



**PECC 2021 Internship Program
Internship Report
October 2021**

**Truston J. Yu
Bachelor of Social Sciences
The University of Hong Kong**

A few years back when I visited Singapore as a high schooler, I passed by the PECC office on the way to the neighbouring ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute. As I navigated through Heng Mui Keng Terrace I came across PECC for the very first time. Little did I know that I would later on be spending a summer with this institution, albeit virtually.

When I applied for the PECC Internship I had little expectations - there could only be two nominees from each campus to begin with, and only two out of all nominees would be selected by the Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (HKCPEC). The final interview took place at the Trade and Industry Tower in Hong Kong, where I sat in front of a large panel throwing all sorts of questions at me. I did not stress over it for I honestly did not expect to be selected, so the final offer caught me by a surprise.

What sets PECC apart from other international organizations is its tripartite nature comprising public sector officials, business leaders and academics. I noticed how the atmosphere in meetings was much more laid back compared to what we would expect in other fora like the United Nations. Despite the backdrop of the trade war between the United States and China, representatives of different national committees did not seem to be restricted by rhetoric on a governmental level.

My colleagues at PECC were very welcoming and did their best to help me integrate into the work environment. From post-mortem meetings to proofreading manuscripts for the State of the Region report, I had an insider's glimpse at the inner workings of an international institution - I even got to witness the election process of a new PECC co-chair. Particularly, I was fortunate that my internship period coincided with the PECC General Meeting and the APEC meetings, so I was able to sit in on many of the discussions. At the APEC meetings, I attended a list of different subgroups and committee meetings tackling various niche areas such as intellectual property and digital governance. I could not say that I have understood every part of it, but it was an eye-opening experience nonetheless.

Through this internship, I was exposed to a wide range of different ideas. I also worked on tasks assigned directly to me by Secretary-General Mr. Pedrosa, who shared with us his wisdom and experiences. My very first task was to follow a webinar on the Pacific Alliance, a rather young regional integration initiative by Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. Before this I was already an avid learner of international relations, but I was completely oblivious to the

developments on the other side of the Pacific. Mr. Pedrosa followed the issue of freight costs closely, which went through the roof due to severe backlogs caused by port closures due to the pandemic. These are the types of issues I would never learn about on my own without the internship. For example, the Ever Given container ship that blocked the Suez Canal went viral on the internet, yet I never had the chance to learn about its deeper implications until this internship. I assisted in the research process by scouring for news coverage as well as compiling data from different sources. I discovered that even a short interruption of the Canal may trigger a domino effect that lasts for several months in the entire supply chain, and cargo costs will rise accordingly. Thanks to this internship experience, I am now able to look at different global issues with deeper insights.

This internship has also changed the way I see the world. Having lived in the Far East for my whole life so far, I could easily see how regional alignments like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) made sense. However, I did not have any concept of such thing as a "Pacific region." After this internship experience I began to appreciate the interconnectedness of the wider Pacific region. While I would not be calling myself a proud "Pacific" citizen just yet, the other side of the Ocean now appears to be much closer to us than I had previously imagined.

If any of you reading this is a prospective applicant, my advice would be to show a strong interest in an aspect of the Pacific region - it could be a sub-region or a particular topic area, and it does not even have to be related to your major in university. My specialization is in Southeast Asia, and I thoroughly enjoyed presenting my own insights of this region to the interviewers. I believe this demonstrated passion was what earned me the offer in the end.

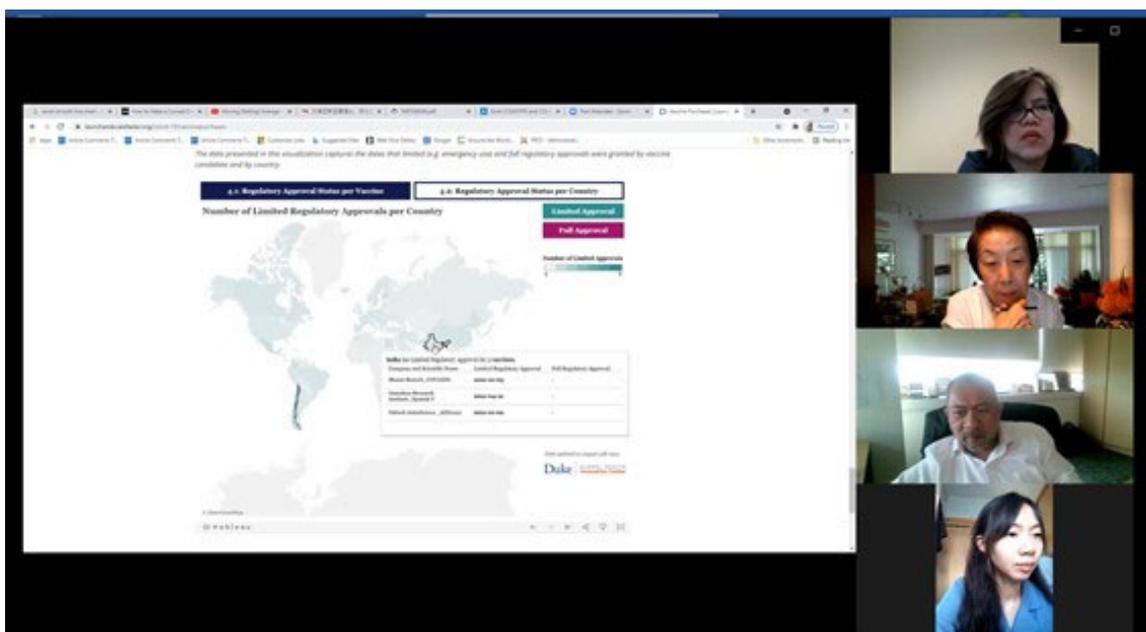
My biggest regret was not being able to experience working in the PECC office myself and meeting my colleagues in person. It would have been a much more immersive and transformative experience to be in the office. If you do make it to Singapore, I would really recommend you to go around the city and make the most out of your time there - a privilege that my cohort of interns did not have.

**HKCPEC's participation at
PECC Virtual Internship Programme 2021
Photos provided by Melissa Tong and Truston Yu**

(1)Melissa and Truston are having a virtual meeting with PECC colleagues
*(from left to right on top row: Ms Betty Ip, Ms Zakiah Kassim and Secretary-
General Mr Eduardo Pedrosa) -*



(2)Melissa is attending a webinar discussion on vaccines development -



(3) Melissa and Truston are having a work meeting with PECC colleagues -

