

## AIT LAUNCHES THE AIT ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER

THE AIT ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER HAS BEEN LAUNCHED TO EQUIP STUDENTS AND FACULTY WITH THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION AND START-UPS

The AIT Entrepreneurship Center was launched at the “100 Innovations X Entrepreneurs” conference on 27 September 2019 organized by AIT. The Entrepreneurship Center is envisioned to be a place for incubating young entrepreneurs and providing them with entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities for sustainable development.

AIT President Eden Woon said: “I expect the AIT Entrepreneurship Center to be a breeding ground for future business leaders as well as a learning center, where AIT students, faculty, and alumni come to share their knowledge to create innovations and businesses with the ultimate goal of enhancing economic and social development. It will also be an inclusive center, reaching out to interested outside academic and business parties, and it will be the home base for our new Entrepreneurship Minor.”



Inaugural events organized by the AIT Entrepreneurship Centre include a “ideas entrepreneurship camp” with student delegations from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and National University of Singapore and AIT. Then there was an expert talk by Ludovic Sinet of Good Tech Lab on “The Role of Science and Technology in Solving the World’s Biggest Problems” held on October 8, 2019; and a visit by a delegation from the National Innovation Agency led by its Executive Director Dr. Pun-Arj Chairatana on October 7, 2019.

The AIT Entrepreneurship Center is located in the AIT Enterprise Building on AIT campus. The Center offers an “Innovation space” for co-working, a “Maker space” for prototyping and a “Support space” with experts helping in IP and business development.



From left: Prof. Dieter Wilhelm Trau, Dr. Eden Woon, Dr. Pan-arj Chairatana, Dr. Subin Pinkayan, and Dr. Naveed Anwar

### INSIDE...

- Q & A..... 2
- Recent News / Happenings at AIT..... 5
- Photo Gallery..... 6
- Global Engagements..... 7
- Seminar/Workshops/Conferences..... 8
- Backpage..... 9



## Q&A with the President on His One Year Anniversary

Dr. Eden Y Woon joined AIT as President on September 1, 2018. It has been slightly over one year since he took over the reins. AIT's Office of Public Affairs is pleased to share a Question and Answer session with President Woon.

### 1. What did you want to accomplish when you came to AIT a year ago?

I consider the start of my tenure at AIT last September to be the beginning of AIT 3.0 – with AIT 1.0 being the first few decades after our founding in 1959, when we had more widespread support and engagement, and AIT 2.0 being the past two decades or so when resources became more constrained and various issues limited the growth of the institute. But all through AIT 1.0 and AIT 2.0, many of our graduates spread out across the world and contributed to the social and economic developments of many communities, and our research in social impact fields became well known. But it is a fact that other academic institutions globally in the past two decades grew faster with more resources, exposing the critical need for AIT to be more competitive and more relevant. So this is what I wanted to accomplish when I took this job.

### 2. How is your I<sup>2</sup>E<sup>2</sup>S<sup>2</sup> strategy being applied at the Institute?

To do what I said I wanted to accomplish, in the first week of my term at AIT one year ago I introduced the concept of I<sup>2</sup>E<sup>2</sup>S<sup>2</sup>, namely: Innovation, Internationalization, Enterprises, Entrepreneurship, Stakeholders and Support. In other words, we want to inject more innovation into our research and teaching, broaden our global connections and footprint, improve our relations with enterprises, nurture the spirit of entrepreneurship, care in the way we deal with our students, alumni, faculty and staff, and solicit support from a broader segment of society. I can say that with my new team on board now, progress is being made on all of these fronts, though results cannot be seen instantaneously. This I<sup>2</sup>E<sup>2</sup>S<sup>2</sup> strategic focus has found itself incorporated in the new AIT Roadmap, which underpins AIT 3.0.



I need to emphasize that this by no means implies that we will forego our legacy of social impact. We continue to do that, as the areas in which AIT has made its mark are still needed by the world today. There is no “out of fashion” when you talk about climate change and water resources and waste treatment and food, for example. AIT research disciplines are critical for the societies of Asia, and we will

continue these studies, but with more innovation, thus the new motto for AIT is “*Social Impact with Innovation*”!

### 3. Can you elaborate on your strategy on “Global Engagement” of AIT?

AIT must expand its global footprint and outlook and re-establish its brand worldwide. This benefits our faculty as their collaborations can reach all continents, and this benefits our students, as we have been signing up prestigious global partners—35 just this year alone—for exchanges, dual Masters and PhD degrees and Bachelors-Masters international unified programs. In fact, my goal is to have at least 20% of our Masters students go abroad for a semester on exchange. Since not all our students can afford the expenses for air tickets and lodging, we are raising exchange scholarship donations to help subsidize some of these students. With each exchange, there is a reciprocal enrollment of a student from that partner institution. This way, we can both give our exchange students a global outlook, but also give students who do not go on exchange the ability to interact with exchange students from diverse regions around the world who come to AIT. Degrees strengthen overall collaboration between AIT and its partners, and provide students a broader research experience. The whole AIT family will be proud when AIT once again is a respected global institution!

I should say a word about China at this point. I discovered that our China connections are not as strong as they should be. So, in my one year here, we have signed over 15 partnership agreements with Chinese universities and institutes. Many of these agreements will give our students a chance to exchange to China. In fact, at this very moment, an AIT MBA student has exchanged to Tsinghua University in Beijing, the top university in China. We are also intensifying our recruitment efforts to bring more Chinese Masters and PhD students to AIT. Finally, I want to see more research collaboration with Chinese institutions, especially since many of them are interested in the Belt and Road Initiative and development in the region which AIT has great connections.

Many people ask me about AIT Center Vietnam (AITCV) and what my plans are for it. I consider Vietnam to be a very important country for AIT, and we are fortunate to have had a presence in that fast-growing country for the past 25 years. There will be a change of leadership at AITCV at the end of this year, and we fully plan to review AIT Center Vietnam's operations to make the Center more integrated with the AIT home campus in Bangkok and more useful for the country of Vietnam.

#### **4. What new initiatives have already been started at AIT?**

We are beginning our implementation of the AIT Roadmap that I mentioned earlier. This Roadmap is what is guiding us in AIT 3.0. For example, we are re-evaluating the curriculum, and new one-year Masters programs will be introduced to attract busy employees in the private sector—they are being designed now and will be launched in August 2020. Other courses are being modernized, and we are now looking at re-aligning our research themed focus with our expertise and with our ability to address global challenges. This re-alignment will be done in a multi-disciplinary manner, involving our Engineering, Environment, and Management Schools.

I would like to see 20% of the two-year Masters students complete an industry internship for one semester, working on something related to their field of study or as part of their research requirement. This will give our students a good feel on what industry is looking for, and provide AIT closer links to the private sector. Also, we will start introducing Service-Learning initiatives for interested students to go to less developed rural areas or back home

to work on development projects. This will strengthen the social responsibility aspect of our education. The whole idea is to make our education more experiential.

We are already engaged in many management initiatives to bring the best global practices to AIT. I have asked the Vice President for Academic Affairs to reform many of the academic practices that are outdated or can be improved, such as our admissions process, our research incentive scheme, and closer relations between our Schools and our Outreach Centers. In the non-academic areas, the Vice President for Administration is overhauling our campus operations, policies and procedures to streamline our management. In time, he will also start looking at turning the AIT campus into a Sustainable Campus.

#### **5. Could you tell us about your thinking on the new Entrepreneurship Center?**

Many young people are interested in starting their own business, and AIT students are no exception. But we had not provided them with adequate training or connections or mentorship to nurture this interest. This changed on September 27 when we launched the AIT Entrepreneurship Center. I named as the Founding Director our new Dean of Engineering, who joined us from the National University of Singapore. He has impeccable academic credentials plus a host of patents and several companies which he founded. He will be working with the Vice President for Knowledge Transfer to provide the type of education in entrepreneurship that has been lacking at AIT. We don't expect that all students want to be future business owners, but those who have that interest will now have the chance to learn a bit about what it takes to start a business. As one minister told me when I visited a country where many of our students come from: "Entrepreneurs are 'job creators' and not just 'job seekers,' and my country welcomes these types of graduates!"

The Entrepreneurship Center will be the hub of many activities, including mentorship, seminars, projects, meetings with alumni business owners, and introductions to venture capitalists, and it will be a prominent co-working space for students—and indeed faculty—from different Schools to interact with each other on business ideas.

To help nurture this entrepreneurial spirit at AIT, we will introduce an Entrepreneurship Minor starting next

August, so that interested two-year Masters students can spend some time working on his or her own start-up and take some related entrepreneurship, innovation, and design courses to complement their major studies.

### 6. What is AIT doing to make the Institute more comfortable and welcoming to students?

We are fortunate that we have enough residential quarters for our 1800 students. But many of the units need upgrading, and our Facilities and Management Office is busy renovating and updating all of them. We are also installing enough air conditioners and hot water heaters for those students who desire them. We are grateful to a number of donors who have specifically earmarked their generosity to improve student housing.

We are also improving our services to students, and this actually goes for services to staff and faculty too. The point is to make AIT a caring community with professional service. This is our home, and we want to make this home as comfortable and welcoming as possible!

Finally, I already mentioned that we will strive to make the AIT campus a sustainable, green campus. This will be a gradual process, but we are already getting started.

### 7. What is your plan regarding the 25,000 or so Alumni of AIT?

Alumni are a very important part of the Institute. With the knowledge and skills they acquired at AIT, they have benefitted their own communities and helped spread AIT to the far corners of the world, especially Asia. But we need to connect with them more solidly and continuously. Therefore, we will be starting a series of on-campus lifelong learning workshops to bring our alumni back periodically to upgrade their knowledge. The alumni deserve to have AIT's help in updating their professional expertise. So I have asked VPKT to work with AIT Extension and our Office of Advancement and Alumni Affairs on this lifelong learning series.

But it is a fact that we also need more alumni contributions. AIT's finances are heavily dependent on tuition income and scholarships, and around the world today, universities cannot thrive with such a



business model. We are fortunate to have generous Royal Thai Government scholarship support and contributions from various governments and agencies. We are getting increasing support from industry—as they find us more relevant. Still, at almost all universities around the world, alumni support plays a key role in allowing institutions to invest in modern equipment, hire top faculty members, fund leading research, and improve infrastructure. I am hopeful that our alumni will answer the call when they see AIT moving in a positive trajectory in AIT 3.0. This 60th Anniversary year is providing a great start, as small donations are beginning to come in from alumni worldwide.

### 8. Looking ahead, what do you envision for AIT's future?

As we celebrate our 60th Anniversary, I see a bright future for AIT, as it is the only truly international university in this region. Educators around the world are becoming increasingly concerned by the demographic trend toward fewer and fewer college-age students. But AIT will be in good shape, as we draw our students from the vast Asian region. The fact that we do not belong to any government, the fact that our campus is fully English, the fact our faculty come from all over the world, and our outreach is global, and the fact that our disciplines are vital for the earth, humankind and the future, tell me that we are fundamentally well positioned. If we are able to do the things that I have advocated above to make the Institute more relevant and more competitive, and since our positioning is fundamentally sound, AIT will be in good shape for the future! Then with a successful transformation during AIT 3.0, AIT 4.0 will not be far in the future!

## AIT Alumni Association ROC Chapter supports the 60th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign

The AIT Alumni Association (AITAA) ROC Chapter has confirmed its support of the 60th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign through the Student Exchange Scholarship Program for a period of 5 years. AITAA ROC Chapter is the first National Chapter to provide such a Chapter gift.

Of the total 1 million-baht gift, 500,000-baht will be allocated to AIT master's student of any nationality taking part in exchanges to Chung Yuan Christian University (CYCU). The other 500,000-baht will be allocated to AIT master's students of Taiwanese na-

tionality taking part in exchanges with any university in the world with which AIT has an agreement; as well as AIT master's students of any nationality taking part in exchanges with any university in Taiwan. The scholarship covers half of total student exchange expenses, including airfare, board, and lodging.

AIT President, Dr. Eden Y. Woon expresses his sincere thanks to the ROC Chapter for its continuous support to the Institute.

## RRC.AP Celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

On 11 September 2019, RRC.AP celebrated its 30th anniversary at the RRC.AP office at AIT. The event showcased RRC.AP's history, activities, and services as well as the winners of the Photography and Painting Competition on the theme of Sustainable Development Goals.



## Dr. Yanyong Phataralaoha (IE&M '86) donates 500,000 baht to the Student Exchange Scholarship Program and 500,000 baht to the Upgrading of Student Village 1



*Cheque handover ceremony.*

Prominent alumnus and major donor to AIT Dr. Yanyong Phataralaoha (IE&M '86), Managing Director, Thai Pipe Industry Co. Ltd. presented the donation cheque to AIT President, Dr. Eden Y. Woon in continuation of his support for the 60th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign towards the Student Exchange Scholarship Program and the upgrading of Student Village 1—where his future wife lived while studying at AIT. He was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Gantasiri Phataralaoha, AIT alumna who graduated from Environmental Engineering in 1984 and their daughter, Ms. Wintica Phataralaoha.

## AIT Cultural Show August 2019: 13 September 2019



## "Run for Health – Run for a Cause", Monsoon Marathon 13 September 2019



## INCOMING



**Delegation from Shanghai Municipal Civil Defense Office and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), led by Mr. ZHONG Jie, Director-General**

5 September 2019



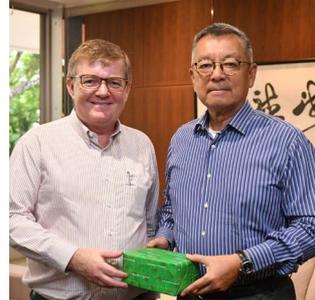
**Prof. Matthias Ruth, Vice President for Research, University of Alberta, Canada**

10 September 2019



**KL University, India and SHE Foundation**

5 September 2019



**Mr. Cormac Kavanagh, Senior Education Consultant – ASEAN, Education in Ireland**

18 September 2019

## OUTGOING

### President's visit to Bhutan



*8 August 2019: Meeting with Dasho Nidup Dorji, Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan (RUB).*



*9 August 2019: Meeting with Ms. Sonam Pelden Thaye, Director of Royal Institute of Management (RIM).*



*9 August 2019: AIT signed a Tripartite MoU with the Institute for Management of Studies Limited (IMSL) and the Royal Service for the Protection of Nature (RSPN), Bhutan.*

### Three AIT Students attend Summer Program at Tongji University, Shanghai, China

21 – 30 August 2019: Three AIT students from the Department of Development and Sustainability (DDS), School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD) attended the summer program at Tongji University, Shanghai, China, with the theme of sustainable urban and rural development. These are: Ms. Chitralada Chaiya, a doctoral student, Regional and Rural Development Planning (RRDP); Ms. Nichcharat Rungruang, a master's student in RRDP; and Ms. Megha Bajaj, a master's student in Natural Resources Management (NRM).





**International Conference on Entrepreneurship & Innovation for a Sustainable Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**  
3 – 6 September 2019



**Seminar on "A Journey towards Data Science: From Academia to Industry" by Dr. Nattiya Kanhabua**  
4 September 2019



**Seminar on "Emerging Trends in Signal Processing" by Prof. T. Kishore Kumar**  
18 September 2019



**8<sup>th</sup> Joint Student Seminar on Civil Infrastructures, organized by RNUS-SET, Asian Institute of Technology, and ICUS-IIS, University of Tokyo**  
12 - 13 September 2019



**Seminar on "Strategy Planning from the Lens of Big Business (oil & gas) and SMEs/ Entrepreneurs" by Prof. Sam Hanna**  
18 September 2019



**Seminar on "Rapid Assays Based on Nanomaterials for Quality and Safety of Foods" by Prof. Dario Campagonone, University of Teramo, Italy**  
13 September 2019



**Seminar on "Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing R&D at NECTEC" by Dr. Choochart Haruechaiyasak, Director, AINRG, NECTEC**  
25 September 2019



**Seminar on "Developing Isotope Methods for Tracing Nutrient Sources in Waters" by Dr. Deb Jaisi, Associate Professor, University of Delaware, USA**  
17 September 2019



**Special Talk on "Developing your Personal Brand and Improving Communication Skills for the Business World" by Monica Singh**  
25 September 2019

## Partnerships and Agreements (MoU/MoA)



**O P Jindal Global University (OPJGU), India**  
19 September 2019



**Army Research and Development Office, Thailand**  
30 September 2019

# News You Can Use

## 60th Anniversary Celebrations

### 23 OCTOBER

AIT 60th Anniversary Thai-Style Gala Dinner  
*Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand*

### 24 OCTOBER

AIT 60th Anniversary Celebration Ceremony (by invitation only) and Presidents Forum  
*AIT Main Campus, Pathum Thani, Thailand*

### 25 OCTOBER

Open House  
*AIT Main Campus*

*Details : <https://bit.ly/2mvvVgV>*

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