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EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY OF OFFERING MSIT & MIT GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT LEYTE NORMAL UNIVERSITY, TACLOBAN CITY, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to conduct a study on the possibility of offering a new graduate program particularly Master of Science in Information Technology (MSIT) and Master in Information Technology (MIT) for LeyteNormal University, Tacloban City. SWOT analysis was used which involved observations, interviews, and review of available documents. Results showed that based on the analysis, a favorable advantage on the part of the university. This implies that the program can sustain within a five year period from the start of program offering and onwards as there is a potential target market.

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INTRODUCTION

Institutions of higher learning are considered the primary sources of quality manpower, technology, and knowledge of any nation in its attempt to achieve the desired level of development. Education is the need of the present and the demand of the future. The world needs to offer educational programs that will prove to be beneficial for the society. Not only is it important to offer educational programs that meet the needs of today and also meet the predicted demands of tomorrow, but it is more important to ensure that the programs are of good quality.

The Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City is categorized by Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as an institution of higher learning and one of the State Universities and Colleges in the Philippines that offered BS Information Technology (BSIT) program. The curriculum is patterned after the Rules and Standards for the Undergraduate Information Technology Education (CHED Memo Order No.53, s.2006). Such rules and standards is a result of the series of workshops initiated by the professional organization in Information Technology education, PSITE (Philippine Society of IT Educators), where IT educators, practitioners, students and stakeholders in the IT industry are invited as participants to the workshop with the presence of a technical panel from CHED. The curriculum includes courses that will facilitate the development of the students in the different disciplines of Information Technology.

Hence, basic courses in the curriculum will help the student to become knowledgeable in the different academic areas that will mold them to become a better student, professional, citizen and as a person. All of these combined will result in the attainment of the vision and mission of the university as well as the goals of the IT and Computer Education unit. Quality graduates will result to employability and with all the tools they learned in the university, excellence in the chosen field is within reach, thus cementing the university's vision as a Center of Quality Education in the various fields like the Arts and Sciences (Verecio, 2013).

To this writing, the Leyte Normal University was able to produce seven (7) batches of graduates from the school year 2009-2010 to 2015-2016. Hence, a number of graduates of the BS Information Technology programs in the university and other graduates in the region have inquired on the possibility of opening a graduate program particularly Master of Science in Information Technology (MSIT) and Master in Information Technology (MIT). In respond to this claims, a proposal to open new programs in the university is hereby formulated and possibly be put into reality. The IT & Computer Education strongly believe that this is an outstanding opportunity for Leyte Normal University to begin a cutting-edge in Information Technology which will continue to grow at a fast pace. Moreover, in the quest of the university to apply for future search of the Commission on Higher Education for the Center of Excellence/ Center of Development In Information Technology in the region, it is stated that one of the criteria of

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an applicant should have at least a graduate program related to IT Education offerings thus, this new program is also prevalent. Further, the program will be an opportunity for our graduates who wanted to further develop their interest in the field of Information Technology by pursuing a graduate program. This will give them also an advantage, to be more competitive in the world of work.

Objectives of the Study

This study focused on gathering and analyzing data to prepare a feasibility of offering a new graduate program particularly the Master of Science in Information Technology (MSIT) and Master in Information Technology (MIT). Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis will be conducted to ensure the feasibility of curricular offerings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legal Basis

CMO 02. S. 2000 Policies and Standards for Graduate Program in Information Technology

CMO 07. S. 2010 Revised Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Graduate Program in Information Technology (ITE)

CMO 17. S. 2014 Lifting of Moratorium on the Opening of Undergraduate and Graduate programs in Business Administration, Hotel and Restaurant Management and Information Technology Effective Academic Year 2015-2016.

“In accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 7222, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of 1994”, and by virtue of Commission en banc Resolution No. 272-2014 dated May 5, 2014, the moratorium on the opening of the undergraduate and graduate program is hereby lifted by the Commission effective Academic Year 2015-2016.

Program Description

The proposed programs are both designed to further train IT Practitioners by providing them with advanced knowledge in Information Technology enabling them to design and implement IT solutions in their workplace. However the program differs in terms of:

Master of Science in Information Technology (MSIT) – student is expected to finish all academic subjects for a total of 33 units before taking the comprehensive examination. He/she will undergo a thesis writing (IT-Based Application Project). Such thesis is an original research undertaken by the student on problems related to Information Technology and will be presented at a committee hearing.

Master in Information Technology (MIT) - student is expected to finish all academic subjects for a total of 45 units before taking the comprehensive examination and oral interview composed of committee.

Program Goals

The MSIT & MIT programs aims to develop in its students

- a working foundation of technologies needed in order to effectively use information technology for different types of applications.

- the basic skills in analysis and design of various information system using structured analysis and design methodologies.
- the ability to implement IT solutions; and
- the skills necessary to manage system development projects

Admission Requirements

To be admitted to the MSIT or MIT program, the following basic requirements must be met:

1. The applicant must possess a bachelor’s degree in any field from any recognized institution.
2. Proficient in at least one programming language; and
3. with at least two years of IT-related work experience (may be waived if the applicant is a BS in Computer Science, BS in Information Technology, BS in Information Management graduate and other related fields).

Acceptability of an applicant will be determined on the following basis

1. a fully accomplished application form;
2. an official transcript of records and other certificates of training;
3. work description and other documentation of IT-related projects; and
4. two letters of recommendation from former professors and/or employers.

Swot analysis/ environmental scanning

Strength

In the recent years, the IT & Computer Education has overcome several weaknesses during the decade of operation.

Classroom & Laboratory Facilities

There is enough facilities and equipment available in the IT & Computer Education Unit. The classrooms are conducive to learning with state-of-the-art facilities installed with the latest software, hardware technology as well high speed internet connection.

Currently, there were seven (7) computer laboratories in the university that are being utilized for instructions for the BS Information Technology program and other courses offering computer subjects. However, such utilization is done only from Monday to Fridays. Hence, considering that graduate school programs are done on Saturdays and Sundays in the university, the current classroom/laboratory rooms is more than sufficient. Therefore, there is no additional classroom or laboratory space is necessary for the implementation of the program

Further, at this time, we do not anticipate for additional computer equipment’s for the implementation of the program but rather we will be using such existing computer facilities.

Library

There are two libraries in the university, the College Library, and Graduate School Library with a collection of books, references, journals, publications, etc. The library holdings are quite adequate resources for the program at this point. We will

need to remain current by acquiring new books as they appear, and have included a line item in the budget for it. Research oriented material could be provided via the library loan system. As the program grows, and as more publications appear, we will reassess and possibly request new subscriptions and acquisitions.

Convenient Class Schedule

Classes of the Graduate School program in the university are usually recited in alternate Saturdays and Sundays. This scheduling becomes an advantage and attractive to students considering that it would minimize their expenses in coming to school as most students are not residing in the City of Tacloban.

Faculty

There are strong and qualified faculty members of the IT & Computer Education Unit whom are all master’s degree holders with appropriate experience, while two faculties are doctorate degree holders. The professional or major subjects for both MSIT & MIT program will be handled by the said faculty listed below:

No.	Name of Faculty	QUALIFICATIONS		
		Undergraduate	Master’s Degree	Doctorate Degree
1.	Dr. Rommel L. Verecio	BS Computer Science	MS in Information Technology (MSIT)	Doctor of Management in Human Resource (DM-HRM)
2.	Las Johansen B. Caluza	BS Computer Science	MS in Information Technology (MSIT)	Philosophy in Technology Management (Ph.D. TM)
3.	Mark Lester P. Laurente	BS Math major in Computer Science	MS in Information Technology (MSIT)	Philosophy in Technology Management (Ph.D. TM) <i>On-going</i>
4.	Lowell A. Quisumbing	BS Computer Science	MS in Information Technology (MSIT)	Doctor of Management in Human Resource (DM-HRM) <i>On-going</i>
5.	Micheline A. Gotardo	BS Computer Science	MS in Information Technology (MSIT)	
6.	Devine Grace D. Funcion	BS Computer Science	MS in Information Technology (MSIT)	
7.	Lalaine E. Llose	BS Computer Science	MS in Information Technology (MSIT)	
8.	Engr. Edwin Murillo	BS Civil Engineering	MS in Information Technology (MSIT)	

Weaknesses

Funding

There are many programs offered in the university both undergraduate and graduate level. This entire program relies based on the budget appropriations of the university to sustain the operations. With this, there may be cases that the university cannot provide immediate funding all needed

requirements by the program (keeping abreast of technology, library resources, etc.).

Opportunities

Target Market

The target market or prospect students for the implementation of the MSIT & MIT program will be the graduates of the BS Information Technology program in the university. Currently, from its inception, the program was able to produce seven (7) batch of graduates.

The program will also cater other graduates from the neighboring private and public higher educational institutions in Tacloban City as well as that of the entire region. Currently, the neighboring institutions have the following Information Technology Programs offered with the corresponding number of graduating students as presented in the table below:

Graduating Students Per Academic Program Offerings
SY 2015 – 2016

SCHOOL	ACADEMIC PROGRAMS				Total Number of Graduates
	BSIT	BSIS	BSCS	BSCoE	
EVSU					
Carigara	28				28
Ormoc	25				25
Tanauan	31				31
Main-Tacloban	115				115
ESSU					
Borongon	58		28		86
Salcedo			100		100
LNU	51				51
NwSSU	59	26	16	1	102
SLSU	169			32	201
PIT	48				48
SSU	97	39		18	154
UEP	65				65
UPVTC			31		31
VSU Main			21		21
ACLC Tacloban	576		93		669
ADFC	12		3	4	19
Abuyog Community College	26				26
AMA	27		1	7	35
Colegio de San Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila			13		13
Holy Cross of Carigara			7		7
Western Leyte College	20		2		22
St. Joseph College of Maasin	22		5		27
STI Ormoc	50				50
GRAND TOTAL					1,926

With approximation of at least 0.02 percent from the total number of graduating students as prospect to enroll the MS Information Technology (MSIT) and Master in Information Technology (MIT) program, such proposal to open will sustain its marketability over the years considering that it will need only of at least **15 students** for a certain subjects or program to be offered.

Further, other prospective students for this program are IT practitioners (e.g. programmers, system analysts, software engineers, etc.) in industry and/ or government, academics, managers, administrators, and other IT professionals who are already familiar with information technology and are interested in enhancing and upgrading their knowledge in IT.

Threats

Scholarships

Most students who pursue graduate studies rely on government scholarships because of financial constraints. Such scholarship is from CHED, DOST, and other scholarship funding entities but because of limited slots, not all can avail. However, this concerned cannot totally affect to prospect students who want to enroll considering that the tuition fee is affordable and not as high compared to private institutions.

Increased Competitions of Offering Institutions

Currently, in the City of Tacloban, there were only two institutions offering such program namely: Asian Development Foundation College a private institutions and Eastern Visayas State University a government institutions. With these two institutions, the Leyte Normal University can compete in terms of facilities, faculty and instructions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the SWOT analysis conducted, the proponent established an idea that it is favorable for Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City to offer the graduate programs mentioned in this study as there is a greater advantage considering that there is no additional cost that will be incurred as existing facilities will be utilized in the operations particularly in classrooms, computer laboratory facilities and library resources. Moreover, there is no need of hiring additional faculty, as there is a competent and qualified faculty in the IT & Computer Education Unit that can also teach such program offerings and this is also an opportune time for them because of a two years gap that no freshmen enrollees in the college due to the K-12 transitions.

Further, the program can also sustain within a five year period from the start of program offering and onwards as there is a potential target market as reflected in the table.

Recommendations

In light of the foregoing conclusion, the following are recommended:

1. Conduct stakeholders' consultative assembly with the representation from industry, parents, students, IT organization, and faculty for the improvement of the proposal particularly on subjects offering.
2. Present the proposal to the VP for Academics and be scheduled for presentation to the Academic Council for further evaluation and approval.
3. With the approval of the council, submit the same to the Board of Regents for final approval of the proposal and wait for the BOR Resolutions granting the authority to open such program offerings.

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- CMO 02. S. 2000 Policies and Standards for Graduate Program in Information Technology
- CMO 07. S. 2010 Revised Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Graduate Program in Information Technology (ITE)
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