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Editorial

Dear colleagues, supporters and friends of VGU,

In the 4th year after its foundation, VGU is hosting almost 400 students in six study-programs. Three more programs will be launched in September. From the very first days, the Vietnamese-German University has been a diverse and multifaceted project with stakeholders, staff, friends and supporters coming from two countries, various organizations and institutions and many different backgrounds. This multiplicity is what VGU stands for – it is the diversity that makes it possible to exchange ideas, gain intercultural experience and discuss academic issues and approaches from different points of view. In such a complex, international context, communication and information are important keys to success. With this newsletter we would like to update everyone involved and connected with VGU about our current topics, projects and events from the past few months, and also give you some information about upcoming events. Feedback and input for the next issue are highly appreciated. Enjoy reading!

1. News from the Campus

Current campus locations of VGU
After the Tet-Holidays of 2012, VGU left the so-called “Building B” which was rented in Thu Duc District. The 2011 intake of the full-time program of CompEng, as well as all new Bachelor students, are now being lectured in the new interim building in Binh Duong New City on the campus of Eastern International University (EIU). Other full-time programs will follow to Binh Duong with the new intake of 2012. The part-time program of MSST has moved to the original VGU building in Thu Duc (former “Building A”), where it will share the location with the earlier intakes of EEIT and UDP, until those students have completed their studies. The other part-time programs of BIS and the new MBA “Small- and Medium Sized Enterprise Development” will remain close to the city center of Ho Chi Minh City, where a new premise near the airport has rented from the University of Finance and Marketing (UFM) near the airport. VGU has four classrooms, a meeting room and two offices permanently available there.

News from Binh Duong interim-campus
The new VGU interim campus in Binh Duong is constantly developing. Thanks to our motivated “weltwärts” volunteer Thiemo Wambgsanß, many students’ activities are being offered, like a dancing class, swimming class, sports activities and movie shows. However it is not only life on campus that is developing, but also the area surrounding the VGU university building is becoming more and more lively and turning into a vivid and attractive place to live and study. Several new stores and restaurants are opening, the sports center offers facilities for relaxation and it is, therefore, not surprising that the VGU Bachelor students are satisfied with the campus and student life in Binh Duong. Also the Master students of CompEng have now moved to Binh Duong. Some of the students are staying in the VGU dormitory, whereas some
take the daily shuttle bus together with the VGU staff and flying professors. It remains to be seen if they will become as satisfied with the study situation in Binh Duong as the Bachelor students are. From June on the Flying Faculty will have the opportunity to stay in Binh Duong in the VGU guesthouse, instead of traveling to the campus every day. Another option for those professors who prefer to stay closer to Ho Chi Minh City is to live in a tropical hotel resort called “Phuong Nam”, which is located half way between Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong New City. Staying in Phuong Nam Resort, the city center can be reached easily and the daily travel time to work is shortened to 40 minutes. Professors are free to choose where they prefer to stay while teaching at Binh Duong. In contrast to all of this progress, the office- and administration floor of the new building is still not finished; however, the move of the whole administration to Binh Duong is still scheduled for the upcoming months.

Architectural competition for new campus has started
The first step in setting up the new VGU campus is done. VGU signed a contract with Phase-eins, a company specialized in consultancy of projects in the fields of architecture and urban planning, which will be the organizer for the architectural competition for designing the new campus. On 14th of March the consultants visited VGU and were provided with necessary information related to the project idea, the development plan of VGU and the parcel of land on which the campus will be built. Phase-eins will soon run an architectural competition and forward the shortlist of applications to VGU.

2. Events

University Council Meeting in Wiesbaden
On the occasion of VGU’s university council meeting in Wiesbaden on 30th January 2012, a delegation from VGU and the Vietnamese government flew to Germany. On the agenda were important topics for the further development of VGU, such as the opening of new study programs in 2012, the appointment procedure for VGU professors and VGU’s internal financial regulations with the future salary scheme.

Delegation from Diponegoro University, Indonesia at VGU
Headed by Professor Edy Darmawan, a visitors’ group from the Indonesian Universitas Diponegoro of Semarang (UNDIP) was welcomed by VGU on 29th February 2012. The common goal of this visit was the agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding about the future exchange of faculty and students within the fields of Urban Development; both VGU and UNDIP are offering Master programs in this subject.

Saxon Delegation to initiate the new MBA program
From 25th February until 2th March, the Saxon Minister of State for Research and Art Prof. Sabine von Schorlemer, accompanied by representatives of Saxon universities, traveled to Vietnam. The delegation visited VGU at 1st of March to sign a contract between University of Leipzig and VGU that set up a new MBA program of “Small Enterprises Promotion and Training” (SEPT) at VGU. The program’s main focus is the identification of growth and potential innovation inside Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), as well as the development of innovative concepts for promoting them and generating positive multiplier effects in their business environments. The aim of the MBA program is to convey theoretical knowledge, as well as application-oriented findings and relevant practical experience.
related to the promotion and development of SMEs. The student recruitment for the MBA in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Development for the 1st intake in Ho Chi Minh City in September has just started.

**VGU at education fairs**

Like in previous years, VGU again took part in several education fairs to inform high school graduates about study programs at VGU and to recruit new students for the Bachelor programs. VGU joined exhibitions not just in Ho Chi Minh City, but also in Hanoi, Da Nang and Can Tho. Interested visitors were able to get information from presentations, flyers and posters, ask questions and take part in a dart game to win some of the popular VGU shirts and bags. Although it was obvious that many high school graduates did not match the target group of VGU mostly because of the insufficient skills in English language, the general result is still positive. Taking part in events like this will continue to improve the visibility and awareness of VGU throughout the country.

**Summer School “Water and energy in South East Asia” at VGU**

This year, from 25th March until 1st April, the Summer School program “Water and energy in South East Asia” was held at VGU. It was organized by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in cooperation with experts from University of Siegen, University of Bochum, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), as well as Vietnamese Nong Lam University (NLU) and VGU. Arranged by Dr. Karl Klügel and Dr. Ngoc Luan Nguyen, the first days of the Summer School were held at NLU, the following days took place at VGU in Binh Duong. Participants of the program discussed relevant issues concerning water and energy and its relation with development in Mekong Region, and exchanged approaches and ideas in the field of innovative technologies and renewable energy for regions along the Mekong River.

3. **Personnel and administrative affairs**

**New tuition fees and scholarship-policy in 2012**

After consideration of the market demand for VGU’s study programs and the experiences during the last three years, VGU has decided to develop a new system for tuition fees and scholarships in 2012. The new fee for the Bachelor Programs EEIT and CompScience will be around 1,200 USD per semester (converted from VND) and Finance & Accounting students will be charged around 1,300 USD per semester. The price for the full-time Master programs is now approximately 900 USD per semester, while the part-time Master program of BIS has a tuition fee of around 1,500 USD. MSST students will be charged approximately 1,200 USD and the MBA SEPT tuition fee per semester is about 2,100 USD. All fees will remain constant during the full duration of the study programs, and already include examination fees etc.

As part of the new policy, VGU’s students can benefit from different types of scholarships. VGU offers merit scholarships for students who achieve the best study results, as well as social scholarships for students with an especially difficult financial situation. A special achievement is the new cost of living scholarship of around 550 USD per semester that automatically applies to all new full-time Master students.

**Introduction of new document management system**

VGU has launched the document management system “Alfresco” in order to give central and collaborative access to all kinds of data files and electronic documents. The system enables all users to save and share documents and also provides a central electronic registry for VGU. In February, the first Alfresco workshops were offered to the staff of VGU. As the system is still in the start-up phase, user log-ins have only been given to administrative staff so far. Nevertheless everyone is invited to try out the system already and
request a user log-in. Contact person for log-ins and a short introduction is Ms. Tien from Strategic University Development.

Staff of VGU
VGU is a growing institution. The number of students is growing rapidly which also means a rising need in capacities of academic and administrative staff. Ms. Huynh Dinh Thai Linh, the new coordinator for the MBA program and teaching assistant in Marketing started working in March. In addition, new Research and Teaching Assistants and Post-Graduates Mr. Tran Anh Tung, Mr. Nguyen Khac Danh, Mr. Tran Tuan Minh and Ms. Nguyen Hai Van, started working for the programs of EEIT and CompEng. Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Thanh began her employment at VGU as a new HR executive.

Also, some people ended their employment at VGU this year. Ms. Do Nguyen Hoang Yen, who worked as an assistant for the coordinators, left VGU to study in Germany, as well as Mr. Nguyen The Hoang, who worked in the VMU team as academic framework coordinator. Also two German coordinators finished their contracts in the first quarter of 2012; after more than 2 years Dr. Matthias Baitsch for CompEng and after 6 months Prof. Eberhard Halter for MSST have returned to Germany. VGU is still advertising various positions: [http://www.vgu.edu.vn/info/jobs-at-vgu/](http://www.vgu.edu.vn/info/jobs-at-vgu/)

4. Prospects and Dates

UDP students will travel to Malaysia and Singapore
From 3th to 8th of April students of the study program “Urban Development Planning” (UDP) will travel to Kuala Lumpur and to Singapore. This journey will give the students a possibility to examine in which way urban development was implemented in two major Asian cities, which have undergone a process of rapid change in the last decade. The students will visit real urban management projects and can use the gained knowledge in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to compare those approaches with urban development in Vietnam and to develop new and innovative approaches for urban planning. Professor Julian Wékel, UDP Program Director at Technische Universität Darmstadt, and Mr. Henning Hilbert, VGU’s Program Coordinator, will accompany the students.

Orientation Days for new applicants
To attract new Bachelor and Master students, VGU will offer Orientation Days for the specific target groups in April. Anyone who is interested in joining VGU will be invited to get first-hand-information about the study-programs of VGU and to get an impression of the location of his or her potential program. Up to 1,000 visitors per day are expected. The Open Day for full-time programs will be held on 22th April in Binh Duong.