

Provost Kim Wilcox visited Thailand in January 2006 with several MSU colleagues. During their busy time there, they were hosted for an evening of MSU Sesquicentennial celebration by the MSU Alumni Club of Thailand. Some 140 alumni and guests attended the event. In this photo Wilcox (third from right) joins Preang Kitratporn, the current president of the club; Vallop Manathanya, immediate past president; Anan Chaikittisilpa, former president; and other club members behind a Beaumont Tower cake.



## Thailand Travel Showcases MSU's World-Grant Transition

MSU Provost Kim Wilcox, accompanied by a small group of senior administrators and professors, spent the week of January 16, 2006 in Thailand exploring ways to expand MSU collaboration with the country's government ministries, educational institutions, and Thailand-based alumni. For Wilcox, who began as provost in August 2005, the trip marked the first opportunity to participate in MSU's global engagement in an international setting. "The relationships that we build and the knowledge that we gain in Thailand directly benefit our students, faculty, and staff at the university – and the citizens of Michigan. Similarly, the information we bring to Thailand enriches that nation," he said. "That kind of partnership and shared benefit is what defines the international legacy of MSU, and I'm pleased to be able to take my first big step in being a part of that legacy."

The MSU delegation also included John Hudzik, vice president for global engagement and strategic projects; Jeffrey Riedinger, acting dean for International Studies and Programs (ISP); Lonnie King, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine; Chris Wheeler, professor of education; and Kim Gladstone, director of development and external relations for ISP. In addition to meeting with alumni and government ministries, the delegation visited five Thai universities (Chulalongkorn, Kasetsart, Rajabhat Pranakorn, Srinakharinwirot, and Thammasat) and met with representatives of the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Embassy.

According to Vice President Hudzik, MSU's Thailand-focused activities advance campus research

and education interests while simultaneously yielding national and international benefits. "Together, these kinds of contacts abroad help the university achieve global distinction," he said. "And this reputation, in turn, allows MSU to advance Michigan's standing in the global environment."

Commenting on the broader context of international travel by MSU administrators, ISP Acting Dean Jeffrey Riedinger said, "As MSU looks back on the 150 years of its history, including more than 50 years of robust international engagement, it is fitting that high-level delegations of MSU administrators travel to a selection of international destinations, not only to reinforce old relationships and explore new ones, but also to emphasize the importance of the work our faculty are doing around the world every day. While recent trips by Simon and Wilcox have focused on our engagement in Asia, future trips by senior administrators will involve countries in Africa and Latin America."

### Collaborations in Health

Lonnie King, who was wrapping up a one-year assignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, said the trip was a chance to make better sense of what is happening on the ground in one of the world's avian influenza hotspots. He was able to visit both the Ministry of Agriculture's Diagnostic Laboratory and the CDC Bangkok office. "Places like Thailand are critical in understanding the convergence of human and animal health issues," said King. He feels that Thailand could become a key regional center for avian influenza research, surveillance, and training, and that MSU

involvement there could expand to services across Southeast Asia. "Expanding global partnerships make it easier to apply MSU's capacity, be it in diagnostic services or epidemiology, where it's most needed."

MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine has participated in a student exchange program with Chiang Mai University in northern Thailand for nearly a decade, which King says has given MSU veterinary students the chance to solve animal health challenges in new ways, develop cultural awareness and sensitivity skills, and be involved with exotic animals such as elephants and water buffalo. The arrangement has provided Thai students exposure to state-of-the-art clinical training at the MSU veterinary teaching hospital. King found visits of the delegation to Bangkok-area universities, two of which have colleges of veterinary medicine, encouraging in terms of opportunities and mutual interest in furthering relationships between those institutions and MSU.

### Collaborations in Education

Chris Wheeler's Thailand experiences date back to the mid 1980s, but his most extensive project took place in the early 1990s when he led a team of MSU education and forestry faculty on a project to address the country's major deforestation problems. The team engaged teachers and students in rural primary and secondary schools in the study of local forest management; the teachers and students, in turn, worked with villagers on small-scale social forestry projects. The goal of this successful project was to create local capacity to solve natural resource-related problems, particularly among the country's children.

Wheeler sees three exciting potential outgrowths of this trip for the College of Education: working with the Thai Ministry of Education in support of professional development for mid-level ministry officials in the areas of teacher development, educational technology, and math and science teaching; collaborating with Srinakharinwirot University colleagues who have been "engaged in fundamental transformation of the curriculum to meet the challenges of contemporary Thai society" – and to learn from their innovations; and identifying new areas of collaboration between the colleges of education at MSU and Chulalongkorn University, where a long-standing existing relationship has laid solid groundwork.

Among additional examples of linkages between MSU and Thai universities is the ongoing exchange

program between Chulalongkorn University and MSU's Eli Broad College of Business, which enhances the educational experience and prepares students from both universities for the burgeoning number of jobs related to international business. Another example is the long-standing relationship between the MSU School of Criminal Justice and Thailand's law enforcement community, a connection that improves public safety in Thailand and increases capacity of Thai officials to collaborate on issues of drug trafficking, terrorism, and environmental protection.

This article is a modified and updated version of the January 12, 2006 *MSU News Bulletin* article by Geoff Koch, University Relations.

## Former ISP Dean Hudzik Appointed to Vice President Position

John Hudzik, former dean of International Studies and Programs, has been appointed vice president for global engagement and strategic projects at MSU. His new position was made official by the MSU Board of Trustees at their December 9, 2005 meeting. The appointment is for a two-year period effective January 1, 2006. Hudzik served as acting dean and dean of ISP for nearly a decade before being tapped for the acting MSU provost role in January 2005. He served in that capacity until Kim Wilcox assumed the permanent provost role in August.

According to ISP Acting Dean Jeffrey Riedinger, Hudzik's appointment to this high-level administrative position is one more indicator of the seriousness of MSU's international commitment expressed in President Lou Anna K. Simon's Boldness by Design initiative, particularly the strategic imperative of expanding the university's international reach through new initiatives and alliances.

One of Hudzik's first assignments in the new position was to join with the provost's recent delegation to Thailand. He will focus his energy and experience on longer-range and strategic issues related to MSU's commitment to strengthening its already considerable international activity abroad and to further internationalizing the on-campus curriculum and environment. He will also focus a portion of his time on overall institutional long-range planning and budget strategy.