

## The 4th Thai Cooperative Education Day



June 6th every year is officially hailed as "The Thai Cooperative Education Day". That is because on that day in 2002, the Joint Declaration for Support and Development of Cooperative Education was signed by the then Ministry of University Affairs (presently the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Ministry of Education), Thai Association for Cooperative Education (TACE), and representatives from higher education institutions, business and industry partners, and other related networks.

With the first held in 2009, this year is the fourth Thai Cooperative Education Day. It aimed to provide a forum for disseminating information, showcasing achievements, and exchanging experience in cooperative education among concerned parties and partners, and to update and promote cooperative education for all involved sectors.

Heralding "Advancing Thailand in the World Community through Cooperative Education Innovations" as the theme for this year, highlights of the event included the opening and announcement of policies on cooperative education by Thailand's Minister of Education, the keynote address on "Strengthening Graduate Competency for the World Community through Cooperative Education" by Dr. Paul Stonely, WACE CEO, and the signing of the MOU among strategic partners to promote international cooperative education. All the parallel sessions served the theme well with a variety of interesting activities, such as the roundtable discussion on "International Cooperative Education: How to Make a Success" by panelists from both the university and industry sides, Co-op Clinic for all burning questions, Academic Salon for cooperative education research presentations, and a sharing forum "International Cooperative Education: Enriching Graduates' Potentials for International Employment" by international cooperative education students.



In addition, award presentations included "The 2012 National Best Practice in Cooperative Education" Awards and the Co-op Showcase session in which the student winners of "The 2012 National Best Co-op Projects" shared their success stories.

Two memorable moments were the multimedia presentation honouring "The Father of Thai Cooperative Education: Professor Wichit Srisa-an" and the formal introduction of the World Association of Cooperative Education-International Satellite Office at Suranaree University of Technology (WACE-ISO@SUT). One of the first two of its kind, the office aims to represent WACE and help achieve its missions in Asia and the Pacific Region. The participants also enjoyed 'wandering through coop park' where the exhibitions showcasing cooperative education innovations from OHEC, TACE and the 9 regional cooperative education development networks kept them impressed and entertained.

The day was wrapped up by the National Agenda Roundtable Discussion on "How to Develop Cooperative Education for Enhancing Thai Graduates' Competitiveness in the World Community" by the strategic partners in international cooperative education development.

In summary, over 2,000 people attended the event, representing a wide range of interested parties including students, educational institutions, government offices, business and industry, private organizations, professional associations, and general public. Next year, it is already expected to be an even more spectacular Thai Cooperative Education Day.

