

## FOREWORD

The articles in this issue of the ABAC Journal primarily address two of the main concerns of Assumption University, the personal development of young people and the nature of business and social activity in the modern world. As leaders of an institution of higher education the administration and faculty of AU have not only been concerned with finding the optimal way of both giving our students a good technical education, with a broad awareness of modern social, economic, and political issues, but also making them virtuous people who will exercise their business leadership in an appropriate and ethical manner. We believe that these aspects of our mission are not incompatible and this is reflected as we present these reports to our readers.

Parental child rearing and education, particularly in higher education, are separate tasks with different characters but are necessarily very closely related. As Aristotle noted long ago, the development of knowing and virtuous human beings had to have its start in early training. In the modern world the role of parenting has been made even more complex as childhood has been extended into adolescence and as Professor Dr. David Tin Win and Thandee Kywe note in their astute article, “Parenting Adolescents - The Most Difficult and Extremely Important Task”, adolescence has extended downwards into ages that would have not long ago been clearly in the childhood years. The crises of adolescence provide immense opportunities for growth but their resolution is never easy and these years are fraught with dangers. The authors provide a guide to parenting in these critical years through an examination of three central issues: goal setting, conflict management, and raising self-esteem.

Krisana Kitchroen, Director, Office of the President, addresses the other side of this issue in a review of the literature on service quality in educational institutions. Such institutions face a delicate task: they must help students establish and define goals in ways that they otherwise might not have but they also must satisfy the students as clients. The author of this article suggests that it would be useful to use instruments from the business world, the SERVQUAL and IPA models, both of which compare client expectations with their perceptions, as a means of evaluating and planning the educational experience. Colleges must challenge students in ways that go beyond their expectations, certainly, but they must also meet those expectations. This article describes tools that can help in this delicate endeavor.

Our students must be aware of how the rapidly changing technological picture will affect the business world into which they will enter, and Isaac G. Mathews,

provides a strong account of how such adaptations must be made in one industry, online brokerage houses, in light of a development, day trading, itself made possible by online technology. As these online brokerage houses became successful they suddenly had to compete with the online components of traditional brokerage houses and the author provides an analysis of how they might successfully compete. The multiple moves of this complex competitive game demonstrate the quickness and complexity of the economic world that our students will be moving into.

Professor Dr.Kriengsak Chareonwongsak takes a more international perspective in investigating the successes, potential, and challenges have faced and will face ASEAN as it has shifted from a geopolitical organization to its role as a force for development in Southeast Asia. An awareness of such factors are critical for our students, and for all local businesspersons. No business of any size can remain isolated from the international economy for long and cooperative organizations like ASEAN will play a role in development throughout the world.

Another article of this issue, Kevin J. Joyce's analysis of Las Vegas water consumption in the light of conservation policy may seem far from the concerns of those connected with a school located not in a desert but in a tropical climate. The general principles that he uses in his analysis and the suggestions he makes are, however, applicable to any ecologically-related resource conservation problem and should therefore be of general interest. A too close focus on local conditions, after all, may lead to a lack of flexibility in thought and problem-solving.

The final article, by Dr. Suthira Duangsamorn, steps back from immediate concerns to consider some of the larger issues that remain close to the heart of educational and cultural endeavors. Observing that nations express their most basic values through their literature Dr. Duangsamorn examines how Thailand's Buddhist tradition can be found within the poetry and prose of Thai Writers, M.R. Kukrit Pramoj and Angkarn Kalyanapong and in the novel of Chart Korbchitti. This article may be less involved with day to day practical life than the others in the issue but the spiritual and philosophical values she and the writers consider provide the basic context that allows the practical endeavors to be truly meaningful.

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