

Canadian Embassy



Ambassade du Canada

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March 21, 1995

Dr. Rueben Umaly  
Suranaree University of Technology  
Centre for International Affairs  
111 University Avenue  
Nakhon Ratchasima  
30000

The Centre for International Affairs	
Ref.No.	148/38
Date	27 MAR 1995
Time	8:30 a.m.

Dear Rueben,

I hope this brief note finds you well. Enclosed please find a copy of the speech Ingrid gave at the launching ceremony for the SUT-CUTC International Undergraduate Program in early March for your files.

On a personal note, my plans have changed and I won't be visiting the Philippines in April anymore. Thank you for all the help you gave me when I was trying to plan the trip. I hope you have a great holiday there yourself next month.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lindsay Neilson".

Lindsay Neilson

Launching ceremony for the SUT-CUTC International Undergraduate Program

March 2, 1994

Krasae —

Your Excellency<sup>^</sup> Thawil Praisont, Rector Wichit, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to be here this evening at the launching of the international academic program of the Suranaree University of Technology's International Undergraduate Program with the Canadian Universities Technology Consortium.

I have worked with Dr. Wichit during his last days at the Ministry of University Affairs. He served ably as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Canadian Thai HRD institutional linkages program. We have lost him in his position there but we have gained an able university Rector, amongst his many other activities.

In December I had the opportunity to visit SUT and see for myself the range of services and physical infrastructure located in the north east of Thailand. It was an impressive visit.

What makes this initiative between Thailand and Canada so important is that it is contributing to one of the most important development needs of this country. The challenge to development thinkers, government and citizens of Thailand is to reform education in order to improve the supply of skilled labour. A serious mismatch has developed between the provision of education and the economy's requirement for skilled workers in manufacturing and services. A failure to address this risks exacerbating inflation in the short term and stalling growth in the long term.

The failure to provide sufficient secondary education and tertiary education outside of Bangkok has lead to several problems:

- serious shortage of engineers, specialist manuf employees, researchers, analyst, technicians
- disproportionate % of the pop employed in agric
- competition for the finite pool of skilled people is bidding up wages and leaving some management positions unfilled or underfilled

There is good news. The 1994-95 govt budget announced its intention to increase financial resources devoted to improving secondary education, open university type facilities, night schools, vocational and technical training.

This week I received a publication from the Assoc of Cdn Community Colleges on Exemplary trng models in industrial technology. They work on the APEC HRD for Industrial Technology Network and have worked closely with Chinese Taipei and Thailand in producing this



report. They selected 50 of the finest industrial technology training programs and listed some lessons learned.

The lessons learned include:

- a commitment to hands on training using the same tools that trainees will use in industry - learning by doing
- provision of instruction by those who are continuing to work in the industry, full or part time
- a concern for minimizing the time spent training, use of competency based training to ensure that the trainee receives only the training required and not extraneous training.
- involvement of private sector organizations directly in the training process
- nationally accredited and transportable training

A follow up conference is planned May 13-15 in Toronto.

This brings me to the SUT-CUTC Thai Canadian linkage in question. This relationship is particularly important because it exemplifies so well some of the issues I have raised earlier. This relationship is concerned about bringing policy home to reality. It does several things well.

- they are concerned about making the university industry linkage
- they are concerned about serving the north east of Thailand
- they are concerned about addressing key science and technology shortages in Thailand

At the same time they are breaking new ground. To my knowledge there is not a lot of experience in developing transportable university degrees between Canada and Thailand or other countries for that matter.

It is an ambitious undertaking. You will be involving approx 200 Thai students of which about 50 students will become eligible to continue their studies in CUTC institutions in Canada. 10 Cdn cooperative students will complete one semester in Thai enterprises. 16 Cdn and 16 Thai profs will jointly teach, supervise and evaluate 4 applied programs. This does not include all the other Thai and Cdn profs who will be involved the research and design work of the program.

This is a very exciting initiative and, on behalf of the Cdn Embassy I would like to extend my warmest greetings and best wishes for your ongoing success.