



SME-UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP UNLOCKED OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATES TO OFFER BUSINESS CONSULTATION SERVICE

Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)'s Entrepreneurship Centre, SME Corp Malaysia and Higher Education Ministry organised SME-University Internship programme for the first time that involved 24 undergraduates representing four consultation groups.

The programme was held to showcase the undergraduates' capability in providing consultation services to small and medium enterprise (SME) companies.

UMP Entrepreneurship Centre director Dr. Omar Jamaludin said the participants' final presentation was a reflection of their ability to help the companies improve their sales performance by having promotional activities, effective marketing programmes, systematic account management as well as organised and customer-friendly outlet layouts.

"The programme is carried out over six months with two months spent of early research, making final presentation and preparation

of report while three to four months are used for participants to work on assignments in SMEs fixed according to the groups," he said.

He was pleased about the commitment showed by the undergraduates, who were a pioneer group, with the winner picked to represent the university at the finals.

In his speech during the official opening, ministry's entrepreneurial/graduate marketable section senior secretary assistant chief Dr Syahira Hamidon said the participants should be proud of themselves and were a fortunate lot because they now had the experience in entrepreneurship despite studying in engineering subjects.

"This is in line with the Institutes of Higher Learning Entrepreneurial Development Policy as an effort to groom graduates with entrepreneurship characteristics," Dr Syahira said when officially opened the programme at Astaka Hall in UMP on April 5, 2012.

SME Corp Malaysia Pahang

state director Masnani Basirun was satisfied with the cooperation given by UMP in helping to make the programme a success and completed within the stipulated period.

Masnani said the programme also gave the opportunity to entrepreneurs to upgrade their companies' capability and ability to continue to be competitive and progressive.

"Companies involved in the programme achieved a variety of results from the consultations provided with some of them recording sales increase of 75% after three months of supervision.

"A total of 433 undergraduates from 15 public universities and 92 companies have participated in the programme since 2009. The programme is based on Consultation Based Learning For ASEAN SMEs (COBLAS)," Masnani added.

Consulting Sphere Group which offered consultation service to Syarikat Embun Kaseh Beauty Secrets was announced as the winner.

The group's members were Electrical and Electronic Engineering Faculty undergraduate (FKEE) Mohd Solehuddin Mahmud, Mechanical Engineering Faculty (FKM) undergraduate Siti Norsita Mohd Rawi, Technology Faculty (FT) undergraduate Nurul Asyikin Mohamad Ladzem, Computer Science and Software Engineering Faculty (FSKPP) undergraduate Azwan Affandi Md Jahaya and Chemical Engineering and Natural Resource Faculty (FKKSA) undergraduates Azimah Saman and Nor Amalina Hussain.

Also present were SME Corp. Malaysia business development division deputy director Hilyati Muhammad Nasir, SME Corp. Malaysia business development division senior manager Murniati Mokhtar, Global Factor Sdn. Bhd. Managing Director, Haji Ab Razak Hj Azhari, SME Bank entrepreneur skills development centre senior manager Norani Mohd Noor and Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Berhad (PUNB)'s Undergraduate Prosper Unit executive officer Azham Ardin Shah.