VEMBA 'ohana
A semi-annual newsletter of the University of Hawai‘i Shidler College of Business Executive MBA program in Vietnam

pages 4-5  APEC Summit 2011 in Hawaii
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New Partner - New Beginning
Aloha,
After reading the first issue of the VEMBA ‘OHANA last July, many alumni and students provided feedback about the value the newsletter can bring to our community. Here are a few words from your VEMBA colleagues about building connections and gaining a sense of VEMBA identity:

“Thank you for your kindness in sending me this newsletter. It must have taken you much time and effort to complete such a comprehensive version. Both the information and the design are well-prepared. I believe my friends will also love it and find it as the invisible bridge to connect all the alumni.”
Nguyen Ky Bao Ngoc VEMBA-HCMC’11

“Wow, this is impressive!”
Cung Hoang Thao VEMBA-HCMC’11

“Thank you for your favor! It is really interesting newsletter and I like it and would like to thank VEMBA Team for great idea and contribution!”
Le Quoc Su
VEMBA-HCMC’11

“This is a pleasant surprise – an excellent idea in bringing the members of the VEMBA program together.”
Tze Chong Lim
VEMBA-HCMC ‘11

“Great work, thanks for keeping us updated.”
Pham Cong Man
VEMBA-HN’10

“This is very cool and really well done. I’m really proud to be a part of the UH-VEMBA alumni. Thanks for this and please pass on my compliments and congrats to everyone who contributed and put so much effort into this.”
Shannon Hopkins
VEMBA-HCMC’10

“Thank you very much for the Newsletter. It is very informative and thanks to those that contributed to the Newsletter. I really enjoyed reading it.”
Nguyen Viet Bot
VEMBA-HCMC’09

“...for this very first issue, I would say VEMBA Team has done an excellent job considering the fact that you are all busy.... Much appreciated and congratulation to VEMBA, and of course to you and me as part of that. I hope I continue having a chance to work with you in the next issue”
Vu Thuy Vy
VEMBA-HCMC’09
It is gratifying to have received enthusiastic feedback from the readers of the last issue of VEMBA ‘Ohana.

Since then, there have been so many developments that this 24-page long newsletter does not seem to have enough space to report them all. Perhaps the two most visible VEMBA activities were the series of Pre-APEC events that Shidler organized in Vietnam and the visit of President Truong Tan Sang to Hawaii.

On October 4, 2011, together with Vietnam’s National Committee for International Economic Cooperation, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), and the Foreign Trade University, Shidler APEC Study Center offered the first workshop in Hanoi to explore the changing role of Vietnam in APEC. With more than 200 participants at the Melia Hotel, Dr. MRC Greenwood, UH President and member of the APEC Hawaii 2011 host committee joined Dr. Hoang Van Chau, FTU President, Mrs. Nguyen Nguyet Nga, Director General, Multilateral Economic Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Vu Tien Loc, VCCI President and myself as the Director of the APEC study center, to discuss the future of Vietnam in the growing APEC community.

Two days later, and with the support of VEMBA alumni and students in HCMC, Shidler organized another Pre-APEC workshop in HCMC. H.E. An Le, US Consul General greeted the jam-packed audience at the Sherwood Residence conference to hear Mr. Hoang Van Dung, VCCI Deputy General Director and former ABAC-APEC Chair and other panelists to discuss the recent impacts of APEC on Vietnam’s economy, in particular, on the growing role of private enterprises in improving Vietnam’s competitiveness.

A similar event was also organized in Danang with the support of the Learning Resource Center at the University of Danang and the local Chamber of Commerce.

In November, Shidler also hosted the Vietnam APEC delegation in Honolulu headed by President Truong Tan Sang. As more than 200 CEOs and managers from the two economies discussed business opportunities, Foreign Trade University and the University of Hawaii signed a letter of intent expanding collaboration beyond the VEMBA program.

With its 6th cohort in Hanoi, VEMBA inaugurated a new executive classroom located on the 11th floor of the Foreign Trade University main building, and kick-started the 5th cohort in HCMC last October. As the program grows in quality and reputation, VEMBA keeps attracting star professors to its classrooms. Participating faculty include scholars from Cambridge, Columbia, and Illinois, Chicago. The program has also recently attracted head-hunting companies from Hong Kong and Singapore. Through constant monitoring of the changing business environment, we continually adapt our curriculum to provide the best learning experience to our business graduate students.

As always, I’d like to thank all contributors of this issue. Please keep in touch and send your news, updates and comments to Ms. Xuan My at xuanmyn@hawaii.edu. Enjoy reading this newsletter, and do continue to help us make a difference with VEMBA.

Aloha,

Tung Bui, PhD.
Professor and Matson Navigation Company Chair of Global Business Faculty Director,
Vietnam Executive MBA Program
APEC SUMMIT 2011

by Huynh Buu Quang VEMBA-HCMC ’11
Senior Vice President & Head of Commercial Banking, HSBC Bank (Vietnam)

The Asia Pacific is an important global economic zone and the area is playing an increasingly critical role, as Asia is becoming the engine for global economic growth.

This year’s Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum was held in Hawaii, a so-called “paradise on earth” and the home of our alma mater, University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Political and economic leaders from throughout the Asia Pacific brought delegations to the forum to discuss pressing economic issues in the region. During the 2011 APEC forum, delegation leaders also paid a visit to our University to learn about best practices and how to apply them across different countries and organizations. This is testament to the quality of University of Hawaii’s educational and research programs.

HSBC is proud to have sponsored a pre-APEC forum event in Ho Chi Minh City, organized by the University of Hawaii Vietnam Executive MBA program (VEMBA) at Sherwood Residence. The event was attended by US Consul General An Le and VCCI’s Standing Deputy Director Hoang Van Dung, who was also the head of the organizing committee for Vietnam’s delegation to APEC 2011 in Hawaii. Many other executives and entrepreneurs from a variety of businesses and industries in HCMC also attended. The sponsorship underscored HSBC’s long term commitment to Vietnam and our determination to promote cross-border business between Vietnam and other countries whenever the opportunity arises.

APEC Summit in Hawaii on Nov 12, 2011

Vu Nguyen

HSBC Vietnam
It was my honor to participate in the event as one of the panelists, together with the President of the University of Hawaii system, Dr. MRC Greenwood. It was such a memorable experience for me to be able to discuss and share views with other participants about various topics, including the role of Vietnam in the global economy. For me, this is an intriguing question that every one of us should continue to consider in order to find the answer for ourselves. The answer to this question could be the foundation for new business ideas and strategies for both companies and individual entrepreneurs in Vietnam over the next decade.

As an alum of VEMBA 3 - HCMC, I am always a keen supporter of the UH EMBA program in Vietnam. The knowledge and experience that I have learnt from both the courses as well as from professors, classmates and guest speakers have been invaluable to me. Without a doubt this is the best MBA program available in Vietnam! This is the reason I have recommended that colleagues from HSBC and other organizations apply for the program. There are two HSBC senior managers studying in VEMBA 5 and there will be more in the next VEMBA cohorts. Vietnam, like every other country in the Asia Pacific region, has a critical need for more talented and well educated professionals and entrepreneurs to help drive sustainable and high quality economic growth in the coming decades.

The VEMBA program delivers exactly what the country needs and I have full confidence that if the quality of VEMBA remains as it has always been, this program will be a huge success in the years to come.

Photos: 1 UH President MRC Greenwood speaks at Pre-APEC Event in HCMC on Oct. 6, 2011. 2 Tung Bui, H.E. An Le, MRC Greenwood, Dao Duy Chu, Hoang Van Dung and Donna Vuchinich attend a pre-APEC Event in HCMC on Oct. 6, 2011. 3 Tung Bui speaks at a Pre-APEC Event in Danang on Oct. 27, 2011. 4 Vu Tien Loc, VCCI, speaks at a pre-APEC Event in Hanoi on Oct. 4, 2011. 5 Pham Viet Thanh, Chairman, Vietnam Airlines, and Pham Long Tran, VEMBA-HN ’03, Chairman, VNPT, and Tung Bui at Shidler APEC VN-US Forum.
Have you ever had fast food for lunch? It is likely you have, because the busier you are, the more fast food you eat. That’s why the fast food revenue in Vietnam reached $30 million last year, and is growing at a rate of 28% per year.

Surprisingly, fast food chains like KFC and Lotteria have changed their strategies when entering the Vietnam market. They are marketed as snacks, or fun foods, instead of full meals as they were originally intended. That’s why fast food outlets in Vietnam have become social scenes, where the main customers are teenagers and families with children.

In the minds of Vietnamese consumers, and consumers worldwide, fast food is unhealthy and too oily. This is one challenge that western fast food companies have faced in Vietnam, and it is hard for them to overcome this mindset to be considered a real meal here.

Vietnamese food is known for being delicious, fresh, and healthy. Because of these unique qualities, Vietnamese food fits the taste bud trend of diners worldwide. You can find increasing numbers of restaurants with the signboard ‘Vietnamese Food’ in the United States, Europe, and other Asian countries.

So, what if we combined the convenience of fast food, and the freshness of Vietnamese food? It must be impossible, because it would be too hard to combine the standardization of fast food and customization of Vietnamese food. At least this is our typical thought pattern.

But that is exactly what Ngo Trong Thanh, VEMBA–HN ‘10, did! VietMac, a Vietnamese fast food debut, appeared on the streets of Hanoi this year. Instead of bread-based goods, VietMac’s specialties are made from rice, and in hamburger form. The idea came to Thanh while he

After just seven months, VietMac has set up six fast-food outlets in Hanoi. It opened the first outlet in Ho Chi Minh City on February 2, 2012 at 207 Nguyen Van Troi Street, Phu Nhuan District. The second will be opened on March 20, 2012 at 43 Nguyen Hue Street, District 1.
was on a plane bound for New York, and Hawaii for his VEMBA summer course.

After just seven months (since February 2011), VietMac has set up six outlets in Hanoi, and has signed a franchise contract to set up five outlets in Ho Chi Minh City. According to the plan, these outlets in HCMC will be in operation by the end of the year.

On a recent and rare trip to Vietnam for the pre-APEC conference in Hanoi, Dr. MRC Greenwood, President of the University of Hawai’i system, Ms. Donna Vuchinich, President of UH Foundation, and Professor Tung Bui visited VietMac. Their presence was a great encouragement for VietMac, and demonstrates the University of Hawaii’s interest in its student’s success, even after their graduation.

Recently, several investment funds have expressed interest in investing in VietMac. But Thanh Ngo, VEMBA-HN ‘10, has declined their proposals. In his opinion, the most important factor in ensuring VietMac’s growth is engagement, and he believes that strength would be stripped if he allowed the investment funds.

However, on October 9, 2011, VietMac closed a deal with a business partner in Ho Chi Minh City allowing him to acquire a 5% share of VietMac.

To Thanh Ngo, companies based in northern Vietnam rarely penetrate the southern market well, for a couple of reasons. One is the lack of compatibility between northern business customs and specific characteristics of customers in the south. VietMac will solve this gap by offering our Ho Chi Minh City business partner a share. Living in HCMC, he will be able develop the market in HCMC and other areas of southern Vietnam on behalf of VietMac.

Most importantly, this new partner evaluates VietMac’s brandname at a price of $2,250,000 (as much as the capital fund does, and he paid $112,500 for a 5% share of VietMac. This is a good sign for a brand that is only ten months old.
**GOOD PEOPLE: The Key to Success**

by Nguyen Viet Hung VEMBA-HCMC ‘09
Managing Director, KMS Technology

If there were one word to describe my last four years, it would be fortune. During this period, I finished my VEMBA program and co-founded my first company, KMS Technology (www.kms-technology.com). In both journeys, VEMBA and KMS, I found one common factor that led to my success.

Rewinding back to 2007, I was at a crossroad. I was faced with the basic question that we all ask throughout our lives: “What is my next step?” I didn’t have a clear answer. At that time, I received a recommendation to join the newly launched VEMBA-HCMC program. I was unprepared to apply for the program, but I was lucky enough to be accepted into the first VEMBA HCMC cohort. It turned out to be a wonderful journey. The huge amount of knowledge I acquired from the program was obviously my win. Surprisingly, it went even beyond that. I had fun, made friends with the cohort, and learned a lot from my peers. I kept in touch with my professors after I finished the program. I realized that it was the good people I had a chance to meet that made the whole VEMBA journey fulfilling and wonderful. I met incredible professors and friends throughout the program. That was what I was looking for after all, and that was my fortune.

In the middle of the VEMBA program, I went on and co-founded a company called KMS Technology with a group of friends. We grew to 60 employees in the first year, 180 in the second year and nearly 300 in the third year, 2011. We have doubled our revenue each year for the last three years. When asked to explain how we did that, all I can say is that I was fortunate to have a talented group of people as my business partners to start KMS three years ago. And that was truly the reason. It has been them, my partners, who pushed KMS toward the success we have today. Good people matter. Having a great business idea and a great business strategy are important. But implementing it successfully separates successful people from those who fail. Once you start talking about implementation and execution, it is entirely dependent on the people that you have on the team, not the ideas. It is quite simple like that. Success only comes from our people. And we need to get good people “onto the bus” (borrowing words from Good to Great) at the very first sight of them.

Once we have good people on the bus, trust connects people and motivates them to perform at their best. Integrity is the key practice to build and maintain trust among the team. It’s as simple as this: Success <- People <- Trust <- Integrity. With this solid principle, I can see how KMS will become stronger and stronger everyday, as a team.

In brief, my two most important journeys of the past four years-VEMBA and KMS—share one thing in common: that I was fortunate enough to get to know, learn from, and work with good people. That was really the key to the success I’ve achieved so far.”

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I am quite proud to be a VEMBA alum, Cohort I HCMC’09, and to be a part of the VEMBA Network. Having earned my undergraduate degree from the University of Hawaii as well, I have come full circle through the University of Hawaii system and I hold so much Aloha for the program. It is this Aloha that drives me to help create a VEMBA 'Ohana among all cohorts, whether it is in Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi.

For twenty years, I have been ‘entrepreneuring’ my way through the financial industry, and naturally I have seen and survived the ups and downs of the business. I have witnessed some of the best and some of the worst times for the industry. Twenty years is a long time to store up experiences, whether positive or negative, and thank goodness I am the eternal optimist!

VEMBA provided me the opportunity to retool and rethink strategies that helped me become a better-qualified and more highly respected entrepreneur. Everybody needs money. But I think that creating new networks, or enhancing existing ones, provides us with the other necessary “things” we feel we need to achieve personal success.

It makes me so happy to look around the VEMBA network (V-Network) and see so many alumni getting promotions, elevating their job positions, and bringing value to their companies because of VEMBA. I see alumni taking jobs with the companies of other alumni. I am equally excited to see VEMBA alumni busting out on their own to become true entrepreneurs, taking that leap of faith in their abilities to create successful businesses. These are positive reminders of the value that VEMBA and the V-Network can bring to the ‘Ohana. This is the time when our fellow alumni need us to support their endeavors. We never forget the relationships that we have built within our own cohort, and all of us have the responsibility to try and get to build relationships among the various cohorts as well. “It’s all about the networking opportunities within VEMBA,” a few alumni mentioned to me the other day.

There is an unlimited supply of energy from the synergy of all Cohorts, both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, and we cannot overlook this huge opportunity. That is the power of the V-Network, as we are such a powerful and respected force in the community. The business community here in Vietnam knows us quite well and the program continues to gain recognition all the time. This is the time to create the “things” we want and need in our lives. The money will naturally follow by creating these things in the right way. Use the energy of the program and the V-Network.

My efforts focus on getting involved with the different cohorts in Ho Chi Minh City, sometimes socially and sometimes in the classroom, to help build relationships among us and create a more unified VEMBA ‘Ohana. I enjoy being part of different events and getting to know people. I will also be making an effort to come to Hanoi and meet alumni and current students there. This is all part of the full circle and part of leveraging the power of VEMBA and the V-Network.
My New Chapter of Life

by Le Thi My Hanh VEMBA-HN’13
Account Manager, Pioneer Communications & Marketing

On the bus to Ba Vi Resort on October 21st, it seemed that all of us VEMBA6-Hanoi students were in the same boat and that everyone needed to be side-by-side throughout the trip. We had a great time getting to know each other during meals and debating the issues during class. On the first evening our groups stayed up late discussing our work until nearly midnight, which was both productive and a lot of fun. I believe that the laughter in that classroom motivated our team members to strive for a greater outcome. The Organizational Behavior course and Residence Weekend have equipped us with the necessary tools to stay focused on studying at high intensity, and helped us adapt better to student life.

After the three intensive days, when we all returned to our normal working days among our normal friends and family members, some of us wondered whether or not we should follow through with such a heavy, fast-track course load. We have to make trade-offs and balance our time for studying, work, and family. We were a little bit nervous about how we would be able to manage the whole course for the next two years: the volume of readings we have to cover is immense; assignments are followed by even more assignments; and meanwhile we’re working full-time. Sometimes even after reading lots of things, we still feel like we are in the middle of nowhere.

Yet we were so excited when we received great comments from Professor Bess for the effort we put into the first two assignments. We also figured out how to work together effectively despite time constraints and how to assign duties suitable to each individual’s profession. We tried hard to stick to the commitments we had made in our team contracts to ensure the quality and quantity of our work. And because most of us come from different industries, we tended to balance team members’ voices from various professional perspectives. Together, VEMBA6-Hanoi worked hard, studied hard and laughed hard!

For me in particular, the Organizational Behavior curriculum has helped me to understand behavior at both the individual and organizational levels. Before VEMBA, I understood the terminology to some extent, and applied them to my company, but not in a systematic way. The knowledge is not only applicable to my company but also my real life and relationship.

After all the struggle of the orientation and the first course, we are all still alive and do believe that we can survive. It is definitely important to have a healthy balance between academics, work, and social life, especially for freshmen.

I firmly believe that it is a good start for us to kick-off this new chapter of life!
Hawai’i is perhaps the most famous island chain in the world. It has many attractions: sun, surfing and unique culture. You can also add education to that list. Spending summer semester in Hawai’i will give you a chance to get out of your comfort zone for a short period of time, to see new sights, to meet new people, to learn about another culture, and of course, to earn credit for your MBA while doing it.

Studying in Hawai’i also offers you opportunities that you simply cannot find in your home country or on the U.S. mainland. As the most diverse State in the U.S., Hawai’i is a living laboratory for racial harmony. 80% of the population is non-white and it represents various races including Pacific Islander (Hawaiian, Samoan, Tongan, Marshall Islands), Asian (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, the Filipino), African American and Hispanic. Hawai’i is a geological and environmental wonder where you can experience landscapes ranging from lush, tropical rainforests, to barren lava fields left by still active volcanoes, to the United States’ only barrier reef.

The UH campus is located on the island of Oahu, the most populated island in the chain and the home of such famous attractions as Honolulu, Waikiki, Hanauma Bay, Diamond Head volcanic crater, the North Shore and Pearl Harbor. Getting around

Continued on page 19
EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAM IN HANOI:
NEW PARTNER, NEW BEGINNING

by Pham Anh Tuan, VEMBA Hanoi Staff

In recent years, the cooperation in education between the United State and Vietnam has seen remarkable progress. A number of high quality education programs from undergraduate level to graduate level were brought to Vietnam by American universities, providing Vietnamese students with the opportunity to study international-standard programs right here in Vietnam.

In the area of business education, the cooperation between Shidler College of Business and Foreign Trade University (FTU) could be seen as an exemplary model for educational cooperation between the two countries, where two high-ranking business schools collaborate to offer a first-rate MBA program.

FTU is considered one of the best universities in Vietnam, and also the greatest school for international trade in the north. The school was established in 1960, founded from the International Relations department of the National Economic University, with only one program. Since then, FTU has transformed into a multi-curricula university with
diverse and high-quality programs the help Vietnam's economy merge with the world.

Students of FTU are always appreciated not only for their knowledge and language skills, but also their dynamism, creativity and confidence.

FTU is also proud to possess a contingent of highly-qualified young lecturers who have graduated from doctoral programs in Western countries and are capable of teaching business courses in any country in the world.

FTU and UH officially entered a long-term partnership on July 15, 2011, after a signing ceremony that took place in Hanoi with Dr. Vance Roley, Dean of Shidler College of Business, and the special presence of Mr. and Mrs. Jay Shidler. This cooperation has been strengthened in the past few months, during a signing ceremony at the APEC summit, witnessed by the President of Vietnam, His Excellency Mr. Truong Tan Sang, the State of Hawaii Speaker of the House Mr. Calvin Say, and many other high ranking officials from both countries.

In October 2011, the sixth class of the VEMBA program in Hanoi, and the first class under this new cooperation between Shidler College of Business and FTU was kicked off with 35 qualified students. Thanks to the support from FTU, VEMBA students in Hanoi now have the opportunity to study in an excellent learning environment, with a classroom that conforms to international standards, and with the best educational quality and service provided by Shidler College of Business.

According to the commitments by leaders from both schools, in coming years, the scope of this cooperation is expected to expand to cover not only the VEMBA program but also new programs and activities such as PhD programs, joint research and workshop opportunities, and professional certification programs.

University of Hawaii at Manoa
Shidler College of Business

Executive MBA Program in Hanoi

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The VEMBA Class of 2011 (VEMBA 3 - HCMC) graduation ceremony in July 2011 left me and many others with unforgettable memories. If I were asked to summarize the whole ceremony in three words, they would be recollection, achievement and aspiration.

It was a great honor for VEMBA3 - HCMC graduates to be greeted and congratulated by families, friends and many VEMBA alumni from previous cohorts. The strongest evidence that University of Hawai‘i VEMBA program still maintains its top position among Executive MBA programs in Vietnam is the success of VEMBA alumni, who are well-established professionals.

The VEMBA graduation marked a big milestone for all the graduates. The 22-month period of demanding academic standards was a real test for anyone. But not only that, the program also gave us the opportunity to acquire long-lasting
...the program also gave us the opportunity to acquire long-lasting friendships and many life lessons.

friendships and many life lessons. The strong sense of joy and pride in the eyes of everyone was absolutely clear when Mr. Shidler and Dean Roley conferred the degrees.

Another special thing about the graduation ceremony was the attendance of VEMBA4 - HCMC. The new graduates from VEMBA3 - HCMC, were particularly pleased that we were able to cross the finish line, and there is no doubt the torch will be carried brightly by future cohorts.

Lastly, I’d like to end this short note by saying Aloha to you all with both meanings of this word: Hello and Love. Aloha!

Photos: 1 VEMBA4-HCMC graduating students with Jay Shidler, Vance Roley and Tung Bui. 2 R to L: Nguyen Anh Tuan, Nguyen Thi Hien (two Valedictorians of Class 2011) with Mr. & Mrs. Shidler at Graduation Ceremony on July 17, 2011 at White Palace. 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7: Alumni from VEMBA1-HCMC, VEMBA2-HCMC and VEMBA3-HCMC and guests congratulate graduating students
Six VEMBA-HCMC’11 students attended the commencement at the University of Hawaii at Manoa campus:
Ms. Phi Tran Cao
Mr. Quang Huynh
Ms. Huong Le
Mr. Dat Nguyen
Mr. Hoa Vo
Mr. Lam Vo
**VEMBA4-HCMC: SUMMER BREAK**

by Sin Tuyet Mai VEMBA-HCMC ’12

Director, Lim Kim Hai Electric

On August 6, 2011, VEMBA2-HCMC celebrated their one year graduation anniversary at Chinatown Café - which also happens to be an entrepreneurial venture of one of their classmates. The invitation was extended to all friends from VEMBA 1, 3 and 4.

The party started with Professor Le Dang Doanh, Former Head of CIEM, and a member of IDS, who gave a keynote speech on Vietnam’s macroeconomic state in 2010 and the forecast for 2011. Dr. Doanh, an economist, and the VEMBA alumni had an open and friendly discussion about Vietnam’s macroeconomic issues and their effects on the business environment, followed by a very exciting 30-minute Q&A session, with many questions about government policies and how enterprises would cope with them. In addition, Tiffany Do (VEMBA 2 - HCMC), shared her idea of a new “one million dollar” charity campaign.

After the discussion, all attendees enjoyed a Barbecue, drinking, dancing and “Name that Cocktail” game. The program included a session for VEMBAs to share updates about their status one year after graduation, including any major changes in work, career and personal life. The group celebrated several entrepreneurial ventures, job transitions, and new born babies. Mr. Pham Van Thinh was officially proclaimed the “Chief Entertainment Officer” of VEMBA2 during the party, and shared his plan for VEMBA 2’s upcoming activities for the year. Chinatown Cafe: 158/9 Nguyen Cong Tru Street, Dist 1, HCMC

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**VEMBA2-HCMC: REUNION**

by Le Ngoc Trang VEMBA HCMC ’10

Claim Manager, ACE Insurance Vietnam

It’s time to relax, everyone! That was a great idea after 10 months of knowing each other since the day we started VEMBA4 with the kick off class in Can Gio. The last 10 months have been a challenging time for everybody, since we needed to balance our limited time for work, study, and family, but we got it all done well! It was time for a refreshing trip to get out of HCMC, get out of work and studies and just reserve our time for fun together.

Sanctuary Ho Tram, a beautiful resort in Vung Tau, was our choice destination for the trip. Everything was well prepared to make sure that we would have a wonderful holiday. We arrived at Ho Tram at 12 noon and everybody was immediately excited with the beauty of the resort as well as its comfortable layout and furnishings. Some started to prepare food for the BBQ, some prepared wine, some prepared music to make sure we would have a memorable night together, and the rest couldn’t keep themselves from jumping into the beautiful swimming pool. After the preparations were finished, we all ran to the beach and played football and games until sunset. Everybody became a professional soccer player! We had a good time playing and laughing together until everybody became hungry and exhausted, and decided to move back to our villas for our dinner party at the pool.

Lights on, music on, get the good food and fine wine ready, let the party start!

It was really a great party where everyone could do the BBQ together. Some of our classmates are really good bartenders so we had the chance to drink a lot of unique mixtures. We drank, we danced, we played games, we swam, we chit chatted, we played music together and the night kept going; nobody wanted to stop! We hoped the night would never stop so that our wonderful party night would continue!
My favorite quotation is: “Every moment of each day counts. Our best resource is to live life with intensity and exhilaration—in thought, experience, action and deed.”

It’s been one month since residence weekend at Can Gio. My first-day excitement remains and I have started to feel overwhelmed with the courses. This year I will participate in Christmas activities as usual, and add my MBA course load to my busy schedule.

When Ms. Xuan My from the VEMBA HCMC office asked whether I would be interested in sharing some ideas about the course, I thought about the deadline for our organizational behavior paper. But I promised her that I would write some brief ideas about what I am going to do with the knowledge I gain through this program.

Back in 2007, I attended an information session for the first VEMBA program in Ho Chi Minh City. It was also the first time I spoke to Professor Tung Bui. His encouragement to pursue higher education was inspiring, and I was drawn to the many interesting courses in the program.

I didn’t apply for VEMBA in 2007 because I knew that I wouldn’t have enough time for studying. Recently, I came upon the university website again. I decided the timing was right and contacted the VEMBA office in HCMC for more information on how to submit my application.

During my admissions interview, Professor Bui asked about the time I could allocate for my studies, the reasons I chose the University of Hawai‘i and what I expected to learn after the 22-month journey. I told the professor that I had already thought about how to manage my time and that investing in higher education has been my dream. I wanted to make it happen.

My experience reflects two different industries: hospitality and industrial laundry. I spent my first 18 years of professional life in Sales & Marketing and management at International 5-star hotels, which has allowed me to travel to many different countries. I really enjoyed communicating with customers and bosses from different nations and cultures.

In November 2011, I took on a new challenge when I joined the Vuong Luc Trading Service Co., Ltd as PR & Business Development Director. The company’s core business is to provide laundry solutions. Two things I like about the company are that we have exclusive distribution rights with three high-quality European brands of industrial laundry machines, and the company uses equipment that conserves water, time, energy and chemicals.

During the next 22 months I want to learn new concepts, gain knowledge, share experience with professors and classmates, strengthen my ability to run my own business successfully, and keep my work-life balance. I believe that we will have fun and build a substantial VEMBA network in the years to come.
The program for VEMBA 6 is certainly challenging, but also extremely rewarding. I find it has “woken my brain up” and I am really enjoying the chance to get into new theories and ideas, and apply them to my work. The opportunity to go away for a weekend residential study period was very helpful, though more tiring than I expected! However, motivation and a bit of adrenalin carried us through, and we still found time for a few beers. It is also excellent preparation for the amount of work needed to be successful in the University of Hawai’i MBA. But I think the biggest thing was the team building that the VEMBA staff managed to achieve, and the bonding among the group. It was so rewarding to spend a few good days with interesting, friendly people and to be assured that the next two years would not only be academically rewarding, but also personally satisfying.

One of the things I will remember most from residence weekend was the bonding of our team. Through the efforts of the team, and the set up provided by the professors and the staff from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, we made connections that made our subsequent lessons more valuable and enjoyable. We have also made personal connections that will last. This team building probably wouldn’t have happened without the setup of residence weekend, which offered us the chance to see each other on a regular basis in just a few days.
It was one of the largest VEMBA events to date with over 130 students, alumni, and their families attending. This event gives VEMBA alumni and current students an opportunity to meet and welcome the new class, as well as to celebrate a successful year and reflect on our achievements.

One of the highlights of the evening was our troupe of Hawaiian dancers who thrilled the crowd with their high-energy performance that got everyone up and dancing. But the prize for most energetic VEMBA cohort certainly goes to the new members of our VEMBA family, Cohort 5 HCMC (class of 2013), who had the highest number of attendees and some of the most dynamic dancers.

This year’s event was organized by VEMBA4 HCMC, with the help and hard work of many classmates, as well as monetary contributions and gift donations by individual and corporate sponsors. Certainly the 2012 year-end event, hosted by VEMBA 5, is something we can all look forward to.

We would like to give special thanks to our event sponsors. These generous contributions helped make this a wonderful event.

MONETARY CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS:
- Platinum Sponsor: Lim Kim Hai Electric Co. thanks to Sin Tuyet Mai (VEMBA 4)
- Gold Sponsor: Quang Dung Tek, thanks to Mr. Ngo Truong Da (VEMBA3)
- Silver Sponsor: Haagen Daz, Flagship store at Bitexco Tower, thanks to 3 alumni of VEMBA 2

INDIVIDUAL MONETARY SPONSORSHIPS:
- Gold: Nguyen Quyen (VEMBA4)
- Silver: Nguyen Ngoc Thai Binh (VEMBA4)

GIFT SPONSORSHIPS:
AON, NIVEA, KPMG, PARKLAND COMPLEX...
THE US FDIB DELEGATION VISITS VEMBA-HCMC

by Phan Ngoc Thanh—VEMBA HCMC Staff

The US Faculty Development in International Business (FDIB) program visited our VEMBA-HCMC campus where they exchanged ideas and interacted with VEMBA-HCMC students and Prof. Eric Mais, who was teaching FIN633—Case Problems in Financial Management at that time.

Shidler College of Business is one of 33 universities that are funded by the US Department of Education to promote education and research in international business. This year, together with the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the University of Hawaii’s Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) has for the third time brought a group of 20 business professors to do a study tour in Vietnam.

The goal of the FDIB program is to expose and educate faculty on doing business internationally through first hand oversea experiences...

Wisconsin, Madison, the University of Hawaii’s Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) has for the third time brought a group of 20 business professors to do a study tour in Vietnam.

The goal of the FDIB program is to expose and educate faculty on doing business internationally through first hand oversea experiences, and following the program, share their learning and experience with students via the business community via lectures and meetings.

The HCMC segment focused on the rapidly growing SMEs and MNE outsourcing, including site visits to and briefings from the Harvard Kennedy School in HCMC, US Consulate in Vietnam, Ernst and Young Vietnam, Baker McKenzie, a large scale property developer, Saigon High Tech Park, Intel’s $1.3B manufacturing plant, Nestle Vietnam, and a 5-star hotel furniture manufacturing outfitter.

The Hanoi segment emphasized the transition of state-owned enterprises, including site visits and briefings from Deloitte Vietnam hosted by Ms. Ngoc Tran (VEMBA-HAN ’08), Audit Leader, an online brokerage firm TVSI received by Mr. Dung Van (VEMBA-HAN ’06), President and CEO, Hanoi Trade Corporation, a NGO supporting motorbike injury prevention, and an interdisciplinary session led by Vietnamese scholars at Foreign Trade University in Hanoi, VEMBA Partner in Hanoi.

on Oahu is easy and cheap. With one of the best bus networks in the U.S., the island’s “TheBus” offers convenient, efficient service to all places of interest on Oahu.

The Bus offers student discount passes, available at the UH Campus Center (www.hawaii.edu/campuscenter/). Visit The Bus at: www.thebus.org.

It is also worth visiting the active Kilauea volcano on the Big Island. Kilauea is located on the southeastern tip of the Big Island and is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. Its current eruption started in January 1983 and has been continuously flowing ever since. As of January 2000, it had produced 2.5 million cubic yards of lava, covering 39.9 square miles, and added 506 acres (205 hectares) of land to Kilauea’s southern shore.

The personal growth opportunities in Hawai‘i abound, both in and out of the classroom, and the VEMBA summer elective program offers all of us a chance to take advantage of them!
Best wishes to Vuong Ba Kiet VEMBA-HCMC ’11 and Nguyen Thi My Phuong VEMBA-HCMC ’10 upon their recent marriage. Their wedding ceremony was held on Nov. 24th, 2011 at Park Hyatt Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Mr. Luu Trung Thai VEMBA-HANOI ’09 has just been promoted to General Director of Thang Long Securities. Prior to accepting the position, he was Vice General Director of Military Bank.

Mr. Nguyen Khac Thanh Dat VEMBA-HCMC ’11 was promoted to Deputy Director-Business Development, Prudential Vietnam. He is the first Vietnamese person nominated for this position by Prudential Corporation. He also has just stepped into the 14th year working for Prudential Vietnam.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 14 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
VEMBA4-HCMC Networking with Yale University’s MBA students at Kissho Restaurant

MARCH 20 2–4 p.m.
Business Seminar: Central Bank Independence: What it Means, Why it’s Important, Lessons from the U.S. and Implications for Vietnam with Prof. Thomas Cargill, Prof. Tung Bui, Mr. Louis Taylor, Vice Chairman and General Director of Standard Chartered Bank(Vietnam) and Mr. Quang Huynh, Vice General Director, HSBC (Vietnam)

MARCH 26 6–8 p.m.
Information Session, VEMBA HCMC campus

APRIL 6 6–8 p.m.
Information Session, VEMBA Hanoi campus

MAY 21 6–8 p.m.
Information Session, VEMBA HCMC campus

JULY 15 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
VEMBA4-HCMC Graduation Ceremony & Celebration, White Palace

MAY–AUGUST
VEMBA summer courses at UH Manoa

AUGUST 25–26
VEMBA Summer Outing

OCTOBER 5–7
VEMBA6-HCMC Residence Weekend Kick-off

OCTOBER 19–21
VEMBA7-Hanoi Residence Weekend Kick-off

DECEMBER 20
VEMBA Year-end Party & Gathering
FOUNDED BY THREE VEMBA-HCMC '10 CLASSMATES WHO SHARE A PASSION FOR PHOTOGRAPHY, LIGHTBOX CAFÉ-EVENT-STUDIO DIFFERENTIATES ITSELF FROM OTHER “COFFEE SHOPS” IN TOWN WITH UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE AND STYLE. WITH THREE DISTINCT AREAS, EACH WITH A DIFFERENT DECORATIVE THEME, AND A SPACIOUS, EQUIPPED PHOTO-STUDIO, LIGHTBOX IS A GREAT PLACE TO MEET UP WITH FRIENDS, ORGANIZE SMALL AND MEDIUM EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS, AND TAKE PHOTOS.

IN OCTOBER 2011, LIGHTBOX PROUDLY HOSTED THE VEMBA HALLOWEEN PARTY ORGANIZED BY VEMBA-HCMC ’12 & ’13, MR. TRAN QUOC HUNG, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, HEWLETT PACKARD, MR. TUAN, VICE PRESIDENT, AN PHU LONG CO., AND MR. DO CHI HIEU, FINANCIAL ADVISORY MANAGER, DELLOITE VIETNAM. THE THREE YOUNG FOUNDERS OF LIGHTBOX, SHARED THAT Aside FROM THEIR FULL TIME JOBS, THE PROJECT DEMANDED A LOT OF TIME, EFFORT AND COMMITMENT. “IT’S TOUGH TO BUILD UP THE BUSINESS, TOUGHER TO GROW IT. HOWEVER, WE WERE GLAD THAT WE ALL FOUND GREAT BUSINESS PARTNERS AND HAVE BEEN DOING SOMETHING THAT WE SIMPLY LOVE,” HIEU SAID.

LIGHTBOX ALSO OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF PHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES, FROM PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOTS AND CORPORATE EVENTS TO WEDDINGS, PERSONAL ALBUMS, AND STUDIO RENTAL.

LIGHTBOX CAFÉ
179 HOA LAN, PHU NHUAN, HCMC

VEMBA4-HCMC COHORTS HOSTED HALLOWEEN NIGHT FOR VEMBA OHANA.
The Mānoa campus of the University of Hawai'i is again ranked among the “Best National Universities” in the 2012 edition of the “Best Colleges” guidebook published today by U.S. News and World Report. It is also ranked among the top U.S. universities as an “A-Plus School for B Students” - which “truly seek a broad, engaged student body” and “where non-superstars have a decent shot at being accepted and thriving.”

UH Mānoa also ranked in the top tier of national universities with campus ethnic diversity, identified as a college “where students are most likely to encounter undergraduates different from themselves.”

Shidler College of Business ranked in the top 25 percent of the U.S. News and World Report ranking of “Best Undergraduate Business Programs” and the College’s undergraduate program in International Business ranked 12th. U.S. News also ranked Shidler’s MBA programs in the top 25% overall for 2012.

“I am pleased to announce that we have moved up from 15th to 12th in the U.S. News ranking of International Business programs, tied with the Foster School at the University of Washington. For the second straight year we have appeared in the overall U.S. News undergraduate business school rankings. This year, we ranked 115th out of 486 AACSB accredited business schools in the U.S.,” said Shidler College of Business Dean Vance Roley.