

DATO' SRI ABDUL AZIZ: CHART OUR OWN TRACK TO EXCELLENCE

By: Mohd R Jamaludin



“We can chart our own track to excellence,” was the firm stance made by Dato' Sri Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman, one of the directors on the board of Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP).

“We do not necessarily have to be on their list. We can set our own benchmarks,” remarked Dato' Sri Abdul Aziz further in a recent exclusive personal interview with the Publication & Graphics Unit of UMP's Vice-Chancellor's Office at the Hyatt Regency in Kuantan, Pahang.

He was responding to a query on his views on the outcome that UMP did not make the cut in the Top 18 universities in the country.

“Universiti Malaysia Pahang does not need to tread on the same route as other IPTAs had in order to excel”

Earlier in July, the Ministry of Higher Education announced a list of 18 top universities, both public and private institutions of higher learning, in Malaysia. Aspiring to be a world-class, competent-based university, UMP, however, did not make it.

The director's remarks brought the writer back through time when UMP's Chairman, Dato' Mohd Hilmey Mohd Taib, said in a similar exclusive interview over six months ago that he was confident the aspiration was achievable, but wanted the university to touch base with reality.

“UMP has to achieve this distinguished standing in gradual stages. The immediate goal is to be the preferred tertiary education provider in the East Coast of Peninsular. Then, we can go on to national, regional and global,” added the Chairman.

On that note, Dato' Sri Abdul Aziz emphasized that the outcome of not making into the Top 18 list should spur and challenge UMP to improve. “The hardwork put in will not go to waste, but will certainly leave footprints for future generations to recognize.”

One instance, he acknowledged, the current Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr Daing Mohd Nasir Daing Ibrahim, has shown high-spirited dedication towards internationalization of the university, which was initiated eight years ago.

Hard evidence to substantiate the

recognition were the many memoranda of understanding (MoU) and agreement (MoA) signed between UMP and several foreign universities – the latest being the double degree programme in Mechatronics, offered in collaboration with Germany's Hochschule Karlsruhe Technic Und Wirtschaft (HsKA) Karlsruhe University of Applied Science and the German-Malaysian Institute. Through this MoU, UMP is at the forefront of local public institutions of higher learning in offering high quality engineering undergraduate programme, modelled after Germany's tertiary curriculum.

The university also saw MoU signed with multinational companies, like IBM Malaysia Bhd, to facilitate information communication technology network services, training programmes and internships, to both students and lecturers alike.

“With more multinational companies and industries setting a firm foothold in Pahang, in areas like Gambang, Gebeng and Pekan, the university will certainly be making its mark in realizing the State's ambition to become the East Coast Education Corridor.”

Internationalization does not only mean going abroad, but also, attracting foreigners to come over. In 2009, UMP opened its doors to the first batch of 37 international undergraduates from China, who enrolled for the six-month English Intensive Preparatory Programme at the university.