

# WORLD TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

## World Technology Universities Network (WTUN) The Fourth World Technology Congress (WTUC4) Report

### **Executive Summary**

The annual WTUN Congress was hosted this year by founding member, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST/Taiwan Tech). It was delivered on their campus in Taipei from 2 – 4 October 2019 and attracted 50 attendees. These delegates, who were academics, professional services staff and members of senior management, represented 20 Higher Education Institutions and from over 16 countries. WTUC4 covered a range of topics, specific to the Network and issues relevant across the global HE sector. Delegates discussed technology transforming the HE sector and whether degrees are still necessary for employment. Following WTUC3, discussions and work around the selected UN Sustainable Development Goals continued, with work moving into implementation stages. This report will outline key areas of discussion and activity at WTUC4, report on the key outcomes of the Congress and be used to inform the upcoming year of activity for the Network and planning for the next Congress (WTUC5).

### **Key Outcomes**

#### The launch of WTUN's first student competition

AT WTUC4, WTUN launched its first Student Competition. This will be open to all UG/PG students at member institutions. The theme of the 19/20 competition is Digital Creativity. Students will be tasked with submitting a proposal to combat one of the Network's chosen UN SDGs through the form of Digital Creativity. Students from all faculties and disciplines are welcome to enter and are encouraged to attempt multidisciplinary proposals. Teams can be no more than 4 members and the deadline for submission is Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020. All members are encouraged to take this opportunity back to their institutions.

#### General agreement with WTUN moving forward with the Gender Equality Pledge

The WTUN Gender Equality working group has drafted a pledge which they put forward for the Network to approve. The pledge involves making Gender Equity a priority and ensuring equal panels at events, to provide diverse and enriching viewpoints. There was a general consensus to proceed with this and for members to sign. There were some comments fed back which the working group will take on board with a view for members to sign the pledge in the upcoming year.

#### Innovation and Entrepreneurship continuing to be a key priority for the Network

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship working group has begun discussing how WTUN can have an impact on I&E. Student Entrepreneurship, supporting start-ups and encouraging global citizenship are key aims of the work stream. Attendees were in agreement around keeping the theme as a priority for the Network and will be moving forward with this work stream, possibly aligning it with other work streams (UN SDGs) and activities (exchanges).

#### The Exchanges programme to be modified to ensure maximum collaboration possibilities and impact

The first two rounds of the WTUN exchange have been a success and improvement has already been noted between the 18/19 and 19/20 cycle, especially with exchange reporting. Operational Board members and exchange recipients at the Congress begun discussing methods of improving the

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current programme to ensure that visits have maximum and continued impact. This involves considering two/multi-way exchanges and considering widening the awards to students too. These ideas will be discussed further through a task and finish group and the changes will be implemented, with the 20/21 round of exchanges launching by the end of the year.

## Future Plans for WTUC

Many delegates have attended numerous WTUC's and the Network collectively would like to examine the Congress to ensure it is fit for purpose going forward. As the Network has developed from initial set-up to the implementation of various activities and work streams, the Congress needs to reflect this. Delegates also wish to increase the remit of the Congress, take more time to explore issues within the context of HE, understand the host country context and ideas to attract a more external set of delegates, including non-members, NGOs, government representatives and industry experts. A meeting will be convened, including the hosts of the next Congress, to discuss these ideas and inform the planning of WTUC5.

## **Concluding comments**

WTUC4 enforced the decision to align the Network with specific areas of research and the UN SDGs whilst in early stages of implementation. This attracts academics from within member institutions and spreads the reach and activity of the Network. The priorities of Gender Equality within HE and Innovation & Entrepreneurship will also continue. However, with the Network being at such a dynamic level, changing continuously, staple activities such as the exchanges and congress will be reviewed to ensure maximum impact. Members are keen to support WTUN in these next stages and hope to see the Network continue to grow and develop.