

Vitae EMPLOYABILITY ASSESSMENT: PREPARE STUDENTS FOR CAREERS

FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY, PHILIPPINES

Far Eastern University (FEU), with 60,000 students, is one of the Philippines' leading universities, known for commitment to academic excellence and innovation. The university provides programs spanning business, health sciences, education, technology and the arts. Anchored on its Aspiration 2028 vision, FEU recognized graduate employability as a strategic priority and partnered with IFC Vitae to support student success in the job market. IFC vitae helped to streamline current practices, benchmark to global standards, and identify areas for further improvement.



FROM CHALLENGES



TO SOLUTIONS

EMPOWERING STUDENTS WITH CAREER SKILLS

Count by Activity Type



FEU enriched student learning through 12,450 [LinkedIn Learning](#) licenses, 350 alumni mentors, and 250 guest speakers, providing digital resources, guidance, and real-world insights to strengthen career readiness and professional growth.

INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATIONS

Micro Credential Earned

MICRO CREDENTIALS:

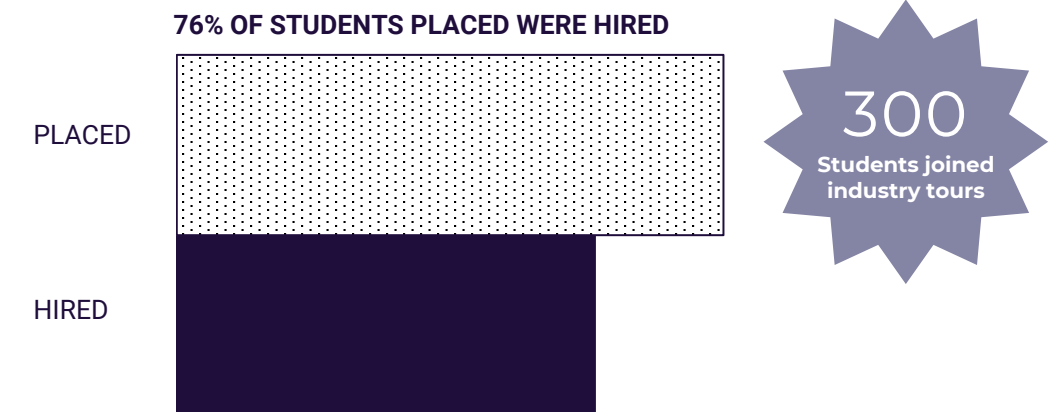
	CORPORATE ETHICS	✓
	HUMAN RESOURCES	✓
	EXCEL	✓
	LIFE SUPPORT	✓



More than 2,200 students earned industry-recognized credentials in Corporate Ethics, Human Resources, Excel, and Life Support, strengthening their employability and aligning skills with modern workplace needs.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT FOR SUCCESS

Students engaged, placed, and hired



Over six months, the university engaged about 300 students in industry tours across 13 companies, resulting in 17 placements in ING's pilot program and 9 hires—strengthening real-world learning, employer engagement, and career pathways.



Leo Leaño

Asia Pacific Global Compliance & Reporting – Learning & Development Leader, [EY](#); Tax Partner, [SGV](#)

Chris Ferareza

Chief Sustainability Officer, P&A Grant Thornton



An innovation of the [International Finance Corporation \(IFC\)](#), a member of the World Bank Group, Vitae helps higher education institutions develop pathways to improve the graduate employability and outcomes. Our tools offer a data-driven approach for institutions to identify their relative strengths and weaknesses while evaluating themselves against a global benchmark of best practices.

Contact Us

www.vitaeready.org
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Scan the code below to learn more and **check your institutional practices:** <https://bit.ly/4fhVqb4>



Far Eastern University How to Engage Alumni and Industry

In an interview with IFC, FEU alumni and industry leaders reveal how active collaboration through Industry Experts Forums transformed curriculum, built vital soft skills, and delivered real-world experiences launching graduates into successful careers.

This interviews have been combined and edited for length and clarity.



Can you tell me about your connection to FEU and your role in the Industry Experts Forum?

Leaño: I graduated from the university back in '03, passed my CPA licensure examination also in the same year, and joined SGV, the number one professional services firm in the country. We're affiliated with Ernst & Young Global Limited. I work mostly in tax compliance, and in addition to my role here, I go to the university from time to time as part of the Industry Experts Forum, or what they call INDEX. They solicit from us—through those forums—inputs on how the industry sees or views the current requirements vis-à-vis the graduates coming out of the university. Then they present curriculum, programs, supplementary events or lectures, and other initiatives, and we get to comment.

Ferareza: Well, number one is that I'm a graduate of FEU and it's really close to my heart. Even before I became president of the alumni association of the university, I had already been involved in many activities. I thought that joining this advisory committee, or attending this Industry Experts Forum was a really good avenue for me to give back to the university. That is my personal advocacy.

Why do you take part in this work—what motivates you?

Leaño: I have always been a firm believer that for things that are important, we need to make time. Being a Tax Partner and with the many activities that I do, I really have a full schedule, but I've been a recipient of a good education and good learning from the university, and I find it a big responsibility to go back and make sure that the university continues to produce top-notch graduates—good candidates for employment who can contribute not only to their respective fields, but also to society.

Ferareza: Equally important is the fact that their product is our input to our organization. For us to be able to get the best quality people and professionals, it's really important to be involved in designing the curriculum so that it will be relevant to what we do in actual practice. Because, you know, if it's purely theoretical, it's not easy to train people when they join the workforce. We want to make that intervention early on.

How do you advise the university?

Leaño: I share with them a lot of things that I observe, and I have emphasized the need to focus on soft skills—particularly the ability to speak and articulate points—and also significant improvement in writing skills. I've observed with our young recruits that there are often challenges in articulating thoughts and putting them in writing. This does not undermine the strong emphasis on technical expertise, which the academic curriculum must ensure. Updating professors as well as instructional material to give a flavor of what's happening in actual practice is something they've also emphasized.

Ferareza: We want to really get involved because the interest in the accounting profession is getting less and less. So, if there is a way to make the curriculum more palatable to students or prospective accountants, then our work can rekindle the love for the profession. The name of the game in practice right now is being able to train them fast and deploy them fast because of the strong competition.

How often do you engage with FEU?

Leaño: I don't even get to measure it. Director Celmer knows that whenever the university calls me, I always find it a privilege to be called back home. That's why invitations for speaking engagements to students, invitations to do tax updates to professors or administrators, we always make time—even for alumni events. If I'm going to measure it, probably about five days a year. It's usually not spent by full days—they might invite you for three or four hours.

Ferareza: It's just a few hours, less than 8 hours, or about 8 hours. But as far as I am concerned, being the president of the alumni association means I spend a lot of time engaging with students and alumni.

Do you host interns or offer job placements?

Leaño: Yes. In fact, both as an initiative from the university and by invitation from our end, we have a memorandum of understanding with the university to take interns and support their internship program. My organization supports the university in various student activities, sponsoring events—especially for students. I ask the university to send me potential candidates as well as interns, and in

my team, I've hired FEU graduates. The university takes a proactive step in identifying alumni who have accomplished something in their respective fields, and they reach out through the office of Director Celmer.

Ferareza: In the Philippines, the accountancy law limits what interns can do because it's very strict in terms of the 'practice of profession' clause. Therefore, there are many restrictions on what you can assign to an intern. Most of the time, it's limited to preparing schedules for analysis, preparing certain documents, and ticking and tying—but only up to a certain level of risk. That's another thing associations of CPAs are actually talking about, and we have been scheduling a meeting with the board of accountancy to address that matter because it's a big problem for the profession. The university should have a partnership or collaboration with an accounting firm or with the industry they cater to, because it's not easy to simulate something without actual experience.

What do employers most need from FEU graduates?

Leaño: I've observed with our young recruits that there are often challenges in articulating their thoughts as well as putting this in writing.

Ferareza: Number one is communication skills. They are very technically competent, but when they apply their technical competence, that's the major problem—they have difficulty communicating in writing or verbally. Most of the time, that's where we emphasize the need for additional intervention to make them more effective when they join the workforce.

What advice would you give other universities?

Leaño: Updating professors as well as instructional material to give a flavor of what's happening in actual practice is something that they've also emphasized.

Ferareza: The university should have a partnership or collaboration with the industry they are catering to because it's not easy to simulate something without actual experience.