

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

09 April 2007
(week 15)

Present:	Said Irandoust (<i>Chair</i>) Peter Haddawy Sivanappan Kumar Stephen Ogunlana Sudip K Rakshit	Udaya Rathnayaka Jonathan Shaw Hoang Le Tien (<i>AOH Coordinator</i>) <i>Secretaries:</i> Karma Rana Renedith Calabdan
Apologies:	Dennes T Bergado Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai Indra M Pandey	Khin Ni Ni Thein Vilas Wuwongse
Invited:	Nitin Afzulpurkar (<i>on behalf of Dean, SET</i>) Ann L Fontanilla Benjamin Gargabite	Teerapan Satagowit Patcharee Wangsakan

PAC 07.04.01 Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed all present to the PAC meeting. Dr. Jonathan Shaw, AIT Extension Director as host of the meeting also welcomed the PAC members. The President on behalf of PAC, offered a vote of thanks to Director, AITE, to the staff members of AITE, and to Dr. Tien who made necessary arrangements in preparation of the meeting.

To enable PAC members to accommodate PAC meetings into their schedules for the next semester it was agreed that PAC meetings will be held fortnightly on Wednesdays, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

PAC 07.04.02 Review of the Minutes of the PAC Meeting of 20 March 2007.

The minutes of the 20 March 2007 PAC meeting were *confirmed*.

The President clarified that in general, freeze hiring of personnel is applied to all funds, not just funds 10 and 21. Exceptions will be dealt with on case to case basis. Recruitment of Fund 30 personnel should be done in collaboration with HRO in terms of first finding available expertise possibly available within the Institute.

ISSUES FOR DECISION

PAC 07.04.03 Partnership Agreements

Considering the amount of time PAC spends in deliberating draft partnership agreements, it was opined that PAC should rethink how to effectively review these documents.

- 1] Department of Livestock and Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Lao PDR on "Implementation Arrangements for the Wetlands Alliance Program (WAP) in the Lao PDR". The following comments were put forward:

The revised draft MoU based on comments made by PAC will be taken up at the next PAC meeting following discussion between VPR and Dr. Hakän Berg.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION*Finance***PAC 07.03.04 Finance****1] Monthly Financial Performance Monitoring – January 2007 Results**

The response of Head, Finance Office (H/FO) on PAC's request for clarification/identification of factors that contributed to low tuition and fee revenue for January 2007, was provided as tabled paper (please see Annex 1). The H/FO reported that the primary reason for low F10 revenue in January 2007 compared with January 2006 was attributed to the currency exchange loss as the Baht has appreciated by 12% (from 41.21 to 36.20 Baht per USD). Comparing with the budget, it was highlighted that "the year-to-date February revenue is 36% of budget revenue, mainly due to the negative exchange rate impact. And if the expenditure continues at the same pace, which is about Baht 33 million a month, the current net surplus of Baht 134 million would be zero out". Consequently, the targeted net surplus of Baht 30 million as budgeted, will not be reached.

Following the deliberation, PAC recommended the following actions to be taken: (c/o Head, Finance Office)

- a] In light of the present currency exchange and the reduced intake in January 2007, calculate the number of students needed to be enrolled/recruited for August 2007 intake, per school in order to fulfill the budget made for the whole year.
- b] Provide the estimate for the whole year, the effect of currency fluctuation, using the currency exchange range of Baht 32 – 35.
- c] Deduct the savings made from the budgeted expenditure following which the difference is to be adjusted in the budget. Adjustment should take into account the fact that budget 2007 was based on a fixed currency exchange of Baht 37/ US\$1.
- e] Calculate needs for budget revision and recommend the appropriate timing of implementation.

The Head, Student Office and the Coordinator of Admissions and Scholarships Unit (ASU) were also invited to provide additional information on the reconciliation of tuition and fee and other issues related to student statistics/key numbers.

2] Long Overdue Account Receivables

Based on PAC's advise to clarify and restructure listing of overdue receivables from students and sponsors/donors, the Head, Finance Office has reported as follows:

- 1] "Fund 10 : Admissions and Scholarship Unit Coordinator (ASU) sent out the list of students who have been terminated and resigned. The total outstanding payments are Baht 3.7 million versus Baht 12 million of the amounts overdue more than 3 months."
- 2] "Fund 30: SCPU Coordinator has been able to follow-up the outstanding amounts with the Principal Investigators (PIs). The long overdue amount is reduced by Baht 4 million from Baht 14 million."

PAC recommended that the Student Office should send a formal letter informing the concerned individuals (alumni) that no service (e.g. request for documents, certificates, transcripts etc.) will be provided by the Institute in the future if the outstanding balance are not settled. Copies of letters should be provided to the school deans for information and support in following-up.

3] Travel Policy

It was agreed that Dr. Nitin Afzulpurkar and Professor Stephen Ogunlana will further study the proposal prepared by the Finance Office and make a recommendation to PAC. The possibility of having a corporate arrangement to obtain discounts in hotels should be explored. It was also suggested that provision of a list of Institute-recommended hotels in the region would be useful to traveling faculty and staff.

The President requested Head, Finance Office to provide the financial implications of the proposed per diem rates. It was pointed out that as in any other educational organizations, travel should not be seen as a source of income.

The President will provide Head, Finance Office the percentage of deductions that will be applied on the per diem rates in cases where conferences cover for 1 or 2 meals etc.

PAC 07.04.05 **Issues from the President**

1] **Campus Planning and Environment**

The President reported that on Saturday, 07 April 2007, he was accompanied by Dr. Tien, Head, Infrastructure Office on an extensive tour around the campus. Areas/sites also visited included those where ongoing works (campus renovations and flood protection work) are being carried out – the effects of which have been the topic of intense debate, particularly on the issue with regard to clearance of vegetation and trees.

The issue was discussed at length and PAC agreed on the following:

- 1] The composition of the Campus Planning and Environment Committee (CPEC) will be reconstituted to also include external professional members / experts. The President will review the current terms of reference of CPEC.
- 2] Provisions will be made for the immediate recruitment of a tree specialist.
- 3] Faculty with expertise in forestry will be requested to make an assessment of the areas where the trees and vegetation have been cleared as part of the ongoing campus work.

PAC also highlighted the need to adequately consult and inform the community on the issues and works that are planned to be carried out on campus particularly those that affect the campus environment.

It was opined that representation in CPEC should be such that – it serves as a mechanism in taking inputs from a broad-based constituencies as well as in getting back to constituents feedback, actions taken, tangible impact on the management of campus environment. The need for maintenance and timely pruning of the trees and vegetation were also highlighted. The idea of organizing an institute forum led by the Infrastructure Office (IO) whereby IO plans for campus development including recommendations from professionals regarding relevant issues are presented to and discussed with the whole community, was noted and well received.

2] **AIT Charter**

The President reported the outcome of the Board of Trustees meeting held on 28 March 2007, particularly concerning the discussions on the draft AIT Charter and ownership model. Members of the Board have been requested to consult with their respective home governments and to provide their feedback on the draft AIT Charter and the levels of

commitment (cash and in-kind contributions) by 01 May 2007. A special meeting of the Board which will be convened on 28 May 2007 at which the draft AIT Charter and levels of commitment are expected to be finalized.

The President informed PAC that he is in close contact with some ambassadors who are members of the Board to actively discuss possible financial models and alternative steps to take in terms of maintaining the momentum towards successful completion/signing of the draft AIT Charter. SEAMEO's financial model is being studied as a possible reference in developing a suitable financial model for AIT. He pointed out that AIT should prepare for other alternatives in case the government model will not be successful.

The President requested inputs from Deans SOM and SET on their ideas of possible financial models for AIT. Likewise, PAC members were in agreement that more brainstorming should be done on this issue at PAC. Issues closely linked with the draft charter and ownership model including possible solutions and suggestions put forward by members were noted and discussed at length in the meeting with a common understanding that by commitment come interest and active involvement from partners / owners as a natural consequence.

3] Visit of Azerbaijani Minister of Communications and Information Technologies and Delegation

The President informed the meeting of the visit of HE Professor Ali Abbasov, Minister of Communication and Information Technologies, Republic of Azerbaijan to Thailand and Vietnam from 10 to 14 April 2007, in order to explore possible collaborations as well as for exchange and sharing of ideas and experiences in information technology, education and human resources development.

A MoU between AIT and the Ministry of ICT, Azerbaijan will be signed on the 12th of April 2007. The objectives of the MoU are to provide scholarship and financial support to qualified professionals from Azerbaijan to pursue graduate studies and continuing education at AIT, and to carry out projects in the fields of HRD and ICT for Azerbaijan's sustainable development.

PAC 07.04.06 Processing of Student Applications / Deadline of Application for Admission

In order to capture a larger number and best qualified prospective students particularly from Thailand, PAC recommended as follows:

- 1] Adjust the timing of sending offer letters to prospective Thai students by actively taking into account current schemes and deadlines used by other competitor universities.
- 2] For August 2008 intake, announce deadline of application by December 2007. As admissions and scholarships have been decoupled, the applicant should be able to get a feedback on his/her admission status as early as January 2008 and not later than March 2008.
- 3] Deans were requested to ensure timely follow-up on processing of applications at the FoS levels.
- 4] The correct currency exchange should be announced in AIT website.
- 5] Consider / study the feasibility of requiring payment as guarantee of commitment from the prospective student who will be offered definite scholarship to study at

AIT. It was noted that this is now being practiced by a number of top universities in Thailand.

The Head, Student Office reported that the student application forms has a tracer section where information is available on how prospective students came to know and applied to AIT, and where else (other universities) they have applied.

PAC 07.04.07 AIT-SCBPCL Collaboration on Provision of Visa Credit Cards

The draft "Memorandum on Agreement of Collaboration in Providing Services of Credit Cards" between AIT and the Siam City Bank Plc. Co., Ltd. was endorsed in principle with the following recommendations:

- 1] Legal opinion of Dr. Prajit Rojanaphruk (one of AIT's legal advisers) will be sought particularly on the impact / legal bearing of the "profit sharing issue" to AIT's standing as a non-profit institute.
- 2] Verify whether the revenue that will be generated through this initiative, which goes to scholarship and research is subject to taxation.
- 3] Clause 1.3 should include "staff" and the phrase "based on visa regulations ..", should be added.
- 4] Clause 3.1.3 should specifically indicate the AIT revenue of .8% of the actual transactions on the cards.
- 5] Negotiate a higher profit sharing than .8% of actual transaction if AIT is able to issue more than 500 cards.

Some of the main benefits of the platinum credit card which will be co-branded by AIT and SCBPCL are as follows:

- The platinum credit card is free of charge for the first 3 years.
- No minimum salary level is require to obtain the card.
- AIT gets 200 baht/card/ year as long as the card holder spends at least baht 30,000 per year on the card.
- .8% of actual transactions made on the card goes to AIT

To obtain the above mentioned benefits AIT needs to issue at least 500 cards. It was noted that the main target support group of this project will be the alumni.

PAC 07.04.08 Recruitment of FEBT Faculty

Regarding the inquiry raised by the Student Union President concerning the need for additional faculty in FEBT FoS, the President remarked that he will clarify the outcome of discussions with VPR and Dean, SERD on this matter in a separate meeting.

Other Matters

PAC 07.04.09 Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 25 April 2007, starting from 8 a.m., in Room 210, Administration Building.