

THE COOL THINGS TO DO IN A HEATED WORLD

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At the conference, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Chen Kan-Nan spoke about the measures the university could take to be part of the solution rather than the problem to the pressing issue of climate change we are facing today. Inspired by the book, *Degrees that Matter: Climate Change and the University* (author and year), Dr. Chen believes that TKU must be more actively involved for certain changes such as implementing energy saving schemes, creating an ecological balanced campus, and instilling social responsibility in the students.

Although the university does not produce the kind nor the scale of pollution as some industries do, it produces other kinds of indirect pollution that also contribute to the “Green House Effect.” As a university, Dr. Chen points out, TKU consumes a great deal of energy in electricity for various day-to-day running systems, such as computer networks, lighting, shuttle bus services, and waste incinerators. Furthermore, since TKU is a fairly big university in terms of student size, the CO₂ gases emission per student is relatively high due to high energy consumption. In light of this, Dr. Chen calls for urgent improvement.

In fact, some improvement is already on the way. TKU’s newest campus, Lanyang, has been awarded by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) for its “green” design, making it one of the few university complexes in Taiwan to be garnered with this honor. For this award, Lanyang basically fulfills the 9 criteria that were set out by MOI and they are 1) preservation of ground water, 2) sources of water supply, 3) energy saving measures, 4) reduction of CO₂ emission, 5) reduction of waste, 6) reduction of waste water, 7) environmentally healthy interior, 8) and 9) the ‘greenness’ of the campus and the bio-diversity it allows in the process. With this experience, Dr. Chen sees Lanyang a good model for Tamsui to follow.

The first step Tamsui Campus needs to take for becoming a greener place is to cut down energy consumption, Dr. Chen asserts. Not only the university needs to implement concrete measures to accomplish this, it should also educate its faculty members, staff and students how to save energy and care for environment more aggressively. For all this to happen, the university first and foremost needs clear and transparent policies with viable goals, which are supported by senior administrators and technical staff. Following this, real implementation can begin, that includes holding more conferences on ecology, purchasing environmental friendly produce, and actively participating in the environmental events of local communities. As for students' education, the university should heavily incorporate ecological issues in its core curriculum and extra-curricula activities.

More specifically, Dr. Chen proposes a "trilogy of implementation" of making TKU a greener place. In the first episode, there will be an "Environmentally Friendly Week" every academic year, an increased number of courses relating to global warming, environmental protection, and energy consumption will be offered, and a "Vehicle-free" day on campus will be organized to encourage car pooling or public transport. In the second episode, there will be an overall, thorough implementation of the 3R mantra in ecology: "reduce," "reuse," and "recycle." In the third episode, a systematic cultivation of diverse plants will start.

In conclusion, Dr. Chen says that TKU must assume a greater social responsibility by becoming a truly environmental friendly institution by example and educate its students accordingly. (~Ying-hsueh Hu)