

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS: PLENARY SPEAKER AND PANELISTS

The Academic Consortium 21 International Forum 2020, to be held on 6-10 December 2020 in Bangkok, Thailand, is one of the prominent activities that allow leaders and faculty members from participating universities to share in discussions about current issues of global interest. Kasetsart University is highly honored to host this upcoming event under the theme “New Pathways in Higher Education to Meet Challenges of Global Change”. Under this main topic there are four tracks: 1) curricular changes and new program development; 2) the role of technology in education today and into the future; 3) integrating liberal arts education with professional education; and 4) changing perspectives of higher education students. For each of these tracks, a one-hour keynote address has already been confirmed.

For Keynote 1, we have invited Clinical Professor Udom Kachintorn, M.D., Senator and Former Deputy Minister for Education, Thailand, to speak on “Establishing Core Mental Skills in University Degree Programs vs. Providing Vocational and Tailor-made Training to Fill Future Employment Gaps”. The topic addresses global demographic workforce changes (aging), which has increased demands for vocational and specified qualifications, e.g. in agricultural, construction industries, and healthcare services, to name only a few. The keynote speaker will address the extent to which universities should respond by offering vocational training and tailor-made courses in their areas of strength, while simultaneously maintaining their primary focus on academic degree programs and research.

Keynote Speaker 2, Professor Naoshi Kondo from the Graduate School of Agriculture, Kyoto University, Japan, will give a talk on “Technology in Education Today and Tomorrow: A Case of Precision Agriculture Learning through Artificial Intelligence” to raise awareness of educational technology trends that universities should embrace to improve students’ engagement and motivate dynamic learning. Technology in education comes in various forms, for example, online courses, mobile devices, flipped classrooms, cloud-based technology, virtual and augmented reality, and involves technology-focus subjects, namely STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), STEAM (STEM and art), and the Internet of Things.

The third keynote session on “Balancing between Liberal Arts Education and Professional Education” by Dr. Greg Watkins, Associate Director of The Structured Liberal Education, Stanford University, USA, will discuss the extent to which universities should provide liberal arts education, and whether it should be provided only in the first year as part of general education or throughout their professional degree programs. The keynote speakers will point out the importance of liberal arts education, which has been proven to develop cognitive skills, namely critical thinking, problem solving, and situational judgment, which are the core skills needed throughout students’ future careers.

The last keynote address, “Responding to Current Values and Goals of Higher Education Students”, will be presented by Professor Hannele Niemi from the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland. This session will involve strategies to prepare for the predicted massive university closures. In part, declining enrollments are due to diminishing interest in traditional degree programs and increasing preferences for online learning programs, inspired by famous university dropouts who have become successful entrepreneurs.

Aside from these keynote addresses, proposals are welcomed for: 1) a speaker from an AC 21 member university who is interested in delivering a 30-plenary address to kick-start the forum on any topic of choice related to the main theme; and 2) for five panelists from AC 21 member universities who will speak for 15 minutes each on a topic providing a vision or strategy to deal with any of the challenges confronting higher education addressed by the forum.

Each proposal must include an abstract (no longer than 250 words) with a clearly stated title, speaker’s name and affiliation (with 100-150 word bio data). The proposal and bio data should be sent as a *.doc files* and must be submitted by 31 October 2019 to [fro@ku.th](mailto:fro@ku.th) (please cc: [chamaipak.t@ku.th](mailto:chamaipak.t@ku.th)).

All proposals will be peer-reviewed and the result will be announced by email by 30 November 2019.

We appreciate your interest in the Academic Consortium 21 International Forum 2020, and look forward to welcoming you to Bangkok.