

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

02 April 2008

(week 14)

(confirmed)

Present:	Said Irandoust Izel Ann Dante Peter Haddawy Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai Sivanappan Kumar Jayant Routray	Jonathan Shaw Ram Shrestha Md. Mustafa Saroar Khin Ni Ni Thein Vilas Wuwongse
Apologies:	Barbara Igel Sudip Rakshit	Secretaries: Karma Rana Renedith Calabdan

PAC 08.04.01 Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed all present to the PAC meeting. Apologies were received.

PAC 08.04.02 Approval of the 02 April 2008 PAC Agenda and Review of the PAC Meeting Minutes of 19 March 2008.

The minutes of the 19 March 2008 PAC meeting were confirmed.

Follow-up Issues:

1] Investment Committee

The results of the first Investment Committee (IC) meeting was announced through the President's weekly letter issued on 03 March 2008. The Head of Administration is working with the Mr. Khan (Finance Officer) in finalizing the figures on the budget proposals approved by the Investment Committee during its first meeting. The detailed results of IC will likewise be communicated formally to the respective schools, through the Deans.

2] Right Livelihood Award (RLA)

PAC members were informed that the deadline of submitting AIT's rationale for the RLA committee is set for middle of April 2008. A task force formed by the President deliberated and provided additional inputs on the letter drafted by Mr. Wallberg (Sida Consultant). The revised version will be sent for review and comments of the Deans, former AIT professors and some former senior administrators who are supportive of the idea.

3] Initiatives Related to the President's Afghanistan Trip in March 2008

The Director, AIT Extension provided an update on the recent developments regarding issues for follow-up ensuing from the collaboration initiated during the trip to Afghanistan by the AIT team led by the President.

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- a] The deadline for submission of a concept of for the NIMA initiative has been moved to April 7, 2008. Dr. Shaw spearheads the finalization of the concept note with the help of other individuals with relevant inputs.
 - b] The Balkh University submitted a revised HRD requirement, particularly on the scholarships distribution for master's and doctoral degrees. The request will be carefully considered in view of its financial implication to the project as a whole.
 - c] A possible partnership is being explored with USAID, Kansas State University, Indiana State University and the U.S. Ministry of Agriculture for the US\$40 million project to be implemented in Afghanistan.

The President informed the meeting that a task force will be installed which will focus on the NIMA initiative, particularly on the development of a proposal that will identify area/s where AIT could provide expertise. The composition of the task force will be completed soon.

4] .Asia Domain

PAC was informed that there are around 500,000 registrations made for domain asia so far, which include educational institutions and private companies of repute.

5] AIT Degrees

The VPAA reported the outcome of his communication with a German University which initially denied admission of an AIT alumni. The alumni was accepted in the said university after an official clarification letter was sent from AIT. In addition, the university has included AIT in its list of recognized foreign universities.

ISSUES FROM PRESIDENT

PAC 08.04.03 Progress on the New AIT Charter

The President reported on the outcome of the 27-28 March 2008 intergovernmental meeting on AIT Charter convened by MOFA Thailand. It was noted that the gap between the Board-approved AIT Charter version and the version proposed by Japan, have been narrowed down to a few but significant remaining issues. Almost 80% if the new Charter has been agreed upon in principle.

The President prefers to regularly inform the AIT community of the progress of the new AIT Charter in order to provide a reliable reference for the community and to avoid unfounded speculations and rumors. Formulation of reports to the community will continually be considered carefully and communicated in a balanced manner.

On a related issue, the President was pleased to inform the PAC members of another possible avenue in obtaining an international organization status, that is through the UN System. Information of the required processes will be sought.

PAC 08.04.04 ASEAN Regional Center of Excellence (COE) on MDG

Expressions of interest were received by the President for the position of the Interim Director, after the announcement was sent to the AIT community on 27 March 2008. Expressions of interest were sought instead of going through a nomination process as the position is for the interim stage. It was also noted that the President deemed it fit to open the Interim Director position to both faculty and staff because there are qualified AIT staff with Ph.D. who have strong and relevant experiences in this area.

The Interim Director of the COE should be able to start immediately in order to put a structure in place. The President underscored the need to seize the momentum generated from the recent UN-DG Roundtable Meeting, and look forward to the opportunity of highlighting accomplished activities by the ASEAN Regional COE on MDG during the occasion of the annual meeting of ECOSOC in mid June 2008 in New York.

A standard search for the Director position will be made later as announced. The Director must be able to effectively mobilize resources and support from AIT faculty and staff.

ACTION:

- 1] It was agreed that additional names could be submitted by the Deans to the President provided that consent of the concerned individual is sought prior to submission of their names.
- 2] The terms of reference for the ASEAN Regional COE and that of the Director should be developed

PAC 08.04.05 Proposed TC Graduation Prize

The President received a proposal from the faculty members of the Telecommunication (TC) FoS, to establish a graduation prize for the best master's thesis in the field of telecommunications, in honor of the late Prof. A.B. Sharma, who was the founding chairman of the TC Program.

PAC *agreed* that the following information be provided at the next meeting for further deliberation of the proposal (c/o Head of Administration):

- 1] Existing policy on the establishment of graduation prizes, if any.
- 2] List of existing graduation prizes being awarded and the background information on how these were established.
- 3] Inquire from the proponents the source as well as the level of funding that will be committed for the prize.

In general, the President expressed his support towards efforts in recognizing the contributions of the late Prof. Sharma to the Institute.

PAC 08.04.06 KIDS-D System

PAC congratulated VPER, Prof. Vilas Wuwongse for whose initiative, the successful signing of the MoU on the Application of Digital Library for Education Project (KIDS-D System) at the Ministry of Education, took place on 17 March 2008. KIDS-D System is a joint project of AIT with Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), Ministry of Education and Srinakharinwirot University (SWU).

The primary objective of the project is to build a digital repository, that collects and stores information resources, valuable for learning and teaching. Various types of materials such as books, articles, still photos, moving images, slides, music, video or teaching records will be kept in electronic formats so that teachers, lecturers, students in primary and secondary schools, and other kids in Thailand can access to these valuable resources regardless of time and place. In this project, OBEC and SWU will apply the digital library system developed by AIT to store and retrieve learning and teaching materials including other valuable information resources owned or created by the institution. The success of this initial cooperation will indicate the future application of the system within the government and private sectors. The main target group of the project is primary and secondary schools nationwide. Students, teachers, self-study students and the general public are the identified end-users.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

PAC 08.04.07 Indirect Incentives: Professional Development Fund (PDF)

The paper on “Indirect Incentives: Professional Development Fund (PDF)” which includes related issues such as 1] faculty financial productivity, 2] payroll recovery of project-funded faculty/staff from other projects, 3] guidelines on the use of PDF and 5] PDF of leaving employees was received and deliberated by PAC members.

The comments/suggestions provided by PAC members on each item are reflected in Annex A. The document will be further discussed at PAC once agreed revisions are incorporated.

PAC *endorsed* the annual reporting/publishing of honorarium disbursed to and PDF accumulated by individual faculty as a form of recognition of their efforts and a motivation to other faculty colleagues.

PAC 08.04.07 Appointment of Field of Study (FoS) Coordinator

PAC *agreed* that the appointment process for the position of the FoS Coordinator should be revisited and discussed with faculty members of the FoS. Lessons learned will be taken into account in the new ToR. Under the new ToR, the FoS Coordinator has a clear pedagogical role.

The issue on the process of appointment was raised by some members who opined that faculty members of respective FoS should be involved in identifying the coordinator, as done in the past, knowing that the appointed person would need the support of colleagues in the FoS to function effectively. The President agreed that the process should ensure indication of support from colleagues in the FoS, but this is not necessarily accomplished by election alone. The person’s interest/dedication and profile should match with the ToR. It was further clarified that appointments were made based on School Deans recommendations with the assurance that the appointed person is fully committed. As the issue is being discussed in various fora, the President stressed the importance of remaining respectful in relating with individuals in any venue of discussion (e.g. email).

On a related issue, VPAA informed the meeting that he is working on automating the financial productivity analysis for the FoS.

PAC 08.04.08 Myanmar Promotional Trip

The D/SERD provided a brief report on his recent promotional trip to Myanmar (27 March – 01 April 2008) where 30 prospective students were interviewed. One of the main outcomes was the indication from BKP Foundation to support students to study at AIT in the field of Gender and Development.

Some of the discussion points highlighted were:

- The situation and educational system in Myanmar is different, therefore AIT should likewise develop a suitable strategy. In this regard D/SERD has requested ERCO (c/o Mr. Kyaw Soe Hlaing) to develop a white paper on how to work with Myanmar.
- It was suggested to conduct a survey that will obtain AIT alumni's input on how to better position AIT in the face of close competition in the higher education market, which is fast emerging in the region.
- The President suggested that a survey of AIT alumni's employers' impressions on the competence of AIT alumni, features that employers appreciate most and the qualities they are looking for in prospective employees, be included in the tracer study that will be implemented by ERCO.

PAC 08.04.09 Updates on Fund Raising Initiatives

VPDR provided the meeting some updates on the status of some of the fund raising proposals/activities earlier initiated. The suggestion to explore collaboration with banks in Thailand as a complementary strategy to the efforts of raising funds for the scholarships that will be under the patronage of the HM the King and/or HM the Queen of Thailand, was noted.

Actions to be taken:

- 1] Regarding the 80 Scholarships in honor of His Majesty the King on the occasion of HM's 80th Birthday Anniversary, the appropriate scholarship title to be used as well as the scope, should be verified with the royal palace.
- 2] Seek reconfirmation/permission of the palace on the use of the Baht 1 million donation given by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn for the purpose of scholarship.

OTHER MATTERS**PAC 08.04.10 Purchase of Fixed Asset**

Suggested steps on expediting the process of approval of proposed fixed asset purchases which will be charged against Fund 10 account, were noted. Delegation of authority to the school deans to approve such purchases was one of the suggestions. However, the President stated that he need time to carefully consider the issue before any change in the current policy on fixed asset, is made.

PAC 08.04.11 Admissions Status: Weekly Updates

Weekly updates on the admissions status (August 2008 intake) for all schools were received by PAC members. This will be further discussed in the next meeting.

PAC 08.04.12 Hiring of Fund 10 Staff

D/SERD followed-up on the proposal submitted to the President on hiring of staff in SERD under fund 10. The President expressed his willingness to approve the proposal provided that the faculty to staff ratio of 1:1 is maintained.

ACTION: D/SERD to provide the President further justification for the request.
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PAC 08.04.12 Deferred Agenda Items

It was agreed that agenda items that were not discussed will be deferred for the next PAC meeting.

PAC 08.04.13 Next Meeting

The next PAC meeting will be on Thursday, 15 May 2008 in Room 210.