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VC COLUMN

Harvard of the East

THE campus community at Universiti Utara Malaysia is known largely to thrive on its research and innovation. As the only management university in Malaysia, we are eager to make ourselves known as the “Harvard of the East”.

Harvard is a name that is synonymous with the Harvard Business School, an internationally known university highly ranked in most university ranking systems.

Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) aims to adopt the educational approach undertaken by Harvard Business School, mainly in the production of case studies and problem-based learning.

To realise this, UUM recently upgraded the Institute for Management and Business Research (IMBRe), which was previously under the Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business, to be an institute at university level.

IMBRe will bring together researchers to develop case studies that are relevant to the Asian region. We aspire to produce the *UUM Business Review* with case studies that are relevant and appropriate to the regional setting.

Although we first started out as a university that mainly catered to local students, today, UUM hosts students from around the world, adding further dimensions to its intellectual pursuit and enriching cultural diversity on campus.

As a result of efforts in pursuing our aspiration to become an eminent management university in the country and the region, we have cultivated international diversity on campus.

We greatly appreciate the presence of international

students, not just for the purpose of internationalisation, but for the edification of our local students to be able to interact and collaborate cerebrally, and emotionally engage with the different cultures that international students bring.

Cultural integration is easily achieved at UUM because we practise a full-residential system that provides accommodation to undergraduate students and postgraduate students with families. We encourage international students to get involved in cultural and community activities to gain a rich cross-cultural experience.

To greatly foster and sustain an international academic hub at UUM, our postgraduate programmes are all conducted in English. We also provide intensive English language courses for students who need to improve their English before admission into a degree programme.

We strongly believe that the success of an organisation is highly dependent upon the conscientious efforts and unflagging support of the members in the organisation. We advocate and practise the dissemination of information at every level of the organisation and welcome feedback.

An example of this is the introduction of “Le Tour de Schools”, which involves me visiting our 15 Schools and the three Graduate Schools. I started the tour with our flagship School of Accountancy and two other schools in March. Hopefully, I will be able to visit all schools before the semester ends.

We realise, however, that a university history spanning only 30 years means that we have a long way to go

before we can be on par with established universities such as Harvard, Cambridge, Stanford or Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In order to gain a competitive edge in the global arena, we continuously upgrade and refine our academic programmes to ensure they gain national and international recognition.

Our two accounting programmes serve as an example of our endeavour to provide quality programmes. They are conducted in collaboration with two professional bodies, ACCA and CIMA.

Consequently, when students complete either one of the accounting programmes at UUM, they will acquire two certificates – the bachelor’s degree in accountancy and an ACCA or a CIMA certificate.

We strive to be financially well-positioned to ensure our academic and administrative fronts are properly equipped for effective work production. We ensure that the university has good scholars who have produced quality research and are published.

We maintain a great relationship with our students, alumni and the industries. Though our ambition will take a while and require determined diligence, I am confident that we are on track to becoming the “Harvard of the East”.

● Prof Datuk Wira Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak is the vice-chancellor/president of UUM



By PROF DATUK WIRA DR MOHAMED MUSTAFA ISHAK