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Accounting for advancement

THE Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (MICPA) has been working with Malaysian universities to promote the importance of undertaking a professional accounting qualification for career advancement.

MICPA sees the vast potential that lies in Malaysian undergraduates and has been nurturing leadership skills and personal development through regular career talks and collaborating at student events.

MICPA has also been raising awareness on the MICPA-ICAA Programme, which is the professional accounting programme conducted in collaboration with the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia (ICAA).

Many people do not realise that they can do the ICAA professional programme in Malaysia through MICPA as it runs a joint programme that grants dual memberships to its candidates.

Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) is one such university that has developed strong ties with MICPA through its proactive steps to provide a pathway for students to undertake professional examinations while still undergoing their degree programme.

Since 2009, its School of Accountancy (SoA) has identified



School of Accountancy dean Prof Dr Kamil (front, centre) with UUM faculty members and students. Inset: MICPA-ICAA programme prize-winner Low Mei Yee.

139 students with the capability and interest in pursuing a career in accounting, and provided them with scholarships to sit for the MICPA-ICAA Programme.

The students do two out of the five programme modules in their final year: Financial Accounting and Taxation. These students are selected not solely based on academic achievements, but also their active involvement in extra-curricular activities.

SoA dean Prof Dr Kamil expressed his commitment in ensuring UUM students will be involved in programmes that can enhance their job-related skills.

Besides the theoretical aspect explicated in classrooms, students are also trained to master soft skills – leadership, teamwork, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, information management, continuous learning, moral and ethics.

For that purpose, the SoA has worked hard to garner funds, which are then ploughed back to selected students through scholarships.

He adds, "The records from student bodies show that UUM accounting students involved in joint programmes such as the MICPA-ICAA Programme show better performance and have received many job opportunities.

"We hope to continue this collaboration with MICPA and would encourage more students to seize the opportunity to advance themselves through this professional accounting programme."

UUM has provided much support to its students by arranging for special classes and examination venues. UUM lecturers have also been helpful and supportive.

The SoA works closely with MICPA to provide the best preparation in terms of focus sessions and revision classes. A series of motivational and professional talks were also conducted for students undertaking the professional exams.

This is to keep students abreast with industry expectations and to prepare them for real world life upon graduation, and to inspire them to be confident and enthusiastic about their future careers.

All this was not in vain, as UUM

produced a top-scorer in the Taxation paper in 2012 – Low Mei Yee, who won the BDO Gold Medal for her achievement.

Low attributes her success to the continuous support received from family members. Doing the MICPA-ICAA Programme with her peers made studying more interesting and allowed for fruitful discussions. Having tutorial classes provided by the university and ready advice from tutors and lecturers were a tremendous help.

Low shares, "Doing the MICPA-ICAA Programme during my fourth year at UUM was challenging and exciting.

"It provided me an opportunity to take up challenges, stay focused and strive to achieve targets in life. What I learnt equipped me not just with technical accounting knowledge but also built up my soft skills and self-confidence that has helped me secure a job after graduation."

Low is now working in a Big 4 accounting firm. As for advice to her peers, she encourages them to maintain a healthy lifestyle and effective time management.

■ For details about the MICPA-ICAA Programme, call 03-2698 9622, e-mail micpa@micpa.com.my or visit www.micpa.com.my