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**POST DOI MOI URBAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM: THE CASE OF HONG DUC UNIVERSITY**

by

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ABSTRACT

POST DOI MOI URBAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM: THE CASE OF HONG DUC UNIVERSITY

Jeanne Beth Natali

Old Dominion University

Director: Dr. Maurice R. Berube

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is experiencing unprecedented peace and prosperity. Although Vietnam's war-damaged economy continued to decline for ten years after hostilities ended in 1975, everything changed in 1986 when *doi moi*, a moderate economic reform program, was introduced. *Doi moi* put enormous stress on higher education, whose function in the past had been to train workers for the state sector. Suddenly, higher education had to respond to the changing needs of Vietnamese society.

A 1992 educational sector study found that higher education was irrelevant to the needs of the transitional Vietnamese society. Universities were too small and too diffuse to be effective. A plan was drafted to consolidate single-focus institutions into larger multidisciplinary universities, to revise curricula and to improve the quality of teaching faculty. In Thanh Hoa Province, Thanh Hoa Teacher Training College, Thanh Hoa Medical College and

Thanh Hoa Agricultural and Technical College formed Hong Duc University (HDU) which opened in 1997.

This study examines Hong Duc University and discusses the university's impact on Thanh Hoa Province. This case study is based on information collected from interviews, informal conversations, observations, document analysis and archival record analysis made during a three-week field visit in the summer of 2001.

The findings show that Hong Duc University has a positive effect on the region. Localized academic programs and research opportunities assist with regional development. Furthermore, Hong Duc University, although in transition itself, is relevant to the changing needs of the transitional society. Finally, the data revealed that HDU has stimulated economic growth in the city of Thanh Hoa.

The study concludes with several recommendations. First, the university funding base must be diversified. Once the university has sufficient educational resources, access to technology must be improved and the university infrastructure must be upgraded. Second, a plan for professional development, recruitment and retention of adequately trained faculty must be established. Next, the curriculum must be upgraded to reflect workplace realities.

Access to the university must be assured for the region's ethnic minorities and the very poor. Finally, the continued conduct of scientific research is recommended to increase HDU's regional influence.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPV	Communist Party of Vietnam
HDU	Hong Duc University
HVO	Health Volunteer Agency
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NLF	National Liberation Front
NSEP	National Security Education Program
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam
SRV	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WUSC	World University Service

CHAPTER I

Overview of the Study

Introduction

After years of colonization, war, political instability, economic disaster and social chaos, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is reunified, peaceful, recovering and rebuilding. Key to the rebuilding of the country has been a strong plan for higher education.

The purpose of this case study is to assess the impact of Hong Duc University (HDU) in coastal North Central Vietnam, and to address how the university operates in the new economic environment created by socioeconomic reforms in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Specifically, this research focuses on the relationship between national economic renovation policies and The People's Committee of Thanh Hoa province's local interpretation and implementation of these policy recommendations to restructure higher education in Vietnam.

When the People's Army of Viet Nam (PAVN) and the National Liberation Front (NLF) forces overtook The Republic of Vietnam, ending the second Indochinese war, Vietnam found itself impoverished, much of its infrastructure in ruins. Further complicating Vietnam's

predicament was the 1979 "war after the war" against the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and with its ally, China. That combination left Vietnam in desperate financial trouble. An ensuing international embargo, led by the United States, included all Western countries except Sweden and all members of the Association for the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The embargo alone cost Vietnam millions of dollars in aid, further devastating the newly united country (Harvie & Tran, 1997).

Vietnam's attempt to win the peace via the means it had employed to win the war—a highly centralized command-and-control economy—failed (Williams, 1992). Consequently, Hanoi turned to major economic renovation policies called *doi moi*. Had it not been for *doi moi*, the entire Vietnamese economy would have collapsed (Morely & Nishihara, 1997).

Although *doi moi* probably saved the country, it also put intense pressure on Vietnam's higher education system (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996). Almost over night, the economy began to slowly evolve from centrally-planned and highly controlled to multi-sector and market-driven. The higher education system in the old economy had been patterned after the Soviet Union's system. The national government tightly controlled higher education. Hundreds of small,

highly specialized universities taught a curriculum designed to train students to assume positions in the economy (Chao and Natali, 1999). The government paid tuition and fees for all students, and guaranteed for all graduates employment in state-owned enterprises.

After taking steps toward a market economy, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam had to integrate into the world economy. Exacerbating Vietnam's difficult transformation was the technological revolution that had occurred nearly everywhere else in the world. In order for Vietnam to modernize, Hanoi needed to invest heavily in human capital to build the technological infrastructure (Quan, Tao & Sloper cited in Sloper & Can, 1995). Although investing in higher education is critical in training workers to build a technology infrastructure, higher education is prohibitively expensive in a developing country such as Vietnam. According to Marr & Rosen (cited in Chan, Kerkvliet and Unger, 1999), for the cost of subsidizing one student in higher education, 30 poor students can receive a primary education. Regardless, Hanoi was faced with a cycle wherein technological changes in the world created a demand for educated people, and educated people created more technological changes. Speaking about

American educational reforms, former George H. Bush administration educational policy advisor Diane Ravitch says, "Technological change created a need for an educated people, and educated people stimulated technological change" (cited in Berube, 1991, p. 8). Although Ravitch was speaking of the United States, she easily could have been referring to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

In their 1989 book Education and National Development, Fagerlind & Saha pose their theory of education and dialectics.

In order to unravel the complexity which seems to surround the education-development debate, one must view the relationship between education and society as a dialectical one. The contradiction lies in the fact that education is both an agent of change and in turn is changed by society...Furthermore, the manner in which this dialectical process occurs and is resolved, is contingent on other characteristics of the social system itself. We have argued that the most important of these characteristics are the economic, the social and the political. Each of these three dimensions interacts dialectically with each other, and all three interact dialectically with education. (pp. 225-226)

Fagerlind & Saha continue, "These relationships are in a constant state of change, and thus not only the educational system, but the features of the larger societal system are also constantly changing" (1989, p. 227).

Problem Statement

Although a limited body of literature has been written about the ongoing higher education reforms in Vietnam, no historical case studies of institutions that have implemented reforms exists. A review of the literature revealed no case studies of Vietnamese universities. In the introduction to Tran's (1998) historical study of Vietnamese higher education, Vietnamese Higher Education at the Intersection of French and Soviet Influences, the author states, "A study of contemporary Vietnamese universities would be interesting and deserves a separate endeavor" (p. 24). A close examination a Vietnamese university is valuable to researchers who need to understand how Vietnamese national educational policy recommendations are interpreted and implemented on a local level.

In order to frame this research within the appropriate historical context, this study first provides a brief history of higher education in Vietnam, paying specific

attention to the country's rebuilding after many years of colonial rule, wars for independence, and the stubborn negative social and educational patterns whose roots are in the Chinese and French colonial systems and in the Soviet-style system that was adopted in 1975.

Second, this research outlines the massive economic renovation policies enacted in 1986 and discusses the effect of these policies on higher education.

Third, this study examines the dilemma of higher education in developing countries with limited resources to commit to education.

Most important, this research presents a case study of one urban university that was organized and founded solely to provide education and training in the new Vietnamese economy. This university was selected for two reasons. First, Hong Duc University is being built as a national model for multidisciplinary provincial universities. Hanoi is monitoring Hong Duc University so that the Hong Duc model can be replicated through out Vietnam, if the university is successful (C. Dang, personal interview, May 18, 2001). Second, Hong Duc is one of the earlier provincial universities to be opened in response to massive educational and economic reforms in Vietnam.

Three research questions are posed to assess the impact of Hong Duc University in Thanh Hoa Province. These questions will be used to frame the study and guide the content of the interviews and other data to be gathered. They are: 1) How does Hong Duc University impact the local environment of Thanh Hoa City and Thanh Hoa Province? 2) What relevance does Hong Duc have to a society in transition? 3) How is Hong Duc University developing through international cooperation?

Background

Although *doi moi* was successful in saving the Vietnamese economy from complete collapse, the higher education system was caught unprepared for producing workers and managers to assume positions created by the new market economy. "Despite the achievements of the 1979 and earlier reforms, Vietnamese education was insufficiently prepared to support the market economy" (Walker, Vu, & Dang, 1996, p. 141). As national economic reforms continued into the 1990's, Vietnam's higher education system grew increasingly irrelevant.

To correct address the incongruities between Vietnam's economic and educational systems, Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the United Nations

Development Program (UNDP), and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) studied the educational system and made policy recommendations. The resulting document, Education and Human Resources Sector Analysis: Synthesis Report (1992), became the guiding policy statement that the government of Vietnam used to outline educational issues facing the country and to establish priorities for higher education.

A prevailing theme in the MOET, UNESCO, UNDP document is the irrelevance of the higher education system and the urgent need for restructuring. Major Issue G: "The Irrelevance of Education and Training to Society in Transition" sums up the findings of the report. "Vietnam is changing and developing rapidly. Economic alterations will bring certain social and political modifications as well. All the systems and structures of the government must be modified to support this change" (Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training, the United Nations Development Program, and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [MOET, UNDP & UNESCO], 1992, p. 39).

Section 4.30 of the same report continues, "Vietnam's education and training system...must react and adapt to support the rapid pace of development. If it does not, it

risks becoming irrelevant, inefficient, and a brake on development" (MOET UNDP & UNESCO, p. 39). Later in the document, the following is reported,

Reorganization and consolidation of higher education institutions at present is of high priority to the Government . . . However, with a programme aimed at increasing the provision of higher education and its contribution to social and economic development, reorganization, consolidation and change in organizational arrangements from monodisciplinary institutes to multidisciplinary universities is seen to be imperative. (p.47)

Other recommendations in the report include a need to increase the relevance of vocational and technical training, to improve efficiency in the use of resources for education, to expand the resource base, and to improve the quality of academic administrators, faculty and curricula.

The case of Hong Duc University in Thanh Hoa City on Vietnam's North Central coast will illustrate the role of the urban university in post *doi moi* Vietnam. After the release of the Education and Human Resources Sector Report (1992), Vietnam's national government called for the complete restructuring of the nation's higher education

system, including a recommendation to consolidate or close the hundreds of small, single-focused Soviet-style institutions that were characteristic of Vietnamese higher education. Hong Duc is one such consolidated university.

Country overview.

Vietnam, formally known as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, is a poor, densely populated agrarian country of 78,705,000 people and a land area of 331,000 square kilometers (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2001). A 1997 World Bank estimate placed Vietnam as the fifth poorest country in the world, occupying the space between Sierra Leone and Burundi (World Bank, 1997). Despite pockets of urban prosperity, Vietnam's per capita income is about \$370 a year (UNICEF, 2001). Two startling population features of Vietnamese society are the rapidly growing birth rate of 2.5% (UNICEF, 2001) and high population density of 208.7 persons/km² (Boothroyd & Nam, 2000).

Consequently, Vietnam has one of the world's lower per capita arable land areas at 0.1 hectares per person, leaving little room for agriculture (Boothroyd & Nam, 2000). Vietnam's rapid population growth is a major obstacle to the socioeconomic development of the country. The growing population is deteriorating the environment,

resulting in an increasingly impoverished society (Boothroyd and Nam, 2000).

Geographically, Vietnam is a long, s-shaped country which borders China to the north, Cambodia and Laos to the west, and the South China Sea to the east. The National Assembly is the country's main legislative body. The ruling Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) administers the executive branch of the government. In addition to the National Assembly and the CPV, there are trade unions, the women's union and the youth union.

When the second Indochina war ended with a communist victory and Vietnam's reunification in 1975, the Communist Party dedicated itself not only to nationalism, but also to Marxism, the political system the CPV was convinced would bring prosperity to the country. Immediately after the war, the Party moved quickly in the South to implement the transition to socialism. The transitional post war government began to introduce a planned economy and a complementary Soviet-style system of higher education. That system included replacing multi-discipline institutions and community colleges in the South with state-supported, single-discipline institutions.

Although nearly everyone in the South welcomed an end to decades of fighting and most were glad the country was reunified, few southerners embraced the Party's new economic policy of collectivization (Kerkvliet & Selden cited in Chan, Kirkvliet & Unger, 1999). Private businesses were closed, private industries were absorbed into the socialist structure, strict price controls were mandated, agricultural land was collectivized, and hundreds of thousands of Saigon's residents were relegated into new economic development zones, which were little more than undeveloped areas. During this period, production fell, inflation soared, poverty and hunger were widespread, and Vietnam found itself at war again, this time with neighbors Cambodia and China (Williams, 1992).

Clearly, the state-sector economy was not producing. State-run enterprises were sluggish, and factory workers were unconcerned about efficiency and productivity, because the state managed production and paid workers' salaries (Williams, 1992). Dark economic times ensued. Vietnam became increasingly dependent upon the Soviet Union to replace the economic support the United States had once provided to the Republic of Vietnam (Palmujoki, 1997). The country suffered severe shortages of necessities, and the

economy stagnated from 1976 to 1980, and the country staggered from one economic crisis to another. By the early 1980's, Vietnam's transition to socialism was failing and the Communist Party of Vietnam made plans to abandon the collectivization program in the South (Williams, 1992).

Thanh Hoa Province.

Rural Thanh Hoa (population 3.7 million), Vietnam's second largest province, is located eighty miles south of Hanoi. Thanh Hoa province borders Nghe An, to the south, and Son La, Ninh Binh and Hoa Binh, to the north. The province is bordered by the Gulf of Tonkin to the east, with 102 km of coastline, and with Lao Democratic Republic on the west, with a 192 km border. The province contains three economic zones: the delta, the seashore, and the midlands/mountain region. The GDP grows at a rate of 7% per year (Hong Duc University, 1999b). Along with Hanoi and Haiphong, Thanh Hoa is considered part of the triangle of northern economic development. Thanh Hoa City is the provincial capital and only urban area in Thanh Hoa Province. Thanh Hoa City is also the only urban area between the cities of Hanoi and Vinh. Eleven per cent of the province's population or 370,375 people live in Thanh Hoa City, a small and densely populated urban area

(People's Committee of Thanh Hoa, 2000). Compared to most of Vietnam, Thanh Hoa is ethnically diverse. Seventy-five per cent of the population of the province is Kinh, or Vietnamese ethnic majority. Twenty-three per cent is Hmong or other ethnic minority, and 2% is Chinese (People's Committee of Thanh Hoa, 2000). Although much of Thanh Hoa province is mountainous and isolated, Thanh Hoa City is located on a coastal plain and is directly accessible by both Highway 1, the major north-south highway which runs from Lang Son to Ca Mau and the Reunification Express, the national railway which runs from north to south.

The majority of Thanh Hoa's residents earn a living from agriculture or fishing, but recently, foreign joint ventures have opened in Thanh Hoa to bring manufacturing to the province. According to Hong Duc University rector, Cao Danh Dang (personal interview, May 2001), Thanh Hoa is in need of greater economic development, including shipping and heavy industry. Several large industrial branches are under construction, and the education and training of these workers will be Hong Duc's responsibility. According to Hong Duc's current strategic plan,

Strategic forecast of Thanh Hoa' socio-economic development in the coming ten years is to push up

agricultural industrialization and rural development, development of industrial branches for processing of agricultural, forestry and aqua culture products, for construction materials, consumer goods, electronics, information technology, tourism and services . . . by 2005, additional 500 engineers of industrial branches, 300 economists and business managers, 500 engineers of agriculture and forestry have to be trained. By 2010, demand for training will be much higher. (Hong Duc University, 1999b, p. 3)

Because Thanh Hoa is a comparatively smaller urban area than Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi, the city has not enjoyed the same opportunities for economic prosperity as Vietnam's larger urban centers. Yet, Thanh Hoa City is under a great deal of pressure to provide educational and employment opportunities to a deeply impoverished province. Rural residents routinely travel to Thanh Hoa City in search of opportunities that are not available in the rural regions of the province.

Hong Duc University.

Hong Duc University has existed for only four years. In a direct response to the recommendations in the Education and Human Resources Sector Analysis Report, MOET

(1992) gave its permission for the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa to consolidate Thanh Hoa Teachers Training College, Thanh Hoa Technical College, and Thanh Hoa Medical College to form Hong Duc University, an urban multidisciplinary institution.

Hong Duc responded to the report's call for reform in funding strategies by seeking alternatives such as funds from local industries, student fees, and local contributions. This is unusual in Vietnam where in the past the government has fully funded most universities.

Hong Duc responded to the calls for improvement in administrators, faculty and curriculum by urging faculty to study abroad. Although studying abroad is generally prohibitively expensive, several faculty members have traveled to Australia and Canada to study. As an alternative to costly study abroad programs, several of Hong Duc's faculty members are studying in distance learning programs offered by western universities. The government urged Vietnamese faculty to contact foreign educational experts who can help to update institutions and bring teaching methods in line with current best practices. Although formal exchange opportunities are only now being

developed, Hong Duc hosts foreign educators from Japan, Australia, England, the United States and Canada each year.

Different provinces and regions have adjusted to socio-economic changes at different rates and colleges and universities in various locations have responded differently to local needs and changing national policies. Thanh Hoa's response to the socio-economic changes that have changed Vietnam's educational system is innovative.

Importance of the Study

This study is important for several reasons. Most important, Vietnam is a post-war society, and the success of post-war societies is important to regional stability. Information about the socio-economic system and the higher education system is important to understanding the country's rebuilding after the war. From the end of the American War in 1975 to the end of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia in 1989, the country has been isolated from much of the world. Very little was known about how Vietnam was rebuilding after many years of war. What is known is that Vietnam's higher education system has been constantly reforming since the end of the war. In the field of comparative educational reform, very few English language

texts exist on the subject. This dissertation will help fill that void.

As a result of *doi moi*, the economy is making steady annual growth of 8% a year (Ebashi, cited in Morley & Nishihara, 1997); however, the educational system has been slow to respond to the training and education needs of a free market system (Nguyen, X., 1997). An examination of the higher education and training system will allow policy makers to understand the problems of higher education.

Vietnam can become a major business partner with the United States. However, the country's potential has not been fully explored because worker and management training has been difficult (Chao & Natali, 1999). Likewise, Vietnam can be a major participant in the global economy. Since *doi moi*, Vietnam has gone from relying on rice imports for basic survival to being the world's third largest rice exporter (Kamm, 1996). Since the lifting of US trade sanctions in 1995, American corporations such as Microsoft, Nike, General Electric, Coca-Cola and Pepsi have established operations in Vietnam.

Vietnam has also begun exporting products, including crude oil, textiles, and garments, sea products, rice, coal, shoes, coffee, rubber, cashew nuts, and peanuts

(Harvie & Tran, 1997). A new export from Vietnam is computer software, specifically financial software. Corporations such as Merrill Lynch and Jardine Fleming recently began purchasing financial services software developed in Vietnam (Leibhold, 2000). Investors hope that Vietnamese programmers' efficiency, diligence, and creativity will put Vietnam's information technology industry on par with that of India (Leibhold, 2000). Foreign investment from Western Europe, Asia, and the Pacific Rim has been high, especially in industry and oil and gas production. However, turnover has been high. A commonly heard complaint from foreign investors leaving Vietnam was that the local workforce lacked the managerial skills necessary to manage businesses (Harvie & Tran, 1997).

In short, Vietnam's higher education system has yet to define itself in relation to current economic realities. Education and training remains grossly outdated (Chao & Natali, 1999). In order for Vietnam to realize its potential in the global economy, human capital must be fully developed by a relevant educational system (MOET, 1998c). Second, since Vietnam's new policy of openness, the country is at a crossroads. Economic, social, and political

reforms are changing the fabric of Vietnamese society, and the government is facing difficult choices in educational reforms that must accommodate this new open environment. Vietnamese officials have requested assistance from government organizations and non-government organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, the Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Project. Although many of these organizations have begun providing assistance, more information must be made available about Vietnam's educational system. An English-language canon is crucial as Vietnam updates its educational system and enters the global marketplace. Once finished, a copy of this dissertation will be presented to the president of Hong Duc University so that he may use its findings in his search for technical assistance for the university.

The urban context.

Critical problems in Vietnam's rural sector directly affect urban life. A vicious cycle of rapid population growth, a deteriorating environment and increasing rural poverty is forcing migration from rural to urban areas (Boothroyd and Nam, 2000). Thanh Hoa is one such province. Rural citizens, especially young people, have long migrated, at least temporarily, to Thanh Hoa City for

educational and employment opportunities. The poverty and low educational levels in the province put a great burden of responsibility on Thanh Hoa City and on Hong Duc University. Because HDU is the only university in the province, it is responsible for the higher education and training of nearly all the youth of the province.

The successful economic development of Thanh Hoa Province largely depends on the work of Hong Duc University. The university and the province are linked in a causal relationship; the university effects changes in the society, in turn, the transformed society places new demands on the university. In a rapidly changing society such as Vietnam, societal transformations and the resulting demands on higher education can be perplexing to both the society and the university; however, for progress, contradictions and their solutions are necessary. Particular attention will be paid to the role that Hong Duc, an urban university, plays in the development of rural Thanh Hoa Province.

Procedure

This case study is critically important to the documentation of the economic and educational development of Hong Duc University and Thanh Hoa Province. Because the

Socialist Republic of Vietnam is relatively young, Vietnamese educators are deeply committed to rebuilding the nation's educational infrastructure. Very little case study research such as the proposed study is being done. Consequently, much of Vietnam's recent educational history will go undocumented. This history must be captured now, while the key players in the founding of the university are available to recount events and produce documents.

Interviews with stake holders.

One part of this research is the documenting of the oral history of Hong Duc University. Interviews were conducted with key administrators who participated in the decision to create Hong Duc University, and with faculty, staff, and students who have been involved with Hong Duc since its founding in 1997.

Direct observations.

Direct observations were made during a three-week field study at Hong Duc University. Daily life in the university community as well as the lives of students and faculty on campus were made.

Participant Observations

The researcher also made participant observations as part of the foreign language faculty during the field

study. This experience helped the researcher to gain first-hand knowledge of the lives of students and faculty at HDU.

Physical Artifacts

Physical artifacts in and around the university community were observed and documented. Artifacts such as teaching materials, student supplies, office supplies and other items yield information often unobtainable from other sources.

Document analysis.

A document analysis was conducted to corroborate evidence gathered through interviews and conversations. Documents are also used to establish the historical context in which Hong Duc University was founded. Policy directives from MOET establish the historical and political events that led to the recognition of a need for a university in Thanh Hoa and the subsequent establishing of Hong Duc University. Finally, reports, grant proposals, and other documents are analyzed to determine how Hong Duc is implementing the various functions of the university.

Chapter Summary

This research is intended to add to the body of knowledge by documenting the founding and recent history of Hong Duc University. A thorough review of existing

literature revealed no existing case study of any Vietnamese university. Hong Duc University is of particular importance because the university was founded for the sole purpose of providing education and training in the new Vietnamese economy. Further, Hong Duc is strategically important, not only in Thanh Hoa City and Thanh Hoa Province, but also in the "industrial triangle" of Hanoi, Haiphong, and Thanh Hoa. Finally, this case study is presented within the social, economic, and political circumstances that led the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to implement sweeping economic changes that lead to the restructuring of higher education.

In the first chapter, the researcher introduced the problem to be investigated and presented background on The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Thanh Hoa Province, Thanh Hoa City and of Hong Duc University. The importance of the study and the urban context of the problem also were discussed, as were the economic changes in Vietnam since 1986.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature that is necessary to frame this study. This review contains a discussion on the role of higher education in developing countries and a historical framework for both Vietnam's

higher education system and for the post-war reconstruction of the social, political and economic dimensions of Vietnamese society.

Chapter Three discusses the research design and methodology for this case study. Also included in this chapter are the research questions used to frame the study and the theoretical basis for the research methodology that was used.

Chapter Four presents a synthesis of the data collected to provide the reader with a detailed description of the university and the surrounding area and a more detailed, holistic depiction of the university.

Chapter Five uses the information presented in Chapter Four to address individually each research question and present a discussion on each of the questions.

Chapter Six offers recommendations for the university to expand its influence in Thanh Hoa Province and a summary of the research.

CHAPTER II

Historical Context

Introduction

To understand Hong Duc University and its role in the urban higher education reforms in Vietnam, this literature review places modern Vietnamese higher education in its proper philosophical and historical contexts. In order to understand the challenges facing contemporary Vietnamese higher education, Vietnam's colonial history is explored. Also germane to the discussion of modern Vietnamese higher education is an understanding of the Vietnamese-American war, and its devastating social and economic impact. An analysis of higher education in developing countries is presented to help the reader understand the unique difficulties of development in Third World countries such as Vietnam.

Educational history of Vietnam.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a relatively young country. Certainly, the culture is ancient, and various manifestations of the country have existed for thousands of years; however, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam—the unified country at peace that the world now knows—is only twenty-five years old. Until recently, the development of

higher education in Vietnam depended on foreign influences prevalent in the country. Each intruding influence brought with it unique reasons for its presence. Consequently, the higher education system suited the foreign influence rather than the indigenous Vietnamese culture. The educational legacy of the Chinese, French, and more recently, the Soviet Union is evident in Vietnam today. However, the Vietnamese government has been taking steps since the early 1990's to make the Vietnamese higher education system relevant to a society in transition (MOET, UNDP & UNESCO, 1992).

China's Confucian legacy.

China ruled Vietnam almost continuously from 111 BC to AD 938 and left its cultural imprint on the society. According to Do, "when independence was recovered in 939, the Vietnamese inherited from the former conquerors a body of knowledge and beliefs such that it was difficult to distinguish what was specifically Vietnamese and what was borrowed from China" (Do, 1970, p. 49). One such belief system was that of Confucianism, the most notable cultural legacy that China left to Vietnam after a thousand years of domination. Vietnamese history, philosophy, and psychology are incomprehensible without an understanding of

Confucianism. Traditional Confucian thinking remains an important institution in Vietnam today.

Confucianism is not only a traditional religion of Vietnam; it is also a form of government, an educational tradition and a social system. Confucianism stresses obligation first to one's king, then to one's teacher, and finally to one's father. This filial piety, coupled with Vietnam's tradition of ancestor worship, ensured that the Vietnamese cultural gaze would be on the past, rather than on the future. According to Kamm (1996), young boys imitated their grandfathers in the rites of ancestor worship, so that one day, they would be prepared to fulfill the role of the grandfather. This cultural orientation toward repetition of the past made social progress difficult in Vietnam. Because traditional Vietnamese farmed with stable technology on a very limited amount of arable land, they lived by repeating cycles of the sowing and reaping and by the perpetuation of customary law (Kamm, 1996). Consequently, Vietnamese society changed very little over time.

As a way of social order, Confucianism stressed the importance of each individual's recognition of the role of superior and subordinate. Moral harmony could be achieved

through recognizing and accepting social order. Once moral harmony was achieved, social and political harmony would follow. Without this order, wars and other social ills would ruin the society. The concept of the "mandate of heaven" kept Vietnamese social order in place. According to this concept, the emperor, charged with the mandate of heaven, must rule according to moral principles, and his subordinates are obliged to follow his rule. Should the emperor "lose the mandate of heaven," the peasantry would have cause for revolt.

Confucianism has instilled acceptance of a hierarchical order that provides stability and order. The regime may not be loved, but it is not opposed, because few Vietnamese believe that those not of the mandarin class have a role to play in affairs of state. Dissidence barely exists. Change will come as it must, because those who rule are a handful of old men, but it is likely to be shaped by the party mandarins who enjoyed the old men's favor (Kamm, 1996, p. 128).

On one hand, the mandate of heaven holds governmental structure in place. Because peasants are unlikely to question their role in the social order, the power elite is

free to govern, so long as they appear to hold the mandate of heaven. Ho Chi Minh inherited the mandate when he declared Vietnam's independence in 1945, as did the communist victors in 1975 (Neher, 1999). On the other hand, should the people detect that the emperor has lost the mandate, there is a rationale for revolution.

Confucian education.

Education was the key to access to the Confucian hierarchy. "The foundation of Confucian society was the Confucian education system which stressed the teaching of morals and human relationships according to the principles of filial piety and ritual" (Tran, 1998, p.30). The Chinese emperors established the first public schools in Vietnam to provide practical training for wealthy young men. Public education consisted of primary education for boys under fifteen; higher education for older boys was established primarily to train men for the mandarinates. Confucian ideals stressed training men in the philosophical arts to assume the moral leadership of the nation. According to Confucian philosophy, "the average man is incapable of understanding metaphysical problems" (Nguyen, H, 1974, p. 63), and the goal of the mandarinates was to educate *quan tu*, or "the perfect man."

The Confucian curriculum, taught first in ancient Chinese language, and later in *Nom*, Vietnamese language written in Chinese characters, included poetry, literature, philosophy, rhetoric, ethics, and political science. Mathematics and other practical sciences were not included in the curriculum until the late nineteenth century. The texts were written in a complicated form of verse and required students to acquire an excellent command of the Chinese language. Once *Nom* was used, students were required to be bilingual, as Chinese remained the official language of Vietnam and was used in the universities and the courts.

Along with reading and reciting Confucian verses, students were required to memorize the texts and poems. Students spent years memorizing and mechanically repeating verses and phrases that they often did not fully understand. Student achievement was measured by the ability to memorize and recite long passages of text. By its very nature, Confucianism promoted a static system that benefited a few powerful men who were held in place by the system.

Quoc Tu Giam (translated as school for the king's and princes' sons), the first Vietnamese national university, was established in Thang Long (currently Hanoi) in 1070.

"Vietnam's first university provided training in more than 700 scholarly areas. The development of intellectual capacity was considered an excellent way to build the state" (World Bank, 1997, p. 3).

Prior to 1075, mandarins were chosen from candidates recommended by the Buddhist monks who instructed them. In 1075, the Ly dynasty organized and administered another Chinese tradition, the competitive exam. Using the Confucian classics as texts, the students, after mastering the material and passing the exams, were admitted to the mandarin state and enjoyed high social standing. By the beginning of the Later Le dynasty (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the competitive exams were fully implemented. By 1374, the hierarchy of higher education included *thi huong* (the interprovincial examination), *thi hoi* (the pre-court competitive examination), and the *thi dinh* (the prestigious court competitive examination). Graduates of the *thi huong* examination were awarded either *cu nhan* (licentiate), if they passed four examinations, or *tu tai* (bachelor) if they passed three examinations. Graduates of the *thi hoi* examination were granted the title of *tien sy*, or doctor. According to H. Pham (cited in Sloper and Le, 1995),

The essential features of (higher) education in this definitive period were that it was selective, being for the privileged classes....A Confucian style philosophy of society which emphasized educational attainments, ritual performance, and government authority was dominant with the state being run by a scholar class of civil servants. (p.45)

Early 20th Century Vietnamese educational historian Q. Pham viewed Confucian education as,

An exploitation of Confucianist principles for the benefit of the autocracy, it is a powerful instrument of domination in the hands of the kings, and it is from the intellectual point of view, the most formidable enslaving of intelligence never known before in the history of mankind. For, Confucianism, not contented with being just an ethic and a philosophy, wants first of all, to be politics, the sole politics able to make man happy under a patriarchal government in the inchangeable frames of a very hierarchical society. (cited in Hue, 1974, p. 18)

Three features of Confucian education in pre-colonial Vietnam held the key to France's future domination of the Vietnamese people. First was the highly conservative

Confucian curriculum. Innovation, research, and the study of mathematics and science were discouraged. Second, teachers rewarded those students with the best rote skills. Third, Confucian philosophy disregarded study of the world in a larger context.

As a Confucian society, Vietnam was concerned only with what was happening within its shores. Folklore has it that a king was warned that a foreign ship was approaching the shore. He looked out and indeed saw something floating toward the shore. He consulted the Confucian texts and concluded that he was looking at a dragon and was not concerned. What he saw was not a dragon, but an armada of French ships. Such isolation and limited knowledge helped the French gain control of a new colony. Most important, those features stubbornly remained evident in Vietnam's higher educational system for many years and made future reform difficult. Even today, Vietnamese students must move beyond rote skills into new and creative ways of thinking and learning.

Western contact.

One of the more important contacts between Vietnam and the West came in 1615 when the Society of Jesus-- the Jesuits-- after being expelled from Japan, established a

mission in the Portuguese trading post of Faifo (Kamm, 1996). There, a Jesuit priest, Father Alexandre de Rhodes, became one of the more influential individuals in Vietnamese educational history.

The Vietnamese language, still written in Chinese ideograms, posed a problem to early religious proselytizers, who described the spoken language as the sound of chirping birds (Kamm, 1996). To aid translating the Bible into Vietnamese, Father de Rhodes, along with his Jesuit colleagues, devised a system of writing in which a Roman alphabet punctuated by diacritical marks replaced the ideograms. Although his work was meant to facilitate Christian proselytizing, Father de Rhodes' revisions to the language were widely accepted as a means to educate the masses (Do, 1970). That function angered the ruling mandarins, who accused the Catholics of undermining Confucian authority. Nonetheless, Father de Rhodes' new writing system ultimately made higher education in Vietnam more widely accessible.

French colonial rule 1887 - 1945.

France's first hostile act toward an increasingly anti-Catholic Vietnam came in 1859. In an almost eerie foreshadowing of America's future military involvement in

Vietnam, shots were fired in the dark between French and Vietnamese naval vessels off the Vietnamese coast. By 1887, France had full sovereignty over Vietnam, which was eventually divided into three regions: Tonkin in the north, Anam in the middle, and Chochin China in the south. Eventually, French colonial rule spread to neighboring Cambodia and Laos to form French Indochina.

French colonial system of higher education.

The first priority of the French colonial Indochinese educational system was to establish an *Ecole des Interpretes* (School of Interpreters) and *College des Stagiaires* (School of Trainees) to help the new government communicate with and govern the indigenous people. In time, French replaced Vietnamese as the language of instruction in the universities. Like the Chinese invaders before them, "the French governors had a fear of higher education for the native intelligencia" (Do, 1970, p. 52). In 1917 the Education Act was passed, abolishing Confucian education and national examinations. From that time, a system based on a French model was established, but opportunities in higher education were horizontal, not vertical (H. Pham, cited in Sloper and Le, 1995).

Fearing the loss of Vietnamese students to foreign universities, the French began establishing universities to keep the Vietnamese away from foreign influences. The first of these institutions, The University of Indochina, was established in Ha Noi in 1907. Rather than being a true university, The University of Indochina was really a group of vocational schools that trained skilled workers and technicians. Within this group were The School of Decorative Fine Arts, The School of Practical Industry, and The School of Industrial Techniques. Vietnam's first pre-university classes of physics, chemistry, and the natural sciences were not established until 1919. The first physicians were not trained in Vietnam until 1923.

Higher education in colonial Vietnam was a politically charged issue, and colleges and universities did not operate smoothly. However, obstructing higher education did nothing to forestall the rebellions against the French. When political unrest erupted, the French retaliated by closing the institutions. In general, the French governors refused to fully develop higher education in Indochina, for fear that the Vietnamese would begin building a national resistance movement.

The inculcation of foreign influences on the Vietnamese higher education system led to an educational identity crisis. One thousand years of Chinese influence led to the blind worship of intellectuals; one hundred years of French influence taught the Vietnamese to worship the diploma. Thien's (cited in Vo, 1974) reflection on foreign influences in Vietnamese higher education illustrates the damage inflicted upon Vietnamese society by foreign educational systems.

Vietnam's traditional higher system of education, *dai hoc* was almost totally geared to the production of good, highly moral motivated statesmen. It had little respect or concern for what modern society calls business and technology (including war finances and war technology). It produced a breed of men obsessed by the desire to secure the highest diplomas to prove their talent and worth... the Vietnamese, conditioned by centuries to respect diplomas and titles . . . the French colonial authorities, instead of saving Vietnamese society from a perverted Confucian system by pulling that society away from a worship of diplomas and purely literary studies and diverting the attention and energies of the Vietnamese towards sound

economics and technology- in other words, towards producing the business and scientific leaders and experts the country badly needed to modernize itself- did much to perpetuate the system. (p.69)

That stern indictment of foreign influences in Vietnamese higher education explains the seriousness with which Ho Chi Minh pursued the August Rebellion to develop an indigenous educational system.

The rise of Vietnamese independence.

Between 1940 and the end of World War II, a chain of events lead Vietnam into thirty years of war, and ended with the country's reunification. During this period, Ho Chi Minh organized a national front independence movement, the League for the Independence of Vietnam, or *Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi*, better known as the *Viet Minh*. Included under its umbrella were many non-communists who sought independence for Vietnam. In what is now known as the August Rebellion of 1945, Ho Chi Minh seized the opportunity and declared Vietnam's independence, which the French ultimately rejected. French Prime Minister Charles de Gaulle dug in and declared war on the Viet Minh, announcing that France would regain sovereignty over Indochina (Kamm, 1996). The Viet Minh wasted no time and

quickly took control of many areas in the northern area of the country, and Vietnam's war for independence against the French began. Although Ho Chi Minh was intent on garnering support for a communist government, many non-communist nationalists who opposed the French supported the Viet Minh.

The brutal war ended in 1954, when Viet Minh forces ravaged the French at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu.

Higher education and the Vietnamese revolution.

Early in the Vietnamese revolution, the Indochinese Communist Party realized that education was vital to building an independent Vietnam. As early as the 1930's, the underground Indochinese Communist Party was laying plans for the educational system in a unified Vietnam (Tran, 1998). Through networks of students, the Indochinese Communist Party organized support for its activities. The first formal plan for higher education reforms in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's higher educational system was drafted in 1945 but was not enacted until 1950 because of the war. "After the foundation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the country began to develop according to the scientific development needs of the nation" (MOET, 1998c).

The first educational reforms dealt with essential issues: literacy, basic education, patriotism and loyalty to the country. Their theme was to remove the influence of colonialism (Walker, Vu, & Dang, 1996). However, the reforms could be initiated only in those areas of Vietnam that were considered liberated-- areas controlled by the Viet Minh. The areas under French control maintained the French system, the effect of which was a bifurcated educational system. "After 1945, there was an awareness of the spirit of independence and a national unity among Vietnamese. This awareness could be considered as a catalyst for the development of an indigenous educational system" (Nguyen, H., 1974, p. 28).

The years of French colonization devastated Vietnam's educational system, and were characterized by widespread illiteracy. According to Sloper & Le (1995), in 1945, the year of the August Rebellion, 95% of the population was illiterate. Ho Chi Minh expressed concern about the cumulative damage that the colonial powers inflicted on Vietnam's educational system and promoted a massive campaign to eradicate illiteracy. To build a cadre of educated citizens, Ho likened teachers in the national literacy campaign to national heroes. "Mass education work

is an important one, having a great bearing on the nation and society, and also on the building of our Fatherland" (cited in Woodis, 1970, p. 105).

During Vietnam's war against the French, a parallel system of higher education emerged. The French continued to run educational institutions in the cities, and the Vietnamese ran institutions in the countryside (Tran, 1998). Ho Chi Minh wrote about higher education during this period:

Classes were run in caves; each village sent a person to study for a few days, then he went back and taught his covillagers. When his knowledge was exhausted, he returned to the class and learned some more. Such was the method we adopted for the mass education work and for its development into a movement" (cited in Woodis, 1970, p. 103).

Teacher training became a revolutionary act and an essential part of Ho's plan to eradicate illiteracy. That plan required a steady supply of teachers, but the French closed the College of Pedagogy in 1930. Clearly, the possibility that the Vietnamese could organize teacher training in Vietnamese language threatened the French. A teacher training college was opened in 1951, and in 1953,

the second teacher training college, Thanh Hoa Teachers College, a predecessor to Hong Duc University, opened. As educators struggled to work in clandestine locations, rebuilding Vietnam's higher education system took many years and required commitment by the people.

Shortly after taking office as the president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh posed this challenge to the nation's students: "Whether Vietnam's mountains and rivers can be crowned with glories, whether Vietnam can gloriously stand as equal among the powers of the five continents depends largely on the efforts you put into your study" (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996, p. 140). At the first meeting of the new republic, Ho Chi Minh declared that an ignorant nation is a weak nation, and declared that the raising of the intellectual level of the people was the urgent task of the time (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996, p. 141).

A socialist higher education should produce specialists who have revolutionary and professional knowledge . . . They must show a collective spirit and suppress individualism. At the same time they should know how to think independently and combine study with practical work . . . They should understand that

teaching and learning are for serving our Fatherland and people (Ho Chi Minh cited in Tran, 1998, p. 125).

Ho Chi Minh saw education as a tool for both modernizing the society and advancing the socialist cause. As Vietnam struggled for independence from foreign intervention, Ho Chi Minh also saw the role that higher education must play in national rebuilding. In a later decree on training and development, Ho made the connection between education and modern national development quite clear. "They (specialists) must have the skills to mobilize people and the capability to solve problems arising in the present condition of our country, and to catch up with global scientific and technical progress." (Ho Chi Minh cited in Tran, 1998, p. 124)

The American war.

The First Indochina War ended in 1954 with the signing of the Geneva Accords which temporarily divided Vietnam into what eventually became two countries, The Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north and the Republic of Vietnam in the south. Ho Chi Minh became president of Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North, and Emperor Bao Dai led the south until Ngo Dinh Diem was elected

president. The Accords never provided for so permanent a division. Elections were to be held throughout Vietnam in July, 1956 to choose a unified administration. However, America refused to sign the agreement because of Communist China's participation in the conference, and it insured that the elections, which most believe Ho would have easily won, were never held (Kamm, 1996).

Almost immediately after the Geneva Accords were signed, the United States began sending aid directly to Saigon and training Republic of Vietnam (RVN) soldiers. By 1962 American planes and helicopters were flying combat missions in the Republic of Vietnam. By 1963, 16,300 military advisors were in the country. Air raids on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam began in 1964. The first American combat troops landed on the beach in Da Nang in March of 1965, and by the end of that year, U.S. troops numbered 184,300. By 1967, nearly 500,000 American troops were in Vietnam (Kamm, 1996).

Despite the huge American military presence, the Vietnamese fought fiercely for independence, refusing to meet its enemy on any clearly defined battlefield. Northern soldiers had solid support in the South, and the Vietnamese fought a guerilla war for which American soldiers were

unprepared. By 1968 America found itself in a war unwinnable by any means consistent with its national interests and sought to disengage. In 1969, President Richard M. Nixon announced the first American troop withdrawals. In January, 1973 a formal peace agreement was signed and American troops were steadily withdrawn until the last American soldier left Vietnam on March 29.

Officially, the war ended on April 30, 1975 when communist troops captured Saigon. The death toll was staggering. More than 58,000 thousand American soldiers were killed, and more than 10% of the Vietnamese population died.

Although the violence raged, nearly all the country's young men and women were involved in the war, and higher education existed only to train technicians for the war effort. Along with the loss of millions of Vietnamese lives came devastation of the land and the country's infrastructure. Railways, schools, hospitals, universities, power plants, harbors, bridges, and roadways were frequent targets of American bombing raids in the north. In the south alone, five million hectares of forests were destroyed (Neher, 1999), and 40% of the population was made homeless.

Higher education during the American war.

Despite the violence and chaos that Vietnam endured from the 1950's through the mid-1970's, North Vietnam managed to maintain an ambitious program of educational development. During this time, highly specialized universities and institutes opened. By 1975, North Vietnam's higher education system resembled that of the Soviet Union and consisted of 30 universities, mostly attached to socio-economic sectors such as agriculture, construction, communications and economics. Those institutions prepared students for the national rebuilding effort once the war was won and the country could pursue a Marxist course (Tran, 1998).

The higher education system of the Republic of Vietnam was based more on the American model, and included a cross section of public and private universities and community colleges. Like their northern counterparts, the schools in the southern system of higher education prepared students for the national rebuilding effort, with the country pursuing a capitalist course.

Reunification.

In 1975, the immediate task before the newly reunited nation was to combine the northern and southern

educational, political, and economic systems. After Hanoi's victory in 1975 and the subsequent reunification of the country, the victorious communists sought the rapid collectivization of the southern economy. The southern economy would not respond, though, and collectivization was never fully implemented. Still, when the Communist Party held its Fourth Congress, problems in the South and a desperate need for economic reforms did not stop the country from remaining wedded to a hard communist line. "The way forward was seen in terms of rigorous communist orthodoxy" (Williams, 1992, p. 41). Although the government always had the option to allow the South to maintain a mixed economy, "Revolutionary euphoria, ideological inflexibility and a scarcely veiled contempt for the 'soft' ways of the South dictated an uncompromising line from the leadership in Hanoi" (Williams, 1992, p. 41).

For fifteen years following the communist takeover of the former Republic of Vietnam, the Vietnamese economy declined. Sluggish state-run enterprises stagnated and continued to drain resources from the economy. Because the state managed production and paid salaries, factory workers were unconcerned about efficiency and productivity. According to Nam, inflation raged at nearly 797% (cited in

Morley and Nishihara, 1997), unemployment was at 20%, food production and industrial output dwindled, and the economy grew a mere .04% from 1976 and 1980 (Hiebert, 1996). The economic predicament was so grave that the entire country nearly collapsed.

Vietnam's poverty was embarrassing for a country that was considered rich in both natural and human resources. However, the war with the United States left Vietnam so deeply impoverished that the country that had once grown enough rice to feed its entire population now appealed to the world community for help in alleviating famine.

Although many expressed frustration with Vietnam's inability to develop at the pace of its ASEAN neighbors, the reasons for Vietnam's sluggishness were clear. Years of war had deeply damaged the country's infrastructure. In the south alone, the war produced 20,000 bomb craters, 10 million refugees, 362,000 invalids, 1 million widows, 880,000 orphans, 250,000 drug addicts, 300,000 prostitutes and 3 million unemployed. According to Bresnan (cited in Morely and Nishihara, 1997),

The human cost of the violence between 1965 and 1975 is incalculable; to the millions killed must be added the widows, orphans, and disabled left in large

numbers to be cared for by the impoverished and divided society that survived. (p. 67)

A 1973 U.S. agreement to provide postwar assistance to rebuild Vietnam was never honored, leaving Vietnam nearly destitute when the war was finally over in 1975. Although the Soviet Union replaced some of the aid once promised by the United States, Hanoi could not cope with rebuilding the country with an economy that staggered from one crisis to the next.

In addition to Vietnam's economic problems, Hanoi's decision to invade Cambodia in 1978 served only to further isolate Vietnam. An international embargo led by the United States included all ASEAN nations and Western countries except Sweden (Williams, 1992). That embargo cut off western aid which, might have cost Vietnam as much as \$78.5 million USD. A 1979 border war with China resulted in Chinese withdrawal of aid to Vietnam, costing the country another \$900 million USD (Harvie & Tran, 1997).

The heavy military commitments made necessary by the wars with Cambodia and China and lack of international trade and aid crippled Vietnam's national rebuilding efforts, forcing the country to become dependent on its ally, the Soviet Union, whose financial and technical

support kept the Vietnamese economy afloat. Still, by the late 1970's, all economic indicators pointed toward failure. By the mid 1980's, the economic situation was desperate. Ebashi (cited in Morley & Nishihara) found that economic growth targeted at 14% per year faltered at 0.4%, production fell, and worst of all, hyperinflation ravaged the economy. Food production dropped to the point that food riots threatened to collapse the nation. Food supplies dwindled to dangerously low levels, and millions of people lived in famine. Finally, the government conceded that the transition to socialism was not happening as swiftly as planned, and the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPVN) approved a 1986 economic policy called *doi moi*, or, renovation. Economic policy reforms continued through the 1990's, and have transformed Vietnam's economy in the direction of a decentralized multi-sector economy.

Higher education during reunification.

A program of educational reforms promulgated in 1979 were intended to unify the northern and southern higher education systems (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996). In the south, the government quickly moved to enforce a socialist educational philosophy (Tran, 1998). The North Vietnamese had adopted the Soviet system as their guide for education

since the 1940's, and they reached out to their ideological ally again for assistance in rebuilding the country after the war. As in the Soviet system, higher education was delivered in a system of highly specialized institutes, colleges, and universities. The number of institutions grew quickly after the war. In 1975, Vietnam had 45 higher education institutions. During the ten years after 1980, the total had reached 103 higher education institutions, two-thirds of which had fewer than 1,000 students.

A lack of academic staff was an immediate problem in post-war Vietnam. The south suffered a massive brain drain, because of the large numbers of academics and intellectuals that fled the country in the late 1970's and early 1980's. In 1991, only 13% of the country's academic teaching staff had doctorates, and most of those were earned overseas, particularly in Soviet Union and other Soviet Bloc countries. As a result, these academics were not sufficiently trained to provide academic leadership when the Vietnam began liberalizing its economic system.

Doi moi.

After years of war, more than a decade of a heavily subsidized but faltering economy, and the loss of Soviet financial support, the Vietnamese economy reached a crisis.

By 1986, the first generation of Vietnam's politburo had either died or retired to become "advisors," and younger, more reform-minded members were poised to make the major policy changes that saved Vietnam, and put the country on the path to rebuilding. In December, 1986, the Sixth Party Congress recognized that the transition to socialism had taken longer than what was first expected and agreed to introduce a radical program of economic reform called *doi moi*, which literally translated means, "renovation." *doi moi* abolished the old system of bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies and promoted a gradual shift to a state-managed market system. In economic terms, *doi moi* slowed centralization without fully abandoning the centrally planned economy. Instead, a parallel economy of private enterprise and free market competition operated alongside a scaled down centralized economy. The government returned agricultural land to farmers, encouraged foreign investment, lifted price controls, and ended subsidies for state-run enterprises. State-run enterprises were on their own to compete against joint ventures of public and private capital and completely private corporations. According to Boothroy and Nam (2000),

The policy of *doi moi* consists of three inter-related fundamental thrusts: a) shifting from a bureaucratically centralized planned economy to a multi-sector economy operating under a market mechanism with state management and a socialist orientation; b) democratizing social life and building a legal state of the people, by the people and for the people; c) implementing an open-door policy and promoting relations between Vietnam and all other countries of the world community for peace, independence and development. (p. ix)

According to the World Bank (1997), *doi moi* produced immediate results and turned the country around dramatically, restored stability, accelerated growth at 8-9% in the 1990's, and attracted public and private foreign capital at levels unprecedented in Vietnamese history.

Political stability and social cohesion...have been hallmarks of Vietnam's reform as the government gave attention to consensus and equity issues early in the process and spread the dividends of reform across a wide segment of the population...decollectivization and price

liberalization resulted in higher incomes and improved living standards for most Vietnamese.

(World Bank, 1997, p. xxv)

The number of state-run enterprises has dropped from over 12,000 to fewer than 7,000, and inflation dropped to about 19.5% by 1995 (World Bank, 1997). The country went from receiving rice imports through hunger alleviation programs to becoming the third largest rice exporter in the world, behind the United States and Thailand.

Although *doi moi* spurred the Vietnamese economy, the country did not immediately receive the major investment boost that it expected. As the American-led trade embargo against Vietnam continued, much-needed Western capital trickled into the country. Eventually, however, Western investors did not want to risk missing what looked like a good investment opportunity, and the American economic embargo crumbled. As Vietnam continued to seek friendlier ties with the West and create a favorable business environment, the economic picture seemed brighter. Increasingly, Western investors thought Vietnam to be an economic frontier capable of extraordinary growth because of its disciplined workforce, cheap labor and materials, and eagerness to join the global economy (Neher, 1999).

President George H. Bush, took steps to normalize relations with Vietnam, and his administration made overtures to Hanoi. However, Hanoi refused to provide information regarding the POW/MIA issue, ending the negotiations until President William Jefferson Clinton took office and signed legislation lifting the trade embargo (Brown, cited in Morley & Nishihara). In 1995, relations between the United States and Vietnam were normalized.

Although Vietnam had appeared to be transforming into an "Asian Tiger," full economic success has been elusive. Living standards have improved, people are growing wealthier, and the proportion of people classified as poor has fallen dramatically to about 30-35 per cent, yet Vietnam's prosperity appears to be threatened. The first effects of *doi moi* are fading, and the Asian financial crisis has spilled over into Vietnam (World Bank, 1997). The country has lost competitiveness. Its legal system remains underdeveloped and its banking system, weak. The state's enterprise system is inefficient. Export growth has fallen. In addition, the higher education system is not prepared to train workers for the multi-sector economy. The Vietnamese economy is losing momentum, including investment, output and employment. Furthermore, the quality

and sustainability of economic growth also seem to be shrinking (World Bank, 1997).

Higher education in the age of *doi moi*.

Vietnam's dramatic economic reforms have put intense pressure on higher education. In a speech delivered to UNESCO by a representative of MOET, "Entering the period of *doi moi* and the change to a market-oriented economy, Vietnam's system of higher education has been feeling the impact of economic difficulties" (MOET, 1998c, p. 4). Once the economy began to reform, "industries developed, world markets opened and foreign investors arrived, but the higher education system was suddenly expected to meet entirely new expectations" (Chao & Natali, 1999, p. 2). The system was caught unprepared. Before *doi moi*, higher education's function was to train workers for state enterprises. Employment for graduates was guaranteed and was generally permanent. After *doi moi*, higher education was forced to train workers for all sectors of the new economy, and graduates had to compete for jobs in a much freer market. According to MOET (1998c),

There has been a continual downgrading in terms of numbers of students, training quality and efficiency, material resources and in addition the quality and

motivation of staff and management resources, particularly financial, are quite limited, and organizational capacity has been poor. (p. 4)

Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training recognized that a major philosophical shift such as *doi moi* can succeed only "if education is reorganized, expanded and modernized . . . education and economic growth are closely interlinked" (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996, p. 140). According to the Ministry of Education and Training,

People have now become the most valuable resource of the newly emerged nation in the race to the twenty-first century. In this regard in Vietnam, despite its plentiful human resources, the question of skilled workers, fostering talented people has become the task of Vietnam's education in general and of higher education in particular so as to meet the demands and trend of the country's social development during the period of industrialization and modernization. (MOET, 1998c, p. 5)

Post *doi moi* higher education reforms.

In the years immediately following reunification, higher education focused on preparing workers to assume roles in state enterprises. During this time, the Ministry

of Education created an integrated national system of education based largely on the Soviet system of Higher Education (MOET, 1998c). According to H. Pham (cited in Walker, Vu, & Dang, 1996), "National standards were defined, and new curricula and textbooks were developed" (p. 141). According to Eisemon & Nielsen (1995), the state supplied all funding to higher education, paid for students' housing, tuition and fees and provided jobs for graduates. Although students lived in modest campus dormitories and were provided only simple meals, their futures were generally assured. Competition for limited spaces in higher education was fierce. Admission was based on national exam scores and demand outpaced available spaces (Nguyen, X, 1997).

Once implemented, *doi moi* prompted major educational reforms in 1980, and another major educational renovation five years later (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996). The higher education system was not prepared to meet the demands of the new economy, and the first higher education reforms targeted curriculum and instruction as well as educational financing. By 1989 the government had stopped offering employment to all graduates, who were now forced to compete for employment (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996). "College

graduates found that they had few relevant skills, and much of the responsibility for teaching these skills fell on the businesses that desperately needed trained workers, since teaching at the universities was inadequate" (Chao & Natali, 1999, p. 3). Hanoi soon realized that "Vietnamese education was insufficiently prepared to support the market economy" (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996, p. 141). Higher education reform must meet the needs of radically shifting demands in the economy. In 1991 and 1992 MOET, UNDP & UNESCO drafted a joint analysis project, Education and Human Resources Sector Analysis. This plan was the first to comprehensively identify and reform weaknesses in the higher education system that resulted from *doi moi*. The document made clear that if the higher education system did not diversify, the nation's new economic prosperity would end. The report identified several urgent issues that education in general and higher education in particular must address.

Those issues were:

1. Decline in quantity and quality at all levels of the general education system;
2. Poor linkage between vocational technical education and production and employment;

3. Irrelevance of higher education to and poor linkage with research, production and employment;
4. Weaknesses in, and constraints upon teaching staff;
5. Lack of financial resources and infrastructure for education and training, and low efficiency in their utilization;
6. The inappropriate nature of the organization and management of the education and training system and its relationship with the legal system;
7. Inadequacy of education and training in a changing society. (MOET, UNDP, and UNESCO, 1992)

Those urgent issues formed the basis of higher education reforms since 1993.

Restructuring of higher education.

From the critical issues raised in the Education and Human Resources Sector Analysis (1992), reforms were developed to address each of the preceding issues. These initiatives made systemic changes to higher education and training, which had not been responsive to the socio-economic changes that the country had undergone (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996). Two of the report's sections, Programme C and Programme G, addressed the need for Vietnam's higher education system to respond and be more flexible to the

demands of the new economic system. In the final section of the report, Programme G: The Irrelevance of Education and Training to Society in Transition, the sector study team recommends a rapid pace of development for education and suggests that a proactive effort be made to "review the education and training system and reconceptualize its role in support of economic growth and social development" (MOET, UNDP and UNESCO, 1992, p. 39). Should the education and training system react slowly, it "risks becoming irrelevant, inefficient and a brake on development" (MOET, UNDP and UNESCO, 1992, p. 39). In the third section of the report, Programme C: Reorganization of Higher Education Institutions and Research Institutes, the sector study team recommended systemic changes to the higher education system. Specifically, these changes address the "inadequate provision and network in higher education and poor linkage with research, production and employment" (MOET, UNDP and UNESCO, 1992, p. 35). When this report was published in 1992, Vietnam had numerous higher education institutions that were too "academically and/or geographically dispersed to make the most efficient use of resources" (MOET, UNDP and UNESCO, 1992, p. 35). At the time, 300 state research institutions and 102 separate higher education institutions

existed but were not fully integrated at the system level. The report cited higher education as the weakest area of the country's education and training program and urged that reforms be made.

In 1998, MOET reaffirmed its commitment to the guidelines for the educational reforms first brought forward in 1992. In a speech to UNESCO, MOET presented the following higher education guidelines attached to *doi moi*:

1. To ensure higher education training is aimed at not only meeting the demands for staff and officials to work in government offices and the state-run sectors, but also at satisfying the various demands of all people who wish to obtain higher education degrees of different levels;
2. To complete networks of universities. To develop different forms of multi-faculty universities and colleges in localities where demand is high. To open private universities. To diversify training to include: regular-irregular training; open-university and correspondence training;
3. To diversify financial resources for education and training, i.e. apart from the sum of money funded from the state budget, the financial resources will

be added to by tuition fees paid by the students; the money offered by foreign countries and international organizations; earnings from conducting scientific research, production of goods and involvement in different forms of social services conducted by the universities;

4. To reform the procedures of higher education training by putting the process of higher education into two stages of practice: Fundamental training and specialized training. To implement the change of the system of training according to the yearly system into a yearly system combined with a course and credit system. To reform methods of teaching and facilitate the supervision and assessment of the process of higher education objectively. (MOET, 1998c, p. 4)

Again, MOET found that consolidating mono-disciplinary institutes into multi-disciplinary universities was critical to efficiently using human and physical resources, as well as to providing more logical access to students.

Although MOET was concerned with those development issues, it also stressed social fairness, which is always central to higher education in developing countries.

Vietnam's higher education development issues are very different from those in developed nations.

The developing world.

According to the Taskforce on Higher Education and Society (2000), the developing world includes most of Asia, Latin America, large parts of the former Soviet Union and all of Africa. According to the Taskforce on Higher Education and Society (2000), 120 of the world's countries or 80% of the world's population lives in the developing world. Poverty is so widespread in the developing world that 60% of the world's population lives in extreme poverty (United Nations, 2000).

According to United Nations (2000) estimates, five billion of the world's six billion people live either in the developing world or in transitional economies. In contrast to the population of the developed world, these five billion people are younger and far needier. The median age of the population in the developing world is younger than the developed world by 13 years. The median-aged Third World resident is 24.4 years old, while the median-aged resident of the developed world is 37.5 years old. The UN estimates that by the year 2015, 116 million

Third World youths will be looking either for work or for higher education opportunities (United Nations, 2000).

In calling for an immediate need for one billion new jobs, the International Labor Organization (cited in United Nations, 2000) reports that one billion of the world's economically active population works in subsistence agriculture or informal sector activities that do not produce a living wage. A failure to create opportunities for the poorest of the developing world risks large numbers resorting to survival jobs, including organized crime, drugs, prostitution, and corruption. Those activities drive developing countries deeper and deeper into poverty. To reduce poverty in the developing world, new jobs and classrooms must materialize in the first few decades of the new millenium (United Nations, 2000).

Today, more than 50% of the world's higher education students live in the developing world (Taskforce on Higher Education and Society, 2000). The developing world's high birth rates guarantee that this proportion will continue to rise in the decades to come.

Development.

No discussion of higher education and national development can take place without first considering the

concept of development. Before any society can embark on a development program, it must first consider the concept of development, then devise a strategy for development. Traditionally, development has been defined in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), "the total monetary value of all the goods and services produced in a country" (Taubman, 1999). However, as Riddell, Shakelford and Stamos (1992) suggest, GNP alone insufficient as an indicator of development because it does not account for other important factors such as a country's standard of living, distribution of wealth, and environment. Curle (1970) further asserts that a simple economic definition of development is incomplete. Early on, development was strictly an economic concept defined as the growth of per capita income that would "enable a country to attack the symptoms of under-development, poverty, hunger, and the like" (p. x). Most policy makers saw development strategy as under developed countries' imitating developed countries. Curle warns that this "rich country model" is dangerous because as countries develop, so do social problems such as environmental damage, violence, social isolation and hard cores of poverty that seem to be unaffected by high national incomes. National wealth, although important,

should be seen only as a means toward development and not an end. Curle cautions that policy makers must seek alternatives to economic development. The development concept should be expanded to include not only economics, but also social factors so that societies can seed development through certain basic qualities such as security, sufficiency, satisfaction and stimulus.

Fagerlind & Saha (1989) define development as the fulfilling potentiality. That is, just as humans have within them implicit potential, so do societies. Therefore, just as humans' biological, psychological, and sociological capacities can be evaluated in terms of their level of realization, so can societies be, "judged as efficient or inefficient in making possible the actualization of their human potential" (p.5). For the purpose of this discussion, development is any change that promotes or actualizes those aspects of a society. In keeping with Fagerlind & Saha's (1989) framework, education is an essential element of development.

Education and development in the developing world.

In 1948, the newly established United Nations declared education a fundamental human right (United Nations, 2001), and the countries of the world raced toward national

development through education, particularly higher education. That race was based on two assumptions: trained workers are key to the economic development, and economics and education together promote a country's well being, including opportunity for all (Pepper, 1996).

Countries that successfully advanced technological understanding and scientific inquiry prospered through industrialization. On the other hand, the world's poorer countries could not afford the educational infrastructure that would promote technological and scientific inquiry. Consequently, developing countries could not compete, and their poverty was thought to be a result of low levels of scientific and technological understanding and industrialization (Pepper, 1996).

Benefits of higher education.

Higher education renders tangible benefits to both individuals and societies. A substantial overlap exists between the public and private benefits of higher education, which "is central to the argument that collective action is needed to support, nurture and strengthen higher education institutions" (Taskforce on Higher Education and Society, 2000, p. 37). Although an accurate measure of the benefits of higher education is

impossible, the personal gains from higher education include higher wages, more satisfying employment, and an improved standard of living. Research done by the Inter-American Development Bank (cited in Taskforce on Higher Education and Society, 2000) illustrates the personal economic benefits of higher education in Latin America. A worker with six years of education who is employed for the first time earns 50% more than a worker who has never attended school. This gap widens to 120% for a worker with 12 years of education, and exceeds 200% for those with 17 years of education. Although this study was done in Latin America, the results are typical for any developing area of the world. Public benefits tend to rise out of the private benefits of higher education. The Taskforce on Higher Education and Society (2000) found that investment in higher education yields tangible positive societal benefits, including increased worker productivity, reduced birth rates, rising tax revenues, and improved institutional capital.

Positions on higher education policy in developing nations.

According to Eisemon and Nielson (1995), "Higher education planning is a relatively recent policy

innovation, coinciding in most developed and developing countries with the application of human capital development theory to educational investments and the assertion of state responsibility for the higher education sub-sector" (p. 406).

Simmons (1980), considers the dilemma that development poses for educational policy makers. He explains that the type of development that the country pursues generally dictates a country's educational policy. If the country is pursuing economic growth, then policy makers may wish to cut higher education spending and increase spending on primary and vocational education. However,

if a country's primary development goal is to raise the standard of living for the poor majority and the distribution of income, planners might promote an aggressive adult education program in community participation and problem solving and provide funds to villagers to organize to improve their circumstances. Planners could also set a quota on the proportion of students from lower and upper income families who would be admitted to higher education which would be consistent with their proportional representation in society (Simmons, 1980, pp. 3-4).

Societies that want to promote both growth and equity (as Simmons supports) would create policies that would mix the two types of programs.

Educational issues raise profound ideological dilemmas for developing countries, causing policy makers, economists, and politicians to argue the role of higher education in national development. Consequently, few countries have successfully implemented major educational reforms (Simmons, 1980). Traditionally, two philosophies of higher education in the developing world have coexisted. The World Bank supports approaches to higher education which encourage sustainable, large-scale poverty reduction through the development of primary education and universal literacy. On the other hand, UNESCO encourages sustainable national development through long-term investments in higher education (Kent, 1995).

According to Kent (1995), as a lending institution, The World Bank is concerned with the responsible and efficient use of public funds in a framework of policy making. "In the eyes of the World Bank, higher education is simultaneously a social institution and a problem for governments" (Kent, 1995, p.3). Thus, the main priority of the Bank will continue to be basic education, whereas its

involvement in higher education will be guided by calls for equitable and cost-effective financing (Kent, 1995). The World Bank maintains that "investments in higher education have lower social rates of return than those in primary and secondary education and that investments in these levels have a more direct impact on poverty reduction" (Kent, 1995, p. 3). Simmons (1980) illustrates that higher education is generally 20 to 100 times more expensive per student than primary education. Expanding higher education will concentrate scarce educational funds on a few elite students. Such a funding model would make fewer resources available in the critical areas of healthcare, agriculture, and housing.

According to Kent (1995), the World Bank maintains a skeptical view of higher education and does not expect universities in developing countries to solve complex problems of contemporary society. The best that the Bank expects is that Universities in developing countries "adapt well to aiding economic growth" (Kent, p.3) while not putting too much of a burden on public funds. Hans Weiler (cited in Fagerlind & Saha, 1986) warns that "educational expansion, as we know it, does not necessarily make either people or countries more prosperous; instead it may, and

does, leave the former without jobs and the latter with increasingly burdensome claims on public funds" (p.4).

UNESCO's position on higher education in the developing world is strikingly different from that of the World Bank. UNESCO sees higher education as key to sustainable development.

Without good training and research at the higher level, no country can assure a degree of progress compatible with the needs and expectations of a society in which economic development is carried out with due consideration for the environment and is accompanied by the building of a 'culture of peace' based on democracy, tolerance and mutual respect, in short-sustainable human development. (UNESCO, 1995, p.13)

Developing nations cannot develop without educated human capital, and too much emphasis on primary education will leave a huge gap in the educated human capital needed to initiate and sustain national development. UNESCO maintains that only through the expansion of higher education can a developing nation develop the intellectual human capital necessary for national development. "For UNESCO, higher education is seen, not as a burden on public

finance, but as a long term social investment in productivity, social cohesion and cultural development. The improvement of higher education is seen as a means of strengthening the goals of sustainable human development" (Kent, 1995, p.3).

New research seems to indicate that opponents of higher education expansion may be softening their positions. According to the German Foundation for International Development (2000), supporting higher education in developing countries has been regarded as an inefficient investment. However, a policy of increased investment in basic and secondary education has increased demands for higher education. These increased investments in higher education, coupled with high birth rates, has greatly increased the demand for higher education expansion. Bollag reported (1998) that after years of pressuring developing countries to cut spending on higher education, the World Bank is beginning to recognize the need to locally train professionals. Salmi, a World Bank official in the Caribbean acknowledged that aid officials are increasingly coming to the conclusion that, "all sectors—the economy, health—depend on higher education" (cited in Bollag, 1998, p.2). Olsson, of the Swedish

International Development Cooperation Agency, also noted that although the World Bank's position is changing, a great deal of damage has already been done to higher education systems in the developing world (Bollag, 1998).

Higher education expansion is expensive. In developing countries with burgeoning populations, governments search for ways to provide higher education without bankrupting coffers. According to the Taskforce on Higher Education and Society (2000), in 1995, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa, had tertiary expenditures per student of 154% of the GNP of the regions. Conversely, the United States allocated only 23% of the GNP to tertiary education. The World Bank and UNESCO also found that countries with the highest standards of living enroll a greater proportion of their countries' citizens in tertiary education. According to the Taskforce on Higher Education and Society (2000), in the world's poorest regions (Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Sub Saharan Africa), only 339 students per 100,000 inhabitants were enrolled in tertiary education. Conversely, the world's wealthiest regions, North America and Western Europe have more than 4000 students per 100,000 inhabitants.

To offset the cost of expanding higher education, while leaving funds for improving basic education, the World Bank urges developing countries to diversify funding of higher education through cost-sharing and promoting private higher education (Taskforce on Higher Education & Society, 2000). The Bank makes these recommendations with the assumption that countries will regulate equity issues. UNESCO, too, urges cost-sharing of higher education, but stops short of the suggestions that the World Bank gives. Generally, UNESCO suggests that societies should view higher education not as a burden, but as a "long-term national investment for enhancing economic competitiveness, cultural development and social cohesion" (UNESCO, 1995, p.13). UNESCO further urges countries to ensure efficient use of human and material resources before considering cost-recovery plans such as the introduction of tuition and fees. As Bollag (1998) reports, countries have experienced difficulty when attempting to introduce tuition fees. Students in Columbia and Mexico rioted when tuition was introduced, and students in Mali resorted to violence when the government decided to give stipends only to top-scoring students. Bollag (1998) also reports that Arab and European countries that recently began charging fees also began

admitting more affluent students who had not passed university entrance exams. To avoid inequities, UNESCO urges countries to seek support for needy students through grants and low-cost loans (UNESCO, 1995).

Vietnam's position.

Higher education is a top priority of the Vietnam's strategy for modernization and industrialization. According to MOET (1998c), "the process of modernization will turn Vietnamese society into a modern and civilized one with advanced and strong national identity" (p. 5). Clearly, education officials see higher education as the catalyst for national development. To address equity issues, MOET (1998c) offers,

Social fairness must be achieved in higher education. To apply regulations giving priority to the poor as well as others being given preferential treatment, as stipulated in the government's current policies, including women, ethnic minorities, those credited with service to the state and the disabled. Higher education must contribute to offering more opportunities to people from every walk of life to obtain continuing education. (p.4)

Access to higher education.

Post World War II assumptions (Pepper, 1996) about education and national development in the West have proven to be correct. In the United States, heavy investment in higher education and worker training in technology and scientific inquiry led to national development (Curle, 1970). However, one can not ignore that not everyone in developed countries shared in the educational opportunities and the economic benefits that followed. Educated families continued a tradition of participation in higher education, but poor families were largely left out of the national development boom. By the 1960's, research consistently demonstrated that the American educational system was creating social strata that continued to divide more and more sharply. Researchers such as Christopher Jenks and James Coleman found that although primary education attendance rates increased dramatically from the early to the mid 20th century, "the relationship between family economic status and the amount of schooling a child received had remained essentially unchanged" (Pepper, 1996, p.23). Numerous studies repeatedly yielded the same result: children from higher socio-economic circumstances

were more likely to attend college than poor children with the same intellectual ability.

Although equity is always a concern when a country considers educational policy issues, nowhere are these matters more serious than in the developing world. By the early 1970's, UNESCO (cited in Pepper, 1996) warned of the rigid social stratification that would result unless careful attention were given to the quest for a non-discriminatory model of educational development. UNESCO also cautioned that, the underprivileged were often denied the right to an education (Pepper, 1996). As Simmons (1980) suggests, unless an equitable course of development is pursued, educators become the gatekeepers to job security and high income. The educational establishments of many developing countries reject the poor as unfit, and ultimately, the educational establishment decides the fate of the disadvantaged. This social stratification is what Husen (cited in Simmons, 1980) called education's shift from being the "Great Equalizer" to the "Great Sieve" (p. 8).

Because of the personal gains available through higher education, corruption is an inherent problem in many developing countries' higher education systems and institutions. According to the Taskforce on Higher

Education & Society (2000), "with higher education offering such clear private benefits—both economic and social—corruption in the awarding of university places within some systems is unsurprising" (p. 42).

Curle also addresses the issue of corruption and the dangers of elitism in higher education in the developing world.

The administration, and particularly at the top level, is drawn from a very small educated group....In largely populated developing nations, members of the ruling class generally have far greater knowledge of each other than their counterparts in more developed nations. This means that improper considerations play a very large part in the conduct of affairs. Personal relationships and enmities loom large in administrative decisions, as do family interests (Curle, 1970, pp. 64-65).

Higher education in the developing world, according to Curle (1970), is often little more than a small group of educated, urban elite that corrupts and controls higher education systems. Should corruption occur on a large scale, "an educated class that fails to reflect the true distribution of aptitude and talent in a society will

develop" (Taskforce on Higher Education & Society, 2000, p.42).

Education and development in the socialist state.

According to Fagerlind & Saha (1989), "development in the Socialist State is any program that will assist in the development toward communism" (p. 249). In theory, those societies have a long-range goal of building socialism. In practice, this means that the society should, "achieve at the quickest possible speed, the industrialization of the country and the other associated processes—urbanization, and occupational, educational and political change" (Lane, 1976, p.25).

Traditionally, Marxist and neo-Marxist countries have favored national development through massive primary education programs. Marxists perceive higher education as catering to an elite minority of the population. Fitzpatrick (cited in Price, 1977) writes that "the university as it has been up to this time does not exist as a learned institution. It is a 'diploma factory', necessary for the careers of future state chinovniki who are educated there" (p.89). According to Price (1977), the goal of the Marxist educator is to abolish social class and raise the general level of understanding of the lower classes, even

if it is perceived by some to be a lowering of standards or a holding back of the more able. In the socialist state, universal primary education is critical to nation-building and serves two functions. First, educating masses of cadres enables citizens to participate in their own governance. Second, universal primary education delivered by teaching cadres trained in socialist theory and method gives socialism a wide audience in the public schools.

In the early days of the revolution, Vietnam endorsed a program of universal primary education for both of these reasons. Teachers figured prominently in the revolutionary plans for a unified Vietnam, and Ho Chi Minh referred to them as mass education fighters, "who would have great...bearing on the nation and society, and also on the building of the Fatherland" (cited in Woodis, 1970, p.105). In a chapter in On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam Le Duan, Ho Chi Minh's successor, further discusses the role of teachers in nation building: "Teachers give knowledge to pupils, and meanwhile forge them into men....Teaching brings its contribution to the birth and progress of society" (Le, 1965, Volume III, p.156). In general, the goal of Marxist education was to produce the new socialist

man who was fit for the labors that would advance the socialist society (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989).

Although equity issues loom large in all educational policy debates in developing nations, socialist states pay particular attention to class issues because social stratification is troubling. Although higher education clearly is necessary for national development, Marxist/Leninist countries have a history of distrust for higher education and the university. The division of workers into categories of manual and mental labor isolates workers according to the perceived value of their labors. This idea can be traced to Marx, who saw universities under Capitalism as serving the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Lenin found value not in tertiary education but in universal primary education. Basing his ideas on Marx and Engles, Lenin found primary education to be a necessary tool for building a socialist and, eventually, a communist society. Lenin required illiterate workers to spend two hours daily learning to read so that they would be conscious of their exploited condition and contribute to building a socialist society (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989, p. 256).

In China, Mao Zedong, a former university librarian, saw little value in higher education. Instead, he theorized that "intellectuals must be reeducated by workers, peasants, and soldiers" (Pepper, 1996, p. 384). According to Mao, students should be selected from the workers and peasants, and when finished with their studies, should return to the working class. In a stab at intellectuals, Mao said "make intellectuals of the laboring people and laborers of the intellectuals" (Pepper, 1996, p. 384). Mao found intellectuals and the university educated to be of little value in terms of problem solving. In a famous diatribe against the Ministry of Urban Health, Mao said, "the more books people read, the dumber they seem to become" (Pepper, 1996, p.384). Health workers with an elementary education and three years of health training were of more value than university educated medical personnel. However, Mao found ,

It is still necessary to have universities; I refer mainly to the need for colleges of science and engineering. However, it is essential to shorten the length of schooling, revolutionize education, put proletarian politics in command...Students should be selected from among workers and peasants with

practical experience, and they should return to work in production after a few years study. (Price, 1977, p.89)

Unlike Mao, Ho Chi Minh, the son of a mandarin, did not deliberately single out intellectuals for persecution; instead, he looked for the ways to highlight the positive aspects of intellect for the good of the nation (Chan, Kerkvliet, & Unger, 1999). Ho felt that higher education must be used to construct the nation but was careful not to separate manual from mental laborers. Ho conceded that both types of labor were necessary for national development in Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh's plan for an independent Vietnam was to expand higher education, making it available to a larger population (Tran, 1998). Many Vietnamese schools post a commonly cited quote by Ho Chi Minh in the classroom, "For the benefit of ten years from now, we plant trees. For the benefit of one hundred years from now, we educate people."

Ho Chi Minh saw distinct value in both primary and higher education, and manual and intellectual labor for the national development of a unified Vietnam. "Brain workers play an important and glorious role in the revolution in socialist construction...the revolution needs the force of

intellectuals" (cited in Woodis, 1970, p. 107). Ho blamed Vietnam's colonizers for separating the educated from the uneducated, creating a rift between manual and mental labor and dissention between the educated and the uneducated.

Like Mao, Ho urged cadres and mass education fighters to stand close to the masses to wipe out illiteracy and further the socialist cause in Vietnam (Woodis, 1970). Higher education, according to Ho Chi Minh, must be encouraged but not separated from the socialist cause. Ho urged higher education to link technological education with practice, and found value in Vietnamese students learning the advanced scientific theories of other countries, then adapting those theories meet the needs of the country's reconstruction (Tran, 1998). Ho Chi Minh saw the future of Vietnamese society through the scientific and technical education of Vietnamese youth (Tran, 1998).

Although the objective of higher education in the less developed socialist state has always been to advance socialism and to create the new socialist man, the mandate of today's global economic system is changing that notion.

Globalization and its impact on education in
developing countries.

In a 1974 discussion of post-industrial advanced capitalist societies, Bell (cited in Fagerlind & Saha, 1989), accurately predicted that,

the post industrial society will be dominated by the importance of knowledge, both systematic and theoretical, and by people who have mastered the knowledge. Thus, professional scientists and other technological experts will comprise the crucial base for the economic structure. (p. 242)

Although Fagerlind & Saha (1989) inaccurately assumed that socialist countries would not develop an economic structure based on knowledge and information twelve years later, all evidence suggests that indeed socialist countries, even developing ones, are becoming information societies (Liebhold, 2000). Because of globalization and communications networks such as the Internet, countries are far less likely to stay isolated and out of touch. The Taskforce on Higher Education & Society reports in Peril and Promise (2000), "Knowledge is like light. Weightless and intangible, it can easily travel the world, enlightening the lives of people everywhere. Yet billions

of people still live in the darkness of poverty—unnecessarily” (pp. 18-19). Higher education, according to the Taskforce, gives people the ability to reach for the switch to illuminate the darkness of poverty.

Much is at stake when developing countries make policy decisions about higher education. Where more developed nations devote proportionately smaller amounts of national budgets on higher education than their developing counterparts, the future of developing countries depends largely on the development of intellectual capital. Unfortunately, the cost of this capital is high.

Today, global wealth is concentrated less and less in factories, land, tools and machinery. The knowledge, skills and resourcefulness of people are increasingly critical to the world economy. Human capital in the United States is now estimated to be at least three times more important than physical capital. (Taskforce on Higher Education & Society, 2000, p.15)

Developed countries have responded to this shift from physical to intellectual capital by pouring resources into higher education. The question now is whether developing countries will be able to compete. Vietnam recognizes that because of globalization, it is faced not only with

challenges, but also with new opportunities. According to MOET (1998c), "Vietnam is in a favorable position in that the competitive advantage formerly based on abundant natural resources and the large scale capital investment will now be based on skilled management" (p. 5). Because of the challenges associated with globalization, Vietnam, it seems, is finally prepared to adapt higher education to the needs of the country.

Vietnam appears prepared to invest heavily in its higher education system. Currently, 15% of the national budget is spent on education, with higher education receiving the majority of the funds. In coming fiscal years, this percentage will climb to 18% and 20% (World Bank, 1997). That the country can find the funds that have been recommended for higher education is not clear (World Bank, 1997).

In this era of globalization, developing nations must modernize or risk being relegated to the sidelines of the world economy. As Friedman reports in The Lexus and the Olive Tree (2000), "globalization is the integration of capital, technology and information across national borders in a way that is creating a single global market, and to some degree, a global village" (p. 9). Although developed

nations see this as pure economic opportunity, countries such as Vietnam now face a planet of economic competitors. In the joint World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB, and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report, Vietnam 2010: Pillars of Development, the crucial role of education is noted: "A key component of human development is education and knowledge. These not only directly increase people's capabilities and choices but also create human capital, which is an important engine of economic growth" (World Bank, Asian Development Bank [ADB] & United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2000, p. 4). According to this report, "The Government is aware that the key question is no longer whether to integrate into the global economy, but how to best do so" (World Bank, ADB, UNDP, p. 4).

However, the news for Vietnam is not completely dire. Despite its poverty, Vietnam has been able to maintain an outstanding literacy rate. Vietnam's literacy rate is forty points higher than its East Asian neighbors; in fact, Vietnam's literacy rate is on par with the world's wealthiest countries (Taskforce on Higher Education & Society, 2000). Vietnam's high literacy rate is likely to be the key to the country's participation in the knowledge-based global economy. According to Liebhold (2000), two

thousand information technology students are graduating from universities in Ho Chi Minh City each year. Eventually, these students hope to work for local corporations in Vietnam writing software for large multinational companies such as Jardine Flemming or Merrill Lynch. Investors in these companies report that Vietnamese programmers are well educated and creative, and believe that Vietnam may be able to replicate India's success in building an information technology sector (Liebhold, 2000). Although Vietnam's fledgling information technology sector is small, exporting \$9 million dollars worth of software last year, the government has introduced a five-year plan that is hopes will build a high tech sector in the economy, with exports projected to reach \$500 million dollars by 2005 (Liebhold, 2000).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

This study uses a qualitative research design, specifically a bounded, single case study analysis that will consider Hong Duc University in its unique physical and historical context. Because this study incorporates first-hand reports from university faculty, staff, administrators, and students, participant observations, and a study of archival documents and physical artifacts, it is especially revealing.

According to Creswell (1998), a case is considered by some to be the object of a study. However, a case study is also a qualitative methodology that is "an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). According to Yin (1994), "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, or when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 1).

Data Collection

Yin (1994) cites six sources of evidence necessary for proper triangulation in qualitative studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts. All six sources of evidence were collected for this case study. To assist in data collection, a gatekeeper was identified in 1999 and has provided the researcher continued access to the Hong Duc University community. Gatekeepers, as defined by Creswell(1998) are "individuals who can provide entrance to a research site" (p. 60). All information was collected during a three-week field visit to Hong Duc University.

Selection of subjects.

This study is based on personal interactions with the people who live and work in and around Hong Duc University. A significant part of this research is based on formal interviews and informal conversations with HDU administrators, faculty, students, volunteers and staff, and with local residents and business people.

The researcher identified key informants, administrators, faculty and staff for formal interviews because of their experience at HDU and their understanding of how the university operates. Subjects were selected for

informal conversations based on their accessibility and their ability to provide relevant information. All requests for interviews were submitted to the director of international relations, who honored all requests.

The interviews.

Interviews with key informants were used to gather information and first-and second-hand information on life at Hong Duc University. Key informants, as defined by Creswell (1998), are "individuals who provide useful insights into the group and can steer the researcher to information and contacts" (p. 60). According to Yin (1994), the success of a case study is often dependent on the quality of key informants. Great care was taken to select the most appropriate informants for this study. Interview questions focused on the university community's perceptions of three central issues: 1) Hong Duc University's impact on the local environment; 2) The relevance of Hong Duc University to a society in transition; 3) University development through international cooperation. All interviews took place in person with Hong Duc's administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The university rector, and the directors of finance and budget, international relations and science management, training,

and the medical, agriculture and forestry and business programs were interviewed either in their offices or in conference rooms on the campus.

Informal conversations were also held with the university vice-president, teaching faculty, students, Project Trust volunteers, and staff people with various university functions. In keeping with a request from a Hong Duc administrator, the researcher provided all questions in writing in advance of the interviews. When possible, the researcher conducted interviews in English with a bilingual Vietnamese-English speaking research assistant in the room. When necessary, interviews were held with a translator provided by HDU and the research assistant. At the request of university administrators, no interviews were tape-recorded. Instead, both the researcher and the research assistant took notes during the interviews and transcribed the notes immediately following the meeting so that vital information and impressions were not lost. To ensure accuracy, the researcher and the research assistant compared notes after the transcription. Interviews were both open-ended and focused. In the open-ended interviews, informants were simply asked about their lives at Hong Duc University and were asked to propose their own insights

into life at Hong Duc. These informal interviews were used to corroborate facts that emerged from the formal interviews.

Direct observations.

Direct observations of the university and local community were made during a three-week field study during which the researcher lived on the HDU campus. The purpose of these direct observations was to gather more detailed information within the various contexts that students, faculty and staff work, as well as the local context that the university works in. Photographs were taken to document the various contexts.

Participant observations.

With the assistance of the gatekeeper, the researcher assumed the role of participant observer, that is, a researcher who joins the organization being studied in order to gain first hand knowledge and understanding. The researcher lived in the residence building and devoted several hours daily to lecturing students and faculty as part of the foreign languages department. From this experience, the researcher gained first-hand experience in the life of Hong Duc faculty and students.

Documentary evidence.

During the field study several pieces of documentary evidence were collected from the gatekeeper were collected. The documents, including a grant proposal, a speech and several internal reports and strategic plans were used for two purposes: to corroborate information gathered from other sources during the field study and to make inferences about information in the informants' own words.

Archival records.

As with documentary information, archival records supplement other sources of information. Archival records collected during the field study include university budgets, maps, charts and survey data of the university campuses.

Physical artifacts.

A final source of information collected is the physical artifact. The artifacts observed during the field study include instructional materials and equipment, student supplies, and office supplies and equipment. These physical artifacts yield important information about the resources available to the faculty, staff, and students.

Construct Validity and Reliability

To assure construct validity and reliability, Yin's (1994) three principles of data collection were followed. These three principles are 1) the use of multiple sources of evidence; 2) the creation of the case study database; 3) the provision of a chain of evidence.

According to Creswell (1998), the rationale for collecting information from multiple sources is triangulation, or the uncovering corroborating evidence from different sources to create an accurate, holistic depiction of a situation. According to Yin (1994), multiple sources of evidence will provide the researcher with multiple measures of the same phenomenon.

To increase the reliability of the study, the researcher has created a case study database so that subsequent researchers can review the evidence collected in this case study. Case study notes and documents and tabular materials (quantitative data collected from surveys) will be kept on file in a retrievable manner to assist future researchers who would like review the evidence collected.

Finally, to increase reliability of the information in the case study, the researcher will maintain a chain of evidence. According to Yin (1994), this chain of evidence

will "allow an external observer to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions" (p. 98). Specifically, the reader should be able to read the conclusions of a case and follow the research process backward in order to learn more about the derivation of the researcher's conclusions.

Gaining Access to the Field Site

Before the summer 2001 fieldwork which led to this research, the researcher made two visits to Hong Duc University, the first in January, 1999, the second in May, 2000. During each visit, the faculty, staff, and students were comfortable, friendly, and spoke with ease and, ultimately, familiarity on the second visit. Initial contact was made through a former Vietnamese educational official, who has been providing technical assistance to Hong Duc University since it began opened in 1997. Because the officials at Hong Duc respect this gatekeeper, this researcher has been given open access to the university. The gatekeeper wrote a letter to the Hong Duc's rector, endorsing the researcher's project, and the rector responded with an invitation to the researcher to conduct the field study. In addition to prior visits, contacts with

Hong Duc before the field study were primarily made by email, and fax.

Data Analysis

According to Yin (1994), one analytic strategy for case study data is to develop a descriptive framework for organizing the case study. In this study, the research questions posed by the researcher form the descriptive framework. A variety of data analysis techniques suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) were used to analyze the data collected from the field. Data analysis was begun on site during the field study, and notes were compiled immediately following field contact. Following Miles and Huberman's (1984) recommendation, document summary sheets and contact summary sheets were completed to begin summarizing main concepts and themes that were unfolding at the time. Once the field study was finished, the second step in data analysis was completed. That second step involved reading and rereading field notes and summary sheets to begin grouping patterns and themes that were emerging from the data. Next, codes linked to the framework of the research questions were developed. That coding of transcripts of interviews, document summaries, and field notes was used to

divide data into categories, The organized data was finally collapsed into patterns.

Presentation of Findings

Findings are reported in a traditional case study narrative report. Specifically, the linear-analytic structure will be used because Yin (1994) cites this approach not only as the standard method for composing research reports, but also as the most advantageous approach for dissertation research. The synthesized data relating to each research question is presented sequentially, and interpretive material is presented separately.

Human Subjects and Informed Consent

The major concern for the protection of human subjects is the use of information that government employees provide about a government enterprise. Understandably, some respondents were restrained, offering facts while avoiding the appearance of offering opinions. For this reason, confidentiality was assured to the key informants through written communications and oral statements. When appropriate, only summary data will be presented in aggregate form, key informants will be referred to as male, and all responses to questions will be quoted anonymous

manner. Participants in the informal conversations are only generally identified by position at the university.

Limitations of the Study

Four limitations have been identified as possibly influencing the results of this study.

1. Although Hong Duc University extended gracious hospitality and assistance to the researcher, fieldwork was limited by time and money. No funding was received for the field study, and all costs associated with this study were borne by the researcher.
2. Many respondents in the formal interviews were uncomfortable being included in a research study. Before the beginning of the fieldwork, administrators requested written copies of the interview questions, and the researcher was asked not to document interviews with audio or videotapes. In many (but not all) cases, the interviews yielded little more information than a written survey. Although disappointing, this avoidance of discussing opinions and openly sharing information is significant in its own right.
3. The documents provided to the researcher were selected by the HDU administration. Although the documents provided do directly address the research questions

posed, it may be possible that additional documents exist but were not made available to the researcher.

Chapter IV

Findings

Introduction

Introduced in 1986, *doi moi* made fundamental changes in Vietnam's socio-economic policies, setting into motion a series of reforms that slowly transformed Vietnam's highly centralized economy into a multisector system with a growing private sector. Reforms as sweeping as those Hanoi implemented rippled through all of Vietnamese society and demanded change in all sectors, particularly business and education. Higher education found itself completely unprepared for *doi moi*, and faced several problems with reforms of its own. When higher education reforms were introduced in the mid-1990's, Vietnam had too many small, highly specialized higher education institutions that were not fully integrated into a larger system (Vietnamese Ministry Education and Training, United Nations Development Program & United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1992). *Doi moi* put pressure on the Vietnamese higher education system to consolidate small, narrowly focused institutions into larger, multidisciplinary universities that are integrated into a larger system of higher education.

Second, the reforms associated with *doi moi* affected the most fundamental elements of Vietnam's socioeconomic system. The curriculum in place in 1986 was conceptually irrelevant to the reforms that were put in place. Furthermore, most in higher education were educated under the old Soviet-based system that *doi moi* was created to eliminate.

Finally, Vietnam was deeply impoverished at the end of the war with America. During the aftermath of hostilities in Southeast Asia, Vietnam slipped into economic chaos and famine. Very few resources were available for higher education as Vietnam struggled to feed its people and stabilize. What funds were available for education were dedicated to the eradication of illiteracy and a policy of universal primary education. The result was a highly literate workforce with no relevant opportunities for higher education.

When first implemented, higher education reforms focused on large national universities in the densely populated cities such as Hanoi, Hue and Ho Chi Minh City. Here, large universities were restructured to meet the needs of workers in Vietnam's largest cities. Although these universities needed reorganizing, the majority of

Vietnam's population lives outside the large urban areas, in the provinces and smaller cities, where change is slow. Only recently have provinces begun to attack the basic problem of irrelevant higher education. As economic reforms spread across the country and private businesses and joint ventures open in less populated areas of Vietnam, the need for reform will become increasingly evident. Hanoi has identified Hong Duc as a model university for this restructuring of provincial higher education. Hong Duc has confronted the unique pressure that *doi moi* has placed on higher education, choosing to modernize by upgrading faculty skills and opening a local area that has until now been closed to a global academic community to help HDU modernize. That modernization is crucial if HDU is to meet the human resource development needs of Thanh Hoa, a north central province of much untapped potential.

This study investigates how a model university in Vietnam's restructuring higher education system operates. Specifically, the researcher posed three questions: 1) How does Hong Duc University influence the local environment? 2) What relevance does Hong Duc University have to a society in transition? and, 3) How is Hong Duc University developing through its international partnerships?

Although Hong Duc University is not representative of provincial universities in Vietnam, it was selected for study because it was created in direct response to the socio-economic reforms of *doi moi*. Hong Duc is simply one example of how a province's attacking the problem of providing relevant higher education and training.

This study is important for several reasons. First, the world is interested in how post-war societies reconstruct themselves after decades of war. The growth and development of post-war societies is crucial to the long-term political, economic, and social stability of a country. This is a pivotal time in Vietnamese history. Immediately after the war with America, Vietnam was an isolated society run by communist hard-liners who were unable to control a crumbling economy. Vietnam depended heavily on Soviet financial and technical assistance, until the Soviet Union experienced its own economic crisis which cut off aid to Hanoi. In response, Vietnam implemented *doi moi*, a reform program designed to help the country start on a path of self-determination.

Second, the Vietnamese economy is in transition, a condition which is of interest to global partners eager to help Vietnam restructure or to trade with or invest in

Vietnam. As Asian markets tumbled in the mid-1990's, Vietnam was looked upon as a sleeping Asian tiger with many untapped markets. An understanding of how the higher education system supports this transitional economy will help those who would like to become involved with Vietnam.

A qualitative research methodology was selected because this method is the best to get an accurate picture of a model Vietnamese university. Much of the information contained in this study was gathered by the researcher during a three-week field study, which gave the researcher ample time to gather corroborative evidence from multiple data sources, including documents, interviews, informal conversations, observations, and the researcher's participant observations as she lived on campus and taught English to HDU students, faculty and staff. Key informants for this study include a variety of both named and unnamed people in the university community, including the university rector, vice-president, and deans, directors, and department chairs. Numerous named and unnamed faculty and staff also served as key informants, as well as many unnamed students and community residents that I encountered during my summer 2001 field visit.

The following chapter provides the reader with a description of the research site and a synthesis of the data. In order to thoroughly examine each element of the university and to present the material in a logical manner, information in the following chapter is treated according to organizational units of the university and the university community. Both descriptive data and pertinent themes that emerged regarding the data will be revealed throughout this chapter. This arrangement is intended to provide a physical description of Hong Duc University and capture the local people in their everyday setting. Second, the data synthesis will demonstrate the relationship between Hong Duc University and the community in which it is located. On a more complex level, the data reveals a more complex, interdependent relationship between a university and societal systems that are growing and changing at the same time. As the university continues to influence the area in which it is located, the local educated citizens continue to put greater demands on the university for updated education and training opportunities.

The Research Site

At first glance, Thanh Hoa is unremarkable. The landscape along Highway 1 from Hanoi to Thanh Hoa is a repetition of rice paddies, small red brick kilns, and communes that stretches from the Red River Delta south to the North Central coast. Facing the highway is an endless row of small cement houses and wooden, thatch-roofed huts. An occasional brightly tiled two-story house rises above the rest, suggesting an emerging Vietnamese middle class.

Highway 1 winds into Thanh Hoa City, sixty miles, three and half-hours, and three provinces southeast of Hanoi. The city sits between two craggy mountain ranges, and is the only sign of urban life between Hanoi and Vinh. Unlike its smaller northern neighbor, Ninh Binh, Thanh Hoa experiences virtually no tourist traffic, making the presence of foreigners unusual. Sam Son Beach, only a few miles east of the city, is the summer vacation destination of many of Hanoi's elite but is bypassed by foreign tourists because of its dreary appearance and shoddy accommodations. Gray Soviet-built high-rises crowd the otherwise pleasant beaches on the Gulf of Tonkin.

Thanh Hoa City.

Central Thanh Hoa City is comprised of three districts: the university district, the central business district, and the agricultural district. Once inside the city, Highway 1 becomes Le Loi Boulevard, on which most of the city and provincial government offices are located. The new city centerpiece is the Ho Chi Minh Memorial, a walled pagoda and gardens that occupy most of a city block. Adjacent to the memorial are several government buildings, including a large post office, a looming cement structure surrounded by numerous communication towers and satellite dishes and the People's Committee Building where many local governmental decisions are made.

From sunrise to sunset, the city streets in the business district of Thanh Hoa teem with traffic. Motorcycles, horse, and ox carts, heavy industrial vehicles, pedestrians balancing loads on sticks across their backs, school children sharing bicycles, and farmers herding ducks compete for precious space on Thanh Hoa's streets. The people of Thanh Hoa seem not to notice the intense summer heat. Once the day's work is done, the sun slips behind the mountains, the temperature cools, and Thanh Hoa comes alive. Men gather in cafes to drink coffee

or beer and listen to music or watch soccer on TV. Some old people squat in front of their houses, silently watching the street life; others tell stories or play games such as mah jhong. The children play badminton or soccer while their mothers gather nearby to talk and keep a watchful eye on the youngsters. The central government has recently launched a physical fitness initiative, which is evident in the evenings, as the wider main streets are full of people, from toddlers to the elderly, walking, stretching, and performing tai chi.

The people of Thanh Hoa describe themselves as patriotic, persistent and hard working people who value education, despite very limited opportunities-- precisely what is obvious to an observer of this city and its history. The French War ravaged Thanh Hoa; however, despite the province's heavy involvement in the hostilities, higher education in the province was begun in itinerant outdoor classrooms that could fold up and disappear in a moment. Educators in the province remained committed to training teachers who, once the war was over, would be prepared to teach an illiterate Vietnamese population in the Vietnamese language for the first time in more than 100 years. These early teacher-training courses were the beginning of what

would later become Thanh Hoa Teacher Training College and eventually its modern incarnation, Hong Duc University.

Hong Duc University.

Hong Duc University (HDU) is a diffuse, multi-disciplinary university with three campuses and several applied science and technology centers located around Thanh Hoa City. According to Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), (2000) Hong Duc University opened in 1997 as the merger of Thanh Hoa Teacher Training College, Thanh Hoa Economics and Technology College, and Thanh Hoa Medical College. MOET lists two mandates for the university. First, HDU trains students in the fields of science and technology to assist with the social and economic development of Thanh Hoa Province. Second, HDU is to promote research and technology transfer for the development of Thanh Hoa Province. Each campus has a specific function, and retains its unique personality amid the gradual integration of programs and expansion of HDU.

Campus I.

Campus I, by far the largest of HDU's facilities, is known alternately as the Teacher Training Campus, Form I, or the main campus, as most people call it. The campus is 4.8 hectares, and currently includes seventy-one

classrooms. Current strategic plans call for the campus to expand to 26 hectares (Hong Duc University, 1999b). The north side of the campus is bounded by Le Lai Boulevard, a busy city street full of commerce and traffic. The south side is bounded by large rice paddies in which farmers in conical straw hats and black pajamas stoop to work in the rice fields, from sunrise to sunset. The eastern boundary is a small, unnamed street lined with small shops that cater to students' needs. The western boundary is a large, rambling area owned by Hong Duc University and it will be used for the campus expansion. Just inside the main gate of the campus is a large rusty cage in which faculty, staff, and students park bicycles and motorbikes. An attendant is on duty to ensure the safety of the vehicles and to watch over students and staff as they come and go. This campus houses all of the administrative offices, large lecture halls and computer labs, and the most modern facilities of the university. The main area of campus is laid out in a 'U' shape, with the main administrative offices, faculty work rooms, and conference rooms in the center building (Building A), and two classroom buildings (Buildings B and C) to the left and right. Building D was added behind building C in 1999, and a new building is under

construction directly behind Building A. Once completed, this building will house all administrative offices. Buildings A, B, and C, the three main buildings, are three stories high and are rectangular, open-air cement corridors with rows of rooms facing the corridors. Students frequently meet to study or socialize in the middle of the three main buildings on a grassy mall area lined with flowering trees.

The rector's office is on the second floor of Building A, and, etched in gold, his is the only name above an office door. All other administrators' offices are identified only by title. In proximity to the rector's office is HDU's main conference room, where most important meetings are held. At the center of the room is a long series of tables arranged in a rectangularly shape. Fruit bowls, water glasses, and teacups are kept full by a number of women who provide custodial assistance around the campus. The wall at the head of the room is draped in red and blue curtains, with a gold hammer and sickle and a red star, commemorating the North Vietnamese Army's and People's Army of Vietnam flag. To the left of the room is a large alabaster bust of Ho Chi Minh, which is often

surrounded by flowers. The room is air conditioned, as are some of the administrator's offices.

Typical administrator's offices are no more than nine feet by twelve feet, and, generally, see a great deal of traffic throughout the day. Offices are furnished with a telephone, computer, desk, bookshelf and coffee table and vinyl sofa. All offices also have water heaters and tea sets that are replenished by the custodial workers. An office occupied by one high-level administrator is air-conditioned and has private, unlimited access to the Internet. Faculty and staff come in and out of the administrators' office throughout the day, pausing to smoke a cigarette or drink a cup of tea while waiting for a signature on a document.

Teaching faculty share office space by department, generally in large, well-furnished workrooms, without computer access. Bookshelves are small, and stocked with English language textbooks, donated by American, British, and Canadian visitors to HDU. Most of the books appear to be untouched, probably because most faculty are unable to read them.

The main campus also houses most of HDU's computer labs. The campus has several small, poorly equipped labs,

but in May 2001, a large new computer lab was installed in former classroom space in Building B. In a grant proposal requesting funds for new computers, the university suggests that HDU can not modernize until more computers are accessible to students, faculty and staff (Hong Duc University, 1999a). Dr. Nguyen Song Hoan, HDU's Director of International Relations and Science Management sees upgrading computer resources as priority. According to S. Nguyen, the campus would soon be receiving 150 new computers as part of a World Bank Program (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001). Although the new computers are needed, the loss of classroom space is likely to create a new problem at a campus where space is at a premium.

Classrooms occupy the remainder of the space on Campus I. Dimly lit by bare light bulbs, the rooms are cavernous with barred window grates and shutters which are closed and locked at the end of each day. Whenever possible the lights are kept off, and large ceiling fans cool the rooms. Students sit five to a row in six neat rows of old wooden benches and tables. The professor sits at a desk in the front of the room on a raised tile platform. A small side table near the desk holds the customary tea set and boxes

of chalk. Just inside the door is a chair that holds a filthy pan of water and a rag that students use to wash the boards. The blackboards, which stretch across the front of the platforms, are often too decrepit to use because their surfaces are faded and peeled. Just above the blackboard in each room is a portrait of Ho Chi Minh, and many classrooms have a red banner that reads, "The Communist Party of Viet Nam Lives Forever in Glory!" All the classrooms have rows of windows on each side of the room. Although they are generally welcome during the hot summer months, the windows in Building C face Le Lai Boulevard and a large outdoor market. By four p.m., a cacophony of blaring truck horns makes teaching almost impossible, and afternoon late classes are often disrupted or dismissed. Despite the hundreds of students who use the classroom buildings every day, no trash or graffiti is visible in or around the classroom buildings, suggesting either disciplined students who are concerned about their campus or stern administrators who do not tolerate littering.

Building D, the newest classroom facility, is a bright yellow, red-roofed four-story building used entirely for instruction. The rooms in this building are brighter, cleaner, and quieter than those in the older buildings.

Although the rooms are still furnished with old wooden benches and tables, lessons are taught from dry erase boards, which improves the quality of instruction.

A fenced-in square of land behind the classroom area is devoted to student housing, sports, recreation, dining, and library facilities. Hundreds of students live in cinder block buildings that look similar to all the other buildings on campus. The corridors in the fronts of the buildings are strung with wire on which students' clothing hangs daily. Generally, six to eight students share a small room and bathroom that can barely accommodate them. Unlike other housing at the university, plumbing is installed, and running water is available on an inconsistent basis. A well on the hostel grounds is available for days when the water is not running, and students can be seen dipping buckets in and carrying water to their rooms or bending over to wash their hair. To save space, the rooms are furnished with multi-purpose bunk beds that also function as desks with small boxes for storage. Students share small closets for their clothing. Students decorate their rooms brightly with cut foil hearts and photographs of Asian pop singers and European soccer stars. Several students hang portraits of

Ho Chi Minh on their walls. No student rooms had computers or television sets, and only a few rooms had radios.

Between the hostel buildings are two small recreation areas used for physical education classes and evening pickup games of soccer, badminton, and da cau, a game in which a group of players kicks stacks of bottle caps tied to a feather. Large trash dumpsters sit at the entrance gates of the hostel, and tattered children carrying deep woven plastic bags climb in and out of the trash, looking for anything salvageable.

The library is located in an old multipurpose building that also houses classrooms, a large auditorium, and a small student dining room called "the canteen." A very basic medical clinic is in the student housing facility. This part of the campus has a separate entrance gate and a security office from which staff members closely watch the comings and goings at the facilities.

Campus II.

Located about thirty minutes away from Campus I is The Medical Campus, officially known as Campus II, which was established in 1960 as the Medical College of Thanh Hoa. At 3.1 hectares, The Medical Campus is smaller, much older, and more run down than the Teacher Training Campus. Current

plans show that the campus will nearly doubled to 6.0 hectares (Hong Duc University, 1999b). The Medical Campus has one main building and several smaller buildings, joined by walking paths which wind through large, old shade trees. The main gate remains closed during the day, and arrivals must signal security personnel for permission to enter. To the right of the entrance gate is a small office building where security officers work. The side of this building is painted in large letters with announcements and other messages intended for students, faculty, and staff. The main instructional building is actually a pair of two-story structures connected by outdoor cement corridors and stairwells. The small area of land between the two buildings is used to grow medicinal plants for the traditional medicine classes.

The classrooms at the Medical Campus are both large and small to accommodate the needs of various classes. The campus currently has eight laboratories. The larger classrooms are similar to those at the main campus, functional rooms with benches, wooden desks, a desk, and chair for the professor, a chalkboard, and grated windows. The ubiquitous portrait of Ho Chi Minh hangs above the

blackboard. Again, the facility itself is clean with no student trash or graffiti visible.

The smaller classrooms are used for practical experiences for students. A typical room is walled with wooden storage cases with windows displaying skeletons and clay medical models donated by an American university. Also on the walls are various charts and display cases for pharmacy and traditional medicine. One case was filled with examples of roots, fruit peels, and leaves with descriptions under each. Another chart read, "35 Herbs to Treat 7 Illnesses" and listed combinations of herbs to treat illnesses from diarrhea to menstrual problems. By the door was an acupuncture map of the body, which said, in English, "Made in Cuba." Eight beds are arranged on a simulated hospital floor, where students take turns acting as patient and nurse. Another room in the building, the reading room, is a small, quiet destination for students or faculty who need a quiet place to study. The room is empty except for the tables and chairs and the portrait of Ho Chi Minh in the front.

The laboratories are crowded rooms where students wearing white lab coats and white caps sit at long rows of microscopes and take direction from the professor in the

front of the room. The room is full of medical equipment that has been donated by various American, Canadian, and Swedish universities and organizations. The equipment is old, but is well cared for and stored safely in large windowed storage shelves.

The residence facilities are crowded and substandard with students living six or eight to a room. Students spend a great deal of time on personal care. They hand-wash clothes in buckets outside the residence facility and hang them in front of the rooms around the residence area.

Campus III.

Campus III houses the Agro-Forestry and Business Administration Programs. Although this campus is very old, it retains a quaint charm unlike any of the other campuses. Campus III is a former French Mission which, according to one HDU official, was "donated by the French in 1954." The mission has been kept intact, including the remains of a bombed out church in the center of the campus whose only alteration has been replacing the cross on the steeple with a gold star. Campus III is a pleasant series of walking paths lined by flowering hedges and trees, connecting the long white corridors with terra cotta floors. The offices and classrooms open into the courtyard through long rows of

green-shuttered windows and doors. Although this exterior of the campus is captivating, it is not at all equipped to be a university facility. The offices and classrooms are old and not furnished as well as at the other campuses. Inadequate storage facilities leave books, papers and documents piled in stacks on office floors. The rooms are dimly lit and in some instances, require students and staff to sit near windows in order to see properly. As at the other campuses, faculty members share offices, which are furnished with long wooden tables and benches and a few bookshelves for storage. The classroom arrangement is similar to the other campuses, but these rooms seem to be a bit larger and more dimly lit than the others. Only three laboratories exist for Agro-Forestry students.

The housing facilities at Campus III are very poor. The students live in a small, muddy, crowded compound just off the grounds of the campus. Eight students share tiny rooms with no toilet facilities and no running water. Beds serve as furniture for both sleeping and studying. There is no dining facility on this campus, so students must prepare and cook meals on tiny gas stoves. Students spend a great deal of time on personal care, washing clothing in buckets and hanging it to dry around the compound. Food is

purchased from vendors around the compound and is washed in basins outside student rooms and prepared. Students walk to a cinder block structure that functions as both a toilet and a shower. The structure is a large square with the words *nam* (men) and *nu* (women) painted on opposite sides. A wall topped with broken glass separates the two. This structure has no plumbing, so students must carry in water.

The local environment.

Hong Duc University is a major employer and provides many jobs, both directly and indirectly, to local residents. A 1999 report from the university and the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa shows a teaching staff of 105, an administrative staff of 151, and a health care staff of 10 for a total of 771 faculty and staff members at HDU (Hong Duc University, 1999b). The most noticeable local influence that HDU has on the immediate community is a small business district that is growing around the campus perimeter. A large market with both indoor and outdoor stalls sits directly across the street from the main campus and thrives on the commerce faculty, staff, students, and their families. By 6:00 a.m., breakfast stalls are full of students, faculty and staff, and by 11:00 a.m., the breakfast stalls are packed in for the day and replaced

with lunch stalls which are crowded once again with students, faculty and staff. One particular stall is run by Mrs. Binh, a fifty-year old woman who sells *bun cha*, a popular lunch dish of rice noodles and grilled pork. Mrs. Binh squats, fanning a small charcoal fire on which she grills pork. By noon, students line the benches for a lunch that costs a few cents for the rice noodles and additional ten cents for pork. On a good day, Mrs. Binh closes by 3:00 p.m., and earns the equivalent of one dollar and twenty cents. However, because her stall is outside, she does not open on rainy days.

The market is a covered, open-air building with rows of wooden platforms from which the proprietors offer fruit, vegetables, meat, clothing, toiletries, school supplies, and most anything else the university community might need. Like all markets in Vietnam, this market is the nerve center of this part of town, and is used as much for socializing as it is for shopping. The fifty or so women who sit in the market all day intimately know the comings and goings of the university. The market building is surrounded by a dusty, treeless patch of land where another fifty or so people who can not afford permanent stalls in

the market come to sell ducks and chickens, watermelons, or bamboo pipes.

Inside the market, women squat on wooden platforms, selling shoes, hats, school supplies, snacks badminton sets, and soccer balls. They say that their businesses are so dependent on the university that they do not even open on university holidays. A thriving business in the market sells fresh flowers, traditional in Vietnam to mark special occasions. Because HDU holds many ceremonies through the year, the flower vendors are quite busy. Another large stall sells notebooks, dictionaries, and other school supplies.

The relationship between the market women and the students is more than a formal arrangement between customers and sales people. Instead, warm relationships form between the market women and the students. Said one market woman, "So many of these kids are so far from home and so far from anyone they know. I put myself in their place. If this was my kid, I would want someone to take them under, you know, talk to them like a mother would." Indeed attachment is evident by the number of young students who amble with their bicycles from stall to stall in the market, stopping to talk with the women.

Another local business that thrives on the university business is Mr. Tran's Restaurant, located directly across the street from the main gate of HDU. By noon, every table in the restaurant is occupied. Customers all seem to know each other. They move from table to table, chatting, sharing some food or drink, and moving on. Mr. Tuan's is also a popular destination when university business is taken off campus to be conducted over glasses of *bia hoi*, a homemade, locally brewed beer served warm from plastic gasoline jugs. Mr. Tran runs the restaurant with his wife, daughter, and eighty-seven year old mother who helps by sweeping the floor and tables with a broom between patrons. Wearing pajamas, Mr. Tran cooks all day over a wok heated by a wood fire. An open window in front of him is supposed to vent the smoke, but the walls of the restaurant are black and sooty from the cooking fire. Customers enter the restaurant and approach a counter full of various kinds of meat, which they pick up to inspect before handing it to Mr. Tran to cook. A sign in the back of the restaurant advertises dog meat, a special meal in Thanh Hoa. Students pull tables together in the back of the restaurant and share bowls of rice and pork ribs. As in most American university communities, the HDU students complain about the

prices at Mr. Tran's Restaurant, swearing that he inflates his prices because his is the closest indoor restaurant to the university.

Relationship between foreign visitors and locals.

Because of Thanh Hoa's isolation from areas where foreigners are common, the local community treats foreigners cautiously and with great curiosity. HDU is the only source of foreign traffic in the local area, so when locals encounter a foreigner, they assume that the person is a visitor to HDU. That assumption has caused some difficulty for the two Project Trust volunteers (Britain) who come to HDU every September for a year between high school and university to work and live (Project Trust Volunteer, personal communication, May 2001). The volunteers are typically between eighteen and twenty and teach English to students in the foreign language program. The volunteers in the summer of 2001 said that both the local and university communities were slow to accept them until the visitors proved to be responsible to the community (Project Trust Volunteer, personal communication, May 2001). However, the boys must have assimilated into the community by February, because they had many invitations to student and faculty homes for Tet, the Vietnamese New Year

holiday reserved for family and close friends. By May the boys easily navigated the community on their bicycles and established friendly relationships. One local woman, whom the boys called "Mom," looked after them, helped them around the community, and sometimes cooked for them. The boys also formed warm relationships with the students, who were frequently in their room at the hostel. At the Faculty Singing Competition, held in honor of Ho Chi Minh's birthday, the boys sang the Thanh Hoa song in Vietnamese to the cheers of hundreds of onlookers. Officially, however, the volunteers say that they must report to the local authorities, who monitor their movements around the community. They also must report to the authorities when they plan to leave the local area. Letters arrive undisturbed from the U.K. in about ten days, but packages take six weeks and are opened before delivery.

In the case of this researcher, local shopkeepers and restaurant owners assumed that this researcher was the parent of one of the Project Trust volunteers, simply because she was of the same race. Market women asked many questions, but grew reticent when they learned that the researcher was American and not British. In several instances, the shopkeepers were unaware that the United

States and Britain were two separate countries in different parts of the world. In other cases, they refused to say the word "America," using instead the term "over there." That caution contrasts sharply to the shopkeepers in southern Vietnam, who are curious about life in America and ask many questions. The Thanh Hoa market women addressed the researcher generally as, *ba tay*, "western woman," instead of *ba my*, "American woman," as I am often called when traveling in southern Vietnam.

University Administration

Hong Duc University is a training and research facility "belonging to the National Educational System of SRV and a public-established, multilevel, multisector university under the provincial people's committee and state management of MOET and other authorities" (Hong Duc University, 1999b, p. 2). According to Rector Cao Danh Dang, MOET is using HDU as a model for the reorganization of provincial universities in the higher education system in Vietnam (Dang, personal interview, May, 2001). The University is under the authority of The People's Committee of Thanh Hoa and the state management of relevant central ministries. This multi-disciplinary organizational structure is different from the traditional model of small,

single discipline institutions under the regulatory guidance of MOET or other relevant ministries. Still, MOET plays a significant role in the daily work of HDU. Specifically, MOET regulates training, scientific research, cadres management, and financial management. According to HDU's Strategic Plan to 2010, this new organizational structure lacks the necessary operational regulations: "Such by-laws have not been well concretized in to the university's internal rules and regulations" (Hong Duc University, 1999b, p. 8).

Administrative structure.

According to MOET (2000), HDU has nine faculties (natural sciences, social sciences, primary teacher training, foreign language, agriculture and forestry, business administration, medicine, technology, and in-service training), nine departments (academic affairs, science management and international relations, material management and service, professional, student affairs, administration, planning and finance, student hostel, and project managing), three centers (Applied Science and Technology, Information and Library, and Management Improvement), and three general sections (Marxism-Leninist, psychology and education and physical and defense

education). The university provides training on three levels: university, junior college, and the secondary vocational.

The academic calendar is standard at all colleges and universities in Vietnam and is similar to the calendar in the United States. The academic year at HDU begins in September and ends in June. The university closes for Tet, the lunar new year, for two weeks each winter.

Admissions.

The admissions process informally begins in May when thousands of new high school graduates converge on Thanh Hoa City to prepare for the university entrance exam which is given in July. Students who have graduated from high school and who meet age and health guidelines are eligible to sit for the exam. University faculty members offer preparation courses in their homes for fee-paying students who hope to be among the 2,500 students selected to attend HDU. In 1999, 31,000 (62%) of Thanh Hoa Province's 51,000 high school graduates applied for admission at HDU (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). According to Dang once students take the exam, the Student Services Department scores the exams, and a faculty committee makes placement recommendations. Admission is based solely on entrance

examination results. High school grades are not considered as part of the admissions decision. In most cases, students are required to take the placements that they are offered. The People's Committee of Thanh Hoa determines the number of available slots in HDU's programs. In all cases, demand far exceeds availability.

Fees.

According to Dang (personal interview, May 2001), the educational reforms associated with *doi moi* have transformed higher education in many ways. Dang cites as an example of a major change to higher education, the collection of tuition and fees. Under the old centralized system, admitted students paid no tuition to attend higher education programs and were guaranteed jobs once they graduated. Today, colleges and universities supplement their budgets with tuition and fees collected from students. Some students now pay tuition and fees to attend HDU; however, teacher training students pay no tuition because of the massive teacher shortage in Vietnam. In exchange, graduates are required to accept placement into teaching jobs according to local need. According to information contained in HDU's strategic plan, tuition and fees for non-teacher training students is 3,297,060 VND or

\$201 a year (Hong Duc University, 1999b). Although that seems like a relatively small amount of money, the average yearly income in Vietnam is about \$300, making tuition prohibitively expensive for most students. Students who show an aptitude for teaching and score well on the entrance exam are offered admission to the teacher training program. Once admitted, they pay only for room and board. According to HDU's rector, the university also participates in a program called The Learning Encouragement Fund (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). Scholarship funds come directly from Hanoi and make up 29% of the overall budget of the university (Hong Duc University, 1999b).

Funding

The current funding structure of HDU is also a departure from the old centralized system. Previously, Hanoi provided all funding for colleges and universities. Today, however, funding comes from a variety of sources, including the central government, donations from local businesses and churches, international grants, and tuition and fees (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). The budget is managed by the Office of Financial Planning and Budget, a department with 18 people divided into five work groups. The university's operating budget comes from local (24%),

national (70%), and foreign (6%) sources (Hong Duc University, 1999b). Included in the local funds are fees charged for research activities and what Dr. Dang calls consignment training, the equivalent of workforce development training in the United States. These programs present Hong Duc with an excellent opportunity to supplement its set budget. To do so, officials must make regular contact with local businesses, industries, and joint ventures. That funding structure is unique in Vietnam, where, historically, all university funding comes from Hanoi.

According to the Director of Financial Planning and Budget (personal interview, May 2001), his department is responsible for budget planning and recommendations, income management, accounting, and financial aid. Before the beginning of the budget year on January 1, each department prepares yearly spending plans and submits them to the Financial Planning and Budget Department which compiles all of the plans and submits them to HDU's rector for approval. Once the university rector approves the departmental budgets, the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa must give final approval to all budgetary matters at the university. The Accounting Division is on the first floor of Building A

on Campus I. A visit to the department found several women working at long wooden tables with calculators, notebooks, and stacks of paper. The room had no computers (personal observation, May 2001).

The university's role in the development of Thanh Hoa Province.

Clearly, local authorities expect that HDU will contribute to developing Thanh Hoa Province. HDU's current strategic plan describes the university's purpose as to, "enroll students from specific areas of Thanh Hoa Province, and to improve the quality and effectiveness of the labour force through out all of Thanh Hoa" (Hong Duc University, 1999b, p.4). Article 3 of Decision Number 797/TTg, Decision of Prime Minister on the Establishment of Hong Duc University (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1997), states that HDU has the following responsibilities: "Training offices of science and technology to meet the demands of socio-economic development of Thanh Hoa Province; and, Researching, applying, and transferring technology to serve the socio-economic development of Thanh Hoa Province." That connection with the local area is also found in HDU's mission statement, which states, in part, "The mission of the university is to meet the demand for qualified human

resources in technology, application research, technology transfer, community services serving the provincial socio-economic development objectives in the industrialization process" (Hong Duc University, 1999b, p. 9). HDU's current strategic plan further states that among the objectives of HDU is that the university will "meet the provincial socio-economic developments" (Hong Duc University, 1999b, p. 2). In short, administrators at HDU will quickly say that HDU has two purposes: to develop the human resources of the province and to transfer technology to the people of the province.

Thanh Hoa's development needs fall into two main areas: trained human resources to meet the current demands in the province and currently employed workers with irrelevant skills to be retrained (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). A university grant proposal discusses the specific development needs of the province over the next five years:

A forecast on human resource by the year 2005 shows that it is necessary to train more than 500 engineers of technical and technological specifications, 300 bachelors of economics and business management, and 300 engineers of agriculture and forestry. The demand

for training human resources will be much higher after 2005. The requirement for training teachers and officers for education-training and medicine is increasing; by 2005 it is expected to be able to train 2500 upper secondary teachers, 3600 lower secondary teachers, 775 doctors for hospitals, 250 community doctors for village line and thousands of sanatorium bachelors for medicine institutions. (Hong Duc University, 1999a, p. 4)

A listing of HDU's current full-time courses verifies that the university is heavily involved in training workers in four basic areas: education, medicine, agriculture and business management (Hong Duc University, 1999b).

In-service training programs play an important role in retraining local workers who are not prepared for the work environment created by *doi moi*. These part-time programs are designed to allow workers to remain employed while attending university classes several days a week. These programs depart from Vietnam's highly traditional education system which typically served only traditional-aged students.

Conversations and formal interviews with faculty and administrators revealed that they see the development of

Thanh Hoa as an essential objective of the university. Administrators talked more of the role of HDU in a larger societal context, Although teaching faculty and program administrators were more likely to discuss specific projects that have a direct impact on the lives of the residents of Thanh Hoa. University Rector Dang described HDU's role in the development of Thanh Hoa Province as the university's "uniqueness" in the education and training system of Vietnam. Dang, the former Director of Education and Training in Thanh Hoa Province, describes the university as one whose mission is charged by the needs of the province. According to Dang, these needs are to train the technical workforce in the province, to upgrade the professional qualifications of local workers, and to reach out to the ethnic minorities who make up one third of the province's population. Dang elaborates, "Our duty is different (from that of national universities). We take our direction from the local authorities and train according to their demands" (Dang, personal interview, May 2001).

HDU's rector also recognized Hong Duc's interdependent relationship, which has developed with the local area. Hong Duc University was founded to develop Thanh Hoa Province. As Hong Duc's influence in the area grows and the province

develops, the province, in turn, influences the development of the university. Rector Dang points out that "the more developed our society becomes, the more we are needed" (Dang, personal interview, May 2001).

According to the Director of Academic Affairs, the university maintains contact with the local community. Committees of HDU faculty and administrators work with local constituent groups to uncover training needs in the local area. Once these needs are identified, the local People's Committee and university officials decide upon an appropriate course of action to fill the needs (Tri, personal interview, May 2001).

Dang also sees an altruistic purpose for the university, one he describes as "a charity for the poor." Dang states, "We are also here to give poor people a chance to get a higher education here at home. Our poor students do not have the opportunity to go anywhere else" (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). According to many of the students I spoke with, Hanoi is the preferred educational destination for many of Thanh Hoa's university-bound students; however, without scholarships, few can afford a full university education in Vietnam's capital. These students agreed, however, that HDU gave them an opportunity

that they might not otherwise have. According to Dang, the presence of HDU will allow Thanh Hoa to attract and retain its best students.

Dr. Nguyen Song Hoan, Director of Science Management and International Relations, echoes Dang. Nguyen says that HDU is important to the one million poor minorities in Thanh Hoa who can not afford to send their children to Hanoi to study: "We need to make the training of minority students a priority" (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001).

Although nearly all faculty and administrators mentioned the needs of minority students in the province, neither programs for minority students nor any ethnic minority students themselves were in evidence. Pressed for details about university programs for ethnic minority students, one administrator pointed to a program in which some male teacher education graduates are required to teach in ethnic minority areas for three years after graduating.

A discussion with students reveals that economics indeed drive their choices in higher education. Students in the teacher training college frequently say that they chose HDU because their entrance exams placed them into pedagogy, a program in which they pay no tuition. Said one student,

"I really don't want to be a teacher, but I also don't want my parents to have to go into debt for my education"

(student, personal communication, May 2001).

Faculty Life and Issues

Faculty are the driving force of any university. The quality of a university is only as strong as its faculty. Clearly, when a faculty is well trained, respected, well paid, and provided with opportunities for advancement and professional development, the university thrives.

Unfortunately, HDU's faculty, although hard working and concerned about the students, lack some of the more fundamental components needed to accomplish the instructional and research goals of the university.

Academic preparation of the faculty.

According to figures published in HDU's current strategic plan (Hong Duc University, 1999b), the university's teaching faculty is a diverse group of 505 people working at several different locations who seem, at first glance, to have very little in common. The university's first faculty members were transferred to the newly created Hong Duc University from Thanh Hoa Teacher Training College, Thanh Hoa Medical College, and Thanh Hoa Business and Technology College. The original college

rectors were moved to HDU in the position of vice presidents, and the Thanh Hoa People's Committee appointed Dr. Cao Danh Dang, Thanh Hoa's Director of Education and Training, as the founding rector of the university. Faculty members range from twenty-three year olds with vocational secondary degrees to sixty-year olds with Ph.D.'s. What is common to this otherwise disparate group of people is a strong attachment to Hong Duc University. Faculty and staff are members of the Trade Union, which is under the management of the provincial labor union. Upper administrators all belong to the Communist Party and urge younger faculty to become members to increase professional development opportunities. Faculty and staff spend six days a week on campus, returning in the evenings, whenever possible, for social activities, entertainment, and meetings. Thanh Hoa City has very little social life beyond cafes and karaoke restaurants, so activities on campus generally draw many people from the faculty, staff, and surrounding community. The result is a faculty that appears to be well aquatinted and cooperative.

Faculty Life.

Faculty and staff generally live within two-miles of the campus and ride bicycles or motorcycles to school.

Young, unmarried, same-sex faculty members often pool their very limited resources to rent houses near the campus, suggesting that they have moved to Thanh Hoa away from their families of origin. A typical arrangement is one shared by two young male professors in their mid-twenties who spend 150,000 dong (roughly \$10 USD) a month to share a small house with one of the men's sister and her children. The house is about a mile from the campus over dark, often muddy, unpaved streets. The sister shops, cooks, washes clothing, and takes care of the house while the men teach at the university during the day and take turns privately teaching English and physics to students at night. The main area of the house is a single room with a rough concrete floor, two wooden beds topped by bamboo mats, and a large chalkboard and long wooden table and benches for private lessons. The sister and her children live in a cramped space off the main room. The electricity in the main room is so weak that a bulb hanging from the ceiling sheds barely enough light to see. An old table fan sits on a desk, the plug cut off and the wires shoved directly into an electrical outlet hanging from the wall.

Accommodations for older, more established members of the faculty are much better. They live with their extended

families in larger, yet still modest homes with tile floors, cement walls, fluorescent lights, and amenities such as telephones, televisions and stereo systems. Some few homes have washing machines and personal computers with Internet access. High level administrators carry laptop computers and cellular telephones. Very often, husbands and wives both work at the university, so multi-generation households are common. Grandparents take a major role in running the household and rearing children.

Cohesion.

Faculty members seemed to spend a great deal of time visiting each other in their homes and spoke of each other as friends. When faculty members introduced the researcher to colleagues with whom she was unfamiliar, they would offer a great deal of personal information about family, length of employment at HDU, and personal interests. Faculty members routinely introduced the researcher to colleagues, then told her about the academic strengths and goals of their children. In both formal interviews and private conversations, faculty and administrators spoke highly of the university and were proud of their affiliation with the university and of the university's contribution to Thanh Hoa Province. Said one faculty

member, "This is it. HDU is all these kids have. They have a lot of hope, and we have to make HDU a place where they can learn what they need for their future"(faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). In one instance, an administrator discussed his pride in HDU and in Thanh Hoa in general.

During the American war, we had no normal life. We could not go outside, carry water, plant rice. We had to live our lives at night in the dark because we lived in fear of bombs falling. Now, I feel like this is such a special time. We are at peace. We can educate our people again and build something for ourselves. That is why HDU is here (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001).

A staff member and northern war veteran who overheard the conversation joined in: "That time was such a nightmare that I'd rather forget about it. But now we can use what we have to build something for our children" (staff member, personal communication, May 2001). Clearly, both men saw themselves as part of an important effort to rebuild Thanh Hoa after years of war and its aftermath.

Special events are often held to unify the university community and bolster faculty morale. One revealing event

was the May 18th and 19th Faculty Singing Competition held in honor of President Ho Chi Minh's birthday. Participation was voluntary, and the outcome was a two-day event that involved not only everyone at the campus but also many in the local community. A huge blue and red flag and the gold hammer and sickle decorated the stage in the multipurpose room at Campus I. A large red banner reading, "The glorious communist party of Vietnam lives forever!" hung across the curtain. A panel of judges, including the HDU rector and representatives from the Thanh Hoa People's Committee, sat proudly at a table in front of the stage. A keyboard player accompanied the hundreds of singers from the corner of the stage, and a camera operator documented the two-day event. The preliminary competition on day one began at 7:00 a.m. and continued until 9:00 p.m. The second day's competition began at 11:00 a.m. and continued until 9:00 p.m. Every department, including administrators, teaching faculty, children from the preschool, drivers, groundskeepers, cooks, and security personnel participated. Participants prepared costumes and rehearsed for weeks before the competition, as the enthusiasm grew. Contestants sang patriotic songs that depicted historical events in modern Vietnamese history. The crowd particularly loved the

dramatic portrayals of mothers sending children clad in black pajamas and plaid scarves off to battle and rousing songs that included battle cries and the victorious waving of red flags. The audience roared during the finale of one song, when a soldier wearing jungle fatigues and waving a red hammer and sickle flag burst into the middle of a chorus of singers. For the entire two-day competition, the huge room was packed with hundreds of students, faculty, staff and community people and their children chanting, stomping, cheering, and singing along with the competitors. On the last night of the competition, the crowd was so large that every seat was taken, and the overflow crowd stood around the room, and in the corridors outside, crowded around windows and doors. Many in the audience brought bouquets of flowers that they presented to their favorite acts as they concluded their songs. In several instances, a group of performers had to wait for the previous group to receive a long line of well-wishing students and faculty presenting flowers.

Although special events and competitions help to unify faculty and improve morale, HDU faculty note two issues that hinder them in their work: inadequate academic preparation and low pay.

Inadequate academic preparation for subject being taught.

HDU endeavors to train workers for all sectors of the provincial labor force and to provide solutions to local problems through research and technology transfer programs. A qualified faculty with relevant academic preparation and sufficient knowledge of teaching techniques is needed to accomplish these two goals. Most of HDU's faculty received training at narrowly focused, single-discipline institutions in the former Eastern Bloc countries, or in Vietnam's pre-*doi moi* higher education system which was patterned after the Soviet system. Consequently, preparation of faculty is limited to the individual academic subjects that they teach. Faculty were prepared only to train students to assume roles in the state economic sectors. Before 1986, private sectors of the formal economy did not exist. Furthermore, faculty trained under the old system have no formal instruction in classroom management or teaching techniques. In many ways, the success of Vietnam's new economy hinges on retraining faculty. Faculty must be prepared themselves before they can be expected to prepare students to work in the new economy of Vietnam.

The need for a better-trained faculty is recognized by both university officials and provincial authorities. According to the Director of Academic Affairs, the lack of a faculty with relevant training is a major problem at the university. (Tri, personal interview, May 2001). In 1998, 75% of HDU's teaching faculty held a bachelor's degree or less, and 10% of teaching staff held only a vocational secondary certificate (Hong Duc University, 1999b). The situation for administrators is worse. Eighty-eight percent of administrative staff hold a bachelor's degree or less, with 10.5% holding only vocational secondary certificates (Hong Duc University, 1999b). Additionally, the administrative staff has had no training in university administration, leaving them to learn management techniques on the job. HDU's current strategic development plan reports that "217 managerial cadres including leaders of the university, units, departments, specialists and assistants of faculties who have not undergone any formal training in organization and management of university level" (Hong Duc University, 1999b).

Deficiencies in the training of faculty left them unprepared for the demands that the socio-economic reforms of the mid-1980's placed on them. Since *doi moi* policies

were implemented in 1986, Vietnamese society has been transforming, and the economy has been evolving from a highly centralized command-and-control economy to a multi-sector economy with a developing free market sector. That socio-economic transformation is pressuring higher education to keep pace with the needs of a rapidly developing society.

Talking about *doi moi* with faculty and administrators often brought up the issue of the university's responsibility for retraining a faculty and staff who were originally trained under the old system. HDU's rector indicates that *doi moi* has prompted a fundamental shift in the educational priorities of Thanh Hoa Province. The immediate need after Vietnam's wars was to alleviate the illiteracy that gripped the nation, particularly the north. Thanh Hoa's priority, like that of most provinces, was to ensure literacy for all (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). Although Thanh Hoa's educational officials report that illiteracy was eradicated in the province in 1997 (Hong Duc University, 1999b), *doi moi* has posed new educational challenges in the province, particularly the expansion of the state sector into several different sectors. The province has untapped potential for economic

development in the industrial and service sectors (Hong Duc University, 1999b), but the need for educated human resources far outpaces the ability of HDU to produce such graduates. Asked how *doi moi* affected Thanh Hoa Province, HDU's rector responded that "Hong Duc University was established in direct response to *doi moi*. *Doi moi* made us focus on the training and retraining of the local workforce" (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). A grant proposal written by HDU describes the stress that *doi moi* placed on the university.

However, because it was established shortly, physical facility is backward and teaching and researching staff fail to meet increasing demand of training activity. Otherwise, influenced by the course of industrialization and modernization and rapid development of new mechanism, the private economic sector as well as joint venture has witnessed dramatic growth resulting in different kinds of jobs formed and high demand for qualified and skillful laborers. This brings about big challenges and forces staff in the university of Hong Duc to make more efforts to increase its responsiveness to the social demand.

(Hong Duc University, 1999a)

A vexing problem for HDU, then, seems to be the necessity to keep pace with the changing needs of the local area, and to upgrade the faculty to meet those needs. According to several administrators, recently funded initiatives move slowly because of the lack of appropriately trained human resources. The success of the university's proposed electronic library hinges on the ability to train faculty, staff, and students to use computers. According to one administrator, nearly 70% of teaching faculty lack the basic computer skills necessary for implementing the initiative (administrator, personal communication, May 2001). Access to information on the Internet and in many of the learning resources at the university hinges on the faculty's ability to become English proficient. Likewise, faculty participation in regional and international meetings and symposia depend on their ability to use the English language.

If the major purpose of Hong Duc University is to develop the human resources of Thanh Hoa Province, the currently employed faculty is not academically prepared to serve this purpose. Current projections hold that by 2005, Thanh Hoa Province will need 500 technical engineers, 300 bachelors of economics and business administration, 5100

secondary teachers and 1025 physicians (Hong Duc University, 1999a). A much better prepared faculty will be needed to meet those needs.

According to the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa, two initiatives have been launched to resolve the problem: one to recruit new, well educated faculty, another to transfer less qualified faculty from their teaching posts. An effort to recruit new, better-educated faculty was launched in 1999. It focused on younger faculty members with M.A. or Ph.D. qualifications. A directive by the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa authorized HDU to recruit faculty who are, "young and can develop with excellent degree, good morality and development capacity." (People's Committee of Thanh Hoa, 1999b). Although that approach appears to be sound, the People's Committee announcement made no mention of funding for this initiative. An unfunded mandate will do nothing to recruit much-needed faculty.

In May 1999, the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa also addressed removing those faculty determined to be unqualified for university teaching. The public announcement recommends transferring faculty who are, ". . . recognized not to be appropriate in terms of the new structure and qualification" to other branches of education

in Thanh Hoa or to administrative posts (People's Committee of Thanh Hoa, 1999b). Again, that response to the problem of under prepared faculty appears to be reasonable, but the public announcement does not mention plans to fill vacancies left by the transferred faculty.

Locally, the university has developed several in-house professional development plans for retraining. Unfortunately, these plans are expensive, labor-intensive, and an added burden to an overworked, underpaid faculty. Staff classes taught by existing faculty are held on campus to train faculty in various subject areas, particularly English language and business administration. Although time consuming, the staff classes are an inexpensive way to use more educated faculty members to train those less proficient. A more expensive retraining effort sends faculty members to Hanoi to update their education and training. That option is expensive, however, because the university not only pays the faculty member's living expenses, but also the cost of a replacement while the faculty member is in Hanoi (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). HDU's 1998 budget shows that 0.88% was spent on "expenses for upgrading and retraining offices" (Hong Duc University, 1999b). During summer 2001,

the university was short-staffed by 60 professors who had been sent for retraining (administrator, personal communication, May 2001). The problem of staff shortfalls is raised by nearly everyone when the issue of retraining is discussed. Faculty and administrators agree that retraining is an important problem at HDU, but they also agree that the university is short-staffed and struggles when faculty leave for retraining.

HDU appeals to foreign colleges and universities to help with its retraining needs. One faculty member, aware of having outdated skills, waits for international faculty to visit so that he can engage in academic discourse and gain access to updated textbooks and teaching materials (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). Several other professors asked the researcher to bring them textbooks if she returned. According to the Director of International Relations, "we are one of the poorest provinces in all of Vietnam. We need a lot of help from our foreign friends to help train our faculty" (Nguyen, S., personal interview, May 2001). HDU encourages foreign visitors to collaborate on projects that it believes can help with university development. Many of HDU's international projects are intentionally designed with a

focus on university development (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001).

No HDU department has been more affected by *doi moi* than the business administration and management program (Vu, personal interview, May 2001). The Dean, a man who has been in his position for more than thirty years (as part of the former Thanh Hoa Economic and Technical College), cites his department as one that is especially affected by *doi moi*. Asked how *doi moi* affected Thanh Hoa, he responded, "Doi moi has directly affected us. More than anything, our local economy has been affected by (the development of) private enterprises, but these private enterprises mean that we must prepare our students to work in these enterprises" (Vu, personal interview, May 2001). According to the dean, this faculty was trained to teach students to work in "a fixed program directed by the central government." *Doi moi* has prompted a need for retraining faculty to teach to students who will assume roles in a completely different economic environment. More than anything, students will need to be prepared to work in the private sector that *doi moi* created. Asked how the faculty will be retrained, he said that when funds permit, faculty

would be sent to Hanoi, then return to Hong Duc to train other faculty members (Vu, personal interview, May 2001).

The Director of International Relations and Science Management describes a need for an on-going continuing education program, that encourages technologically proficient faculty who read, write, and speak English (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001). HDU has a professional development plan that includes the use of staff classes for English language training, the assistance of visiting foreign scholars, and study either in Hanoi or outside the country.

According to S. Nguyen, the presence of professors who read, write, and speak English is critical to the modernizing the university. As part of its professional development plan, the university would like to send more instructors to other Asian nations, particularly to Thailand. According to one administrator, "Thailand is close, it's developed, and it's an inexpensive place to travel. Thailand is the perfect place for us to send faculty and students" (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001). HDU's ability to send faculty to international conferences held in southeast Asia is severely limited because few faculty speak English well enough to

participate. English is the official language of ASEAN, so any international conference or meeting held in Southeast Asia is conducted in English. Many of HDU's senior faculty were fluent in French, retrained Russian, and now are facing the prospect of retraining once again, this time in English (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). In the English staff class, professors are selected from across the college to attend a three-day-a-week class taught by another faculty member. Enrollment is limited, and faculty members covet spots in the class, because English proficiency is so necessary at the university. Faculty members enrolled in the class range from twenty-three-year-old new faculty to veteran professors in their fifties. Although the faculty members are enthusiastic students, the classes are taught late in the day, and attendance is inconsistent, because many faculty members have families or work responsibilities.

Another component of HDU's professional development plan is to help faculty develop sufficient reading skills in English to be able to read English textbooks. The administration sees the technology faculty as desperately needing that skill since most technology textbooks are printed in English. Very few computer science faculty (or

students, for that matter) can read English. Computer science faculty and students joke about not understanding the English language prompts in Windows programs. When installing software, they simply hit "forward" until the desired result is displayed on the screen. They said they often have no idea what the screens say, but if they continue to hit "forward," eventually they will arrive at the desired result (faculty member, personal communication, May, 2001). Science and technology faculty are encouraged to learn enough English to be able to use English language textbooks to teach technological concepts (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May, 2001). Likewise, the agricultural and forestry department routinely receives books from the Canadian government, and uses them to teach technology, biology, and cultivation. The agriculture faculty obviously has spent a great deal of time in English language training because many of the professors can read English and several speak enough English to participate in international conferences.

Because HDU has been able to attract foreign faculty delegations and foreign workers with international grant projects, faculty and administrators say that they now need English language skills to communicate with foreigners.

Foreign faculty have a wealth of knowledge that can benefit HDU faculty, who must be able to converse with the visitors. Foreign faculty members are tapped to lecture to HDU faculty and to help them modernize their teaching skills and materials.

Most desired is the prospect of sending HDU faculty outside Vietnam to participate in international conferences, symposia, and training opportunities. Faculty members say that they can not possibly keep current with their subject areas if they do not participate in educational opportunities abroad (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). Both the Agriculture and the Business Departments cite Thailand as a preferred destination for faculty. Thailand is close enough to be cost efficient, but is also technologically advanced enough to help Vietnamese faculty members retrain. The Dean of Business Administration expressed some frustration by saying that,

We have short courses for retraining available in Thailand, but the programs are conducted in English. We have to train our faculty to be able to work in English first. Opportunities are opening everywhere,

but English is the pre-requisite...English is the key for us right now (Vu, Personal Interview, May, 2001).

HDU's 1998 working budget shows one-tenth of one percent allocated for faculty to travel abroad (Hong Duc University, 1999b).

Retraining existing faculty puts a great strain on financial and human resources. HDU is already short-staffed, and those who leave the campus for retraining only exacerbate the problem. Clearly, the solution to this problem lies in the decision of the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa to recruit new faculty members with M.A. and Ph.D. qualifications.

Faculty pay.

Low pay is a serious problem faced by HDU faculty. Although figures cited often conflicted, base salary that is set by the MOET was reported to be 54,000 dong (\$33) a month (Vo, personal interview, May 2001). Instructors are paid extra for working with grant projects, supervising departments, and providing services such as translating (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). Although they were curious and asked many questions about American faculty salaries, the HDU faculty clearly did not want to reveal their salaries. One faculty member did share

in a private conversation a salary of about 125,000 dong (\$70) a month for teaching and supervisory duties (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). Although that salary is far above average in Vietnam, it is not representative of the average teacher's salary at the university. This senior faculty member is engaged in a range of additional duties outside of those that are regularly assigned.

The English faculty often has opportunities to work with grant-funded poverty-reduction projects that often include English language instruction. The various poverty reduction projects at the university almost always have opportunities for faculty to teach English, often off campus, to participants. Those situations are considered highly desirable and are given to the senior faculty (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). Although the extra income is helpful to the teachers, the English Department is often understaffed because of the number of faculty involved in grant projects. Further, these projects often take the better teachers out of the HDU classroom. In a private conversation, several faculty member members reported having to carry the extra course responsibilities to make up for colleagues lost to special

projects (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001).

A major problem associated with faculty pay is outside work. Because faculty salaries are so low, most report having to supplement their incomes. Nearly all HDU faculty members tutor students at night in their homes. Without that extra money, faculty members report that they would not earn a livable wage. English and the natural sciences are the subjects most in demand for tutoring; however, professors in nearly all disciplines can earn money by conducting classes in their homes. Those paying for the services are HDU students wanting assistance in their regular classes or high school seniors preparing for Vietnam's national exam (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). In the month or two before HDU's entrance exam, most teachers have classrooms full of students in their homes preparing for the exam. In the evenings, students crowd into homes lined up on benches and listening to teachers as they instruct from chalkboards on walls in their homes.

Professors teaching subjects not in great demand for tutoring often work in side businesses in the service sector or in family enterprises such as farms and

businesses. The result, according to one professor, is an overworked faculty unable to devote its full attention to teaching responsibilities. "I am so tired at work sometimes because I have students in my house until midnight. I wish I didn't have to do so much of this, but I have to make some money" (faculty member, private conversation, May 2001). Although MOET did adjust faculty salaries in the early 1990's (Chao & Natali, 1999), the problem persists and clearly requires further attention.

Before *doi moi*, research was undertaken in a parallel system of state research institutes (SRI's) patterned after the Soviet system. These SRI's were well funded and staffed with some of the better faculty in Vietnam's higher education system (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996). According to HDU's Director of International Relations and Science Management, "higher education in Vietnam is still divided by those institutions that do research and those institutions that teach. The government now plans to combine the two" (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001). As higher education institutions continue to be combined into larger universities, those universities will assume greater responsibilities for research. In general, combining teaching and research is well received at the

university as a way to make better use of educational resources. "By combining to do both teaching and research, we can use our resources much better" (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001).

Research activities.

Although HDU is primarily a teacher-training college, faculty members are involved in local research projects. According to MOET (2000), the second mandate of HDU is, researching technology and technology transfer for the development of Thanh Hoa Province, both economically and socially. HDU does participate in some national research, but most research is done locally with the goal of addressing some of Thanh Hoa's persistent problems. Most research activities carried out at Hong Duc are designed to improve the lives of the people of Thanh Hoa (administrator, personal communication, May 2001).

HDU faculty and administrators frequently use the term "technology transfer" when discussing research at the university. Technology transfer, according to one administrator, is the development of applied technology at the university that is then transferred to farmers, medical workers, and other practitioners in the field (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001). Technology transfer is

the bridge between the academic departments and Thanh Hoa Province. In HDU's current strategic plan (Hong Duc University, 1999b), the university rector outlines the objectives for scientific research development at the university. All four objectives directly address the transfer of technology developed at HDU to Thanh Hoa Province with the intention of improving people's lives. Objective I of the report states that the university will become a "center of scientific and technology application research for the province" (p. 12). The second objective suggests that the university will involve itself in scientific research activities, technology application, and development to solve socio-economic problems in the province. The third objective involves providing the province with scientific technology transfer, production, and business services, according to faculty specialization at the university. The final goal is to promote scientific research that will improve the quality of training at the university. These goals for academic research are all support HDU's larger goal of "researching, applying and transferring technology to serve the socio-economic development of Thanh Hoa Province" (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1997). Although administrators and faculty agree

that national research is important, most find that the human and physical resources at HDU are necessary to help solve local problems and improve the quality of life in Thanh Hoa.

Several faculty thought that research and technology transfer projects were so important that they found ways to make them the topic of conversation. Both the agriculture and forestry department and the medical department gave examples of how they saw their academic departments' research as influencing the local community. Both departments work directly with local residents in what they term, "technology transfer," or "applied technology" programs. Dr. Nguyen Thi Bach Yen, Vice-Director of Agriculture and Forestry describes her faculty as "very important to the development of Thanh Hoa Province." She elaborates, "80% of Thanh Hoa Province is agricultural, so everything we do in this department affects nearly everyone in the province" (Nguyen, Y., personal interview, May 2001). She describes a relationship between her department and the local community. Students are provided with a "material base," then sent out into the province to talk with farmers and come back with real problems for research.

Generally, students return to work on problems with crops, land management, animal breeding, and food production. Students do their research at the Agricultural Education Center, a living laboratory for agriculture and forestry research that was initially funded by CIDA, The Canadian International Development Agency, in 1995 (Nguyen, Y., personal interview, May, 2001). One aspect of this poverty reduction project has been the creation of this demonstration farm, which is conducting research projects on wet rice cultivation, hybrid peanuts and sweet potatoes, hog breeding, and other food production techniques. Students and faculty work together to develop solutions to agricultural problems at the demo farm, then go into the province to transfer these solutions to farmers, thereby increasing productivity (Nguyen, Y., personal interview, May, 2001). The program is popular with administrators because of its obvious material benefits to the university. In separate conversations, three administrators described the project in terms of its financial contribution to the university and ultimately to the province. One administrator cites the research done in the agriculture program as an example of effectively using university research to form an active partnership between the

university's programs and the local community. "The CIDA project is a perfect example of how we (at HDU) should be working with the community" (Nguyen, S., personal communication, 2001).

The Dean of the Medical College was also eager to discuss a similar relationship between his department and the local community that is fostered by research and technology transfer. According to Dr. V. Thanh (personal interview, May, 2001), the medical students and faculty work cooperatively with Thanh Hoa's provincial hospitals, outside agencies, and NGO's to research and alleviate several serious health problems, including malaria, tuberculosis, malnutrition, high birth and infant mortality rates, and low immunization rates for local children. According to Dr. Thanh, the medical department also works directly with outside agencies and NGO's to research health problems and disseminate health information to the local people and to provide direct medical services to the people of Thanh Hoa.

Cooperative research projects between the university and the community give students a practical perspective in their medical education, which is important for students who will only spend two or three years at HDU before

becoming health care practitioners. An exchange program between Thanh Hoa's provincial hospital's and HDU provides opportunities for university lecturers to go to work directly with hospital patients and for medical staff at the hospital to go to HDU to lecture to medical students.

This way, students have direct contact with doctors and patients and understand their work. Students can understand the problems that they will encounter in their work. It is better that they can ask questions now, while they are still students (Thanh, personal interview, May 2001).

Although the local area benefits from such a project, so does the university and faculty who participate. Moving faculty from lecture to practice and back again, keeps them aware of current issues facing their students.

One on-going project currently in its eighth year is the Family Planning Project funded by the United National Development Program. According to Thanh, this project involves training medical students from the communes at HDU for two years in family planning methods and community education techniques. Once they finish training, they return to the communes to practice for another two years before returning to HDU for refresher courses. This

program ensures that practitioners are kept current on family planning practices (Thanh, personal interview, May 2001). One administrator sees the medical faculty as filling a void in the delivery of medical services in the community, especially the isolated areas where medical professionals do not have access to updated training:

The medical faculty must develop applied medical technologies, train the students, then send them out into the villages, rural areas, mountain areas, and train the local medical professionals in the use of new medical technology. Our students and faculty need to go where the medical professionals need the new technology but can not get it (Nguyen, S., personal communication, May 2001).

Although these training programs are useful to both the community and the university, Thanh describes them as "stressful." "Our faculty is stretched so thin. Each time we send someone out to work on a project, we have one less person on the faculty to teach our students. Our resources are thin, very thin" (Thanh, personal interview, May 2001).

The leadership of both the medical and agricultural faculties seemed to value these research programs. When interviewed, they were enthusiastic about their programs

and directed the conversation toward a discussion of them. The presence of these research projects indicates that the leadership of these two departments understands the need for and benefits of them.

The presence of local research programs demonstrates more than just an understanding of their importance. These programs demand a high level of commitment from program administrators to apply the resources of their departments to seek solutions to local problems. Many of these programs demand that the faculty spend time in the field, and often require hours of retraining. One example is in the AEC program where agricultural faculty spend several hours each in English classes in addition to their regular teaching and supervisory responsibilities.

A noticeable absence of research and technology transfer programs was in the business department. When interviewed, the dean of the business program did not mention any specific collaborative projects in which the business faculty was involved. Several lines of questioning about cooperative programs in the local area were ignored. If no programs exist, this is unfortunate because the socioeconomic reforms of 1986 have dramatically altered the business environment in Thanh Hoa (Vu, personal interview,

May 2001). Local business people surely need local expertise and guidance, which would logically come from Hong Duc.

These research and technology transfer programs at Hong Duc provide a critical link between the local community and the university. Faculty research projects serve several purposes at HDU and in the local community. First, these programs engage faculty in academic inquiry and keep them connected with current information and practices in their academic areas. On a practical level, the research done at HDU transfers much needed information from the university to the local farmers, health care providers and other workers in the province, thereby improving the quality of life in Thanh Hoa. Third, these research projects give students an opportunity to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. One common criticism of Vietnamese education has been its highly Confucian nature and inability to move students from rote memorization to critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Chao & Natali, 1999). These research and applied technology programs encourage students to work cooperatively to find solutions to problems that diminish the quality of life in Thanh Hoa Province. Finally, these

cooperative research projects assist in the development of the university. These projects are often funded by international institutions and organizations that provide funds, expertise, and instructional materials and textbooks to the university. These research projects are critical to the development of Thanh Hoa Province, and to the university itself.

However, a limited number of faculty members are actually involved in this research. Two reasons for that limited number have surfaced. First, HDU is understaffed. More professors are needed to do the daily teaching at the university (Hong Duc University, 1999b). Second, HDU's teaching faculty have many responsibilities outside of their teaching. Most faculty members work second jobs and have families. Little time may be left for research. However, if instructors are not engaged in academic pursuits outside of their regular teaching, then they will not be able to keep current in their fields.

Relationships between faculty and students.

Although formal and always respectful, the relationships between faculty and students seemed to be friendly and somewhat paternalistic. Professors know their students well, and appear to have much closer bonds than do

their American counterparts. Students frequently visit their professors in their homes, taking gifts of food or fruit. Each professor seems to have a core group of students whom he or she knows well, but all students seem to be looked after parentally.

Several times, faculty accompanied small groups of students to visit the researcher. Many of those students were shy, and would have likely kept a distance without their teachers' urging them to have contact with overseas visitors. In one instance, a computer science professor gathered a group of students for an evening visit to the hostel where the researcher and her Vietnamese-speaking assistant were staying. The professor wanted her students to meet the research assistant, who is also a computer science student in the United States. In the conversation, it was clear that the professor knew the strengths, weaknesses and interests of each student, and guided the shy, all male group in asking appropriate questions of the visitor. For example, she knew that one student had an interest in a particular computer programming language. Although the boy sat quietly listening to the conversation, she urged him to ask about the programming language. She

whispered to him throughout the conversation, and finally he began asking questions.

Privately, she praised her students' hard work and tenacity, and shared some regrets. She was sorry that the students would probably never get to develop fully their talents because of the limited resources at the university. HDU struggles keep pace with the rapid development of technology in the world. Before students ever gain access to a particular software or hardware, new products are already on the market (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001).

Second, the professor praised her students because of their inquisitiveness and hard work, but lamented the state of computer information technology in Vietnam. "No matter how hard they work, how hard they study, they can't go very far compared with the rest of the world" (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001).

Foreign language faculty, too, seemed to know their students well and wanted to be sure that they had contact with English-speaking foreigners. The English faculty selected a group of students to attend an evening question and answer session with the researcher during which students could practice their public speaking skills as

well as have personal experience with foreigners. Students were proud to have been selected to attend and dressed formally for the occasion. Faculty prepared the students to present cultural information, and sat interspersed among the students, urging them to ask questions and present information. That task was difficult for students who do not normally speak publicly, and they quite obviously looked to their teachers for support and trusted them to help. Aside from the thirty English majors who were invited, a computer science professor brought her students so that they could participate and be exposed to new ideas. In addition to the students whose professors formally selected them to attend, another group of students crowded the doors and windows just to observe the group conversation.

Although this question and answer session gave students an opportunity to practice their public speaking skills, it was not an open forum. Topics for discussion were distributed to all participants several days before the meeting and were limited to educational topics. Administrators also attended the event and stopped the meeting several times to sing political songs. Students

seemed to be familiar with this format, and when asked, sang along with the administrators.

As a participant-observer, the researcher taught several English classes at HDU during the summer of 2001. The researcher encountered many unfamiliar students and quickly had to assess their skills. On several occasions, she asked individual faculty members about their students, and they knew them well. In some instances, she had only to tell a teacher where a student sat, and she could quickly summarize the student's skills and abilities. When the researcher discussed individual students with faculty, they knew a great deal of personal information about them, but were careful not to betray confidences. One student had a difficult time with a particular concept on which she would be tested on her final examinations. The researcher noticed that the student was frustrated more than what a student would normally be over such an event. When the researcher discussed the student with her regular English teacher, she told me that the student came from a very poor family and had many pressures. She also knew that this was one of her best students, and she quickly found the student and worked individually with her.

In general, teachers were easily able to cite students' strengths, weaknesses, interests and family background, and appeared to be concerned about their students.

Professors were also concerned about their students because they felt that the students needed parental figures while they were attending HDU. One faculty member kept in touch with a group of residential students for the purpose of providing guidance. The professor said,

For some of these students, this is their first time away from home. And they are so far away from their parents and families. The lucky ones have someone, some family member or family friend in Thanh Hoa City. But some kids are alone. They need to know that someone knows where they are and what they are doing (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001).

Clearly, the faculty see themselves as not just teachers, but also as role models and guides for the students. This support system is important to students because eighteen-year olds in Vietnam generally have few opportunities for independence before coming to college. These students would probably be lost without the faculty support that they seem to cherish.

Faculty also plan special events to help build unity among the students. The English students described an overnight camping trip that they planned with their teachers. The students were pleased to go with faculty, and spoke fondly of this event (student, personal communication, May 2001). Faculty and students traveled to Sam Son, hiked up the mountain, and staked out an area where they pitched tents and built fires. A faculty member went into town and purchased two dogs that they and the students killed, cleaned and roasted on the fire that night. One graduating senior recalled this camping trip as one of his most enduring memories of his life at HDU.

Events such as these help to build a strong bond not just between the students, but also between faculty and students. Although students seemed to view administrators as authority figures, they were much more relaxed with their teachers.

Surprisingly, administrators also appeared to know a great deal about students. Two administrators took the researcher on a mid-day tour of the hostel, and knew students by name. Likewise, students responded by addressing the administrators by name, though one of the administrators is in the academic division and has no

formal contact with students. However, the students knew him immediately when he entered the residence facility. During the tour, the administrators entered students' rooms unannounced. Students responded by stopping what they were doing and standing rigidly with their arms at their sides as the administrators visually inspected students' living quarters, often making suggestions about cleaning up or staying organized. Students seemed not to mind, quickly correcting the deficiencies. One administrator said, "Their parents have left their children in our care. We are doing what their parents would do if they were at home" (hostel manager, personal communication, May 2001).

The feeling of students toward their professors is clearly warm and appreciative. Students often talked about their teachers in group conversations, fondly discussing their favorite or their most difficult professors. In numerous conversations, students expressed appreciation for their teachers, and wanted very much to make their teachers proud. Said one student, "They do so much for us for so little." Asked to elaborate, she said, "You know, they don't get paid very much, but they still work so hard for us and care about us so much" (student, personal communication, May, 2001). That appreciation was expressed

by a faculty member toward her students in almost the same words. She said,

They work so hard and will get very little in return. One or two of these students are so talented, and they will never get a chance to use what they know. Even when they graduate, they might not earn enough money to make their education worth it" (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001).

The behavior of the students at the Faculty Singing Competition demonstrated their feelings toward their teachers. Students talked with excitement about the competition during the week before the event, discussing the costumes and songs that faculty were preparing. The students arrived early on the day of the event and sat in groups according to their majors. They listened quietly as the groups performed and cheered loudly in support of their teachers. When a faculty group finished its performances, students jumped to their feet and ran to the stage to shower their teachers with flowers. The English faculty, in particular, were very popular. The students listened to the performance in anticipation of the finish and rushed to the stage to give their teachers large bouquets of flowers. The

students of the winning faculty as proud as the performers themselves.

Curriculum Issues

In many ways, HDU's curriculum problems began before the university was established. Higher education was unprepared for *doi moi* (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996), and several faculty members and administrators admit privately that the curriculum often does not reflect current practices in the field. Before *doi moi*, students learned a great deal of theoretical information at the expense of practical skills (Nguyen, X., 1997). Further exacerbating the problem, textbooks and teaching materials are old and conceptually irrelevant to the new economy (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996).

When HDU opened in 1997, the existing curricula from the three original colleges were used (Tri, personal interview, May 2001). According to the Director of Academic Affairs, officials at the new university immediately began supplementing the original curriculum with new offerings to begin constructing university-level programs and to continue serving the local area. Documents show that HDU began to expand its original curriculum by requesting to add university training programs in mathematics, Vietnamese

language, and agronomy (MOET, 1998b). Later in 1998, a soil management program was added on the secondary level (MOET, 1998c). In January 1999, a university level program in physics was added as were college level programs in accounting and informatics (MOET, 1999a). Finally, in April 1999, a college level sanitarium program was added (MOET, 1999b). In each of these decisions, MOET approved the programs, then requested that HDU develop curricula and resubmit to MOET for final approval.

Training programs are recommended by a committee of HDU faculty and administrators and are based on local needs communicated to the university. These training programs are approved by the local People's Committee of Thanh Hoa, an organization of 417 members and 26 party cells, then sent on to MOET for final approval (Hong Duc University, 1999b).

According to the Director of Training, programs are evaluated every three or four years when a group of students graduates. Recommendations are then made to the rector and the People's Committee to continue, discontinue or modify programs. Hong Duc University is responsible for developing course content and having that content approved by MOET (Tri, personal interview, May 2001).

According to HDU's Strategic Development Plan, students' courses are scheduled in blocks, and they have very little choice in what courses they take. Electives do not exist, and courses such as Marxism-Leninism and physical education are required subjects. Students are required to attend thirty scheduled contact hours each week, leaving little time for outside study.

According to HDU's Strategic Development Plan (1999), the university currently offers programs from preliminary-level training to undergraduate level programs. In 1999, the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa decided that this arrangement was insufficient to meet the increasing need for human resource development in the province, and recommended that the university-level programs be increased and secondary-level programs be gradually decreased. The People's Committee further recommended that the preliminary-level training be eliminated and transferred to the technical secondary education level in the education and training system (People's Committee of Thanh Hoa, 1999b). In 2000, HDU was permitted to add four university-level training programs in English, history, biology and chemistry (administrator, personal conversation, May 2001).

Instructional techniques and learning styles.

HDU students both report and demonstrate that they love learning and enjoy the university experience. They are quiet and orderly in the classroom. The students generally arrive in the classroom early and wait for the professor to come into the room. When the teacher arrives at the classroom door, students rise and stand in silence, staring straight ahead with their arms at their sides and wait for the professor to pass. The students remain standing until the teacher is settled at the desk and nods for them to sit. Late arrivals stand in the doorway, hats in their hands, bow their heads and say, "I am sorry I'm late, teacher. May I please enter?" Granted permission, late arrivals enter the room, and quickly and quietly settle in for class. During class, students are attentive and do not speak to each other while the professor is teaching. Classes are held in blocks of time several hours long, broken into forty-five minute segments. After each block of instruction, a drum sounds, and students wait for the teacher to signal the class to break. During the break, a student prepares the teacher a cup of tea from the teapot on her desk and asks the teacher to initial a log of activities held during the class period. Another student

asks if the board needs cleaning. The remaining students usually walk outside or stand around the classroom. Although students will talk quietly among themselves during the break, they are generally quiet, and try not to disturb neighboring classes. The drum sounds again, signaling the end of the break, and students return quickly to their seats ready for class to begin again. Students generally seat themselves, segregated by sex, with the male students in the back and female students in the front.

Although students are passive in the classroom and generally speak only when spoken to, males are slightly more assertive than females, offering answers to questions with only slight prompting. Although a few female students are assertive, most must be prodded to participate, and do so less assertively. When an instructional block is over, the drum sounds again, and the students stand and wait for the teacher to leave. Students then remain in the classroom to erase the board and tidy up. Teachers never erase the board or do anything in the classroom except lecture.

Teaching methods are limited to lecture and are a one-way transfer of information. The instructors nearly always teach from the seated position, rarely standing unless writing on the board. They never move about the room when

they speak. Teacher training students were knowledgeable about their academic subjects, but were concerned that they lack the practical skills needed to actually manage a classroom. Said one student, "I know my English is good, and I know that I know enough to teach lower secondary kids, but what do I actually do when it's just them and me in the room? That's scary" (graduating student, personal conversation, May 2001).

When the researcher was teaching an English class and moving around the room to elicit responses from students in conversation exercises, they grew uncomfortable and seemed unsure of how they should respond. Presented with class exercises that required real communication, students hesitated to participate. Once they understood what was expected of them, the male students were more likely to participate in this unfamiliar mode of instruction, but the female students remained reticent. As a test, the researcher paused during an exercise, returned to her desk and asked students to repeat information about parts of speech. Students were comfortable and appeared to be more relaxed when asked to repeat memorized information.

The students in the English classes were excited to have an American English-speaker teaching them, and were

keenly interested in comparing and contrasting American English with British English, which is more familiar to them. Many students visited the researcher at the hostel after class to practice conversation, to ask her to proof read assignments, and to ask her to help them prepare for their final exams in English class. One particular assignment for which several students sought help was their final essay. One student brought an essay about a dream in which she saw Ho Chi Minh, who talked to her about being a good student. Soon, a second student came by with an essay to read. Oddly, he, too, had dreamed of Ho Chi Minh the previous night. By the end of the evening, several students had brought essays detailing a remarkably similar dream about Ho Chi Minh. When the researcher asked the students why the essays were so similar, they said that original essays were not necessary. More important was the skill of being able to memorize and accurately recall the content of the essay that was printed in a textbook.

Another perplexing moment came as the researcher was walking around the campus in the evening as students were sitting outside studying. A low mumbling could be heard everywhere, but the students appeared to sit alone with books and notebooks. When the researcher approached the

students, se realized that they were preparing for their final exams by memorizing content from their books and notebooks. One student was memorizing page after page of a Vietnamese literature text. The researcher asked a group of students whom she had come to know what they could possibly be memorizing from a literature book. They replied that teachers commonly require students to memorize large passages of text from literature books. Asked about course content in general, students said that their textbooks guided the presentation of material in their classes. They also believed that their books were the "higher authority" and contained the "right" answers. They all agreed that memorizing content from textbooks was good because by memorizing the content, they were also memorizing the "right" answers (students, personal communication, May 2001).

Instructional materials and textbooks.

Both teachers and students use photocopies of outdated textbooks and other teaching materials. Several English teachers showed the researcher copies of their textbooks, which were outdated, photocopied, laminated British volumes. One professor in the sciences reported that he prepared lectures using a Russian-language textbook. S.

Nguyen noted that the updating of textbooks, particularly the materials used in the sciences and technologies, is a crucial step in HDU's inability to modernize (Nguyen, S., personal interview, May 2001). He shared with the researcher a long computerized list of English language textbooks titles, available from a Houston, Texas textbook wholesaler. Asked how the English language textbooks could be used, he responded that the staff would study the concepts in English from the textbooks, then translate the concepts into Vietnamese when they teach the concepts to their classes. Clearly, many faculty members do not read well enough in English to understand the concepts contained in a university-level textbook. Those with marginal reading skills may attempt to use the English language texts without a complete understanding of the information and may make serious mistakes as they translate for their students.

Textbooks are available in the library, but are often in English, French, or Russian, languages not understood by most students. Furthermore, many of these books were published as long as forty years ago and contain outdated content. HDU's library is a woefully inadequate facility that students and faculty try to use in earnest. The main library is currently on the grounds of the hostel, sitting

squarely in the middle of the student housing facilities. The library is made up of eleven rooms, and is located in two buildings connected by a second floor cement catwalk. Books for borrowing are stored on the first floor of the facility. Women sit at tables in doorways and using index cards and small file boxes check out books to students. Students are permitted to check out books for an entire semester, but faculty members are limited to two months.

Many books are not available for check out because the library lacks sufficient copies. A student requests a book from a staff member, who retrieves it. Students must read in hot, crowded reading rooms, sitting shoulder-to-shoulder at desks on long wooden benches. The reading rooms are packed with students and faculty, who read silently for hours. Quite often, every chair in the library reading rooms is occupied. One assumes that students who need to use the library were unable to because of limited seating. That arrangement of book retrieval means that HDU students graduate without having even the most basic understanding of library organization. Further, students do not have the valuable learning experience of browsing through shelves of books as they locate their items.

A portion of the library is available three days a week as a reference area for faculty. Books in this area of the library are not as densely packed on the shelves. Available books include dictionaries, encyclopedias, a large set of the Everyman's Library English Classics, and a variety of computer science and technology books in English. The literature books did not appear to have been used, but the science, computer science and technology books appear to have been used. Those books were not available for student use, and many are written in English, French and Russian, making them useless to many faculty members. Many of HDU's older faculty earned degrees in the former Soviet Union, where Russian was the language of instruction. Unfortunately, the Russian textbooks are the oldest and most outdated.

The new book room was full of recently delivered boxes from Hanoi. Workers opened each box and removed, catalogued, and prepared books for circulation. According to the library director, academic departments select books for purchase from lists sent from government-approved publishers in Hanoi (Nguyen, T., personal interview, May 2001). Nearly all of the foreign language books were donated to the library by international organizations and

universities affiliated with HDU. Several students and faculty found the library to be of little use in their academic work. The faculty complained of disorganized materials and varying levels of competency among the library staff. Several noted arbitrary opening hours that made planning to use the facilities difficult (faculty member, personal conversation, May 2001). One staff member associated with the library agreed that organizing the resources has been difficult since the materials have been sent to the main campus of the new university from the original colleges (library staff member, personal conversation, May 2001).

In a competitive grant process with funds originating from the World Bank, HDU has secured a substantial sum to build an electronic library (Hong Duc University, 1999a). According to university officials, the library will have a local area network (LAN) and will have filtered access to the Internet for faculty and students. The LAN will also carry instructional materials for faculty and a variety of learning resources for students (Nguyen, S., personal conversation, May 2001). Although this library project is a step toward modernizing the university, the project seems to be ambitious for a university with such limited

resources. The existing facilities of the library are substandard, some bordering on decrepit, and a great deal of renovation must be done for this project to succeed.

As with all Vietnamese universities, HDU is facing a severe deficit in its learning resources (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996). A 1999 report reveals that HDU had only .087 personal computers per student and one computer per 13.36 faculty member (Hong Duc University, 1999b). According to one faculty member, Internet access in private offices is limited to top administrators. One faculty workroom does have Internet access; however, one person controls access to the room and closely monitors use of the computer (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). Except for the computer science students, few HDU students are familiar computers. Further, the students seemed to have no curiosity about them. Although many students visited the researcher's room in hostel, not one asked about the laptop computer that was on her desk. Although the university's current strategic plan (Hong Duc University, 1999b) indicates an inadequate number of personal computers for students and faculty, the number of empty computer boxes that being carried to the trash in May 2001 signals that this situation may be changing.

Language laboratories are available for student use and are equipped with tape recorders, but the facility was not open during the field visit to HDU. Asked about the labs, several instructors complained that they were rarely used, and that they no longer planned to use the labs, because of difficulty gaining access.

A small amount of other instructional equipment was noted at the campus, but was never seen in use. VCR's, televisions, digital cameras, video cameras, and other resources were seen in storage or locked in offices, but no faculty used the equipment for instruction. A television at the front of the main conference room is often tuned to news broadcasts during the day.

In 1999, twenty laboratories were available at the college. Seven of these laboratories were for students in the teacher training sector, three for agriculture and forestry students, eight for medical students, and two for technology students (Hong Duc University, 1999b). In general, the labs were ill-equipped, poorly furnished, and insufficient for university-level research.

Two factors appear to hinder student learning at HDU. First, faculty are not academically prepared to train future professionals for Thanh Hoa. Faculty members'

insufficient academic preparation, dearth of pedagogical training, and lack of opportunity for research prevents them from participating in the mainstream of academic life. Second, the physical facilities are insufficient. Teachers lack the most basic instructional materials, such as useable chalkboards and textbooks. More advanced instructional resources, such as computers or VCR's, are virtually unavailable to the average HDU student or professor. The result is that student learning is wholly dependent on faculty lectures.

Limited access to instructional resources is a recurring complaint from faculty. Resources are kept under lock and key, and one university staff person has regular access to those keys. If this person be unavailable, so are the resources under this person's control. One faculty member complained that even when rooms are open, resources within the room might be locked. This faculty member had to postpone a student examination because when the faculty member attempted to type the test, the computer's mouse, while connected to the computer, was locked in the desk drawer (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). Resources seemed to be tightly controlled by one or two staff people responsible for access. Hours of opening for

some of the resources were unclear. Faculty members approached work rooms, attempted to open locked doors, then shrugged and left. One faculty member told of working in the faculty workroom at 3:30 p.m., several hours before the scheduled closing time, leaving the room to retrieve a package of printer paper, and returning to find the lights off and the door locked (faculty member, personal communication, May 2001). Judging by the reactions of most faculty members, few seem to mind the inconsistencies. Teaching faculty seem to rely heavily on prepared lectures and access to alternative teaching materials might not be important to them.

Student Body

According to the latest available enrollment figures from the 1998-99 academic year, Hong Duc University has 9,229 full-time, part-time and dual enrolled students in the technical secondary, college, and university levels (Dang, personal communication, May 2001). According to these statistics, the majority of HDU students are enrolled in either the teacher training program or the agriculture program. Of the 253 full-time university-level students at HDU, 203 (80%) of were enrolled in the teacher training program. The 50 remaining students in the university-level

programs were enrolled in the agriculture program. Enrollment at the college level is similar. Seventy-eight percent of the 3,368 full-time students at the college level were enrolled in the teacher training college. In terms of graduation ratio, the teacher training program accounts for 71% of HDU's university and college graduates. HDU's current strategic plan calls for a dramatic increase in student enrollment by 2010. University-level students are scheduled to increase from 253 students to 4100 students. Overall, enrollment is expected to grow from 9407 in 1998-99 to 11,080 by 2010. Although that statistic represents a net growth of only 1673 students, the population of students enrolled in university level programs will dramatically increase, shifting HDU's focus from college-level to more university level programs.

According to HDU's rector, only 5% of HDU's students are from Thanh Hoa City, and the remaining 95% come from the poor, rural areas throughout Thanh Hoa Province. About 40% of students live in university housing. The remainder of the students live with family in the local area or in rooms rented from local residents (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). Housing is currently available for approximately 2320 students. HDU projects that 3000 spaces

will be needed by 2005 (Hong Duc University, 1999b). Students pay 30,000 VND or \$1.82 a month to live in the residence facility (HDU student, personal communication, May 2001).

Students' daily lives.

The loud beating of a bass drum at 5:00 a.m. awakens the university community and begins the school day. By 5:15, students jog and perform calisthenics in the morning fog that hangs over the campus until the sun rises. By 6:00 a.m., students fill the breakfast stalls in the market and hurry to eat a bowl of *pho ga*, chicken noodle soup that is commonly eaten for breakfast in northern Vietnam. Students chat freely with the soup vendors and others seated around them. When the drum sounds again at 6:20, students run across the street to their first classes. Morning classes end just before noon, when many students return to the market for a quick lunch and shopping. By 12:30, the campus is still as the entire university community breaks for a short nap that ends with the banging of the drum. Afternoon classes begin at 1:30 and continue until 5:45 p.m., when the drum sounds one final time, and on-campus students rush back to the hostel compound before the gate nearest the campus is locked. The boys run to

their rooms, drop their books, and return shirtless in shorts, carrying soccer balls. They divide into several groups to play in their bare feet on the muddy, makeshift soccer fields until night falls. Some girls play badminton after classes, and others return to the market, wash clothes, or take care of other personal business. By 7:00 p.m., students have finished dinner and visit friends or gather with their books to study in groups under the sodium vapor lights which cast the campus in a pinkish-orange glow. Because the rooms are so crowded, many students study outdoors until near midnight every night; however, around exam-time, students study outdoors nearly all night. Students come and go all evening, standing in front of the buildings and shouting their friends' names, using the common interjection, *oi*, meaning, "Hey, come here." The summoned friend usually responds with, *oi*, and runs down the steps to join friends.

Although HDU students do not regularly wear uniforms to class, their dress is conservative and remarkably similar. Male students generally wear belted dark slacks, white shirts and sandals. Female students dress similarly, but with long shirts to cover their hips and hats over their hair, which is worn long and pulled back.

On special occasions and formal meetings, male students wear neckties and female students don *ao dai*, the traditional Vietnamese high collared tunic and slacks. Unlike the young people in Vietnam's larger, more sophisticated cities, Thanh Hoa's students generally do not wear blue jeans or other Western clothing.

Girls and boys typically separate into small groups, often walking arm in arm or hand in hand around the campus. Student conduct is generally reserved, and during her entire three-week site visit, the researcher witnessed none of the rambunctious behavior that is common to American university students. Occasionally, boys and girls study together in the evenings, but typically never mix in sports, recreation, or social activities. However, students will jokingly warn visitors to beware of "ghosts" when walking around the campus in the evenings. These apparitions turn out to be young couples who meet in the shadows once everyone is settled for the evening. Obvious to the visitor to HDU is this "culture of love," as some students call it. Students talk frequently of love and marriage and speculate endlessly about couples. Young faculty members are drawn into that social interaction. One twenty-five year old single male instructor worried that if

he did not find a mate soon, he would be too old to marry and start a family. Another twenty-four year old single professor confessed great anxiety when discussing marriage. When students meet someone for the first time, they immediately ask about marital status and the number of children a person has. When they meet a Westerner, students ask about dating and marriage customs and are often shocked at the differences between Vietnam's conservative customs and the more liberal dating customs in the West.

Generally, HDU students are open, friendly, and curious about visitors. Minh and Li (pseudonyms), two typical HDU students, agreed to talk over tea in a local café. Li is a nineteen-year-old, second-year English major from Thanh Hoa City. Unlike her classmates, she frequently dresses in designer jeans and drives her own Honda Dream, the relatively expensive status symbol of motorbikes in Vietnam. Li's parents are both local officials and seem to be able to provide for her. Minh is a twenty-one-year-old senior who will graduate from Hong Duc in a few weeks and leave Thanh Hoa. He comes from a very poor family, who live in a nearby fishing village and make a living by farming and fishing. Minh lives with distant relatives in Thanh Hoa

City and does house chores in exchange for room and board in their house a few blocks from the university.

Sitting outside Thanh Hoa's new café, Minh speaks in nearly perfect English about his life and experiences at HDU. He chose to attend the teacher education program at HDU because he "wanted to go to Hanoi National University, but my entrance exam was no good. Besides, I did not have the money to stay in Hanoi, either." That theme is common among HDU students. Clearly, Hanoi National is the preferred university, but admission is highly selective, and life in Vietnam's capital city is much more expensive than in Thanh Hoa. Consequently, many students who would like to attend university in Hanoi can not. Several students the researcher encountered had attend Hanoi National University, but they were either unable to compete academically or had to transfer to HDU for financial reasons. Li speaks through a translator because her English is not good enough to converse: "I really love Hanoi. I love the city, but I hate living in this small town. I started studying at Hanoi National University, but I had to leave. The academics are really hard there." Li attends HDU during the academic year, then spends summers in Hanoi with family.

Minh said of HDU's faculty, "They are really good people, really concerned about the students, really want us to do well. They really care." Li reiterated Minh's comments when asked what the best aspect of HDU was. Without hesitation, she said, "The teachers." Asked to elaborate, she said, "The teachers are what make HDU what it is. They do really care about their students. They want us to do well." As a student who is away from his family, Minh found the faculty to be an important part of a support system.

I don't get to see my family very often. They live far away, and I really miss them. My teachers help me through that. They help me because I know that they are watching me and making sure that I am doing what I should be doing. (Minh, personal communication, May 2001)

Minh believed that he was losing something by leaving HDU: "More than anything, I feel like I'm not ready to say that I am finished with my education. I feel that there is so much more for me to know." "Do you think that you are not prepared for your work?" the researcher asked.

No, it's not that, not really. My uncle lives in Poland. I really wish I could go there and study. Go

there, just go anywhere. I feel like I'm not ready to go to work for the rest of my life. (Minh, personal conversation, May 2001)

Li said, adding,

There is just so much in the world that we need to see, so much that we don't know about living here. But when will we ever have the chance? I just want to go somewhere different and see how people live. (Li, personal conversation, May 2001)

Minh nodded in agreement as Li spoke. Both students believed that by living in an isolated area of a country not known for its openness, they were missing much of the world.

The researcher asked again about academic preparation: "Do you feel prepared to teach your own classes?" Minh responded quickly, "Not really, I'm kind of scared." Minh says his preparation to teach lower secondary English took three years. He did two short observation periods, then a forty-five day student teaching period in the school at which he will work. He will be placed in a lower secondary school in his hometown and is required by law to accept this placement because the government paid his tuition. "I'll start at 410,000 dong a month (\$25), then I'll get a

raise after the first six months, then another raise after a year." Four hundred ten thousand dong a month is not enough money to live on, and Minh will need to make extra money, which he does not look forward to: "I know that I will not make enough money to live on. I'll have to find a second job as soon as I get there and start working."

Uninterested in discussing academics Li began chatting with one of the waiters as we continued our conversation.

Later, the researcher asked one of the British volunteers, who spend a great deal of time with the students, how the senior students seem to feel about graduating. "Actually," said Matt Whitlock, "this is it. This is the high point of their lives. This system makes them feel like they have no control over their lives" (Whitlock, personal conversation, May 2001). Minh reiterated that feeling:

I didn't even want to be a teacher, but I did not want my parents to have to pay for my college. That's why I came to HDU, now I'll have to go where the government tells me to go. At least I'll be near my family. Some students are sent far away from their families. But who knows, maybe my uncle can take me to Poland to

study for while. That would be great. (Minh, personal communication, May 2001)

Poverty and isolation.

Two themes emerged from conversations with students: poverty and isolation. HDU students are aware that they are isolated from a larger, more complex world, but they do not have an accurate idea of what the world outside of Vietnam is like. Unlike the people of southern Vietnam, very few northern Vietnamese have family in the West. Consequently, students in Thanh Hoa have an understanding of the West that is based on stereotypes and rumor. Many students visited the researcher in the hostel, were curious about common office supplies, books and other personal effects in her room, and inspected each item that was visible. One item that attracted great interest was a small packet of personal photographs of family and friends. A photograph that aroused great interest was of a group of people at a party. About fifteen people of various races, shapes and colors appeared in the photo, and students asked about each person with great interest. Another photograph that students were interested in was one taken inside of an American home. They were fascinated by the kitchen and the living room, asking many questions about the appliances and

electronics in the photos. They were so curious that the photos actually disappeared for a few days and were later returned by a student who said that she had taken them home to show her parents what "America looked like."

Students also seemed obsessed with crime, and asked many questions about personal safety in the United States. Said one student, "Are you afraid every day?" "No," the researcher responded. "Why should I be?" The student seemed shocked. "The crime, of course. You know, guns everywhere, people with too much freedom." Assured the researcher had never witnessed a violent crime in the United States, and knew of no one who had, the student was bewildered, asking about crime several times more. The researcher asked a group of students why they thought crime is rampant in the United States. The answer, of course, was television. American popular media is pervasive in Vietnam, even in small towns. During the day, Vietnamese television broadcasts a mix of politics, news, and Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean and Venezuelan soap operas. At night, sports, music and films, many from America, are shown. An hour of MTV is broadcast on a local channel two nights a week. Students' understanding of America comes from several sources: MTV, Vietnamese political programs

and American films depicting organized crime and violence. As one might imagine, Vietnamese students see American youth as unstructured kids with too much money and not enough parental guidance. One student asked the researcher, "Do students at your college have cars?" "Yes, the parking lot at my college is full of students' cars." One student caught questioned the researcher's logic. "But you said you worked at a community college." "Yes," the researcher told her. "But you said that community colleges are often attended by students who do not have enough money to attend universities." "Yes, that's true." The student was truly puzzled. "But how can the car park be full of cars if you have poor students?" The researcher tried to explain the demographics of the town where she lives, the sorry state of public transportation, and the relativity of the word poor, but the student could not understand. Students were also confused about the freedom that American college students enjoy. They were shocked to learn that most students leave their family homes at eighteen years old. One student asked, "Are American kids more mature than Vietnamese kids?" "How so?" the researcher asked. "You know, is an eighteen year old American different from and eighteen year old Vietnamese?" The researcher explained

that eighteen-year-old Vietnamese kids seemed more likely to see themselves as kids, accepting guidance from their parents. Eighteen-year-old American kids, on the other hand, see themselves as young adults, seeking independence from their parents. The students were obviously shocked and disturbed by this.

Nearly every student expressed a desire to study overseas. One student was particularly intrigued and at the same time frustrated by the idea. She spoke nearly perfect English, with a British accent, and knew that she had the talent to do more than teach junior high school.

I want to go out of the country to study. I know I could speak perfectly if I could just study in England or Scotland. If I could just get there, I know I could do the work. I just know it. (student, personal communication, May 2001)

Sadly, this student was nearly destitute, and once the group began discussing the particulars of studying abroad, quickly dismissed the idea of going abroad.

Unfortunately, poverty is a prevailing theme among students. Assuming that American and Vietnamese university students share something, the researcher presumed that Vietnamese university students look upon graduation with

hope, as their American counterparts do. On the contrary, most students said they to did not want to leave college because they knew that life would become difficult after graduation. One student said,

I would rather just stay here. The work is hard, but at least I don't have anything to worry about besides my school work. When I graduate, then what? I will make 410,000 dong a month. What can I do with that?

(student, personal communication, May 2001)

Asked if she had any hope that Vietnam would improve in the future, another student said, "The future? Why do we always have to talk about Vietnam in the future? I will graduate next year. What about then?" Many students believe that they will never recoup the money spent on their education, but not one student suggested that the experience is not worth the cost. Instead, every student appreciates the opportunity for an education and tries to enjoy the university.

Services for students.

Services for students are available at the university and are delivered by eleven staff members at HDU, who say that they are responsible for "student education and management" (Nguyen, S., personal interview, May 2001). The director of

this division lists seven responsibilities for the department:

1. Rating entrance exams;
2. Managing student studying;
3. Organizing student life;
4. Organizing student activities;
5. Assuring the morality of HDU students;
6. Keeping order in the lives of students;
7. Punishing students who break the law.

The researcher met with the director of student service and the entire student services staff, and the Vietnamese student services professionals focused on three topics: assuring the morality of students, keeping order in students' lives, and punishing students who break the law. The staff asked many questions about student services philosophies in the United States, and they were shocked by two things: the amount of privacy that students have, and the lack of punishment at universities in the United States do. Although they were surprised to learn that corporal punishment is never used in American higher education, they would not elaborate on their punishment philosophy or methods. Likewise, they were surprised that American student services personnel almost never contact students'

parents. HDU's student services staff meets formally with students' parents once each year. If a student gets into trouble, the university punishes the student, then calls the parents.

One interesting contrast arose with a person involved in arranging student activities. He said, "We have a real problem getting our students to attend leisure activities that we have planned for them in the evenings, do you have this problem in the U.S.?" Told that American universities face the same problem, the man rubbed his chin and said, "Yes, students just don't feel right about having fun when their parents have sacrificed so much to send them to college."

Several clubs do exist at HDU, including art and literature clubs and a popular English language club. In keeping with national "social evils" campaigns, HDU students are required to attend "social evils" meetings on the weekends. One staff member from student services commented that the department is vigilant in looking for social problems in the student body, but that so far, none had been found (Nguyen, S., personal interview, May 2001).

Several responsibilities of American student services personnel puzzled the HDU staff. Counseling seems to be a

foreign concept to the Vietnamese student services staff, and no one on the staff is academically qualified to counsel students. No personal counseling is done at HDU, and the staff could not understand why students who needed counseling were attending universities at all (student services staff, group interview, May 2001).

HDU student services staff also does not counsel students on career or postgraduate matters. Because the government no longer places graduates in jobs in the state sector once they leave universities, career counseling and placement will surely need to be implemented. Since *doi moi*, graduates must compete for employment positions in the private sector, and student services staff could assist students in making this transition. Student services staff had many questions about how American universities work with private businesses in cooperative learning programs and graduate placement. Clearly, Vietnamese student services staff will also need to be retrained to meet the needs of students who are being trained to work in Vietnam's new socio-economic environment.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the reader with an overview of the research design and the research questions that framed

the data collection. The study next described Thanh Hoa and Hong Duc University in a physical context, and chronicled the daily lives of the faculty, staff, students, and locals in the university community.

A discussion of the framework of university administration detailed HDU's organizational structure and provided a context in which academic, faculty, and student issues can be discussed. Faculty issues were presented to detail the daily lives and unique difficulties encountered by university faculty in a developing country. Findings on academic issues demonstrated the impact of socio-economic reforms on higher education. Findings on students were reported to detail students' daily lives and to give a sense of the dilemmas confronted by Thanh Hoa's youth.

In many ways, HDU is similar to universities in most developing countries. Faculty preparation is inadequate to meet the needs of students, physical facilities are poor, and instructional materials and textbooks are insufficient to meet students' needs. However, HUD confronts a very different problem from that of many universities in developing countries: Vietnam is a transitional economy. Economic reforms have reshaped the socio-economic landscape. The state economic sector is shrinking, and a

private sector is growing. Faculty members who were trained to work in the state sector now must rethink their teaching and retrain so that they can prepare students to work in the private sector. That retraining places a heavy burden on a faculty and staff that is already stretched to the limit. Although HDU needs to train workers for the new economic system, the university must first retrain its faculty so that they are prepared to train workers for the province.

CHAPTER V

The Influence of Hong Duc University

Introduction

Chapter four of this study presented a synthesis of the data that is needed to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this study. This chapter presented a holistic account of daily life in and around Hong Duc University, specifically, relevant background information placed HDU within the context of the local and national issues that inspired the university's founding. Next, a synthesis of the data collected during the field study was presented. Finally, an in-depth analysis of the data collected was presented to show HDU within the context of the local community and the organizational units of the university community.

Chapter Five will use the synthesized data from the previous chapter to answer the research questions that were posed to gather information about the impact of Hong Duc University on Thanh Hoa Province. Specifically, these questions were designed to elicit information in three areas: the university's influence on the local environment; the university's relevance to a transitional society; and the university's openness to international relations as a

mode of development. Within the framework of these research questions, several principal themes that place HDU at the center of a sphere of influence in the region have emerged. This sphere of influence is relatively small because HDU is only four years old; however, it will continue to grow as HDU continues to expand and graduate more students who will assume more positions in the province. Thanh Hoa Province is rural and isolated, with one urban center from which all official channels of local government emanate. The Thanh Hoa People's Committee headquarters is located in Thanh Hoa City, and is the official link between this largely agricultural area and the central government in Hanoi, whose sweeping policy changes affect the daily lives of Thanh Hoa's people. Hong Duc University is responsible for providing access to higher education that is relevant to Vietnam's changing socioeconomic environment.

As in any qualitative case study, this research does not treat Hong Duc University as a representative of Vietnamese provincial universities. On the contrary, this case study is a holistic examination of one university, its faculty, staff, students and community. Hong Duc was selected for this case study because Hanoi has identified it as a new model for a provincial university (People's

Committee of Thanh Hoa & Hong Duc University, 1999). If Hong Duc is successful, then other provinces in Vietnam will be able to learn from Thanh Hoa as they develop their provinces and reform their higher education systems.

Chapter 5 presents the evidence that HDU impacts the local area. The university provides the necessary connection between the national policymakers in Hanoi and the local people, who struggle to adopt national reforms on a local level and adapt to life in a new economic environment. The university monitors national policy and the resulting regional needs, and works with local people to provide educational resources. Two interesting conclusions are reached about HDU's relationship with the region. First, HDU influences the local environment through academic programs that educate the local people and stimulate change in the local environment. Second, the educated people of Thanh Hoa stimulate change at the university. That symbiotic relationship is creating a dynamic flow of information that improves the quality of both the region and the university. For the remainder of this chapter, each research question will be used to frame a specific discussion about the impact of Hong Duc University. Each question will be stated, followed by a

detailed account of the related themes that emerged from a synthesis of the data collected will be presented.

Research Question One: How Does Hong Duc University Influence the Local Environment?

This question was posed because HDU is a provincial university that was created to help with the development of Thanh Hoa Province. The two main purposes of the university are to train and retrain the human resources of the province and to provide a transfer of technological solutions to Thanh Hoa's problems. Because Hong Duc University is the only university in Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam's second largest province, its sphere of influence is of particular importance. The 3.7 million people of the province depend on Hong Duc to provide education needed to sufficiently develop the workforce to meet the region's needs in the new economic environment. The relationship between HDU and the region is not a static, one-way transfer of information, though. The university and the region stimulate change in each other. Changing regional needs define HDU. As the university continues to educate the population of Thanh Hoa, the people of Thanh Hoa in turn stimulate change at the university. The result is a

dynamic, symbiotic relationship that keeps both the university and the region alive.

Observations, interviews, personal conversations, and documents collected during the field visit for this study confirm that Hong Duc University influences the region in several ways. First, the university influences the local area through its academic programs, which are localized and provide educational opportunities that would not otherwise be available to Thanh Hoa's residents. Second, the university impacts Thanh Hoa's economic environment in two ways. First, many local people are employed directly by the university. Second, the campus has stimulated regional commerce in a way that would not be possible without the presence of the university. Finally, the university has altered the social environment through both the introduction of foreigners into the local area and the cultural activities that the university sponsors.

Academic Impact

Hong Duc University's academic programs impact Thanh Hoa because of their emphasis on community development and the manner in which they stimulate a flow of information between the various sectors in the province and the university's academic departments. Specifically, evidence

suggests that HDU's academic programs influence the three major sectors of Thanh Hoa's environment: education, agriculture, and medicine. Evidence further suggests that the business department is still struggling to redefine itself in the new economic environment. Localized academic content, field experiences, and research projects allow students to focus their academic experiences on Thanh Hoa's problems. Hong Duc University trained nearly 5,230 full-time students in 1998-99 and plans to increase that number to 6,000 by 2005, and to 8,000 by the year 2010. HDU currently has 11,500 graduates in Thanh Hoa Province, and as the university continues to grow, so will its influence in the local area (Hong Duc University, 1999b).

Teacher training is HDU's greatest area of academic influence. HDU (or its former incarnation, Thanh Hoa Teacher Training College) trains or has trained nearly every public school teacher in the province. In 1999, Thanh Hoa Province employed 35,000 public school teachers. It will be responsible for the training of an additional 7,100 new teachers by 2005 (Hong Duc University, 1999b). HDU's teacher education curriculum is localized, and students study regional education problems so that they will be prepared to understand Thanh Hoa's unique educational

problems once they begin working. Although still engaged in formal academic study, students participate in two field experiences in which they observe public schools and be assigned token classroom management tasks by the regular classroom teachers. These observations, according to students who have completed them, are designed to familiarize participants with classroom routines and to expose them to different types of schools. When most of their coursework is complete, students engage in an eighteen-month practice teaching experience which permits students to practice their newly acquired teaching skills.

Aside from the regular full-time teacher training programs, in-service programs offer local public school teachers with outdated training an opportunity to come to HDU to update their skills. These programs are beneficial to the educational sector because they stimulate a flow of information between the university and the public schools. The public schools benefit because HDU provides updated pedagogical training to teachers in the province. The University benefits because the teachers who come to HDU for retraining keep the university up to date on the training needs of public school teachers.

That symbiotic relationship is demonstrated by the relationship between the university and the public schools. The University trains nearly all of Thanh Hoa's public school teachers. Indirectly, HDU has a chance to groom the young pupils who will eventually become HDU students. The quality of Thanh Hoa's public schools depends in part on the quality of HDU's teacher training program. In turn, the quality of HDU's teacher training program depends in part on the quality of Thanh Hoa's public schools. If effect, HDU affects the lives of nearly every person who has been a part of the educational system in the province.

HDU influences the region through field study opportunities and academic research projects that focus on local issues. Faculty and students work directly with local workers to identify problems and study solutions that improve the quality of life in Thanh Hoa. Research projects in the agriculture and forestry and medical departments are at the center of HDU's influence in these two sectors.

Eighty per cent of Thanh Hoa's population work in the state and private agricultural sectors, so the work of the agriculture and forestry department directly affects the majority of the population. Nearly all agricultural extension services in Thanh Hoa Province are provided

through the agriculture and forestry department. The localized agro-forestry programs infuse local content into academic coursework, research activities and field experiences so that students understand regional issues before entering the field. Early in their coursework, students formally study the local agriculture to gain an academic understanding of issues affecting Thanh Hoa's farmers. Once students have an academic foundation in local agricultural problems, they are required to work in cooperative arrangements with farmers so that they will understand the problems and working conditions that they will encounter after graduation. Toward the end of their formal coursework, students engage in field research designed to give them an opportunity to participate in the daily lives of agricultural workers. Students enter the field, work with farmers to identify problems affecting their lives, and then work with faculty to research solutions. The students and faculty then transfer solutions directly to the farmers who need them. In this instance, the university impacts the local area, not only by training students to be leaders in the agricultural sector but also by helping to solve problems in the largest sector of Thanh Hoa's economy. The programs are particularly effective

because they give students an academic background in local problems, and they commit the resources of the university to solving problems which affect the quality of life of the majority of Thanh Hoa's people.

Like the teacher training program, the agro-forestry program also stimulates a dynamic exchange of information between the university and the local agricultural workers. The university helps to prepare students and send them into the field with solutions to problems that affect people's daily lives. The students return to the university with information about regional agricultural needs. Because of this flow of information, the needs of the local workforce are never far from the decision makers in the academic departments.

Another area of HDU's academic influence is in Thanh Hoa's public health sector. Infectious diseases, malnutrition, and high birth rates are all life threatening problems in Thanh Hoa, and the medical department is directly involved in both researching these problems and training students to help find regional solutions. Like the agriculture and forestry department, the medical department also requires both field study and research of its students. Furthermore, the faculty is involved in

formal exchange programs within in the health sector. In an arrangement with Thanh Hoa's provincial hospitals, faculty members and students go to the hospitals for practical experience while hospital workers lecture at the university. That arrangement ensures that students have practical experience before entering the workforce, which is critically important if young graduates are to be effective. Likewise, lecturers also have recent practical experiences to draw on as they teach their students. That arrangement also ensures that local health professionals keep current in their fields as they prepare lectures. The health problems are especially difficult in Thanh Hoa's 629 communes, where 136 doctors account for only one-fifth of the necessary level (Hong Duc University, 1999b). Communal health workers have very little access to updated health information, so students and faculty go into these areas to identify and research local problems. Solutions are then taken directly to the area where they are needed. One particular research project that directly impacts the local community is one that attempts to determine the best mode of transmission for family planning information in remote areas, where high birth rates exacerbate poverty. Funded by the United Nations, the program is designed specifically to

place faculty and students in the field to work on the problem of high birth rates. Another component of this program offers health workers in remote areas of Thanh Hoa an opportunity to come to the university on a rotating work-study basis so that they have the most current family planning information available. Another recent medical program involves students and faculty working in the remote areas to educate local people about the problem of malnutrition. These programs carry much-needed solutions to local problems directly to the people who need them. In turn, the faculty and students in the field gain an understanding of local demands in the medical sector and carry this information back to the university.

Access to educational opportunities.

Access to educational opportunities is another way that Hong Duc University impacts the local area. In the past, Vietnamese higher education has been criticized for its irrelevance and distance from the people who need it most. A highly select group of students traveled far from home, studied philosophy, poetry, and the Confucian texts, and returned as highly educated mandarins who could actually do very little. Quite the opposite, Hong Duc University is accessible to local people who need higher

education in order to work in the new economic environment of Vietnam. As a provincial university, HDU was founded with the needs of the local population at the center of its mission. The university provides affordable educational opportunities, often to non-traditional students, where none existed before. Students can remain in their home province and attend college without having to pay high fees and living expenses in Hanoi.

Retraining needs for local workers are met through a variety of in-service training programs designed to assist Thanh Hoa's local workers who were trained before *doi moi*. These programs directly address local employment demands. Customarily, Vietnamese adults do not attend university once beyond traditional college age (18-24). Unlike the more traditional programs at HDU in which students are young and inexperienced, these in-service programs serve the more experienced adult population of Thanh Hoa.

HDU also cooperates in several grant-funded poverty reduction projects that include in-service training of local people as part of their goals. Some of these projects offer training in technology or English language to make their education more relevant to the new demands being placed on them.

The issue of access to educational opportunities is also addressed in the affordable cost of HDU. Thanh Hoa is a poor province, and for financial reasons, many talented students often choose not to attend college. HDU's tuition is much lower than the tuition at any of Hanoi's universities, and offers students an affordable, practical education. Furthermore, many students receive financial aid through national scholarship programs. Because of Vietnam's severe teacher shortage, teacher-training students, HDU's majority population, receive full tuition scholarships, and are responsible only for paying room and board. Other national scholarships programs provide cash assistance to academically talented students. These programs make attending HDU possible for poor students.

Local impact.

Hong Duc University also impacts the local economic environment through employing local residents, and stimulating regional commerce. HDU employs more than 800 people, including teaching faculty, administrators and staff. A 1999 university report indicates 771 employees (Hong Duc University, 1999b), but this number has grown, according to a university administrator (personal communication, administrator, May 2001). A 1999 decision by

the People's Committee of Thanh Hoa approved the incremental recruitment of 100 teaching faculty, 80 to be hired immediately to fill the current shortage (People's Committee of Thanh Hoa, 1999b). Although official figures are not yet published, the teaching faculty has likely increased by the proposed 80-100 people. Because most of Thanh Hoa City's workers are employed in household or small manufacturing enterprises, Hong Duc is one of the larger single employers in the city. HDU's status as an employer is likely to grow, since the university's current development plan calls for an increase of 1,673 students within the next nine years (Hong Duc University, 1999b). More than likely, the university will continue to request permission to hire more faculty and staff.

HDU has also stimulated commerce in the region. As many as 150 permanent businesses operate in and around the local market. Local shopkeepers say that the university is at the center of their business activities, and that without the university, they would have no business. Located directly across the street from the campus, the market keeps a large supply of convenience foods, school supplies, clothing and personal items for students who have nowhere else to shop. The market also sells traditional

items such as meat, rice, vegetables and live poultry to the families of faculty and staff who live nearby. Vendors in the outside areas of the market compound make a living selling soup, rice and noodles to students for breakfast and lunch. Outside the market grounds, the streets are lined with permanent businesses, such as restaurants and shops that cater to the needs of the university community. A service industry has also emerged. Residents use the first-floors of their homes to make clothing or photocopies, or offer the use of their home telephones for a fee. Property owners lease homes and rooms to students, faculty and staff. A secondary tier of informal, temporary commerce has also emerged. Transient entrepreneurs set up on street corners to fix bicycles, offer rides to students on personal motorbikes, or to sell a few pieces of fruit or boiled eggs. The streets surrounding the university are full of people doing business. Without Hong Duc and its faculty, staff, and students, these businesses would not be operating.

Hong Duc University impacts the local social environment through the introduction of foreigners into the local areas and through cultural activities held at the university.

Until only recently, Vietnamese society could be characterized as highly Confucian. The society was static and oriented toward the past, without regard to the world in a larger context. Small, remote areas of the country, such as Thanh Hoa Province, have retained many Confucian characteristics, but Hong Duc University is introducing foreigners to the local community. Aside from French colonists, Thanh Hoa has had very limited experience with foreigners. Most of the recent foreigners to visit the province have been humanitarian aid workers. However, since the university has been encouraging international partnerships with institutions and organizations abroad, foreign visitors are becoming more common. Although the local people are somewhat reticent in their interaction with foreigners, they are friendly and curious, if reserved. They stare intently at an unfamiliar foreigner in the area, and whisper amongst themselves. Personal experience with the local people was friendly and pleasant, and after a period of inspection, they carefully approached and eventually became quite friendly and helpful, coyly asking questions in an effort to become better acquainted. The shopkeepers wanted to share their experiences with the British volunteers, often using them as an opener for

conversations. They spoke of the boys in a sophisticated manner, and through their contact with them, have become accustomed to seeing foreigners in the area. They now say that they are not as surprised as they were in the past when they see foreigners in the area.

The students at HDU are curious about foreigners, and clearly take advantage of opportunities to interact with overseas visitors. Students visit foreign guests frequently, and spend a great deal of time with the British volunteers that spend each year at HDU. Although the English language students use these opportunities to practice their speaking skills, they clearly wanted to know about the world outside of Vietnam. They ask many questions about the outside world, and are curious about people and places different from that which they are familiar. This openness is somewhat surprising, considering the fact that 95% of HDU's students come from remote areas far from Thanh Hoa City.

HDU also influences Thanh Hoa's social environment by the many events that are held on the campus. Very little formal entertainment is available to the local people, and what is available is, for the most part, unaffordable. Consequently, the entertainment, musical competitions or

other events held on campus tend to draw large crowds because they are free and often open to the public. This serves the community in two ways. First, community people have an opportunity to participate in free campus events. Furthermore, community people who would not normally visit a university campus are drawn to HDU for the entertainment. As local people become more familiar with the university through casual visits, they may be more interested in sending their children to HDU.

In summary, HDU influences the local environment academically, economically, and socially. The university's localized academic programs which reach into the various sectors of the province are specifically designed to do two things. First, these programs train new workers to meet the immediate local demands of the new economy, and retrain currently employed workers who find that their skills are irrelevant to the reformed economic environment. Second, these programs provide practical solutions to problems faced by Thanh Hoa's teachers, medical workers, and farmers by sending students out for significant field experiences. These programs stimulate an exchange of information between HDU and the local community.

HDU also impacts the local area by providing access for educational opportunities to a population who, because they are poor, have no other access to higher education. Furthermore, the university expands educational opportunities to the adult population through in-service training programs for community leaders and workers. These programs are designed both for workers whose skills are outdated and for local leaders who are involved in poverty reduction projects. These projects bring community leaders to the university to improve their English, learn computer skills, or update their management skills.

Finally, HDU impacts the regional socioeconomic environment. First, the university directly employs nearly 800 people, making it one of the larger single employers in the province, and by stimulating regional commerce in businesses and services nearby the university. HDU also influences the local area by stimulating social changes. First, the university sponsors several foreign visitors each year, making the presence of foreigners increasingly common. Secondly, local people who would not otherwise visit a university campus come to HDU to attend social events, and attend cultural activities.

Hong Duc University positively impacts the region in several ways. Academic programs, economic stimulation and social and cultural activities in the university community are transforming the region. Although these transformations seem small now, they will continue to grow as Hong Duc University continues to expand to meet regional needs.

Research Question Two: What Relevance Does Hong Duc University Have to a Society In Transition?

Doi moi drastically changed Vietnam's socio-economic system. Ten years of post-war revolutionary euphoria, socialist reforms, and strict collectivization policies were suddenly halted. The government abandoned bureaucratic centralism and state subsidization for an approach that established a parallel economy of private enterprise and free market competition alongside a much scaled down state sector. These changes put enormous pressure on the higher education system, which desperately needed to reform in order to meet the education and training demands of the new economic environment. Once *doi moi* was implemented, universities immediately found themselves irrelevant to the transitional society (Walker, Vu & Dang, 1996). As the economic system began to evolve into its current multi-sector arrangement, the educational system seemed to remain

static. Industries developed and world markets opened, but higher education was slow to respond (Chao & Natali, 1999). Both the universities and the workforce that they were responsible for training were unprepared for such sweeping changes. Faculty, many of whom were trained in the highly specialized former Eastern Bloc higher educational systems, suddenly found their academic preparation to be outdated, even useless. Further exacerbating problems on university campuses, the curriculum was suddenly grossly outdated, as were textbooks and other instructional materials.

To complicate the problem, MOET began decentralizing university funding to higher education, while increasing expectations for reform. During the fifteen years since *doi moi* was implemented, Vietnam has been searching for cost effective ways to modernize its higher education system. Localities were directed to renovate their higher education systems to meet the needs of the reformed economy (MOET, UNDP & UNESCO, 1992). Thanh Hoa Province's solution to this problem was to consolidate three small, specialized colleges into one multidisciplinary, multilevel university that focused on the training needs of the province. An analysis of the synthesized data reveals that although Hong Duc was created as a local response to *doi moi*,

socioeconomic changes continue to pose enormous challenges to the university. Data collection at Hong Duc University reveals that socioeconomic changes drive the training needs in the province and, therefore, must drive the work of the university.

Three themes relating to HDU's relevance to a society in transition emerged from a synthesis of the data collected at the research site. The first concerned HDU's response to the changing educational needs of the region and the university's need to modernize. HDU was created to prepare local residents to work in the new economic environment. The university is responsible for monitoring the education and training needs of the province; nearly everyone interviewed raised that issue. For HDU to meet the training demands of the region, the university must modernize immediately. Nearly every person who spoke at length with the researcher raised the issue of the university's struggle to keep pace with the rest of the world.

Another theme that repeatedly arose in formal interviews, conversations with faculty and administrators, and in university documents was the need for faculty to update their training to understand the new system and to

be prepared to teach students. Closely related to the need to upgrade faculty skills is the need to upgrade curriculum, textbooks, and teaching materials to reflect the needs of the new economy. Thanh Hoa is a poor province whose educational system would struggle even if Vietnam's economic system had been stable since 1975. The systemic changes made in the socio-economic system keep Hong Duc's faculty and curriculum out of date.

Responsiveness to the changing educational needs of a transitional society.

The dramatic socioeconomic changes resulting from *doi moi* placed enormous strain on Thanh Hoa Province's educational system. Before 1986, Thanh Hoa's typical skilled laborer was educated locally and worked in the state agricultural, educational, industrial, or medical sectors. The path for successful high school graduates was predictable. After passing rigorous national graduation and national university entrance exams, students were placed into government-sponsored training programs according to local needs. Once graduated, they were placed in state sector jobs that they kept for life. State sponsored training programs were highly specialized and trained students to work within a narrow state sector. After 1986,

that scheme was abandoned. Private sector workers were suddenly in demand as the state sector dominance of the labor market diminished and the local private sector expanded. MOET no longer controlled the admissions process, subsidized all university studies, or guaranteed jobs for graduates.

According to the university rector, *doi moi* marked a turning point in Thanh Hoa's educational priorities. Where primary education and universal literacy had been the regional priority, now higher education became the focus of provincial educational efforts (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). The newly emerging private sector demanded better-trained technical workers who understood how to work in private enterprise. A workforce with relevant skills and training was critical to companies who wanted to localize labor and management. Graduates now needed to be prepared to provide leadership in a new economic environment. According to Rector Dang, (personal interview, May 2001), businesses, some of them foreign-owned, began developing in the province. Cement factories, sugar refineries, fish canneries, construction material factories, and gemstone mines began to demand a highly skilled technical workforce.

These private businesses relied on Hong Duc University to train skilled technical workers and managers.

Still, Hong Duc University struggles to keep pace with a changing economy. As Vietnam's social-economic environment continues to evolve, HDU's attentions are divided. First, the university is attempting to keep pace with the current needs of the new economy by both training a new generation of workers and retraining older workers whose skills are outdated. Although those efforts are difficult in a developing country, the university currently faces the problem of trying to upgrade the province's workforce before the school can upgrade its own faculty. Just as socio-economic change made workers' education irrelevant, so, too, have the skills of faculty become irrelevant. Each department expressed the need to modernize the university, upgrade faculty skills, and upgrade curriculum and instructional materials. Despite seriously limited human and financial resources, Hong Duc University is attempting to meet the needs of the transitional society.

The Prime Minister's decision that authorized the establishing of Hong Duc University states two purposes for the university. First, HDU will train workers to meet the

socio-economic demands of Thanh Hoa Province. Second, HDU will assist with researching and developing solutions to local problems (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1997). The university rector understands the need for the university to monitor and meet local training demands and in interviews repeatedly raises the issue of the university's relevance to the transitional society. He notes that HDU was founded for this purpose, and will "continue to monitor the industries in Thanh Hoa, so that we can continuously train a highly skilled technical workforce for the province" (Dang, personal interview, May 2001).

Procedures appear to be in place to track HDU's relevance to the changing regional workforce. The director of academic affairs describes a system that HDU has adopted to work with private sector businesses and industries. Although his department has historically arranged practical experiences for students on farms, in public schools and hospitals, and in other state sectors, he also must now work with private sector farms and businesses to arrange practical experience programs. As he arranges students' field experiences, he talks with private entrepreneurs about their training needs, then takes the information to a University training committee that is responsible for

curriculum decisions (Tri, personal interview, May 2001). Although that actually seems logical for a university director of academic affairs, it is novel in Vietnam. Before *doi moi*, Hanoi had tightly controlled both the economy and the material taught in university training programs. As part of Vietnam's decentralization of higher education, the university will now be responsible for services that Hanoi had always provided.

The Director of Science Management took a similar tack: "No matter what, students need to understand technology. The world today is all about technology." He saw technological training as a sort of educational baseline from which all students should begin. Once that baseline was established, the students could be trained in any number of areas. "The new society needs technology and workers, all workers, who know technology. That's what we need to do. We must train our students to use technology first" (Nguyen, S., personal interview, May 2001). The administrator's solution to training workers in technology was to aggressively seek funding for projects that would pay for computer hardware and software. Among those initiatives is a recently-funded World Bank project that

will build an electronic library on the campus and equip it with computers and software.

Several documents also address Hong Duc's relevance to the society in transition. According to a grant proposal submitted to the World Bank on behalf of HDU (Hong Duc University, 1999a), the rapid course of industrialization, modernization, and development of the private sector has prompted dramatic growth in jobs that require qualified, skilled laborers. That growth challenges HDU to be more responsive to Thanh Hoa's constantly changing socioeconomic demands. This response begins with training young adults to fill immediate needs in business, education, technology, and medicine. However, an important component of this response is retraining currently employed workers in these same fields. Older workers trained under the old system now lack the relevant skills needed in the workforce. HDU currently has an in-service training program for the retraining of adult workers. According to HDU's current strategic plan, the in-service training program will be reduced in the next ten years so that the university can devote a greater proportion of its resources to training traditional-aged students, who will make up a greater proportion of the university's students.

The need for an appropriately trained faculty.

A second theme regarding the relevance of Hong Duc University to a society in transition is the need for an appropriately trained faculty. Most of HDU's faculty was trained before *doi moi*, either in the former Eastern Bloc or in Vietnam's Soviet-style higher education system that was established after the war. All faculty interviewed expressed a need for retraining, but interviews with faculty in the business department revealed a pressing need to retrain faculty. *Doi moi* was fundamentally an economic reform program that affected the business sector more than any other. The director of business reported that he has been attempting to upgrade his faculty's skills since *doi moi* was introduced but has been struggling because of insufficient funds and opportunities. Asked to describe exactly how *doi moi* has affected his department, he said:

Doi moi changed everything. The faculty was originally trained by the central government to work in the 'fixed' program. Now, all that has changed. People need to be able to teach their students to work in the new environment, but they must be retrained first. We have done a lot of retraining and we to have a lot more to do. (Vu, personal interview, May 2001)

He also discussed the aspect of *doi moi* that has posed the greatest challenge for his department as he faces the problem of upgrading the skills of the business faculty.

The variety of sectors in the economy. In the past, we only had one state sector. That's all we had to prepare our students for. Now, we have joint ventures, a household sector, a state sector and a private sector. We must be ready to meet all of their needs. (Vu, personal interview, May 2001)

These retraining efforts are difficult to implement. In general, faculty must be sent outside the university for retraining. A small number of professors go to Hanoi and are compensated, but their positions often remain unfilled until they return, causing the remaining faculty to have to teach additional classes. The administration prefers to send faculty to Thailand or China, but they must first be proficient in English to participate in international conferences or training. Opportunities for professional development for business faculty are rare. Consequently, the Director of Business says that his faculty often relies on teaching each other and attending staff classes to improve their English. They hope that once they are English

proficient, that they will be sent out of the country for retraining.

Other departments such as pedagogy, agriculture, and medicine report that they, too, need retraining to keep them relevant to the needs of a changing society. Each department participates in English classes so that they can participate in international training and meetings.

The Director of International Relations and Science Management again stresses a need for a technologically sophisticated faculty. As he began to implement the electronic library project, he noted that many administrators, fewer teaching faculty, and almost no students have even the most rudimentary computer skills. He stressed that the project could not move forward until the faculty were trained to use computers. For this retraining effort, staff classes were used to help faculty gain critical computer skills (Nguyen, S., personal interview, May 2001). HDU's Library Director added that from his perspective, the library project could not move forward "without funds for training faculty to use the technology that will be purchased for the library" (Nguyen, T., personal interview, May 2001). Clearly, a technologically

sophisticated faculty will make the university more relevant to the changing society.

The relevance of curriculum and teaching materials.

A major aspect of the university's relevance to a transitional society is the relevance of its curriculum and teaching materials. Although *doi moi* has rendered much faculty training obsolete, it has also created a need to upgrade curriculum, textbooks, and other teaching materials. The problem of upgrading curriculum may solve itself. Hong Duc has an advantage in that it is a relatively new university that appears to be changing its focus by establishing new education and training programs. Although Hong Duc did retain the original curricula from its three founding colleges, the institution was established as a university, not a college. This means that new university level programs with new curricula were established. Furthermore, HDU's current strategic development plan (Hong Duc University, 1999b) calls for discontinuing the vocational secondary training program. The plan also calls for small increases in college- and university-level training programs and larger increases in the university level training programs from 253 students in 1998- 99 to 4100 students by the year 2010. These

university-level programs should be launched with new curricula since 86% of them are brand new programs.

Lack of access to technology impedes HDU's relevance to a society in transition. The global academic community regards computer use as commonplace, but HDU's faculty has not yet arrived at this conclusion. The university does have computers, though not nearly enough for all of the faculty, staff, administrators, and students who need them. Efforts are underway to purchase more computers with grant money, and some new computers have been arriving at the university. The problem of access does not lie just in the number of computers available. Facilities management is at times illogical, as computers sit locked away while students and staff need to use them. A sound management plan needs to be put in place so that the machines can be secure yet accessible. In addition to problems with hardware, the university faculty lacks access to updated computer software. Old software is common as are copied CD-ROM's that can not be installed without original packaging. If HDU's faculty and students are to regard themselves as members of a larger global academic community, they need access to same tools that most members of that community have.

Instructional technology would also make HDU more relevant to the needs of the changing society. Student learning relies solely on faculty lectures. Very little instructional technology is used, although it is available. Televisions and VCR's sit in conference rooms and language labs virtually unused because of unpredictable hours and other facilities management problems.

The condition of textbooks and teaching materials is serious. Both teachers and students use photocopies of outdated textbooks and another teaching materials. Several English teachers showed me copies of their textbooks, which were outdated, photocopied, laminated British volumes. Vietnamese language textbooks in the technologies are nonexistent. Old textbooks in the technologies, sciences, business administration, and economics are conceptually outdated. One teacher in the natural sciences keeps an old Russian-language text because he is familiar with the concepts it contains. Several teaching faculty and administrators cite the lack of updated textbooks as an obstacle that Hong Duc University must overcome if it is to modernize. HDU does have some new textbooks, but many of them are English-language desk copies that have been donated by Hong Duc's overseas partners. These books are of

little value to most of HDU's faculty since their English language skills are so limited. The university relies heavily on faculty to be able to teach from English language textbooks. This lack of useful teaching materials not only keeps Hong Duc from having updated print materials for students, but also forces students to rely more on faculty lectures for knowledge.

Hong Duc University is trying to meet the needs of the changing Vietnamese society. The university needs to train and retrain the regional workforce to meet the current demands of the new economic environment. However, *doi moi* caught higher education unprepared. Consequently, the university is not yet prepared to train workers in the new environment. HDU must upgrade and reform before it can be completely effective in training regional workers. However, it is likely that as the university grows, new programs will be introduced (Hong Duc University, 1999b), new curricula will be taught in these programs, and recruitment efforts will attract new, better-qualified faculty.

Research Question 3: How is Hong Duc University Developing Through Its International Partnerships?

Hong Duc University's collaborative international projects are an example of entrepreneurial activities that assist with developing the region and the university. Tied directly to HDU's mission statement, those projects directly assist with developing Thanh Hoa Province. A secondary purpose of these projects is as a means to develop and modernize Hong Duc University. Managed by the International Relations Office, these projects reflect the entrepreneurial attitude that is needed to drive the development of HDU and the local area. Far from the government center of Hanoi and the commercial center of Ho Chi Minh City, Thanh Hoa has been removed from many of the world changes that prompted Vietnam's economic reforms. Even today, people in this remote city are aware of some of the events and trends that shape the world but distance themselves from them. "Social Evils" campaigns, launched in Hanoi and aimed at Vietnamese youths, warn against Westernizing. HDU students are sometimes required to attend "Social Evils" meetings to hear stern warnings about morality. Several administrators at HDU, however, are aware that the university must join the world academic community

if the university and the local area is to modernize. International cooperation has been a part of Hong Duc University almost since the university opened. These projects link the university with the changing society in Thanh Hoa.

Several international projects are tied to Hong Duc's overall mission to research local problems, develop solutions, and transfer technology to the community. The agriculture and medical programs work closely with international organizations in programs designed to improve the quality of life in Thanh Hoa.

The agriculture and forestry program has participated for several years in a joint program called the Agricultural Educational Center (AEC), funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the World University Service (WUSC). HDU is one of four partners, with Fraser Valley College, Selkirk College, and Olds College in Canada. This program has completed phase one and is now beginning phase two, worth \$400,000 Canadian dollars. The focus of this phase of the project is poverty reduction in Thanh Hoa through the study of plant tissue culture and hybrid rice cultivation.

The medical program is also involved in several efforts to improve the life in the province. Funds from the World Health Organization (WHO) allow HDU to take nutrition projects into the province in an effort alleviate malnutrition in the rural areas. The Health Volunteer Organization (HVO), an American program designed to improve health care in developing countries, provides funds for training health workers in the province. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) provides much-needed funds for family planning programs that HDU facilitates in the province.

These international cooperation programs accomplish two important goals. First, they allow Hong Duc's faculty to participate in global projects that connect them to international faculty and aid workers who bring with them updated research and information. Second, they allow Hong Duc to be a channel for vital information and services needed in the province. Without international partnerships, that help would not be possible.

Hong Duc University is also pursuing international projects designed to develop the university in several ways. Some projects provide equipment, supplies and teaching materials that assist with modernizing the

university. Other projects assist with faculty and curriculum development. Finally, some projects provide direct financial assistance, most likely through in-direct cost line items in grant proposals.

Several of Hong Duc's international projects benefit the university by providing equipment, supplies, and teaching materials, all of which are needed to modernize the university. CIDA, the World Bank, and HVO provide computers for various projects, including the agricultural programs, the library, and the medical program. Several of the programs, including some of the institutional partnerships, the World Bank, and CIDA, provide new textbooks, language tapes, and other teaching materials to the university. Several organizations, including Rutgers University, CIDA, and HVO, provided instructional equipment, particularly in the medical and agricultural fields. A World Bank project will update the library by providing funds for computers, furniture, and storage.

Two projects have or will provide major additions to HDU's infrastructure. Funds from CIDA have built the HDU's demonstration farm, a structure just outside the downtown area of Thanh Hoa. The demonstration farm has several fields, smaller plots, ponds, and outbuildings for students

to use in local research. On the main campus, funds from the World Bank are being used to upgrade the library to include a new electronic facility. This project includes a major renovation of existing facilities.

A National Security Education Project (NSEP) partners Tidewater Community College (TCC) and Hong Duc University in a program that provides funds for faculty exchange. In the summer of 2001, an HDU administrator visited Tidewater and met with faculty and administrators in several departments to discuss university administration. In the summer of 2002, a group of TCC faculty and students will travel to HDU. TCC faculty will be paired with HDU faculty to assist with pedagogical issues, and TCC students will participate in a service learning project with Vietnamese students.

Few of these projects can be successful if they do not include a substantial professional development component for faculty. Many of the international projects address faculty development. Because HDU's faculty is, for the most part, not adequately prepared, most projects designed to assist with modernizing the university must begin by upgrading faculty skills. No project can move forward without a faculty that is technically competent and

actively involved in research projects that connect them with their academic disciplines and with a larger global academic community. Many of these projects focus on teaching English to faculty, who will be able to develop their professional skills once they are English proficient. Faculty who participate in these projects plan to take advantage of professional development opportunities abroad, use English-language textbooks donated to HDU, and make more effective use of the Internet and instructional software, in which English is the predominant language. Developing English skills is critical to information technology faculty, who need the language to understand much of their academic field. Other faculty development projects, including the CIDA, HVO, World Bank, and American Friendship Bridge, provide updated training for faculty in health and agriculture and forestry.

Finally, a small amount of money comes directly to HDU through international projects. Although no administrators mentioned funds from international projects during the course of my research, HDU's 1998 budget indicates a line item for "Project and Aid" (Hong Duc University, 1999b).

Hong Duc University's international cooperation projects are innovative programs that help the university to meet its own development goals, while helping to improve the quality of life in Thanh Hoa Province. These programs begin with the base of faculty development, then expand to provide resources to upgrade physical facilities and instructional materials and supplies.

Chapter Summary

This chapter used the synthesized data presented in the previous chapter to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. Specifically, these questions were used to frame a discussion of HDU's impact on the region. The questions were designed to assess HDU's impact on and relevance to the region and the influence of the role of the International Relations Department in developing the university and the region.

Several areas of impact were noted. Specifically, the localized academic curriculum, the economic activity in and around the university, and the introduction of foreigners and inexpensive cultural activities influence the local region. Although HDU's current impact may seem small, one must bear in mind that the university is young. The longer

the university operates, the more influence is likely to grow.

The second research question assessed HDU's relevance to a society in transition. The data revealed that HDU is not yet prepared to train workers to meet the demands of the new economic environment. The faculty must first be retrained and other improvements in the curriculum and instructional technology must be made before HDU can be fully relevant to the needs of the transitional society.

Finally, the third research question assessed the role of the International Relations Department. That department positively contributes to the development of the university and the region by establishing collaborative programs with foreign universities and NGO's.

This chapter provided answers to the research questions that sometimes revealed problems facing HDU. Proposed solutions to these problems will be addressed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER VI

Recommendations and Conclusions

Introduction

This dissertation assessed Hong Duc University's impact on Thanh Hoa Province. HDU was created to train the local workforce and to provide opportunities for students and faculty to research local problems and transfer technological solutions to the regional workforce (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1997). HDU is primarily a teacher training college, but the university also trains health care providers, agricultural workers, and business leaders. The university was established as a regional educational response to the demands that *doi moi* put on Vietnam's socioeconomic system (Dang, personal interview, May 2001). HDU's main challenge is to remain relevant to the needs of the society while simultaneously upgrading. To remain relevant to the changing society, HDU has localized its curriculum. Faculty, administrators, and students spend a great deal of time in the community involved in practical experiences and field research. These programs impact the educational, agricultural, and medical sectors by placing HDU students, faculty, and staff into the region in problem-solving and leadership roles. As the university

continues to search for and transfer solutions to educational, agricultural, and medical problems in the region, its influence continues to expand.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are offered to increase the university's regional influence. These recommendations are based on information contained Chapter Six of the Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise (Taskforce on Higher Education and Society, 2000), which offers sound advice to universities in developing countries. The recommendations contained in this chapter are offered with one caveat, however. Hong Duc University has access to few resources, and a sound plan for modernization must include both improving the university's resources and the management of its resources. Upgrading and increasing the university's resources will do little to improve teaching and learning if these resources are not managed carefully and logically.

Diversify the university's funding base.

The first step in modernizing the university must be renovating its funding base. Hong Duc University lacks the capital for either regular operation or reform. The majority of HDU's funds come directly from MOET, which has

recently been reducing commitments to higher education. As Vietnam's economic system moves away from central planning, so does its educational system. Decentralization and diversification generally mean that as funds from Hanoi decrease, expectations for innovation will increase. Currently, a small proportion of funds comes from non-traditional sources, such as consignment training, commissioned research, international grants, and charitable contributions. Although HDU's funding scheme is a step toward reform it is not enough. Initiatives must be found which will diversify funding and increase the amount available for modernization. Efforts should be made to form working relationships with private businesses, manufacturers, and joint ventures in the province. The law regarding many of these joint and private ventures requires localized labor and some local management. For a fee, HDU could provide workforce development training for these enterprises, assisting in both university and regional development. The university would benefit from the additional funding and from the contact with local business. That contact would keep the university abreast of current practices in the field. The information could then be used to make curricular decisions. The region would

benefit by having enough local training opportunities to fill labor and management positions with Thanh Hoa residents instead of with workers and managers from other areas.

For businesses outside of Thanh Hoa City, the university could establish in-service training centers located in distant areas of the region. These centers would provide access to training programs for workers who would otherwise have none. This would open development options in areas of the province that may have abundant natural resources for business or manufacturing but no trained human resources.

International collaborations can be developed into major sources of funding for the university. HDU is only four years old, and in these first few years, the university has established strong relationships with foreign institutions and NGO's. Given the strong leadership in HDU's International Relations Department and upper administration's obvious support, cooperative projects will continue to develop, eventually contributing significant capital and instructional and human resources to the university.

Once the university's funding base is diversified and capital increases, the university will be able to undertake an ambitious program to upgrade infrastructure, instructional and human resources.

Improve the educational infrastructure.

A critical step in modernizing the university is to improve the educational infrastructure at the university, including computer technology, instructional technology, access to the Internet, and the improvement of the physical facilities at the university.

Modern technology must be made available to students, faculty and staff. A small number of computers are available to students, faculty, and staff. Frustrations are evident due to inaccessible hardware that is locked in labs and workrooms. In order to assist with regional or university development or to compete for spots in graduate programs, HDU students must be familiar with the most up-to-date technology hardware and software. Without that access, technology graduates are unable to become regional leaders in the private and state enterprises that need skilled human resources to help with their own upgrading. Technologically skilled graduates are imperative if Thanh Hoa is to use its own residents who better understand the

province to lead the development of the province. Without skilled local workers, the province must import trained human resources from other localities.

Access to technology is also important to faculty who must be able to design their own updated teaching materials. Teachers currently use handwritten lecture notes, some of which appear to be very old. Access to word processing would make updating lectures easier. The faculty needs access to computers to design classroom activities, worksheets, and other alternatives to the traditional classroom lecture. Although most prefer to lecture, teachers will sometimes involve students in time-consuming classroom exercises that involve teachers' writing and students' copying volumes of information from the chalkboard. If teachers could design their own teaching materials, they could spend more time engaging students in learning activities which rely less on less efficient teaching methods.

Professors also need access to computer software to upgrade their knowledge and teaching techniques. Computer science instructors commonly use outdated software, some of which is no longer used in the information technology field. Until the computer science faculty has access to

updated information, their skills and their teaching will continue to lag behind industry standards. The result is that students spend a great deal of time and effort learning information that will be of no value to them once they graduate.

Other professors would also benefit from updated software. Instructors in the sciences and technologies would be able to upgrade their training with instructional software. CD-ROM's are relatively inexpensive, portable, and can provide more updated information than textbooks to the faculty. Further, the multimedia dimension of instructional software is ideal for faculty's learning new teaching methods. That technology is ideal for foreign language instructors, who can improve their listening and speaking abilities without access to native speakers. Foreign language faculty can also use the CD-ROM's with their students to supplement classroom instruction. Students would have access to multimedia instruction that would depart from traditional lectures.

Access to interactive software would also be invaluable in the medical programs. The medical faculty uses aging, bulky medical models and other instructional equipment to teach health care concepts. Interactive

software would allow students to see more realistic depictions of medical conditions and anatomical models. Furthermore, information contained on CD-ROM is much more likely to be current than information contained in expensive textbooks which can quickly become outdated.

The business department could also benefit from access to updated technology. Private enterprise is still unfamiliar to both students and faculty. By using business simulation programs, faculty and students can learn about the management issues in private enterprises and can manage their own virtual businesses. That software would allow students to learn decision making skills and would give students experience in making decisions and evaluating these.

Access to computers for staff is also critical to the efficient operation of the university. Staff in several essential administrative units keep records by hand, which is time consuming and most likely inefficient. As the university continues to grow, the record keeping and reporting requirements will increase. International grant programs and other collaborative efforts usually require an extensive written report and accounting for funds. Without a staff prepared to provide these required documents, the

university will not be able to comply with requests for reports. Surely, that inability will frustrate collaborative partners. At the very least, financial record keeping must be computerized to ensure accuracy and allow for an easier, less time-consuming reconciliation of accounts. Budgets can be carefully monitored and yearly reporting will be faster and more accurate.

Student services staff can also improve their record keeping by using databases to track students' academic progress, financial records, and other information needed to ensure a smooth delivery of services to students. Although the university does not currently provide student development services, these may be required in the future. Fewer guarantees of employment and a closer connection to private businesses and industries means that students will need to be prepared to compete for jobs once they graduate. Student services can assume this function by providing opportunities for students to learn about the world of work, the local job market, and their career goals. Record keeping is essential when students begin an on-going relationship with a student services office.

Access to technology does not seem to be a problem for upper level administrators. Administrators do a great deal

of reporting and record keeping, particularly as a function of HDU's grant-funded projects where accurate and complete reports are essential. However, the administration can play an important support role in the use of technology at the university. First, administrators can publicly support and encourage the faculty and staff to use technology and to regard the use of technology as commonplace. Second, the appropriate administrators can establish policies to ensure access to the technology once it has arrived at the university. Although security of equipment is a top concern, a logical plan must be developed to give certain staff members access to and responsibility for computer labs. Faculty and students must have access to the university resources outside of the formal class periods. If technology remains inaccessible, it will be of little value.

Finally, the issue of Internet access must be addressed. Vietnamese society is not open. The government controls access to print, broadcast, and digital media, crippling the academic pursuits of students and faculty. In the 21st century, information capital is far more valuable than physical capital, and successful countries participate in the free flow of information and developing their

knowledge industries. That free flow of information stimulates students' thinking and removes boundaries on their creativity. Countries that remain isolated can not participate in the global academic community or the world economy. Faculty skills can not be upgraded without access to the same academic information that the world academic community has. VNN, Vietnam's Internet service provider, makes available filtered Internet access, which limits information. Until unfettered access to information is available to the academic community at HDU, faculty, staff, and students will remain largely out of touch with colleagues in other parts of the world.

These recommendations to improve access to technology are ambitious. Before any can be implemented, a massive retraining initiative must be undertaken. Although the administration must advocate this effort, the faculty must support it as well. Most faculty and staff have no computer skills and will first require introducing to computers before they can participate in any in depth training on computer use for instruction or record keeping. Students will need that training as well. The general HDU student does not have basic computer skills and will have to learn basic computing concepts before any significant training.

That retraining effort would accomplish several goals. First, faculty, staff, and students would have the basic computer skills that are common in the global academic community. Furthermore, it would also create a technologically sophisticated atmosphere in which computer use is an integral part of academic life.

In addition to computer technology, the academic community can also benefit from improving all instructional technology and educational infrastructure. Language labs, science labs, televisions, and other instructional equipment will allow HDU students to rely less on faculty lectures and more on alternative teaching techniques for learning. The faculty will also need retraining on pedagogical techniques. All of HDU's faculty can benefit from such training. Very few of HDU's teaching faculty have ever been trained in teaching methods, and none is trained in the use of instructional technology. Again, faculty and students must move from a place that instructional technology is regarded as novel to a place where it is regarded as commonplace.

In addition to improving instructional technology, HDU must find the funding to renovate and maintain the traditional physical infrastructure of the university. The

most noticeable deficiencies are in HDU's classrooms, which are a less than optimal learning environment. Classroom lighting is sometimes dim, and teachers turn off lights in the intense summer heat. Furthermore, classroom seating is at long rows of tables and benches, where students sit closely together and are distracted by their neighbors. Another issue that must be improved is noise insulation. Several foreign language classrooms where listening skills are taught have windows that open onto busy city streets. The university might consider relocating some of the air-conditioned offices or closed storage rooms to this side of the building. Foreign language classes should be in quiet locations that are conducive to listening and speaking.

A relatively inexpensive but necessary improvement is the upgrading of classroom chalkboards. The boards are damaged and writing on them is virtually impossible. In general, poor condition of the classroom facilities leaves instructors little choice but to sit in their seats and lecture to students.

Scientific and language laboratories must also be upgraded and used more efficiently. Collaboration with international partners will require that science labs are kept up to date. Poverty reduction projects, health care

initiatives and other programs conducted through NGO's and higher education institutions provide access to laboratory equipment and teaching materials. Language labs also must be upgraded. Once a system is in place for the efficient use of computer labs for students, foreign language faculty will be able to use computer software in language labs instead of the outdated cassette tapes that are currently at the university. For these labs to be of use to HDU students, a plan must be in place to secure the equipment while at the same time providing access.

Housing facilities must also be expanded and upgraded. Students live in crowded conditions that do not provide sufficient study space. Consequently, students are forced to leave their rooms to study in corridors and on sidewalks. Additionally, students need reliable access to clean running water. Campus I has water most days of the week, but the campus has both scheduled and unexpected water outages. Therefore, students spend an extraordinary amount of time on personal care activities that require water. Students must dip buckets in a well and carry the water long distances up several flights of stairs to wash clothes and perform other housekeeping chores. Students also must bathe with water hauled from the well.

The housing facilities at the Medical and Agricultural and Business Campuses require more renovation and maintenance as students live in deplorable conditions. The housing facilities are smaller, older, and more crowded than those at the main campus. Students need access to running water and suitable dining facilities. At the very least, students' living environments must not distract them from their studies, which is currently the case. Present conditions could pose health and sanitation problems. Facilities at these campuses need upgrading immediately so that students can devote full attention to their studies.

Reform the curriculum, adequately compensate faculty and upgrade quality of teaching faculty.

In order for HDU to continue expanding its influence in Thanh Hoa Province, the institution must reform the curriculum to make it more relevant to the needs of graduates. In several instances, faculty pointed out that the current curriculum does not always reflect reality in the field. Curriculum reform must be undertaken with leaders in education, medicine, business and agriculture who are currently working in these sectors. The university might consider organizing advisory boards for each instructional program. Area workers directly employed in

these sectors can then be appointed to the advisory boards and can in a more formal way provide information about regional training demands to the university. Curriculum reform must also concentrate on preparing students to actually to do their jobs. Specifically, the pedagogy students expressed concern that although they are adequately prepared academically to teach, they do not feel prepared to manage their own classrooms because they did not have enough training in actual teaching and classroom management. Hong Duc University is correct in its regional focus. The localized curriculum and field experiences ensure that students are exposed to the regional issues that they will face, but the university must be vigilant in keeping the current training demands of the province at the center of instructional programs.

At the center of many of these reforms is a need for an adequately trained and compensated faculty. The majority of HDU's faculty was trained in the pre-*doi moi* educational system, which means their skills and knowledge are out of date. Although plans appear to be in place to upgrade faculty training, these plans are labor intensive and create as many problems as they are meant to solve. Members of the faculty are sent for retraining, only to

leave their current positions unfilled. Substitutes are often found from within the faculty, further stressing an overextended workforce. Two solutions may help solve the faculty retraining issue. First, the university might consider a professional development program that does not interfere with the regular class schedule. Professional development classes could be taught on alternating afternoons, in the evenings, or on weekends. Key to the success of and faculty retraining program is additional compensation that would offset the loss of funds professors earn outside of regular compensation. Along with retraining must come a serious effort to recruit the most qualified faculty possible. University officials must make connections with graduate institutions in Hanoi to attract ambitious graduates.

Finally, retention efforts must focus on better pay. HDU's faculty, no matter how dedicated, can not devote all of their professional energies to the university when they must work at other jobs. The university must make its case to Hanoi, where faculty salaries are set, that HDU faculty salaries, as well as those of all Vietnamese faculty need to be increased.

Increase access to ethnic minorities and the very poor.

In order for HDU to have a greater impact on the region, the needs of the ethnic minority population and the very poor must be served. Thanh Hoa Province has an ethnic minority population of more than one million, the majority of which is Hmong, Vietnam's largest minority. The Hmong people do not speak Vietnamese and live in the rural mountainous regions of the province. The isolation of the Hmong people has in the past been a point of contention with the Hanoi government, and an effort is underway to bring the Hmong people into the majority society. Vietnamese language is being taught in the public schools attended by Hmong children, and the government is urging the Hmong people to speak the national language and participate more fully mainstream Vietnamese society. Included in these efforts must be initiatives specifically directed at the minority population. The fact that Vietnam's new Prime Minister is from a minority background may mean that overtures to the ethnic minorities may become more numerous over the next few years. Although recruitment efforts for minorities are needed, the overall limited number of seats available poses a problem. The demand for

space far outweighs availability. Efforts should be made to assure that ethnic minority students have access to higher education, but in general, a wider effort to expand funding must first be undertaken. The university must find a way to provide greater access without placing further stress on human or physical resources.

Several of the applied research programs and field experiences target ethnic minority areas and should be continued and expanded. These programs are designed to alleviate the extreme poverty experienced by minority communities and to provide access to healthcare and food production techniques. The education program places a number of graduates in the minority areas to ensure the presence of trained teachers. The administration, particularly the International Relations Department, should make the needs of ethnic minority communities known when international collaborations are being formed. Poverty reduction projects aimed at these communities could be designed to ultimately provide space for students at the university as well as taking services into the minority areas.

According to HDU's rector, HDU must serve the needs of Thanh Hoa's poor students, who have no other access to

higher education. Strategies to assure access to those students of Thanh Hoa must be developed. Although most students in the province are poor, some are destitute and access to higher education will disrupt generations of poverty in their families. Educating the very poor and sending them back into their communities to work, will improve development efforts. Only people born and reared in the poorest areas can understand the complex issues involved in the development of these areas. Again, an expanded funding base is necessary before these efforts can be put into place. HDU must find a way to serve more students without placing further stress on the academic community.

Expand efforts to conduct scientific research.

Finally, efforts to conduct scientific research contribute both to the region and to the university community and must be continued and expanded. The efforts of the International Relations Department can help the academic departments to have access to overseas programs designed to work in partnership with universities in developing countries. These research projects serve several vital functions. First, they give HDU's faculty and students an opportunity to expand their knowledge and

upgrade their skills. International faculty can work with HDU's faculty, providing the most up-to-date scientific information. Further, these research projects give HDU faculty an opportunity to interact with the global academic community. That contact gives faculty more than just access to updated information; it also allows faculty to begin thinking of themselves as part of a larger academic community, which will eventually improve faculty attitudes. These research projects provide a crucial link for developing Thanh Hoa Province. The local nature of scientific research at HDU allows faculty and students to concentrate on regional problems affecting the daily lives of Thanh Hoa's residents. Continuing and expanding these programs will improve life in Thanh Hoa and expand HDU's influence in the region.

Summary

Several recommendations have been made to increase Hong Duc University's impact on the region. The task seems formidable. Improving this university is an ongoing project requiring innovation and persistence, not a plan with a beginning, middle, and end. Suggestions were made for improving several components of the university. Access to technology and the Internet was addressed, as was access to

other forms of instructional technology. Suggestions for improving traditional infrastructure were also made. Classrooms, dormitories and laboratories need to be upgraded to remove barriers from students as they participate in the academic experience. The need for curriculum reform was addressed. Much of HDU's curriculum focuses on regional needs and teaching material must be kept current. The needs of the faculty were also addressed. Several suggestions were made to retrain, recruit, and retain qualified, motivated faculty. The university's influence in the region may also be increased by reaching out to the ethnic minorities and very poor. A suggestion was made to continue and expand scientific research programs.

Although these suggestions address the needs of the various components of the university, they are impossible to implement without an approach to university funding that is decentralized and diversified. Hong Duc University needs more money; however, these funds must come from a variety of sources outside of Hanoi. These suggestions address only improving infrastructure, upgrading educational and human resources, and increasing access to higher education. In addition to those initiatives, efforts must be made to

manage resources more efficiently. Logical management of educational resources assures access to those who need them.

Conclusion

This study was designed to gain an understanding of how Hong Duc University, a newly established university in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, operates and to assess the impact of HDU in the local region. Using case study methodology, HDU was selected not because it is representative of Vietnamese universities, but because it is unique. Hanoi began major higher education reform in the mid-1990's and called for a consolidation of small, specialized institutions into larger, multidisciplinary universities. Hong Duc grew out of that reform.

Many HDU faculty, staff and administrators were involved in this study. Rector Cao Danh Dang and several of his key administrators were either formally interviewed or participated in informal discussions. Likewise, deans and department heads participated in interviews and provided access to their programs-- and often their faculty or staff-- for interviews or group conversations. Many of HDU's students participated in informal interviews and conversations. For the protection of many who

participated, identities of all students and some other respondents have been obscured.

Three research questions were posed for this study: 1) How does Hong Duc University influence the local environment? 2) What relevance does Hong Duc University have to a society in transition? and 3) How is Hong Duc University developing through its international partnerships? These questions were specifically designed to gather information for a better understanding of the university, its structure and administration, and to assess the impact of the university in the region.

A great deal of data was gathered and synthesized, and that synthesis provides a holistic view of a university in transition, operating in a society in transition. HDU faces many of the same issues that universities in all developing countries face. The infrastructure is frail, faculty lack updated information and teaching skills, the curriculum is out of step with the reality of Vietnam's new economic environment, and the demand for space at HDU far outweighs the university's ability to educate the people of Thanh Hoa. But Hong Duc faces unique challenges. Vietnam's economy has been evolving since 1986. This evolution has moved the state sector, centrally planned

economy to a multisector economy with a growing private sector. Vietnam's higher education system was already insufficient before *doi moi*. Years of war degraded Vietnam's infrastructure and made very little money available for anything but rebuilding efforts, including higher education. Immediately following the war, government officials enforced a hard communist line, and followed the Soviet Union's lead in higher education. Vietnam's chosen students, most of whom were from families who were either residents of the North or supporters of the communist rebellion, received a Socialist higher education. The best students, or those whose families made sacrifices for the northern side of the war effort, were sent to the Soviet Union for study. Others were educated in the highly specialized Soviet-style system that was established in Vietnam. Once implemented, *doi moi* made fundamental changes in the socio-economic system that were beyond the imagination of the original hard-liners who seized control of the country. The government responded slowly to a need for higher education reforms that continued to change the economic environment of the country and put the higher education system further and further out of touch. Consequently, Vietnam's current higher education is only

now beginning to recover from a period of irrelevance to the socioeconomic system. Hong Duc, beginning with a poor baseline, must now upgrade its faculty, curriculum, and infrastructure, while continuing to meet the current needs of the region.

The synthesis of the data collected for this study shows that HDU is affecting the local region. Efforts are underway to modernize the university while upholding the original goal of the university to train the human resources of the region and engaging in research designed to improve life in Thanh Hoa.

Specifically, several major needs were noted. First and most important is a need to increase and diversify the funding base. Without more funding, HDU can not possibly modernize the university. That funding must come from a variety of alternative sources, not the traditional state source.

After funding is increased, the university must improve access to technology and upgrade the traditional infrastructure. The curriculum must also be reformed to reflect the current demands of economic environment in Thanh Hoa. Furthermore, a professional development plan for the faculty must be put in place to ensure that they have

access to opportunities to upgrade their skills. Efforts must also be made to recruit and retain well-educated faculty who can assist with retraining veteran teachers. Access for Thanh Hoa's ethnic minorities and the very poor must be increased. Spaces are severely limited, but access must be assured for the disenfranchised of the province. Finally, HDU must continue and increase scientific research efforts. Those programs provide professional development for faculty and improve the quality of life in Thanh Hoa.

The scope of this investigation is limited to Hong Duc University and provides information only about that university. Because of the limited scope of this study, further research is necessary, including similar studies in universities in the central and southern regions of the country. By studying additional Vietnamese universities, entrepreneurial activities could be uncovered and shared with other provinces or universities struggling with their own reform initiatives. In addition, some components of the university merit individual study. For example, a detailed study of collaborative projects implemented with NGO's would provide valuable information regarding the implementation of these programs. Once the university has existed for a longer period, an impact study using

statistical data would be valuable to assess HDU's economic effect on Thanh Hoa Province.

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Appendix A

Interview with Dr. Mai Tien Tri, Director of Academic Affairs, Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001
(Conducted through translators Mrs. Dinh and Nguyen Mong Tuyen)

Note: Dr. Tri asked for written questions a head of time, and came to meeting with prepared written responses.

JBN: Describe what you do.

MTT: I supervise training and activities at the university.

Together with other departments we get advice on training plans. I make recommendations about which fields that we should expand, design the master curriculum for each year in the short-term strategic master plan.

JBN: How often the revised curriculum?

MTT: Every time are three and four-year courses and after each group of students leaves we look at the curriculum. We also give advice to practicum students We supervise each department's implementation and we do evaluation and assessment. We also determine the past management of our human resources.

JBN: Do you evaluate faculty?

MTT: Yes

JBN: How you do that?

MTT: Our department sets the standard then we double check the individual departments to be sure that the implementation is correct.

JBN: How do you arrange practical experiences?

MTT: We go to the schools in the province, the private farms, the private businesses and hospitals to arrange for training.

JBN: Are the practical experiences paid?

MTT: No, but we do pay the supervisors.

JBN: Who is responsible for making decisions about curriculum?

MTT: A training committee decides makes recommendations to the president makes the final decision.

JBN: How are new programs initiated at the university? Who decides what new programs are implemented and when?

MTT: The training committee uncovers needs and reports the needs to the rector's board who contacts faculty in the departments and asks them.

JBN: Do you have a systematic way to uncover needs?

MTT: Yes, we go to other departments regularly to discuss needs.

JBN: When Hong Duc was founded was a new or existing curriculum used?

MTT: Our university was originally three colleges. When we were founded in beginning we used the three-year courses that were already in place with some supplementation.

JBN: How long did this take?

MTT: About one year

JBN: When was the idea for a new University first proposed?

MTT: In 1994 we had the first idea.

JBN: In your opinion, what are the three most important responsibilities of your department?

MTT: Helping the presidential board decide a training plan. Management of training activities, and help with teaching methods and assessment of training activities.

JBN: What curriculum changes have taken place at the university?

MTT: Since 1997 we've used mostly the old curriculum with minor revisions. According to recommendations that come up in the committee we will revise and add according to local needs.

In 1998-99, three-year courses for students in agriculture were added. Next time we will move to a four-year degree. We'll also separate agriculture from forestry. We will add computer science specializing in business to help with the employment needs of the region. Twenty new fields will open in the next five years. Agriculture, teacher training, medicine, and business.

JBN: When you make changes to the curriculum, how is faculty training updated?

MTT: We try to recruit new teachers or we send our current teachers out for re-training the also invite foreign experts in.

Appendix B

Interview with Dr. Nguyen Bach Yen (with several faculty members), Director of Agriculture and Forestry Department Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001

YBN: First of all, before we start, would like to welcome you again to Hong Duc University and to the Agricultural College. We are so proud that you have returned to see us and we feel that your visit is an honor. Even through you have met us before, let me take a few moments to introduce you to our faculty and staff. (Several faculty members are introduced from the departments of livestock and veterinary medicine, land management, biology and agriculture). I am also very happy to tell you that we have been studying our English very hard and we would like to conduct this interview in English.

JBN: Thank you, Dr. Nguyen. Hello again. It's a pleasure to be back at HDU. As always, I love to visit with you in the Agricultural College. Your campus is beautiful and I enjoy spending time here.

YBN: Thank you.

JBN: OK then, let's get started. Describe for me the structure and function of your department.

YBN: We have a faculty of 29. We have 500 full-time students and 400 part-time students. We have five fields:

- agronomics
- animal management
- land management
- forestry
- cultivation

JBN: Where are most of yours students enrolled?

YBN: In cultivation.

JBN: What levels are your programs?

YBN: We have three levels, two-year, three-year and four-year programs.

JBN: What is the focus of these academic programs?

YBN: More than anything, we are working on new technologies and application for farmers in the province. We work with developing technology and transferring technology from the university to local farmers. We also work with land management issues. Thanh Hoa is the second most populated province in Vietnam. We have 3.6 million people, and 80% of them are farmers. All of

our graduates will stay in the province and work after the graduate. We are the only ones training agricultural workers in this province. Our work is very important to the development of Thanh Hoa Province. Eighty per cent of Thanh Hoa Province is agricultural, so everything we do affects nearly everyone in the province.

JBN: Describe the local collaborative projects that you have outside of the university.

YBN: First, we provide a material base for training our students. We give them classroom instruction, then we send them into the province to observe in private and state-owned enterprises. Then, when students have more experience, we send them out to work directly with farmers.

JBN: So you send students out into the province to work directly with farmers?

YBN: Oh, yes, we do. We send our students out for practical experience in every subject area. They go to the farmers and get real problems for scientific research. After they find solutions to the farmers' problems, they take the solutions directly back to the farmers.

This way they get an academic understanding and practical experience.

JBN: Any other linkages?

YBN: We do formal work with the Department of Science and Technology of Thanh Hoa Province. We work with them a lot for problem solving in the province.

JBN: Specifically what kinds of problems do you work on?

YBN: We work on problems with food crops, land management, animal breeding, food processing.

JBN: What about international cooperation? Do you have any?

YBN: The demo farm is an international cooperation we are proud of.

JBN: Tell me more about the demo farm.

YBN: That's our laboratory where we take the real problems of farmers to work on solutions. The demo farm was built by CIDA(Canadian International Development Agency).

JBN: So CIDA has been working directly with the Agriculture Department?

YBN: Yes. We have been working with Canada in a poverty reduction project funded by CIDA.

JBN: Tell me about the CIDA project.

YBN: The project is called AEC, Agricultural Education Center. We just finished our first phase of the project. We have been working on animal diseases. We train our faculty to go out into the field and work with farmers directly. We also study English as part of the CIDA project. In the future, faculty will be able to travel to Canada for training. The CIDA project also provides us with textbooks and computers to help train faculty.

JBN: What about the textbooks? Are they English-language books?

YBN: Yes, they are, that's not too much of a problem, though. We're all studying English very hard and can read the books.

JBN: How much money have you gotten from the project?

YBN: About \$400,000 Canadian dollars.

JBN: So where are you now with the project?

YBN: We are getting ready for Phase II. In this phase, the contents of the project are widened. We will work on plant tissue culture and hybrid rice cultivation.

JBN: Do you have any other international projects?

YBN: Well, we want to prepare the staff to go to Thailand. The climate there is similar to Vietnam's climate, and

they understand the agricultural problems that Vietnam has. Now our faculty is prepared to use English. We also would like to work in cooperative projects in Russia and China. Many of us speak Russian, so the language would not be a problem. International cooperation is very important for us.

Appendix C

Interview with Dr. Vu Van Thien, Director of Business Administration and Management, Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001
(Conducted through translator Nguyen Hung and Nguyen Mong Tuyen)

JBN: Describe the structure and function of your department.

VVT: We have 36 faculty, 350 students in two- and three-year junior college and college level programs. Our two main fields of study are accounting and business administration. Beginning next year we will train university level students. MOET will work with HDU to design the program.

JBN: Can you talk some about the two programs:

VVT: The accounting program trains students to work at various levels, from household level to the enterprise level.

JBN: What about the Business Administration Program? What is the focus of this program?

VVT: The program is for managing to meet the suitable training demands in the area.

JBN: What kind of demands are these?

VVT: The demands of companies on a small to medium scale.

JBN: What kinds of companies?

VVT: Companies from all economic components. We do not train students to work with large corporations. This is done at the university level. We will do this next year.

JBN: Describe any collaborative projects that you have outside of the university.

VVT: Within the university we work with other departments. Our staff works with other departments and other departments work with the staff.

JBN: But what about outside of the university? Do the faculty or students work with anyone outside?

VVT: Yes, we have cooperative relationships.

JBN: What kind?

VVT: We have in-service training for students.

JBN: But do you ever send students out to work directly with businesses?

VVT: Sometimes.

JBN: How long have you worked with this department?

VVT: For over 30 years.

JBN: So you worked with the former Thanh Hoa Junior Economic and College?

VVT: Yes. I was rector of the Junior Economic College. When the colleges combined, I became the director of the business program.

JBN: So you have seen many changes over the last 30 years.

VVT: Yes, many.

JBN: So, how has training in business administration changed in the last 25 years (since the end of the war)?

VVT: We have had changes in what we do, but these changes are dependent on changes to the system. We have had to change to meet the new mechanism.

JBN: New mechanism?

VVT: Yes, *doi moi's* new market economy.

JBN: What has this meant to you in your management of this program?

VVT: We have had to do a lot of retraining. We continue to have a lot of retraining to do.

JBN: Retraining of whom?

VVT: Of faculty who were originally trained for a "fixed" program by the central government.

JBN: By fixed, you mean *doi moi*?

VVT: Yes, *doi moi*.

JBN: Where and how are your faculty retrained?

VVT: We are now upgrading people's skills so they can prepare their students to work in the *doi moi* environment.

JBN: But how will you do this?

VVT: We will use various resources. Faculty will train each other as they have always done.

JBN: Train each other?

VVT: Yes, if someone is able to go to Hanoi to get extra training, then they will return and train others on the staff.

JBN: Let's talk about how *doi moi* has affected Thanh Hoa.

VVT: Oh, *doi moi* has greatly affected Thanh Hoa.

JBN: How so?

VVT: More than anything, the economy has been affected by the private enterprises. Our training programs must be preparing students to work for private enterprises.

JBN: How many private enterprises have opened in Thanh Hoa?

VVT: The quantity is not important. We now have a variety of sectors in the economy. We have cooperative or joint ventures, we have the household sector, we have the state sector and we have the private sector. We must be ready to meet all of these needs, but we have a lot of retraining to do first.

JBN: What can you tell me about international cooperation in which you are involved?

VVT: Nothing yet. Of course, everyone on the faculty wants to study overseas.

JBN: Has anyone gone yet?

VVT: No, not yet. But I will go to China next month.

JBN: For what?

VVT: I will visit several universities in a country that has a multi-sector economy similar to that of Vietnam. I will look at how they teach in their programs.

JBN: Anywhere else?

VVT: We have short courses for retraining available in Thailand. We can afford to send some faculty to Thailand, but the programs are conducted in English. We have to train our faculty to be able to work in English first. Opportunities are opening everywhere, but English is the pre-requisite.

JBN: What are you doing to get your people trained in the English skills that they need?

VVT: We are trying to get people into the staff class. It's difficult because everyone wants to get in. English

skill is the key for us right now. We need that more than anything.

Appendix D

Interview with Tuan Van Vo, Director of Financial planning
and Budget, Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001

(Conducted through translators Mrs. Dinh and Nguyen Mong
Tuyen)

Note: Reading from prepared remarks.

JBN: Describe the responsibilities of your department.

VVT: We make the plans for financial development, an for
making recommendations on how to spend money for the
priorities in the training plan. We are in charge of
income. We manage the budget. We report directly to
the rector about balances. We supervise all accounting
activity. We make decisions about financial aid for
students.

JBN: How many people are in the department?

VVT: We have 18 people in five groups.

1. Planning in budget
2. General accounting
3. Management of income
4. Spending and managing expenditures
5. Equipment buildings and grounds

JBN: Who sets faculty salaries?

VVT: Hanoi, MOET. Faculty are paid according to their qualifications in their positions. The base salary is 54,000 dong per month, however most teachers work teaching other students at night. They're not allowed to tutor university students, but they work with students studying for entrance exams and high school students.

JBN: What is your budget year?

VVT: Our budget year begins on January 1 and ends December 31.

JBN: Does each department get a separate budget?

VVT: Each faculty and makes a finance plan then submits it to the finance department who carries it to the rector, and it is the rector who makes the final decision about department budgets.

Appendix E

Interview with Dr. Nguyen Song Hoan, Director of
International Relations and Science Management,
Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001

Note: Speaking from prepared responses.

JBN: What are your responsibilities at the University?

NSH: I have four main responsibilities:

1. To help the president with management of scientific research and of students and other faculty.
2. To oversee international activities
3. To oversee the buying and maintaining all equipment at the University.
4. To help the rector with planning for sending faculty for graduate study. I help them decide who will go for post graduate study.

JBN: How many people are on your staff?

NSH: I have 11 people in four groups under my responsibility. Each group is responsible for carrying out their responsibilities. We have no secretaries for assistance. Each person is responsible on their own.

JBN: What's the purpose of international relations at the university?

NSH: We have four purposes.

- 1 Exchanging cultural and scientific information.
2. Finding of opportunities for faculty and students to do scientific research.
3. Soliciting assistance from foreign universities for development.
4. Helping with curriculum preparation of the master plan and getting projects that the universities.

JBN: What benefits as the university received from contacts with foreign institutions?

NSH: A lot. Curriculum work, student faculty exchanges.

JBN: Would you say that this work is important to the mission of the University?

NSH: Yes of course it is. We are under the direct supervision of the rector. He is very interested in our activities. We really hope that we can get some faculty exchanges even small projects anything.

JBN: How many foreign institutions do you have cooperative agreements with?

NSH: Formally we have signed with six. Frazier Valley, Olds College, British Columbia, Lansing Community

College, Tidewater Community College, and Rutgers University.

Formally, we have also signed with six other organizations:

- HVO in USA
- CIDA in Canada
- Project Trust in Britain
- World University Service in Canada

JBN: Describe for me some of these projects.

NSH: We have student and faculty exchanges, we have foreign English teachers, we have teacher training with Australia and Canada, we get help with curriculum design, and with our demonstration farm.

We had six students from Canada stay with us for three months. They worked at the demonstration farm 2 by 2. We had four women and two men and they were each twenty five years old. We had one student who was 46 years old.

JBN: How do you see international relations changing in the future?

NSH: Well, I think that it will be expanded. We want sister relationships with many institutions and we would like to focus on curriculum design and student

exchange. We would like to use these contacts to help develop our community both socially and economically.

JBN: Is there anything you like to add?

NSH: Yes. We are one of the poorest provinces and all of Vietnam. We need a lot of help from our foreign friends. I hope that we can continue to attract foreign investment in the future. We must try our best to train our faculty, especially in foreign languages. They need to be able to work with foreign visitors to help them develop their skills.

Appendix F

Informal Conversation with Dr. Nguyen Song Hoan

Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001

NSH: As you know, Vietnam has two systems of technological development. We have a system for research (institute) and a system for training (university). We already know that the MOET is planning to combine the two so that we can use our resources better.

JBN: So what will this mean to HDU?

NSH: HDU will be responsible for much more research in the future.

JBN: Why is this?

NSH: You know, Ho Chi Minh believed that technology in higher education would rebuild the infrastructure of Viet Nam. Colleges and universities have always put great emphasis on technology development. Today, there is a very heavy emphasis on the development of technology. HDU will be responsible for more research in the future.

JBN: Do you have a plan in place yet?

NSH: We will establish a center for research and applied technology in the future.

JBN: Have you done this sort of thing before?

NSH: We have one center for agriculture and forestry. We have a demonstration farm.

JBN: I see. So you use the demonstration farm as a way to develop applied technology?

NSH: Yes, it's a way that HDU works with the local community. We develop technology at the demonstration farm, then we take that technology directly to the farmers in the province.

JBN: Then what's next?

NSH: The medical faculty. They will be able to develop applied medical technology and then work with local medical personnel in the villages, rural areas, mountain areas where the medical professionals need new technology, but can not get to it.

JBN: This seems like a real challenge for HDU, the responsibility that you have to the local area.

NSH: Yes, the ethnic minorities here are very poor and they can not go to Ha Noi to study. HDU is the only place where they can get a higher education. We really need a scholarship program for ethnic minority students.

You know, almost 1/3 of the population of Thanh Hoa province is ethnic minority. We need to make training of ethnic minority students a priority.

JBN: How difficult do you think this will be?

NSH: Well, we have achieved universal primary education in the ethnic minority areas.

JBN: And I think that HDU has been somewhat responsible for the success of that.

NSH: Yes, we train most of the teachers who go out there. We require that some of our teaching graduates work in the mountainous areas.

JBN: Who is required to go?

NSH: Male graduates of our teacher training program. They most teach in the minority areas for three years.

JBN: Do you prepare students to work with minorities?

NSH: No, it's on the job training.

Appendix G

Interview with Dr. T.V. Nguyen, Library Director,
Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001

(Conducted through translators Nguyen Xuan Hung

JBN: Describe for me the structure and function of your
department.

TVN: We have 25 staff right now. In the very near future we
will need over 30 to meet the demands of the new
electronic library.

JBN: Will this entail retraining existing staff?

TVN: Yes. Plans are already in place for retraining.

JBN: What kinds of plans do you have?

TVN: Plans for retraining are in our World Bank Proposal.
They will fund the training of staff. I hope that
staff can be retrained both inside and outside of
Vietnam.

JBN: Tell me something about your training as a librarian.

TVN: Training for a librarian focuses on the profession of
library studies. Then it breaks down into specific
fields of information management. You know, software,
database management, library sciences...

JBN: How many titles do you have here?

TVN: About 150,000 books.

JBN: Who chooses the books for the library?

TVN: We get a list of books available from the publishers in Hanoi, then we work with the academic departments to select what we need.

JBN: What are the borrowing procedures?

TVN: Well, some books must stay in the building, and other are available for check out. Teachers can take the books out for 2-3 months. Students can take them for the whole semester.

Appendix H

Interview with Dr. Vo Van Thanh, Medical Program Director,
Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001

(Conducted through translator Nguyen Xuan Hung)

JBN: Please describe for me the structure and function of
your department.

VVT: We train nearly 500 students in eight medical areas:

- Nursing at the college level
- Nursing at the secondary level
- Midwife training
- Assistant specialist in medicine training
- Infectious disease training
- Environmental health
- Obstetrics and gynecology
- Assistant pharmacology

We also provide retraining to about 500 medical cadres from
the province each year. Our plans include university level
nurses training in the near future and dentistry beginning
next year.

JBN: Where do you do the retraining? Here or in the
province?

VVT: We bring the medical cadres here.

JBN: Who are they?

VVT: Mostly community doctors and public health workers.

JBN: Tell me about your local collaborations.

VVT: We work with the public health department of Thanh Hoa Province, and we also work with the Provincial Hospital. We also work with traditional hospitals and other hospitals treating malaria, TB and other health problems. We are always doing research and going into the province to try to help with local health problems. This way, students have direct contact with doctors and patients and understand their work. Students can understand the problems that they will encounter in their work. It is better that they can ask questions now, while they are still students

JBN: What are the biggest local health problems that you work on?

VVT: The birth rate, for sure. We have made it our priority to reduce the birth rate while at the same time increasing the healthy birth rate. We also want to reduce the malnutrition rate in the province. We also must work on reducing the rate of infectious disease. We need to increase the vaccination rate for children, too.

JBN: This seems like a big responsibility.

VVT: Yes, but we must do all that we can because we are the only training facility in the province.

JBN: What about international cooperation?

VVT: We are working closely with Rutgers University in New Jersey. We are hoping that they can help us by setting up a training program on the Internet. We will host visitors from Rutgers in August. Hopefully then we can discuss a distance learning project.

JBN: What about the training that you do...what kind of practical training do you do?

VVT: The first stage is done here at the campus, and the second stage is done at Thanh Hoa Hospital.

JBN: Who supervises students at the hospital?

VVT: Teachers who are placed at the hospital. We have an exchange program. The hospital provides teachers to the University and faculty goes to the hospital to work directly with patients. This way our students have direct contact with doctors and with patients.

JBN: This seems like a good relationship.

VVT: Yes, but we need more training for everyone.

JBN: Any other cooperative programs?

VVT: Yes, we've been working with The American Friendship Bridge, a program to train medical personnel. Every summer we send two teachers to Nam Dinh Province where they receive training. There are problems with this, though.

JBN: What kinds of problems?

VVT: Well, first of all, the English skills of our staff are insufficient. The idea is that teachers will go and get experience and training and then return to train others. Our faculty does not have good enough English skills to get much out of the program. The other problem is that our faculty is stretched so thin. Each time we send someone out for training, we have one less person on faculty. Our resources are stretched very thin, very thin.

JBN: What is your biggest problem in your department?

VVT: Lack of English proficiency. We need to train our teachers in English so that they can use the resources that are out there. We have three teachers in the staff class, but that's not enough. Our teachers will need to be able to read foreign resources and teach directly from them.

JBN: How are your graduates placed?

VVT: Students are moved around according to the needs of the province. Students from the communes returned to the communes. All other moves are dictated by the government.

JBN: What about the medical needs of ethnic minorities? Are you preparing your students to work in the minority areas of the province?

VVT: Oh, yes, students have to be prepared to understand minority culture and the medical needs of minority people.

JBN: Are there differences between the medical needs of the majority and the minority?

VVT: Yes there are. The environment is different. The diseases are different. Training is longer for those workers going to minority areas. The language is a big problem. Minority people don't always speak Vietnamese, so communication can be a problem.

Appendix I

Interview with Dr. Cao Danh Dang, University Rector,

Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, May 2001

(Conducted through translators Mrs. Dinh and Nguyen Mong Tuyen)

JBN: Tell me about the people of Thanh Hoa.

CDD: They are diligent, hard working, creative. We have 3,546,000 people in the province and over 11,000²/k. We have 27 districts and towns, 11 mountain districts with one million ethnic people. There are seven ethnic tribes in the province. We have a rich folk culture, and our people are famous for their eagerness to learn.

JBN: How do most people earn a living?

CDD: About 80% of the province earns a living by farming. Fishing and forestry are also important.

JBN: Tell me about your higher education history.

What was it like here in, say, the 1950's?

CDD: We were at war at that time. What do you mean by higher education, vocational education? University education?

JBN: I mean any education beyond high school.

CDD: We were focused mainly on secondary schools. We only had vocation schools to train mechanics, hydraulic workers, agriculture workers. When we won the war with the French in 1954, we really started higher education in 1955. We had a teacher-training school and a vocational school for other fields, mainly agriculture and forestry, though. We had a large illiterate population and had to train a lot of teachers to solve the illiteracy problem.

JBN: What about the 1960's, what changed?

CDD: Well, it was really the same as in the 50's. We did add a medical college in Thanh Hoa in the 1960's.

JBN: How did *doi moi* impact the local area?

CDD: Well, *doi moi* was started in 1986. It impacted all fields, including education. In Thanh Hoa, We focused mainly on elementary schools. Before *doi moi*, we really didn't have a way to train the local labor force. After *doi moi*, we opened a school that directly trained the local labor force. We also increased one and a half times

the number of students in the colleges. Our focus, though, was still to eliminate illiteracy.

JBN: What about the demands that *doi moi* has put on higher education.

CDD: *doi moi* placed great demands on our ability to train technology workers. We had a demand to provide university-level training in technology. After *doi moi*, Thanh Hoa province had a need to establish a university. This is the only university in Thanh Hoa province.

JBN: In your own words, what would you say is the purpose of Hong Duc University?

CDD: Oh, we have a lot of purposes. To train the technical labor force of the province; to meet the demands of the structural jobs and professional qualifications; to reach out to the ethnic minorities.

Our training demand is determined by the local authorities. We train according to their demands. You see, our duty is different. We train according to local needs. We take direction from the local authority. We are unlike national

universities who train according to national needs.

We are also here to give poor people the chance for a higher education. 80% of our province farms for a living. Very few can afford to go to university in Hanoi, so we have established HDU so that local students can stay here in their home province and attend university. We are also a charity for the poor. Many students went to Hanoi to university, but had to return to HDU where they could afford to finish their studies.

Because we are training according to local needs, we care very much about our students. We know where they will work when they graduate. For example, we recruit 100 teacher training students and we know where they will be teaching when they graduate.

JBN: Do students have to compete for employment once they graduate?

- CDD: Depending on their grades, they are basically guaranteed employment.
- I forgot to say, we are also here to stop brain drain. We want to keep our best students in Thanh Hoa. Before HDU, we lost far too many students to other provinces. Since HDU has opened, we have attracted outside investment, especially from companies that will be working in the province.
- JBN: So, do you get funding other than what Ha Noi sends?
- CDD: Yes, we get contributions from the community. For example, the Thanh Hoa Cement Corporation is the largest in the country. We also have a sugar refinery. Churches also give us money.
- JBN: Let's talk about your impact on the local economy: how many people does HDU employ?
- CDD: Right now, 769 professionals (503 teachers, 116 administrators, and the rest are workers).
- JBN: How many students do you currently have?
- CDD: 5800 full time students and 3000 part time students.

JBN: How is HDU organized?

CDD: We have three campuses now, based on the three junior colleges that collapsed to form HDU. The largest campus we have is the teacher training college, where we are now.

JBN: In your own words, what are the university's three main goals?

CDD: To provide training, to do scientific research, and to manage the educational resources of the province.

JBN: In your own words, are the university's three most important needs?

CDD: Standardization of higher education, increased standards for everyone, eradication of illiteracy.

JBN: What are the major industries in Thanh Hoa?

CDD: cement, sugar, fisheries, construction materials, gemstone mining

JBN: Does HDU do any training for these industries?

CDD: Hong Duc provides training for managers (not workers) in these fields. The adult education center in Thanh Hoa provides worker training. Students who finish their training in vocational areas can choose to continue their education at HDU if they want.

JBN: Describe for me the application process for students?

CDD: Well, students must take entrance exams to get in.

JBN: How many applicants do you get in a year?

CDD: Last year 51,000 students graduated from high school in the province. 31,000 applied to HDU and we accepted 2,500.

JBN: What is the criteria for selecting students?

CDD: First, they must obey national exam regulations by MOET, then we choose the students with the highest marks.

JBN: Do you consider high school marks?

CDD: No, only entrance exam marks.

JBN: Let's talk about funding. Who pays tuition here and who does not?

CDD: Teacher training students do not pay tuition. We only take the best students, and because we have a huge need for teachers in Vietnam, the teacher training students will not pay tuition. Others pay for tuition. Housing is charged separately.

JBN: How many students live on campus?

CDD: About 40%.

JBN: Is there any financial aid available?

CDD: Yes, we have something called Learning Encouragement Fund. It is available at all universities. We get

money from NGO's, future employers and other contributors.

JBN: What about curriculum? How much local control do you have over what is taught?

CDD: The curriculum, degrees, etc are all directed by MOET. However, the local authority plays a role in the master plan of the university.

JBN: Finally, what makes Hong Duc University unique?

CDD: This University of only serves one province. We take care of the labor needs of the entire province. We play an important role. No higher education institution was able to do this before us. The local authority helps us with a need analysis. We only trained according to the needs of the community. As a result we can use our educational resources better. Also we provide consignment training. The more developed our society becomes the more we are needed. We must close the gap between rich and poor. Our poor students do not have the opportunity to go anywhere else.

Vita

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EXPERIENCE

1999-present

Coordinator of International Programs
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1993-1999

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EDUCATION

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Socio-economic issues in post *doi moi* Vietnam.
Educational history of Vietnam.
Comparative education in the developing world.