



Erasmus Mundus Students & Alumni Association (EMA)

Newsletter Team Annual Report (2006/2007)

Introduction and Overview

The Erasmus Mundus programme is a co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education which promotes the European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world. It supports European top-quality Masters Courses and enhances the visibility and attractiveness of European higher education in third countries. It also provides EU-funded scholarships for third country nationals participating in these Masters Courses, as well as scholarships for EU-nationals studying at Partner universities throughout the world. Over the past years, thousands of students of Europe as well as all over the world have been successfully graduated from various Erasmus Mundus programs. To enhance the network of alumnus and current students, a student and alumni association is launched last year. The mission of the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association is to serve the interests of Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni, notably by providing a forum for networking, communication and collaboration and by promoting Erasmus Mundus as a European programme of excellence in international education.

Publicity for and the actual coordination of EMA activities is carried out by service teams. These teams consist of dedicated students and alumni, and are led by the team coordinators who jointly form the EMA Steering Committee. As one of the main services provided by EMA, Newsletter service team constantly contribute in gathering, reviewing and editing newsletter content, as well as cooperating with other service teams. This report is created by the current team communicator as an annual summary of year 2006/2007.

Mission of Newsletter Service Team

Newsletter as a main instrument for distributing internal and external information of Erasmus Mundus master programs, EMA, and European higher education, is a main service provided by EMA. Newsletter Service Team is responsible for gathering, reviewing, editing and distributing the newsletter issues for the target audiences. This goal is ensured by the active participation of the members and coordinator of the team.

Launch of the Team

The Newsletter Service Team was launched during the Erasmus Mundus (EM) Student Seminar in June 2006, together with other service teams and the Launch Committee. As being an independent group, it works closely with many others, especially Magazine Service team.

In October 2006, as a one of the main output of the service team meeting, a working document is created¹. The working document has defined the following guidelines of the Newsletter Service Team:

- * Mission
- * Target Audiences
- * Sections
- * Format & Platform
- * Organization
- * Frequency

Under the framework of the newly developed working document, with the help of the former service provider, Academic Co-operation Association (ACA), three issues of Newsletters were distributed and highly appraised by the EM students.

A margin Period

Due to the contact margin, there is one newsletter issued without the help service provider. Newsletter Service Team undertook the responsibility to gather, review and coordinates this 4th issue of newsletter edition. And it is a major achievement not only for newsletter team but also for the whole liaison group as well as EMA. The Newsletter Service Team gained precious experience from this time. During this time, many good contributions were made from other Service teams, European commission, and many students and alumnus. Even though, this issue did put a heavy load for the service teams as well as the commission, which further confirmed a service provider is needed, at least for a few years.

Current situation

As the new contract with the ICUnet is signed in June 2007, the EMA has a new service provider. Main practical part of the newsletter service is currently provided by them. However, Newsletter Service Team is still responsible for gathering, editing and distributing the coming newsletters among EMA students and alumnus.

¹ The final version is attached at the end of this document.

Cooperation with Other Service Teams

Cooperating with other service teams is especially important for Newsletter Service Team, which is most effective information channel for the association. For this and many other reasons, a good collaboration is achieved in year 2006/2007.

** Magazine Team*

Magazine Service Team is the most closely related team among the EMA service teams. Many working documents and comments are generated jointly. During the margin period, magazine service team is one of the major contributors. For the coming first edition of EMA magazine, Newsletter Service team is responsible to contribute and actively participate for preparation.

** Jobs Team*

Jobs and placements section is one of the most attractive one in the EMA newsletters. The main provider of this section is Jobs Service Team. A close cooperation is achieved during year 2006/2007.

** IT Team*

IT Team provided good online discussion platform (Wiki), helped to established mailing address and many other technical support for Newsletter Teams.

** Conference Team*

Newsletter is a main channel for conference news to spread within EMA. For the coming events, Newsletter Service Team is responsible for Conference Team to distribute information among EMA students and alumnus.

** Policy Team*

During the launch period, EMA Statute is review and commented within service team. Good comments from Newsletter Service Team, is highly appraised. Newsletter Service Team is and will be responsible for actively help to establish EMA policy.

** Promotion Team*

Report for promotion event of EMA is one good topic of newsletters. Several articles are issued by newsletters.

Challenges

For year 2006/2007, even many major achievements have been made, Newsletter

Service Team have been encounter with some challenges:

* *Communication*

The communication between members was difficult sometimes. E-mail exchange has been proved to be the most convenient means. Because it is unreliable and lack of efficiency, sometimes it is hard to reach a consensus. Online meeting (e.g. Skype conference) can be also applied under certain condition. But, because the alumnus is spreading over the world, it is hard to define a meeting time. And the voice quality is highly depended on the internet connection, which can be problematic.

* *Budget*

Ideally, according to the working document of Newsletter Service Team, there should be a professional editor for both newsletters and magazines of EMA. Although due to the budget limitation it was not possible at the launch period of EMA. Although, with the help of the new service provider, a satisfied work of newsletters are issued and distributed among students and alumnus. Even so, it is still advised, a full time editor should be employed.

* *Inactive Members*

Active participation is always a key factor of a successful alumni association. But, the EMA service team work is a volunteer work. Members are not obliged to be devoted for contribution. This is especially problematic during the launch period. Inactive members can also make a bad influence of the team. However, it is the nature of any alumni association, and will appear less as the growth of the team.

Representation Events

Newsletter Service Team, as one of the most active group also undertook several representation mission of EMA during last year. Table 1 shows a summary of such events.

Table 1. Representation Mission Undertaken by NST (2006/2007)

Topic / Means	Time/Location	Participant
“Enhancing the Attractiveness of European Higher Education” / Conference	28-29 th Nov 2006 / Brussels, Belgium	Hu Zhongliang
ALGANT EMMC Graduation Ceremony / Graduation Ceremony	26-27 th June 2007 / Padova, Italy	Hu Zhongliang
Annual International Educators Conference / Conference	27 th May-1 st June 2007 / Minneapolis, US	Tyler Henderson
Inaugural Meeting of Asia-Europe Alumni Network / Seminar Meeting	31 st Aug – 1 st Sept 2007 / Madrid, Spain	Hu Zhongliang

New member recruitment

For the coming EMA general assembly, one of the main missions of the Newsletter Service Team is to recruit new member into the group². Fresh and inspiring ideas are highly expected from the new members.

² A recruitment presentation is attached.