementing the trimestral system. This study mainly focused on the perceptions of DLSL full-time college academic administrators and faculty on the implementation of trimestral system. Future researchers may study the perception of other groups particularly the students.

These changes could not be implemented at once. A careful approach to enable it to gain acceptance, initially by the administrators and finally, by the rest of the academic community should be developed. These approaches are as follows: a) Organization of Administrative Workshops; b) Formation of Trimestral Plan Committee; c) Information dissemination activities; d) Creation of Alternate Working Committee; and e) Conduct of study to other sectors of the institution

Change is something that most people look negatively. Actually, changes and opportunities for growth often seem like problems at first. But

this could be resolved by providing information to those who are involved. Afterwards, knowledge would help individuals to accept and support the new ideas. However, extensive studies and consultations should be done before implementing any change. A real need must be felt before planning such big change because this will affect the lives of all De La Salle Lipa stakeholders.

References

- About Dictionary.com (2007). *Semester*. [On-line]. Retrieved October 24, 2007, Available: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/semester>
- Bautista, O., Ordoñez, V. and Sanyal, B. (1992) Change from a semester to a trimester system at the De La Salle University, Philippines. (IIEP Research Report no. 94) Paris: *International Institute for Educational Planning*.
- Commission on Higher Education.(2007). *Higher Education System*. [On-line]. Retrieved October 19, 2007, Available: <http://www.ched.gov.ph/hes/index.html>
- De La Salle University – Manila. (2005). *Academic Calendar*. [On-line]. Retrieved October 16, 2007, Available: <http://www.dlsu.edu.ph/offices/registrar/calendar/>
- De La Salle University – Manila. (2004). *Move to Lead* (Volume 3. No. 1). [On-line]. Retrieved October 19, 2007, Available: http://www.dlsu.edu.ph/offices/mco/publications/achievers_inc/AI_vol3no1.pdf
- De La Salle University – Manila (2007). *Parent's guide 2006-2007* (What you should know about DLSU policies and procedures) (2006-2007). [On-line]. Retrieved October 19, 2007, Available: http://www.dlsu.edu.ph/_media/_pdf/parents_guide.pdf
- Department of Education. (2007). *Historical Perspective of the Philippine Educational System*. [On-line]. Retrieved October 19, 2007, Available: http://www.deped.gov.ph/about_deped/history.asp
- Llaguno, M.P.B., Ruazol, B. A. & Sarmiento, A., (2002). Stress, Motivation & the Trimestral System: Effects as Perceived by Selected Students and Faculty of the College of Liberal Arts. Unpublished Undergraduate's Thesis, De La Salle University - Manila, Manila, Philippines.
- Miclat, Jr. E., (2005). *Strategic Planning on Education: Making Change Happen*. Philippines: Rex Book Store, Inc. pp. 27, 29-32.
- Ozmon, H. & Craver, S. (2003). *Philosophical Foundation of Education* (7th Ed.). Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. p.44.
- Pajarillo, M., FSC (2007) *Academic Concerns* (President's Notes # 2). Lipa City: De La Salle Lipa.

- Philippines. (2007). [On-line]. Retrieved October 27, 2007, Available: http://www.seameo-innotech.org/resources/seameo_country/educ_data/philippines/philippines_ibe.htm
- Philippine Embassy Beijing. (2004). *The Philippine Educational System*. [On-line]. Retrieved October 19, 2007, Available: <http://www.philembassy-china.org/country/education.html>
- Recto, A. (2005). *Foundations of Education* (Vol. II). Philippines: Rex Book Store, Inc. pp.30-31.
- The Chronicle of Higher Education. (2007). *Term Length: Semester vs. Trimester vs. Something Else*. [On-line]. Retrieved December 14, 2007, Available: <http://chronicle.com/forums/index.php?topic=36547.0>
- Valisno, M., Arcelo, A., Cortes, J., Sta. Maria, F., & Ibe, M. (1994). *Higher Education Reform: Now or Never*. (F. Sta. Maria, Ed.). Philippines: Congress of the Philippines. pp. 1-3, 24.