

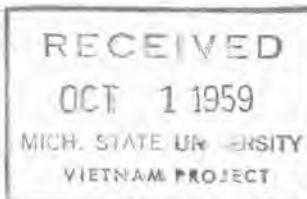
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE 5 TENNESSEE

Department of Economics & Business Administration
Graduate Program in Economic Development

CABLE ADDRESS: VANEDI

September 30, 1959



Dr. Stanley Gabis
Vietnam Project
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Dear Stan:

I am writing you about the question of where Mr. Nguyen Duy Xuan, one of your participants, should conduct the research for and writing of his thesis. As you may know, Mr. Xuan will take his oral examinations and obtain the results of his doctoral preliminary examinations on Thursday, October 1. He is then planning to begin work on his thesis, assuming that the results of his examinations will be successful. For sometime we have been operating on the assumption that he would return to Vietnam to work on his thesis after working out the general outlines and receiving approval of them from the faculty. It has been expected that these steps will be completed sometime in December.

It is the policy of this University, especially for foreign students in the Economics Department, to permit the completion of theses in absentia and not to require an oral defense of the thesis. Because of the large number of foreign students coming here in connection with the Economic Development Program we have realized that such policies were necessary to permit students to obtain their Ph. D. degrees. It is expected that the faculty members will devote such time to corresponding with those students working on theses in absentia so that they will receive adequate supervision and guidance.

In the case of Mr. Xuan, we recommend that he return to Vietnam in order to work on his thesis, for two reasons. First, it will permit him to write a thesis on Vietnam which he could not do in this country because of insufficient materials. Secondly, we feel that the presence of an economist in the Michigan State University group and my presence in Vietnam during the coming spring will provide adequate opportunity for guidance of his work. I might add two additional reasons why I personally recommend that Mr. Xuan do his thesis in Vietnam. First, I believe that those persons brought here under your Michigan State University Graduate Program should begin as soon as possible to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of conditions in Vietnam. To require such persons to

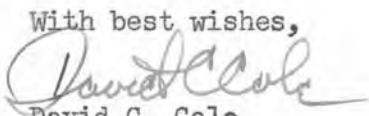
Dr. Stanley Gabis
East Lansing, Michigan

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September 30, 1959

write theses in this country, which generally precludes their writing on Vietnam, seems to me absurd. Secondly, I think that such persons could help the research division of the NIA to get started on some significant projects. I suggest that MSU urge the NIA to assign such persons to the research division, free them from administrative and teaching responsibilities to the maximum extent possible, and encourage them to complete the work for their theses and at the same time produce useful studies on Vietnam.

I sincerely hope that it will be possible for Mr. Xuan to carry out the program as we have planned it.

With best wishes,

David C. Cole
Assistant Director

DCC:mw

October 2, 1959

Dr. David C. Cole
Department of Economics
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Dave:

I am much obliged for your letter of September 30, 1959 concerning Mr. Nguyen Duy Xuan. I sympathize very much with the sentiments which you have expressed and will make them known at once to Saigon. I recently learned that Mr. Xuan wished to return to Vietnam after completing his orals.

Although what you say makes a great deal of sense, there is a complicating factor, namely, that the NIA people very much want their Ph. D. candidates to fully complete their degrees before returning to Vietnam. This has been set as a condition for joining the faculty. Although I understand this rule is not inflexible, it is to be taken quite seriously.

Although I recognize the very persuasive character of your argument that Xuan should do his research in Vietnam, I am not convinced that it is "absurd" that he do his thesis in the U. S. I do not mean to be contentious. There are two points to be considered:

1. There is a greater availability of resources for completing a Ph. D. in this country, and one should be able to anticipate that a Ph. D. from a strong department in the U. S. should be able to transfer his research experience to his own land. After all, a dissertation is only a start. (We hope.)
2. I think you will recognize that there is always the danger that a Ph. D. candidate far removed from the University may bog down on the dissertation for a number of reasons.

I fully recognize that these two considerations are somewhat counter-balanced by your plan to correspond with him concerning the progress of his work. However, one can argue that this kind of arrangement is usually not to be preferred to one in which a student works in close proximity with his chief professor. If he returns now, his situation in Vietnam will be an ambiguous one. I checked with Dorsey, and he agrees with me.

Dr. David C. Cole

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October 2, 1959

Everything I have said must be qualified by Mr. Xuan's attitude. If his motivation drops off because he is home-sick or for some other reason related to the prolonged absence from Vietnam, we might have a greater problem on our hands than if we permit him to return to Vietnam to complete his work.

Elsie has been in touch with Mr. Xuan, and we expect him to come to East Lansing for a visit when he completes his orals. I will look forward to going over the situation with him. In the meantime, if there is anything more that I should know concerning his outlook and present disposition which might influence his work should he remain in the United States, I would greatly appreciate your letting me know. We have had some rather difficult cases along the same line here in East Lansing.

I will forward your recommendations to Vietnam immediately and urge them to give close consideration to Mr. Xuan's case. Our people will have to clear this with the NIA, and this may take a little time, but I will try to hurry it up.

You may be interested to know that Bob Scigliano and John Dorsey are back in academic harness. Bob is rapidly recovering from a severe case of hepatitis and is now doing very well.

It was good hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Stanley T. Gabis
Acting Coordinator

STG/ap

cc: Cunningham
cc Saigon

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING

VIETNAM PROJECT • OFFICE OF COORDINATOR

October 20, 1959

Mr. David Cole
Vanderbilt University
Department of Economics
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Dave:

I hope this reaches you before leaving for New York. As you know, we have had some exchanges with Saigon concerning Mr. Nguyen Duy Xuan. I am attaching a copy of a recent memo from Ralph Smuckler.

I have discussed this whole matter with Jim Hendry, and he tends to support your position, namely, that considering Xuan's attitude we might seriously consider his return to Vietnam. Jim Hendry emphasized the point that Frank Child who is now on the staff in Saigon might possibly aid you in supervising Xuan's work. This whole arrangement would hinge on whether or not we could persuade the NIA or our Project to support Xuan in research activity. I was particularly concerned to learn just very recently that Xuan had developed a case of ulcers. This sort of thing could be very decisive in determining the course of action.

Jim will be in New York for the American Friends of Vietnam meeting, and I have asked him to get in touch with you and discuss Xuan's case. As you may know, we have asked Xuan to come up here on November 14. However, I would appreciate it if you went over the matter with Jim. Jim has a part time relationship here with the Vietnam Project and is advising several Vietnamese economic students. Your guidance will be invaluable.

Sincerely,

Stanley T. Gabis
Acting Coordinator

STG/ap

cc: Hendry
Cunningham



October 28, 1959

Dr. Ralph Smuckler
Chief Advisor
Michigan State University Group
Box 34, A.P.O. 143
San Francisco, California

Dear Ralph:

I was sent a copy of your memo of October 13 to Stan Gabis concerning Mr. Xuan. Subsequently, I discussed the problem with Jim Hendry at the recent Vietnam Conference. I still feel strongly that my earlier position is the right one in general and under the specific circumstances of Mr. Xuan.

I recognize the danger that some students returning to Vietnam without completing their theses may never get around to doing so. However, I feel that measures can be taken to reduce the likelihood of unfinished theses. I realize that this shifts the burden of responsibility to your end of the line rather than leaving it back here, but I think that other benefits which would accrue from theses researched and written in Vietnam more than compensates for the problems that might arise. I may be poking my head in where it is not justified, but I suggest that you try to work out an understanding with the Institute whereby those persons returning to do their theses would be assigned to full-time research and would be prodded to get the job done. If no other satisfactory financial arrangement can be devised I would suggest that MSU pay the salaries of such persons while they are working on their theses. This would be considerably cheaper than supporting them here in this country.

In the particular case of Mr. Xuan, I can report that he is extremely anxious to return to Saigon. In addition to a recently acquired case of ulcers, one factor that is bearing heavily upon his mind is a forth-coming marriage. It seems that he has been committed to the eldest of a string of sisters and none of the others can get married until Mr. Xuan skims off the top layer. Thus, you see that your position has earth-shattering sociological implications.

Finally, I might note that Mr. Xuan could not do a thesis in this country on economic conditions in Vietnam that would be satisfactory to this faculty. There just is not sufficient material in this country. He

*Mail a copy for
Cecil & Hendry
S. M. S.*

Dr. Ralph Smuckler

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October 28, 1959

could write on some other subject, but again, I think that this is a misallocation of resources.

Turning to another matter, I was pleased to hear that you will be back in this country in December. I would like to visit you in East Lansing sometime in January before departing for Saigon so that we can discuss recent developments and you can clue me in on what to expect. I have just received Milton Taylor's report on the Business License Tax and find that we are far apart on this one. Anyway, we can see how things work out and I will appreciate any suggestions that you have to offer.

With best wishes,

David C. Cole, Assistant Director
Graduate Program in Economic
Development

DCC:mw

cc: Dr. Stanley Gabis

November 5, 1959

Mr. David Cole
Department of Economics
and Business Administration
Vanderbilt University
Nashville 5, Tennessee

Dear Dave:

I guess the question of Mr. Xuan's return is pretty much out of our hands. You know what our preference is, and I should add that it is felt rather strongly by several of my colleagues in Saigon. However, if an emotional problem exists, we are willing to accept the inevitable. We are fortified by the fact that you will be here for a long enough period to see him settled and underway and that Frank Child can provide guidance over the months that follow your departure.

I was glad to hear from you again, and I hope that we can arrange the kind of meeting you suggest in East Lansing. I assume that we will be able to get together since I expect to be back on campus at the beginning of January.

Cordially,

Ralph H. Smuckler
Chief Advisor

RHS/dcm

cc: Coordinator



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