

# Making the Faculty Senate Function: A Challenge to Its President

Natchaya Chalaysap\*

## Abstract

In mid-2010, several months into the first year of his three-year term of office as president of the nearly moribund Faculty Senate of the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Associate Professor Taweesak Sutakavatin found himself at a loss to know what to do to revitalize the organization. The veteran lecturer in NIDA's School of Public Administration and former Vice President for Planning had assumed office with great expectations and plans for building the Faculty Senate ("Senate") into a vibrant and effective voice and representative of the faculty in the affairs of the university. At the time of the landslide faculty vote that propelled him into the position, Prof. Taweesak had deemed it a distinct honor to be accorded the privilege of continuing to make contributions to the advancement of the institution, albeit in a decidedly different role than his erstwhile service as the university's senior planning executive. He had been convinced that his administrative experience and expertise would stand him good stead in his new role as president of the Senate.

Now, after five months of grappling with problems that ran the gamut (from poor meeting attendance and limited cooperation by Faculty

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\* This case study was written by Dr. Natchaya Chalaysap, Associate Professor of Foreign Language Education (TESOL), Graduate Faculty of Language and Communication, at the National Institute of Development Administration (Thailand) and is based on a combination of field and archival research. NIDA cases are developed solely as the basis for class discussion, and are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of effective or ineffective administrative or managerial practice. Copyright © 2010 National Institute of Development Administration.

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Senate committee members to continuing disinterest and non-involvement by members of the faculty at large to Senate budgetary and staffing constraints and so on), Prof. Taweesak's initial "delight" in having been elected to the post had largely been replaced by growing concern about his prospects of making the Senate function at all. He knew well that unless he could discover ways in which to gain the commitment and teamwork from Senate committee members and the faculty as a whole and overcome the faculty's disinterest, apathy and cynicism, all of his earlier hopes and plans for the Senate would come to naught.

Unique among cases of its genre, the case tracks the actual investigatory process pursued by the newly Senate president when, at the outset of his term of office, he had set about learning as much as he could concerning the Faculty Senate. Thus, the case begins with information concerning the genesis of faculty senates at Thai universities, as well as what little of the founding and history of NIDA Faculty Senate as could be found or pieced together (Prof. Taweesak learned early that the Faculty Senate Office was completely devoid of organizational documents, including any chronicling of the Senate's history). An account of the Senate's mission and recent programmatic activities is then presented, followed by a discussion of a plethora of problems and issues that had been serious obstacles to the efficient and effective functioning of organization. Previous attempts and current thinking concerning resolution of some of these obstacles are then elaborated. The case then presents the "voices" (i.e., views, thoughts, suggestions, and the like) of several different groups of "stakeholders" in the functioning of the Senate: past and present presidents and vice presidents of the Faculty Senate, past and present Faculty Senate committee members, and faculty members from different NIDA schools.

The case ends with Associate Professor Taweesak's vocalized determination to not give up hope, but to persevere. But, in so doing, he had to come up with answers to a number of questions, among which were: "What activities should be included in his action plan?"; "How could he get the Senate committee members and lecturers in general to participate in the Senate activities?"; "How could he deal with inadequate personnel and Senate financial resources?"; and, "How could he make the Faculty Senate more important in the eyes of the faculty in general?"

**Keywords:** Decision-making, Participation, Incentives, Management

# การขับเคลื่อนสภาคณาจารย์: สิ่งท้าทายประธานสภาฯ

ณัฐชยา เฉลยทรัพย์

## บทคัดย่อ

ในช่วงกลางปี พ.ศ. 2553 หลายเดือนที่เขาก้าวเข้าสู่ปีแรกของวาระ 3 ปีของการดำรงตำแหน่งประธานสภาคณาจารย์สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์ (นิด้า) ที่มีสภาพจะไปไม่รอด รศ. ทวีศักดิ์ สุทกะวาทีน รู้สึกมีแรงทำอะไรไม่ถูกได้แต่ครุ่นคิดว่าจะฟื้นฟูองค์กรอย่างไร อาจารย์ผู้คร่ำหวอดของการของคณะรัฐประศาสนศาสตร์ และอดีตรองอธิการบดีฝ่ายวางแผนผู้นี้ เข้ารับตำแหน่งประธานสภาฯ ด้วยความคาดหวังสูงและมีแผนจะทำให้สภาคณาจารย์ เป็นองค์กรที่มีประสิทธิภาพเป็นตัวแทนของคณาจารย์ในเรื่องที่เกี่ยวกับสถาบันฯ ในตอนที่เขาได้รับคะแนนเสียงท่วมท้นให้เข้ารับตำแหน่งประธานสภาฯ เขามั่นใจว่าประสบการณ์ด้านการบริหาร และความเชี่ยวชาญของเขาจะทำให้เขาทำงานในบทบาทใหม่ได้ดีแม้จะมีบทบาทที่แตกต่างไปจากเมื่อครั้งที่ดำรงตำแหน่งรองอธิการบดีฝ่ายวางแผน

หลังจาก 5 เดือนที่เต็มไปด้วยปัญหาห่อเหี่ยว ตั้งแต่ปัญหาการที่กรรมการสภาคณาจารย์ไม่ค่อยเข้าร่วมประชุมประจำเดือน จนถึงปัญหาที่อาจารย์ทั่วไปไม่สนใจเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมสภางบประมาณและบุคลากรที่มีจำกัด และอื่น ๆ ความเบื่อกับใจของ รศ. ทวีศักดิ์ในช่วงต้นที่ได้รับการเลือกตั้งใหม่ ๆ ก็ถูกแทนที่ด้วยความกังวลที่ทวีขึ้นเรื่อยๆ ว่าจะอย่างไรจึงจะทำให้สภาคณาจารย์ดำเนินไปได้ตลอดรอดฝั่ง เขารู้ดีว่า ถ้าเขาไม่สามารถหาวิธีที่จะได้รับความร่วมมือจากกรรมการสภาฯและอาจารย์ทั่วไป และไม่สามารถทำให้อาจารย์ทั้งหลายเห็นคุณค่าของสภาคณาจารย์ได้ ความฝันและแผนซึ่งเขาวาดไว้ ก็คงจะล้มเหลวแน่นอน

สิ่งที่ไม่เหมือนกรณีศึกษาเรื่องอื่น คือ ตั้งแต่เริ่มเข้ารับตำแหน่ง รศ. ทวีศักดิ์ ประธานสภาคณาจารย์สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์คนใหม่ต้องการย้อนรอยอดีตเพื่อทราบเรื่องต่าง ๆ ที่เกิดขึ้นก่อนสมัยของเขา เขาต้องการทราบให้ได้มากที่สุดเท่าที่จะทำได้ เกี่ยวกับความเป็นมาและการดำเนินงานของสภาคณาจารย์ของสถาบันฯ ดังนั้น กรณีศึกษานี้จึงเริ่มต้นด้วยข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับกำเนิดของสภาคณาจารย์ทั้งหลายในมหาวิทยาลัยในประเทศไทย และโดยเฉพาะการก่อตั้งสภา

คณาจารย์ของนิดา ซึ่งมีข้อมูลน้อยมากเนื่องจากสำนักงานสภาคณาจารย์ไม่มีเอกสารที่เกี่ยวข้องกับประวัติความเป็นมาขององค์กร รศ. ทวีศักดิ์ ต้องปะติดปะต่อข้อมูลให้เป็นเรื่องราว กรณีศึกษาี้เริ่มด้วยการนำเสนอภารกิจและกิจกรรม ตลอดจนโครงการของสภาคณาจารย์เมื่อไม่นานมานี้ตามด้วยการอภิปรายเกี่ยวกับประเด็นปัญหาที่เป็นอุปสรรคต่อการดำเนินงานของสภาคณาจารย์ให้มีประสิทธิภาพและประสิทธิผล จากนั้นจึงให้รายละเอียดเกี่ยวกับความพยายามในอดีตไม่นานมานี้และความคิดของสภาคณาจารย์ในปัจจุบันเกี่ยวกับวิธีแก้ปัญหาหรืออุปสรรคในการดำเนินงานของสภาฯ กรณีศึกษาี้ได้นำเสนอความคิดเห็น ข้อเสนอแนะ และอื่น ๆ จากกลุ่มคนที่เป็นผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียในการดำเนินงานของสภาคณาจารย์ ไม่ว่าจะเป็นประธานสภาฯ ในอดีตและปัจจุบัน รองอธิการบดีฝ่ายวางแผนคนปัจจุบันซึ่งเคยดำรงตำแหน่งรองประธานสภาคณาจารย์คนที่ 1 กรรมการสภาคณาจารย์ในอดีตและปัจจุบัน ตลอดจนอาจารย์จากคณะต่าง ๆ ในสถาบันฯ

กรณีศึกษาี้จบด้วย รศ. ทวีศักดิ์ประกาศความตั้งใจแน่วแน่ที่จะทำให้สภาคณาจารย์นิดาเป็นองค์กรที่อาจารย์ทั้งหลายของสถาบันมองเห็นความสำคัญและเข้ามามีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรม จะพากเพียรทำงานต่อไปโดยไม่ท้อแท้สิ้นหวัง แต่ถ้าจะทำเช่นนั้นได้สำเร็จ เขาก็จะต้องตอบคำถามหลายคำถาม ในบรรดาคำถามเหล่านั้น คือ กิจกรรมใดบ้างที่เขาควรจะบรรจุไว้ในแผนปฏิบัติงาน เขาจะทำให้กรรมการสภาคณาจารย์และอาจารย์ทั่วไปมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมของสภาฯ ได้อย่างไร เขาจะจัดการอย่างไรดีกับบุคลากรและทรัพยากรการเงินที่ไม่พอเพียง และเขาจะทำให้สภาคณาจารย์มีความสำคัญในสายตาของอาจารย์ทั่วไป ได้อย่างไร

**คำสำคัญ:** การตัดสินใจ การมีส่วนร่วม แรงจูงใจ สิ่งจูงใจ การบริหารจัดการ

Reminiscing in mid-2010 after the just-adjourned monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate of the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Associate Professor Taweesak Sutakavatin, a veteran lecturer in NIDA's School of Public Administration, could manage only a forlorn sigh as he recalled how pleased he had been when, at the January 2010 meeting of the Faculty Senate, he had been elected as the organization's new president. At the time it had seemed like a real honor and a privilege to head the organization that was the official "voice of the faculty."

A former NIDA Vice President of Planning (until he resigned in August 2009 to take a short break), Prof. Taweesak had focused his interest on the presidency of the Faculty Senate after his subsequent candidacy for the deanship of the School of Public Administration had come to naught. He had very much desired to continue to contribute to the development and advancement of the university, and leading the Senate had seemed like an opportune way in which to do so. As the President of the Faculty Senate he would be able to not only attend the monthly meetings of the deans and center directors, but also serve as a member of the NIDA Council, the university's top administrative body, which functioned like the board of directors of a business corporation. Although he knew that he would not have a vote in deliberative discussions of the deans and center directors, as the representative of the NIDA faculty as a whole, he would have a voice on the NIDA Council.

He had thus been delighted to have won the election to the presidency of the Faculty Senate by a landslide vote, with most Faculty Senate committee members having voted for him in the belief that his previous administrative experience would enable him to make the Faculty Senate function more efficiently, turning it into a vital, active, and recognized organization in the eyes of the faculty from all schools. Now, however, nearly six months in the role, Prof. Taweesak initial "delight" had largely been replaced by concern about the prospects of being able to make the Senate function *at all*.

Pursuit of his plans to transform the largely moribund organization into a vibrant and effective Faculty Senate would entail the performance of many tasks – ones that necessitated ongoing commitment and teamwork from the faculty as a whole and, in particular, from members of the Faculty Senate. But, given the levels of disinterest and apathy – among other problems and issues – that he had encountered to date, Prof. Taweesak,

was nearly at a loss to determine what to do to gain greater involvement and participation by the Faculty Senate committee members.

## **Overview of the NIDA Faculty Senate: Genesis and Early History**

Immediately following his assumption of office, Prof. Taweesak had begun to research the history of the NIDA Faculty Senate in the quest for insights into what previous senates had done and what problems they had faced. But, he found virtually no documents in the Faculty Senate Office by which he could trace the organization's developmental history. Further, in marked contrast to the usually complete histories of faculty senates at other universities (e.g., their endeavors, accomplishments, etc.) that could readily be accessed via the Internet, only a highly parsimonious account of the inception of the NIDA Faculty Senate could be found on the NIDA website.<sup>1</sup> Thus, forced to rely on the sparse information contained on the NIDA website concerning the origin of faculty senates at Thai universities in general and at NIDA in particular, Prof. Taweesak could reconstruct only a fragmented account of the broad contours of NIDA Faculty Senate's developmental history.

### **Genesis of University Faculty Senates in Thailand**

The phenomenon of faculty senates in Thailand had their genesis in the upheavals and subsequent profound societal changes of 1973, when students across the nation took to the streets to demand the resignation of the centralized military-led government and the restoration of democratic rule based on and reflecting the will of the citizenry. From these initial protests aimed at overthrowing dictatorial rule in the political and governmental arenas, the demand for greater participation soon spread to embrace the administration and management of most Thai organizations and institutions, including universities. Organizational members and stakeholders in setting after setting began to demand that they be given a voice in organizational decisions and policies that greatly impacted their work, careers, and well-being.

Traditionally, there had existed a clear and nearly inviolable demarcation of roles and functions as between university governance and faculty responsibilities: appointed administrators held the sole and exclusive right to administer their institutions, while faculty members were charged with teaching, research, and service responsibilities. Although grumblings concerning their lack of input in administrative decisions that

greatly affected them occasionally arose within faculty ranks, these were largely intermittent and fleeting. They had heretofore never precipitated a move by university administrators or faculties to propose a modification of the *status quo*.

However, in the immediate aftermath of the success of activists in forcing the 1973 dissolution of the military dictatorship of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, faculty members from twelve universities throughout the country joined together to call for the right to participate in the administration of their universities. From May 23-25, 1974, faculty members from the twelve universities convened a seminar in Chiang Mai University in Chiang Mai province, aimed at determining the general structure, roles and responsibilities of faculty senates. The outcome was the establishment of faculty senates in all universities in the country.

### **Founding of the NIDA Faculty Senate: Early Structure and Governance**

Through the concerted efforts of the faculty and the top administration, the NIDA Faculty Senate came into being in 1976, with the passing of the enabling Statute of B.E. 2519 (subsequently amended in B.E. 2543, 2544, and 2552). As it was deemed the voice of the faculty in matters of university governance, all lecturers, researchers and librarians were *de facto* members. Within a few years of its establishment, the NIDA Faculty Senate joined the Council of University Faculty Senates of Thailand (CUFST), which was established in 1980 to serve as the national coordinating and advocacy body for the group as whole.<sup>2</sup>

In his largely futile search for a reasonably complete history of the NIDA Faculty Senate, Prof. Taweesak had been able to discover neither the identity of the initial president nor even the number of presidents who had preceded his own election to the office.<sup>3</sup> Neither could any documentation that existed.

It was known, however, that the Faculty Senate presidents were usually senior lecturers. In the earlier years of the organization, Faculty Senate presidents had been regularly invited to attend the meetings of deans and directors, but did not serve on the NIDA Council. A 2006 amendment to the Statute of NIDA had made the Faculty Senate president an *ex officio* member of the NIDA Council.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, in 2009 the Statute of NIDA had been amended to provide for an extension of the Senate president's term of office from two to three years.<sup>5</sup> With this latter amendment to the Statute of NIDA, the Faculty Senate president



was also accorded workload credit equivalent to the teaching of three courses, which meant that he did not need to teach. This dispensation was not extended to other Faculty Senate committee members.

In its early days, the Faculty Senate's charter had made provisions for the election of a single vice president. However, from 2005 onwards, *two* vice presidents – Vice President #1 and Vice President #2 – were elected to assist the president with his duties. Their term of office was the same as that of the Senate president. However, the vice presidents did not have any special responsibility, except for attending meetings in and outside NIDA as assigned by the Senate president.

## **The NIDA Faculty Senate: Mission, Membership, and Programs**

### **Mission and Objectives of the NIDA Faculty Senate**

As stipulated in the Statute of NIDA, B.E. 2552, the main mission of the NIDA Faculty Senate was to “give the top administration consultations and recommendations related to NIDA activities in order for the latter to run the Institute smoothly and efficiently.”

The objectives of the organization encompassed the following:

1. to boost academic progress and maintain academic quality standards;
2. to promote ethics among the NIDA faculty, other types of academic staff (namely, researchers and librarians), and support personnel;
3. to develop good relations among the NIDA faculty, other types of academic staff (namely, researchers and librarians), and support personnel;
4. to coordinate with the NIDA top administration;
5. to coordinate with faculty senates of other universities in carrying out activities that benefit university faculty nationwide;
6. to listen to opinions on different matters from the faculty, other types of academic staff (i.e., researchers, librarians), and support personnel and report their views to the top administration; and
7. to carry out other activities assigned by the NIDA president that benefit NIDA and society.

### **Selection and Composition of the Faculty Senate Committee**

To accomplish the mission and objectives, the aforementioned Statute of NIDA provided for the establishment of several sub-committees under the Faculty Senate, each of which was assigned primary



responsibility for oversight of the Senate's activities in discrete areas. Prof. Taweesak's review of the pertinent provisions of the Statute surfaced some important findings concerning the membership of these all-important committees – e.g., prerequisite qualifications, selection procedures, terms of office, and general attitude of the faculty toward service on the committees, and so on.

First, the Statute provided for the election of two types of members to the Faculty Senate Committee – i.e., those elected by and representing the various NIDA schools and centers and those elected “at large” by the faculty and other academic staff (i.e., researchers and librarians) as a whole (See Exhibit 1). The number of each type of members depended on the number of schools and academic centers at a particular time. The Statute stipulated that the number of general representatives was to be equal to that of school representatives, but that no more than two general representatives from the same school or centers were allowed to serve as general (or, “at large”) representatives. [The total number of both categories of representatives during Prof. Taweesak's term was 22.] Before the Statute of NIDA, B.E. 2552, the term of each Faculty Senate, and therefore committee members' term, lasted two years, but was subsequently changed to three years to coincide with the change in terms of office for all the NIDA administrators. The Statute also provided for the termination of committee membership under specified circumstances or conditions – e.g., death, resignation, retirement, and appointment to an administrative post. Committee members could also be removed if found to lack the requisite qualifications to serve, or if ousted in a three-quarters majority vote of the committee as a whole.

With respect to the composition of Faculty Senate Committee, school representatives tended to be newly recruited or junior lecturers due to the perennial lack of interest among the more senior lecturers in serving in the Faculty Senate. New and/or junior faculty members found it less feasible to decline service as their school's representative as compared to senior lecturers. In the case of general representatives, it was often even more difficult for the selection committee to find lecturers to fill up the positions. Very often the selection committee found that there were not enough candidates to fill the general committee member slots, necessitating either an extension of nomination period or direct pleas to individual lecturers to volunteer to fill up the remaining positions. Usually past committee members of the Faculty Senate would accept such pleas, out of sympathy for the organization and a desire to sustain it. In situations in which

the number of nominated lecturers and applicants exactly equaled the required number of general representatives, there would be no election. All of them would automatically become general representatives.

The president of the Faculty Senate was elected at the inauguration of each new Senate at a meeting presided over by the NIDA president or his representative. Elections to other positions on the committee (e.g., secretary) were then held by the newly constituted Senate, with the newly elected president presiding.

### **Programmatic Activities of the Faculty Senate**

Traditionally, the Faculty Senate had undertaken a number of programmatic activities – some of which were more or less “standard” (in that they tended to be recurrent) and others of which were more changeful (in that they tended to be a function of the visions of the particular incumbents in the offices of the Faculty Senate and NIDA presidencies). Among the former activities were attendance by NIDA Senate representatives in CUFST’s monthly meetings and periodic academic seminars. An example of perennial activity was that of selecting the outstanding NIDA lecturers to compete in CUFST’s annual nationwide contest for designation as the best lecturer of the year in the four areas: social sciences, humanity, health science, and science and technology. As part of this endeavor, the NIDA Faculty Senate was also required to send its committee members to participate in the selection sub-committees for this purpose. A final example of a “standard” activity was the Faculty Senate’s annual nomination of NIDA’s most outstanding lecturer in ethical behavior to compete with those from other universities for the prestigious ML Ngamchit Burachat award from the the Foundation of the same name.

The more dynamic set of activities that the Faculty Senate undertook *inside* NIDA, tended to vary from year to year, depending on the vision and initiatives of its president and the tasks assigned by the top administration. The action plan of Associate Professor Taweesak’s immediate predecessor, Associate Professor Dr. Pachitchanat Siripanit of the School of Applied Statistics, was a good example of the range of internal endeavors the Senate sometimes pursued. The four main activities covered by Dr. Pachitchanat’s action plan were: the arrangement of academic meetings, seminars and conferences (apart from the monthly Faculty Senate committee meetings); the production of Faculty Senate publications; fund-raising; and, the implementation of tasks assigned by the

NIDA president (See Exhibit 2).

Notwithstanding such conscientious planning, the outcomes of these action agendas not infrequently fell short of what the Faculty Senate president had desired. Sometimes agenda items were either not implemented at all or incompletely implemented. For example, among Dr. Pachitchanat's action items, neither the proposed Faculty Senate seminar outside NIDA nor the periodic luncheon gatherings had actually materialized. Additionally, Dr. Pachitchanat's proposed Faculty Senate newsletter and journal publications had come to naught. To wit, none was published during her term in office, although a good-faith attempt to do so had been made. (A former Faculty Senate staff member revealed that in much earlier years when a Faculty Senate journal had been published and assigned to her for distribution, she discovered that very few faculty were interested in receiving a copy of *any* Faculty Senate publications, be it a journal or a newsletter. This reality had led to the cessation of written accounts of academic meetings and seminars – their replacements being video tapings of events, with CDs used to store the records.)

Typical of the types of assignments given the Faculty Council by the NIDA president were the three main tasks that Prof. Taweesak's predecessor had received. Those tasks were:

- (1) keeping the faculty's ethics under surveillance;
- (2) selecting the best NIDA lecturer of the year; and
- (3) checking the students' evaluation of lecturers' performance and behavior, and reporting extreme cases to the administration so that the deans could give a warning to those lecturers who did not follow the code of conduct.

While the NIDA president expected the Senate president to execute such assigned tasks, the latter theoretically could decline to do so if he/she disagreed with any of them.

One activity organized by the Faculty Senate Office in years past, albeit not on an annual basis, was one-day observation tours for all NIDA faculty, the objective of which was to foster good relationships among faculty members from different schools. The Office of the Faculty Senate paid for all the expenses incurred during such tours. In later years, however, not many faculty members had joined the tours – a reality that led to invitations to the support staffs from all the schools, centers, and divisions to participate in the activities. In fact, the support staffs tended to participate in larger numbers than the faculty itself.

Because the budget allocated by the Institute to the Faculty Senate was quite modest, former Senate president, Dr. Pachitchanat, had initiated the idea of the Faculty Senate undertaking projects with income-generating potential. Her initial proposal was that the Senate request funds from the NIDA Research Center to conduct research, a proposal aimed at enabling the Senate to earn a significant sum of money with which to support extra activities. Agreeing with her idea, the Faculty Senate committee proceeded to establish a Faculty Senate research team that was assigned the task of conducting a survey on “the personnel’s satisfaction with the work performance of the NIDA top administration.”

Fund-raising was another activity organized by the Faculty Senate on an occasional basis, as the possibilities were limited only by the imagination and, of course, the availability of volunteers to organize and administer the events. Among the more popular activities that had been carried out by the Faculty Senate in years past were golf or bowling competitions. The challenge for each Faculty Senate president was that of coming up with an idea that would not overly burden the committee members, but that nonetheless held the promise of generating a significant amount of money.

These, then, were among the programmatic initiatives that Prof. Taweesak was pondering as he contemplated an action agenda for the first year of his three-year term in office. The overriding vision to which he was committed was that of increasing the faculty’s participation in NIDA activities. He was very much of the view that the Faculty Senate should be an arena for the faculty to express their views on NIDA affairs and on social and political issues and to foster good relations and teamwork among the faculty. What particular array of activities might best help bring these aspirations to fruition – this was of course the as-yet-unanswered question.

## **Problems and Obstacles Encountered to Date**

Now that several months and Senate meetings had transpired since his election as president, Associate Professor Taweesak could reflect on some of what he had known about the functioning of the Senate prior to this election. In so doing, he recalled that, in fact, he had earlier heard of snippets of stories concerning the difficulties experienced by past Senate leaders and active members in gaining faculty participation and involvement, among other problems. But, he had tended to take little note of those representations – and what notice he had deigned to take was

largely suffused with the assumption that the problem simply could not be particularly insurmountable. However, from having presided over several meetings of the Faculty Senate, he now had reason to question his earlier optimism.

### **Interest, Attendance, and Participation Issues**

When Associate Professor Taweesak, as the newly elected president of the Faculty Senate, took the gavel from NIDA's Vice President of Planning, who had conducted the January 2010 Senate election, the first item of business had been to preside over the election to fill the remaining leadership positions in the organization. It had been then that Prof. Taweesak got his first first-hand glimpse of the almost palpable lack of faculty interest and involvement. That is, a few members were willing to accept nominations to the posts of first or second vice president, but very few to the positions of secretary and treasurer. The difficulty had only increased when it came to inducing committee members to step forward to fill the other vital positions, such as heads of the academic affairs, research, reception, and other Senate committees. Although some of the committee heads could be appointed, if necessary, Prof. Taweesak had been disheartened that in the first meeting only the two vice presidencies, secretarial, and treasurer posts could be filled by election. He had no choice but to suspend further elections until a subsequent meeting, given that not all the members were in attendance, with some not having come at all and with others having already departed immediately prior to the commencement of the elections.

While these January 2010 events and observations had afforded Prof. Taweesak a glimpse of the magnitude of the challenge before him, the February meeting – the first meeting during which he presided in full – placed the challenge in bold relief. Recalling the events of that day, he could now see that the pronounced lack of interest observed at the January meeting had been simply a precursor of what lay ahead. To begin with, there had been the nearly interminable wait for Faculty Senate committee members to arrive. Specifically, after the free pre-meeting luncheon for committee members, he had found himself waiting and waiting and then waiting some more – for more than half an hour in total – for enough committee members to arrive to constitute the quorum needed to begin the meeting.

This he had found very unsettling because he had deemed the February gathering to be an especially important one, and not just because it represented the commencement of his term as president.

Rather, in his advance thinking and planning for the meeting, he had resolved that a major activity would be that of having the members brainstorm ideas that would become the Senate's agenda and action plan for its activities during the current year. He had also planned to appoint some members to attend to particularly urgent and time-sensitive matters that were under the purview of the Senate.

It had thus been with great expectations and great plans that Prof. Taweesak had approached the February gathering. His assumption had been that the committee members as a group would share his sense of the importance of the meeting. Alas, his expectations and hopes all but evaporated as he observed the sparse attendance of committee members, initially only about half of the twenty-two members of the committee. Some members were of the nature of "flash members." That is, they showed up at the venue, enjoyed the luncheon, entered the meeting room for about 15 to 30 minutes – and then disappeared. Others showed up merely to perform the act of appending their signatures to the attendance roster so that the meeting could proceed – and then, having performed their "duty," promptly vanished.

Witnessing all this, Prof. Taweesak had felt compelled to comment on it. Thus, when a quorum was finally reached, he "half ordered, half requested" that all members of the committee give priority to the Faculty Senate and make themselves available to meet from 12.00 noon to 3.00 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. (However, he would soon find, to his continued dismay, that the number of attendees in subsequent meetings did not increase.)

Additionally, once a quorum for the February meeting had finally been reached, and after Prof. Taweesak's gentle admonishment concerning the necessity of promptness and attendance, another task had to take priority over his planned agenda for the meeting. That is, he had to conduct *another* election – this time to replace the faculty member who had been elected as Senate secretary at the January meeting. The resigning secretary, in her letter to the Senate president, pleaded that not only had she not been in the January meeting when she was elected, but that taking on the new role would simply be too burdensome because she had to devote time and energy to another special assignment made by the NIDA President. With no one stepping forward to volunteer to take on the secretarial role, Prof. Taweesak had no choice but to ask the committee members in attendance to elect a new person to fill the position. Alas, he was crestfallen as a couple of attendees' response was to excuse



themselves from continued participation in the meeting due to “pressing matters” elsewhere. A replacement was eventually elected, but the time taken to do so was, in Prof. Taweesak’s view, excessive. It would have gone much faster, he opined to himself, had nearly everyone not sat back waiting on *someone else* to volunteer, or accept being nominated to, the post.

From all the foregoing, Prof. Taweesak could not escape the conclusion that many Faculty Senate committee members were not nearly as active as he had expected. They clearly had not much desire to devote themselves to this voluntary organization or even to involve themselves very much at all in deliberations concerning its plans and priorities.<sup>6</sup> While some faculty members became general committee members through the election process or because they volunteered to work for the organization, others (called “soldier volunteers”) had been “drafted,” as it were, by their schools to serve as Faculty Senate committee members just to fulfill the regulation stipulated in the Act of NIDA.

In the attempt to encourage Senate committee members to attend the monthly meetings, Associate Professor Taweesak had taken to having Mrs. Suparat of the Faculty Senate Office send meeting reminders by SMS message to their mobile phones, in addition to through the normal channel of invitation letters. This way, few members would be able to purport that they did not get notice of the meetings or that they “forgot.”

Participation, however, remained low, and not just with respect to the rate of participation of the committee members low but also that of faculty in general, whose participation in Senate activities was even lower. Two interacting factors were deemed to account for this. First, faculty members in general did not recognize the importance of the Faculty Senate. Second, consumed as most faculty members were by the workload imposed by the need to fulfill three categories of requirements<sup>7</sup> critical to professional advancement, with workloads a function of academic rank, most faculty had not much time left to participate in activities of seemingly limited or questionable importance.

*Selecting “Best Lecturer” Nominees.* Associate Professor Taweesak discovered soon after he started his term in January 2010, that an immediate task before the Faculty Senate was that of identifying and nominating NIDA’s outstanding lecturers in earlier-mentioned four specific areas for purposes of having them enter into the CUFST national contest for best lecturers. This annual nation-wide competition was an important avenue for recognizing an institution’s exemplary faculty



members. It was important, he felt, that NIDA not become a non-contender by default, simply for want of anyone volunteering or being assigned to do the necessary groundwork to develop the list of nominees.

There being an extremely limited number of volunteers to take on the responsibility for leading Senate sub-committees, Prof. Taweesak had decided to preside over this sub-committee himself, while also prevailing upon members of the previous selection committee to continue service for another year. In his capacity as head of a sub-committee, Prof. Taweesak quickly encountered yet another obstacle to the smooth conduct of the affairs of the Senate. That is, it soon became evident that, quite apart from the noted reluctance of committee members to volunteer for service on the Senate's sub-committees, there was the additional problem of finding a time when all committee members were free to meet. After the initial meeting of the selection committee, at which only a 2-3 members attended, he resorted to calling the sub-committee's final meeting in the morning of the same day as the monthly Senate meeting in order to be reasonably assured of a higher level of member participation.

Further complicating the efficient and effective accomplishment of this task was the difficulty encountered in searching for NIDA lecturers who were ready to compete for the title of NIDA best lecturer of the year. First, about half of the NIDA faculty were junior lecturers and hence without a substantial portfolio of published works. Second, NIDA lecturers tended not to preserve comprehensive records of their accomplishments, thus making it exceptionally difficult to justify their nomination. In brief, the relative newness of the many of the junior lecturers, in conjunction with the absence of preparation (e.g., documentation of achievements) on the part of the faculty as a whole, combined to make this an often frustrating and time-consuming process.

*Attempts to Build a Spirit of Camaraderie.* From the outset of his term, Prof. Taweesak had been convinced that the building of a closer-knit faculty – one that demonstrated mutual respect and mutual concern – was of cardinal importance and indeed might well be a *prerequisite* for the building of a revitalized Faculty Senate. Hence, he had intentionally set about trying to cultivate the building of good relationship among the faculty from different schools. One of his initiatives was that of holding a birthday party for lecturers born in each month of the year, beginning in April 2010, the month of the NIDA president's birthday. Each month, the school representatives on the Senate were requested to informally invite their colleagues born in the particular month to join the party, which was

held at lunch time immediately before the monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate committee. Prof. Taweesak paid out of his own pocket for a generously sized cake that was specially ordered for the occasion. Alas, he soon discovered that camaraderie would not be so easily built.

The activity was successful in the inaugural month of April, when the NIDA president's birthday was recognized and celebrated. Thereafter, however, fewer lecturers whose birthdays were in consecutive later months attended the luncheon party. In July, apart from the Senate committee who attended the monthly meeting, only one non-committee member attended; in August, none came. Many faculty members later averred that they had not known about such an activity. (However, word did reach Prof. Taweesak and the remainder of the Senate that university officials working on the ninth floor where the Faculty Senate Office was located were very happy with the cake!)

*The Nature of the NIDA Faculty Culture.* Prof. Taweesak's experience with the faculty birthday parties were noteworthy, also, for what they revealed about the "culture" of the faculty – e.g., their rather pronounced aversion to participation in extracurricular activities. For example, most faculty rarely, if ever, attended conferences and cultural and religious activities held at NIDA, even when some of the meetings concerned issues vital to their working life. Instead, the support staffs were recruited to attend conferences or similar activities, while the faculty by and large restricted their involvements to their own work as lecturers and researchers. Many were engaged in various kinds of *outside* projects (e.g., commentary or actions that addressed hot political issues), thereby gaining public visibility – often with the justification that such endeavors burnished NIDA's reputation, not to mention the activists' own pocketbooks. Although Prof. Taweesak was very familiar with NIDA's organizational culture, he had been a little taken aback by its strength even among Faculty Senate committee members whom he had thought would have, by virtue of the Senate roles to which they had agreed, adopted a more institutionally beneficial set of values, beliefs, and norms.

*The Scarcity of Budgetary Resources.* While in some past years, the inability of the Senate to pursue all its planned activities had as much to do with poor faculty participation as with budget limitations, on the whole the work and potential impact of the Faculty Senate were more often constrained by limited budgetary allocations than by poor faculty participation *per se*. In this connection, the Baht 550,000 budget available for use during Prof. Taweesak's first year in office (Baht 20,000 from the

Thai government fiscal budget and Baht 530,000 from NIDA itself) would likely need supplementation if all of the Senate activities that Dr. Taweesak had planned were to be undertaken. (See Exhibit 2 for the activities plan and associated budgetary allocations of the previous Faculty Senate committee.)

Over the years, presidents of the Faculty Senate had pursued different approaches to the problem of insufficient financial resources. A few of these methods entailed fundraising *via* various avenues, while others involved supplementation *via* the Senate president's own personal resources. With respect to fund-raising endeavors, three former Senate presidents – Professor Dr. Suchart Prasithrathasin, Assistant Professor Chareon Kuwinpan, and Associate Professor Dr. Pachitchanat Siripanit – had each devised fund-raising schemes (e.g., bowling and/or golf competitions) to support Senate activities not financially supported by NIDA. However, Prof. Taweesak's immediate past predecessor, Dr. Pachitchanat, had employed a distinctly novel approach – i.e., conducting a research study that generated Baht 285,000 to support Senate activities during her term of office<sup>8</sup>. In terms of budget supplementation via personal resources, one former Senate president, Associate Professor Dr. Suchitra Boonyarattapan, had used her own money to pay for special clothing for committee members to wear in uniform in a stage performance to celebrate a New Year's Day, and to buy items for merit-making at a religious day celebration.

*The Scarcity of Senate Support Staff.* Similarly, just as the Senate was expected to either do more with less (or, alternatively, devise ways to raise its own funds), so was it expected to accomplish its work with only one of the two Senate support members that had been its dedicated support personnel in earlier days. That is, with Miss Weereeya Wicha having retired, the Senate office tasks now fell on Mrs. Suparat Hengmo, the lone remaining staff member. (The second person attached to the office was merely a messenger delivering documents.) To make matters worse, not only did Mrs. Suparat have to perform the tasks of two people, she was also obliged to participate in other NIDA activities (e.g., attend training courses or seminars arranged for officials), failing which she would be ineligible for promotion when the time came. The ultimate implication of this, as Prof. Taweesak saw it, was that too ambitious a programmatic agenda for the Senate could potentially overwhelm the lone support person, as prospects were virtually nil that any committee members themselves would volunteer to “shoulder” the burden.

The main long-term solution to this problem that had been advanced by a couple of past presidents had been the request that top administration recruit a new employee for the Faculty Senate. To date, this request had not been successful. Hence, two other means of addressing the shortage were employed from time to time. First, although not at all convenient, Faculty Senate presidents occasionally sought project-implementation help from the NIDA central division. Second, in the past, a couple of Senate presidents had drawn upon the secretarial resources of their own academic units to assist with Faculty Senate tasks. Because the work of the Faculty Senate was periodically, as opposed to routinely, busy, these latter two “stop-gap” measures had sufficed – albeit, minimally – to enable the essential activities of the Senate to go forward, despite the chronically inadequate support staffing.

*The Handling of Assignments from the Top Administration.* From time to time, the top administration assigned specific tasks to the Faculty Senate. While the Senate could theoretically decline to accept these special assignments, as a practical matter the response of choice had nearly always been to try to accommodate such requests. Occasionally, however, these assignments posed problems. For example, during the term of Prof. Taweesak’s immediate past predecessor, the top administration requested that the Faculty Senate, pursuant to its mission to enforce the ethical code of conduct of the faculty, review student evaluations of lecturers’ performance and behavior and report extreme cases to the administration so that the deans could give a warning to those lecturers who did not follow the code of conduct.

It was, as the saying goes, a “*mission impossible*,” not the least because the Senate had absolutely no power to punish or otherwise sanction anyone judged to be remiss in one ethical area or another. The feedback from many lecturers was decidedly negative and, in some instances, quite hostile. The result: An enormous amount of negative feedback from the faculty directed at the Senate. This had been a rather painful experience for all concerned.

Moreover, in handling the tasks assigned by the top administration, previous Faculty Senates had found it helpful to be both proactive and innovative. For example, to attend to the top administration’s assignment to identify the best NIDA lecturer of the year, the previous Faculty Senate initiated a project called “Ajarn Rajapruek (Rajapreuk Lecturers).”<sup>9</sup> It set up a Faculty Senate committee to select the best NIDA lecturers in several areas— teaching, conducting research, and textbook writing.

Although a local competition, a major benefit was that of preparing NIDA lecturers to compete yearly for CUFST recognition as the best lecturers at the national level. (The top administration supported this activity with a Baht 25,000 grant.)

While there was no foolproof way to guard against the potentially negative fallout from some special assignments, the experience of the faculty ethics assignment that the Faculty Senate had accepted under Prof. Taweesak's immediate past predecessor had underscored the need to add an appropriate degree of caution to the traditional deference with which the Senate responded to assignments by the top administration. The experience also suggested that a Senate backed up by maximum faculty participation and involvement might be able to dissuade the top administration from throwing potentially "incendiary" issues into the laps of the Senate.

## **Voices of Various Faculty Stakeholders of the NIDA Faculty Senate**

Among the many faculty stakeholders of the Faculty Senate were past presidents of the organization, current and former Senate committee members, and faculty members from NIDA's different schools. The viewpoints of these several groups of stakeholders were solicited in the attempt to understand their perspectives on issues, problems, and challenges confronting the organization.

### **Voices of Past and Present Senior Officers of the Senate**

Two former Faculty Senate presidents, Professor Dr. Udom Thumkosit and Associate Professor Dr. Pachitchanat Siripanit, shared their views on the Faculty Senate's problems and provided suggestions to Associate Professor Taweesak. The following are paraphrased and condensed statements of their thoughts and suggestions.

Professor Dr. Udom: The NIDA Faculty Senate was unlike those at other universities in that it was fully "*simpatico*" with the NIDA organizational culture. Admittedly, the top administration sometimes listened to the Faculty Senate, and sometimes not; but, the organization's work could nevertheless be done successfully to a certain extent. The top administration often asked the Faculty Senate to carry out some activities that would be sensitive were they implemented by the administration itself.

In his view, the Faculty Senate was a mechanism to bring about participation of the faculty in NIDA activities. And, to encourage them to take part in the Faculty Senate activities, it was necessary to make them see the importance of the Faculty Senate. [However, he did not say exactly what should be done to achieve this.] To many, perhaps most, observers the Faculty Senate seemed to work slowly, often convening again and again before carrying out any activities. However, he personally *liked* this style of working.

As for fund-raising, he regretted that he did not raise supplementary funds during his term, instead relying solely on the budgetary allocation from NIDA. [He did not mention the crucial fund-raising help that he provided the successor Faculty Senate by holding a golf competition.] He suggested that to have a larger amount of budget allocated by the NIDA administration, the Faculty Senate should make a list of all yearly regular activities for the administration to consider, including the time schedule and action plans.

He also suggested that the Faculty Senate should make a study tour to outstanding faculty senates in foreign countries and visit organizations that would enable the Faculty Senate committee to generate some ideas for activities that would benefit Thai society as a whole. Upon their return to Thailand, the Faculty Senate would be expected to bring forth some concrete projects to show that they did not go abroad just for the sake of traveling.

**Associate Professor Dr. Pachitchanat:** The low rate of participation in Faculty Senate activities could be solved by the committee members themselves. That is, they should act as *public relations officers*, informing their colleagues of what the Faculty Senate did and asking them about their work problems, then tabling them in the Faculty Senate monthly meetings in order to help find solutions. This kind of activity would enable faculty members to see that the Faculty Senate was a channel for addressing their problems and protecting their rights.

She also believed that giving meeting allowances to those attending the monthly meetings could help increase the participation. She recalled that in her term, the top administration paid heed to the Faculty Senate — perhaps more than the faculty in general. The NIDA administration provided more space to the Faculty Senate office, including its own meeting room. It also allocated a budget, although not much, with which to undertake the occasional administration-initiated assignments.



Finally, Dr. Pachitchanat concurred with Dr. Udom's idea of arranging a study tour abroad, saying that CUFST had received a research grant from the Office of Tertiary Education to make observation tours overseas. When the tour group returned, they were required to conduct 4-5 research studies related to their observations and findings.

**Associate Professor Dr. Thawatchai:** Dr. Thawatchai Suppadit – the current NIDA Vice President for Planning and the formerly Vice President # 1 during the Senate presidency of Assistant Professor Charoen Kuwinpun – concurred in many of these views, with minor extensions of certain themes. Asserting that he had enjoyed working for the Faculty Senate and got to know many lecturers from other schools in the process, he saw as the major cause for the low participation rate of Faculty Senate committee the selection process used by individual schools to designate the school's representative in the Senate. Usually, deans would simply order a faculty member – usually a new or very junior one – to serve as the school's representative. While the “drafted” individual may have little or no interest in serving, he/she would not dare say so. But, in consequence, such drafted persons tended not to attend Senate meetings on a regular basis.

This observation, plus the fact that he saw the same faces in the Faculty Senate, suggested to him that some lecturers were willing to work for the organization without expecting anything in return, while others simply had no interest, and might well remain disinterested no matter what. One possible remedy, he suggested, was to amend the statute so that Senate committee members would consist of only those who *volunteer* to serve. He added that it was difficult to build lecturers' motivation to participate in faculty senate activities. If a person did not like social life or did not want to have any interaction with other people, hardly did any incentive would help.

With regard to incentives for Faculty Senate members, Dr. Thawatchai suggested that the Faculty Senate should submit the request for workload credit to the top administration for consideration. Readily admitting that in the past, such credit had not been granted, he pointed out that things had changed; and a new request, properly substantiated, might received a more sympathetic hearing. Another way to provide an incentive for the Faculty Senate committee members, he continued, was to have the top administration adjust the criteria for salary increases by taking into consideration work done for the Faculty Senate, and instructing the deans to do so, also.



As for the idea of providing a monetary incentive for attending Senate meetings, his view was that the NIDA administration could not grant allowances for attending meetings because, unlike many other committees at NIDA, the Faculty Senate did not generate its own income. If the Senate could earn extra money, it would be all right to grant meeting allowances. In terms of ways to increase recognition, Dr. Thawatchai mentioned that the administration was giving consideration to the idea of inviting Faculty Senate vice presidents to attend (but not vote in) the meetings of deputy deans and the directors for planning, for academic affairs, and for central administration. Concerning Associate Professor Taweesak's request to recruit a new employee to team with Mrs. Suparat, Dr. Thawatchai stated that he understood Mrs. Suparat's work habits and thus supported the request.

Wrapping up the interview with a statement of his views on what he would like to see by way of a Senate-top administration relationship, the Vice President for Planning stated that he wanted to see the Faculty Senate act as a consultant to the administration, not an enemy. It should act like a *senate*—giving suggestions, advice, and warnings, and offering an alternative policy or an alternative administration approach if the faculty disagreed with the administration's policy. However, this kind of Senate input should be based on the Institute's strategic plan. The Faculty Senate should be a bridge between the administration and the faculty as a whole. It should collect complaints and then screen them before presenting them to the administration. He concluded with the assurance that the NIDA administration was willing to support the Faculty Senate's work.

**The Current Faculty Senate President, Associate Professor Taweesak:** First pointing out that he had made the decision to affiliate with the Faculty Senate in just a short time (as he had not initially planned to get involved), Prof. Taweesak allowed that he was motivated by the opportunity to use his experience as NIDA Vice President for Planning to make contributions to the Faculty Senate. Before his current involvement, he had thought the Faculty Senate was totally separated from the top administration because the Faculty Senate was supposed to be autonomous. However, *having* joined the Faculty Senate, he now knew that both—the top administration and the Senate—could work together for NIDA progress.

Prof. Taweesak perceived that one weakness of the Faculty Senate was its lack of the quality of being an institution, as its work was not systematic. There was no continuity of work — no clearly defined specific

tasks or projects — that could be considered ongoing and routine. The second problem that he saw was poor participation. In his view, this problem could be solved if the Faculty Senate could show its success in different activities to the public. A Faculty Senate web site, he believed, could be a good channel of communication to the faculty in general.

Particularly noteworthy was the fact that all the foregoing commentators were in agreement that the Faculty Senate “should not act like an enemy of the top administration.” That is, unlike the faculty senates elsewhere, the NIDA Faculty Senate tried not to be in conflict with the top administration. It did not desire to act like an opposition party in a parliament or a labor or trade union. In fact, this view of the desired top administration/Faculty Senate relationship as collaborative, as opposed to adversarial, had been held by all NIDA faculty senates from the establishment of the organization to the present.

Prof. Taweesak did not want to do anything against the administration, either. He contended that if the administration and the Faculty Senate had a good rapport, it would be easy for the latter to negotiate with the former on any issue. Occasionally, he noted, some lecturers—including those in administrative positions – who disliked a certain policy of the top administration would approach him with an “informal” request that the Faculty Senate to take action about it. But, when Prof. Taweesak asked the complainant to put his request in written form, no such writing was forthcoming. As the Faculty Senate president did not want to have a conflict with the top administration, he decided not to do anything, but rather wait until someone “kicked the ball right to [his] foot.”

### **Voices of Past and Present Faculty Senate Committee Members<sup>10</sup>**

The views of past and present members of the Faculty Senate were not appreciably different from those of past and present senior Senate officials with respect to faculty participation problems and other pressing issues facing the Senate. Below are presented the views of a limited sample of past and present Senate committee members.

**The Participation Problem:** Time constraints were the main reason cited by Faculty Senate committee members to explain their absences from the monthly Senate meetings. Several pointed out that, like the faculty members in general, the demands on their time and energy often exceeded the available supply. Even compliance with Associate Professor Taweesak’s request at the February meeting that they make themselves available just once a month from 12.00 noon to 3.00 p.m.

on the first Thursday of each month was problematic, they asserted. They would attend the meetings whenever they could, they explained; but, with the Senate being, frankly, a much lower priority than their other responsibilities (e.g., teaching, research, student advisement, thesis and independent study supervision, etc.), there would be many instances in which they would simply be unable to spare the time.

The consensus seemed to be that the activities carried out by the Faculty Senate were not deemed particularly “serious” matters – hence, the difficulty they experienced in regularly allocating to Senate meetings a portion of the already limited time available to dispatch all their several duties as faculty members. Others mentioned that despite their doubts about the importance of the Senate’s work, they nonetheless did not wish to be the cause of its inability to meet and conduct its business. Hence, they were amenable to going to the meeting venue and signing their names on the registration form so the Senate would have the quorum needed to conduct its business. However, use of their names for purposes of establishing a quorum with which to hold a meeting did not extend to permitting the Senate to use their names in more serious or sensitive matters like statements about or involvement in political issues.

In addition, the combined comments of several junior lecturers who represented their respective schools on the Faculty Senate committee revealed many commonalities (and some divergences) in committee member attitudes toward service on the Faculty Senate, as well as in their views of the desirability of some form of monetary incentive and of how well the Senate had utilized, or was utilizing, their availability for committee tasks. The Senate committee member representative of the School of Business Administration (Assistant Professor Police Major Dr. Danuvasin Charoen) revealed that he had *volunteered* to represent his school because none of his colleagues had stepped forward to do so. He further revealed that although he stood ready to take on Senate tasks, he had thus far not been assigned anything to do. Hence, with no specific tasks to perform and with outcomes of dubious value emerging from the monthly meetings, he asserted that he felt it unnecessary to attend just to have a free lunch. Also, while he did not view money as an incentive to induce greater participation, he did put forward two suggestions that he felt could help increase participation. First, he suggested that the Senate committee create or sponsor activities that would yield greater recognition for committee members inside and outside of NIDA. Second, he proposed that the Faculty Senate undertake observation tours to outstanding

university faculty senates overseas in order to see how they function, as well as gain some ideas that could be adapted for use at NIDA. He was opposed, however, to the idea of going abroad just to travel, with no concrete results in terms of insights that could advance the functioning of the NIDA Senate.

Assistant Professor Dr. Arware Masae (a Senate committee member representative of the School of Social and Environmental Development) largely echoed Dr. Danuvasin's point of view, suggestions, and committee experiences to date – with one “twist” and one exception. Initially declaring that those committee members who had not been cooperative would, in all probability, not do so wherever they worked, he then went to assert that the current top administration's intense focus on faculty work achievement was driving faculty members to ignore the Faculty Senate. In contrast to Dr. Danuvasin's view, incentives of some kind, Dr. Arware maintained, were very much needed to attract faculty members to become involved with and work for the Faculty Senate.

Unlike Drs. Danuvasin and Arware, Dr. Wannapa Mahamaneerat from the School of Applied Statistics had already received a committee assignment from the Senate president – i.e., that of serving on the committee for selecting outstanding lecturers as nominees for the CUFST national contest. This had engendered in her a “sense of belonging” to the organization. This same sense of “belonging” was intimated by Assistant Professor Dr. Jintana Amornsa-nguensin, the current Senate treasurer. Attesting to the fact that being given an assignment to do in the Senate helped induce a feeling of “belonging” and also of peer recognition, she stated that when she first joined the Faculty Senate four years ago (she was presently in her third term), she had not been assigned anything to do. But once she was asked to be engaged in the same activity as Dr. Wannapa, her attitude toward the Senate and its work brightened.

**The Incentives Issue:** Several types of non-institutional incentives were provided by the immediate past and current presidents of the Faculty Senate to induce the committee members to attend Senate meetings and activities. During her term in office, for example, Dr. Pachitchanat had suits tailored for all committee members, using money generated by the previous Senate. Likewise, current president, Associate Professor Taweesak had commissioned tailor-made blazers and Tee-shirts with the NIDA Faculty Senate logo for committee members, as some of them were newcomers. Many committee members liked the idea of wearing these uniforms when attending the meetings of CUFST or welcoming Faculty

Senate committee members from other universities. A few, however, were less enthusiastic, variously claiming that the weather was “too hot” for such clothing and/or that the uniform would “make them look like students and support staffs” who also had the same type of garments with a NIDA logo.

Other past and current Faculty Senate committee members offered that while these kinds of non-institutional incentives were perhaps of some motivational value, some institutional incentives for committee members should also be available. In particular, the current secretary of the Senate (Dr. Watchareeporn Chaimongkol) argued that work on the Faculty Senate should be counted toward fulfillment of a faculty member’s expected teaching load. This, in her view, was likely to be a more attractive incentive than items of clothing with the NIDA logo. Her suggestion was that the Senate president should take up the issue with the top administration.

**The Fund-Raising Issue:** To supplement the Faculty Senate’s budget, some past and present committee members suggested repeating the survey of faculty views of the top administration’s work performance that had been initiated during Dr. Pachitchanat’s term. Among those who advanced this suggestion, most felt that the survey should be conducted on an annual basis, as it was an excellent way to augment the modest annual budgetary allocations provided by the top administration. Additional comments addressed subsidiary issues, such as finding ways to ensure that the workload entailed in conducting the survey be fairly distributed, so that it did not fall entirely on a few members of the Senate. Others suggested that more than one study per year be conducted if one such project proved too small to enable all to take part in it.

### **Voices of Faculty Members from Different Schools**

**The Participation Problem:** Disclaiming much knowledge concerning the activities of the Faculty Senate, Assistant Professor Dr. Ketkhanda Jaturongkachoke from the School of Language and Communication allowed that she had heard about the problem of poor participation by Faculty Senate committee members in the monthly meetings. As for participation from the faculty in general (and herself in particular), she stated that poor attendance at seminars and conferences sponsored by the Senate was, in part, due to the speakers engaged to conduct such events. Pointing out that she herself used to attend some seminars arranged by the Faculty Senate, she found that all too often the invited guest speakers were from inside NIDA. More frequent use of experts

from *outside* NIDA as guest speakers, events would be a more promising avenue toward attracting greater attendance from the faculty in general.

Another prominent perspective shared by many faculty not currently involved as committee members of the Faculty Senate was that while the Faculty Senate was an important organization, it served more as a “symbol” than as an active organization. Associate Professor Dr. Patcharaporn Niummanee (School of Applied Statistics), for example, hypothesized that the NIDA Faculty Senate was not particularly well regarded by the faculty as a whole because its primary work was perceived to be that of supporting the work of the NIDA administration. Those faculty who might be in disagreement with a particular administrative policy, or who experienced injustice in the workplace, could not seek help from the organization.

She suggested that the Faculty Senate should deal with issues that affected the majority of faculty staff, such as the personnel performance evaluation policy. It should not let the administration pass any regulations that lowered the faculty’s work morale or quality of working life. The Faculty Senate might hold a forum or meeting on selected hot issues that impacted lecturers’ lives, brainstorm the faculty’s ideas on those matters, and thereafter echo the collective views of the faculty to the administration. This genre of activity, she maintained, would attract many more lecturers to participate in the affairs of the Senate.

Adding to the aforementioned perspective, Assistant Professor Dr. Nattha Winitnaipak (lecturer, School of Public Administration) asserted that the Faculty Senate could not interest lecturers in general because it did not serve as a change agent. After the monthly meetings in which the committee members just discussed the agenda and made resolutions, nothing was done to follow up on the ideas and bring them to fruition. Moreover, she continued, lecturers did not want to join the Faculty Senate as committee members because they were not recognized by anyone. Humans were social animals, she explained. They wanted recognition. With neither money nor recognition, many lecturers felt that involvement in the Senate was largely a waste of time. If Faculty Senate committee members could attend the meetings of administrators, such as the meetings of the deans and directors for academic affairs, as well as those for personnel administration, the situation would be better, she maintained.

Associate Professor Dr. Oros Leelathanikul (lecturer, School of Business Administration) who participated in Faculty Senate activities once in a while, underscored the view of the vast majority when she



explained that NIDA lecturers were usually busy. It was difficult even to call a meeting of 3 or 4 lecturers to deal with the School issues, she pointed out. So, in her opinion, if Faculty Senate meetings had participation by even half of the committee members, that was enough. She also advanced the view that lecturers in general did not attend the forums, seminars, and conferences held by the Faculty Senate because the topics or themes were not interesting enough. The topics seemed to be of interest to only the Faculty Senate committee, not the faculty members in general. Since different schools often held seminars or conferences, with the topics directly concerning their academic fields, she suggested that the Faculty Senate find topics that really interested the faculty from all schools, especially those topics which concerned the well-being of all lecturers. Also, she advised, the Faculty Senate had to avoid having the same topics as those used in the seminars arranged by the top administration.

With respect to the issue of how to encourage lecturers to turn to the Senate to address concerns and views related to their well-being as faculty members, Dr. Oros stated that faculty members could of course voice their opinions in the monthly meetings of their own schools. But, to increase the perceived relevance and stature of the Faculty Senate in the eyes of the faculty, she cautioned that the Faculty Senate should not wait for lecturers to come to it to make complaints. Rather, the representatives of all schools should play a more active role in the school monthly meetings. They should make lecturers aware of any problem that could affect their working life, as well as solicit their views and perspectives concerning how to resolve such problems. Like Dr. Oros, many other faculty put forth the suggestion that to get participation from the faculty in general, the Senate should focus on activities that benefited the faculty as a whole and the general public. Such work, they believed, would receive financial support from the top administration.

**The Incentives Issue:** Drs. Pachitchanat and Ketkhanda were very much of the view that Senate committee members should receive some level of financial inducement for attending Senate meetings. Other interviewees did not address the issue.

**Other Issues:** Concerning the issue of what factors facilitated a smoothly functioning Faculty Senate, the current director of the Research Center and former secretary of the Senate, Assistant Professor Dr. Nada Chansom (School of Development Economics) propounded the view that how well each Faculty Senate functioned depended on the characteristics of the team members. Her idea was supported by others interviewed. During



her term as secretary, she continued, the Senate had functioned well, with the senior lecturers serving as leaders and the junior ones lending a hand to advance their common endeavor. The result was very gratifying, she concluded.

Regarding the trip to a place outside Bangkok or outside Thailand after the Senate's yearly seminar, many interviewees pointed out that all the schools took their faculty and support personnel on an annual overseas tour. Hence, the Senate had to carefully select its target destinations because if many faculty members had already visited a particular destination, they might not be interested in going there again, especially if they had to pay extra.

Finally, almost all interviewed lecturers averred that a major reason why few senior lecturers were sent as school representatives to the Faculty Senate was that the schools wanted junior lecturers to get to know lecturers from other schools. The Faculty Senate was deemed an excellent means by which to fulfill this objective.

## **Forging Ahead in Defiance of the Odds**

Now ruminating about all that had learned and experienced concerning the NIDA Faculty Senate, Associate Professor Taweesak fully understood, for the first, the full magnitude of the challenge that was now his as president of the organization. He grimaced ever so visibly as he reminisced about his frame of mind back in January, when he decided to allow his name to be put in nomination for the position. A fleeting question flashed through his mind: If he had known in January all that he had come to know and experience since then, would he have been as enthusiastic about taking on the challenge? But, that was "ancient history" at this point in time. And, the reality was that he was not one to run from a challenge. He still very much wanted to bring his experience as NIDA chief planning executive to bear on the problems of the Faculty Senate. He still wanted to make whatever contributions he could to the further advancement of NIDA, an institution that he loved. Those desires had not been diminished by his experiences to date as Faculty Senate president.

What had changed, however, was his sense of what issues had to occupy his thinking and be resolved during his first year in office. When he assumed office several months earlier, he had wanted to "hit the ground running." Hence, foremost in his mind had been what kinds of programmatic initiatives he would ask the Senate to ponder and brainstorm, so that an action plan and corresponding budget could be developed

as soon as possible. Those steps remained important. But, such plans would most likely come to naught, in the absence of his making some progress on the organization's ailments. Among these, the chronic problems of minimal faculty participation, limited Senate committee member attendance at meetings and cooperation in carrying out various Senate-initiated and top management-assigned, projects, inadequate Senate Office clerical staff and budgetary funding, and perhaps most critically, a widespread belief among the faculty that the Senate and its work were not only not interesting, but also simply irrelevant to their perennially busy work lives – these were the vital “pieces of the puzzle” that had to be put in place before any meaningful progress could be made on his desire to build an efficient and effective organization. However, the question that remained was, in a word, *how?*

## Addendum of Exhibits

### Exhibit 1: The Organization Flowchart of the NIDA Faculty Senate

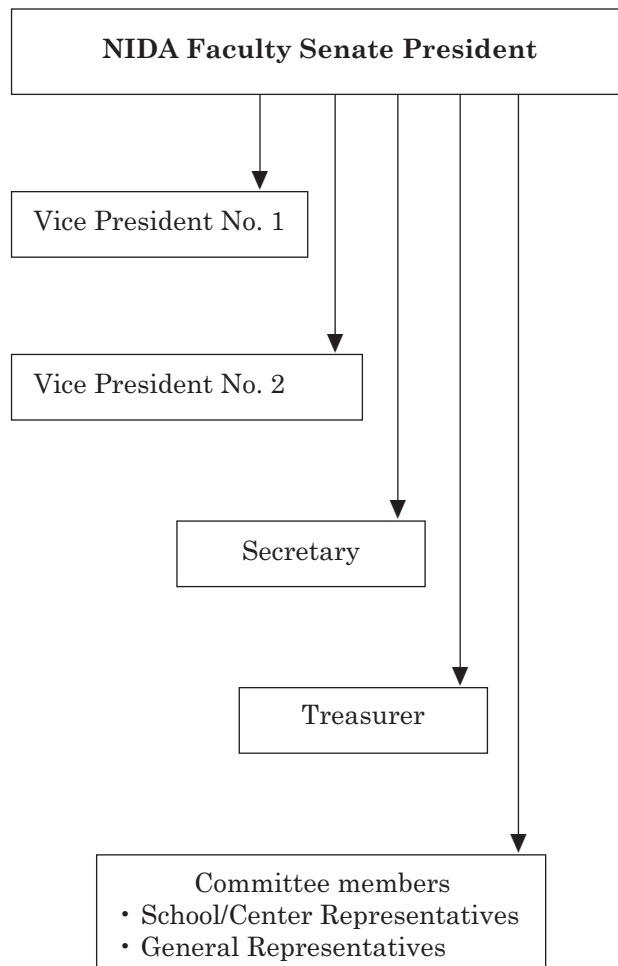


Exhibit 2: Example of the plan of activities in Dr. Pachitchanat's term

Type of Work	Activity	Frequency per year	Time schedule	Amount (baht)	Source of Fund
<b>1. Clerical work and arrangement of meetings</b>	<b>1.1 Meetings/forums/seminars/conferences</b>				University income budget
	a. Academic forum	Twice	May & August 2010	100,000	
	b. Annual academic seminar	Once	May 2010	150,000	
	c. Monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate (FS)	Every first Thursday of each month, or when necessary	October 2009 –September 2010	2,000 or 2,500 x 12 = 24,000 or 30,000	
	d. Hosting the meeting of CUFST	Once	October 2009 –September 2010	50,000	
	e. Annual general meeting of the NIDA Faculty Senate	Once	October 2009 –September 2010		Income from selling food tickets and FS income budget from fund-raising activity
	<b>1.2 Promotion of faculty relations, ethics, and academic progress</b>	4 times			
	a. Luncheon gatherings		December, 2009 and March, June, September, 2010	7000 x 4 = 28,000	Income from selling food tickets and FS income budget from fund-raising activity
	b. Observation tour	Twice	February, August, 2010		FS Income Budget from fund-raising activity
	c. Conducting research	At least one study	October 2009 –September 2010	285,000	Fund granted by NIDA Research Center

**Exhibit 2 (cont.): Example of the plan of activities in Dr. Pachitchanat's term**

<b>2. Production of documents and others</b>	<b>2.1 Production and distribution of publications</b> a. Newsletters	As convenience	October 2009 – September 2010	60,000	University income budget
	b. Journal of the Faculty Senate	4 issues	October 2009 and January, April, July 2010		
	c. Summary of the results of academic forums	twice	May, August 2010		
	d. Summary of the results of academic seminar/ conference	once	May 2010		

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> From one staff member who had worked for the Faculty Senate since 1995, Associate Professor Taweesak learned that the dearth of documentation concerning the organization's history may have been due, at least in part, to the misplacement, loss, and/or intentional discarding of some records during an office relocation that occurred a year or so earlier. This staff member's office had all the "clean and clear" characteristics of a "paperless office," albeit with no accompanying storage of organizational records in other forms. From another 20-year veteran staff member who had retired four years earlier, only fragmented information concerning the organization's history could be obtained. According to this staff member, an earlier attempt to write a history of the organization had come to naught. Further, her staff replacement proved unable to locate the large packet of organizational information that her predecessor had prepared and left in the office upon her retirement in 2006. To his dismay, even a "last-resort" check of the records in NIDA's Central Division turned up nothing in the nature of documentation concerning the Faculty Senate's developmental history or highlights.
- <sup>2</sup> NIDA paid a fee of 20,000 baht yearly for the privilege of being a member of CUFST. Among other activities, CUFST held monthly meetings, with each university taking turns hosting the get-togethers. NIDA could offer to host the meeting in any month it was willing to do so.
- <sup>3</sup> The number of Faculty Senate presidents who preceded Associate Professor Taweesak could be figured out only by estimation. With the Senate having been established in 1976, and with a two-year presidential term of office, there would have been about 17 presidents, assuming that each

president served but a single two-year term. However, from a retired former staff member of the Senate, there was a year when there were three presidents because two of them were elected administrators, in close succession within the same year, and thus had to be replaced as Faculty Senate president, given that administrators could not concurrently serve as president of the Senate. Hence, there may have been 19 presidents before Associate Professor Taweesak, which would make him the 20<sup>th</sup>.

- <sup>4</sup> Accordingly, Associate Professor Taweesak became only the third Faculty Senate president to participate in the deliberations and decisions of the NIDA Council.
- <sup>5</sup> Associate Professor Taweesak thus became the first Faculty Senate president whose term in office would last for three years.
- <sup>6</sup> Lack of participation in Faculty Senate activities was found not only at NIDA, but was in fact a widespread problem in Thai universities. According to a paper, *"The Role of the Faculty Senate: Past, Present and Future,"* written by Associate Professor Dr. Chuchart Areechitranusorn (a former Faculty Senate president of Khon Khaen University and former president of CUFST), nearly all faculty senates across the board lacked strength in structure, role and activity; cooperation from the faculty; and, support from the university administration and the faculty. This had led to the faculty senates at some universities being either dissolved or merged with the support personnel union. Dr. Chuchart argued that it was time that faculty senates were reformed to cope with the present and future contexts.

(Retrieved 13/07/2010 from: <http://science.yru.ac.th/teachercouncil/tcm/detail/role.doc>)

At NIDA, there was another organization – the Personnel Club – that sought to look after the welfare of the faculty, albeit in a more confined area than the Faculty Senate. Established in 1989, the Personnel Club was comprised of all personnel—the faculty and support staff. The purpose of its establishment was to unite NIDA personnel. Currently, it took care of most intramural activities, especially sports events and entertainment activities, as well as New Year's holiday celebrations, a monthly flea market activity held on the first Wednesday of each month. (The latter activity was initiated by the Faculty Senate and used to be under its care.) Until now, all its presidents had been lecturers. The consensus was that the organization seemed to function well – largely, some maintained, because its members were drawn from various types of support staff. However, the president of the Personnel Club was not a member of the NIDA Council. Some speculated that were the Faculty Senate ever to be disbanded, the Personnel Club might take on a larger mission and become its replacement.

- <sup>7</sup> The three categories of workload requirement for lecturers of different ranks were (1) teaching workload (30%), (2) conducting research (40%), (3) serving in committees or sub-committees at their schools and at the university level (30%). Service on a committee outside NIDA was deemed better. For each academic rank, the following were required:
  - *Lecturers* were required to teach one course (3 credits) a year and conduct research that was to be published in an international journal. Otherwise, if they were government officials, they risked not receiving a salary rise; if non-government officials (e.g., university employees), their contract might not be renewed.
  - *Assistant professors* were required to teach three courses a year and conduct a research study or write an academic book or textbook, or have one academic paper or article published in, minimally, a national-level journal. The research paper had to be published in a journal of, minimally, national-level stature.
  - *Associate professors* had to teach three courses a year and conduct two research studies or write two academic books or textbooks, or conduct one research study and write one academic book or textbook. The research studies had to be published at the national or international level.

If the research were published at the international level, one research was enough per year.

- *Professors* had to teach 3 courses a year and conduct a research study that was to be published in an international journal, *or* write two academic books or textbooks, or conduct one research study *and* write one academic book or textbook.

<sup>8</sup> The research concerned the NIDA faculty, support personnel, and students' satisfaction with the administration performance.

<sup>9</sup> "*Ajarn*" was the Thai word for "lecturer"; "*Rachapreuk*" was "the tree that is considered as the symbol of NIDA".

<sup>10</sup> Part of the information for this section was gained during a Faculty Senate trip to South Korea during August 9-14, 2010. During the trip, Associate Professor Taweesak arranged a focus group discussion in the coach. He asked all the tour group members, which included 13 former and current Faculty Senate committee members, two former faculty Senate presidents and a few lecturers, to express their opinions concerning the problems of the Faculty Senate, as well as suggestions on how to solve them. [It was mentioned in passing that prior to six years ago, the faculty tour that occurred in conjunction with Faculty Senate's principal annual conference had consisted of a visit to a local (i.e., Thai) province. After experiencing limited faculty interest and participation in such tours and in the conference that preceded them, the Senate replaced the local trips with international tours. Participation increased significantly.]