

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

7 January 2009

(week 2)

(Confirmed)

Present:

Said Irandoust
Nitin Afzulpurkar
Izel Ann Dante
Peter Haddawy
Donyaprueth Krairit
Sivanappan Kumar
Jonathan Shaw
Ram Shrestha
Khin Ni Ni Thein
Vilas Wuwongse
Mr. Akhtar Nawaz Khan
Secretariat:
Karma Rana
Namita Sravat

Apologies:

Sudip Rakshit
Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai

Jayant Routray
Barbara Igel

Invitee (during second half of the meeting):

Sununta Siengthai
Somkiert Kojchavivong
Maybel B Diopenes
Team from Black Ink

PAC 09.01.01 Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed all present to the PAC meeting and the apologies were noted. He was pleased to inform that the 'AIT Golf Course' has now been formally inaugurated by the Chairman of the Board, Dr. Tej Bunnag during a function held that morning that was attended by many dignitaries.

It was noted that during the second half of the meeting there will be a presentation by the Black Ink on proposed salary structure and reclassification of positions that will be joined by the team from Black Ink and the HR Task Force comprised of Mr. Somkiert Kojchavivong and Ms. Maybel B Diopenes from Human Resource Office, Dr. Jonathan Shaw, Dr. Sununta Siengthai, Ms. Izel Ann Dante and Mr. Pradeep Dash.

PAC 09.01.02 Approval and Review of the Minutes of the PAC meeting - 17 December 2008

The minutes of the PAC meeting held on 17 December 2008 were **approved** with following corrections:

- second paragraph of the item 3 under section 08.12.04 to be deleted.
- fourth line of the item 7 under section 08.12.04 to read as 'Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation and Management (DPMM)'.

Follow-up issues:

- 1] **New AIT Charter:** The President informed that he will be travelling along with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Tej Bunnag (Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand) to Japan, Korea, Brunei etc. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand is arranging the meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of these countries in order to brief them on the new AIT Charter and welcome them to join it. He further informed that a budget has been set aside in order to conduct several meetings at AIT to introduce the new AIT Charter.
- 2] **Outsourcing of Infrastructure and related facilities:** The School Deans and Director AIT Extension were requested to provide the name of their respective unit's representative to the Committee on Performance Indicators, to the Head-Administration, Ms. Izel A Dante. The President also indicated that Prof. Jayant K Routray has declined to be Chair of the Task Force.

- 3] **Academic Recognition of Outreach Work:** The Faculty Evaluation Panel (FEP) has reviewed the P&P on Academic Recognition of Outreach Work that was presented by the Wetlands Alliance Outreach Coordinator, Dr. Theo Ebbers. The School Deans were requested to facilitate the presentation of this P&P to their respective faculty members. After the feedback from these presentation meetings has been incorporated, the final version will be forwarded to the Academic Senate for their review.

Dean SERD, Prof. Kumar informed that the memo from Dr Ebbers was circulated in the SERD School Faculty meeting in December 2008, and that he would be invited to the School faculty meeting to further discuss this issue.

ACADEMIC ISSUES

PAC 09.01.03 Invitees to the Academic Senate

The Vice President Academic Affairs, Prof. Peter Haddawy stated that there is a need for the Director-AIT Extension and the Directors of various Academic Programs to be able to provide input to and benefit from Academic Senate (AS) deliberations. Thus, it was suggested that there be standing invitation to them to participate in the AS meetings. It was noted that the AIT Extension is taking a greater role in supporting the degree programs such as their involvement in the PRAM Program, Summer Program and in efforts to collaborate with Halley's to launch a Business School in Sri Lanka. Work is also in progress to develop a framework that will allow students to apply credits earned in the short courses run by the AIT Extension towards AIT degree program.

The AS Chair, Prof. Ram Shrestha noted currently the non-members are invited to the AS meeting whenever the discussion on an agenda item could benefit from their participation. As per the bye-laws the AS determines the conduct of its own affairs, and so having standing invitation for the suggested members should not be a problem. He will take this issue up in the next AS meeting and report back to the President.

PAC 09.01.04 Academic Degree Title

The Dean of School of Engineering and Technology, Prof. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai had sent a memo to the President following the recommendation from the Academic Senate to change the academic degree title as given below. The memo outlined the survey result that was opened to all SET students with majority of the respondents giving preference for Master of Engineering degree and not Master of Science in <name of AoS or FoS>.

A member noted that SET strongly feels that SET being Engineering School should confer Master of Engineering and not Master of Science. The degree should be based on the curriculum of the program and not based on the background of the student as is currently practiced according to the existing AIT policy. Also in Thailand and in the region, Master of Engineering degree is regarded as higher than the Master of Science.

The AS Chair, Prof. Shrestha noted that this issue has been extensively deliberated in several Academic Senate meetings and there was also a Task Force constituted by the AS on Academic Degree Title. The AS did deliberate on the issue of marketability of the degrees in the region, and thus recommended that the degree title should specify the FoS/AoS name in the title (which was left up to the FoS to decide). In US also they give only M.S. degree which is accepted everywhere.

The Dean of School of Environment, Resources and Development, Prof. Sivanappan Kumar noted that in his school also there are four FoS with curriculum focused on engineering, and was also discussed in the school faculty meeting. He emphasized that the degree title should not be decided on students choice, but by the body such as Academic Senate or Administration.

The President noted that now with AIT conferring Professional Masters which is same as M.E. in some schools in Europe and US, it will be confusing if there are two many degree titles.

The PAC **agreed to recommend** for President's approval the AS recommendations on Academic Degree Title which will be implemented from August 2009 intake as follows:

Master's Degree Regulation: *"The two-year regular Master degrees offered by AIT are the degrees of Master of Science in <name of AoS or FoS>, Master of Business Administration, Master of Agribusiness Management, and the Executive Master of Business Administration, all without further designation; their abbreviations are M.S. in <name of AoS or FoS>, M.B.A., M.A.B.M. and M.B.A.(Executive) respectively. The one-year professional Master degree offered by AIT is the degree of Professional Master in <name of AoS or FoS> with abbreviation P.M. in <name of AoS or FoS>.*

Doctoral Degree Regulation: *The doctoral degree offered by AIT is the Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Agribusiness Management, and in addition School of Management also offers Doctor of Business Administration, without further designation; their abbreviations are Ph.D., D.A.B.M. and D.B.A. respectively. The Professional Doctoral degree offered by AIT is the Professional Doctorate in <name of AoS or FoS> with abbreviation P.D. in <name of AoS or FoS>.*

Note: *M.Eng. and M.Sc. degrees awarded before the adoption of the new policy are equivalent to M.S." and "D.Eng. and D.Tech.Sc. degrees awarded before the adoption of the new policy are equivalent to Ph.D. degree.*

PAC 09.01.05 Academic Senate Reports

The Reports from the Academic Senate (AS) meetings held on 24 September and 29 October 2008 were reviewed and following recommendations of the Academic Senate were approved by the President:

1] New Masters Program in Nanotechnology

The *new masters program in Nanotechnology was approved* and Dr. Joydeep Dutta, the proponent of this program was requested to consider changing the title of the course on "Fundamentals of Chemistry" and accordingly revising the course outline, as suggested by the AS. The President informed that the School will be providing the seed funding for building up laboratory facilities for this program which will eventually be paid back by the program in 5 years.

2] Integrated Doctoral Degree Program

Two degrees (Masters and Doctoral) will be conferred to the students currently enrolled under the integrated program (admitted under the basic concept of 'Masters leading to Doctoral degree') upon successful completion of all the academic requirements. The President urged the Academic Senate to revisit the issue and finalize the policy on Integrated Program as soon as possible.

PAC 09.01.06 P&P on the Faculty Financial Productivity

The VP-AA, Prof. Haddawy presented the final report of the Task Force on Faculty Financial Productivity which has incorporated comments received from the 24 September 2008 Academic Senate as well as the comments received in the 8 October 2008 PAC meeting. Based on these final TF recommendations the P&P on Faculty Financial Productivity was also distributed to the PAC members. As per the AS suggestion now there is an option for the FoS to equally share the collective FoS financial productivity from teaching among its faculty members; and the FoS decision to share equally or credit faculty individually has to be reaffirmed every year, not later than the start of the effective year. However, there is no change recommended in the policy on the student supervision calculation which is credit-based and which AS felt will have disincentive for guiding students towards a Research Study. For disbursement of honoraria, it shall be based on a faculty member's financial productivity of the immediate previous two years. Some of the AS suggestions were beyond the scope of the TF and have to be dealt separately.

The PAC commended the TF Chair, Prof. Haddawy and all the members of the TF for coming up with the recommendations and the P&P on Faculty Financial Productivity. The President opined to follow and approve the P&P on the Faculty Financial Productivity and be observant to any distortions due to implementation of the policy. This could be then revisited and revised accordingly.

It was reported that one of the Directors of New Initiatives had requested to credit his time spent on the initiative in lieu of a supplementary allowance. If this is to be considered based on a one day per week basis, 20% of the personnel cost need not be covered. However, the PAC members felt that it would complicate the calculation scheme as there are several administrative positions handled by faculty members such as Deans, FoS Coordinators etc. with supplementary allowance and several positions that such as Chairs of various committees that do not receive any compensation. Thus, it was **agreed to keep only supplementary allowance**. However, it was noted that the Faculty Evaluation Panel (FEP) does consider all such services in the overall evaluation, and faculty should outline them in their Curriculum Vitae submitted for evaluation.

The AS Chair noted that there have been substantive improvements in the P&P with some major concerns of the AS accommodated, and requested to present the final version to the AS for approval. The AS was **requested to give precise feedback on the final version of the P&P on Faculty Financial Productivity as soon as possible so that it can be implemented**.

SECOND SESSION

PAC 09.01.07 Black Ink Presentation on Salary Structure and Reclassification of Positions

It was informed that the Black Ink Group was requested to carry out a Salary Rationalization Project, based on the Final report of the HR Task Force. Their work included analysis of AIT's current salary structure and rationalized it into a uniform methodology and scheme; benchmarked against market practice; profiling AIT's staff population, and compared it against the new salary structure; and recommendations concerning salary rationalization and address any abnormalities as they currently exist.

The members from Black Ink and the HR Task Force on Salary Structure and Reclassification of Position were welcomed to the meeting. The key points of the presentation given by the Black Ink members were as follows:

- Current Salary Structure is too diverse and complicate to manage.
- There are vast disparities in the three current salary structures with inconsistencies in mid point progression, in each grade level, and application of the structures whereby staff performing same functions but being compensated differently. Also there are too many levels/steps.
- Centralize the function of maintaining and updating organization charts at HRO.
- To bring down the current 270 positions to 112 positions.
- One salary structure for all AIT employees was recommended with minimum and maximum base salary, mid-point, mid-point progression, range span, min-mid range, max-mid range and max-min overlap specified for each band and grade levels.
- Also based on the data provided, they found that around 400 employees are outliers (over or under paid), and around 400 employees are in the salary range.

The key comments given were:

- It is important to distinguish between faculty and staff at AIT.
- To maintain internationality of the institute, the faculty has to be recruited internationally, thus benchmarking has to be with international institutes, and as far as possible with the academic institutes.
- This needs to be linked with performance evaluation system and training people involved in evaluating subordinates.
- Impact of contract system at AIT needs to be considered.
- Base salary should be same irrespective of source of funding. The system should allow giving bonus from surplus generated.
- System should allow to give overpay in order to be able to recruit the best.

The members of the Black Ink were thanked and appreciated for their work, and the final version of their report will be received by the next week.

The PAC members recommended to revive the Annual Performance Evaluation and to make it even more rigorous. This should include training for all, and detailed job descriptions should be maintained.

The President concluded the discussion as follows:

- Members to review the final report on salary structure and reclassification of position.
- Members to come up with specific questions on the report and any suggestions.
- Call a PAC meeting in 3-4 weeks with focused discussions on mid-point, and to finalize and plan to implement it.
- Conduct Institute Forum after internal preparations to present it to the AIT employees.
- Present it to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees for their approval.

PAC 09.01.08 Next Meeting and the Deferred Items

It was informed that due to President's travel plans, the PAC meeting on 21 January 2009 is cancelled. The following agenda items were deferred for the next PAC meeting and a possibility to have a short PAC meeting on Friday, 9 January 2009, to deliberate on these issues will be checked by the secretary:

- Review of P&P on Fellows of AIT
- Draft P&P on Partnership Agreement Definitions, Processing and Finalization
- Call for Proposals: Sustainable Development in the Context of Climate Change
- AIT Emergency Plan
- Concept Proposal for AIT Internal Scholarship/Fellowship

/ns 08 January 2009