President Brand Renews IU’s Ties With Key Asian Countries

This May, Myles Brand took his first trip to Asia as president of Indiana University, visiting Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand in two weeks of tightly scheduled events. Upon his return, he said he admired how clearly these countries understand the role of education as a resource in their national development and how committed they are to investing in higher education.

Meeting with more than 400 alumni from the Indiana University Alumni Association’s affiliates in each country, Brand was impressed with the professional achievements of IU’s Asian alumni, many of whom have advanced to high-level positions in business, education, and government. He was also moved by the affection and goodwill with which IU was regarded there, and by the alumni’s desire to further enhance IU’s visibility in their countries.

The president pledged his support both for the development of a coordinated marketing effort in such important areas as student recruitment and for the pursuit of new linkages with universities, corporations, and public agencies.

In each country, the president and his delegation held substantive discussions with university officials, business leaders, government representatives, and U.S. embassy officials on areas of mutual interest to showcase IU’s strengths as a global university and to explore areas for future international collaboration.

The president’s party included Vice President for Public Affairs and Government Relations Christopher Simpson, Vice President for Information Technology Michael McRobbie, and, from the Office of International Programs, Dean Patrick O’Meara, Associate Dean Kenneth A. Rogers, and Associate Dean Charles Reafsnyder, who joined the party just in Malaysia.

In Tokyo, President Brand gave an interview with a reporter from Nihon Keizai Shim bun on the topic “Building Partnerships between International Business Interests and American Research Universities.” At the U.S. Embassy, the president’s delegation met with public affairs counselor Louise Crane and cultural affairs officer Anne Callaghan to discuss general issues of student recruitment and future trends in the flow of students between Japan and the United States. The delegation also paid a courtesy call on Tadahiro Hasegawa, a former resident of Indiana, who, with some help from IU Southeast, established Apollo America, a subsidiary of Idemitsu Kosan Co. Ltd., which is located in southern Indiana. Mr. Hasegawa’s daughter Ai is a music student currently attending IU Bloomington.

The major event in Tokyo was the reception hosted by the IU Alumni Club of Japan. President Brand presented the IU Alumni Association President’s Award to the club’s president, Hiroshi

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IU Alumni Club of Japan President Hiroshi Watanabe displays a painting by Peg Brand presented to him by Indiana University.

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Watanabe, retired president and CEO of Hoechst Mitsubishi Kasei and one of IU's most distinguished alumni. He was a founding member of IU's International Council and a past recipient of the university's Thomas Hart Benton Medal. Present at the reception was another very distinguished IU alumnus, Kaoru Ando, a founder of the Fujitsu Corporation, and recipient of an IU honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1980. During the reception, a number of prospective students interested in coming to IU were introduced. Also on hand to greet the IU delegation was Bill Bishop, managing director of the State of Indiana's East Asian office.

In Singapore, the delegation's schedule was arranged by IU alumnus Jack Holder, director of the U.S. Education Information Center, and president of the IU Alumni Club of Singapore. The club's vice president, Michael H. C. Chan, accompanied delegation members throughout their stay. Their first visit was to U.S. Ambassador Timothy Chorba to discuss a broad range of issues, including Singapore's educational needs. They met important business leaders at a lunch hosted by C. C. Cheong, CEO of J.P. Morgan, a company whose six top executives are all IU graduates. The group also met with administrators of the Engineering and Accountancy/Business Schools of Nanyang Technological University to discuss possible linkages. Among Singapore's universities, there already exists a list of opportunities for which external collaboration is being sought.

The schedule for Malaysia was extremely full, and included discussions on a major initiative for IU in multimedia/information technology, a press conference covered on national television, visits with administrators at IU's key partner institutions, and meetings with Malaysian government and corporate officials. President Brand's delegation was welcomed to the Universiti Malaya (UM) by Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Dr. Hj. Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad and Deputy Vice Chancellor Dato' Dr. Osman Bakar. They were introduced to Tan Sri Othman Yeop Abdullah, chair of Multimedia Development Corporation, which oversees the educational component of the Malaysian government's ambitious information technology initiatives such as the "Multimedia University" and the "Multimedia Super Corridor."

Tan Sri Sanusi also introduced the delegation to senior staff of Universiti Telekom Malaysia (Unitel), for which a new campus was being planned to serve...
President Myles Brand and Universiti Malaya Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Dr. Hj. Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad explore areas of mutual interest.

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as the “Multimedia University.” Dato’ Mohamed Said Mohamed Ali, chair of Telekom Malaysia, expressed hope that IU and UM would work together to help UNITEL develop its academic programs. IU units of particular relevance to this project are IUPUI’s School of Engineering & Technology (SET), the School of Continuing Studies, the Office of Information Technology, and the Instructional Systems Technology Program at Bloomington’s School of Education. The prospects are exciting for IU, Michael McRobbie said, “because in Malaysia, we already have many of the parts in place to begin that kind of international partnership.” IU is one of the institutions involved in developing Internet 2, and McRobbie hopes to position IU as a major participant in the Asia-Pacific Region.

With SET’s Dean Oner Yurtseven serving as guide, the president and his delegation visited the spacious campus of Tenaga Nasional’s training institute—formerly known as IKATAN but newly named Universiti Tenaga Nasional—for which the IUPUI school provides academic and professional training programs. There, the group paid a courtesy visit to Tenaga’s CEO, Datuk Dr. Tajuddin Ali. It also met with Tan Sri Dato’ Mohd. Noordin Hassan of Petronas, Malaysia’s largest corporation, which is planning a new campus concentrating on a technical and business curriculum, and looking to IU for possible collaboration.

President Brand gave a speech to the Malaysian-American Chamber of Commerce on the role of public and private partnerships in U.S. higher education. Dean O’Meara and Dean Rogers visited the offices of Malaysian American Commission for Educational Exchange—the Fulbright office—where they toured the advising center, met with its director and staff, and responded to questions from prospective students. Joined by President Brand, they then paid a courtesy call to Deputy Chief of Mission Anna Borg at the U.S. Embassy.

Afterwards, President Brand hosted a special dinner for Vice Chancellor Sanusi, Tan Sri Ani Arope, who is the senior representative for Southeast Asia at General Electric and one of IU’s staunchest supporters in Malaysia, and Abdul Farouk Ahmed. Farouk, president of the IU Alumni Association of Malaysia and managing director of ICC Centre, has been a driving force in developing meaningful partnerships between IU and Malaysian universities and corporations. His daughter Shameem is the second child in the family to attend IU.

The highlight of the Malaysian visit was the Alumni Association reception held at the Universiti Malaya. Attended by 100 or more guests, it included a sumptuous banquet and entertainment.

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founder of NIDA. A great supporter of IU, Dr. Atthakor has helped Thai students do graduate study at IU through his own scholarship fund. His children and grandchildren have all taken degrees at IU.

A major event was a luncheon hosted by President Brand for the rectors of several universities located in the greater Bangkok area. Among the guests was Dr. Somsakdi Xuto, a former rector of NIDA and a founding member of IU's International Council.

The IU Alumni Association of Thailand hosted a well-attended dinner reception for the delegation. Among the guests was one of IU's most distinguished Thai alumni, Dr. Amara Raksasataya, a former rector of NIDA, former ambassador to the United States, and a past recipient of IU's John W. Ryan Award.

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by a gamelan orchestra and a student troupe of traditional dancers and singers. President Brand presented the Thomas Hart Benton Medal for exceptional service to Farouk in recognition of his many contributions to promoting IU's activities in Malaysia.

The last two days of the trip were spent in Bangkok, Thailand, where the delegation renewed old ties and met some distinguished IU alumni. Today's extensive network of relationships between IU and Thailand had its origins in the 1950s, when IU was invited by the Thai government to help establish a graduate school now known as the National Institute of Development Administration. NIDA has become the premier institution of its kind in Southeast Asia and is an active partner with IU's School of Public & Environmental Affairs in programs of student/faculty exchange.

President Brand called on one of IU's most well-known senior alumni in Thailand, Dr. Bunchana Atthakor, the...
The IU delegation visits the ancient Siamese city of Ayutthaya as guests of Chulalongkorn University. Accompanying them are (left to right) Dr. Tepwanee Homsanit, Dr. Sucharit Pienchob, Dr. Bunga Watana (Rajabahat Institute), and Dr. Vorasak Pienchob (far right).

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— RMN & CR

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Kenneth Rogers, Myles Brand, Patrick O’Meara, and Christopher Simpson relax at Ayutthaya, Thailand.