

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

04 June 2008

(week 23)

(confirmed)

Present: Said Irandoust Pakin Santanan
Izel Ann Dante Vilas Wuwongse
Peter Haddawy
Barbara Igel Secretaries:
Sudip Rakshit Karma Rana
Jayant Routray Renedith Calabdan
Jonathan Shaw

Apologies: Sivannapan Kumar **Invited:** Kyoko Kusakabe
Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai Noppadol Phien-wej
Ram Shrestha Hoang Le Tien
Khin Ni Ni Thein

PAC 08.06.01 Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed all present to the PAC meeting including Dr. Noppadol Phien-wej and Dr. Kyoko Kusakabe, who attended on behalf of Dean, SET and Dean, SERD respectively. A special welcome was also extended to Mr. Pakin Santanan, the new Student Union President, to his first PAC meeting.

Apologies were received.

PAC 08.06.02 Approval of the 04 June 2008 PAC Agenda and Review of the PAC Meeting Minutes of 15 May 2008.

The meeting agenda was approved and the minutes of the 15 May 2008 PAC meeting were confirmed.

Follow-up Issues:

1] Update on the AIT Center Vietnam (AITCV) Director Position

The Head of Administration provided the meeting an update on the search for the AITCV Director position.

The President informed the PAC members of his interest in considering an innovative partnership wherein a strategic partner institution will host an AIT-managed center. Under the scheme, the partner institution could host the AIT office and provide all the necessary facilities and support to run a program leading to an AIT degree and which will be completely under the management of AIT. If the concept will be successful in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, it may be considered for possible implementation in other AIT centers (AITCV and AITCI).

ISSUES FROM PRESIDENT

PAC 08.06.03 Progress on the New AIT Charter

On Monday, 26 May, Mr. Daisuke Okabe, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Thailand, visited AIT and met with the President for discussions on the new AIT Charter. In follow up to the 14 May 2008 informal intersessional consultations held

between the Government of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Thailand and AIT, Mr. Okabe wanted to jointly review with AIT and reconfirm the wording under the different articles that were discussed at the meeting and mutually agreed upon.

With the compromises made on the part of the Government of Japan and AIT, the President expressed confidence that the revised text of the new AIT Charter, would 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 intergovernmental meeting, the next meeting is expected to be the concluding one, at which the text of the new AIT Charter will be finalized. Under the new AIT Charter, AIT's status as a full-fledged "international organization" will be reaffirmed, and membership open to all states and international organizations which associate themselves with the objectives of AIT.

PAC 08.06.04 Annual Report

The President expressed that the target publication of the AIT annual report for next year should be set by the end of March or April 2009 at the latest. Required early coordination to meet the target date of publication and submission of necessary contents for the annual report should be planned carefully (c/o PSSU in coordination with ERCO).

PAC in its previous meeting did not specify the number of pages of the 2007 Annual Report but has agreed on the principle that the report should contain important information only, while other relevant data will be provided in the CD to be enclosed. It is intended that the Annual Report should be seen as a promotional report.

PAC 08.06.05 Faculty/Staff Honorarium and New Faculty Recruitment

The detailed breakdown on the school-wise honorarium payments in 2007 prepared by the Head of Administration was provided to the President and will be presented to faculty members at the scheduled meetings of the President with the schools (the first school meeting was with SOM) to discuss the issue regarding faculty honorarium and new faculty recruitment, and related strategies in this regard for the future. The President stressed the importance in maintaining a reasonable student to faculty ratio. Careful attention needs to be given as to how much extra teaching faculty are engaged in, whether it is affecting the teaching and student supervision, and also strategic consideration as to whether honorarium payments could be used to increase faculty numbers to ensure that the quality of teaching and supervision is not affected. The figures prepared by the administration will be used for the purposes of stimulating discussions, and from a longer term perspective, it is important to find additional way of decreasing the student to faculty ratio. The President is also supportive towards increasing the number of adjunct and visiting faculty, as well as attracting young and dynamic faculty members from other institutions on post-doc or short term assignments. In addition, the President will also discuss the proposed bonus system.

PAC 08.06.06 Faculty Engagement in Outside Professional Activities

Follow-up on actions taken concerning faculty engagement in outside professional activities was discussed. Communication from the D/SET was sent to the faculty members of SET. Acting Dean/SOM reported that initial discussions with concerned faculty member/s were made on this regard.

ACTION: Dr. Kyoko, as Associate Dean was requested by the President to follow-up on the action taken/to be taken in SERD regarding this issue.
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PAC 08.06.07 Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

The President requested inputs from the School Deans, AIT Extension, Centers and Administration on their ongoing or planned initiatives. The tentative date agreed to send in inputs is 13 June 2008 following which a half-day special PAC meeting will be scheduled mainly to brainstorm on SDP.

Some of the discussion points highlighted were:

- Some members opined that an Institute SDP should be a steady document that provides a clear and long term direction. Rolling action plans could be provided as annex to the main document.
- Revisiting the whole SDP may be necessary.
- SDP - to be considered as a promotional document of the institute.
- Some issues to be looked into include among others are issues pertaining to AIT centers, research focus areas, sustainable development.
- AIT's thematic research orientation on "Climate Change for Sustainable Development" serves as the overarching umbrella.

PAC 08.06.08 Proposed Establishment of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Position

Subsequent to previous PAC deliberations, the President informed the meeting that he is considering appointments of individuals based on the initiative or project being run which will be for a specific duration (e.g. Executive director/director title) instead of establishing Associate Vice President position/s.

PAC 08.06.09 Preliminary Feedback from the Visit of AIT delegation to Myanmar.

The President conveyed to PAC members the preliminary feedback received subsequent to the visit of AIT delegation to Myanmar. Dr. Barbara Igel, Acting Dean/SOM also provided the meeting updates and outcomes of her recent trip to Myanmar. Members were in agreement that there is still more room in improving channels of information and communication between AIT and the AIT Alumni national chapters.

The President recalled that AITAA national chapters were invited to assist in the student recruitment in a systematic manner and to propose plans. Suggestions were also put forward on having one alumni office under AITAA that would provide the information pertaining to AIT alumni. In future meetings with the AITAA Mother Chapter, the President intends to present/discuss once more his suggestion that AITAA national chapters could draw up their respective agenda for the coming years to support their alma mater. Efforts to continually enhance relations with the AIT Alumni National Chapters in various countries will be followed-up in coordination with the AITAA Mother Chapter.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**PAC 08.06.10 August 2008 Admission Updates**

The latest admission forecast for August 2008 intake (as of 30 May 2008: week 22) particularly on the school-wise applications, offers and confirmations, were distributed to PAC members.

Institute-wide applications have reached 1531 which is 60++ applications lower than the same week last year (August 2007). Offers are still running low and totals only 562 as of week 22, which is lower by over 120++ offers compared with the same period in August 2007. Confirmations stands at 50 compared to about 106 and 68, compared with August 2007 and August 2006, respectively.

The PAC members were updated of the actions being done by the schools to improve the drop in the August 2008 intake key numbers as well as the information on additional students expected to be received which are not yet taken into account in the report. The President requested the Deans of SERD and SET to discuss within the schools the causes resulting to low number of offers sent out. The meeting also discussed possibility of schools having different application forms.

PAC 08.06.11 Academic Senate (AS) Recommendation on the English Language Requirement

The PAC deliberated on the recommendations of the Academic Senate (AS) concerning the English Language Requirements and has agreed to endorse the following requirements for final consideration of the President:

- 1] There should be an in-country testing and interview of entrants from select countries.
- 2] All applicants for Master Degree Programs must submit an approved test score equivalent to IELTS writing score of 4.5 or higher from an approved testing service, preferably for certain countries also undergoing an AIT interview. Applicants with IELTS writing score of less than 5.0 are to be encouraged to attend the **Bridging Program (BP)**.

Exceptions:

 - a) Native speakers and graduates of university degree programs conducted in English-speaking countries can be admitted without test scores.
 - b) Conditional admission with BP for students with scores of less than 4.5 (but not less than 4.0) can be made. Upon completing the BP, if the candidate attains a score of 4.5 or higher, then entry to a certificate or degree program will be granted; if not, then entry will be denied.
- 3] All AIT entrants should take the AWP Test at the start of their programs.
- 4] In their first or second semester, unless they attain a passing score (6.0 or higher) in the AWP Test, all AIT master and doctoral students in regular programs are required to attend a writing course – *Academic Writing* or *Technical Writing* depending on their field of study and to obtain a grade of ‘C’ or better on the course to graduate.
- 5] Remedial courses and tutoring should be made available to students whose AWP Test scores indicate that they are unable to attend the *Academic/Technical Writing course*.
- 6] The entry requirements for CAS and doctoral students are that all applicants must supply a writing test score from an approved testing service equivalent to an IELTS writing score of 5.0 or higher for the CAS and 5.5 or higher for doctoral program, preferably with an AIT interview for certain countries.
- 7] Professional degree program students will be required to meet the same criteria for entry and graduation as regular program students; however, alternatives for course delivery and grading instruments for these students are proposed that suit the practical, applied nature of and intensified shorter duration of these programs.

The PAC was not agreeable to the recommendation of the AS which states that “*the grades obtained in Academic Writing Placement (AWP) Test and/or Academic/Technical Writing course will not be included in the transcripts. The recommendations include the requirement that the students will be required to have a minimum of ‘C’ grade in AWP Test or Academic/Technical Writing course to graduate.*”

ACTION: Based on the feedback from PAC members, the President will request the AS to further deliberate on the stand of the PAC concerning students who are not able to reach the passing grade of "C" in Academic Writing or Technical Writing, as indicated below:

- 1] PAC proposed that the rating for the AIT AWP will be recorded as either "PASSED" or "NOT PASSED".
- 2] Students should obtain a "PASSED" AIT AWP Test result in order to graduate. Those students who are not able to pass will go through the following process:
 - they will be given the choice to either delay graduation until they pass the AWP Test or
 - students could formally seek reconsideration from the AIT administration to be allowed to graduate as scheduled provided that the "NOT PASSED" AWP Test result will be temporarily recorded in their transcripts, which will be cleared from the students' record as soon as they achieve the "PASSED" AWP test result. They will be given a maximum of 1 year to pass the AWP test or submit a passing rate in IELTS.

PAC 08.06.12 AIT Conference Center (AITCC New Charging System)

Based on PAC deliberation and upon the recommendation of the PAC members, the President *approved* the 15% increase in the current AITCC food and beverage prices. This increase will be effective from 01 July 2008. The details of this adjustment will be communicated to the community through a formal announcement from the AITCC management. It was agreed that a users' group will be set up for further discussions on the proposed increase in costs of rooms and related services provided by the AITCC.

ACTION: AITCC management to make a formal announcement to the community.

PAC 08.06.13 Degree Titles

PAC *recommended* that degree awarded by AIT should be based on the content of the program taught at AIT and should not be based on the background of the student. PAC agreed that this issue will be forwarded to AS for further discussions.

OTHER MATTERS

PAC 08.06.14 Next Meeting

The next PAC meeting will be on Wednesday, 23 July 2008 in Room 210.