

## PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

15 May 2008

(week 20)

(confirmed)

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<b>Present:</b>	Said Irandoust Izel Ann Dante Peter Haddawy Barbara Igel Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai Sudip Rakshit Jayant Routray	Jonathan Shaw Ram Shrestha Md. Mustafa Saroar Vilas Wuwongse  Secretaries: Karma Rana Renedith Calabdan
<b>Invited:</b>	Kyoko Kusakabe Patcharee Wangsakan Ahmed Khan	<b>Apologies:</b> Sivanappan Kumar Khin Ni Ni Thein

### PAC 08.05.01 Welcome and Apologies

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

### PAC 08.05.02 Approval of the 15 May 2008 PAC Agenda and Review of the PAC Meeting Minutes of 02 April 2008.

The meeting agenda was approved and the minutes of the 02 April 2008 PAC meeting were confirmed.

Follow-up Issues:

#### 1] Right Livelihood Award (RLA)

The President reported that a Swedish parliamentarian has already submitted to the Right Livelihood Foundation the paper nominating AIT for the award. Representatives from the Foundation are expected to visit AIT sometime in September or October 2008. As soon as the nomination becomes public, the former senior administrators and faculty members agreed to provide support.

#### 2] Afghanistan Trip Report by the Director of AIT Extension

Dr. Jonathan Shaw, Director of AIT Extension informed the meeting on his planned trip to Afghanistan in mid June 2008 together with Mr. Olivier Nicole to follow-up on collaborations initiated earlier during the previous promotional trip to Afghanistan. A basic assessment of the English language competencies needs to be conducted.

AIT Extension's main interests among others are to follow-up on the NIMA project, with UNDP, and the Afghan Civil Service Institute. Meetings with the Aga Khan Foundation and officers from the University of Central Asia will also be made. PAC was informed that the implementation of the NIMA project has been delayed to next year.

### ISSUES FROM PRESIDENT

#### PAC 08.05.03 Progress on the New AIT Charter

The President provided an update on the progress of the new AIT Charter.

During the intergovernmental working group deliberations on the new AIT Charter, members had supported the suggestion put forward that intersessional consultations take place among members in order to narrow down or bridge the remaining. In line with this recommendation, intersessional consultations have been taking place between the Government of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Thailand and AIT. The most recent was a meeting held on 14 May, hosted by the Embassy of Japan in Thailand. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Government of Japan and MOFA Thailand and AIT, among others by Mr. Masato Watanabe, Deputy Director General, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan and the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Working Group meeting Mr. Ittiporn Boonpracong, Deputy Director General, MOFA Thailand. The President together with AIT Legal Advisor Dr. Prajit Rojanaphruk, Ms. Kulvimol Wasuntiwongse, Secretary to the Board, and Mr. Karma Rana, Institute Secretary, participated from the AIT side.

As an outcome of the day-long informal discussions, we have now been able to bridge all of the major differences, particularly on the issue regarding legal continuity, transitional provisions, drafting of bye-laws, role and representation of the AIT President in the new Council, among others. The President is confident that the compromises which have now been agreed on the part of both Japan and AIT, would now be acceptable to the majority of the Institute's partners, when it is put forward by MoFA Thailand, at the next intergovernmental working group meeting. As agreed at the last meeting, the next meeting will be the concluding one, at which the text of the new AIT Charter, is expected to be finalized.

#### **PAC 08.05.04 Interim Director Position, ASEAN Regional Center of Excellence on MDGs**

Following the invitation of expressions of interest from members of the AIT community, the appointment of Professor Jayant K. Routray, as the Interim Director for the Center, with effect from 1 May 2008 was announced. The PAC members congratulated Prof Routray on his appointment.

The main responsibility of the Interim Director will be to ensure a quick follow up on the declaration of the ASEAN Regional Roundtable on MDGs: "ECOSOC's Promotion and Achievement of Millennium Development Goals through Education and Outreach", held on 24-25 March 2008, at AIT, and to establish the "ASEAN Regional Center of Excellence on MDGs" at AIT along with its accompanying activities as outlined in the Interim Director's terms of reference.

#### **PAC 08.05.05 Annual Report**

The annual report is set to be published on 06 June 2008. Mr. Shawn Kelly, AIT Media Specialist presented the draft format and content outline for last year's (2007) annual report which follows the same template as that of 2006.

The PAC recommended printing of the 2007 Annual Report on good quality paper that should contain important information only while other relevant data will be provided in the CD which will be enclosed. PAC members were also in agreement that an increase in budget allocated for the 2007 annual report may be necessary.

Other discussion points/comments on annual report highlighted at the meeting were as follows:

- The annual report should be treated more of a promotional material rather than just a statistical report.
- It should also have a personal tone, featuring in story form notable accomplishments of students.

- It should be distributed to all AIT partners and stakeholders.
- Items on training and conference should be in one block.
- In terms of order, research should come after academic activities.
- There should be a specific heading for outreach activities.
- Active partnerships entered into by AIT should be highlighted. It was suggested that a brief explanatory paragraph could be added.
- A larger print run (economies of scale; lower unit cost; copies available for all who need).

ACTION: Mr. Shawn Kelly to submit to the President the revised budget specifically for the annual report.
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#### **PAC 08.05.06 Updates on AIT Center Vietnam**

PAC received the document providing relevant information on the Internal Agreements between AITCV and AIT-HQ-Schools in terms of scope of degree programs conducted in Vietnam, financial management, fund remittance from school accounts in AITCV to school accounts in AIT-HQ, etc. VPER reported that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Vietnam is keen on engaging AIT in either two-stage or joint Ph. D. programs where a doctoral student will spend 1 ½ years in Vietnam and 2 ½ years at AIT. This will involve partnership with local universities in Vietnam. VPER will soon convene a meeting with Ph.D. coordinators to discuss relevant issues such as the framework for the two-stage and joint Ph.D. programs, AIT standard guidelines and criteria in collaborating with local universities, etc. The meeting was also informed that good relations nurtured by AIT with semi-state enterprises are now bearing fruit as support in the form of scholarships are coming in.

Disparity in honorarium payments of faculty members teaching in Vietnam and the need for a pricing policy from AIT-HQ in cases where a satellite center requires services from the AIT-HQ-schools were also raised. It was clarified that honorarium only applies to programs that are opened as Fund 30 academic programs and that internal agreements only cover fund 30-opened programs. It was agreed that courses/academic activities under two-stage programs which are taught/conducted in Vietnam should be treated as fund 30 activities and fund 10 when conducted in AIT-HQ. Programs conducted in Vietnam should be viable and profitable for both parties involved (e.g. AITCV and SOM or SET/AIT-HQ). It was stressed that academic quality should not be compromised in cases where AIT degree will be awarded but some portion of the program will be carried by a local partner universities. These issues will be addressed in the context of the respective schools. PAC members opined that agreements between AITCV and the AIT-HQ schools may need to be revised.

ACTION: VPER to convene a meeting with Ph.D. coordinators.
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#### **PAC 08.05.07 Establishment of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Position**

The rationale (Annex 1) for the proposed establishment of the Associate VPAA position was presented by VPAA and was deliberated at length by PAC members. Many of the PAC members do not favor creation of new positions as highlighted in the comments and possible options suggested:

- A] This step may give the impression that the administration if going back to being a "fat" administration.
- B] Involving more faculty in administration may have more negative implications to the quality of academic teaching and activities, as students have long been complaining about not having enough faculty to teach and students not receiving quality faculty supervision on their thesis and dissertations.

- C] The two options suggested were either to have full-time Vice Presidents (VPs) or hire professional administrators who could assist the VPs in the implementation of policies, activities and new initiatives.
- D] Support to VPs could also be extended through the task forces. The works of TFs are often not visible and members do not feel empowered because recommendations made are not implemented. PAC members were in agreement that more recognition should be given to the Chairs of task forces as well.
- E] Some members opined that faculty could not fully be in charge, and would need professional support of administrators in the implementation stage.
- F] The President still considers it important that VPs continue their teaching and research duties in order not to lose touch with the core activities of the Institute and is not agreeable to having full-time VPs. Based on experience the President expressed his doubt on the effectiveness of hiring an external person who is new to AIT system and context in order to support increasing academic development and quality issues at AIT. He believes that AIT leaders should be developed. And those who are already working on new initiatives need to be given due recognition.

**ACTION:** A revised concept, based on feedback received at the meeting will be presented for consideration at the next PAC meeting. (c/o President)

#### **PAC 08.05.08 Faculty Engagement in Outside Professional Activities**

The PAC members received the relevant stipulations in AIT's personnel policy concerning the issue on faculty engagement in outside professional activities.

Interaction with industry, business, government and institutions, including activities pertaining to outside consulting services and research are of great value when these positively impact & contribute to society, professional growth of the faculty and enhancement of the faculty member's service to the Institute. However, it is important that all full-time faculty or staff members accord primary allegiance to their duties at the Institute. Any employment or work by a faculty or staff member who is appointed and employed full-time by the Institute cannot be undertaken unless specifically authorized by the Institute to avoid ethical and legal conflicts of interest. Personal responsibility, integrity, and high ethical standards are the principal factors in avoiding conflicts of interest, and the Institute expects that all members of the faculty and staff to conduct their outside activities in a manner that reflects credit on themselves, their profession, and the Institute. Essential to the effectiveness of such procedures are a complete disclosure of outside professional activities. No activity, whether on or off campus, must be undertaken which violates the Institute's policies or is considered detrimental to the interests of the Institute. Approval must be sought from the School Dean / Unit Head for engagement in outside professional activities and they must be consulted whenever faculty or staff members are not sure whether there could be a conflict of interest.

The President will be meeting with the Schools in analyzing the data that has been generated on honorarium payments for their respective fields of study, and towards immediately increasing faculty numbers in much needed areas, instead of honorarium based teaching. The increase in faculty numbers must be considered from a longer term perspective and be sustainable. However, it is important to seriously consider this approach from a strategic perspective, since it will have an immediate impact on the quality, leading to a higher faculty per student ratio and increased availability of faculty towards students, possibility of generating additional advanced courses for Ph.D. students, larger pool of faculty to work on research and sponsored projects etc.

ACTION: Meetings with schools should be scheduled regarding issues on honorarium payment and increase in number of faculty in needed areas etc.

**PAC 08.05.09 Strategic Development Plan (SDP)**

The need to highlight how the new initiatives such as proposed undergraduate programs, establishment of AIT Centers/branches/offices etc. relate to AIT's strategies and plans, was stressed during the Executive Committee (25 February 2008) and the Board of Trustees (03 April 2008) meetings.

In view of this, the President plans to highlight and present some of the concrete activities and initiatives that have been launched or are in the pipeline by the Schools, Centers and Administration, in relation to the Institute Strategic Development Plan (SDP). The SDP which is a rolling plan would also be updated in the process.

ACTION: The President requested specific inputs from the Schools, Centers and Administration on their ongoing or planned initiatives, which will be incorporated in the revised SDP.

**PAC 08.05.10 AIT Representatives to Visit Myanmar**

The President informed the meeting that a 5-day-visit to Myanmar by an AIT delegation will be conducted at the end of May 2008. Measures on how AIT could extend both immediate and long-term assistance to the country, will be explored.

An AIT-Myanmar Fund will also be set-up with the initial donation of about \$45,000 to be put in as initial seed money. This amount will come from the money expected to be recovered from the financial commitment made by Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris (CCIP) to AIT through an MoU in 1993. It is hoped that setting-up of this will catalyze support from other organizations through this fund. It was opined that capacity building efforts/assistance from neutral institutions such as AIT will be able to extend help more effectively.

**ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

**PAC 08.05.11 Report on First Four Months (Jan-April) Financial Results for 2008**

Ms. Patcharee Wangsakan, Head/Finance Office together with Mr. Ahmed Khan, Finance Officer (Budgeting) reported on the four-month financial results which continue to show a positive trend. The Operating Funds show a combined Net Surplus of 159 million Baht which is a significant improvement over last year's combined Net Surplus of 96 million Baht at this point in time. However, the coming August 2008 enrolment data does not look all that encouraging, and all efforts must be made to try and increase the enrolment figures, since this is the main intake for the schools, and will have a significant impact on the overall financial performance of the Institute, especially for the next year.

This year AIT has started making strategic investments in different areas aimed at strengthening the Institute's operations and secure a better position in the market. Keeping in mind the large investments being carried out, the President stressed that it is important to continue the discipline in costs-control and to cut down unnecessary expenses.

**PAC 08.05.12 August 2008 Admission Updates**

The August 2008 admission updates were received by PAC members.

To date, the total applications is 1433, which are about a hundred applications lower than the same week last year (August 2006). A significant bulk of this total is generated at SERD(694), which has now achieved about 96% of the School's total in August 2007. Offers are running low and totals only 319 as of this week (wk 20), which is also lower by a hundred offers compared with the same period in August 2007. SERD is observed to be making efforts at offering, which now stands at 174. It is hoped that the other 2 schools will catch up soon. Confirmations stands at 20 compared to about 28 and 45, in August 2007 and August 2006, respectively.

**PAC 08.04.13 English Writing Test Scores of Diploma and Master Degree Students Admitted in August 2006**

The VPAA reported on the English writing test scores of diploma and master degree students admitted in August 2006.

AIT implemented minimal entry and exit scores for writing proficiency in August 2006. Using a nine point scale (equivalent to IELTS bands) with 4.5 the minimum for entry and 6.0 the minimum for graduation, students were tested upon entry (AIT Placement Test). In addition to being offered up to 200 hours of classroom instruction, those who did not achieve 6.0 could also request one-one tutorial sessions by appointment and had frequent opportunities to be re-tested (AIT Writing Test).

The results indicate a striking change. Of the graduating students who entered in August 2006, there are only 5 who have not achieved 6.0 which means that 8.7% have passed the AIT Writing Test. At entry in 2006, only 19% had passed the test. From the graduating batch of May 2008 there were originally 60 students who did not reach 6.0. The 5 graduating students who did not reach the English proficiency level of 6.0 required for graduation were given two options: i] delay their graduation or ii] they will be allowed to graduate and will be given 1 year to reach 6.0 or pass the IELTS. The English writing proficiency rating will be temporarily recorded in their transcript, which will be cleared from the student/s' record as soon as they achieve 6.0.

The hard work and dedication of colleagues from the Language Center were commended and acknowledged for this achievement.

**OTHER MATTERS****PAC 08.05.14 Thanks to Outgoing Student Union President**

A vote of thanks by PAC members was extended to the outgoing Student Union President, Mr. Mustafa Saroar, for his sincere and active participation in the PAC on behalf of the student body.

**PAC 08.05.17 Deferred Agenda Items**

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

**PAC 08.05.18 Next Meeting**

The next PAC meeting will be on Wednesday, 04 June 2008 in Room 210.