

April 15, 1960

Mr. Gustav Hertz  
Public Administration Division  
ICA  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hertz:

Your suggestion that I furnish you with some comments concerning the weaknesses of the NIA and methods or procedures to correct these and strengthen the Institute has not been forgotten.

It may be well to point out some of the major gains of the Institute. In considering the future aid program for the NIA the following are listed.

1. The Institute is essentially self-supporting financially, since the national budget covers practically all salaries and scholarship and other operating expenses.
2. The NIA building has funds already allocated for it, a large plot of land already cleared, plans already approved, contractors selected, and a completion date within the next two years is highly likely.
3. Graduates of the NIA are sought after and are holding responsible positions in administration, including in at least one case already, the position of province chief.
4. The library is well along, although problems still exist.
5. Practically all of the regular faculty of the Institute have already had some contact with American education in public administration and/or economics. If the Ph. D. participant program can be managed effectively, there will be members of the NIA faculty with American Ph. D.'s in public administration and economics within the next three years.
6. The Case program has produced text materials which are being used. Translations have been made and a broad solution to the text materials problem is in sight through the PL 480 program.

7. The in-service training program is in a position to have a broad impact throughout the government.

8. The NIA is increasingly a site for "professional" interest in public administration (e.g., the Association, public lectures, the Journal, the EROPA, the library, etc.).

However, we should review the fact that the Institute should become a strong research center so that it can do an adequate task in the long run as a public administration center for Vietnam in that area of the world. To do this we must emphasize the strengthening of its faculty and pursuing a participant training program. For a few selected people will continue to come for Ph. D. program. These Ph. D.'s will then be able to push in the direction of broadened basic research during their full time careers as faculty members of the Institute.

It certainly is true that there are weak links in the NIA faculty even by Vietnamese standards. Mr. Vu Van Thai has a highly critical attitude concerning this matter, but there are others who have the opposite view.

It appears to me that there are three areas where weaknesses may be found where we should plan for the years ahead. Namely, the participant training program, research development and up-grading the administrative organization of the Institute.

Specifically, MSU feels that assistance in the future will be necessary. We should like to have you consider the following points.

1. The advanced program is extremely weak and we ought to explore thoroughly the alternatives in this area.

2. We have never paid much attention to the examination system. It might be well to look into this so that we can help the Institute if they desire to change.

3. The Ph. D. participant program is extremely important and one in which the East Lansing staff should and is taking an active hand. We shall devote more time and energy to this facet of work.

4. The general administration of the Institute should be up-graded through technical assistance from us. This aid should now be forthcoming as we attempt to integrate our administrative service with that of the Institute. I assume that one of our current objectives is still that type of integration, and that the chances for our being effective in this area will increase as the new building facilities become more and more demanding on their administrative talent.

This gives you a short, but I hope, clear concept of the needs of the NIA.

Cordially,

Ruben V. Austin  
Assistant Dean

RVA/ap