

## PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

12 July 2005

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**Present:** Said Irandoust (*Chair*)  
Teresita del Rosario  
Nazrul Islam  
Kalchana Nettayawichit  
Hoang Le Tien

Ng Eng Wan  
Vilas Wuwongse

*Secretaries:* Karma Rana  
Izel Ann M Dante

**By invitation:** Md Zeenatul Basher  
Benjamin Gargabite (*for PAC 05.07.05*)

Matthew Laszewski

**Apologies:** Chongrak Polprasert  
N Ramachandran

### PROCEDURAL MATTERS AND FOLLOW-UP ISSUES

#### PAC 05.07.01 Welcome

The President welcomed Mr Laszewski, Chair of the Editorial Board, and Mr Basher, student representative, to the meeting. The information team will assist in summarizing the thrusts of the administration, through PAC discussions, and disseminate highlights to the community and the Institute's external partners. The SU President and Vice-President, and the Academic Senate Chair will also be regular invitees to PAC meetings.

The change in name to President's Advisory Council (PAC) was noted.

#### PAC 05.07.02 Review of the Minutes of PEC Meeting of 5 July 2005

Responsible persons and units identified to follow-up actions agreed at the last PEC meeting should regularly report progress to PAC.

#### PAC 05.07.03 Matters Arising from the Minutes

##### 1. Review of Central Administration

To improve coordination among its units and to control the rising costs allocated for central administration, the current central administration structure will be reviewed according to the respective functions of units. The review should result in an optimal cost-effective restructured central administration, as well as set-up efficient and cost-effective processes.

Pedagogical units, such as the Schools, library, and learning resource centers, are considered autonomous units.

Two working groups (WGs) – to respectively cover aspects of cost reduction/ cost-effectiveness and revenue generation – will be set up to make a comprehensive review of the current central administration structure and its processes (including the Institute's policy and procedures). Comparisons should also be made with resources spent for administration, research and other activities at other top universities (in Asia, Americas, and Europe). Cost and headcount (critical mass) for administration, faculty, research, and services will be benchmarked against comparable universities. Optimal student- and administrative staff-to-faculty ratios need to be determined. The WGs will be requested to recommend

specific/concrete measures (immediate, medium- and long-term), as well as make an analysis of probable consequences. Each WG will be composed of: 2 representatives from the central administration, 1 representative from each School, 1 representative from the AIT Extension, 1 representative from the Library, 1 representative from the Language Center, and 1 representative from the AIT Alumni Association (external). Representatives should have competencies on the terms of reference, and should serve as a communication channel for their units.

The review process will start (at week 31) with the presentation of the Institute's financial situation (with time-series data) at the Schools and other units, and to present plans to address the situation. At these meetings, the terms of reference for the working groups will also be presented so that available competencies from the School/units can be identified and submitted to the President within a week after the meeting. At week 33, the WGs will be formed and appointments formalized. The WGs will be requested to take up these assignments with urgency, and expected to submit recommendations to the President within five weeks (by week 38). The recommendations will be reviewed at the PAC, which serves as the Steering Committee for these WGs, and will also be disseminated to the Schools/units to invite feedback. Their feedback should be received by the President within two weeks (by week 40) for further analysis and review at PAC. The PAC intends to announce final decisions and an implementation plan to the community by week 43.

Among the immediate cost-cutting measures for review by the President include a possible reduction in the number of security guards, a directive that all events (i.e., conferences, meetings and trainings) be held at AIT, and a hiring freeze on non-project positions. The Institute will nurture a culture of efficiency so that cost-cutting will become a habit instilled in everyone; at the same time, the cost-effectiveness of Institute's services and resources will then be promoted. Other possible saving measures suggested include optimization of manpower in each unit; identification of operational costs where savings can be made immediately (e.g. electricity, water, etc); and, mobilization of external partners to assist the Institute in upgrading its library and laboratories.

The terms of reference for each of the Working Groups will be drafted by the President's Office, and the financial report will be finalized by the CFO in the agreed format, for presentations and discussions during visits to the Schools/units.

The President's Office will finalize the schedule of the President's and CFO's visits to the Schools/units to be held from 1 to 12 August 2005 to present the Institute's financial situation.

To follow up with the President's invitation during his address to the community, a formal invitation will be sent out to the community for nominations and applications for the three part-time Vice Presidential positions (for Education, Research, and External Relations) and for the Directorship of the AIT Extension. Nominations/applications, which should be received within a week, should include a rationale indicating the candidate's motivation, competency, and relevant qualities. The next PAC meeting will review all candidates, and will shortlist three candidates for each position. These shortlisted candidates will be invited to present their manifestos in an open hearing (during 15-31 August 2005), which will be followed by a Q&A session (with the candidates) and in an open discussion (without the candidates). Further reflection on the discussions will be made at the PAC meeting. The President intends to finalize a decision and make appointments by early September 2005. The VP term of service, which will not be longer than the President's term of office, will be on an acting capacity until the AIT Bye-Laws are amended to accommodate these positions.

The President's Office will issue a formal invitation to the community to submit nominations or applications for the three part-time Vice Presidential positions and for the Directorship of the AIT Extension.

## 2. Academic Restructuring

As soon as the academic restructuring of the three Schools is completed, the community will also be invited to nominate or apply for the Deanship of the three Schools, and will follow the same process used for the selection of the VPs. Each Dean should be well-respected by the School, be highly competent in education, research and outreach activities, and be a visionary who is proactive for development. The appointed Deans will then be given the authority to setup the School's management structure (e.g. Vice-Dean, School Board, etc), accountability processes, and discuss content-related development and quality issues in identified focus areas.

An evaluation of the academic restructuring into three Schools will be conducted one or two years after implementation.

## 3. PAC Composition

Invitations to PAC meetings will be extended to the President of the AITAA-Mother Chapter, as well as to the Employees Committee and Faculty Relations Committee to send representatives. The PAC composition will again be adjusted upon the completion of the central administration restructuring.

The President's Office will issue a formal invitation to the President of the AITAA-Mother Chapter, as well as to the Employees Committee and Faculty Relations Committee to send representatives to the PAC meetings.

## 4. Review of Administrative Processes

The review of current administrative processes at the Institute is geared towards increasing efficiency and cost-effectiveness, and to eliminate duplication; it will be conducted in tandem with the review of the central administration.

The CFO will propose an authorization/approval structure for financial processes, as well as set authorized limits for each level. The CFO will also present the budgeting process and timeframe for FY 2006 at the next PAC meeting.

The HRD reported that the HR processes, including authorization, are currently being reviewed. Recommendations will be ready for submission to PAC in August 2005. The HRD has also submitted for the President's approval the performance guidelines, appraisal forms, and schedule.

The CFO will submit an authorization/approval structure for financial processes and set authorized limits for each level, and will also present the budgeting process and timeframe for FY 2006 at the next PAC meeting.

## 5. AIT Homepage

The Editorial Board Chair and the Newsletter Editor, in collaboration with the IT Coordinator (Webmaster), are to convene those involved with the construction of the AIT homepage and unit websites. The information team should then identify tasks and set a timeframe. All communication channels need to be improved and to be widely available (e.g. homepage/websites, online Bulletin/Newsletter, a weekly printed Bulletin in English and Thai may be revived).

The information team shall meet in mid-August.

## **POLICY AND STRATEGY MATTERS**

### **PAC 05.07.04 Partnership with Australia**

The trip report on an AIT mission to Australia was received from the Director of Promotions. The draft MOUs with RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) University and Deakin University will be brought to the Schools and AIT Extension for feedback and possible involvement. Prior to undertaking promotional trips, initial discussions and identification of concrete activities at School-level can be made through exchange of communications. These School-level activities will then be compiled by the Promotions Office before initiating an Institute agreement with other universities. Special care should also be taken in assessing the ranking of universities the Institute is partnering with. Assurances that MOUs and institutional linkages are workable should be documented. Cooperation with top universities, which can serve as feeder institutions to the Institute's programs will assure the quality of incoming students. Promotional trips should be in accord with the Institute's strategic promotional plan specific to a country or region.

The (Acting) Deans/In-Charge will present the draft MOUs with RMITU and DU to their units and report feedback to PAC. The Director of Promotions will be informed of PAC decisions.

## **FINANCE AND AUDIT**

### **PAC 05.07.05 January – May 2005 Financial Report**

The CFO presented the School revenue and expenditures for 2003, 2004 and the first five months of 2005, as well as a consolidated operating summary for 2004 and 2005. The School report should be presented in the same format as the consolidated operating summary, with an additional column for year-end projection. The report does not yet include the AITVN net surplus (THB 4.5m) and May 2005 Semester tuition (THB 10m). The CFO will confirm at the next meeting whether allocated costs (for central administration) is a percentage of central funds (Fund 10) or of the consolidated income, and will try to obtain data on fellowships for 2003. Income is recorded at the time the service/activity is performed, and not at the time funds are actually received.

The CFO highlighted the reduction (~15%) in tuition and fees revenue from 2003 to 2004, and increase (~9%) in allocated costs for the same period. This could be attributed to the change from term to semester system, reduction of overhead rates from 20 to 13%, as well as in the increasing offers of Institute fellowships. The Deans were urged to control the offers for fellowships especially when the targeted number of students (on which the budget is based) is not achieved, and should note that fellowship offers will only have its impact when it takes effect after a year or two.

The number of students presented in the Institute's facts and figures, and other documents, should be accompanied by the full-time equivalent figures.

The CFO will present revised School and consolidated financial reports, confirm regarding allocated costs, and determine student FTE.

*[At this point the Director of Admissions and Scholarships was invited to join the meeting.]*

The DAS reported that to date, 410 students, which is only about 16% of the offers made, have confirmed their enrolment for the August 2005 Semester intake. The DAS

was requested to report a breakdown of enrolling students by funding category (on full or partial scholarship, externally funded, self-paying, on fellowship, etc); investigate the reasons, other than financial, that candidates reject AIT admission offers; and suggest initiatives to influence those offered admissions to accept the offers. The scheme used for Bangladesh and India wherein faculty members establish email communications with candidates should be tried for other nationality groups. The assistance of the alumni local chapters in this regard may also be sought. The DAS should also ensure that quality is not jeopardized, especially on admitting students with external funding.

The CFO was also requested to consider payment of tuition and fees on an installment basis, especially those with institutional guarantors.

The Promotions Office should strengthen its promotional activities in identifying countries where highly-qualified self-paying students can be attracted; in exploring external organizations and companies where students can be interns during the inter-semester break; and in seeking AITAA assistance in securing projects for the Institute. Strategic promotional efforts specific to a country or region should be developed. Student internship/ employment by external companies should be channeled through School projects.

The DAS, in collaboration with the DP, should respond to PAC suggestions and submit a report soonest.
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## OPERATION

### **PAC 05.07.06 Appointment and Renewal/Reappointment Cases**

The following case was endorsed:

#### *Faculty Appointment*

1. *Dr Eric Fleury, Visiting Senior Researcher, 1 year from 1 July 2005, SAT-Mic, no cost to AIT.*

Appointment made.
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The following cases were deferred to the next meeting:

1. Dr Chandhana Indhapanya, Adjunct Associate Professor, 4 months from 8 August 2005, SERD-RRDP, School Fund.
2. Mrs Arlene N Satapornvanit, Senior Project Researcher, 6 months from 1 July 2005, fixed-term, SERD-AARM, Fund 30.
3. Mr Ram C Bhujel, Research Scientist, 3 months from 1 July 2005, fixed-term, SERD-AARM, Fund 30.
4. Ms Pornpip Sirisoontaralak, Project Researcher, 11 months from 1 August 2005, fixed-term, SERD-FEBT, Fund 30.

SERD Dean will present these cases at the next PAC meeting.
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## OTHER MATTERS

### **PAC 05.07.07 President's Meeting with the Chairman of the Board**

The President reported the following highlights of his recent meeting with the Chairman of the AIT Board of Trustees.

- Courtesy visits and partnership with senior officials of the Pathumthani Province, Ministry of Education, the entity that will emerge from the restructured Ministries of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, neighbors Thammasat University and the National Science and Technology Development Agency among others.
- Enhance both internal and external communications.
- Coordinate with research and development initiatives in Thailand and the region through creation of joint centers for research and education. Strategic planning towards minimizing costs. Possible areas could be in biomedical engineering, automobile engineering, environmental economics, etc.
- Upgrading of laboratories.
- Not pursue the MIT of Asia concept but real partnerships (not only MoUs on paper) with leading universities in Korea, Japan, Singapore, China, Taiwan, Thailand, etc.

### **PAC 05.07.08 Issues from ARCA**

1. ARCA raised the issue of the lack of responsibility of function which contributed to the delay in the hand-over of major projects. The Grounds and Arboretum Maintenance (GAM) Director will provide a detailed report to the President.
2. A Task Force, chaired by Professor Paul, was requested to review the scope of engagement of travel agencies operating on the AIT campus, to review, reopen and oversee the bidding process, as well as to draft the terms of reference of on-campus travel agents. The lease agreements of the existing travel agencies on campus were terminated with effect from 31 August 2005.
3. The ARCA called for the cooperation of Schools/units in respecting the enforcement of the AITCC cancellation policy.

### **PAC 05.07.08 Issues from the Acting Dean of the AIT Extension**

The Acting Dean of the AIT Extension formally announced that she is stepping down from the interim position. It was pointed out that the position of Dean is a misnomer since AITE is not a School and should not be considered as one. The title of Director for its head is, thus, more appropriate. The search for the Director of AIT Extension is included in the process for the selection of the VPs (*as reported above in PAC 05.07.03, 1*).

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for *Tuesday, 26 July 2005*, 1330 hours, in Room 210, Administration Building. Issues (with background information) should reach the secretariat no later than noon of *Wednesday, 20 July 2005*.