

## PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

09 January 2007

(week 02)

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**Present:** Said Irandoust (*Chair*)  
Peter Haddawy  
Sivanappan Kumar  
Stephen Ogunlana  
I M Pandey  
Sudip K Rakshit

Udaya Rathnayaka  
Jonathan Shaw  
Hoang Le Tien (*AOH Coordinator*)  
Khin Ni Ni Thein  
Vilas Wuwongse

*Secretaries:* Karma Rana  
Renedith Calabdan

**Apologies:** Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai  
Dennes T Bergado

**Invited:** Joydeep Dutta (*on behalf of Dean, SET*)  
Avinash Panel

Noppadon Rittipongshusit  
Salil Sen

### PAC 07.01.01 Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed all present to the PAC meeting.

The President informed the meeting of his official mission to Manila (from 09 – 12 January 2007) and has asked the VPAA to preside over the remaining agenda items after the President leaves the PAC meeting.

### PAC 07.01.02 Review of the Minutes of the PAC Meeting of 14 December 2006.

The minutes of the 14 December 2007 PAC meeting were *confirmed*.

UPDATE:

- **AIT Platinum Card** - The VPAA will inform the Siam City Bank PCL (SCIB) to proceed with the arrangements in preparation for the planned launching of AIT Platinum card following confirmation from Dr. Tien that he had conveyed the issue to the AITAA alumni.

## ISSUES FOR DECISION

### PAC 07.01.03 Appointment Case

PAC *endorsed* the appointment of Dr. Philip Doneys, Assistant Professor, 2 years, SERD/GDS, Fund 10. Dean, SERD also reported the process of selection for this particular position.

### PAC 07.01.04 Partnership Agreements

PAC endorsed the following partnership agreements with:

- 1] MoU with Donaldson (Thailand) Ltd – presented by Dr. Dutta on behalf of the Dean, SET
- 2] MoU with La Rochelle, France – presented by Dean, SERD
  - PAC suggested that it should be made explicit in the agreement that students under the exchange program will have to pay fees to their home institution.
- 3] MoU with Mie University, Japan - presented by Dr. Dutta on behalf of the Dean, SET
- 4] Agreement with Department of Civil and Earth, Resources Engineering (DCERE), KYOTO UNIVERSITY, Japan

- PAC endorsed the agreement with DCERE in principle, but recommended that an institutional level MoU be pursued since other schools in AIT have collaborations as well with Kyoto University. There has not yet been an umbrella MoU between AIT and KU.

PAC also provided its comments on the partnership agreement below which will be further deliberated at the next PAC meeting:

- 1] MoU with University of Oulu, Finland
 

The President commented that partnership with the University of Oulu should be encouraged since UO is one of the good universities in Finland. Three areas in the draft MoU that PAC has commented upon are regarding the:

  - A] Duration – It was suggested that the agreement should cover a minimum of 2 intakes.
  - B] The responsibility of monitoring the progress of exchange students and their fulfillment of requirements for graduation should be clarified in the agreement.
  - C] If any of the parties decides to terminate the agreement by sending a six-month notice, it should be clarified in the agreement that the responsibility of both institutions should be fulfilled until the enrolled/on-going doctoral students complete their studies.

## **ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

### **FINANCE AND AUDIT**

#### **PAC 07.01.05 Update on FY 2006 Financial Results**

PAC was informed that the first draft of the FY 2006 financial result which will include December 2006 results, will be ready by next week (week 3, i.e. 15-19 January 2007).

#### **PAC 07.01.06 Update on FY 2007 Budget**

It was reported that Finance Office has uploaded to the ERP, budgets that have been received so far and is still awaiting detailed breakdown (2007 budgets) from some schools and units. Without the details of the budget, nothing will be fed into the ERP which will affect the operation of the concerned office. As a standard, 50% of approved budgets will be set in the ERP and the remaining half will be uploaded during the middle of the year.

Some members raised the fact that there are items in the budget (e. g uniforms for the staff of some units) that could not be provided in half, and should be reconsidered.

### **ISSUES FROM THE PRESIDENT**

#### **PAC 07.01.07 Increase in Royal Thai Government Budgetary Support for 2007**

The Thai Parliament on 27 December 2006 has officially approved AIT budget for the fiscal year 2007 as part of the 8th Five-Year Cooperation Plan between the Institute and Thailand from 2005-2009. The total budget for this year is approximately 21 million Baht more than that received last year. The AIT budget for their Majesties King's and Queen's scholarships, RTG fellowships, Joint Research and other activities is 155,067,000 Baht. Additionally, AIT also received a new budget of 10,000,000 Baht for education and research activities for GMS.

Prof. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, RTG Faculty Representative, Dr Chotchai Charoenngam, and Ms. Wannapa Pliansri, RTG Relations Coordinator were thanked by the President for their hard work and effort which has resulted positive outcome.

**PAC 07.01.08 Visit to AIT of the 45 Top Engineering students in Thailand**

On January 9, AIT has an opportunity to host the visit of 45 top engineering students in Thailand, who are selected by the Engineering Institute of Thailand (EIT) to receive the "Best Engineering Student Achievement Medal" from the Crown Prince. The selection was made by a committee chaired by Dean Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, who also serves as the Vice President of EIT. These senior students rank first in their respective fields of study from all universities in Thailand, all with a cumulative GPA of 3.60 or higher. Since these distinguished students qualify for full-fee RTG fellowship, they are invited to see AIT first hand before the award ceremony organized in the Royal Palace. The students were briefed about AIT, the programs available in 3 schools as well as the student life in AIT. Students were divided into groups to visit the laboratories of their interest. After the visit, with the offer of full-fee fellowship on the spot, 14 top students have committed to enroll in this August intake, 3 in SERD, 3 in SOM and 8 in SET. All of them have agreed to serve as AIT's ambassadors to inform their classmates about the Institute's best kept secret institution right inside Thailand."

**PAC 07.01.09 Death of Ms. Sao Sirikit Nanda Muang, SOM, on Sunday, 24 December 2006**

The above incident highlights the need for students to be more alert and aware of the potential hazards on the highway, swimming pool and other areas etc. The administration is currently in the process of developing clear set of guideline and instructions with details of contact persons in the handling of emergency situations such as death of student, other serious injury, accident or incidents.

The President thanked Professor Rakshit, Dr. Ni Ni, Dr. Tien, Mr. Karma Rana and all those who helped, for their presence immediately after the incident and their active support in the handling of the case.

As a relevant matter, the President reminded the Administrative Office Heads through the AOH Coordinator to finalize the comprehensive emergency plan for AIT. It was earlier agreed and communicated that each office head will provide input for the plan.

**PAC 07.01.10 Change of Leadership at AITCV**

Dr. Fredric Swierczek, has assumed responsibilities as interim Director of the AIT Center in Vietnam (AITCV) for a one-year period, effective 1 January 2007. The outgoing AITCV Director Professor Nguyen Cong Thanh has been appointed as Senior Advisor to the interim Director of AITCV and will continue to be based at AITCV.

**PAC 07.01.11 Meeting with Thai Foreign Minister and ASEAN Proposal**

The President provided a brief report on the meeting with Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday, 8 January regarding efforts towards reaffirming AIT's international status. The meeting was attended by the Foreign Minister of Thailand, H.E. Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram and four Director Generals from the side of MOFA and by Dr. Tej Bunnag, Chairman of the Board, the President and Prof. Vilas Wuwongse, VPER from AIT's side. A detailed briefing was made on AIT's new directions and strategies as well as update on the international status and progress made in this direction. The Minister together with the DG's were unanimous in their support for AIT and do not see any foreseeable obstacle in AIT attaining full international status as soon as the Geneva II Act is approved by the cabinet. The Thai government will take the lead in mobilizing other countries of ASEAN to become new core founding members of the Institute under its proposed new charter. This proposal will be initially presented by Thailand at the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) prior to the ASEAN summit in Cebu (11-15 January 2007), and at one more SOM meeting during the year, following which it would be submitted for consideration at the 2007 ASEAN summit meeting.

**PAC 07.01.12 Meeting with the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Foundation**

The President also briefed PAC members on his meetings with H.E. Mr. Ong Keng Yong, secretary general, ASEAN Secretariat and Mr. Apichai Sunchindah, executive director, the ASEAN Foundation. The ASEAN secretary general also conveyed to extend support to AIT as soon as the proposal from Thailand on the international status of AIT and new governance/ownership concept is received by ASEAN secretariat.

**PAC 07.01.13 Possible Partnership in Regional Training Activities between AIT Extension and UNITAR**

The President also had discussions with Mr. Nico Barito, Senior Fellow, Decentralized Cooperation Programme, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), who is also a member of the Steering Committee of AIT Center in Indonesia and has assisted and facilitated the meeting with the ASEAN secretary general. Possibility of AIT Extension - UNITAR partnership in regional training activities was also explored. Mr. Barito has been assisting AIT through his extensive contacts and networks in possible partnerships and linkages in Indonesia, as well in mobilizing the support of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore towards AIT's efforts to enhance its partnership with ASEAN.

The President and Dr. Shaw had initial discussions with Mr. Barito during his recent visit to AIT regarding the possible collaborative training activities between AIT Extension and UNITAR.

**PAC 07.01.14 Misuse of unofficial Mailing lists and AIT harassment policy – Legal Advisor, Fact Finding and Disciplinary Committees**

The President will send an official communication to inform the AIT community of the ethics and rules on the use of mailing lists. The community will be warned of the latest misuse of mailing list and the case of harassment as a learning experience, without referring to persons involved.

**ACADEMIC ISSUES****PAC 07.01.15 Update on January 2007 Student Intake**

The VPAA provided an update on January 2007 student intake as attached in Annex 1. As a comparison data of the January 2006 student intake was also provided.

- January 2007 (as of 09 Jan. 2007) 83 students enrolled so far out of the 133 who accepted offer from AIT; pay factor = .89
- January 2006– 155 students enrolled out of the 156 who accepted offer; pay factor = .91

It was noted that due to the 14% increase in tuition and fees in August 2006, the FFE number of students accepting in 2006 and 2007 are approximately equal.

**PAC 07.01.16 Feedback from the First Semester of the Faculty Evaluation Panel (FEP)**

The VPAA reported on the feedback from the first semester of the Faculty Evaluation Panel (FEP) which touched upon the following issues:

- 1] *Need for better mentoring of junior faculty* with particular concern for i) the appropriateness of the nature and quantity of the work load assigned to them, and ii) awareness of the requirements for promotion. The necessity of having in place a clear guideline on the maximum number of masters and doctoral students to be supervised by new assistant professors.
- 2] *Gaps between school and FEP recommendations.* It was agreed to consider the possibility of having meetings between the FEP and school committees in cases that there are marked differences between the school and FEP recommendations, in order to facilitate better understanding of how each panel came up with their results.
- 3] *Schools Evaluations.* Detailed input from schools is important for the FEP's deliberations.

- 4] *Citation Rates*. In evaluating the numbers of citations of faculty members the FEP has found that having some benchmark figures for comparison would be very useful. It was suggested that each school identify three peer institutions following which the FEP will collect citation rates of the faculty members in each area at those schools to use as benchmarks. Furthermore, if the SCOPUS citation service is not appropriate for some schools, the deans will provide suggestions for more appropriate citation

VPAA will send the soft file of the tabled document from FEP to the school deans.

**PAC 07.01.17 Removal of One Third Ceiling for Faculty, Honoraria Paying Activity, Fund Allocation**

The PAC members were requested to review the revised version of the document from VPR which incorporated input from Dean, SOM.

**PAC 07.01.18 Final Report: Task Force to Review Present Staff Terms of Employment, Compensation and Career Paths**

Dr. Jonathan Shaw, Chairman of the Task Force to Review Present Staff Terms of Employment, compensation and Career Paths provided the salient points of the Task Force's Final Report (*the final report without the appendices are attached as Annex 2*). The TF made proposals on the following areas: 1] *HR Philosophy*; 2] *Vision*, 3] *Principles* on performance management; value of staff – their development and employability; ethical, open and competitive staff recruitment; staff orientation on AIT's goals; necessity of performance goals and Key Performance Indicators to be defined for all units and specific jobs, 4] *Career Path* – proposed reduction of > 240 current position titles in AIT to 99 which is presented in appendix 1 of the report; 5] *Reclassification of staff* – details are presented in Appendix 3; 6] *Salary Structure* – the TF proposes a single salary scale with a maximum of 10 steps; proposed scales are shown in Appendix 4; 7] *P&P Statement on Employment of Staff*.

Recommendations of the TF are prioritized as follows:

- 1] Design, development and implementation of a comprehensive set of orientation programs for faculty and staff, starting with existing faculty and staff members (see Appendix IV: P&P Statement PA-1-3-3, Section 2.2).
- 2] Design, development and implementation of new systems of performance appraisal (see Appendix IV: P&P Statement PA-1-3-3, Section 4.2), based on performance goals and agreed KPIs.
- 3] With AIT Extension, the design, development and implementation of a comprehensive staff development program, starting with training in supervisory skills and higher level management skills (see Appendix IV: P&P Statement PA-1-3-3, Section 5.2).
- 4] New standard job descriptions need to be written for all the new staff positions.
- 5] Fixed-term contracts for regular staff have been used as a mechanism for ensuring that staff do not want to stay at the Institute for a long time, and have thus been used as an alternative to developing adequate performance management systems. Fixed-term contracts should therefore be phased out.
- 6] The *P&P Statement on Employment of Faculty: General Work Regulations* needs editing and updating to bring it into line with the new *P&P Statement on Employment of Staff: General Work Regulations*.

Other recommendations were concerning: job rotation, need for a clear policy on hiring AIT graduates; measured transition away from relatively high fixed salaries; change of role for HR office; employee and compensation structure. Following the presentation of the TF's Final Report to PAC, and prior to final approval by the Executive Committee, the TF recommended that proposals in the report be presented to the community at a special Institute Forum.

**Discussion Points:**

- Applicability of the recommendations to permanent staff was raised.
- For the proposed reform to be successful, particularly on the reclassification of staff, it is necessary that the proposal and related issues be discussed in all fora and understood clearly by the whole community. It has to be emphasized that the reform is good for

everyone (i.e. incentives to excellent performing staff; longer leave; more benefits by going to the fixed term category etc.)

- 1] The final report of the TF together with relevant appendices should be circulated to all faculty and staff.
- 2] A special Institute Forum need to be scheduled.
- 3] It was agreed that orientation should be given to incoming faculty for the January 2007 semester. The orientation to be provided by heads of RES and Student Offices will be set either on a Tuesday or Friday, preferably 11 a.m. and which could be followed by a lunch.

#### **PAC 07.01.19 Issues for Decision Meeting**

It was recalled that the previously identified issues so far which will be taken up in the next Decision Meeting scheduled for 21 February 2007 were 1] Faculty and Staff Official Travel 2] Guidelines on Honoraria for Faculty/Staff. Responsible offices and/or individuals should be reminded to prepare the necessary documents.

#### **PAC 07.01.20 P & P on Management of Academic Coffee Lounges by Respective School/Extension** (*update from Head, Infrastructure Office*)

The Head of Infrastructure Office (IO) updated PAC members on the actions IO has done in relation to the transfer of management of academic coffee lounges to respective schools and AIT Extension. He also informed the Deans and Director, AIT Extension that utility charges for these lounges will be sent to their offices.

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

#### **PAC 07.01.21 A Presentation on "Sustainability Through Best Practices"** (*by Salil Sen, CSR, Doctoral Researcher, AIT*)

Dr. Salil Sen made a presentation to PAC on the concept "Sustainability Through Best Practices" (*please see the power point presentation attached as Annex 3*). The initial concept proposes the formation of a nodal center as a self sustaining Research/Consultancy/Competence Center, which will showcase the best practices in various disciplines and fields across the schools and AIT Extension.

Some highlights of discussions and initial comments put forward by the PAC members were as follows:

- The philosophy and concept presented were commended, however a clear plan on how to operationalize and implement the idea is lacking.
- Questions on the source of funding in establishing the center, its sustainability and benefits of having the center need thorough discussions among faculty members in schools.
- AIT can be a role model and pioneer on StBP for the educational institutions.
- The concept could be incorporated as part of the SDP of AIT.

PAC opined that services and functions needed should first be identified by doing some market research and surveys to determine if there is an actual demand in this area. Dr. Sen was advised to take into account feedback received from PAC members, refine the proposal as necessary and report back to the President for further consideration.

#### **PAC 07.01.22 Next Meeting**

The next PAC meeting is scheduled for 23 January 2007.