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OUR ROLE MODELS



EDITORIAL INSPIRING THE YOUNGER GENERATION

In this special issue of **360° Magazine** we turn the spotlight on MUIC's mentors without whom the College would be hard put in producing its topnotch graduates.

What is a teacher? What motivates a teacher to continue preparing the next generation for the real world? In what ways does a teacher inspire or motivate a student? These and many more questions our interviewees will answer in the succeeding pages.

We hope you would be as inspired as us after reading what our MUIC ajarns have to say.

MUIC HONORS TEACHERS BY ASSOC. PROF. CHULATHIDA CHOMCHAI, M.D. DEAN, MUIC

Teaching in any culture is regarded as a profession fit only for the wise, the honorable, the true, and the kind of that society.

Our faculty members being represented here in this issue of MUIC 360° Magazine exemplify these qualities, and more. While it is true that intelligence and expertise have made them scholars in their respective disciplines, it is the combination of empathy, compassion, and altruism which has earned them a place in the hearts and minds of their students. They enrich the lives of their students through new knowledge and experience, all the while challenging them to become more than what they already are. As a result, these professionals play a vital part in shaping the future of our country, one student at a time. And for me, I can think of no other nobler endeavors than that.

"Education is not the filling of a pot but the lighting of a fire." –William Butler Yeats

MUIC'S INSPIRING ROLE MODELS

A teacher's responsibilities are not that easy. On top of making sure that their students learn their lessons well, they also try their best to live the principles they teach—in short, be good role models to their students. Teachers serve as inspirations for the next generation as they aspire to reach their own dreams in life. They not only share knowledge, but they also serve as guides to the right path—by their words and actions.

This issue is dedicated then to the hardworking and inspiring teachers of MUIC. They are numerous to be featured in just one issue so we had to limit ourselves to just selecting from among the recent winners of the MUIC Outstanding Faculty Awards and MUIC Outstanding Ajarn Awards in representing their equally dedicated and talented colleagues.

Here we present to you their thoughts on teaching and being a teacher, on motivating their students and serving as good role models.

May they continue to serve as an inspiration to all members of the MUIC community.

THE COACH

ASST. PROF. DR. KANAT TANGWONGSAN
Faculty Member, Science Division

"I want my students to think of me as their coach—rooting for them to be successful," answered Ajarn Kanat when asked by **360° Magazine**.

A lot of students might have the impression that math and computer programming courses are really difficult. Ajarn Kanat would simply tickle their curiosity. "Make them curious! When they're curious, they will inquisitively soak up everything you teach them and will be eager for more. And if they are curious about it enough, that can become their passion."

But once a student is hooked, that's where the real coaching starts. Read: Get ready to sweat buckets. "At the end of my class, my students are cognitively exhausted if I do my job right—they would have spent long hours thinking deeply about various dimensions of a subject."

This is because he believes in constant drilling—just like in sports. "I'm a big fan of deliberate practice. There are skills and techniques that the students need to master, and they are not exactly easy. Over the years, I've tried to collect and come up with the 'perfect' exercises—not crazy difficult, but purposeful and systematic."

But moments of triumph outnumber these instances. "I often think we might have done something right when students who were a little behind in their first programming class show us some really impressive work in their 3rd or 4th year."

**"IT GIVES ME JOY KNOWING THAT
WHAT MY COLLEAGUES AND I DO HAVE
HELPED BATCHES OF STUDENTS LEARN
THE ROPES AND BECOME COMPETENT
PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD."**

MU **MAHIDOL**
CORE **ALTRUISM**
VALUE That quality of selfless service to others
can best describe teachers as they mold
the youth of today.

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THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

ASST. PROF. DR. ORNLATCHA SIVARAK
Faculty Member, Business Administration Division

Ajarn Ornlatcha's bachelor's degree is in Early Childhood Education yet she teaches business courses in university. She complements her graduate degrees in business and management with solid experience in business consultancy thus enjoying the best of both worlds.

And why did she want to become a teacher? "I enjoy learning every day and being with students. You get to learn from them, you get to share what you know and you also need to keep up with your knowledge and skills to be able to teach."

Today's generation of students has different needs and ways of learning, she said. "Instead of simply giving them the answers, I provide them a structure so that they themselves can arrive at the right answer."

Recently she was caught in a dilemma—choosing between student-centered and teacher-centered learning: "My students told me that they want me to just give a lecture. In the end, I decided that I also have to listen to the customer—in my case, my students. So now I'm trying to strike a balance between these two approaches," she said.

Despite these challenges, Ajarn Ornlatcha still considers teaching as a rewarding career. "Every day I have the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life."

"DO I USE THE CARROT MORE THAN THE STICK? I HARDLY USE THE STICK. BECAUSE MY CLASS IS ALREADY TOUGH AND CHALLENGING FOR THEM. I TRY MY BEST TO MAKE THE LESSONS MORE APPROACHABLE FOR THE STUDENTS."



FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY

DR. KAEWTA MUANGASAME
Faculty Member
Tourism and Hospitality
Management Division

"MAHIDOL AJARNS ARE HELD TO HIGHER STANDARDS. WHATEVER YOU SAY OR DO ALWAYS MAKES AN IMPACT. IF YOU WANT TO BECOME AN AJARN, YOU MUST BE READY TO INTRODUCE CHANGES TO THE WORLD TO MAKE IT BETTER."



Teaching is indeed a noble profession. It is thus unsurprising that Ajarn Kaewta repeats like a mantra that the supreme contribution of a teacher is to bring benefit to society, influenced as she was by her parents and Prince Mahidol's tenet.

Her students always describe her as the "chill-chill" type. "When we have an 8:00 a.m. class, everyone needs to be cheerful. Our class should be enjoyable. But the students also know that I'm strict as well."

In her Tourism Package Management elective class, training can be rigorous. She always conducts exercises with her students. "I have to train them through repetition. They are drilled to act decisively when problems arise (during the event itself)."

Asked what makes teaching a rewarding vocation, she said, "Whenever MUIC alumni come to see me and express gratitude for what I have taught them—whether to help their career or simply just to become a better person—that's the time I tell myself that I've done well as a teacher."

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

MRS. BARBARA EKAMP
Program Director, Humanities
Humanities and Language Division

Ajarn Barbara prefers smaller classes. And her classes do not end during the allotted time. For students who struggle with Logic courses—and there's more than a few, she says—she devotes time to them by making them come to her office for virtually free tutorial classes that can reach hours on end.

"Their learning is enhanced by one-on-one or one-in-two discussions. Students in small groups can interact better with each other—and (academically) grow together," she explained.

Talking to Ajarn Barbara about her teaching methods, one can have the impression that she's the old school type—strict, serious, a taskmaster. "I am both. I start very strict. I always walk around the class to observe. But I try to lighten the mood, if needed."

And it doesn't take much for her to really feel good when she realizes that she has indeed done a good job as a teacher. "That's when my students finally get it. Some students might not understand the lesson for one month and I try again and again to help them until finally it clicks."

"I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO HELP. WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WANTED TO CHANGE THE WORLD. FOR THE BETTER OF COURSE."



TEACHING IS PRICELESS

ASSOC. PROF. DR. Taweetham Limpanuparb
Program Director, Chemistry
Science Division

Ajarn Taweetham's concept of what a teacher is has evolved over the years, from being "a teacher of chemistry" to being "a teacher of students."

When asked whether he's a strict or a lenient teacher, he instead described himself as a "listening teacher." "I try my best to listen to my students and learn from them as well. Rather than pour my knowledge into their heads, I try to find out what is inside them right now and what they need in the future so that I can tailor-make whatever materials I have for them."

And what makes him happy as a teacher? "I feel happy when I see my students become successful in their careers or their own businesses. Or when they get accepted in graduate programs abroad under scholarship. I feel like I'm the happiest person in the world. It means your knowledge has turned into other people's happiness."

Ajarn Taweetham added, "It's rewarding because you are sharing things and it is ironic that you never lose these things. Whatever you share multiplies. When you share knowledge, it becomes priceless."

"CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT IS IMPORTANT. HOLDING ON TO YOUR COMFORT ZONE IS A RISK."



THE RIGHT ROLE MODEL

ASST. PROF. DR. WALANCHALEE WATTANACHAROENSIL
Faculty Member, Tourism and Hospitality Division

Asked if she has any particular teaching technique that helps inspire or motivate her students, Ajarn Walanchalee said there's none. "I believe that we can get inspired in different ways. What I try to do is to respect individuals, be honest with them, and remind students that everyone has his or her own talents and capabilities that can be unleashed. It is their own choices if and how they want to make use of them."

She believes that an ajarn is "a person who has the responsibility in providing knowledge and skills that will be useful to students in the real world. An ajarn builds a relationship with students through trust and respect, provides guidance, nourishes students' potentials, and has a moral responsibility to them."

And her message to her students? "Find a role model who is right for you in each stage of your life. That is a quick way to set your compass right. Our society will be better if we think a little beyond ourselves. Be kind and be useful."

**"ENJOY YOUR LIFE JOURNEY
BUT DO NOT MISTAKE
SHORT-TERM PLEASURES
WITH A LONG-TERM GOAL."**

TO INSPIRE AND SPARK CURIOSITY

ASSOC. PROF. DR. DOUGLAS RHEIN
Chair, Social Science Division

Asked what his guiding educational philosophy is, Ajarn Douglas said it is "based on approaching students as individuals with unique strengths and weaknesses. A big part of our job is to understand our students and motivate them to develop the skills and mindset necessary to flourish in their lives. We also try to provide our students with critical thinking skills, understanding and support to help them do well academically, socially and professionally."

Motivating students in their studies can be challenging at times, but he believes in the effectiveness of a straightforward approach: "Presenting our course content with clear practical applications in real-world situations allows students to see the value of a university education and how this experience can help them make better decisions."

And for those students who are getting stressed or anxious due to the effects of the pandemic, he has this to say: "We all recognize the stress, anxiety and hardships facing students during this pandemic. Things are slowly getting better and soon we will return to campus stronger, more resilient and appreciative of the MUIC community."

**"OUR JOB IS TO SPARK
CURIOSITY, INSPIRE
STUDENTS TO QUESTION
ESTABLISHED TRUTHS, AND
HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP
THEIR OWN SOURCE OF
MEANING, PURPOSE AND
VALUE FOR THE LIFE THEY
ARE GOING TO CREATE UPON
GRADUATION."**

THE TEACHER AS A FACILITATOR

ASST. PROF. DR. ALESSANDRO STASI
Program Director, Business Essentials
Business Administration Division

According to Ajarn Alessandro, instructors play a key and oftentimes invisible role “in designing the society of tomorrow.” Thus, ajarns need “to embrace and nurture their students’ enthusiasm day by day, helping them discover their passions.”

Not someone to “entertain” his students, Ajarn Alessandro instead tries “to stimulate their intellectual curiosity through knowledge, encouraging them to learn through books and research. In this regard, I see the teacher’s main role as a facilitator.”

To his students he has three pieces of advice. “First, I wish them to find the right balance in life. Secondly, in a world of rapid changes, it is important to focus on the fundamental courses of the study program. These courses will give them the compass for navigating their future career. My third point is more of a personal conviction. There are no limits in life, only objectives. With hard work and dedication, our students can achieve everything in life. It only depends on will and perseverance.”

“STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THAT LEARNING IS NOT ALWAYS FUN OR EASY. IT IS MADE OF PERSONAL SACRIFICES, DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT.”

RAISING A GENERATION OF GOOD MEN

DR. PRATEEP WONGVERAYUTH
Vice Chair, Humanities and
Language Division

Ajarn Prateep teaches Chinese language courses. Aside from one’s academic duties, he believes that “an ajarn is also responsible for his students’ acquiring of an enhanced sense of morality.”

To emphasize this, he quotes an old Chinese proverb: 十年树木，百年树人 (shí nián shù mù, bǎi nián shù rén) which means: “It takes ten years to grow a tree, but a hundred years to bring up a generation of good men.”

As starters, he said he usually memorizes his students’ full names and makes sure he calls them by their full names in class. “I want them to feel that I care for them and that they can trust me. I can then better address their learning needs individually.”

He always advises his students: “Find your areas of interest and try your best to succeed. The only way to do great work is to love what you do. Getting to know other languages and cultures will definitely benefit you in your future career.”

“CULTIVATING TALENT IS HARD WORK AND IT DEMANDS PATIENCE. THIS REMINDS ME THAT I SHOULD VALUE THE TIME THAT I USE IN TEACHING EACH ONE OF MY STUDENTS, EVEN IF IT IS ONLY FOR ONE TRIMESTER. HENCE, I PUT MY BEST EFFORT TO TEACH MY STUDENTS TO BECOME WELL-ROUNDED CITIZENS.”

ONE WHO GIVES AND SHARES

ASST. PROF. DR. NIRUTCHARA LAOHAPRASIT
Program Director, Food Science and Nutrition
Science Division

One effective way of inspiring your students is to be full of energy yourself, according to Ajarn Nirutchara. "I do enjoy being with students as well as teaching. In every class, I can feel that I have more energy than I usually do. In order to make them feel the same and stay focused, I try to arrange some activities for them like having a group work to make them understand things better and also improve coordination skills at the same time. Besides providing them with information, I give them some real-life examples that they can easily relate to the topic in class."

She explains that for her, an ajarn means a "giver." "Not just a giver of knowledge but also someone who shares experiences in real life that could benefit students and society," she explained.

She has this to say to her students: "I would be very happy to see that all of you stay safe and healthy and enjoy studying even under these trying circumstances."



"MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE KEY IS TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND STUDENTS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE."

COMPLETE HUMAN BEINGS

ASST. PROF. DR. WANKWAN POLACHAN
Faculty Member, Fine and Applied Arts Division

"BEING KNOWLEDGEABLE IS USELESS IF ONE CANNOT POSSESS GOOD MORALS, COMPASSION, SELF-DISCIPLINE AND LOVE."

"I give them goals and for media creators, goals are what you want your audiences to feel, to learn and to experience. After you teach theories to students, make them apply that knowledge," said Ajarn Wankwan on how she teaches and motivates her students.

Describing herself as a "Thai teacher with a global perspective," she added that a "khru" is not just a teacher who gives knowledge but someone who must guide students in their development into complete human beings.

To accomplish this, she emphasizes the need for "a complete and holistic quality of humanity where understanding, compassion, love, honesty and hard work are required." Thus, her advice to her students: "Hoping that you, my students, will indeed be the future, please do not succumb to greed and selfishness."



LEARNING DOES NOT STOP

MS. PLOY NIKADANONT
Program Director,
Communication Design
Fine and Applied Arts Division

Ajarn Ploy believes that “more mistakes equal more learning opportunities.” This is why she keeps pushing her students outside of their comfort zones without fear of making mistakes since “I believe that the best way to learn is to learn from mistakes,” she said.

After all, she herself believes that an ajarn is also a learner at the same time. “An Ajarn is a permanent student for me. You cannot stop learning.”

To her students, this is her message: “Four years in university is a pretty short time. Please don't just worry about how to get an ‘A,’ but also enjoy every moment and do your best in every assignment. If you only worry about how to get an ‘A,’ you won't dare to make mistakes, and you won't learn anything.”

“IT'S ESSENTIAL TO KEEP LEARNING NEW THINGS.”

TRAINING FOR THE REAL WORLD

DR. LADDAWAN JIANVITTAYAKIT
Program Director
Tourism and Hospitality
Management Division

“I HAVE NO AMBITION TO TRAIN MY STUDENTS TO BECOME GENIUSES, BUT I WOULD LOVE TO SEE THEM BECOME RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN ACTIONS AND TO SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.”

Ajarn Laddawan enumerates the various active learning methods that she uses: “Class discussion and group work could motivate students to enhance their collaboration skills. If it's applicable, I take students to learn outside the classroom, for example, organizing events, meeting with communities, and talking with professionals. These activities could connect what they have learned in the classroom to real life as well as give them inspiration for their future career.”

She believes that the major role of a teacher is “to guide students to deal with the real world happily and successfully,” explaining that “it would be more meaningful to teach students how to understand a certain context, how to analyze a certain situation, and how to provide appropriate solutions with adequate justification.”

Her message to her students?
“You may have various experiences in your college life, both good and bad. All of them are valuable and help contribute to your learning experiences. Glad to have you join our MUIC Society!”

YES, YOU CAN

ASST. PROF. DR. KANDAPA THANASUTA
Chair
Business Administration Division

For Ajarn Kandapa, learning goes beyond the four walls of the classroom; being an ajarn means going beyond providing basic knowledge to her students. "It's about guiding them, helping them shape their lives. Being a teacher means it is not about you but your students," she said.

To motivate them, she usually uses positive reinforcement. "What I normally tell the students is 'You can.' That no matter what they face, they will be able to accomplish their task. This is to make them believe in their own abilities."

This is what she always says to her students: "You determine your own destiny. We are here to help. However, everything starts from you. This means it might not be easy, but nothing is impossible."

"I NORMALLY ASK FOR THE STUDENTS' OPINIONS AND INPUTS. I TAKE THEIR COMMENTS SERIOUSLY, TRYING NOT TO LEAVE ANYONE OUT."

AN AJARN'S RESPONSIBILITY

MS. PUVISA QIUJUAN
Program Coordinator,
Foreign Language Program
Humanities and
Language Division

As a language teacher, Ajarn Puvisa believes that learning a language is a cumulative process, especially in the higher levels, enabling students to truly use this language to communicate with others. "If students understand this truth," she said, "then they don't need much encouragement. What teachers have to do is to make students understand this process and the effort that is required."

Aside from teaching her students the ropes, she added that ajarns have an influence on their students' sense of morality. "We have a responsibility to guide them in the right direction not only in the university but in life as well."

She has practical advice to her students: "It may sound like a cliché but mastering more languages means more opportunities for a learner. In the current economic downturn, you can find more paths to survive if you know more languages."

"HAVING A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENTS WOULD BE A LIFELONG STUDY FOR US. IN ADDITION TO CONTINUOUS TECHNICAL TRAINING, SELF-IMPROVEMENT IS OBVIOUSLY ANOTHER CHALLENGING TASK FOR AJARNS, ESPECIALLY FOR US WHO ARE FROM GENERATION X OR Y. THE PROSPECTS OF TEACHING IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA IS ALSO A TOPIC THAT EVERYONE SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT."

LEARNING ALSO FROM STUDENTS

DR. RUCHI AGARWAL

Assistant Dean, Educational Affairs
Faculty Member, Social Science Division

Ajarn Ruchi teaches world religions courses among others. When asked what, for her, is an ajarn, she describes its etymology, "It is derived from the Sanskrit word 'acharaya' which means 'guru,' one who provides knowledge to their disciples."

"As an Ajarn, I have not only provided my students with the knowledge that I have but I also learn from them and with them," she explained.

Being in MUIC for more than 20 years, she has tried different techniques to motivate students and keep herself motivated as well. These include self-learning through practical assignments which they can personally relate to. "I also encourage group work in classes so students can make new friends and learn the important skills of dealing with group dynamics," adding that "students are generally motivated if their ajarns are enthusiastic about their teaching."

"MY STUDENTS ARE ONE OF MY INSPIRATIONS AND I THANK THEM FOR MAKING ME THE AJARN I AM TODAY. I HAVE LEARNED WITH THEM AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE."



A LANGUAGE THAT CAN BE LEARNED

ASST. PROF. DR. CHATCHAWAN PANRAKSA

Associate Dean for Administration
Faculty Member, Science Division

"IT IS SAID THAT IN JUST A YEAR OR TWO AFTER YOU GRADUATE FROM UNIVERSITY, YOUR KNOWLEDGE WOULD'VE BEEN ALREADY OUTDATED. THUS, WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT IS THE 'HOW' OR 'WHY' YOU ACQUIRE THAT KNOWLEDGE. THE METHOD WILL STICK WITH YOU AND CAN BE IMPROVED OVER TIME. KNOWLEDGE IS JUST THE OUTCOME."

Ajarn Chatchawan, who primarily teaches mathematics courses, believes that in this time of automated systems that can generate knowledge, person-to-person discourse is still very important. "Personal discussions with our students can help make them think and create their own set of knowledge and their own set of methods of accessing knowledge."

For many students, mathematics might be a tough course. Ajarn Chatchawan, however, tries to allay their fears by telling them that mathematics can be compared to a universal language which can be used to understand how things work or even how the universe works. "And a language can be learned. Our job as a teacher is to help students understand that mathematics can be useful in their domain of knowledge," he said.





Mahidol University
International College

CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY MAJOR

BACHELOR OF ARTS AND SCIENCE (B.A.Sc.)

This program is the first transdisciplinary program with a mix of computer science, transmedia design, and communication design offered at Mahidol University, with a curriculum flexibility to customize for individual learning choices with MUIC's distinctive I-Design electives as well as the program's electives in MUIC, Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, College of Music, and Ratchasuda College.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

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