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NEW
NORMAL**

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EDITORIAL

HOPE AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted—and continues to disrupt—our lives. The changes it has wrought is practically paving the way for a new world order. In this issue, we discuss how MUIC is coping with the pandemic by introducing precautionary measures to keep everyone safe from infection. We also present what might be in store for us in the next few months in terms of travel, public health, the workplace and education. For all the raw emotions that the pandemic is stirring within each of us—fear, anxiety, desperation—we should always tell ourselves that there is always hope and love. The generosity of several of our alumni in the past months to those who have less in life are recounted here along with the welcome news of hard-up students getting financial support from MUIC. We at **MUIC 360°** magazine wish everyone good health in the days ahead.



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FOR STUDENT AID

MU CORE VALUE
MAHIDOL
ALTRUISM
 the unselfish regard for the welfare of others—seems to be the appropriate core value during this time of pandemic.

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LIFE AFTER COVID -19

TRAVEL "TRAVEL BUBBLES"

Medical certificates stating a passenger is not afflicted with the virus or immunity passports, along with rapid Covid-19 blood tests, could very well become a regular part of travel requirements. As countries reopen to international travel, their governments would identify other countries deemed "safe enough" to accept travelers from. Such travel bubbles might become the norm for the near future as authorities strictly monitor international travel.

Higher Cost of Air Travel

Observance of social distancing in passenger planes would lead to fewer passengers and higher fares. Likewise, lingering fear of air travel and widespread use of video conferencing would discourage frequent business travels.

Trivia

96% of the world's destinations are currently impacted by travel restrictions and other lockdown measures. — World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/TravelRestrictions_0.pdf



PUBLIC HEALTH

Burnout Among Health Professionals

With the extreme workload and pressure they faced at the peak of the pandemic, experts say that a large number of health professionals are experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Big Brother Tracks You (and Covid-19)

Several governments have started using technology (smartphone, CCTV, online banking, etc.) to track, locate and alert those who might be infected.

New Habits Die Hard

Wearing facemasks, maintaining social distance, regularly washing hands with soap or sanitizing with alcohol could become regular habits that will lead to overall improved hygiene.

A.I. Lends a Helping Hand

Artificial intelligence has proven itself to be crucial during the pandemic like sending out initial alerts of outbreaks, screening of the potentially infected, helping hospitals manage their resources, among others. It is expected that A.I. will continue to be used as an effective tool in dealing with Covid-19.



<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/01-06-2020-covid-19-significantly-impacts-health-services-for-noncommunicable-diseases>

Trivia

53% of countries surveyed by the World Health Organization have partially or completely disrupted health services for non-communicable diseases as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.



THE WORKPLACE

Tech Lifestyle

Attending office meetings through applications like Zoom or ordering food through Grab, Lineman or Food Panda or buying consumer goods via Facebook—much of our transactions will rely on the Internet and laptop or smart phone as work- and study-at-home situations become part of the norm.

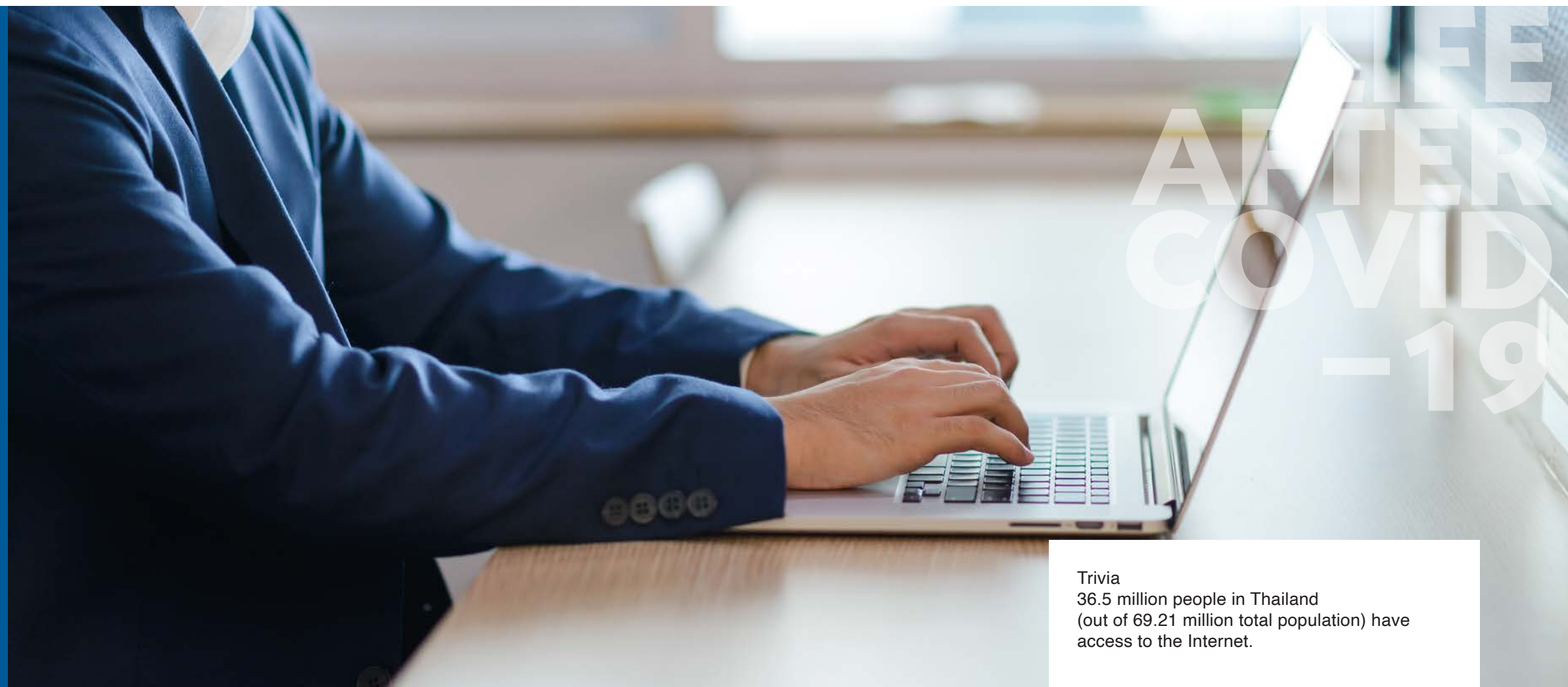
A Different Working Day

To maintain social distancing, companies would come up with various arrangements: From having some of their staff work from home, adopting a rotating office schedule, or maintaining remote offices.

New Office Layout and Innovations

For those still working in the office, several plans are considered to prevent the spread of the virus. Aside from the now-ubiquitous hand sanitizers and thermal scanners in strategic locations, there might also be installed “sneeze guards” in between desks. Small enclosed cubicles might be favored over an open plan office. Technology might also play a big part in a contact-less office, using smartphones to send commands to elevators, coffee machines, lighting / audio / visual equipment, and even toilets.

SOURCES:



Trivia

35.75% of respondents said that weak or nonexistent Internet connection prevented them from getting their work done during the pandemic crisis.

43% of respondents said they used their smartphones as an Internet hotspot while working at home during the pandemic.



<https://www.whistleout.com/Internet/Guides/weak-internet-a-problem>

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Lower Enrolment Rates

Pandemic-related financial problems, travel restrictions, and general fear of Covid-19 might result in fewer students enrolling in the near future.

New Ways of Learning

Covid-19 forced a halt to face-to-face instruction but the online learning that took place during the time of quarantine also exposed its limitations. Hence, blended learning is expected to increase in the future. As schools reopen, face-to-face instruction, though limited in use (with either a reduced class size or reduced number of class days), will be supplemented by study sessions held in asynchronous and synchronous online platforms.

Trivia

36.5 million people in Thailand (out of 69.21 million total population) have access to the Internet.



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/553730/number-of-internet-users-thailand/>

Universities in the US anticipate a 15% drop in enrollment nationwide, leading to a \$23-billion revenue loss.



<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/us/coronavirus-colleges-universities-admissions.html>

MUIC'S NEW NORMAL

LEARNING ONLINE

Due to the global pandemic, MUIC took the unprecedented step of shifting all of its offered courses to online platforms for Term 3. The latter part of Term 2 and the term break were utilized in making drastic changes to this shift.

According to the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA), there was only a slight decrease in the number of classes offered in Term 2, mainly caused by the inability to offer fully lab and studio-based courses and internships as students could not come to campus to do lab and studio work and they could not also do internships outside in the industry.

With the shift to online learning, lecturers had to rely on online learning systems. The main learning management system used was the MUIC e-Learning and Google Classroom. A few lecturers also used Canvas. In terms of online platform for the delivery of lectures, Webex and Zoom were the main mediums of communication between lecturers and students. Aside from this, other applications like Kahoot, Mentimeter and others were used.

Despite this change in learning platforms, the OAA said there were no major changes in the curriculum. However, lecturers were given latitude in doing substantial changes to the syllabus of the courses they are teaching in consideration of the online nature of teaching. Assessment of students' academic performances in each course had to be modified also since they were done in an online environment. This allowed lecturers to experiment with new and innovative ways to design the course requirements.

(Based on interviews with Dr. Chompunuch Pongjit, Associate Dean for Educational Affairs, and Dr. Ruchi Agarwal, Assistant Dean for Educational Affairs)

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES COVERING MUIC PERSONNEL

- Almost all staff were asked to work from home (March 24 – May 7) and upon government's relaxation of restrictions, shifted to alternate working days at the office (May 8 – June 19) until regular work schedule resumed on June 22.
- All meetings were strictly held online during the work-from-home period.
- No outsiders were allowed on campus, including students.
- Staff were allowed to borrow computers and other necessary equipment for the purpose of working from home.
- e-Signature was allowed in official transactions.

(Source: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yingyot Chiaravutthi, Associate Dean for Finance and Human Resources)

KEEPING THE CAMPUS SAFE

MUIC Building 1, (together with Buildings 2 and 3), and Aditayathorn Building have only two access points. Each access point has a security and temperature checking station, with all persons entering the buildings being registered digitally.

Visitors are not allowed entry to the building unless they have a letter from the person they are visiting. This person must come to the entrance him-/ herself to verify his/ her visitor's identity and confirm that he/she should be allowed to enter.

Alcohol gel stations have been set up in strategic sites.

Frequency of cleaning has been increased. On top of their regular duties, janitresses are now asked to disinfect with alcohol high risk objects like handrails of stairs, elevator buttons, door knobs, etc. every hour.

During the early days of lockdown, meetings were held only online. With government's relaxation of precautions, in-person meetings are now allowed but attendees should still wear masks.

Social distancing guidelines set by the Thai government and Mahidol University should be followed. A distance of 1.5 meters between persons must be maintained in the cafeteria and public places. As such, cafeteria tables are marked accordingly.

Staff are encouraged not to go to other offices unless they are on official business.

Everyone is asked to always wear masks.

(Sources: Ms. Arpaporn Iemubol, Associate Dean for Administration, and Asst. Prof. Dr. Chatchawan Panraksa, Assistant Dean for Administration)

Q & A WITH MUIC DEAN

LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS

With the unprecedented and widespread changes in MUIC that were made as precautionary measures against Covid-19, **MUIC 360°** interviews Assoc. Prof. Chulathida Chomchai, M.D., Dean of MUIC, for her views on the situation as we move forward.



AS A LONG-TIME EDUCATOR, WHAT DIRECTION WILL HIGHER EDUCATION TAKE IN THE NEAR FUTURE AS A RESULT OF COVID-19?

The idea is for us to surpass Covid-19. In order to do that, higher education needs to equip people with multiple skills. With Covid-19, you just can't understand only one aspect of it. You have to understand its science, public health, and socio-economic aspects, among others. Someone who is able to master that integrated knowledge will be able to come up with solutions.

We need to see the importance of arts and science in dealing with Covid-19. The science part is about the virus, the genes, the DNA, etc. but the arts part is about communication so people will trust in what you say and follow you. Leaders in this time of Covid-19 are the people who are able to empathize with their audience and speak in a way that the audience would follow their suggestions and recommendations. The ability to understand science and to communicate and empathize with people is very crucial.

Finally, in higher education, the curriculum structure needs to be flexible to allow people to obtain multiple knowledge and skills and give them the answers that they need.

WHAT IS YOUR VIEW OF DISRUPTION IN EDUCATION? HOW DOES THIS IMPACT MUIC? HOW DOES MUIC RESPOND TO THIS DISRUPTION AND OTHER CHANGES?

I think we have experienced disruption in many ways for a while now starting with other universities offering international programs similar to ours, thus competing for our students. Then there's the worldwide decrease in birth rate that will result in fewer students who will study in universities. In addition, this generation of young people is no longer seeking to be 'educated' in the traditional sense. Education is everywhere for them, in Google and Khan Academy and other online learning platforms. They do not see a university education as a way to equip themselves for their career. And finally, a major disruption that impacts all of us like Covid-19. Any kind of disruption becomes significant when it impacts the financial standing of the college. What I mean is that when people feel that their livelihood is threatened, it produces anxiety and that doesn't make for a very good workplace. It creates a lot of uncertainties in the minds of MUIC personnel which would then affect the way we teach and relate to students. Students will be able to feel our anxiety about our future. That is not good because we should be creating a learning environment that is uplifting and promoting engagement. When a disruption is this huge, the initial response is always "We've got to survive." The initial response is just to mitigate the damage, to put a bandage on the wound, so to speak. But we need to do more than that. We have to come up with long-term solutions. When we stop, take a deep breath, and design a way forward, then people will feel more at ease, more in control, and that is translated into students feeling more confident in their learning environment.



AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC, HAS THE VISION AND DIRECTION OF MUIC BEEN MODIFIED? IF YES, WHAT ARE THESE CHANGES?

No. If anything it has even been strengthened. Our resolve to enrich lives, to expand potentials, to shape futures, has been strengthened because of the pandemic. I am more convinced now than ever that this is the only way to deliver education and the only way to create a workplace. Education must make people's lives fuller, encourage them to reach beyond their potentials and make them hopeful for what's to come. This is true regardless of whether they are staff, faculty members or students. MUIC's fundamentals are still strong. I'm more convinced than ever that that's the way it's gonna be.

There's a Latin inscription in front of my daughter's school: "Intus si recte ne labora." It means "If all is right within, trouble not." Or "If the heart is right, all will be well." Our vision and mission constitute the heart of what we do as an institution. And we need to make sure that they are in the right place and for the right reasons and are directed at the right people.

AS DEAN OF MUIC, WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO PARENTS OF MUIC STUDENTS WHO ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT THE PANDEMIC?

I think this pandemic is so devastating because it impacts every aspect of our lives. During such unpredictable times, you should focus on the here and now. Usually when a door closes, a window or two might be opened in the process. Explore the potential of your situation, whatever that may be, and discover new paths to reach your goals. You're doing a disservice to yourself if you have a worthy goal but you have only one way to reach it.

For example, my daughter can't take her Math IGCSE these days (because of the pandemic). As an alternative, they propose to use, instead, the scores of the past year to mark her achievement. She told me, "Mom, I'm lucky I tried my best every time." That's it. If you were thinking, "I'm gonna do my best in the future," then you'll be in so much trouble. For young people, if you have the opportunity to show what you can do, then do it now. It might be the only time you can get to show your ability. I understand that a lot of kids these days are anxious about the future and that's good because it means they care. As parents we can help them by focusing on the here and now, by giving their best now.

ONLINE STUDENT ACTIVITIES

To keep students engaged while studying from home, the Office of Student Affairs, in cooperation with the Student Association and student clubs, organized several online activities in several areas like sports and fitness, arts, social outreach, business, fun and games, and others. College activities that are regularly held every semester—like the Student Association election and Welcoming and Unity Activity—also pushed through, successfully using online platforms.



MUIC SEND LOVE

Students were encouraged to send a message through their social network to cheer up anyone affected by Covid-19.



IC STAY IN SHAPE

Participants chose different types of challenges like body combat, etc. and challenged their friends on social media.



IC FIT MEAL

To promote health and nutrition, students were encouraged to post photos of their meals on social media and explain their health benefits.



MUIC FIFA 2020 COMPETITION

For online sports game lovers, the Student Association organized this online contest.



FUN AT HOME

For board game aficionados, this was a perfect online activity to while away the time.



TRADING COMPETITION

Teams of 2-3 students each used "Click2Win" by SETtrade, a simulation trading software.



READ FOR THE BLIND

Volunteers read for the blind by choosing a book and reading it aloud through a mobile phone application.



HAPPY OLD STUFF (IC GIVING)

Volunteers cleared up their clutter at home and donated unused items to NGOs and charity organizations.



DRAWING CONTEST (IC STUDIO)

Students with artistic flair imagined what "The World after COVID-19" would be like through their drawings and paintings.



HOMING RECIPE (IC STUDIO)

Homebodies who liked cooking showcased their talents by decorating desserts they had made.



MUIC HEALTH WEEK

(Organized by Student Affairs Office)
To encourage smokers to quit the habit, participants in this activity were invited to post a message or photos on social media with the hashtag #MUICNOSMOKING



IC STUDY HARD

(Organized by Student Affairs Office)
This activity promotes helping each other during the pandemic. Participants are encouraged to conduct tutorials for fellow students through communication apps.



SEX EDUCATION TALK

(Organized by Student Affairs Office)
A special online talk about "Sex Education" was held on July 2, 2020 featuring Mr. Chatdanai Sornchai, a Public Health Technical Officer at Srithanya Hospital, and Ms. Chawisa Chartsuwan, Mental Health Counselor.



STUDENT ASSOCIATION ELECTION

The Student Association, in collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs, held an online election for the incoming Student Association officers on July 9-10, 2020.



WELCOMING AND UNITY ACTIVITY

The Sophomore Class Committee organized an online Welcoming and Unity Activity, participated in by 14 groups of freshmen. This event, held every semester, is designed to break the ice and foster friendships among freshmen.



Zoom Meeting



GETTING READY FOR (ONLINE) CLASSES

MUIC shifted to online classes as a precaution to the Covid-19 pandemic on Term 3 of Academic Year 2019-2020. Among the lessons learned is that it pays to be well-prepared, from assuming the right mindset to getting your learning tools and technology ready. Term 1 of the new academic year is just around the corner. Here are some useful tips:

1. GET THE LATEST UPDATE

Forewarned is forearmed. Make sure you're aware of the latest in your respective classes by checking the learning management system your teacher uses (i.e. Google Classroom, MUIC's e-Learning, etc.) and/or email account, Line or Facebook PM, whichever is used in your own class, for any last-minute announcements.

2. BE ORGANIZED

Taking online classes is no joke. It requires more self-discipline compared to in-person classes. One way to ensure you'll have a successful online learning experience is by being organized. Keep important lists, formula sheets, vocabulary terms in one place, organize your notes, use tabs to mark your e-books, and prepare for your online exams as if it would be done in person. Plan your day and stick to your schedule.



3. HAVE A DEDICATED WORKSPACE

You're in it for the long term. "Attending" online classes while slouched on your sofa might be cool at first but sooner or later you need to have a specific workspace. It might be the dining table or a computer desk, but it will help your brain know that when you're in that workspace, you need to focus on studying.

4. DO AWAY WITH DISTRACTIONS

Are you logged in to your Twitter, Facebook, Line, Instagram or other social media platforms when you're in class? Perhaps. Is it productive? No. Turn off or mute your social media notifications, put your smartphone away, log off Netflix, and focus on your online studies.

5. CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT

Familiarize yourself with the virtual classroom tool you're going to use, i.e. Zoom, Webex, etc. Do a test run with a friend and get acquainted with the controls. Make sure your WiFi signal is strong. If you get disconnected from the Internet, don't panic. Just log back in. Having technology problems just as your paper is due? Message your instructor about it while you're having it fixed.

6. PARTICIPATE

Read your e-books and other study materials provided by your instructors. Listen carefully to the online lectures. Ask questions as needed to clarify important points. Online learning presents its own unique learning challenges, and seeking your instructor's help would be really productive on your part.

REFERENCES:



Join Audio



Stop Video



Security



Participants



Chat



Share Screen



Record



Reactions

End

SPREADING LOVE IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

In these trying times, several MUIC alumni have taken the initiative to help out people in need.

MR. PREDAPHOL “PHOOM” BALANKURA (Business Administration, Class of 2004) was helping his family run their food manufacturing company, Del Casaro, when the Covid-19 pandemic struck, sending sales plummeting by 70%.

He was inspired to help after witnessing how hard it has become for taxi drivers to get passengers when the pandemic reached Thailand. “I felt I should do something to brighten up their lives even just a little bit,” he said.

For the next three months, while Thailand was in lockdown, Phoom and his family were able to raise around 50,000 Baht from their own money and donations from friends and supporters and used this to cook and distribute an estimated 15,000 meal packs to medical personnel, drivers of taxi cabs, motorcycle taxis, and tuktuks, and also policemen and soldiers manning checkpoints.

Aside from cash, other supporters donated face masks, face shields, rubber gloves, disinfectants and others. Some members of the food industry also helped him like chef and restaurateur Chalee Kader whose 100 SM:)E MEALS group donated to him a few thousand meal packs. He also partnered with restaurants upcountry to donate meals to local residents.

“I was—and still am—surrounded by good people. I am able to do all this because of their support.”



MR. THOSAPHOL “THOS” SUPPAMETHEEKULWAT (major in Business Administration, Class of 2003, and also MUIC Outstanding Alumni Awardee 2015), Marketing Director of their family-owned New Arriva Co., Ltd. said they were hard hit by the pandemic.

“Our goal is to keep all our employees and not lay them off or deduct their salaries. Thus, we have to work in totally different ways,” he said.

They organized a team dedicated to online business and offered their items at reseller prices so that sellers can earn more. “A lot of people lost their jobs. Selling our items can help them make a living.”

They also made a product that will be useful during the Covid-19 situation, namely, the Qualy Push Stick, which you can use to touch elevator buttons and others. His company donated more than 5,000 Qualy Push Sticks to at least 31 hospitals.

Thosaphol said a helping attitude is indeed part of the MUIC culture. “As students, we stayed together in one small school building. Whenever something went wrong, we helped to sort it out. In our class activities, not everything has to be a competition. This is how we should also contribute to society.”



With the Covid-19 pandemic hitting hard the tourism industry, the hotel and shopping mall businesses of the family of **MS. PATTAMON “BEAU” MEKAVARAKUL** (Travel Industry Management, Class of 2009) were deeply affected in the past several months.

Despite having their business closed for several months, her family did their best to support their more than 1,000 employees by still paying half of their monthly salaries. Cape Dara Resort in Pattaya, of which Beau is the vice president, reopened last June 1, followed by Mike Shopping Mall on June 16.

In May, Ms. Pattamon and her family placed a food cabinet in front of Mike Shopping Mall, supplying it everyday with rice, bottled water and canned goods. “There were also milk, cereals and fruit juice for children.”

Using stocks from Cape Dara Resort, they served iced coffee drinks to hospital staff. They also donated 50 pallets of bottled water to a quarantine center. To raise more funds to buy more items for the food cabinet, Beau sold their used clothes.

Her father, who is the treasurer in one of the temples in Pattaya, helped monks to organize a fund drive. They also joined food drives of the Committee of Thai Hoteliers Association (Eastern Chapter) and the “Pattaya Must Survive” campaign.



FOR MS. RUNGRAVEE “BENZ” KATTAMARASRE (Major in Tourism and Hospitality Management, Class of 2016) and MUIC Outstanding Alumni Awardee 2019), Creative Director and Founder of MISS MODERN, women’s clothing brand, the COVID-19 outbreak gave her a chance to slow down and take a step back.

“I have my employees to take care of. The shortage of surgical masks prompted our teams to develop fabric masks that are both functional and high quality. We turned our sewing machines from making dresses into making face masks,” she said.

They also launched a project called ‘Buy One, Give One’ in which for every set of fabric masks that customers buy, they will get an extra mask that they can give to a person who needs it.

She also networked with several individuals and groups in pooling together donations like alcohol sanitizers, fabric masks, rice and other food items that they had received from numerous sponsors and distributed them in a more organized manner.

From late April to early May, her group distributed donations to four districts in Bangkok. They also delivered alcohol sanitizers and fabric masks to several temples in the capital city and sent 3,000 masks to soldiers in the three southern border provinces.

“Aside from the bigger skill sets such as collaboration, networking, time management and creative thinking, MUIC also gave me the courage and confidence to go the extra mile,” she said.

MUIC RAISES 1 MILLION BAHT IN FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS

Mahidol University International College (MUIC) raised funds to provide financial assistance to students and their families who are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Donations to the MUIC Covid-19 Relief Grant reached 1,065,200 Baht as of May 31, 2020, benefitting more than 150 students. Depending on their circumstances, students who apply for financial support under this grant can receive between 10,000 to 30,000 Baht.

Assoc. Prof. Chulathida Chomchai, MD, Dean of the College, in an email message to the MUIC community, thanked 56 faculty members and staff who have so far donated to the fund.

“As astounding as the sum of all your donations is, the swift and wholehearted response to the initial call for donation surpasses all expectations. The nature of your giving is as valuable as the gift itself,” Dean Chulathida said.



DESPITE PANDEMIC, “ MUIC VIRTUAL OPEN DAYS ” A SUCCESS



Covid-19 did not prevent Mahidol University International College (MUIC) from successfully showcasing its strengths to prospective students. On June 20-21, 2020, it organized the “MUIC Virtual Open Days 2020 Unlock Your Future Live Streaming Series” at MUIC Official Fanpage on Facebook.

For two days, this live streaming Facebook event organized by the Corporate Communication Section garnered more than 280,000 views. It presented five live streaming sessions that highlighted the degree programs of the Business Administration, Science, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Fine and Applied Arts, Social Science, and Humanities and Language divisions, along with those of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Management in International Tourism and Hospitality Management (MM) programs.

Aside from lecturers representing each division, the other featured resource persons were Assoc. Prof. Chulathida Chomchai, M.D., MUIC Dean; Ms. Patchari Raksawong, an alumna and Bilingual MC and News Presenter from MCOT, and selected MUIC students and alumni.



Mahidol University
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