

An Insight into IAMU Activities

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Abstract: This paper intends to provide brief information about the International Association of Maritime Universities (hereinafter referred to as IAMU) to the readers of the Journal of Maritime Sciences (JMS), published by the Faculty of Maritime Studies Kotor, University of Montenegro. The structure and activities of IAMU, its policy on capacity development, the Global Maritime Professional Initiative and future activities are briefly introduced in the following sections.

Keywords: Maritime education and training, Capacity development, Global maritime professional.

1. About IAMU

The IAMU (International Association of Maritime Universities) was founded in November 1999 by seven maritime universities representing five continents, with a shared recognition of the significance of maritime education and training (MET) in the rapid globalization of the international shipping industry. Since then, the IAMU has significantly expanded its membership, now comprising 74 member universities from 40 countries in the world, along with the Nippon Foundation as its member and the donor, bringing the total membership to 75 as of September 2024.

Maritime universities that offer bachelor's degree or equivalent undergraduate maritime education and training programmes for officers on ocean-going ships, as well as post-graduate master's and/or doctoral programmes related to maritime affairs, are eligible for membership. The representatives of member universities also agree to the Basic Agreement, which establishes the guiding principles and serves as the constitution of the International Association of Maritime Universities. To further contribute to the international shipping community, IAMU has held non-governmental organization (NGO) in consultative status with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) since 2007.

The International Executive Board (IEB) is the primary decision-making body of the IAMU. It consists of three regional representatives, three member universities nominated by the previous IEB, the host universities of

the Annual General Assemblies (AGAs), the World Maritime University, and the Nippon Foundation. The Chair of IAMU is nominated by IEB members, who presides over the AGA and IEB. For the smooth and effective operation of the Association, four standing committees are established under the IEB.

The AGA is organized annually by a member university to review and approve activities, policies, programmes and the budget as recommended by the IEB and to promote collaborative networking among members. A scientific conference, known as the IAMU Conference is regularly held in conjunction with the AGA.

2. Basic activities

The IAMU is a global network of leading maritime universities providing maritime education and training for Global Maritime Professionals (GMPs) contributing to the global shipping industry. Therefore, all our activities have been based on the following four pillars.

Pillar one: Activity as an Association of MET Institutions

IAMU member universities provide traditional maritime education and training leading to certificates of competency (CoCs) for officers on ocean-going vessels with an academic degree, which is aligned with their national policies regarding seafarer administration. Therefore, we explore the quality of MET by adopting GMPs which is beyond the STCW minimum requirements.

Pillar two: Activity as an Association of Universities

The IAMU is an association of institutions in higher education focused on maritime education and training, but it does not include secondary education institutions, such as vocational schools. Therefore, the IAMU aims to be a centre of excellence in MET by offering academic degree programmes and promoting scientific research through postgraduate programmes.

Pillar three: Activity as an Association within a Global Network

The IAMU has more than 70 member universities from a total of 40 countries, providing a strong foundation for developing an international network of maritime universities. Therefore, the IAMU encourages collaborative activities among its member universities and the global maritime industry.

Pillar four: Activity as an Association with an NGO in Consultative Status with IMO

The IAMU has participated in several IMO meetings related to maritime education and training and other topics concerning the safe, efficient and environmentally friendly operation of ships. It has monitored the progress

of discussion as a representative of MET institutions with academic degrees. Additionally, the IAMU utilizes its status to submit proposals prepared by working groups to relevant committee meetings.

3. Capacity development strategy

The IAMU aims to be the global leader in maritime capacity building through networking and excellence in maritime education and training (Article II-Vision, Basic Agreement). To fulfil this vision, the IAMU has planned and implemented a series of activities to achieve its capacity development strategy since its establishment in 1999. In the early stages of the IAMU's history, the focus of the capacity development strategy was mainly on the academic staff at IAMU member universities.

The funded research project system provided academic staff with research opportunities organised collaboratively through the global network of the IAMU. In 2014, IAMU established a section that accepts only papers related to maritime education and training in the WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs (WMU-JOMA), providing academic staff with the opportunity to be promoted to higher academic positions, given that the WMU-JOMA is a peer-reviewed journal with a high impact factor.

The IAMU has sent academic staff from member universities to IMO meetings as representatives of the Association. The delegation participating in the MSC, MEPC, HTW and NCSR meetings is required to submit a summary report that will be circulated to all member universities. During the selection process for the delegation, the committee selects at least one young academic staff member who has no prior experience attending IMO meetings and send him/her to those meetings with a well-experienced academic staff member to serve as a mentor, providing on-the-job training. The IAMU believes that this capacity development activity supports sustainable development in the global maritime education and training system.

Since 2015, the IAMU has expanded the area of the capacity development strategy to include MET institutions worldwide, even if those that are not IAMU member universities. Upon request, the IAMU has signed several Memoranda of Understanding with maritime administrations and maritime organisations in countries such as the Philippines, Kenya and South Africa, aiming to improve the quality of MET provided at maritime institutions in those countries. The IAMU's Peer-Assisted Evaluation Scheme (PAES) has been implemented to evaluate the programmes and curricula offered in these institutions. Peers who evaluate the programme and provide academic advice to the MET institutions are volunteers from

member universities, bringing their knowledge and experience as qualified academic staff.

To inspire the younger generation to pursue careers in GMPs and to create a network of well-informed young maritime professionals, the IAMU and the IMO jointly organised the “IAMU Student Forum” at the IMO headquarters in both 2017 and 2023. During these events, students from member universities discussed contemporary issues related to maritime affairs with facilitators from the academic staff of member universities and maritime experts from the international shipping industry. This initiative is also part of the capacity development activities designed for the younger generation, who will be the successors of our generation.

The IAMU submitted a document [1] to the 73rd session of the Technical Cooperation Committee, which outlines the activities undertaken by the IAMU and highlights the Association’s support for Assembly resolution A.1166(32). It also declares IAMU’s willingness and ability to partner with the IMO to achieve the goals of the Capacity-Building decade 2021-2023 strategy. The IAMU will continue to plan and implement activities to achieve the capacity development strategy together with member universities on a global basis.

4. Global Maritime Professional Initiative

The GMP Initiative is a novel process aimed at developing maritime capacity through leading maritime universities worldwide. The IAMU has embraced this Initiative as member universities engaged in serious discussions regarding the feasibility and usefulness of a common academic curriculum for qualified officers on ocean-going vessels, which should be introduced by IAMU member universities. A working group was established to address this issue and recommended that IAMU should leave the determination of specific curricula, syllabi and learning activities to individual higher education systems in sovereign states. Instead, the focus should be on identifying the learning outcomes that are universally applicable in optimizing human resource competency for the maritime industry across national boundaries [2].

In July 2019, the Global Maritime Professional – Body of Knowledge (GMP-BoK) 2019 was published as a result of a joint project between the Nippon Foundation and IAMU. The GMP-BoK 2019 provides a clear description of what constitutes a Global Maritime Professional, outlines the competencies required at various academic levels, and presents a series of learning outcomes to achieve each competency. The GMP-BoK is a useful guideline not only for IAMU member universities but also for MET

institutions seeking to develop their own curricula for qualified officers as well as Global Maritime Professionals.

Another phase of the GMP Initiative is to support candidates intending to become GMP (students) and to educate future GMP professionals (academic staff) at IAMU member universities by incorporating the concept of GMP-BoK into their academic curricula. With support from the Nippon Foundation, IAMU established a fellowship programme for both students and academic staff at IAMU member universities in 2021. In the student program, scholarships covering two years of tuition fees are provided, while in the faculty program, scholarships are offered for tuition fees related to doctoral degrees. Since the establishment of this programme, 41 students from 19 member universities and 4 Ph.D. candidates from 4 member universities have obtained scholarships for their degree programmes. The IAMU is planning to expand the faculty programme to include postgraduate courses, in line with the recommendations given by the selection panel, which includes members from the maritime industry, maritime administration and academia on a global scale.

5. Further activities

The International Association of Maritime Universities will continue to implement its capacity development strategy through the GMP Initiative and related activities introduced in this paper. We believe that the sustainable development of maritime education and training will be achieved through the involvement of qualified human resources in MET for the future.

Digital technology has recently been introduced into ship operations and management in the shipping industry. The pace of digitalization in the shipping sector, including the development of MASS technology, is increasing rapidly. It is anticipated that this pace will further accelerate in the future.

As the UN Secretary-General mentioned in his address to the General Assembly on 25 September 2018, “Driverless vehicles will revolutionize transportation... Technological advances may disrupt labour markets as traditional jobs change or disappear, even as the number of young jobseekers continues to grow. Education must adopt, from the earliest grades, and the very nature of work will change.” The IAMU should be prepared for such changes in the future, as seafaring is a very traditional job.

On the other hand, decarbonisation is the process that involves changing the energy source from carbon to hydrogen, which theoretically reduces CO₂ emissions from combustion processes to zero. However, the technology to use hydrogen as fuel to generate huge energy to propel ships safely and

effectively has not yet fully developed, especially on ships engaged in international voyages. As a result, bioethanol, LNG and ammonia will be used for ship propulsion as alternative fuels instead of harnessing energy directly from hydrogen. We are currently in a period of technological transition.

To navigate this transition effectively, the IAMU has recently formed a committee to review and revise the GMP-BoK. The committee members are engaged in vigorous debates about the new competencies needed for future GMPs. The committee aims to publish the second version of GMP-BoK, hopefully in 2025, which may include a range of new competencies related to digitalization and alternative fuels.

Additionally, a working group has been established for a comprehensive review of the STCW Convention 1978, as amended, with several STCW experts nominated by member universities. The group will be involved in the comprehensive review process at the IMO headquarters, monitoring the outcomes of meetings and submitting comments as representatives of MET institutions, when necessary. The IAMU always looks forward to your dedicated participation in our global activities for the sustainable development of maritime education and training.

References

- [1] IAMU's commitment and capability to collaborate with IMO in realizing the objectives of the Capacity-Building Decade 2021-2030 Strategy, TC73/6/3, 22 August 2023.
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