



**PECC Internship Program 2025
Internship Report**

**Period of internship:
2nd June 2025 to 22nd August 2025**

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Introduction:

My internship at the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) International Secretariat lasted for 3 months from 2 June 2025 to 22 August 2025. During my internship, I focused on data collection and economic research which heavily focused on the economic status of the PECC member economies, including their level of trade, unemployment rates and impact from the trade war and tariffs enacted by the United States (US). The internship provided me with direct hands-on experience in handling a vast array of data collection and allowed me to apply my knowledge within the field of international relations while gaining broader awareness and greater insight into the Asia-Pacific region.

Day-to-day role at the PECC International Secretariat:

During my internship, my primary role was to conduct research, as well as to assist with data collection and analysis for the PECC's State of the Region Report (SOTR) which the PECC Interim Secretary General, Dr. Kaewkamol (Karen) Pitakdumrongkit was busy preparing for, alongside preparations for other PECC events and meetings. I was tasked with conducting data analysis and research for the economic databases that Dr. Pitakdumrongkit oversaw, covering a wide array of fields from cybersecurity, US-China relations to economic policies of the Asia-Pacific region. Additionally, I also conducted research and reported findings on developments of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), including whether there were any updates to the IPEF in light of changes in US administrations - from the Biden Administration to the Second Trump Administration.

When contributing to the SOTR report, I was also responsible for data collection and conducting data analysis on unemployment within the PECC member economies, including the implications of the US tariffs imposed by the Second Trump Administration on member economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). When conducting the data analysis, collating data and my findings on the unemployment rates, and implications of the US tariffs on PECC member economies, it was interesting to observe the differences amongst PECC member economies on how they responded to the tariffs imposed by the Second Trump Administration. This also applied to the differing policies and stances amongst PECC member economies on the tariffs imposed by Trump, including the "Liberation Day" tariffs that Trump enacted on all economies trading with

the US. It was also interesting and at times, surprising to see how for example, Mexico, a PECC member economy, had a relatively low unemployment rate despite being aware of the cartel violence and corruption challenges within Mexico. In addition, in relation to the SOTR report, I was also responsible for collating relevant data, and performed other tasks as assigned, such as drafting summary reports for the PECC AI Conference. It was insightful to conduct research from a wide array of websites, such as observing the Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index's fluctuation upon the implementation of US tariffs and the cybersecurity data amongst PECC member economies. Also, I gained new insights and experience in exploring popular topics such as on US-China relations from both the Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asian perspective, considering that previously I used to explore the topic primarily from the Chinese or American narrative.

I also wrote summary reports detailing my experience and takeaways from participating in the seminar events facilitated by Ms. Betty Ip, the PECC AI Conference, the PECC Virtual roundtable meeting, and the PECC Standing Committee meeting held on 13 August 2025 virtually on Zoom. I also assisted Ms. Nor Irdawaty to complete the survey for the SOTR report, and provided my own input and feedback to the survey. At the same time, I also had the opportunity to interact with my senior professional PECC colleagues. Through frequent interactions with my supervisor, Ms. Ip, alongside other PECC colleagues, for example, Ms. Zakiah Kassim who was responsible for arranging my work visa, and Ms. Irdawaty, I gained deeper insight into Singapore's climate, working environment, and culture. I also had useful in-depth and academic focused conversations with Dr. Pitakdumrongkit, as she used to be a Professor in S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Through my conversations with her, I received useful advice, guidance and suggestions when considering and pursuing future postdoctoral (PhD) studies.

Participation in key meetings:

During the PECC internship, I participated in high level meetings, such as the PECC's AI Conference, the PECC's Standing Committee meeting held in August, and a virtual roundtable discussion held by the US Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation Council. I had the valuable opportunity to interact with esteemed diplomats, delegates and other academics during

my participation in the AI Conference, where I learned and gained deeper insight about the regulations and modern-day practices of AI in healthcare such as the utilisation of AI in treating prostate cancer and asthma. I also had the valuable opportunity to interact with the experts, some of whom were panelists of the AI Conference, where I heard a wide variety of narratives and perspectives when interacting with them on the subjects of AI, international affairs and mental health, just to name a few. While possessing knowledge in the field of international relations and public affairs from my previous participation in Model United Nations conference, it was extremely insightful for me to gain new first-hand experience by witnessing representatives of PECC member committees sharing their views on a wide array of subjects during the PECC Standing Committee meeting. Additionally, in the Standing Committee meeting, I also had the opportunity to learn about the role that youth played and efforts of international trade organisations such as PECC undertook to adapt to an ever-changing world in response to technology advancements and changing societal attitudes amongst the current and younger generation. Such examples include inviting two youth Korean groups to give their presentations at the PECC Standing Committee meeting, which was my first time witnessing it firsthand, rather than on social media or on the internet. This has raised my awareness of the importance of youth's voices in shaping public policy and global governance, including how in light of the development of AI and technological advancements, efforts are being made not only to adapt but also regulate such developments.

Also, I had the opportunity to participate in key seminars facilitated by Ms. Ip. These notable seminars included a talk by Dr. Kurt Campbell, Chairman and Co-Founder of the Asia-Group and former US Deputy Secretary of State under US President Joe Biden, at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore (NUS). I also attended the RSIS Talk at NTU in July 2025, led by Dr. Makio Mayagawa, who served as the Japanese ambassador to Malaysia, the United Kingdom and Switzerland, and was a Special Advisor on National Security in Japan; and another talk in June 2025 by Dr Marty Natalegawa, Indonesia's former Foreign Minister. My participation in the talk by Dr. Campbell provided me with valuable insight on the US' perspective and opinions on its foreign policy, particularly on the subject of US-Southeast Asia and US-China relations, as well as on the development of contemporary US foreign policy. It also intrigued me to explore the widely discussed topic of US-China relations from a more regionalised or

international perspective, while Dr. Natalegawa and Dr. Campbell's talk also provided me with insight into understanding the perspectives of career diplomats and gained insight into the world of government and politics. My participation in other guest talks, hosted by RSIS school NTU and NUS, and by the ISEAS-Yusok Ishak Institute, provided me with greater hindsight and perspective into exploring the subject of international affairs from a Southeast Asian perspective, which was a relatively new field for me. My participation in these seminars and guest talks, allowed me to gain a new perspective into exploring international affairs from the Southeast Asian perspective, and hearing direct advice and experience from esteemed career diplomats both from the guest talks and from my participation in PECC events.

Overall experience:

My internship experience at the PECC can be summed up as being eye-opening and insightful, as it offered me with the opportunity to work in a multifaceted, diverse environment in Singapore. At the same time, I have also broadened my knowledge in the areas of international affairs, including the opportunity to meet and interact with a wide variety of experts, ranging from those in academia, the government, and from the business sector, some of whom I spoke and engaged with during the PECC AI Conference. At the same time, I also had the opportunity to explore Singapore and witnessed Singapore's 60th National Day celebration, ranging from trying Turkic cuisines to Indian and Malaysian cuisines, given Singapore's multi-diverse ethnic environment. I also had the opportunity to get to know colleagues working in the APEC Policy Support Unit where I had numerous opportunities to interact and learn from them about the functions of APEC, gaining new insight from their expansive knowledge on international affairs from the Southeast Asian and small states perspectives. I also had the opportunity to engage with them on a wide variety of subjects, ranging from the culture and diverse environment in Singapore to international relations, economics and international trade, just to name a few.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to my supervisor, Ms. Ip, alongside Dr. Pitakdumrongkit, Ms. Kassim, and Ms. Irdawaty for their friendliness, hospitality, invaluable advice and guidance during my internship at PECC. I would also like to express my thanks and gratitude to the Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation for nominating me to participate in the PECC Internship Programme in Singapore.