

2 President's Review and Vision

The academic year 2002/03 could be remembered as an important milestone in the development of the Institute For Tourism Studies. Two strategic projects that were started in 2001 were completed. Their effects on the future development of the Institute will be long-lasting. The first was the consolidation of the old curriculum of the Bachelor degree programme, and the second was the design and construction of the new academic wing, now named as "Inspiration Building".

In the consolidation of the curriculum, the faculty has turned to existing tourism and hospitality programs offered by WTO (World Tourism Organization)-recognised educational institutions and universities for reference and guidance. The result was a streaming of a number of related courses to make room for emerging and strategic ones and enrichment of the current practicum and extra-curricula activities. The new structure blends the best of the two worlds - professional and academic. While students are drilled on professional skills and attitudes in their junior and formative years, they are equipped with essential theories and knowledge about management and policy-making in their senior years.

An international curriculum carries substance only if it is matched with a high-quality academic team and a vast international network. In 2002/03, IFT welcomed aboard 7 new faculty members whose extensive pedagogic and research experience in Turkey, Hong Kong, Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada has certainly added momentum to the current academic activities and stepped up our research efforts. To create better conditions for student and faculty exchange, IFT has signed cooperation agreements with various universities and institutions, among which are the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of Purdue University in the United States of America and NHTV Breda University of Professional Education in the Netherlands.

The completion of the "Inspiration Building" has given the Mong-Há Hill and IFT a brand-new look. Students and the public are greeted right at the bottom of the hill by joyous and lively shades of yellow and red against a sophisticated gray background. The new space, which measures 5,653 sq.m., consists of 17 classrooms, a 270-seat auditorium, a multi-functional court, a squash court, a recreation area, a conference room, and other academic and supporting facilities.

All these improvements were made to enable the Institute to develop a larger pool of high-caliber human resources in response to the growing needs of the community, fueled by the liberalisation of the local gaming sector. A few challenges lie along the rosy path, though. These include maintaining the quality of education offered to our students amid an increase in intake, developing new courses in response to emerging needs of the industry, engaging in relevant research in tourism development with the hope of providing reference to policy-makers, and maintaining an international outlook. With your support, our team members and students are confident in facing them by taking a step at a time.



Fanny Vong, Ph. D.
President
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