

Item 4-2: Selected Project of UMAP Research Net 2020

Title of Research Project		
New Normal Adaptation for International Mobility during the Pandemic		
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Abstract (up to 500 words)

International mobility is one of the key elements of internationalization. During a pandemic situation such as COVID-19, however, international mobility is severely affected due to travel restrictions to contain the spread of the virus. While online learning and courses are viable options to replace physical classes, international mobility programs such as short programs and student exchange may not be readily replaced by such virtual meetings due to the lack of physical experiences such as cultural immersion that is an important aspect of international mobility. Since physical international travel may be strictly not an option in many places during the pandemic, creative ways of reviving the loss of experience in online short programs or online mobility programs has to be considered if such programs are to be maintained. This research project will propose and evaluate alternatives to overcome this lack of experiences and the possible impact on several other target skills such critical thinking, language skills, cross-culture. Such alternatives include multicultural or multinational pairing or buddy system in the online mobility programs, the use of technology such as VR (virtual reality), as well as the use of physical objects sent to online mobility participants as part of the course for better cultural connection. The response and effectiveness of the proposed new normal for international mobility, specifically online student mobility, will be evaluated. To perform this study, actual programs will be conducted and large-scale surveys on the response of the participants will be taken. The surveys will involve three types of students, i.e. students who have regular/normal mobility experience but no “new normal’ experience, students who have no mobility experience at all, and students who have regular/normal and “new normal” mobility. Statistical analysis and behavioral/decision-making analysis through Markov model will be conducted to evaluate the adaptation. The results of this project will hopefully provide insights on what alternatives are effective to maintain international mobility through the new normal.