

## PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

4 February 2009

(week 6)

(Confirmed)

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**Present:**

Said Irandoust  
Izel Ann Dante  
Peter Haddawy  
Barbara Igel  
Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai  
Sivanappan Kumar  
Jayant Routray  
Jonathan Shaw  
Ram Shrestha

**Secretariat:**

Karma Rana  
Namita Sravat

**Apologies:**

Sudip Rakshit  
Khin Ni Ni Thein  
Vilas Wuwongse  
Mr. Akhtar Nawaz Khan

**Invitee:**

Dr. H L Tien, and Team from GTF, Witthayu  
Ms. Ann Lopez

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### PAC 09.02.01 Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed all present to the PAC meeting and the apologies were noted.

### PAC 09.02.02 Approval and Review of the Minutes of the PAC meeting – 9 January 2009

The minutes of the PAC meeting held on 9 January 2009 were **approved**, with the heading for the section 09.01.14 to read as Oxford Business Group, Thailand Report.

1] **Academic Degree Title:** The Dean/SET, Prof. Worsak informed that his school faculty feels that the new policy on academic degree title approved by the President (based on the recommendation of the Academic Senate) might have bearing on the enrollment of students in SET, as it is perceived that in the region the Master of Engineering is considered higher than Master of Science Degree. He further informed that he will soon send formal memo to the President for his re-consideration.

The President stated that he personally believes that branding of university is more important than labeling of degrees. Moreover, the decision was based on the Academic Senate recommendations, which in turn was made after the 'Task Force on Academic Degree Title' constituted of faculty members from each school presented its report and the issue was discussed at least in three of the Academic Senate meetings. He urged faculty members to actively participate in the Academic Senate meetings where important recommendations are made on academic policies.

2] **Honorary Doctorate Degree:** The Academic Senate (AS) Chair was requested to consult the AS whether there is need to re-submit the nomination of a candidate who was previously recommended as candidate for Honorary Doctorate Degree (dated 12 March 2007) subject to verification that the candidate does not hold any political position. The candidate currently does not hold any political position. The case will then be presented to the Executive Committee on 25 March 2009 for its approval.

3] **Oxford Business Group, Thailand Report:** The President stated that the AIT has now signed agreement with the Oxford Business Group, Thailand Report. They will include an AIT advertisement and an interview with the AIT President in the Thailand Report; and a joint workshop with AIT on impacts of the global financial crisis has also been proposed.

### PAC 09.02.03 Issues from the President

1] **Updates on AIT Charter:** The President informed that on Friday, 6 February 2009 he will be attending the Intergovernmental Working Group on the new AIT Charter meeting that has been called

by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. In this context, his visit to Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, with H.E. Dr. Tej Bunnag, Chairman of the AIT Board of Trustees, were very successful. There are also plans to visit China, Korea and some other selected countries. The arrangements for all meetings were coordinated by the Royal Thai Embassy in those countries.

**2] Dean-SET Position:** The President informed that there will be an open advertisement for the Dean position for the SET, and the Human Resources (HR) Office is currently working on profile and announcement. Both internal and external candidates are invited with faculty and staff encouraged to also disseminate this news through their networks and contacts. If there are any specific inputs on profile for the position, the faculty/staff may also get in touch with HR.

**3] Evaluation of Administration Process:** Some members opined that having face-to-face meetings arranged for the constituencies only might not assist in receiving feedback on the service units and Vice Presidents (VPs). The President stated that he is open to suggestions for improving the process, but the main purpose of this exercise is to provide platform for discussions and mechanism through which the respective constituencies can provide constructive feedback in a collective manner, which would enable the administrators to further their performance, and also help enhance the administrative procedures. He further mentioned that he has been also inviting community members during the face-to-face meetings to reflect on ways and means through which they can support and assist their respective administrators in better achieving the goals or targets that have been set.

It was suggested that instead of lumping the feedback for the Vice Presidents, the audience should be encouraged to give feedback individually.

**4] Undergraduate Program:** Prof. Worsak mentioned that undergraduate program will be more attractive if it is offered in partnership with other universities. In the region many countries are looking for Partner, and in this concept of 'Global University of Excellence' students would have option of spending their years of study in different partner universities located at different countries in the region. Furthermore, he stressed that if AIT starts its own undergraduate program there might be negative impacts with regards to receiving Royal Thai Government funding as then National Universities would try to restrict it.

**5] Need for Better Dissemination of AIT and its work:** The President stated that there is a need for all of us to pay more attention to the important aspect of effectively communicating what AIT does to its external stakeholders. There is a need to collectively reflect on this aspect more since it seems there is a certain picture or perception in the minds of some of Institute's partners that they do not hear anything new coming out from AIT. There is still negative feedback received from time-to-time from partners that they would like to see AIT articulate new ideas more clearly, and hear of the Institute's plans not in isolation but in a more synergistic manner, in relation to what other universities and organizations are doing.

All members felt the need to become more professional in communication strategies, and also to ensure that there is proper acknowledgement of AIT's work and that it reaches out to important constituencies. Professional training of faculty and staff on how to communicate better internally and on how to meet and interact with different groups of stakeholders is important. Also equally important is the dissemination of work in an adequate and effective manner.

The President concluded the discussion by requesting the School Deans to further discuss this issue in the faculty meetings.

#### **PAC 09.02.04 Presentation by GPF Witthayu**

The team from GPF Witthayu group was welcomed to the meeting, and they presented the options for the AIT Bangkok Campus. After the presentation, the Head of Infrastructure, Dr. H L Tien was requested to further consider other locations, including SM Tower in which the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center is also housed.

**PAC 09.02.05 P&P on Faculty/Staff Housing**

There have been concerns raised regarding the policy on replacements of the furnishings and fittings in the Faculty/Staff housing units on campus. The issue was whether replacement policy should be time-bound or based on actual wear and tear. Dr. Tien explained that if it is automatic replacement based on time, then just for ST9, ST10, ST11 and ST12 which are already 13 years old, replacements will cost 5 million baht. A member noted that the problem is of the proper budgeting, and there is a need to budget a proportion for repair and replacements separately, and to price it in rental. One of the members also noted that there is no consistency in replacements done for housing units as per policy, with result that some houses furnishings are frequently replaced.

The President requested Dr. Tien to bring this section of the policy to the attention of the outsourcing company and consult them for their opinion and bring it back for the PAC discussions.

**PAC 09.02.06 Report on January 2009 Enrollment**

The Vice President Academic Affairs, Prof. Peter Haddawy presented the report on the January 2009 Student enrollment. Out of 128, 112 students who had confirmed to enroll in January 2009 have registered. The enrollment figures is seeing a decline with 156 enrolled in January 2007, 139 enrolled in January 2008 and 112 enrolled in January 2009. The major decline in students enrolled is in SOM, which is mainly due to the absence of intakes in EMBA (Bkk, Vietnam and HRM) and DBA, which saw 10 intakes in DBA and 10 intakes in EMBA-Bkk last January 2008. The decrease in the enrollment was also attributed to the significantly lower number of scholarships available in January 2009 than those available in the last two years. Many of those who have received offers with partial funding and/or self-support basis have requested deferment to August 2009 on account of financial basis.

The Dean/SOM, Dr. Barbara Igel stated that the DBA should not be used as a base reference. As a short-term strategy SOM will fill-up MBA programs and add a few specializations such as Energy and Service Science. The President suggested looking into possibility of starting new specializations in the fields of tourism, service sciences, hospital management and health care, etc. Dr. Igel mentioned that strong partners and product champions are needed with clear ownership by one school or co-ownership across two schools.

There was concern that with economic downturn, companies may not be sending staff for professional programs. However, a member noted that this should be seen as opportunity as it is believed that industries may not want to lay off their staff and to retain staff through educational training. Thus, there is a need to identify few selected companies to whom selling/marketing team should visit and provide them with different packages of educational training at AIT.

In this context, a member noted that our alumni relations office is very weak. The President mentioned that he is discussing unification of two alumni offices at AIT. Also there is need for AIT Staff to learn how other universities mobilize their alumni for such activities.

**PAC 09.02.07 Black Inc Report**

The President thanked members for their feedback on the Black Inc Group Report on Salary Rationalization. A member suggested taking into account consideration that AIT will be soon becoming international. Also the benchmarking is very crucial for reaching the mid-point, and the Institute Secretary, Mr. Karma Rana was requested to provide the list of intergovernmental universities to the Head-HR, Dr. Somkiert. It was agreed that the salary should not be just absolute value, but as a package including benefits and privileges for faculty and staff.

The Internal Task Force that had worked on the salary rationalization and reclassification of positions at AIT was requested to fine-tune the reclassified positions suggested in the report, and the HRO was requested to work on the mid-point benchmarking. The final report that includes the complete package

with the benefits and privileges, structure for evaluation of employees and the feedback system, and bonus system specified, will be presented to the AIT Community in an Institute Forum to be held in the first week of March 2009, after which it will be presented to the Executive Committee meeting to be held on 25 March 2009 for their endorsement. The President further mentioned that the new salary structure will be implemented as soon as approved by the Executive Committee, but with positive adjustments made from mid-2008 and negative adjustments from next contract onwards.

**PAC 09.02.08 Revised P&P on Fellows of AIT**

The Head-Administration, Ms. Izel Dante presented the revised P&P on Fellows of AIT, which was based on the discussions held in previous PAC meeting. It was agreed to include the principle for the charges made to the fellows, rather than the table specifying the charges. The table of charges could be used for internal purpose by the Schools and could be included as an Annexure to the P&P. With this correction incorporated, the revised P&P on Fellows of AIT was approved.

**PAC 09.02.09 Summary of Honorarium for Year 2008**

The strictly confidential document on 'Summary of Honorarium for Year 2008' was circulated to the PAC members for their information, which would be discussed in the next PAC meeting.

In this context, the Dean/SET, Prof. Worsak stated that the Institute should have a policy and criteria for deciding for the new academic programs or professional programs to be placed under Fund-30. It was agreed to discuss this issue in the next PAC meeting.

**PAC 09.02.10 Next Meeting**

It was informed that the next PAC meeting will be held on Monday, 23 February 2009 afternoon due to President's travel plans.

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/ns 12 February 2009