

AC21 Newsletter

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10th Academic Consortium 21 Online International Forum 2020

“The first ever online AC21 International Forum hosted by Kasetsart University, Thailand”



Chongrak Wachrinrat
President of Kasetsart University

Sawadee krub! Greetings from Bangkok! At the outset, I would like to thank Academic Consortium 21 General Secretariat for giving us this privilege to host Academic Consortium 21 Online International Forum 2020 (AC21 IF2020) on 8 -9 December 2020. On behalf of Kasetsart University, we were honored to welcome our AC21 partners to the first ever online AC21 International Forum.

Due to the global challenges and threats confronting us during the COVID-19 crisis, in our capacity as host of this *biennial* international forum, Kasetsart University together with the AC21 General Secretariate at Nagoya University, were glad for this opportunity to deepen collaborative connections with AC21 member institutions, even if by electronic communication.

Online forums such as this one are increasingly important for those of us who have leadership roles in the education sector of our own countries, but are temporarily unable to meet conveniently in-person due to the unprecedented prolonged pandemic crisis. AC21 IF2020 presented opportunities for AC21 university leadership teams, as well as our invited experts from non-AC21 members, to interface and interact with one another and to discuss changes and challenges facing higher education institutions in this fast-changing world.



In Thailand, the higher education sector has faced challenges in providing education to meet the global and national demands confronting its workforce due to changes in our social and population structures, technological advancements, higher learner expectations, and the most recently, due to digital and disease disruptions. Thus, in this transition our speakers and participants kindly delivered their thoughts and shared their policy recommenda-

tions for balancing different types of education (including innovative education, professional education, liberal arts education, vocational education, and tailor-made courses) for the new generation.

The theme of AC21 IF2020 “New Pathways in Higher Education to Meet Challenges of Global Change” provided a platform for discussion and exchange of ideas about a number of issues related to higher education during the current digital era and crises. We were truly honored to have five prominent plenary and keynote speakers (representatives from AC21 member universities and experts from other institutions) who addressed these issues from their own perspectives and experiences:

Professor Bailian Li (Senior Vice Provost for Global Engagement from North Carolina State University, USA), delivered a plenary address on “How University's Innovative Education, Research, Entrepreneurship can Impact Global Challenges and Economic Development”,



Clinical Professor Udom Kachintorn (Former Deputy Minister of Education and Former Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Higher Education Science Research and Innovation, Thailand), presented the first keynote address, entitled “Establishing Core Mental Skills in University Degree Programs vs. Providing Vocational and Tailor-made Training to Fill Future Employment Gaps”,

Professor Naoshi Kondo (from the Graduate

School of Agriculture, Kyoto University, Japan), gave a talk as the second keynote speaker on “Technology in Education Today and Tomorrow: A Case of Precision Agriculture Learning through Artificial Intelligence”,

Assistant Professor Dr. Udomluk Koolsriroj (Vice Dean for International Affairs, Faculty of Education, Kasetsart University), shared her ideas in the third keynote session on “Balancing between Liberal Arts Education and Professional Education”, and



Professor Hannele Niemi (from the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland) provided the final keynote session on “Responding to Current Values and Goals of Higher Education Students”.

In addition, we also had five representatives from AC21 member universities who shared their thoughts based on experiences from their home country and university, and discussed various policies and regulatory matters in two panel sessions:

Panel Session 1: Associate Professor Itzel Bustos (from the International Affairs Office of the Cancer Immune Therapy Research Center, Nagoya University, Japan) and Professor Zhijun WU (from the Undergraduate School, Tongji University, China), and

Panel Session 2: Mr. Paul Sterzel and Dr. Ursula Glunk (Managing Director and Academic Director of University College Freiburg, University of Freiburg, Germany); and Professor Kato Kumiko (from the Graduate

School of Humanities, Nagoya University, Japan).

We were grateful for the wrap-up provided by Professor Hideki Kasuya, AC21 General Secretariat Director, Vice-Presidential Advisor, who succinctly pulled together the ideas obtained from this two-day forum.

The full forum recording can be accessed at the link: <https://nuss.nagoya-u.ac.jp/s/SAnCFAnBJ75k7zJ>

Finally, I wish to again acknowledge and thank the organizing committee and the working group from various AC21 member universities, particularly Nagoya University, the University of Freiburg, and the University of Adelaide, for their generous contributions to the success of this forum.

As I conclude, I hope that our participants benefited from the insights and recommendation acquired during AC21 IF2020. We would like to thank Academic Consortium 21 General Secretariat again for extending to Kasetsart University the privilege of hosting this valuable event.

Thank you very much. Kob Khun Krub!



10th AC21 General Assembly Meeting

June Iwatsuki, Project Coordinator
AC21 General Secretariat, Nagoya University



On December 7, 2020, Nagoya University held the *10th AC21 General Assembly meeting (GA)*, prior to the *International Forum 2020 (IF2020)* hosted by Kasetsart University on December 8-9. This was the first-ever online GA meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

AC21 Director Hideki Kasuya kicked off the meeting by welcoming the GA members. President Seiichi Matsuo of Nagoya University delivered the opening remarks, expressing his gratitude for the efforts made by Kasetsart University to develop a new online meeting format within a short period. He also pointed out that the AC21 Steering Committee (STC) had been in discussions throughout the year about new visions and strategies, paying tribute to the dedication of the STC members; it has been proposed that AC21 will bring in new topics and promote joint activities primarily related to the United Nations' SDGs.

Junko Iwatsuki, AC21 Project Coordinator, gave a General Secretariat report of the key activities since *IF2018*. Following this, Senior Director Robert Kotze of Stellenbosch University gave a summary report on the *3rd AC21 International Graduate School 2019 (IGS2019)*, July 12-21, 2019. Professor Hongyang Wang of Nanjing University then reported their preparations for the *7th AC21 Student World Forum 2022 (SWF2022)*, which had been postponed from 2021 to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme for *SWF2022* is "Seeking a United Civilization Solution for Fighting a Pandemic," with "Good Health and Well-Being" of the SDGs as a primary focus along the sub-theme "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure".

In the second half of the one-hour GA meeting, the new STC membership was announced. Online voting took place in November, and the University of Strasbourg, Stellenbosch University, North Carolina State University were elected to serve the STC (office term 2021-2024). The final agenda in the GA meeting was the announcement that Nagoya University would be hosting the next IF2022, which would commemorate AC21's 20th Anniversary. This had been approved by the online voting that took place before this GA meeting.

The biannual AC21 Presidential Rotation Ceremony was also held online, with AC21 Director Kasuya, AC21 General Secretariat, in the chair. The AC21 Trophy was passed on from President Chongrak Wachrinrat of Kasetsart University to President Matsuo of Nagoya University, with the help of digital technology and narration.

As a result of the challenges and issues that the pandemic has raised, we also seek innovation to improve our lives. AC21 has been bringing academics, students, and researchers together to strengthen collaborations more than ever. The STC meeting ended on a very successful and positive note.



Finally, Vice President Kazuhiro Kawakita of Nagoya University closed the meeting by expressing gratitude to the GA participants and especially to the STC members for their continued contribution. The pandemic has been challenging us, but it has also brought us together to think of new ways toward a better future. As we walk through many social is-

Internationalisation – puzzling it out....



**Robert Kotz, Senior Director: Stellenbosch University International
Stellenbosch University**

International mobility is being challenged as one of the cornerstones of internationalisation of Higher Education. It suddenly became a remote idea with student exchanges and Study Abroad programmes being cancelled. It became something with constantly moving goalposts: from perhaps, possible, depending and then all ended with in the dreadful regrettably cancelled.

During the initial stages of lockdown, I have rediscovered a family hobby – building puzzles – scratching through the 1000 pieces for the frame, then the roofs, rivers, trees, people and then, usually, struggling with the blue sky or clouds. Through this puzzling journey, I managed to visit Bled (Slovenia), Brussels, Leipzig, Paris, Amsterdam, Venice, stayed in Chequers Inn, Norfolk in the UK and then ended up visiting the Karlstein Castle close to Prague.

During my travels I also encountered Che Guevara and Mona Lisa:



At SU International we see ourselves as internationalisation practitioners – colleagues who actively engage, respond and take action to integrate an international, intercultural and global dimension into the university community. It is transformative, changes perspectives and adds value to the individual and the institution. Even more, it changes your own take on matters and encourages you to continue with the daily administration, answering difficult questions and thinking more creatively. This is where the words of Guevara about motivation and work inspire: *This is not a matter of how many pounds of meat one might be able to eat, or how many times a year someone can go to the beach, or how many ornaments from abroad one might be able to buy with his current salary. What really matters is that the individual feels more complete, with much more internal richness and much more responsibility.*

Amongst all the challenges, it is at the end about the individual feeling more complete and still how we as SU International, as internationalisation practitioners, add value to the lives of others. Our task is to inspire fellow colleagues in our institutions to also become internationalisation practitioners – to think international, intercultural and global when creating institutional processes or when designing new academic programmes....

The ongoing effects of the pandemic are continuously shattering lives, livelihoods and dreams – everything feels like the 3000 pieces of a big

puzzle – overwhelming when you open the box. But it is possible to get going – look for the frame, the roofs, rivers, trees, people ... and when you get to the sky and the clouds that seem “impuzzable”, you click into your networks: local and international colleagues, bilateral partners and interest groups to get the interlocking going....

This is where my Mona Lisa puzzle encounter comes in - a Da Vinci painting on a poplar plank – not a canvas. She cannot be bought or sold – priceless. “With his Mona Lisa, Leonardo created a new formula, at the same time more monumental and more lively, more concrete and yet more poetic than that of his predecessors.” How do we reframe our internationalisation efforts to be more monumental, lively, concrete and poetic....?

Puzzling together a new way of internationalisation will still have the core elements: the roofs, rivers, trees and the people. Joint research collaboration will be different, but will still have its value in joint publications. Joint academic programmes will be more virtual, but still have the add-on value through the certification and personal growth. The content of student programmes will be more global in its core, but stripped of officialdom and waiting at check-in counters. The new internationalisation puzzle might even be without a frame – endless sky and clouds – a recovery of nature and return to core basics....

I invite you to join us at SU International to piece together the new internationalisation realities, to patiently explore new possibilities and to actually enjoy the hopefully greener route and bluer sky....

AC21 Special Project Fund (SPF) : Results of the 2021 Round SPF Awarded to Five Projects This Year

The AC21 General Secretariat is delighted to announce that four proposals have been selected for the 2021 round SPF awards after careful evaluation by our STC member schools, from the eight outstanding applications submitted this year. Established in 2009, the SPF provides support to projects that involve multiple AC21 members in order to encourage collaboration and partnership.

The results are published on our web site: <http://www.ac21.org/activities/special-project-fund-spf>

Project Titles	Participating Universities
Narrow bandgap photocatalysts for high-efficiency renewable hydrogen production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The University of Adelaide (Australia) North Carolina State University (U.S.A.) University of Canterbury (New Zealand)
Well-Being and Financial Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The University of Adelaide (Australia) University of Freiburg (Germany) Stellenbosch University (South Africa) University of Strasbourg (France)
Efficient syntheses of bioactive natural products and their analogues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stellenbosch University (South Africa) University of Freiburg (Germany) University of Strasbourg (France) Nagoya University (Japan) <p>Non-AC21 Members: to invite researchers from a number of local South African universities to participate in the symposium – these will include researchers from; University of Cape Town University of Witwatersrand University of the Western Cape University of the Limpopo</p>
Towards Scalable and Resilient Cyber Infrastructure for Mission-Critical UAV-Enabled Wireless Networks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> North Carolina State University (U.S.A.) The University of Adelaide (Australia) Nagoya University (Japan) <p>Non-AC21 Members: National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan</p>

< AC21 SPF2021 Timeline >

Oct. 1, 2020 - Dec. 15, 2020	Application period for AC21 SPF 2021
Jan-Feb, 2021	Evaluation / selection period
Feb, 2021	Announcement
March 1, 2021 - February 28, 2022 <i>(NOTE: Call for SPF 2022 begins Oct.1, 2021)</i>	Grant period
September 1, 2021	Submission 1 (Progress report)
March 1, 2022	Submission 2 (Article for the AC21 Newsletter)
May 1, 2022	Submission 3 (Final project report & Final financial report)

AC21 General Secretariat Activities (April 2020 - Mar 2021)

YEAR	DATES	EVENT/ACTIVITY
2020	April 8	AC21 Steering Committee Meeting (STC)
	April 29	AC21 Steering Committee Meeting (STC)
	July 30	AC21 Steering Committee Meeting (STC)
	October 1	Call for AC21 Special Project Fund 2021
	November 25	18th AC21 Steering Committee Meeting (STC)
	December 7	10th AC21 General Assembly Meeting (GA)
	December 8-9	10th AC21 International Forum
2021	January	Evaluation for SPF2021
	February	Announce for the result of SPF2021

Upcoming AC21 Activities and Events

YEAR	DATES	EVENT/ACTIVITY	HOST
2021	TBD	19th AC21 Steering Committee Meeting (STC)	AC21 General Secretariat
	October 1	Call for AC21 Special Project Fund (SPF) 2022	AC21 General Secretariat
	December 15	AC21 SPF2022 Application Deadline	
2022	July	7th AC21 Student World Forum	Nanjing University (China)
	TBD	11th AC21 International Forum	Nagoya University (Japan)
	TBD	20th AC21 Steering Committee Meeting (STC)	AC21 General Secretariat
	TBD	11th AC21 General Assembly Meeting (GA)	AC21 General Secretariat

Members



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www.ac21.org 