APACPH Newsletter

APACPH now has 50 member universities, all dedicated to furthering the health of all people in our region, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Recognising the need for continuing education for the public health workforce in the region, the members of APACPH resolved to pool their resources to develop a continuing education program.

The APACPH Cyber University Project

The concept of a Cyber University was initially presented to the APACPH members during the 34th Conference held in Seoul, Korea in 2001. Yonsei University was exploring a possibility of developing Cyber University with the support of a major Korean company, LG-CNS. The LG-CNS has considerable technical resources, but it remains the role of the APCPH members to provide the academic content and guide the course developments. This concept was welcomed by all the members and Yonsei University pledged further commitment to the project.

The Need for a Cyber University

The Asia-Pacific Region encompasses around one quarter of the world's population. The area we work in is vast, but APACPH is united in its mission of developing appropriate education and program strategies for the region.

APACPH recognises that the needs for continuing education are:
- For a potentially a very large number of health workers (millions)
- Workers of varying levels of education
- Different cultures and languages
- Differing levels of health development

The APACPH Cyber University will offer courses at different levels to cater for these different needs. Some subjects will be available free for self study, but for credit towards a formal qualification, formal enrolment will be required, either through Yonsei University or another APACPH University. Courses will include a certificate program and an MPH.

The proposed certificate program would be aimed at the less affluent countries in the region, and would be set at upper undergraduate/beginning postgraduate level. The course would be suitable for health workers of equivalent level to nurses, medical assistants, allied health workers and medical practitioners. Workers at this level find it difficult to afford the time and cost of continuing education, yet many acknowledge the need to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

All materials will be initially prepared in English. In the initial project it is proposed to translate the presentations into Chinese and Korean as examples of what can be done. In the future it is envisaged that materials will be translated into other regional languages.

Cyber University Developments

At the 35th Conference in Shanghai, Memoranda of understanding between APACPH, Yonsei University and LG-CNS was signed by all parties at the board meeting. Dr Seung-Hum Yu, Dean of Yonsei University Graduate School of Public Health was nominated as a President of Cyber University. Dr Mi Kyung Lee was nominated as a coordinator of the project on behalf of APACPH. A motion was passed all in favour of contributing US$5,000 towards the development of the Cyber University Project.

Online classes for the Cyber University are planned for open on 3 May 2004 with four courses (International Child Health, Health Promotion Planning and Health Informatics initially, and Public Health Nutrition available later in the year). There will be no charge for these courses. Anyone interested in taking these courses should sign up for the courses through online registration by 24 April 2004 at the Cyber University website (http://yscec.yonsei.ac.kr/eng).

A planning meeting of the APACPH Cyber University Academic Committee and the formal launch of the project are planned on 10 May 2004 at Yonsei University.

Later in the year a half day workshop reporting on the development of the project is planned for the 36th Conference in Brisbane, 30 November – 3 December, 2004.

Issues that we still need to consider include the following:

1. Copyright Issues. Courses donated for the use of the Cyber University will remain the property of the APACPH member university. Courses prepared directly for the Cyber University will be copyright by APACPH or the author, to be negotiated on an individual basis. However, a major issue that needs to be discussed and negotiated is the use of copyright journal articles by course participants.
2. Instructors (cooperation will be needed of the member universities)
3. Need to collect feedback from students
4. Evaluation of each unit will need to be considered, even in the early stages
5. Offer courses that reflect the strengths of the APACPH

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