



**AIT NEWSLETTER
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CHANGING!**
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issue of the new
'E-Newsletter' to be
published monthly
starting July 2020

AIT RE-OPENS 1 JULY

26 June 2020

DEAR AIT FAMILY

The AIT Campus will re-open on 1 July. In the past few months, due to the gradually implemented strict measures and the vigilance of the entire community, our campus has stayed safe from Covid-19, and academic instructions went on without delay. Work was going on in many different areas, and we thank all those mission-essential personnel who had to come in to serve our students and community, and we also thank all those who worked from home diligently. In less than one month, more students will graduate from Intersem, thus completing their very challenging final six months at AIT. We appreciate their perseverance and we congratulate them!

Even though the campus will re-open on 1 July, work will be on a shift basis for one month, plus certain cautionary

measures will still be in place, so please pay attention to the Covid-19 Task Force messages and the Intranet for these measures and any gradual relaxation. The Covid-19 situation in Thailand seems to be under control, but globally the pandemic still rages on. At AIT, we must continue to be watchful, and social distancing in gathering and seating will still be the mandatory practice for some time. We are requiring health checks for all employees and vendors and students, and new dormitory assignments will be made with proper separations in mind. Our highest priority continues to be the health of everyone at AIT.

As for academics, we are installing a system which will provide Hybrid Instruction this Fall and more innovative teaching beyond that. A number of Smart Modified

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Classrooms are being outfitted—with support by several generous donors—with technology that will make the experience of those students who are not on AIT campus as interactive and close to being here as possible. It will also allow the Instructors to focus on the teaching with ease. Continuing research students who are overseas will have special arrangements being put together by the Schools. For the students who are able to come on campus, their AIT experience will be even better than before with the new equipment, and classrooms and laboratories will also be arranged with social distancing in mind, providing a safe place to learn.

We know that some AIT students who are at home overseas may not be able to come back to our campus in time for the start of the Fall (August) Semester—classes are scheduled to begin on 4 August. But we are getting excellent support from various offices of the Thai Government—from the Prime Minister’s Office, to the Center for Covid-19 Situation Administration, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, to Thai embassies in different countries, as well as from various Ambassadors here, to facilitate the arrival of our students as quickly—and as safely—as possible. As you can imagine, because of varying seriousness of the Covid-19 situation in each country and the very cautious and prudent attitude of the Thai Government, because of the uncertainties of international air travel and other restrictions, because of visa processing and a likely quarantine requirement, a number of our overseas students may not be present in the classrooms on time. But as I mentioned above, with our Hybrid Instruction system in place, AIT “will not miss a beat”, and instruction and learning will continue for ALL our students, wherever they may be.

We are well-prepared and very much looking forward to the Fall Semester. Please continue to take care and stay safe, and the whole AIT family will get through this difficult period together successfully—that is the AIT Spirit!

Dr. Eden Woon, President

FEATURE

PROF. SHOBHAKAR DHAKAL APPOINTED AS DEAN OF AIT SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

AIT President Dr. Eden Woon has announced the appointment of Prof. Shobhakar Dhakal as the new Dean of the AIT School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD) starting from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022. A Nepal national, Professor Dhakal has been a faculty member of the School of Environment, Resources and Development since 2012.



He earned his PhD from The University of Tokyo, Japan in 2000 and was a Special Graduate Student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States in 1999. Prior to this, he earned his M.Engg from the Asian Institute of Technology in 1996 and B.Engg from the National Institute of Technology, Surat in India in 1993. As the Dean, he will lead the School and all its activities and is accountable to the President for the delivery of all education, research, consultancy and outreach activities of the School, as well as marketing and promotional activities, and for the internal management of the School.

In an email to AIT faculty, staff and students, President Woon wished Prof. Dhakal every success in this new role and invited the AIT Community to give its support and cooperation to the new dean.

President Woon also took the opportunity to express his appreciation to Prof. Rajendra Shrestha for his dedicated service to the School of Environment, Resources and Development in his capacity as the School Dean for more than four years. He has also been a valuable member of the AIT Governing Team and the President thanked him for his representation of SERD and his contribution on policy matters which are instrumental to transforming AIT.

GRADUATION MESSAGE FROM AIT PRESIDENT TO THE GRADUATES OF MAY 2020

DEAR GRADUATES

First, I must apologize to you that one of the unforgettable moments of your life will not happen this May, namely your Graduation Exercise. This is because another unforgettable moment of your life has happened—namely, the Coronavirus Crisis that is hitting the world.

This virus has devastated many countries, including some of your home countries. The devastation takes its toll in human lives, in illness, in the economy, and in our way of life. AIT's way of life was affected starting March 18th when we had to stop our face-to-face instruction and migrate to interactive online learning. Thanks to our faculty's diligence, our staff's hard work, and thanks to your adaptability and patience, we were able to deliver a good quality AIT education to you without delaying your graduation. It is just that, sadly, the Graduation Ceremony itself cannot take place this Spring. I do welcome you all to come back, however, in December and "walk the ceremony" again if you so wish, and bring your parents too at that time!

But I have to admit, whether "normality" can be achieved by December is anybody's guess at this point. This is because this is a global pandemic, with impact globally. And even if the pandemic subsides, what the Post-Covid-19 world looks like is a big question mark. Therefore, our graduates are walking very much into an uncertain world. Frankly, life as we knew it before January may not return again soon, or some say even ever.

But hopefully as you graduate from AIT, you leave equipped with three characteristics:

First is a dedication to study and improve the human race's relationship with nature. AIT being an institution whose mission is "Social Impact with Innovation" and which places a heavy emphasis on Sustainability should have given you an appreciation of how formidable nature is, even as this virus has brutally reminded us of this fact. The world needs you, more than ever, to explore and teach and promote the way we co-exist with Mother Earth.



AIT President Dr. Eden Woon

Second, is an appreciation of how globally connected we are and how dependent we are on each other. This pandemic cannot be solved by one or a few countries. It can only be tackled by the whole world working in unison. AIT being one of the truly international universities in the world, with students from 33 different countries and no country having a majority of students here, gave you an excellent opportunity to interact and empathize and work with people from different corners of the world.

Third is an ability to adapt. You should be confident that you will be able to adapt to the new world, to the "New Normal" as many people put it. The education you received at AIT not only provided you with specific knowledge, but an ability and nimbleness and belief in yourself to adapt to new environments and new requirements. As the world is being turned upside down by Covid-19, with the outcome very much unclear, this is a good confidence to have.

So as you graduate today from AIT, equipped with an appreciation of nature, a willingness to work with global partners, and the ability to adapt, we wish you success in a very different world than the one you experienced when you entered AIT a few years ago. But we are proud of your achievements, and we are thankful to you to persevere through your last few months of education at AIT as unforeseen circumstances forced us into emergency measures. You will never forget your last few months at AIT, and we will never forget you! Good luck!!

[Watch The President's Video Message](#)

ROBOT STANDS IN FOR GRADE 6 GRADUATES AT AITIS VIRTUAL GRADUATION 2020

AIT International School holds a Virtual Graduation for its 6th Grade graduates kept home by the COVID-19 situation



Principal Thomas with one of the graduates at the AITIS Virtual Graduation Ceremony on June 10, 2020.

The AIT International School (AITIS) in June introduced some innovation into its annual graduation ceremony during the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, when an AIT robot represented members of its Grade 6 Graduating Class and received their graduation certificates from the school principal, while proud parents and the young graduates watched online from home.

At the AITIS Virtual Graduation Ceremony 2020, Principal Ms. Oluwayemisi Ayoola Thomas warmly congratulated each of the 27 young graduates by handing over their certificates to the robot, which displayed the beaming young face of each graduate it represented.

The special event on June 10 was carried live via the internet from the Robert B. Banks Auditorium, AIT. The number of teachers, and technical staff was limited, and social distancing was practiced to ensure a safe environment for all.

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Commenting on the children's achievements in the face of the coronavirus, Principal Thomas said: "You have more than proved to us in these past three months that you are ready for the challenges ahead. You kept on studying, as the whole world was going through this pandemic crisis that drove us out of our comfort zone - the classroom. Through it all, you came through with flying colors and you have accomplished the impossible!"

Mr. Russell Rein, AIT Vice President of Administration, said that graduation day is one of the most special and memorable experiences that all students should have, and the children deserved to celebrate their graduation even during the coronavirus pandemic. "This is why we were determined to celebrate this virtual graduation ceremony at the AITIS, and with the help of our own technology and experts on campus, this special event for our Grade 6 graduates materialized," he said.

The robot is designed by the Industrial Systems Engineering Program at the AIT School of Engineering and Technology and was made available by Prof. Manukid Parnichkun and his graduate students at the Advanced Robotics Lab. All dressed up as a graduate in gown and mortarboard, it artfully navigated back and forth across the auditorium stage with the help of research specialist Mr. Hoang Hung Manh. Following the ceremony, the robot returned to its normal duty station at the AIT Library. Live streaming was provided by technicians from the AIT interERLab and ITSERV.

Mr. Rein added: "For AITIS, we are proud that all our young graduates leave us at this point in time, to go on to other primary and middle schools around Thailand and sometimes they even go overseas, which is why it is very important for us to commemorate the time that they've had with us at the AITIS. We wanted to make sure that it would be a moment for them to remember. Even though they are not here in person, I have a feeling they felt like they were back home at AITIS today."

[Watch the Graduation Video](#)

AIT TEAMS UP WITH SCB AND DEPA IN DIGITAL MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT ON 'DATA ANALYTICS FOR UPSKILLING PROGRAM'



Dr. Naveed Anwar, Vice President for Knowledge Transfer, the Asian Institute of Technology (left), Dr. Nattapon Nimmanphatcharin, Director Associate Professor, the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (middle) and Mr. Worawat Suvagondha, First Executive Vice President and Head of SCB Academy, Siam Commercial Bank (right)

The Asian Institute of Technology has joined with Siam Commercial Bank and the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (depa) of Thailand to launch a “Data Analytics for Upskilling” program with the objective of developing personnel skills related to data analytics in the labor market in the face of ‘new normal’ challenges.

Mr. Worawat Suvagondha, SCB First Executive Vice President and Head of the SCB Academy, said that in this ‘new normal age’, where the economy is driven by digital technology, it is vital for private and state organizations to groom personnel with data analytics skills because data is an instrumental factor propelling businesses forward. Thailand is developing quickly and consumer behavior is changing rapidly, so leading business organizations are paying greater attention to data and how to turn it into a tangible asset. Because of this, data analytics skills are a significant discussion topic among new-age business organizations.

SCB Academy, an academic arm of SCB, is recognized for its experience and expertise in developing knowledge and skills for personnel both inside and outside of the bank through modern course content catering to the needs of learners and organizations. Under the cooperative agreement with depa and AIT for inaugurating the “Data Analytics for Upskilling” program, SCB Academy has been entrusted to jointly design and develop learning courses and materials in terms of content, study cases, practical approaches, and tests to ensure that the knowledge, techniques, and preliminary skills being taught meet the real needs of learners and the labor market.

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Dr. Nattapon Nimmanphatcharin, Director Associate Professor of depa, noted that the program is the first-ever cooperation by these three leading organizations (depa, AIT, and SCB) in an attempt to enhance the data analytics skills of the workforce to ensure that they are ready to enter a new global age driven by digital technology. The key objective of the program is to:

- Promote and encourage the development of high quality, top caliber workforce, and personnel in the digital technology area to serve the needs of society, the economy and the nation.
- Promote and encourage the exchange of knowledge and experience between organizations in the state, educational, and private sectors.
- Integrate tripartite cooperation to upgrade course development and education management.

Those qualified to participate in the program are students who will be graduating, new graduates, those entering the labor market, existing workers who want to enhance their skills, and general personnel in both the state and private sectors who want to develop data analytics skills. The program will run for one year from now until May 2021.

Dr. Naveed Anwar, Vice President for Knowledge Transfer of AIT, said that life-long learning is unavoidable during the current economic and social conditions where news and information technology are propelling changes in educational systems and labor markets. Existing learning patterns may no longer ensure life-long career sustainability for members of the new generation. Those who earn a living must adjust and be ready to learn, while industrial entrepreneurs need to develop their employees' skills properly. Learning patterns that suit the news and information era must be able to apply mass technology and be tailored to individual needs, such as massive open online courses (MOOCs), Youtube videos, games, social



Dr. Naveed Anwar (left), Mr. Worawat Suvagondha, Dr. Nattapon Nimmanphatcharin (right)

media platforms, audiobooks, and podcasts. This is a good opportunity for members of the younger generation to choose any learning pattern they find suitable.

Unlike traditional learning programs, what learners will get from these courses is a focus on real-life situations and practices and the applicability of what they learn. The course preparers surveyed needs and collaborated with the private sector to design practical courses that suit labor market requirements. Each course will take only 10 hours through digital learning (anywhere, anytime, anyone). Learners can manage their learning schedule as they want.

Mr. Worawat said that collecting data and analyzing it to predict and understand change is inevitable in an age where technology is changing every second, impacting consumer behavior. Data is therefore seen as a new armory. The more any organization possesses this database, the greater it can understand consumer needs and win their loyalty. It is essential for SCB to count on personnel with data analytics skills, develop knowledge through existing “Big Data”, and make important decisions more quickly and efficiently. The more “Big Data” is valuable to organizations in every industry, the more personnel with data analytics skills are needed. This trend will proceed not just in the short term, but also in the long run.

PRESIDENT WOON PRESENTS DONATION OF PPE AND N95 MASKS TO THAMMASAT HOSPITAL, MADE POSSIBLE BY DEEP ROCK COMPANY OF SHENZHEN



AIT President Dr. Eden Woon presents the donation to Thammasat University Rector Assoc. Prof. Gasinee Witoonchart.

AIT President Dr. Eden Woon on June 9, 2020 presented a humanitarian donation of 160 sets of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and 1200 N95 Face Masks to Thammasat University Hospital, made possible by its Chinese partner Deep Rock Company, a Shenzhen Enterprise. Deep Rock and AIT signed earlier this year a MOU to facilitate AIT cooperation with Shenzhen enterprises.

The Rector of Thammasat University, Assoc. Professor Gasinee Witoonchart, received the medical supplies on behalf of the hospital at a handover ceremony that was also attended by the deputy director of the hospital and other senior officials.

Expressing thanks to the AIT President and Deep Rock, the rector and deputy director commented on the critical need by Thammasat Hospital for such medical equipment. They were particularly pleased with the high quality of the medical supplies and each noted that N95 masks were becoming hard to source. They said that the donation was very timely and useful for the physicians, nurses and staff of the hospital.

President Woon told Rector Gasinee that he was very impressed by her active leadership to keep the Thammasat University campus safe, despite the tremendous disruptions and uncertainties involved during the coronavirus pandemic. The president added that he was moved to facilitate the donation from China by the instrumental role played by Thammasat University Hospital at the national level in caring for COVID-19 patients since the onset of the global crisis.

Expressing his solidarity with the rector and her faculty, staff and students over the ongoing situation in Thailand, President Woon said he was appreciative of the longstanding partnership that AIT has maintained with AIT neighbor Thammasat University.

“AIT is truly thankful for having Thammasat University as our valuable neighbor and trusted friend. Our ties are deep, and I am pleased that this legacy of cooperation remains strong today,” President Woon said.

MPA FIELD SURVEY TO PREPARE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND EMERGING POLLUTION COURSE IN RAYONG, THAILAND



By Kanda Yaemboonruang

To get ready for the launch of the AIT Master's in Marine Plastics Abatement (MPA) program this Fall Semester, researchers and partners from the project on June 29 conducted a seaside field survey in Rayong province, Thailand.

The scientists gathered to prepare the Marine Ecosystems and Emerging Pollution Course, which will be a core course offered as a part of the MPA program starting in August.

The team was led by Prof. Thammarat Koottatep, Coordinator of the Marine Plastics Abatement Program at the AIT School of Environment, Resources and Development, along with expert researchers from the Faculty of Science, Ramkhamhaeng University, Assoc. Prof. Wanna Musig, Dean of the Faculty of Science, Assoc. Prof. Thammasak Yeemin, and Dr. Tatchai Pussayanawin, co-designers and creators of the Marine Ecosystems and Emerging Pollution course

As part of the study visit, MPA officials visited the Eastern Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center (EMDEC, Rayong), the Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center, and the Eastern Gulf of Thailand for discussions with people in the local fishery community and local fish market at *Ban Phe*.

Rayong province will be a study area for the MPA program. Enrolled students will do research on micro-plastics and marine ecosystems, working together with the NGO "Mahasamut Patrol" which is involved in solving the problem of marine waste, and learn to create publicity campaigns to raise awareness of the plastics pollution crisis along with partner "Magic Eyes."

On this trip, several Thai media outlets joined for news coverage, such as Thai PBS World, Thai PBS News Online, Bangkok Post, INN News Agency, Green News Agency, Manager and Brick Info TV.



MARINE PLASTICS ABATEMENT – AIT JOINS UNESCO'S PLASTIC INITIATIVE

AIT has joined UNESCO's newly unveiled 'The Plastic Initiative' along with Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), UN-Habitat, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), National Science Museum (NSM), Thailand and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



Dr. Benno Böer - Chief, Natural Sciences Section, UNESCO Bangkok office

The Plastic Initiative partnership formally kicked-off at a webinar held on 12 June 2020 to celebrate World Environment Day 2020: Biodiversity. AIT President Eden Woon was a featured speaker at the online event moderated by Dr. Benno Böer, Chief, Natural Sciences Section, UNESCO Bangkok Office.

Spearheaded by UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, The Plastic Initiative aims to support sustainable waste management and behavior in the Asia-Pacific region. Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region do not currently have proper action plans for waste management, including effective solutions to address plastic pollution in countries across the region. The Plastic Initiative intends to provide assistance to countries through the implementation of strategies to tackle plastic pollution, the development of sustainable national environmental policies, and the improvement of environmental education to raise awareness among young people.

AIT's membership in the initiative follows the recent launch of a new 1-year Master's degree program in Marine Plastics Abatement (MPA) planned for the Fall Semester 2020. Supported by a financial contribution from the Government of Japan, the MPA program will train a new generation of environmental leaders to combat the ocean plastic litter problem through advanced technologies and sound management practices.

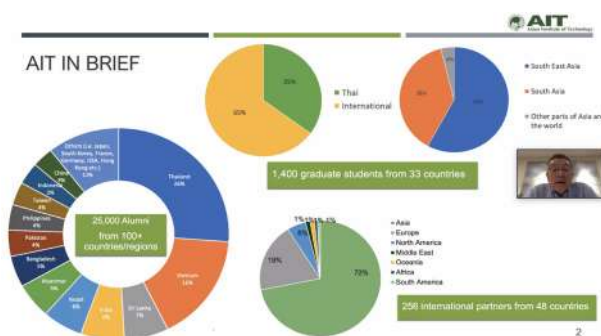
Plastic pollution is one of the greatest problems affecting the marine environment today. A staggering 8 million tons of plastic ends up in the world's oceans every year, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The top 6 countries in the world that discharge the most plastic debris into the ocean are in Asia, according to scientific research. The specialized MPA program seeks to empower young practitioners, social entrepreneurs, officials and professionals who can play significant roles in marine plastic abatement, which is key for attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Image: B. Böer

WEBINAR ON INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE POST-COVID-19 ERA



AIT President Dr. Eden Woon speaking at the webinar

President Eden Woon was the feature speaker at an international webinar organized by AIT on the topic of *Internationalization in the Post-COVID-19 Era*. The virtual event on June 16 was the fourth part of the *Thriving after Massive Global Disruption: A Global Thought Leadership Series* hosted by the University of Strathclyde in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Denis Simon, Executive Vice Chancellor of Duke Kunshan University, China, and Prof. Ian Rowlands, Professor, School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability (and formerly Associate Vice-President, International), University of Waterloo, Canada, joined Dr. Woon as panelists for a robust 90-minute session of reflections and insights.

Dr. Phil Considine, Director of Executive Development, University of Strathclyde, moderated the online event. In his opening remarks, Dr. Considine noted that the AIT webinar had attracted the most diverse international audience to date in the series, with 260 students, academicians and attendees registering from all continents.

Of the many deep impacts that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on higher education globally, one of the most critical has been to universities' internationalization, Dr. Woon told the internet audience. "There is no more business as usual," he stressed, as he called on university administrators to consider new and innovative modes of international cooperation, such as the Pipeline Partnership Program (PPP), which he introduced as a new strategic internationalization effort developed by AIT.

In response to questions, Dr. Simon suggested that the post-COVID era will be marked by "ambiguity and uncertainty" for universities and society at-large. To cope with this, Dr. Simon emphasized the need for students to cultivate an "agile mindset" to succeed amid the rapidly changing forces shaping a future world.

In his remarks, Prof. Rowlands examined the importance of rethinking and redefining the meaning of internationalization through the context of key drivers such as teaching and learning, and research and development. University alliances and networks can provide opportunities in the new environment, he said, in particular through the changing relationships between higher education institutions in the developed and developing world.

AIT President Dr. Eden Woon, Speaker



Dr. Denis Simon, Panelist



Prof. Ian Rowlands, Panelist



Dr. Phil Considine, Moderator



AIT'S FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

The AIT Entrepreneurship Center (AIT EC) released an Open Call: AIT's Fight Against Covid-19 in April inviting the AIT community and alumni to take part in fighting the global pandemic that struck the world. The competition was looking for projects that can create real impact to fight Covid-19 within 6 months. The AIT President supported this initiative and released 250,000 Thai Baht to be used as seed funding for the winning projects.

A Virtual Pitch Competition categorized under Software and Hardware projects was held on 15 May 2020. Six software projects presented during the morning session in front of the judges including Dr. Sarayoot Eaimkhong, Senior Consultant, Healthcare Innovation Management, NSTDA; Mr. Emmanuel Prado, Financial and Business Consultant; and Dr. Chaklam Silpasuwanchai, Assistant Professor, ICT, AIT. In the afternoon session, seven hardware projects pitched in front of the judges Dr. Volker Patzel, Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology, National University Singapore; Mr. Jeff Hamilton, Founder, GoMo; and Prof. Manukid Parnichkun, Professor, Mechatronics, AIT.

The winners for the software projects were:

- **Alpha Protect**, a mobile app that utilizes Bluetooth and Beacon technology to find out the presence of any infectious person in the near vicinity.

Presenter: Mr. Aujaswi Maurya

- **FreMen-Contra-COVID-19**, a mobile app which uses spatio-temporal models developed in the robotics domain to forecast people density at exposed locations.

Presenter: Dr. Waqar Shahid Qureshi

- **Social Distancing Monitoring System, a camera (CCTV) application** monitors social distancing, especially under queuing conditions.

Presenter: Mr. Pramod Wickramatilake

The winners for the hardware projects were:

- **Super Mask**, a mask that has self-cleaning capability, improves communication while wearing the mask and includes viral detection.

Presenter: Dr. Attaphongse Taparugssanagorn

- **Personalized Breathing Device**, this product addresses the issues of air pollution and provides safe air for all to breath by filtering and sanitizing air with Nano-technology solutions.

Presenter: Dr. Tanujjal Bora

- **Wawe Air Purifier**, a multifunctional highly efficient air purifier that has the combination of two technologies: HEPA (High-efficiency particulate air) and Photocatalysis

Presenter: Mr. Saikiran Gaddamedi

All the winners received seed funding of 50,000 THB for hardware projects and 35,000 THB for software projects, as well as additional support from the AIT Entrepreneurship Center (co-working space, promotion, and IP support). The winning teams are expected to make final presentations on the development of their projects in August 2020.



Source: AIT Entrepreneurship Center

ENSURING SAFETY IN FOOD SYSTEMS DURING AND AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Prof. Anil Kumar Anal, Head of AIT's Department of Food Agriculture and Bioresources and Sushil Koirala, a Research Associate in the same department, published an article in Nepal's popular news site 'Online Khabar'. They wrote:

“As the world responds to this pandemic and seeks to restore global prosperity, we must focus on food safety management systems at all times so that we can navigate this crisis together. Food is imperative to our survival when the situation is not normal or becomes a new normal. However, the safety and quality of food cannot be compromised. Undoubtedly, there is a need to avoid ‘business as usual’ practices and to think out of the box on food safety points so that we can safely negotiate the pandemic and/or any such crisis of our generation. This implies to policy developers, food entrepreneurs, food experts, consumers, and other stakeholders.”

[Click to Read the Full Article](#)



SOM ALUMNUS AWARDED “ICON OF SIAM 2020”

AIT alumnus Mr. Navin Surana, who graduated from the School of Management (MBA, 1994), recently received the “ICON OF SIAM 2020” award for his service to Thai society and organizing various COVID-19 and PM2.5 related awareness activities. He also developed a cost-effective reusable mask to solve the PM2.5 dust issue in Thailand using ECO recycled PET and innovative technologies. The award ceremony was organized by the Broadcaster and Journalist’s Assembly of Thailand (BJ.AT) at IPM Television Station, Bangkok on 28 June 2020. General Jittasak Charoensombat, a former advisor to the Minister of Defense and the National Legislative Assembly, presented the award on behalf of General Phichit Kullawanich, the Privy Councillor in the 9th Reign, who was the Chair.

MY EXPERIENCE IN AIT, THAILAND



By Santaute Venoslaviene

Currently, I am studying at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University in Lithuania, in the Faculty of Business Management. I am a PhD student in the Financial Engineering Department. I write to tell you about my three-month Erasmus exchange experience at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand. I heard about the opportunity to study at AIT in early November 2019. Thailand motivated me to go overseas for some very simple reasons. Along with my family, I have always dreamt to live differently than I am accustomed to – and get to know other cultures by running away from the Lithuanian winter! Asia seemed like a great opportunity because we have never been there. Moreover, AIT itself is a high-level international university with highly-educated professors from different countries. Lectures are all held in English.

So, combining all these factors, we made a decision very quickly in January of this year to go forward on our big three-month adventure. In Thailand, we lived a completely different life than in Lithuania – the mix of cultures was huge, the nature was incredible, the colours were bright, and the number of people was incomprehensible.

I found the cuisine to be fascinating, with different flavours, aromas, and abundance of spices. The fruit was perfect!

Overall, the food was very cheap and delicious, so we hardly cooked at home. Though we experienced many impressions every day, we would still be surprised by things on a regular basis. I have never seen so many contrasts. It is quite difficult to describe, since without being there you will not understand everything. Our expectations paid off handsomely.

We lived on the AIT campus, in a family dorm apartment. In addition to the university buildings, there were grocery stores, cafes, hairdressers, massage parlours, a bakery, a bookstore, a medical clinic, a post office, a private school, a gym and spaces for outdoor sports, such as tennis, badminton, football, basketball and even a swimming pool. Having everything in one place, it was not even necessary to leave the institute's main territory. Even though on campus distances were not great, most of the time the students rode bicycles everywhere. The whole campus is surrounded by tropical nature and there is a canal with fish, a large fountain, many green trees, fruit trees, and many species of birds.

AIT is also inseparable from the large monitor lizards that live on campus. In fact, they are the residents who have stayed there the longest! These big lizards roam around the campus freely and can grow to about 2 meters long. Although they are not dangerous to humans if you don't bother them, they were the biggest challenge for us, as we came across them almost daily.



In terms of studies, AIT lecturers were very competent, spoke English fluently, and usually came from countries other than Thailand. The staff and administration at AIT were also very friendly and always ready to help with any issue. I studied at the School of Management (SOM). The lectures were very interesting and a course I took on quantitative decision methods was presented in an attractive way. SOM had a branch office outside the campus in the central business district of Bangkok on the 15th floor of a skyscraper. I had my lectures there. The view through the window was breathtaking, surrounded only by gleaming towers. I did not have many courses for my studies, so I had more “free” time for literature analysis and information gathering for my research. I also had various meetings with professors and students, and participated in regular discussions and seminars.

Within the three-month period, I was also able to get to know many of Thailand's cities. We saw a variety of animals, plants, very beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and spectacular cities. We travelled with two small children (three and one years old), so we often received a lot of attention from both tourists and locals. Thai people are very family-oriented and friendly. As we seemed to stand out enough from the environment to them, many Thais wanted to talk with our children and us, and take pictures together. At first, it was difficult to understand situations where strangers approach, greet, and even take children by their hands, but later we got used to such an open culture.

In conclusion, I am very happy that we had the courage to seize this opportunity and face the challenge to study and live abroad. Although we did not run away from the Lithuanian winter completely, as it was snowing when we came back, we definitely broadened our horizons, learned many new things, and met plenty of interesting people. I think my communication with AIT professors and fellow students will last a very long time. It was an absolutely invaluable experience that will remain in the memory of my whole family.



FROM FRANCE TO THAILAND - MY SHORT BUT SWEET STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE AT AIT



Hey, I'm Claire from France!

I came to AIT during the Spring Semester 2020 from Polytech Nice Sophia in France on a student exchange program. It was my best experience ever!

From the first day, I already felt that I was part of the AIT family. Everyone was very nice and friendly with me and my fellow exchange students from France.

If I could give one piece of advice to anyone who would like to come to AIT it would be: Be Part of the AIT Community. There are many ways to be the part of this wonderful institute, be it through sports, music, or cinema and more. For me, it was the dance club.

The first time I saw a dance club performance, I wanted to join right away. It was during the annual campus 'Welcome Show.' I attended the show, as I wanted to learn some new dance styles. It was the best idea ever! I met some wonderful people there.

They quickly became my dearest friends. Because of this, I learned Indian, Nepali and other kinds of dance styles.

Moreover, I had the chance to participate in the "Cultural Show" later in the semester. I enjoyed it so much! This show is a wonderful contest representing all the wealth of cultures that AIT can offer to a stranger like me. I went to Thailand, but learned about so many more cultures and traditions.

Yes, my Cultural Show experience will stay as my best memory in AIT. Every exchange student should be part of it!

Unfortunately, I could not stay more than three months at AIT because the COVID-19 pandemic eventually forced me to return to France. But I learned so much more about everything and about myself than I ever would have. So thanks to AIT for hosting me this semester.

Thank you for everything. Hope I can come back as soon as possible.

By Claire-Victoria Carles

*Exchange Student for Microelectronics and Embedded Systems (MES)
School of Engineering and Technology, AIT*

AIT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CENTER JOINS “RAMA 4 MODEL” PROJECT TO TACKLE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN BANGKOK – WITH A.I.



By Kanda Yaemboonruang

AIT's Artificial Intelligence Center is now a key part of the “Rama 4 Model” project, the latest effort to tackle traffic congestion in Bangkok. Scientists are applying Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) to analyze and alleviate the traffic problem on a 12-kilometer section of Rama IV Road, one of the busiest routes in Bangkok, stretching across the capital's business districts from Hua Lamphong to Phra Khanong districts.

The 18-month project was launched in November 2019 and carries an overall budget of 50 million Thai baht. Led by Chulalongkorn University, the partnership also includes the Intelligent Traffic Information Center (iTIC) and the Toyota Mobility Foundation. According to Rama 4 Model officials, the project will use digital databases from various sources, such as GPS data from Grab cars, public transportation vehicles, and images from CCTV cameras at various points in the city – to analyse and predict traffic conditions using A.I. technology.

AIT Assoc. Prof. Mongkol Ekpanyapong, co-

director of the AI Center, explained that A.I. collects and interprets real-time data such as the speed of cars, traffic lane congestion, the number of vehicles on the road, and congestion period footage from cameras located along the road. After that, all data will be uploaded to the cloud for storage. Chulalongkorn University will then consolidate the data collected by AIT researchers and others for final analysis. The big data from the project will prove very beneficial for the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and its police departments in their ongoing effort to manage traffic more efficiently, officials said.

“Almost 90% of the CCTV cameras around Bangkok are used for security. Only 7 or 8 CCTV cameras are used for traffic control and monitoring in and around the Rama IV area. This lack of data has become a real challenge. If we really want to fix traffic problems, we need data from every road since traffic routes in Bangkok are connected. Therefore, this project will be a prototype that we can use as a guide to fix traffic problems in the future,” Dr. Mongkol Ekpanyapong said.

GLOBAL POWER SYNERGY PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED OFFERS ONE FULL MASTER'S SCHOLARSHIP TO AIT



AIT President Dr. Eden Woon (right) with Mr. Chawalit Tippawanich, President & CEO of GPSC, June 22, 2020.

Global Power Synergy Public Company Limited (GPSC) will offer one full scholarship to a Master's student to pursue their education at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in the amount of 1.2 Million Thai Baht. GPSC strives and persists to be the main power and utility company of PTT Group. GPSC was established in January 10, 2013 through the amalgamation of PTT Utility Company Limited (PTTUT) and Independent Power (Thailand) Company Limited (IPT). Founded to be PTT Group's Power Flagship, GPSC operates in operating developing, and investing in power business domestically and internationally.

A formal signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) by Mr. Chawalit Tippawanich, President and CEO of GPSC and Dr. Eden Y. Woon, President of AIT took place on 22 June 2020 at GPSC. This scholarship is for any nationality in the fields of Data Science and AI, School of Engineering & Technology (SET) or Energy, School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD) and also offers an opportunity for the recipient to get employment at GPSC after completing the studies at AIT.

Mr. Chawalit was delighted with this collaboration and stressed the fact that this will be the first important step for a further collaboration between GPSC and AIT. GPSC strives to be innovative not only in the power sector but also in renewable energy. He said that this MoA will mark a key collaboration amongst the PTT group and AIT.

President Woon thanked Mr. Chawalit and is grateful for this scholarship to help AIT. He also mentioned that since GPSC is also focusing on innovation, and this donation also matches what AIT is trying to do in its vision of I2E2S2. He explained: This particular donation brings several things together, namely, financial support, helping students, research and education, and relations with private sector. And finally, this relationships benefits both parties.

Also attending the signing ceremony from GPSC were, Mr. Laksanapreecha Krutkuntode, Vice President, Energy Disruptive Innovation, Ms. Narisa Tumma-Upakorn, Ms. Mantana Kunakorn, Ms. Anchana Tisadeekun, Human Resources Development and Mr. Somchai Klinsuwanmalee CSR Division. Representing AIT were Mr. Sanjeev Jayasinghe, Director of Advancement and Alumni Affairs and Ms. Sitahng Puttha, Office of Advancement and Alumni Affairs.

Prof. Kazuo Yamamoto Agrees to support AIT towards a Named 12 credits Tuition and Two Semesters Registration Fee Master's Degree Scholarship

Prof. Kazuo Yamamoto, a former AIT Vice President for Administration and a former Professor at the Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate, School of Environment, Resources and Development has agreed to support AIT towards a 12 credits Tuition and two semesters registration fee Master's Degree Scholarship in the amount 232,000 Thai Baht. This scholarship will be for one student of any nationality (non-Japanese) enrolled in Environmental Engineering and Management (EEM), School of Environment, Resources and Development for August 2020 intake.

Prof. Yamamoto is currently the Audit & Supervisory Board Member (External), IDEA Consultants, Inc.; President, Water Reuse Promotion Center; Emeritus Professor, The University of Tokyo; Professor, Research and Development Initiative, Chuo University; and Visiting Professor, Kindai University.

AIT President Dr. Eden Woon expressed his appreciation and thanked Prof. Yamamoto for his support to the Institute.

Dr. Seni Karnchanawong (M. Eng. EE'82 & D. Eng. EE'89) Agrees to Support AIT's Environmental Engineering and Management (EEM) Laboratory

Dr. Seni Karnchanawong, an AIT alumnus who graduated Master of Engineering 1982 and Doctor of Engineering 1989 in Environmental Engineering has agreed to support AIT in the amount of THB 100,000 towards student research at Environmental Engineering and Management (EEM) Laboratory.

Dr. Seni is working as Associate Professor, Department of Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. His field of specialization is Anaerobic Digestion of Solid Waste; Wastewater Treatment by Anaerobic Process, i.e. UASB, Acidification and Water Reuse in Agriculture.

AIT President Dr. Eden Woon expressed his sincere thanks to Dr. Seni Karnchanawong for his support to the Institute. President Woon said: "Having good laboratory facilities is a very important resource for students to conduct good research output. And we are always grateful to our alumni who remember their Alma Mater. Dr. Seni's contribution is deeply appreciated."



School of Engineering and Technology received donations towards Student Research

The School of Engineering and Technology received numerous donations from individual alumni and private sector to the following laboratories:

Computer Science and Information Management (CSIM):

1. Prof. Djoko Santoso, an AIT alumnus who graduated Master of Science 1982 in Computer Science, and also an inductee of AIT Hall of Fame in the first batch donated 95,567.76 Thai Baht.

Structural Engineering (STE):

1. Prof. Kam Tim Chau, an AIT alumnus who graduated Master of Engineering 1987 in Structural Engineering and also an inductee of AIT Hall of Fame in the second batch donated 200,000 Thai Baht.
2. Mr. Taweesak Triloga, an AIT alumnus who graduated Master of Engineering 1999 in Structural Engineering donated 100,000 Thai Baht.
3. Mr. Sathien Vongvichien, an AIT alumnus graduated Master of Engineering 1965 in Community & Regional Development donated 50,000 Thai Baht.
4. JWS Construction Co., Ltd. donated 150,000 Thai Baht.

Water Engineering and Management (WEM):

1. Mr. Khandaker Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, an AIT alumnus who graduated Master of Engineering 1978 in Water Resources Engineering donated 86,792 Thai Baht.

AIT President Dr. Eden Woon expressed his sincere thanks to Prof. Djoko Santoso, Prof. Kam Tim Chau, Mr. Taweesak Triloga, Mr. Sathien Vongvichien, Mr. Khandaker Mesbah Uddin Ahmed and JWS Construction Co., Ltd. for their support to the Institute.

President Woon said: “AIT students will be able to do their research using good laboratory facilities that will enhance their quality research output. And we are always grateful to our alumni who remember their Alma Mater. Their contributions are deeply appreciated.”

Source: Office of Advancement and Alumni Affairs



EVENTS



2ND Distinguished Entrepreneur Talk

“How to Sell Yourself and Your Company?”

Mr. Pham Thanh Hung, Vice Chairman, Cengroup | Chairman, Ceninvest | Shark, Shark Tank Vietnam

30 June 2020



Alumni Talk Series “Opportunities for Innovation: Conquering COVID-19”

Speakers: Dr. Bindu Nath Lohani and Mr. Mangesh Lal Shrestha

30 June 2020



Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) webinar on: “Climate Technologies and Technology Needs Assessments Activities in Asia Pacific”

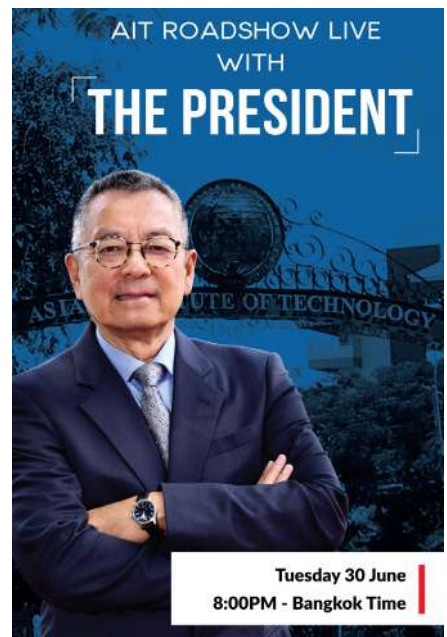
16 June 2020

LIVE SHOWS

AIT Facebook Livestreams Gain Momentum

AIT started streaming livestreams earlier this year, interviewing AIT officials, students and notable influencers. The regular online episodes have been gaining popularity with international audiences.

WATCH: AIT President’s Livestream



NEW MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS OFFERED FOR FALL SEMESTER 2020

School of Engineering and Technology

- Bio-Nano Material Science and Engineering
- Data Science and AI
- IoT Systems Engineering

School of Environment, Resources and Development

- Food Innovation, Nutrition and Health
- Marine Plastics Abatement (1 year Master's program)

School of Management

- Business Analytics and Digital Transformation
- International Finance

COMING UP IN JULY!

- Ensuring quality and reliability of electricity with best practices in distribution network
14 July 2020
- Exploring solutions to cope with emerging norm: Transforming Mindset
16 July 2020

**News
You
Can Use**

GENDER, TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL RISING IN REPUTATION AND RANKINGS!

The AIT journal *Gender, Technology and Development (GTD)* had its Scopus CiteScore rating almost double in the past year in the Gender Studies category, and has ranked as a Q1 Journal for the past two years in a row, GTD Co-Editor-in-Chief, Assoc. Prof. Philippe Doneys reports. *Gender, Technology and Development* is an official journal of the Asian Institute of Technology. It now ranks 35 out of 144 journals.

More Info:

[Scopus](#)

[Scimago Journal & Country Rank](#)



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For feedback, contact
Office of Public Affairs
opa@ait.ac.th