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Judith Puncochar

Northern Michigan University, jpuncoch@nmu.edu

Don Faust

Northern Michigan University, dfaust@nmu.edu

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Collaboration Opportunities with the Society to Enhance Indonesian Citizenry by Furthering
Higher Education with the Liberal Arts (SEICHE)

Judith Puncochar

Don Faust

Northern Michigan University

Authors' Note

Address correspondence concerning this article to Judith Puncochar, School of Education, Leadership, and Public Service, or Don Faust, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Northern Michigan University, 1401 Presque Isle Avenue, Marquette, MI 49855. Contact: jpuncoch@nmu.edu or dfaust@nmu.edu. This article appeared at the 91st Annual Meeting of the Society for Values in Higher Education (2015, July 22-25), Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, KY. Information contained within this article will appear in a forthcoming book by A. Chaedar Alwasilah and Judith Puncochar (2015), *Advancing Indonesian Higher Education*, Jakarta, Indonesia: Gramedia.

Abstract

The Society for the Enhancement of Indonesian Citizenry through Higher Education (SEICHE) is an Indonesian organization analogous to The Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in the United States. SEICHE and ASHE use similar organizational structures and promote scholarly research and debate about issues and possibilities in the advancement of higher education. SEICHE was launched on November 22, 2014, in Bandung, Indonesia, with representatives from seven universities and one non-profit organization. The SEICHE vision is to help achieve international recognition of Indonesia's higher education system, accomplished principally through collaboration and engagement with research in curriculum, instruction, service, and program evaluation. SEICHE aspires to become Indonesia's academic society for the study of research, policy, and practice in all areas of Indonesian higher education. SEICHE advocates a renewed emphasis on "citizenship education" based on an increase in general studies / liberal studies credits in the mandated undergraduate general education curriculum for Indonesian first-year students. SEICHE values are the values of higher education, which include civic engagement, building good character, critical thinking, preparation for one's profession, community outreach, student-centered instruction, responsibility to the public interest, and academic freedom. SEICHE provides opportunities for international collaboration among administrators, directors, instructors, and staff of public and private higher education institutions and organizations who seek to influence educational change in local and national communities.

Keywords

Higher Education
International and Comparative Education
Liberal Studies
Higher Education and Teaching
Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research
Liberal Arts
Citizenship Education,
Indonesian Higher Education
Program Evaluation

Collaboration Opportunities with the Society to Enhance Indonesian Citizenry by Furthering Higher Education with the Liberal Arts (SEICHE)

Indonesia has a pivotal, exciting place in the world. Businesses, tourists, investors, and international reporters and students enjoy appealing weather, amazing cultural diversity, multi-religious tolerance, and friendly people. Renewable natural resources, a strategic location, and important trade routes accelerate social progress, an industrial and service economy, and cultural development. Indonesians are the world's fourth largest users of Facebook (Statista, 2014) and Jakarta is the most active Twitter city in the world (Lipman, 2012). Educational access is increasing for Indonesia's youthful population (Jakarta Post, 2015a). Technological advancements are empowering communications and start-up businesses. The government is increasing freedoms for international reporting (Jakarta Post, 2015b) and is striving for transparency in decision-making.

Within this rapid progress, an Indonesian economic gap is widening between the rich and poor, population is exploding, corruption remains high, and sanctions are slow for exploiters of natural resources (Elyda, 2014). Nevertheless, considerable economic influence awaits Indonesia's future within the community of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN, 2014) and with a global role as a positive force for peace and welfare (Widodo, 2015).

Indonesia has more than 17,000 islands and over 300 ethnic groups. Indonesia has the third largest geographic area and population in Asia (see Table 1), is the third largest democracy in the world, and has the fourth largest population in the world, six official religions, and the world's largest Muslim subpopulation. Indonesia's fledgling democracy, expanding economy, and crowded conditions need educated, responsible citizens who can live harmoniously with diverse others.

Table 1

Indonesia is the third largest Asian nation in population and geographical area.

Nation	Population (2015)	Land surface area (km ²)
China	1,367,820,000	9,596,960
India	1,267,000,000	3,287,260
Indonesia	252,160,000	1,910,930
Korea	50,420,000	100,150
Malaysia	30,260,000	330,800
Pakistan	188,020,000	796,100
Philippines	99,880,000	300,000
Singapore	5,470,000	781
Thailand	67,000,000	513,120
Viet Nam	90,730,000	330,950

Note: Alphabetical by nation. See Asian Development Bank, Basic Statistics 2015.

Approximately 43% of Indonesia's 252 million people are under 25 years of age (OECD, 2015, p. 23). Indonesia is a youthful nation with tremendous human capacity and a critical need for an educated citizenry as the basis of Indonesia's 21st century democracy. Education is one of the largest growth sectors in Indonesia, but obtaining a quality education is challenging. Classrooms are crowded. Social, economic, geographic, and teacher quality disparities are evident throughout all levels of Indonesian education across the nation.

The July 2014 election of Indonesian President Jokowi Widodo by popular vote brought increased democratic optimism to Indonesia. President Widodo emphasized domestic economic growth in his first year in office and urged Indonesians to think positively and build trust (Widodo, 2015). Soon after his inauguration, he reduced fuel subsidies to support spending increases on national development priorities, which included an increase in spending on education (Jakarta Post, 2014).

International Benchmarking of Higher Education

International benchmarking of Indonesia's education systems is necessary to help

Indonesia achieve goals for social and economic development necessary to support a country of its size and importance. Several top universities of the world are in Asia. Pearson's 2014 benchmarking of international education systems ranked South Korea as the best education worldwide, followed by Japan in second place and then Singapore, Hong Kong, and Finland, which slipped from first place in 2012 to fifth place in 2014. Indonesia received the lowest overall ranking of 40 nations in both 2012 and 2014. No Indonesian universities were in the top 100 Asian Universities ranked by Times Higher Education Rankings in 2014. The state accreditation agency Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi (DIKTI) in 2014 rated only 25 of Indonesia's 4,251 higher education institutions with a grade of "A", yet Indonesia has over 5.1 million students enrolled in higher education (Abbas, 2015).

Many of Indonesia's best higher education students study abroad. The ratio of Indonesian students who study abroad to international students who study in Indonesia is five to one. An outflow of 34,999 Indonesian students studied abroad in 2014, relative to 7,235 international students studying in Indonesia, of which 37% were from Timor-Leste (UNESCO, 2014). Indonesian education systems must fill demands of high quality graduates who desire knowledge and have skills necessary to meet challenges of Indonesia's future. Indonesia has talented students with willingness to engage in learning with excellence.

Striving for Inclusive Excellence

Indonesia has excellent educational reforms underway. Free compulsory education through 12th grade is available starting in June 2015 (Jakarta Post, 2015a). Consequently, Indonesian high school graduates who are eligible for higher education will increase rapidly over the next several years. The first complete cohort of high school graduates will finish a newly compulsory four years of high school and will be ready to enter higher education in fall 2019.

Higher education institutions must prepare for a surge of highly talented students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Cost of higher education will prohibit most Indonesian students from enrolling in universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Many students will need tuition reductions through work-study and scholarship support to continue their educations beyond high school.

Higher education shares a direct connection with Indonesia's economic and social development. Well-educated students who obtain skills relevant to the job market will boost Indonesia's productivity and economic growth, thereby increasing capacity for continued investment in education and other services. Jobs are readily available for Indonesian graduates who attain skills in technology and business communications, collaboration, international languages, higher-order thinking, and problem solving (Jakarta Globe, 2015). Yet, current demand for graduates of TVET and higher education institutions exceeds Indonesia's rapidly expanding social and economic circumstances. Indonesia's progress as an economic development leader in Asia depends upon higher education reforms to better prepare qualified students with knowledge and skills for engaging fully in Indonesia's future.

Indonesia has made progress in educational reform at all levels, but challenges are looming. Indonesian education must manage an expanding secondary and higher education enrollment and provide affordable educational access from preschool through graduate school for all eligible Indonesians. Higher education institutions must expand the quality and relevance of advanced degrees and strengthen teacher preparation programs. Starting places for successful higher education reform include collaborative efforts to train Indonesian instructors to further "teaching for learning" with the liberal arts in the nationally mandated first-year program, engage in assessment of student learning outcomes, use international standards of accreditation, and

establish international partnerships.

Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum (MKDU)

During fall semester 2014, authors Professor Alwasilah of the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), the flagship teacher education institution in Indonesia (much like Columbia University in the United States), and Professor Puncocar of Northern Michigan University (NMU) collaborated at UPI in Bandung, Indonesia. They worked together on Professor Alwasilah's vision to renew an emphasis on liberal arts in Indonesia's mandated undergraduate general education curriculum called Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum (MKDU). They co-taught three UPI graduate courses and a PhD-level Liberal Arts Seminar, collaborated with Dean Senny Alwasilah at the Universitas Pasundan and co-taught one undergraduate course, and facilitated a series of UPI focus groups on the MKDU.

Indonesia's MKDU consists of general education courses for first-year undergraduates in all Indonesian public and private colleges and universities. Historically, the MKDU began as liberal arts courses with classes in music, mathematics, science, logic, history, literature, and languages. The original designers of the MKDU understood the liberal arts as foundational to a well-educated citizenry for a strong Indonesian democracy. Recently, Indonesian higher education has engaged in a rapid narrowing of focus on technical and professional degrees at the expense of general education courses. Immersing first- and second-year students in highly specialized courses and limiting access to general education classes could produce graduates with a weakened sense of national unity, fewer cultural connections, less rational thinking, and a waning sense of social responsibility. Higher education should reverse the trend toward placing highly technical and professional coursework early in students' programs. Instead, higher education should present a rigorous program of general studies courses and allow students to

expand their skills and abilities to think, learn, and collaborate *before* focusing students' abilities, interests, and skills on technical and professional degrees.

MKDU Reform

The MKDU attempts to develop a critical social consciousness and an awareness of ethics, ecology, and culture in first-year higher education students. The MKDU rationale is worthy, but instructors usually have limited training in active learning instruction and students typically evaluate MKDU classes as boring and easy. The MKDU program has relatively few credits resulting in broad overviews of a limited number of general topics. Lessons tend to lack student-centered instruction and rely heavily on lectures with a tendency toward “passive indoctrination” (Setiadi, Hakam, & Effendi, 2006, p. 3). Some students sleep during class or engage in social media on cell phones. Many undergraduates perceive the current MKDU courses as “easy high grades”.

Reinstating a rigorous study of “essential core” courses on science, literature, art, music, history, and mathematics in the MKDU – coupled with student-centered instruction to hone civic engagement, higher-order cognitive skills, problem solving, leadership, and debate – would allow Indonesia an opportunity to become an international competitor in higher education. Some universities have restructured the MKDU with a liberal arts focus (e.g., Universitas Indonesia and Universitas Pembangunan Jaya). These efforts are laudatory, but fall short of obtaining intended liberal arts learning outcomes in the absence of instructor training in active learning instruction. MKDU instructors should receive training in instructional use of higher-level thinking strategies, structured “groupwork that works” (Puncochar, 2006), and assessment of student learning outcomes.

We compared course credits required of UPI's MKDU and NMU's Liberal Studies

program with the total credits required for graduation from these two universities. Table 2 has a comparison of UPI's MKDU credits and NMU's 2014 Liberal Studies credits. UPI students complete a dramatically lower number of MKDU credits relative to NMU's Liberal Studies credits necessary for an undergraduate degree (see Table 2). Overall, UPI MKDU students complete approximately 20% fewer general studies course credits than NMU students complete.

Table 2

Comparison of Liberal Arts / General Education credits required for graduation at Northern Michigan University and the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

<u>Credits</u>	<u>Northern Michigan University</u>	<u>Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia</u>
Liberal Studies / MKDU	40	14
Required for Graduation	124–150	144–160
Percentage Liberal Arts or MKDU	26.7% – 32.3%	8.7% – 9.7%

Most Indonesian university programs do *not* have opportunities for students to enroll in additional coursework or electives. Limiting the number of general studies courses in the MKDU causes a rapid narrowing of Indonesian university programs toward technical and professional courses. Numerous required specialized courses limit inclusion of elective courses in science, literature, art, music, history, and mathematics. A rigorous study of essential core courses would broaden students' views of the world, promote higher-level thinking skills, liberate the mind from ignorance, and cultivate social responsibility (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2009, 2014, & 2015). A narrowing of a rigorous study of essential core coursework risks producing a citizenry with a weakened social responsibility and less developed higher-order cognitive skills.

Indonesian undergraduates and master's level students in our classes reported a high level

of interest in general studies courses of music, art, science, literature, history, cultures, languages, technology, and mathematics (Puncochar, 2014a). Their high interest in general studies coursework contrasted sharply with a precipitous decline of Indonesian PhD students' interest in general studies classes (see Table 3). The waning interest of PhD students in general studies coursework is a natural result of a sharpened focus on professional studies. The exceptionally high percentage of undergraduates who listed general studies courses currently absent from the MKDU suggests an *ineffectiveness* of the MKDU to satisfy learning desires of undergraduates. The students' desired courses matched categories of liberal studies / general studies curricula (e.g., science, art, literature, music, history, languages, and mathematics).

Table 3

Indonesian higher education students' responses to a survey item, "Name three classes you would take if you could."

Topics	Undergrads (n = 52)	Master's Students (n = 33)	PhD Students (n = 14)
Not Liberal Arts	4.3%	13.6%	72.9%
Liberal Arts	95.7%	86.4%	27.1%

Liberal Arts

Regardless of whether the *artes liberales* originated in Phoenicia, Egypt, or Greece (see Bernal, 1987; Cook, 2014), the importance of receiving an "essential core" of foundational coursework, as with a rigorous study of the liberal arts, has withstood the test of time. Western education embraced the liberal arts as a basis of a disciplined yet innovative mind required for engaging in democracy, scientific-inquiry, and evidence-based reasoning and living. Currently, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong are investing heavily in liberal arts education (Lewis, 2013). These countries rank first through fourth in Pearson's 2014 benchmarking of

international education systems. If the current trend of investing in liberal arts education continues, Asia may soon outpace the United States in quality of university and postgraduate education. A rigorous study of MKDU courses in the spirit of a rigorous study of the liberal arts would serve a public purpose to create socially responsible, community-oriented, educated Indonesian citizens.

Citizenship Education

Indonesian higher education has a responsibility to serve the public purpose and foster development of citizens with knowledge and skills of civic responsibility, which is a primary goal of a liberal arts education. If Indonesian higher education institutions are hesitant to use the term *liberal arts*, then *citizenship education* or *general education* are appropriate alternative terms (Puncochar, 2014b). Regardless of the terms used, higher education must promote the strongest, most comprehensive education possible so that all graduates will obtain skills necessary to participate effectively in Indonesia's democratic society and economic growth. Higher education students who pursue majors within the context of a liberal arts education substantially increase their likelihood of achieving long-term professional success (AACU, 2014).

Society for the Enhancement of Indonesian Citizenry (SEICHE)

On November 22, 2014, Professor Alwasilah launched a Society for the Enhancement of Indonesian Citizenry through Higher Education (SEICHE). Representatives from seven universities and one non-profit organization attended the unveiling of SEICHE. The SEICHE vision is to help achieve international recognition of Indonesia's higher education system, accomplished principally through collaboration and engagement with research in curriculum, instruction, service, and program evaluation. SEICHE aspires to become Indonesia's academic

society for the study of Indonesian higher education as an international forum for policymakers, professors and lecturers, graduate students, and other researchers to promote and advance research, policy, and practice in all areas of higher education. In his launching speech, Prof. Alwasilah urged a renewed emphasis on liberal studies in the MKDU, which Prof. Puncochar emphasized as “citizenship education” during her SEICHE keynote address (Puncochar, 2014b).

As SEICHE expands, the number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) will increase. SEICHE SIGs would undertake research in focused areas of higher education such as outcomes assessment, instruction, service learning, and the MKDU. The outcomes assessment SIG would research methods for assessing outcomes (e.g., citizenship outcomes) and strategies for conducting research and assessment of course and program learning outcomes. The instruction SIG would encourage scholarly inquiry related to effects of instruction on learning and promote research-based instruction to serve the public good. The SIG on service learning would build equitable, sustainable community partnerships and promote students’ intercultural knowledge and social service competencies. The MKDU SIG would conduct research on the effects of foundational coursework on first-year students’ thinking, learning, and doing.

SEICHE aspires to provide international collaboration among administrators, directors, instructors, and staff of public and private higher education institutions and organizations who seek to influence educational change in local and national communities. An analogous organization to SEICHE is The Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in the United States. SEICHE and ASHE use similar organizational structures, including involving graduate students in the Society’s activities and promoting scholarly research and debate about issues and ideas, questions, problems, and possibilities in the study of higher education (ASHE, 2015). SEICHE is just starting. Organizational structure, bylaws, and election of administrators

are in progress. The SEICHE values are the values of higher education, which include civic engagement, building good character, critical thinking, community outreach, student-centered instruction, responsibility to the public interest, and academic freedom.

Academic Freedom

A value of particular importance to higher education is academic freedom. Innovations in science and teaching depend on academic freedom and willingness to take risks in pursuit of new knowledge. Scientific inquiry must include possibilities to disconfirm conventional knowledge and expand upon the ever-increasing growth of human understanding. A lack of freedom to pursue disconfirming evidence to current knowledge would result in incomplete knowledge and restricted truths. Graduates of institutions without academic freedom would become increasingly narrow in their understandings. Indonesian higher education would become an indoctrination rather than an inquiry skills-based education suitable for life-long learning. PhD students from institutions without academic freedom would face particular difficulties in meeting the dissertation requirement of creating new knowledge. Institutions without academic freedom would lose international appeal. Mission statements of universities would remain unrealized.

The greatest threat to Indonesian higher education is a loss of academic freedom. Academic freedom is at risk in institutions and communities where rectors and deans hesitate to articulate the value of academic freedom. Higher education leaders who disregard academic freedom place instructors at risk of stagnation in teaching and research and generate academic climates fearful of innovation. Scientific inquiry and peer review are of little help to faculty members who have lost academic freedom.

Tensions between academic freedom, the Pancasila (i.e., the philosophical foundation of Indonesia stated in the Preamble of Indonesia's Constitution), and local communities appear to

have increased in Indonesian higher education. In January 2015, an Indonesian lecturer received a suspension because of using a pluralistic instructional field trip with students to learn about world religions (Sijabat & Simanjuntak, 2015). Loss of academic freedom in teaching and research places at risk the role of higher education to influence national educational policies and hold discussions with community members regarding implementations of the five principles of the Indonesian Pancasila:

- Belief in the one and only God
- Just and civilized humanity
- Unity of Indonesia
- Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives
- Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia

In addition, loss of academic freedom has the potential to constrict educational experiences of students at all levels and undermine the Indonesian national goal of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity).

The Indonesian Ministers of Education, leaders of higher education institutions, and members of SEICHE have goals to create collaborations and social outreach opportunities between higher education, international partners, and community members. A committed group of people can change the course of Indonesian higher education for greater good, affect Indonesia's future, and achieve a highly educated Indonesian citizenry. Rigorously trained higher education graduates will enter the workforce as prepared citizens with advanced skills and capacities to meet the challenges of Indonesia's future and build a peaceful, cooperative, respectful, and economically fair and transparent, safe society.

Indonesia's Future and Higher Education Reform

Improving the quality of higher education has a direct and positive influence on Indonesia's future. Higher educational reform requires changes in classroom instruction, adoption of international standards of accreditation, improvements to thesis and dissertation processes, and international collaboration and outreach (e.g., community internships, student exchange programs, and SEICHE). Instructors should receive training in "teaching for learning" and hone instructional skills for classroom discussion, constructive controversy, groupwork, and optimization of student classroom learning. Rectors and deans should act as a humanizing force to promote the values of higher education and model personal engagement in rational thinking, civic engagement, transparency, and respect for all university employees, students, and community members.

MKDU Coursework

Collaborations with SEICHE could help guide MKDU coursework to include courses of high interest to students and prepare students with knowledge and skills in inquiry, thinking, debate, and problem solving for specialized areas of study *and* for civic engagement in Indonesia's democracy and the ASEAN community. Skills-based instruction with student-centered learning, problem solving, civic engagement, and logical reasoning is essential to invigorate and prepare educated citizens to participate in Indonesia's future.

Expanding MKDU to include its historic roots in liberal arts-type courses could play a leading role in improving the quality of Indonesia's overall educational systems, in part, by directly improving the knowledge base of elementary and secondary teachers who enroll in elementary and secondary education programs. In addition, SEICHE collaborations could help Indonesian higher education institutions benchmark students' higher-level reasoning outcomes as

an indicator of MKDU curriculum and instruction effectiveness. Each graduating cohort of students should demonstrate evidence of sensitivities for social justice and measurable understandings, skills, and behaviors conducive for problem solving, communication, collaboration, international languages, ethical reasoning, rational thinking, and lifelong learning. Learning outcomes assessment of higher-level reasoning and collaborative skills with international standards would help Indonesia benchmark (and achieve) an educated workforce with a recognized capacity to accomplish peaceful, rational, respectful solutions to the nation's toughest problems. Indonesia's higher education institutions have the capacity to implement evidence-based decisions and influence Indonesia's future convincingly and favorably as an international leader of higher education, democracy, and the world.

SEICHE collaborations could assist Indonesian higher education in assessment of students' social consciousness and sensitivity to the problems and social realities of Indonesia. To sustain these goals, the Indonesian government mandated three subjects (i.e., religion, Pancasila, and Bahasa Indonesia) in the Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum (MKDU), which are general education studies that first-year undergraduates must take. MKDU programs differ according to institution, but all programs cover government-mandated subjects.

We investigated the MKDU program at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) in a series of MKDU faculty focus groups. The faculty focus groups met biweekly for eight sessions. The goal of the focus group meetings was to understand the UPI MKDU program's instruction and curricula and to learn about students' reactions to MKDU courses.

Structure of Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum at UPI

UPI directors and instructors of MKDU courses met during fall 2014 for a series of faculty focus groups coordinated by Dr. Abas Asyafah, UPI Director of the MKDU, and

facilitated by Professor Chaedar Alwasilah of the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) and Professor Puncobar of Northern Michigan University (NMU). Focus group discussion topics included the structure, instructional methods, curriculum, and assessment of the MKDU program.

MKDU at UPI consists of eight or nine required courses (i.e., 16-18 credits). English language majors do *not* take the MKDU English Language class. Other higher education institutions have different MKDU configurations.

1. Art (2 credits) – Eliminated
2. Bahasa English (English Language) (2 credits) [Not required for English Majors]
3. Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian Language) (2 credits)
4. Pancasila / Civics (2 credits)
5. *Pendidikan Lingkungan Sosial Budaya Teknologi (PLSBT)* (2 credits)
6. Religion Education (4 credits)
7. Seminar on Religion (2 credits)
8. Social Service (2 credits)
9. Sports (2 credits)

The next sections contain information regarding the MKDU courses, as discussed in UPI faculty focus groups, and possible SEICHE recommendations to improve instruction and curricula. MKDU courses are in alphabetical order.

Art (2 credits). The MKDU Art course used to focus on Indonesian culture, but the course no longer is available to UPI MKDU students. The purpose of the previous MKDU art course was to demonstrate art as a venue for communicating personal and cultural values and for understanding human cultures. Previous MKDU art instructors were from diverse disciplines of

music and the arts (e.g., sculpture, music, film, theater, painting, or dance), resulting in difficulties with assessment of learning outcomes associated with a variety of art disciplines.

Through art, students learn to express their feelings, ideas, and appreciation of the diversity of multiculturalism in Indonesia. Students learn how to criticize social and cultural phenomena of their world. Importantly, a study of art forms in higher education classrooms serves as a method of social inquiry into Indonesia's collective cultural memory (R. Milyartini, personal communication, November 13, 2014).

Educational researchers found evidence that studying the arts appears to help the development of students' cognitive and affective abilities (Asbury & Rich, 2008; Ruppert, 2006). In a survey of NMU undergraduates' experience with arts and music classes, undergraduates who took no arts courses in high school reported lower scores on the American College Testing (ACT) college entrance exams than students who participated in art courses. Undergraduates who took five or more semesters (more than two years) of the arts in high school courses scored the highest on the national college entrance exams (Crawford, Schafer, & Puncochar, 2013).

SEICHE could help re-establish music and the arts in the MKDU program. MKDU art instructors could create broad goals and generalizable learning objectives to alleviate the assessment issues associated with learning art and music within diverse art and music disciplines. Broad goals of learning with the arts and music include appreciation of diversity, critical thinking, field specific knowledge, and communication. For each goal, instructors could establish two to four measurable learning outcomes (e.g., identify art or music across a timeline of Indonesian history, write a paper with art or music terminology, distinguish between major Indonesian ethnic art or music forms, and analyze strengths and weaknesses of a specific piece of art or music). Indonesian undergraduates enter higher education with a range of art and music

abilities. MKDU instructors should consider establishing a baseline of undergraduate students' knowledge and proficiencies of Indonesian art forms and music skills, world art history, and art criticism.

English Language (Bahasa English) (2 credits). The faculty focus groups did *not* discuss the English Language course. However, many of our recommendations regarding the Bahasa Indonesia MKDU course apply to the English Language MKDU course.

Indonesian Language (Bahasa Indonesia) (2 credits). More than 90% of Indonesians speak Bahasa Indonesia and about 20% claim to have Bahasa Indonesia as a first language (see Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2015). These percentages are remarkable considering that Bahasa Indonesia is *not* an organic mother tongue of Indonesia and more than two-thirds of Indonesians continue to speak ethnic languages at home (Ananta et al., 2013, p. 25). All Indonesian elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions have coursework in Bahasa Indonesia, as mandated by Indonesia law. The Bahasa Indonesia course has a goal to improve students' Bahasa Indonesia writing and speaking skills for success in academic writing.

The UPI Bahasa Indonesia course collects student ratings and attempts to improve student writing in relatively large classes with few writing instructors. Eleven UPI instructors strive to provide Bahasa Indonesia courses for 6000 UPI undergraduates each year. The massive number of students with too few instructors makes improving students' writing with meaningful, frequent feedback nearly impossible. The Bahasa Indonesia course ratio is one writing instructor to 545 students. SEICHE collaborations might assist with changes in the structure and approach to teaching Bahasa Indonesia.

MKDU Bahasa Indonesia instructors teach grammar, which is a set of rules to explain appropriate use of words in a language. Knowing grammar is important for students to judge

how well speech or writing follows conventional rules of grammar. However, students who see grammar rules in context of a written paragraph are more likely to learn grammar rules and transfer knowledge of grammar outside the classroom than are those students who see grammar rules in isolated sentences (De La Paz & Graham, 1997; Graham, Berninger, Weintraub, & Schafer, 1998). Instructing grammar rules within Indonesian literature written in Bahasa Indonesia promises greater transfer of grammar knowledge and engagement of students with Indonesian cultural studies.

SEICHE could help Bahasa Indonesia courses identify the Great Books of Indonesia for teaching grammar and writing (Alwasilah & Puncuchar, 2014). Great Books are certain classics of literature, philosophy, history, and science that contain basic ideas of culture (adapted from Merriam-Webster, 2015). So far, an established list of Great Books of Indonesia does not exist. Students develop a greater understanding of how language occurs in published writing (Pena, 2014). Consequently, Bahasa Indonesia grammar instruction should occur within the context of an analysis of Bahasa Indonesia literature based on oral communication rubrics and reading comprehension rubrics (see AACU, 2010).

SEICHE could help establish Writing Center in Indonesian higher education. Students who need basic grammar training and skills should be able to go to a Writing Center for additional support, but higher education Writing Centers are rare in Indonesia.

Pancasila / Civics (2 credits). The MKDU Pancasila / Civics course at UPI combines a study of Indonesia's Pancasila and civics, as mandated by Indonesian law. Each subject receives one of the two assigned credits. The course focuses on the philosophical framework of Indonesia as a nation and strives to instill a sense of patriotism. An assessment of patriotism as a learning outcome is not yet available. Students in the course do *not* yet participate in community activities

involving political, civic, or democratic processes as part of their classwork.

Expecting patriotism from coursework without civic engagement in the community is unlikely. Civic engagement involves working to make a difference in the civic life of Indonesian communities. Civic life includes interacting with democratic processes that Indonesian citizens associate with government, politics, and creating legislative policy. Students should have opportunities to engage in civic life in their communities through both political and non-political processes (Ehrlich, 2000). SEICHE collaborations could help establish a civics engagement component to enrich students' motivations, knowledge, skills, and values associated with civic life and overall Indonesian democratic processes. A civics lesson, for example, could involve training high school students to conduct voter registration campaigns (Tillotson & Puncochar, 2014).

Pendidikan Lingkungan Sosial Budaya Teknologi (PLSBT) (2 credits). *PLSBT* is a 2-credit course that combines a socio-cultural and environmental focus on environmental issues. PLSBT instructors strive to integrate students' knowledge across several disciplines, including natural and social sciences. Science instructors do *not* teach the class. PLSBT instructors currently use a sociological perspective for the course. Natural science education is not available to non-science majors. Clearly, opportunities for SEICHE collaborations are abundant in the areas of natural science and mathematics education in Indonesia.

Religion Education (2 credits) and Seminar on Religion (2 credits). UPI religion courses comprise four credits (i.e., 25% to 29% of MKDU coursework) in two courses. Each course has a focus on the single religion associated with students' personal religion (e.g., Muslim students take religion courses in Islam and Catholic students take courses in Catholicism).

The purpose of MKDU religion courses is to instill a good character and high moral

behavior in students. Current Indonesian undergraduates enroll in MKDU religion courses based on students' religious affiliation on their Indonesian identity card. International students without a religious affiliation can receive exemptions from enrolling in the religion courses (C.

Alwasilah, personal communication, October 19, 2014). Religion courses have a goal to develop an understanding of Indonesian students' own religion. Currently, the courses do *not* assess students' moral reasoning, respect for all religions or peoples worldwide, or religious literacy of religions other than students' own. Instructors of MKDU religion courses are religious leaders whose knowledge of religion and instructional abilities vary.

“Religious literacy means understanding and believing in the commonalities across religions, such as peace and respect for humanity” (Alwasilah, 2012a, para. 26). Teaching about world religions is one way to promote respect for diversity, understanding, and cooperation in local, national, and global arenas (Haynes, 2005). A lack of knowledge about other religions contributes to a difficulty in understanding ethics as independent of religion (Moore, 2010). Religious illiteracy fuels misunderstandings between a study of religions and the practice of religions. These misunderstandings are due in part to inconsistency in expertise of religious leaders who are naïve about other religions. Ignorance of other religions promotes religious illiteracy and increases prejudice, bias, and antagonism.

MKDU religion courses strive to inculcate positive values of religion and encourage students to have positive attitudes and demonstrate constructive behaviors indicative of good Indonesian citizenship. Explicit training in the development of *moral reasoning* (as opposed to following rule-based morality) appears absent from religion courses and is *not* part of the religion course assessment of learning outcomes.

Indonesian laws require higher education institutions to teach religion, but these laws do

not mandate teaching strategies. SEICHE could help Indonesian higher education institutions consider several questions related to teaching courses on religion:

1. Are Indonesian higher education institutions appropriate places for a free exchange of ideas about religion?
2. Is requiring undergraduates to spend tuition rupiahs to study their own religion ethical?
3. Should students receive training in the development of moral reasoning in their religion classes? Should religion classes assess moral reasoning as a learning outcome?
4. Should religion courses use a multi-religious education approach based on the Pancasila?
5. Should religion instructors conduct multicultural lessons on Indonesia's official religions so that students could learn more about Indonesia's diverse society?
6. Should religion instructors conduct inter-faith forums and invite representatives of Indonesia's official religions to discuss topics of high interest to undergraduates (e.g., environment, marriage, science, technology, death, food, peace and war)?
7. Should higher education institutions conduct annual diversity conferences and include religious diversity, e.g., "Uniting Neighbors in the Experience of Diversity" (UNITED) (Puncochar, 2013).

Instructional methods for teaching religion courses need clarification, official approval, and assessment of quality and effectiveness. SEICHE could recommend pre- and post-assessments of MKDU students' moral reasoning (e.g., Defining Issues Test by James Rest, 1979) to measure effectiveness of religion courses and instruction on student learning outcomes. In addition, students in religion courses should have an opportunity to evaluate course instruction and content and make suggestions for improvements to their religion classes. Instructors of religion courses should meet required standards of knowledge and instructional abilities.

Social Service (2 credits). The MKDU Social Service course has two credits and a community-service orientation. Students conduct community service in teams. The MKDU Social Service course uses a sociological perspective and engagement within the community as a basis for understanding community relations. Learning through Social Services engagement is an exciting “teaching for learning” methodology that incorporates service to the community and helps students gain a deeper understanding of course objectives, new knowledge, professional expertise, and moral / ethical reasoning while engaging in a community service activity. Higher education students participate in an organized service activity to meet identified community needs, reflect on service activities to gain further understanding of academic discipline and community, and obtain an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997).

Intercultural knowledge competence is an expected learning outcome for higher education students who engage in Social Service community activities. Evaluations of intercultural knowledge competences could include pre- and post-assessments of students’ reasoning about the cognitive and social dynamics of prejudice, poverty, and diversity to allow demonstration of students’ cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills appropriate for interaction in a variety of cultural community contexts.

SEICHE collaborations could assist Indonesian higher education instructors with important hands-on, high-impact learning experiences within the community (Berner, 2015). SEICHE also could make several administrative, curricular, and instructional recommendation.

Administrative recommendations

1. Create guidelines for involvement of MKDU Social Service courses with religion-based organizations. Examine the ethics *and* equity of “free student labor” (e.g., make sure

equitable attention is available to a variety of non-profit public organizations and the diversity of Indonesian religion-based organizations).

2. Create a Social Service Board for outcomes assessment, accreditation compliance, and tenure / promotion processes of instructors who work with the MKDU community outreach portion of the Social Service Courses. The line of reporting should go directly to the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs (i.e., the person with a critical role in academic affairs and the tenure and promotion processes). Invite a member of SEICHE and a member from the institution's Curriculum Committee to serve on Social Service Board.
3. Form a Community Partner Advisory Board and create a network of community partners for Social Service projects. Administer an annual survey of community partners to keep current with community needs.

Curricular recommendations

1. Create a syllabus template to "honorize" MKDU courses for advanced students.
2. Use rubrics to assess standards of quality in community outreach. Include an assessment of learning outcomes based on ethical standards.
3. Develop funding opportunities for Social Service grants and create a Social Service application processes for students to apply for funding of their Social Service projects.
4. Assess Social Service critical thinking outcomes.
5. Categorize Social Service projects under themes as a useful focus for MKDU instructors and students with topics of "environmental sustainability," "gender," "under-served youth," "public health," and "integrated use of businesses to solve social problems".

Instructional recommendations

1. Connect Social Service course outcomes to campus learning initiatives.

2. Establish social service learning outcomes for diversity (e.g., listening to perspectives of diverse others, reasoning with diverse others about problem solving, and working effectively with diverse others to achieve positive change for Indonesian communities).
3. Evaluate challenges faced by Social Service instructors who work with community outreach activities.
4. Teach about the psychological nature of prejudice and bias *and* the sociological dynamics of poverty and not limit students to a sociological perspective.

Sports (2 credits). The MKDU includes a 2-credit Sports course, although a discussion of the sports course did *not* occur in the UPI faculty focus groups. Most higher education institutions throughout the world require students to take sports. UPI students mentioned informally that the MKDU sports course had an enjoyable socializing quality.

MKDU Citizenship Education and the Liberal Arts

At the national level, Indonesia could establish “essential core” courses that traditionally have had a liberal arts-type focus within the MKDU. Expanding access to liberal arts-type courses for undergraduates has the support of several Indonesian professors. Professor Alwasilah (2012b) wrote, “*Apparently, our universities have failed to inculcate the mission of liberal arts on the students.*” Advancing higher education with liberal arts-type courses helps to prepare an educated citizenry with specific dispositions to develop lifelong learning and improve knowledge, skills, and competences throughout the lifespan (see Commission of the European Communities, 2000):

- Developing a high degree of intellectual literacy;
- Honing critical-thinking skills;
- Exhibiting moral and ethical responsibility to one's community;

- Reasoning clearly, think rationally, analyze intelligently;
- Responding to people with compassion and fairness;
- Appreciating beauty of the arts and literature;
- Using arts and literature as an inspiration;
- Reverting to the historical past for lessons to help shape the future intelligently and to avoid unnecessary mistakes;
- Reflecting on personal accomplishments with humility;
- Meeting challenges with observation, problem solving, and success.

Skills for Democracy and SEICHE

Students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and Universitas Pasundan selected a high number of liberal arts-type courses that they would study “if they could” (Puncochar, 2014c). Students’ choices included courses in mathematics, history, natural science, literature, and visual and performing arts. All of the students’ choices could function effectively as citizenship education courses with student-centered instruction, higher-level reasoning strategies, and community outreach. Unfortunately, most of the courses selected by students are unavailable in the current configuration of MKDU coursework or the students’ majors.

UPI master’s and Ph.D. students were eager to learn skills of debate, conflict resolution, and constructive controversy, but they lacked confidence in their opinions and knowledge. We assigned our graduate students homework to write letters to the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture on an educational issue of their choice. Some students shared how they grappled with fear that initially paralyzed them from speaking up (J. Puncochar, personal communication, November 22, 2014).

In Indonesia’s maturing democracy, citizens need to learn that they have the right to ask

for what they want and they need to learn how to use their knowledge and rights to affect positive change and resolve issues constructively. Importantly, they need to learn that speaking up is necessary in a participatory democracy (see Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2013 & 2014). SEICHE collaborations could guide the development of a rigorous study of liberal arts-type courses to provide the democratic skills of civic engagement, resolving controversies constructively, debate, logic, and effective problem solving. However, knowledge of Indonesian rights is powerful only when students act on and practice their knowledge and rights.

Campus Culture of Learning

SEICHE collaborations could help Indonesian higher education achieve a campus culture of learning with strong statements of support for learning and a clear focus on the ideals and values of lifelong learning and collaboration with community members. In our experience, most Indonesian instructors are eager to use active learning approaches in their instruction, but lack training to do so competently. Some instructors in an effort to use student-centered instruction simply assign students to present textbook chapters to the class. These presentations are often uninspiring and ineffective and tend to promote the same passivity in listeners that lectures promote. Instead of student presentations and lectures, instructors should employ a variety of active learning instructional strategies and “teach for learning”. Students need active engagement with course concepts for honing skills of higher-level reasoning, decision-making and problem solving, inquiry, communication, and teamwork.

Assessment of learning outcomes. Developing student knowledge and skills with effective “teaching for learning” requires adequate, on-going assessment. Most Indonesian higher education institutions have failed to instill a foundation of continuous assessment of

students' learning outcomes (Alwasilah, 2012a). Assessment of observable, measurable behaviors of student learning provides evidence regarding the effects of instruction on student learning. Outcomes assessment delivers data to evaluate effects of a program or single class on student learning (e.g., effects of Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum (MKDU) on first-year student learning), provides evidence for data-driven decision-making, and should *neither* burden instructors with additional work *nor* require additional testing of students. Using valid rubrics to assess learning outcomes provides a framework for data as evidence of students' learning, thinking, and doing (see Association of American Colleges and Universities [AACU], 2010).

Instructors must use valid and reliable assessment feedback in accordance with the missions of their institutions and nation for data-driven decisions about instructional practices, curricula, and student learning experiences. Indonesia's higher education institutions must meet international standards for learning and produce graduates who can compete internationally. Indonesia needs an informed, educated citizenry to support a rapidly growing economy, high diversity, and maturing democracy. Several pathways are available within higher education to prepare students for Indonesia's self-determined destiny as a major world leader. Improving the nationally mandated Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum (MKDU) coursework of first-year undergraduates is an important first step.

Teacher education programs. Indonesia's on-going efforts to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education will produce a demand for higher standards in teacher education programs and higher quality Pre-Kindergarten through high school teachers. Indonesia is making progress toward satisfying the demand for higher quality teachers. The number of certified teachers increased to 63% in 2012 compared to 23% in 2005 (Chang et al., 2013). Quality teachers – *regardless of their subject certification* – should complete higher education

degrees and exit teacher preparation programs with greater knowledge typical of the liberal arts (i.e., economics, history, mathematics, science, ethics, music, languages, technology, and, in this case, Indonesian literature). In this manner, Indonesian teachers will have skills and knowledge relevant to the expanding learning needs of their students' rapidly changing futures.

Improvements in teacher education programs and better-prepared applicants to these programs will promote improvements in all levels of education, government, and commerce. Well-educated elementary and secondary education teachers will produce accomplished high school graduates who have increasing exposure to and experience with inquiry-based, collaborative lessons. Each year high school graduates with better skills in science inquiry, technology, and collaboration will enroll in Indonesia's higher education programs. Better-educated high school graduates will influence broad changes in higher education instruction, curricula, teacher education, and community outreach programs. Students in increasing numbers will seek internships and connections to professional work within businesses and communities to prepare for experiences relevant to Indonesia's future.

Indonesian Higher Education and SEICHE

UPI faculty focus group members expressed support for a rigorous study of an "essential core" of liberal arts coursework, learning outcomes, and teaching strategies. They are eager to form international collaborations and they agreed that current students obtain a narrow, highly specialized education. SEICHE could help Indonesia avoid educating citizens narrowly without knowledge of coursework typical of the liberal arts or skills of debate, logic, and evidence-based reasoning. Indonesian higher education graduates should understand the power of music, rhetoric, and social influence to affect human emotion and social criticism offered through the arts. Indonesians should have skills to apply mathematics and evidence-based scientific inquiry

to all aspects of life. Importantly, Indonesians should know of Indonesia's great literature and higher education courses should allow students an opportunity to read these books.

A highly educated Indonesian citizenry needs knowledge of their culture and skills to build a peaceful, ecological, cooperative, respectful, and economically fair, transparent, highly cultural and safe society. The level of knowledge and skills necessary for a strong, robust Indonesian higher education starts with a rigorous student-centered study of "essential core" subjects based on liberal arts-type courses. Liberal arts-based courses and the support of international collaborations with organizations such as SEICHE could help Indonesia produce an educated citizenry with skills for moral and ethical reasoning, critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making, creativity, collaboration, and civic engagement to advance a maturing democracy, growing economy, and promising Indonesian future.

SEICHE Contact

Contact Dean Senny Alwasilah (senny_alwasilah@yahoo.com) of the Universitas Pasundan for information on upcoming SEICHE events. The first annual SEICHE conference is (tentatively) summer 2016, at which time plenary and contributing talks will address broad goals and action strategies of the organization, including SEICHE election of officers and formalization of SIGs.

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