



# Responsibility of Tertiary Institutions to Thai Society

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In the past, temples were the center of education in Thai society, where Thai kids had learnt both secular knowledge and Buddhist philosophy. Therefore, Thai people perceive that ones who have spent their time at temples are good men and well-educated as called 'Tid' in Thai. Although the center of education was moved to academic institutions like schools and universities over a century ago, Thais attitudes towards graduates from academic institutions are similar to their attitudes towards those who learnt at temples. That is the more ones learn, the better persons they are.

Tertiary education has become a basic need of Thai new generation, and indeed a social value. Therefore, the tertiary education sector in Thailand is growing swiftly and competition is becoming more intense. A number of tertiary institutions have been established in order to serves public and individual needs. These institutions now put their all efforts on recruiting as many students as they can to cope with their costs. Indeed, they are more market-oriented. At present, Thai higher institutions are changing their views of 'students', 'education services, research', and 'social services' to 'customers', 'educational offerings', 'additional source of income', and 'public relations'. They now focus on offering a variety of programs and degrees to satisfy needs, wants, and interests of target customers. They concern more about research grants rather than the contributions of the research. On top of that, they currently provide social services to enhance their images.

It is time for tertiary institutions to reconsider their responsibilities to the society. This paper proposes tertiary institution social responsibilities in three aspects. Firstly, tertiary institutions should concentrate on providing high quality education services more effectively and efficiently in a way that preserves or enhances the student's and the society's well-being. They must balance and juggle the often-conflicting criteria of institution profits, student want satisfaction, and public needs, and avoid conflict of interest.

Secondly, tertiary institutions should transform the competition into cooperation among themselves. They should focus on their strengths and fulfill others' weaknesses. This would assist tertiary institutions use limited resources effectively. In addition, tertiary institutions should aim to be specialized institutions in particular areas that the country needs, and provide access for students across the nation.

Lastly, tertiary institutions must simultaneously develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes. In other words, they have to train their students to be smart persons with beautiful minds, and learning to give more than to get. Hence, curriculums should comprise both secular knowledge and morals, and teach students to seek for society's benefits not individuals'.