

LECTURES IN ENGLISH WILL INCREASE IN COMING YEAR

英文電子報

In the coming academic year, at least 357 classes at Tamkang will be taught in English. This is a new measure promoted by the university, which states that a minimum of one mandatory class in the sophomore and junior year of every department of all 7 colleges should be conducted in English. An exception is granted to the sophomores in the Chinese and Japanese Departments who will postpone such an implementation until the following year.

Dr. Feng Chao-Kang, the Vice President for the Academic Affairs emphasized on the importance of this implementation during a meeting for university affairs held on May 13. He believes that such a measure will certainly induce an environment in which our students will think and communicate in English easily. Consequently, he insisted that any future faculty member TKU hires must be capable of delivering lectures in English.

However, some of the faculties at the meeting were reserved over this policy. As some of the mandatory courses are highly-specialized, students are already struggling with Chinese in understanding the essentials. Therefore, teaching these things in English may compromise the effectiveness of their learning. In return, Dr. Feng used Yuan-ze University as an example, which introduced in 2002 the policy of requiring their students to have a minimum of 30 credits of courses that are taught in English for graduation. In comparison, Tamkang only requires a maximum of 12 credits of such courses from our students. It will be tough in the beginning, he said, but it is an important and inevitable step to make towards internationalization.

What do students think about this decision? Chinese majors are ambivalent towards it. Dong-yun, a freshman at the department was wondering how she

could combine that with learning Chinese well. Her strategy for the moment is to sit next to someone whose English is good so she can turn to that person for any help.

Students also could not make up their mind regarding which mandatory course should be taught in English, as some courses are easier than others in English. When asked about what courses are the most difficult to understand in English, Chou Wen-bing from the Department of Chemical and Material Engineering immediately put down “Organic Chemistry”, as it is a fairly complex subject. Most students have mixed feelings. They believe having lectures in English may enhance some of their comprehension ability, but it also means they need to deal with English while struggling with scientific concepts in Chinese—it is double the work they have to do. One way of managing this difficulty is to have departments announce such a course well ahead of schedule so they can prepare fully in advance. (~ Ying-hsueh Hu)