

Report from AISAM 2006

'The AISAM program should be a compulsory part of all MBA programs. It draws together people, experience and knowledge and adds to it with group work, long hours, some stress and tension – as well as some fun – a fantastic learning environment!!'

(Wayne Crofts – AISAM 2006)

The eleventh AISAM program was held in the state of Penang, Malaysia, from July 3 to July 14 this year. Thirty-four students attended the program. While this number was a little lower than in previous years, it permitted all students and staff to get to know each other a little better than when the group was larger.

Student evaluations of AISAM 2006 indicate that an address by Dato' Alfred Teh, Executive Chairman, Eng Teknologi, was a particular highlight. Dato' Teh was very frank in explaining to students the history of Eng Teknologi – the highlights and the rough patches. He was particularly candid in explaining what it meant to be the Executive Chairman of a very successful Chinese Family Business and the responsibilities that go with the role of Chief Executive. Eng Teknologi is proven to be one of the most successful 'home grown' Malaysian owned company in Penang's Free Industrial Zone which was among the first of its kind in South East Asia.

Students also received addresses from:

- YB Dato' Dr. Toh Kin Woon, State Executive Councillor and State Minister for Education. Dr. Toh provided a picture of past, present and future trends in the economic and social development of Penang and Malaysia.
- Professor Dr. Mahani Zainal Abidin, Deputy Director, Private Higher Education Institutions, Ministry of Higher Education and formerly Head, Special Consultancy Team on Globalisation, Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia. Dr. Mahani's presentation provided an excellent start to the Business in Asia unit by explaining the historical development of economies in the Asian region and the importance of cultural influences in doing Business in Asia.
- Mr Shahril Nizam Cheah bin Abdullah, Penang Development Corporation (PDC), explained to AISAM participants how the government of Penang had built the state into a dynamic Free Industrial Zone that now hosted over 700 subsidiaries of multi-national corporations.

A traditional feature of AISAM programs have been on-site industrial visits. Students undertaking two units at AISAM had two half-day visits to Penang based corporations including:

- DHL
- Eng Teknologi
- MEI Project Engineers
- Motorola
- Osram Opto Semi Conductors

At each visit students received a briefing from a senior executive member, undertook a plant tour and enjoyed a very open and frank question and answer session.

Three units were offered at AISAM 2006. During the first week students studied the unit 'Business in Asia' and during the second week chose one of the two electives offered 'International Supply Chain Management' and 'Strategic Negotiation for International Business'.

On the social front 2006 AISAM participants enjoyed the 'welcome barbeque', this time on the Sunday evening prior to classes commencing, negotiated historical Penang on Tuesday evening of the first week and 'shopped 'til they dropped' at the Batu Feringgi night market on Sunday night. 'Solo', proved to be the most popular club on nights off. More formally, students were entertained at a State Dinner at the Bayview Hotel Revolving Restaurant from which they could see 'Penang by night' and the traditional Farewell Dinner was held at the Swimming Pool Lounge of the Bukit Jambul Country Club.

'What an excellent way to finish an MBA and get great social and business contacts.'
(Kerrie Reed - AISAM 2006).