

***The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) presents***  
**Rethinking higher ed: Beyond {the buzzwords}**  
**November 7-8, 2013**  
**Sheraton Centre Toronto**

**Day Two**  
**November 8, 2013**

**Lunch Keynote | Ascension of Asia Pacific Higher Education: Challenges or Opportunities for Canada?**  
*Da Hsuan Feng, National Tsing Hua University*

What does the ascension of Asian universities mean for those universities, and what challenges and opportunities will Canada face as a result? Da Hsuan Feng proposed a Canada-Asia-Pacific higher education roadmap.

Just a few decades ago, research in higher education was conducted almost exclusively by Western universities. Now there are 17 top research universities from the Asia-Pacific region banded together in a tight, Confucian higher education research collaboration. There is also a partnership with LERU (the Leading European Research Universities), founded in 2002. Canada also has world-class research universities. However, a Taiwanese student recently visited Canada, and after coming back she asked why the Taiwanese have not heard of these great Canadian institutions.

Taiwan, like Canada, is self-effacing: it tends to underestimate its own importance, and be under-appreciated by those who do not know it. There are valid similarities between Taiwan and Canada, so that means a conversation between Canadian and Taiwanese research universities would be very valuable. To start this conversation, Feng described some major research universities that are probably not on the radar screen of Canadians.

The University of Malaya was founded in 1905, and Malaya is going to spend \$400 million on a world-class health metropolis based there. Binus University in Jakarta is a quasi-private university, receiving some government money and a huge amount of money from China, and it has given three decades of educational excellence. What links these two countries? By 2020, high speed rail will go through Beijing, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. Further, the closest point between Malaysia and Indonesia is 38km, so within a decade there will be a tunnel between the two countries. There will also be a giant bridge between Sumatra and Java.

The interstate highways in the United States transformed the country culturally and economically. Feng is convinced that there will be a similar transformation in the Asia-Pacific region.

For Feng the commonalities between Canadian and Asian universities are academic agility and intellectual courage. There are a lot of similarities between Taiwan and Canada. They are different in size, but population and GDP are very similar. Some of Canada's research universities are the best in the world, and this takes inherent self-confidence. Despite being next to an 800-pound gorilla that is the US, Canada is able to develop universities and successful industries. Canada and Taiwan can work together to develop paths to inherent self-confidence, which you need for intellectual agility and intellectual courage. Universities should be about building a better world for their fellow human beings in the 21<sup>st</sup>

century, and a partnership between the research universities of Canada and Taiwan would be an exciting way to achieve this.