HIGHER ENGINEERING EDUCATION ALLIANCE PROGRAM

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what's inside?

ASU conference primes Southeast Asia to lead industry 4.0

By Lanelle Strawder

Khandle Hedrick, lead conference organizer and senior program coordinator in the Office of Global Outreach and Extended Education, speaks with conference participants about their involvement in STEM education in Vietnam. Photographer: Studio Ha Nguyen

This spring, conference delegates from around the globe gathered in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, for STEMCON 2018. Academic, industry and government leaders collaborated, connected and shared best practices that will lead to innovative change in Southeast Asia's science, technology, engineering and mathematics environment.

Arizona State University partnered with Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City to host nearly 600 attendees for the sixth annual conference focused on elevating engineering education and workforce development in the STEM fields.

Through an interactive plenary session, a variety of technical sessions, discussion sessions, seminars and exhibits, participants explored the challenges and opportunities in store as Vietnam prepares to be a leader in Industry 4.0 in the Association of Southeast Asian Networks (ASEAN) region.

During this current wave of the Industrial Revolution – commonly known as Industry 4.0 – manufacturing processes are becoming more digitized, relying increasingly on artificial intelligence, computing power and connectivity to progress from a concept to products. To excel in this area, members of the workforce will need to be proficient in digital technologies, such as automation, data analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning/robotics, programming, systems integration and software development.

Public-private partnerships, like the Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP) in ASU's Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, offer opportunities to provide skills training to the existing workforce and students seeking jobs in this rapidly changing field. STEMCON 2018, aptly themed "Industry 4.0 & STEM: People will be the Key to Success and Competitiveness," offered attendees the opportunity to examine the importance

Tran Thi Yen Dinh (far left), education sector director with Microsoft Vietnam, shakes hands with Oracle Academy Asia Regional Director Damian Haas as they prepare to discuss public private partnerships in the era of Industry 4.0. Photographer: Studio Ha Nguyen

of investing in human capital through education.

"At Arizona State University, we consider ourselves among the most innovative universities in the world. We appreciate the fact that STEM is key to innovation – as are people, obviously," says Stephanie Lindquist, Deputy Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. "We need to intersect technology with people and people skills. We're very excited that this year we are hosting a conference focused on STEM and Industry 4.0, which is, again, at the cutting edge of innovation in this particular field."

Conference attendees participated in an interactive plenary by Google executives and technical sessions, panel discussions, seminars and exhibits focused on a range of new biological and digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomous vehicles, nanotechnology, neurotechnology, quantum computing, smart cities and all things connected to the Internet of Things (IoT).

While STEMCON 2018 offered a wealth of information about technical applications and practical approaches, the primary aim was to connect people with the resources and technology needed to shepherd in the cyber-meets-physical systems approach to manufacturing automation.

See Chong Chan is the managing director for First Solar Vietnam, a leading global provider of comprehensive photovoltaic solar systems. He served on a panel of industry-academic who discussed building an adaptive workforce to compete in Industry 4.0. The broad range of talent and expertise impressed the first-time STEMCON attendee.

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>
> Stephanie Lindquist
>
> *ASU Deputy Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs*

"I'm truly amazed by the breadth of topics and also the depth of knowledge that ASU has been able to assemble in its speakers. I've gained a lot of insights into the different perspectives from the academia, the industry and also the government."

Several global companies showed their commitment to develop STEM education in Vietnam by sponsoring scholarships, creating job opportunities and fostering partnerships. Companies included Intel, Amazon Web Services, Axon, Autodesk, Dow, eSilicon, John Wiley & Sons, Microsoft, Oracle, Pearson, Rockwell Automation and Siemens.

"These companies aren't just sponsoring STEMCON Vietnam," said Jeffrey Goss, ASU's Associate Vice Provost for SE Asia and Executive Director of HEEAP and Building University-Industry Learning and Development through Innovation and Technology (BUILD-IT). "They are partnering with Vietnamese STEM educators to develop curriculum and programs designed to prepare the workforce of the future to be technological innovators ready to engage in a global marketplace."

ASU leads modernization efforts in Vietnam's STEM higher education system through the development and implementation of HEEAP and BUILD-IT Alliance activities in Vietnam.

Stephen Berlinguette, the USAID Ho Chi Minh City Section Chief stated, "Our work with ASU began under HEEAP in 2010. From 2015, the BUILD-IT Alliance

Keiko Inoue takes the mic to share her perspective on transformative models for innovation in higher education. (From left to right) Do Thi Lan Dai, chairwoman of Lac Hong University; Gael McDonald, president of RMIT University Vietnam; and Keiko Inoue, program leader for human development, World Bank Vietnam. Photographer: Studio Ha Nguyen

was formed and expanded on some of HEEAP's great accomplishments. USAID's goal has remained the same throughout this time: To build a strong public-private alliance of companies, universities and government that transforms higher education and ultimately helps Vietnam address socioeconomic development challenges through STEM skills and technology.

"We are fortunate to have partners who share these goals. Numerous forward-thinking and innovative universities. And ASU itself, with all of the energy, experience and creativity that it brings to the table. We are very proud of all that we have accomplished and will accomplish through this partnership."

At STEMCON, ideas are born, partnerships are formed and opportunities are created in projects and investments whose impact reaches far beyond the government, industry and academic partners in attendance.

For the past six years, STEMCON has helped ensure that education in Vietnam remains relevant and competitive, especially now as the country shapes itself as a leader in Industry 4.0. ■

SOURCE: fullcircle.asu.edu/outreach/asu-conference-primes-southeast-asia-to-lead-industry-4-0

Brian Epp, director of student success with Pearson Education, awards the Pearson Education Innovation Award Vietnam. The award is designed to promote innovative practices in all aspects of teaching and learning in STEM fields. Photographer: Studio Ha Nguyen

USAID, Oracle Vietnam and Coca-Cola spotlight women in STEM at national conference

By Khandle Hedrick

At the end of the conference, select participants gathered for a photo with WiSTEM performing artist Truong Kieu Diem (center, dark green dress), a finalist with X Factor Vietnam 2016.

On November 13, 2017, the second national conference and exhibition on Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, better known as STEM, took place at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology as part of the Building University-Industry Learning and Development through Innovation and Technology, also known as BUILD-IT, Alliance of Arizona State University. The goal of the conference was to highlight female role models and to strengthen women's connections in the academic and research community.

Over 250 delegates attended the conference including United States Consul General in Vietnam, Mary Tarnowka, and the Vice President of Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee, Le Van Khoa. The conference was themed, "Gender Roles in Education, Leadership and Culture." Much of the discussion centered on the vital need to achieve gender equality in the STEM field.

At the event, keynote speaker Le Thi Kim Phung, associate professor and deputy dean of the faculty of chemical engineering, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, pointed out that current statistics show that the percentage of female students choosing to study science, math, engineering and technology is low. She went on to explain that it is mainly social and environmental factors that have led to girls' low interest in STEM fields, and to more challenges in school for girls who do choose to study STEM than for their male counterparts. This is largely due to the lack of resources to support women.

"Parents and the whole society need to encourage girls to participate in research and science because there are still many women who are successful in this field," Phung stressed.

"In life and work, difficulties cannot be avoided; however, we have to keep working," stated honored speaker Nguyen Thi Hiep, lecturer of biomedical engineering, International University (VNU-HCM). "Then results and success will also come."

In addition to the morning plenary sessions, delegates' favorites also included the afternoon workshops Train the Trainer Coding for Girls, Cloud Computing with Amazon Web Services Educate and Iridescent Learning's Technovation. Attendees were treated to a closing musical performance by X Factor Vietnam 2016 Finalist Truong Kieu Diem.

Women need continued support in the STEM fields and it is conferences like these that help inspire women to lead in areas where they have been traditionally left out.

"Investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock human

After participating in the interactive panel discussion, "Turning Challenges into Your Launch Pad for Success," ASU assistant coordinator Trinh Ngoc Yen (far right), accompanies Vietnam country director Phuong Nguyen (second from right) on stage as she awards a gift and certificate of appreciation to (from left to right) Ly Le, associate professor, School of Biotechnology, International University, Vietnam National University; Nguyen Thi Hiep, lecturer, Biomedical Engineering Faculty, International University, VNU-HCM; Nguyen Thi Hong Hanh, founder/CEO, Skyler Co. Ltd.

potential on a transformational scale," stated Consul General Tarnowka in her opening remarks. "And that is why we are here."

The conference was produced in partnership with HCMUT and the Vietnam Association for Intellectual Women. The United States Agency for International Development, Oracle Vietnam and Coca-Cola sponsored the conference.

BUILD-IT, in addition to hosting an annual conference, is establishing university campus-based clubs and associated academic programing, such as the hugely successful Engineering Projects in Community Service competition that began at the University of Danang in 2017, to provide female mentors and offer scholarships for women earning engineering and technical degrees.

The BUILD-IT Alliance is the latest advancement in a series of initiatives led by the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering at Arizona State University. Sponsored by USAID, the alliance links STEM instruction to the needs and capabilities of industry partners by producing graduates ready for inclusive, technology-based careers. More than 20 industry partners currently support the program. A key objective is accreditation by the ASEAN University Network in the areas of biotechnology, chemistry, mathematics and computer science.

To date, ASU initiatives in Vietnam have provided engineering education support and training to over 9,000 Vietnamese participants, 30 percent of whom are women, and has invested more than $25 million in higher education innovation. ■

Vu Dinh Thanh, rector of HCM University of Technology (left) shakes hands with Mary Tarnowka, United States consul general to Vietnam (right).

Student engineering projects win awards from community service program

By Nguyen Huu Diem Huong

A smart mattress developed by a team of students from Danang University of Science and Technology is one of three winning projects in the Engineering Projects in Community Service Program in Vietnam. VNS/Photo Gia Lộc

A smart mattress that helps the elderly change posture and direction is one of three winning projects in the Engineering Projects in the Community Service program, launched in January by USAID.

The DYNAMIC team composed of students at the Danang University of Science and Technology worked together to create the smart mattress.

Team member Võ Văn Quốc said the students conducted a survey of the elderly with joint or bone disease and patients who had lost movement due to accidents who were patients at two Danang hospitals.

Quốc said the patients' families had to stay with them at all times to monitor their situation and help them move.

The smart mattress, which allows patients to move without assistance, meets quality standards.

The Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City won two awards, one for a remote garden system that can be managed via an internet connection and another for a SmartPlan project.

The Engineering Projects Community Service Program in Vietnam was launched by USAID's Building University-Industry Learning and Development through Innovation and Technology Alliance, Arizona State University and Dow Chemical Company.

The program is an internationally recognized multidisciplinary, social entrepreneurship challenge that helps students from fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics develop a collaborative mindset and technical skills to brainstorm, design, prototype and test their engineering-based solutions for local challenges.

Four universities were selected to pilot the program, including Danang University of Science and Technology, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, and Lạc Hồng University in Đồng Nai Province. ■

SOURCE: vietnamnews.vn/society/450210/students-engineering-projects-win-awards-from-community-service-programme.html#Clk307AREFymKPL0.99

Click to see more pictures from the EPICS Final Showcase!

Women stand out in recent engineering competition

Organizers were pleased by the high level of female participation at each school and noted an overall enrollment ratio of 1 woman to every 3 students in the program.

This spring Arizona State University launched an internationally recognized engineering entrepreneurship program at four universities in Vietnam. The Engineering Projects in Community Service pilot program, also known as EPICS, was sponsored by long time ASU industry partner, Dow Chemical, and the United States Agency for International Development. EPICS debuted in Danang, Lac Hong and Ho Chi Minh City to student teams who were invited to design, build and deploy systems to solve engineering-based problems for charities, schools and other not-for-profit organizations.

In addition to benefiting the community with quality engineering solutions, one of the main goals of EPICS was to engage female students in the STEM fields. Organizers were pleased by the high level of female participation at each school and noted an overall enrollment ratio of one woman to every three students in the program. Even more notable was that three of the four schools in the pilot had female professors leading the program. Women involved in the EPICS program were uniquely identified as Women in Engineering Projects in Community Service participants.

In June 2018, EPICS culminated in a final showcase competition that included all student projects from each university. ASU had the opportunity to speak with a few of the WEPICS students before the final event to learn a little more about them and their involvement with EPICS.

Dinh Thi Trang, Danang University of Science and Technology

ASU: What was it that originally inspired you to join EPICS?

Trang: I joined EPICS because I wanted to learn from real projects and apply the skills to my everyday life. I'm a third year student as an industrial management major and I want to do quality management. To achieve that, I think I will have to learn a lot from my teachers and, more importantly, take practical courses like EPICS to prepare me for my future career.

ASU: What have you learned in the EPICS program?

Trang: I have learned soft skills, but more importantly, I have had the opportunity to reach out to project stakeholders and get used to working in a new learning environment.

ASU: What did you and your team create for your EPICS project?

Trang: Our project is called "Smart Self." It is a study spaces management system for a university or library. Our project consists of an app installed on a mobile phone with android OS. The app will let users know what space is available in the school's self-study area, help customers find the shortest path to the desired location, and then report back to the library.

Le Thi Huong Thinh, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology

ASU: Since you joined the EPICS program, have you been presented with any new opportunities?

Thinh: As a third year mechanical engineering student, this program has given me a big opportunity to work with fellow friends to create a new and meaningful product. Our project comes from the creative ideas of every teammate.

ASU: What have you learned in the EPICS program?

Thinh: I have learned to improve myself in many aspects academically. I have learned how to brainstorm to make useful things to support the community, to enhance the team spirit and to corporate effectively.

ASU: After EPICS, what are your long-term career goals?

Thinh: I intend to become an expert in the mechanical engineering field. Before I can reach that destination, I am going to graduate from university and move on my own research. Then I will get a job related to my field to collect knowledge and experiences.

Pham Tuong Nhi, Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City

ASU: Tell us a little about yourself and why you joined EPICS.

Nhi: I am currently in my final year as a university student studying computer engineering. I joined EPICS because I would like to have more experience in my field and create memories in the process. It is also important to me to contribute to my community and to society. I also like how EPICS helps people realize that women can also participate in the engineering field and do very well. It helps young women who are passionate and eager to participate in this field to have more confidence.

ASU: Can you tell us about your EPICS project?

Nhi: Our team project is a device to support the visually impaired. The device is designed to help the blind move more easily. It is specific in signaling for them that there are obstructions in front and help them determine the direction to go next. As expected, device is a stick with a neat design and it is easy to use. ■

Click to learn more about the 2018 WEPICS participants!

HEEAP awards 109 scholarships to technical female students

By Le Anh, The Saigon Times Daily

A representative of the organizing committee awards scholarships to technical female students in HCMC on December 15. Photo: Mr. Le Thanh Toan

Intel Products Vietnam and the Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP) late last week granted 109 scholarships totaling VND708.5 million to female students from 13 universities and vocational schools in Vietnam.

The Technical Female Scholarship is an annual scholarship program under the framework of HEEAP. Over the past six years from 2012 to 2017, the program has presented 654 scholarships worth VND6.5 million each to female students in HCMC and neighboring provinces.

The scholarship program demonstrates Intel Products Vietnam's vision and responsibility to raise social awareness and support women to pursue engineering and technology programs, says Jeffrey S. Goss, director of HEEAP.

Ho Uyen, public affairs director of Intel Products Vietnam & Malaysia, said that promoting educational opportunities for young girls and building women's capacity are focus areas of education development and social responsibilities for Intel. This is the sixth consecutive year that Intel has offered scholarships to technical female students with the goal to increase opportunities for female students to develop their capabilities in the fields they pursue.

HEEAP was initiated in 2010 as a result of a three-way partnership between the United States Agency for International Development, Intel Corporation and Arizona State University to provide high-quality, work-ready graduates and improve Vietnam's competitiveness in high-technology industries. ■

SOURCE: english.thesaigontimes.vn/57576/HEEAP-awards-109-scholarships-to-technical-female-students.html

Click to see more pictures from the Scholarship Ceremony!

BUILD-IT Upcoming Events

We invite you to visit our website to discover all that BUILD-IT is offering in 2018

Throughout Vietnam, BUILD-IT is hosting a number of workshops focused on innovative technology and engineering higher education. Visit our website to learn more about these unique opportunities!

Automation Project-Based Learning Competition

BUILD-IT is partnering with Rockwell Automation and Polyco Group to launch this innovative competition, expanding experiences and supporting training related to Industry 4.0. Visit our website to learn more!

Visit builditvietnam.org to learn more today

Finger reader for the blind wins EduHackathon 2017

By VietnamNet Bridge

The ASU/AWS EduHackathon 2017 was co-organized by Arizona State University, the BUILD-IT Alliance, and Amazon Web Services (AWS). The Hackathon focused on solving real-world problems that are present in Vietnam and many countries around the world. These include but are not limited to traffic control and reduction, e-government services, health care and leveraging open data.

The competition was open to students from any of the BUILD-IT academic partner institutions with a team of three to five people from the same institution. This year, EduHackathon attracted 17 teams totaling 68 students from different universities in Vietnam.

Nguyen Thai Hoang, leader of the Curiosity team, said that the finger reader helps people who are blind to read documents in normal formats. After the competition, the team will develop the device to read Vietnamese with compact design and longer usage time. The device will be on sale for VND 1 million, the equivalent of $44 USD.

Nguyen Thi Thanh Phuong, country

The Curiosity team with five members from Danang Polytechnic University won the first award at EduHackathon 2017 for a finger reader for people who are blind.

director of Arizona State University, said that the institution will support contestants to develop and refine their products with Amazon Echo Bot, Raspberry Pi, pcDuino, as well as provide free access to ASU's Makerspace in Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho. Additionally, ASU will help contestants look for venture capital funds to invest and establish startups.

The second prize was granted to Vibot from University of Science under the Vietnam National University that features chatbots to provide information to the government. The third prizes went to Puzzle App from University of Science and Smart Traffic from Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology.

Sponsored by USAID and led by ASU, BUILD-IT leverages deep and diverse government-industry-academic partners that share a goal of tightly linking science, technology, engineering and mathematics instruction in Vietnamese higher education institutions to the needs and capabilities of industry partners to produce graduates who can lead inclusive, technology-based growth. ■

SOURCE: english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/science-it/193971/finger-reader-for-the-blind-wins-eduhackathon-2017.html

Oracle Academy leads technology courses in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City

By Ngo Minh Ngoc

In January 2018, the BUILD-IT project and Oracle Academy jointly conducted two intensive, five-day Oracle Database Foundation Train-the-Trainer courses in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. These courses provided faculty members from BUILD-IT academic partners with a deep technical knowledge in database technology and demonstrated a database curriculum that uses a practical, hands-on and engaging approach to teaching. Faculty were provided with various training activities including projects challenging participants to design, implement, and demonstrate a database solution for a business organization.

These activities gave them a better understanding of the curriculum, as well as the teaching methodology, from a student's perspective. At the end of the workshop, 38 faculty members were awarded an Oracle Academy certificate, which enables them to teach Oracle Academy curriculum with full free access to the teaching and learning resources. A similar Oracle Database Foundation Train-the-Trainer Course will be offered in Danang in fall 2018.

As database technology is changing and modernizing rapidly with the popularity of big data and high performance computing, faculty in the area of information technology must be retrained to catch up with new technology trends. With this retraining, universities in Vietnam will be better at preparing students to meet the growing need for employees skilled in computer technologies in Vietnam, one of the country's key workforce challenges. ■

Faculty at Oracle Academy were provided with various training activities including projects challenging the participants to design, implement and demonstrate a database solution for a business organization.

48 STEM professors participate in Master Teacher Training

By James Cervin

The first cohort of Master Teachers learn an engaging activity that they will be able to duplicate in their engineering classes.

A group of 47 STEM professors from Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Danang began a Master Teacher Training pilot program in November 2017 that is funded through the Vietnam BUILD-IT initiative sponsored by USAID and Arizona State University.

This training program was facilitated by nine Vietnamese faculty members from Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Ho Chi Minh University of Technology and Education, Danang University of Technology and Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology. This hybrid program encompassed 35 hours of coursework over the duration of three weeks.

The purpose of this training program is to impact tertiary STEM faculty through the application of pedagogical tools to assist them in transforming their courses and classrooms.

This innovative training program encourages STEM faculty to exhibit a student-centered approach through the integration of hands-on, concrete experiences, educational technology and current teaching practices and theories. Starting in the first quarter of 2018, multiple iterations of this program were conducted in several locations throughout Vietnam facilitated by Certified Facilitators trained by Arizona State University. ■

BUILD-IT accreditation workshops reach over 500 participants

By Le Thi Ngoc Dung

BUILD-IT held a series of accreditation and quality assurance workshops this spring in both Danang and Ho Chi Minh City. These workshops were designed to address the needs and goals of the BUILD-IT strategic partners and reached over 500 participants.

The workshops taught participants how to align their universities with the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology criteria, and how to use the dissemination of software tools to aggregate assessment data streams and display them in an easy-to-understand format for data-driven program improvement and self-study reporting, which is necessary to achieve program accreditation.

One of the highlights in HCMC included a session focused on advanced classroom assessment and evaluation of student learning. The assessment session was designed to guide faculty in using methodologies that satisfy both classroom assessment needs, as well as support program accreditation and assessment purposes. In addition to formal workshops, participants also took advantage of individual coaching sessions for BUILD-IT strategic partners as they developed their assessment systems and drafted self-study documents.

Six strategic partner universities were actively engaged in the institutional accreditation workshop titled, Assessment

of Institution Preparedness for AUN-IQA Certification Based on the Self-Assessment Report in HCMC. The workshop guided participants in developing rubrics for AUN Criteria and used the criteria to assign points for each criterion required in the SAR.

A shortened version of this workshop was given to key quality assurance people at Danang University of Science and Technology. A coaching session with key QA personnel of the HCM-VNU International University was also conducted to discuss their preparation for AUN-IQA Certification, as well as their ABET preparation.

Currently, QA and International Accreditation are top priorities for higher education in Vietnam. They are essential for advancing quality academic programs and curriculum that meet the needs of industry and professions in the area of workforce development. Both program and university level accreditation are key for achieving the university goals and the project goals of BUILD-IT. ■

The workshops taught participants how to align their universities with ABET criteria, and how to use the dissemination of software tools to aggregate assessment data streams and display them in an easy-to-understand format.

250 faculty members trained to implement project-based learning

By Dang Tran Phuong Anh

Building on the problem-based curriculum models and value to student learning workshop, participants enhanced their knowledge about structuring and monitoring student progress on a major project.

After the first Project Based Learning Models (PBL) Workshop in September 2017, a series of PBL workshops were conducted by the BUILD-IT Project from January to May 2018. Approximately 250 participants from BUILD-IT partner schools attended. The workshops were led by Scott Danielson, lead of BUILD-IT Developing Quality and Project Based Curriculum and co-leader of the Maker Network in Vietnam.

Building on the project based curriculum models and value to student learning workshop, participants enhanced their knowledge about structuring and monitoring student progress on a major project. They began applying methods for assessing student attainment of both technical and generic course learning outcomes and building a curriculum to incorporate student projects. They also learned to identify good project ideas and addressed funding issues for project based learning activities.

In the recent project based learning workshop, participants also learned the practical aspects of industry-supported project procurement and tracking. The participants were given proven tools and techniques for approaching companies, as well as approaches for developing, and subsequently using, company awareness regarding the value and limitations of student projects.

The key outcome for this type of workshop was for participants to understand that project based learning results in the development of program capacity to successfully implement project based curriculum reform using industry-supported projects. ■

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Young leaders from 10 ASEAN countries united and equipped to affect change

By Catalina Monsalve

The consensus among the fellows was that they had become family, a family of leaders who are now even more energized and equipped with the tools needed to affect change.

A group of 41 young leaders from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam visited Arizona State University, in March, ready to gain knowledge to help create change and support for their communities. For several of them, it was the first time they had ever left their home countries.

What motivated these individuals to venture out of the comfort of their homes and travel halfway around the world? A deep love for knowledge, culture and a passion for life.

This is the third year that ASU has hosted the five-week Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, commonly known as YSEALI. This academic fellowship program, spearheaded by the U.S. Department of State, is a collaboration between nations that provides an open exchange of educational and cultural ideas through academic programming and active learning.

The fellows' curriculum was packed with classroom activities along with community and cultural volunteer events. Instruction was co-led by lecturer David Benson from the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, who taught social entrepreneurship and economic development, and associate professor Christine Buzinde from ASU's College of Public Service and Community Solutions, who led the civic engagement classes.

One favorite event was a journey to the indigenous Navajo Nation near the Grand Canyon. There, fellows met with Navajo representatives to discuss challenges the Nation faces and how their community works to resolve them. Some of the fellows are now following the Navajo model to document tribal culture in their home countries.

Another learning activity included a historical and cultural study tour to Washington, D.C., New York and Boston. At the Cambridge Innovation Center in Boston, fellows learned more about community working spaces and how they facilitate networking opportunities and access to resources to create positive global impact.

The program culminated in Washington, D.C., where the fellows presented to the U.S. State Department what they had learned and the projects they had developed in collaboration with ASU students, faculty and each other. The presentation also included an original song written and performed by the group referencing all of the experiences that had transpired during their brief time studying abroad.

At the end of the program, the consensus among the fellows was that they had become family –a family of leaders who are now even more energized and equipped with the tools needed to affect change.

"The curriculum was specifically designed for us, so I took full advantage of it," said P'na Rith from Cambodia summing up her YSEALI experience. "But the most precious part of the program for me was the friendships I made. My YSEALI cohort is a family I will never forget."