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KaleidoScope

Mahidol University International College Newsletter



EDITORIAL

Inspiring INDIVIDUALS

Successful alumni mean that the school, for the most part, has done a good job providing them with an education, equipping them well to compete successfully in the job market, and imbuing them with a sense of right and wrong.

Every year, MUIC chooses five among its thousands of alumni whose recent achievements reflect well on their alma mater and more important, encourage and motivate the younger generation to reach for the stars. In this issue, *Kaleidoscope* presents them to you.

Also featured in this issue are two students who went on exchange studies in Japan, a successful student who started her own business and this year's national winner of the science competition FameLab. We hope that these stories would also inspire you.

BUSINESSMEN & EXECUTIVES *Inspire* BA Students

What better way to get all fired up with your dreams of starting and managing your own business someday than by attending an event that lets you learn from successful entrepreneurs and managers themselves?

On May 3, 2018, the Business Administration (BA) Division organized the 1st Annual Business and Entrepreneurial Talk, bringing together in one event both entrepreneurs and managers of major companies.

Some 250 students, faculty, staff, and alumni turned up in this major event held at the Charinyarasami Hall in Aditayathorn Building.

Representing the entrepreneurs were three successful MUIC alumni: Mr. Thosaphol Suppametheekulwat, founder of QUALY which produces environmentally-friendly products and also General Manager of New Arriva Co. Ltd.; Mr. Vitchapong Hutasuwan, founder of Selvedgework which makes custom handcrafted jeans; and Mr. Thanesh Tientamnoon, owner of Medium Rare Steak & Wine.

On the other hand, three senior executives shared their expertise with the audience: Ms. Sirinit Virayasiri, Head of B2B Marketing of Google Thailand; Mr. Dirk Uphoff, Purchasing Director (Southeast Asia) of Bosch Thailand; Mr. Tana Pothikamjorn, Head of Digital Banking of Siam Commercial Bank; and Ms. Hansa Wongsiripitack, Vice President, Creative & Strategy of Central Retail Corp.



Special LECTURE on Eastern Mediterranean Conflicts

The Social Science Division recently had a special lecture featuring a guest speaker from Hungary whose lecture was about the "Protracted Conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean and Their Impact on World Trade."

Faculty members and students of the division attended the talk by Dr. Péter Kacziba from the University of Pecs, Hungary on May 17, 2018 at the Seminar Room. His visit was made possible through the Erasmus + Program (Higher Education Student and Staff Mobility) signed between Mahidol University and the University of Pecs.

"These events provide our students with excellent opportunities to meet with international scholars and discuss global issues. Our relationship with the Erasmus network is further strengthened allowing for greater future collaboration among students and faculty," said Mr. Douglas Rhein, Chairman of the Social Science Division.



KaleidoScope is environment-friendly.





ALUMNI ACHIEVERS

The Good Book says “By their fruits you shall know them” and indeed Mahidol University International College (MUIC) proves that it is a leading international institution of higher learning in Thailand with the quality of its alumni. Of MUIC’s graduates who have marched down its hallways in the past three decades, a significant number have charted successful careers in their respective fields and are important contributors not only to Thai society but abroad as well.

Every year, MUIC selects five such individuals—who not only achieved much in their workplaces but who have also shared something of themselves to the community—and gives recognition to their good deeds. Truly these students serve as inspiration to the current crop of MUIC students and are a credit to their alma mater.



Twenty-five years after graduating with a B.S. Computer Science degree (1st Class Honors), Dr. Supavadee Aramvith, now an Associate Professor in Chulalongkorn University and the Head of the Digital Signal Processing Laboratory in the Department of Electrical Engineering, has come back to her alma mater to receive official recognition as an Outstanding Alumni for 2017.

The award has great significance for her. “It proves that everything that I have learned at the International Students Degree Program (forerunner of MUIC) has been instrumental to my successful career,” she told Kaleidoscope.

She has indeed charted a very noteworthy career in the academe. After obtaining her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Electrical Engineering from the University of Washington, Seattle, USA, in 1996 and 2001, respectively, she joined Chulalongkorn University in June 2001 and now is entrusted with tremendous academic and administrative responsibilities.

A prolific researcher and writer, Dr. Supavadee is also an experienced project leader in both international academic committees and government agencies.

She traces the roots of her success to ISDP. She describes her student days from 1989 to 1993 as an idyllic experience, studying intensely with 29 other students in their batch under what she describes as the “best professors” under the helm of Prof. Serene Piboonniyom, the first School Director of ISDP. Her determination to excel in her studies led to her being granted 1st Class Honors upon her graduation.

Thrilled at visiting the campus for the awarding ceremony, she said that the success of her fellow alumni in the past three decades attests to MUIC’s success as an institution of higher learning.

To the current students, she would like to share these tips: Follow your passion, equip yourself with the right skill sets and expand your network.



OUTSTANDING MANAGEMENT Alumni Awardee 2017

Mr. Kridsada Chutinatton
(MUIC Class of 2005)

Not only does Mahidol University International College (MUIC) produce businessmen, managers and entrepreneurs. It also produces innovators who successfully combine modern technology with their business acumen. Such an alumnus is Mr. Kridsada Chutinatton, a Computer Science degree holder who in 2014 founded FlowAccount.com, an easy-to-use cloud accounting solution designed to help small business owners.

So innovative and practical was FlowAccount that it won in the AIS StartUp 2015 competition, receiving THB 1 million from AIS and US\$ 2,000 from Samsung Asia. Aside from being among the Top 10 Startups in the Echelon Asia Summit in 2015, the company received a funding of US\$1.15 million from top investors two years later.

Asked what his next goal is, Mr. Kridsada said, "I hope that FlowAccount will one day be one of the companies driving Thai SMEs, making it easier for them to do business and become successful entrepreneurs."

While a student at MUIC, he balanced his studies with extra-curricular activities, joining the Photography Club and the Debate Club. "I learned much about the value of teamwork, friendship and leadership."

He also received a scholarship grant from the Singapore International Foundation for one semester in Nanyang Technological University during his third year at MUIC. "The exposure to a foreign country and its culture gave me a wider perspective."

Asked what is one of the most valuable skills he learned at MUIC, he said, "MUIC has one of the best English programs in Thailand. For me, being able to be fluent in English allowed me to be able to continuously learn throughout my career. We really don't know what our paths will be in the future, but if you have a great mindset and are fluent in English, you can learn almost anything."



OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL Alumni Awardee 2017

Dr. Suniti Barua
(MUIC Class of 2000)

Dr. Suniti Barua (nee Kukreja) straddles two countries and two different cultures. Raised in Thailand and now based in the US, Dr. Suniti credits MUIC for achieving success in a diverse career environment.

She finished her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Palo Alto University (American Psychological Association-accredited) in the US in 2010. Afterwards, she received the Fellowship Award and Brian Phillip Keith Research Assistantship Award from Palo Alto University. As a licensed psychologist based in the US and Thailand and also a member of the American Psychological Association (APA), she has conducted many professional trainings and workshops.

According to her, she chose MUIC "as it offered an attractive international program. Studying in MUIC felt like being in a small family within the bigger Mahidol community." She added: "As MUIC provides an international environment, it makes us appreciate, be aware and inclusive of other cultures. In my career as a psychologist, I come across people from all walks of life on a daily basis. Cultural competency is one of the keys to being able to connect effectively and provide a higher quality of service."

To the new generation of MUIC students, she has this to say, "Take your time to explore different activities, classes and experiences that your school environment has to offer. Don't pressure yourself into thinking you know what you want because the journey and your experience might surprise you along the way."

And finally, she expressed deep appreciation for being selected as one of the Outstanding Alumni. "It reminds me of my roots and the beginning of my journey, and how far I have come. I am thankful that the work I do not only makes an impact on the lives of individual patients and their families in a clinical setting, but is also recognized as an important contribution to society."



OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICES Alumni Awardee 2017

Mr. Anunthorn Vinijtaopatom
(MUIC Class of 2016)

Mr. Anunthorn Vinijtaopatom traveled far and wide in search of something he could be passionate about. After spending two years at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Savannah, Georgia, he went home to Thailand and enrolled in MUIC, hopping from one major to another: Food Science and Technology, TV Production, finally settling on Marketing.

All throughout his university studies he always found time to help out with the animal shelter run by his family called CHSThai, a non-profit, charitable, duly-registered, no-kill stray animal shelter located in Saraburi province that was started by his mother 14 years ago. From a few stray dogs and cats that his mother saved, the shelter has now grown big—taking care of 1,600 dogs, 400 cats, five pigs and one monkey.

Aside from taking over the family-run concrete and truck businesses, Mr. Anunthorn is now also the manager of the animal shelter. Their biggest challenge now is how to finance the spiraling cost of taking care of the animals.

“We have already stopped taking in animals because we already have a lot of them but people keep asking us to take in more. Helping sick, starving, and injured animals has always been a pleasure to me and my family.”

This is one of the reasons, according to him, why receiving the Outstanding Alumni Award means a lot to him. “It shows that MUIC sees the value of what we do at CHSThai shelter,” he said.

Asked what was one of the important lessons he learned at MUIC, Mr. Anunthorn said that it is the value of interpersonal relationships. “It is vital to listen to people, learning more about them, being willing to compromise, building your team’s relationship, empowering and leading your team mates toward your goals. My shelter would never survive this long without every one of my staff truly working well with each other and dedicating themselves to their tasks.”



RISING STAR Alumni Awardee 2017

Mr. T-Thawat Taifayongvichit
(MUIC Class of 2016)

Even when he was still a high school student, Mr. T-Thawat Taifayongvichit already set his sights on his future career: To be a film maker. “Mahidol University International College was the only place that offered an English-speaking film program in Thailand, so it was in fact my only choice and the only place I applied to.”

In college, all that Mr. T-Thawat cared about was film-making. He remembers the long days and sleepless nights when he and his classmates worked on their projects. Such intense experience made him value the friendships forged with his classmates and school mates.

After four years, Mr. T-Thawat moved on from the academe (garnering 1st Class Honors along the way) to the real world where he further honed his craft, and at such a relatively young age produced noteworthy works.

As if on cue, his breakthrough short film, “83 Soi Soonvijai 14” won several awards: White Elephant Award in the Thai Short Film and Video Festival 2016, the Grand Prize in Film Category in the Young Thai Artist Award 2016, and Director’s Choice Award in the Little Wings Film Festival 2017 in London, UK. His short film was also officially selected for screening in several international film festivals in 2017.

The future, indeed, looks good. And Mr. T-Thawat is aiming for the next break. “My next goal is to be involved in a feature film project either as a cinematographer, director, or writer.”

Here is his message for current MUIC students: “Youth is not whether you still have some passion inside you. As long as you stay passionate about something—it could be your work or a hobby—you always continue to grow up.”

JAPAN

The Second Time Around



For 21-year-old Pakhin “Shake” Kamkhampetch, a 4th year student taking up International Studies, he had been to Japan two times already, but decided that he wanted to learn more about the country and its people. This time, he decided to enroll in Nagasaki University and explore Japan’s southern region, a contrast from cosmopolitan Tokyo. “Studying in Nagasaki offers the opportunity to study specialized topics like peace studies,” he said.

“I have always loved Japan. Not only as a peaceful country but also its people and their strong sense of organization. The way the Japanese people think and behave, as shaped by their institutions and their unique and wonderful culture, amazes me,” he said.

According to Shake, he always learns a new thing about the Japanese. “Just like the Thais, the Japanese take ‘saving face’ seriously. For example, Thais often laugh if one of their friends did something silly like accidentally burping loudly. On the other hand, if this happens to a Japanese, his friends would tend to stay quiet and pretend that nothing happened.”

As in MUIC, Nagasaki University also has a buddy program for inbound exchange students. From the first day, Japanese buddies are assigned to inbound exchange students like Shake to help them get settled down, bringing them on a tour of the campus, even making appointments with their supervisors in their behalf. “My buddy was very helpful. We also had lunch together occasionally.”

“[As an exchange student, I became] a more optimistic and open-minded person. The more I interacted with people abroad, the more I see the world and things around me in a new, different way.”



Mr. Thanawat “Buddy” Wachiratongkum, a 22-year-old 4th year student majoring in Social Science, said that he was enticed to be an exchange student because of the opportunities provided by MUIC’s wide network of universities abroad. “I want to explore other parts of the world and improve myself in the process,” he said.

He had been to Japan before, visiting Kyushu University for two weeks, and he wanted to come back. “Even if Japan has a high cost of living, I still wanted to go back. I find Japanese people to be so kind. I can also speak their language so it’s easier for me to communicate with them.”

This time, he picked Hokkaido University, spending five months in exchange studies. “I joined the university’s international program where I befriended many foreign students from a lot of countries.”

“My most memorable experience as an exchange student was traveling to many interesting places in Hokkaido with my friends. It was fun and was very challenging for us to go out in the countryside,” he said.



What’s so special about Japan?

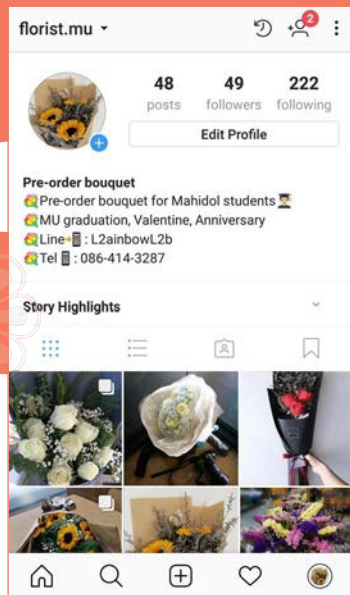
Why do people keep coming back to visit?

Or in the case of our two MUIC students in this article, why do they keep coming back to study?

Let’s go ask them.



Flower Power



An entrepreneur, as generally defined, is an individual who starts and runs a small business. An entrepreneur dares to dream, assumes risks, and in the process, uses and introduces new ideas, products, and innovative ways of doing business.

In Mahidol University International College (MUIC), there are several budding businessmen who start their own enterprise. Albeit in a smaller scale and on a part-time basis, they find that it is a good way to use their business acumen and put into practical use what they have learned in the classroom.

Ms. Suchanat “Bonus” Kongpanunpol is one of them. A 3rd year Business Economics major, she has so far started two part-time businesses. Her first attempt was selling t-shirts. The second—and more successful—is selling flowers.

Named **florist.mu**, she markets her products through Instagram and goes into business during special occasions like Valentine’s Day and Graduation Day. She says her part-time business does well—not only does she recoup her capital but also makes a tidy profit as well. “I chose to sell flowers because I have a passion for them. I love being in flower gardens,” she said.

She was just in her freshman year when she started her flower-selling business by investing part of her personal savings to rent a stall and buy flowers. “I think it is better to use my own money as capital because I will be more careful with my investment.”

How has being an MUIC student helped her in setting up her own business?

Ms. Suchanat said MUIC expanded her world. “I meet a lot of other students with different backgrounds who also have their own businesses. They give me practical advice. Some students are customers who have a high purchasing power and they support my business.”

As a student in the BBA program, she learns many things that give her the needed edge in business. “For example, I have learned from accounting courses how to do an income statement about profits and expenses while I have learned, in marketing courses, to survey the market first to measure the demand and supply and be able to set the appropriate price of the product. I can apply every lesson that I have learned both inside and outside the classroom in real life,” she explained.

Asked what advice she can give to students thinking of starting their own small business, Ms. Suchanat said it is important to be a positive thinker and self-confident. “Being successful does not come from just thinking about it. It results from performing an action, continuing to do it and believing that your plan will work out eventually.”

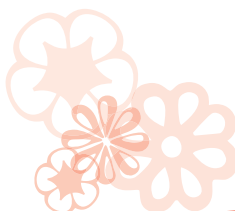
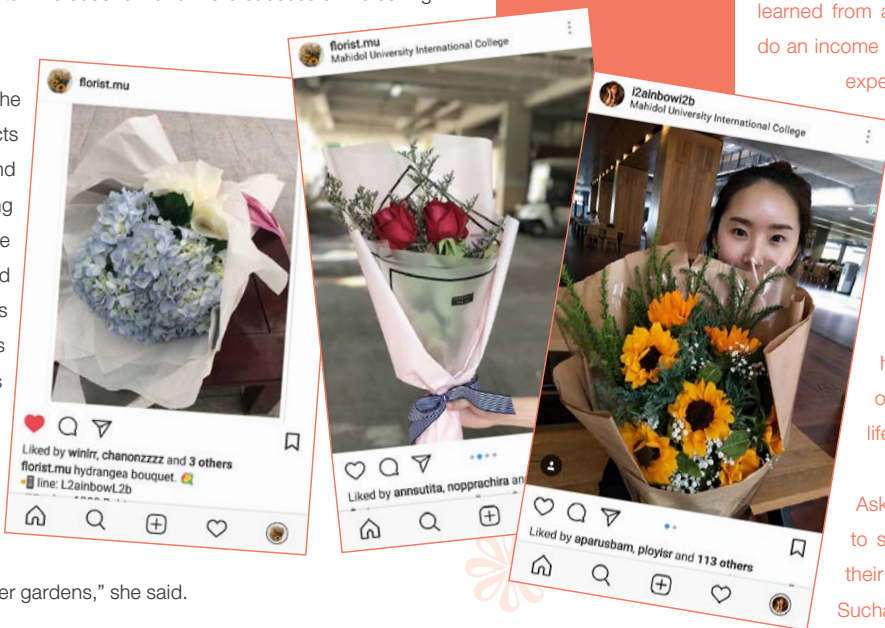




Photo Credit: British Council

THREE Minutes of FAME

Can you explain a scientific concept in layman's terms in just three minutes?

Well, **Mr. Apivich Hemachandra** certainly can. That's why he became winner of FameLab Thailand Competition 2018, a competition where contestants have to explain clearly and effectively a scientific concept to a general audience in just three minutes.

Organized by the British Council of Thailand, the contest drew almost a hundred competitors from medical students to science undergraduate students to researchers to professors, according to Mr. Apivich.



In the end, the Physics major was selected to be one of the 10 finalists. So on April 28, 2018, in front of a live audience at the Bangkok Art & Culture Centre (BACC), Mr. Apivich gave a presentation on his topic "How to safely send credit card details over the Internet" discussing the concept of RSA algorithm. And he won.

Kaleidoscope was able to ask him about some of his thoughts.

Why did you choose that topic?

The reason I chose the topic was because of its increasing significance in our lives especially when [we transact a lot of business] online nowadays. I felt it was something that people who use such system should know about.

The topic also involves some mathematics, which I found fascinating and thought might also be interesting for people who may have wondered about the uses of mathematics in life.

What's the hardest part of the competition? What's the easiest?

The easier part was figuring out the different points I need to say for my speech.

The hardest part, however, was definitely how to condense all the things I wanted to say into a three-minute talk. My initial draft for the finals was nearly five minutes long, and much work was spent deciding which part was crucial enough to keep. Rehearsing the speech was also required so that I could keep within the set time limit.

How did being an officer of the Debate Club help you win?

A lot of the things I learned from debating was how to make your speech sound interesting and simple enough to follow. While the topics I chose for FameLab was vastly different from those I ever discussed in debating, the skills that I have learned through debating were definitely very useful in trying to express my thoughts clearly and interestingly.

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