

## **UNDERSTANDING REGIONALISATION IN PHILIPPINE HIGHER EDUCATION AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE ASEAN INTEGRATION**

*Authors:*

*Joclarisse E. Albia and Sheng-Ju Chan, Ph.D.*

### **ABSTRACT**

Regionalisation in education is not new or uncommon, but it has gained increased interest and importance as a result of the ever-increasing collaborations, interactions and cooperation among neighbouring nation-states and even between regions. Conceptions and definitions of the term vary, and more so its operationalisation in universities and educational institutions. In the Philippines, the emphasis on regionalisation in higher education has become even more pronounced with the ASEAN Integration Vision. The paper explores the constructions and understanding of regionalisation and how it is manifested and made evident in three selected higher education institutions in the Philippines. The study found that the notion of regionalisation is closely intertwined and highly interchanged with internationalization, and it is viewed as a tool for national and institutional capacity building as much as it is envisioned as a mechanism for regional development. Most of the institutions' regionalisation efforts are reflective of soft and open collaborations particularly designed to enhance the programmatic and curricular focus of the institutions. Besides enhancing academic mobility and exchange, regionalisation initiatives were geared at developing and enhancing the academic niches of the institutions. As a push factor, the ASEAN integration serves as both an opportunity for the institutions to legitimise and rationalise their regionalisation and, by association, internationalisation initiatives; and a "consciousness" that fosters heightened positional awareness of the institutions and an increased Asian/Southeast Asian bias.