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President's Review and Vision

September 15, 2002 marked the 7th anniversary of the Institute For Tourism Studies (IFT). During this short period of time, the government, the tourism and hospitality industry, overseas partner institutions and international organizations have been supporting and encouraging IFT, accompanying it along the road in the quest for quality education and witnessing its effort.

In his Policy Address 2002, Mr. Edmund Ho, the Chief Executive of Macao SAR, has explicitly stated that the future of Macao relies on the development of the tourism, gaming and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) sectors. The liberalization of the gaming industry will further demonstrate the strategic position of the tourism sector in the economy and mark the beginning of a new era. To cope with the development of Macao, a number of projects on beautifying and developing the city are in progress. There are also plans to transform certain locations with characteristics into tourism and leisure sites. In addition, new tourism products, promotional events and effective preservation work for cultural heritages will add momentum to the growth of the tourism and hospitality industry.

As the hardware is being enhanced, people who have received specialized education in tourism and hospitality will be much needed to promote Macao's tourism products and rich cultural heritages. However, nowadays, many people have the wrong notion that anyone can become a hotel receptionist or a travel agent as long as s/he can speak fair English and that these are the only kinds of jobs the tourism and hospitality industry can offer. In fact, such concept reflects merely a small part of the requirements for the tourism human resources and covers so few occupations in the industry. To participate in the industry, many employers request their staff to receive training before hand so as to be equipped with the required knowledge, skills, attitude

and emotional quotient. Above all, the tourism industry offers not only jobs, but careers. The industry itself is also in search of leaders.

The Institute understands very well its role in the overall strategy of the SAR government. In addition, it is always trying to figure out how it can best serve the community of Macao and satisfy the growing needs of the industry. For this reason, IFT has undertaken two projects this year, hoping to enhance the quality and the quantity of education and research in the Institute. The first project is the restructuring of the Bachelor Degree Programmes while the second is the construction of a new campus building. In addition to the degree programmes, the Professional and Continuing Education School has also been offering different types of training courses for secondary school students, the unemployed, commercial organizations and trainees from Mainland China.

The pedagogic approach is one of the important factors for determining the quality of education. Many scholars lamented the lack of creativity in students and in teaching staff, and attributed this to teacher-centred and one-way education style and management culture. In this information age, the society needs people who have international exposure and who dare to innovate. Regrettably, the conventional pedagogic approach develops the students' rationality at the expense of their creativity and adventurous spirit. The final outcome is a batch of highly "standardized" graduates who may make good managers or administrators, but may not succeed as outstanding leaders of their community. Encountering this problem, it is necessary for the Institute to restructure both the content of courses and the teaching method. To make classes more interesting and to enable students to have more autonomy in learning, the Institute is now implementing the "Problem-based Learning" (PBL) approach, in which

creativity, inter-disciplinary learning, teamwork spirit and lecturer-as-coach mentorship are central principles. By fine-tuning the pedagogic methodology continuously, the Institute believes that the first class of graduates equipped with new thinking will be produced before long.

The year 2003 will be a year of challenge for the Institute. Counting on the dedication of IFT staff and students and on the support from all walks of life, the Institute will be able to take a bold step forward to develop, for Macao,

high-quality professionals who can be good leaders and who dare to confront challenges.



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President
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