

UMP INTRODUCED EAP TO NURTURE CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE AMONG STAFF



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Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) introduced an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) aimed at providing help and support to staff, which in turn, would transform them into a workforce that practised a culture of excellence in all aspects.

It included living a healthy lifestyle and having high awareness and compliance to the rules and practice of sustainable living.

EAP is an initiative by UMP to help improve work satisfaction among staff by focusing on the resource and services rendered so they would stay happy and contented.

Acting Registrar, Abd. Rahman Haji Safie said, the idea for the programme was mooted by UMP Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr. Daing Nasir Ibrahim himself when he delivered his Annual Speech last year.

"The main purpose of establishing EAP is to provide advice to staff facing difficulty in work, struggling to find balance between career and family and suffering from physical and emotional health as well as experiencing personal life changes that can have direct impacts on quality, focus and daily work performance," he said.

He added that a Staff Consultancy and Assistance Unit was set up under EAP that

would let matters involving problems faced by the staff to be managed more effectively.

He also said free professional help would be provided, with counselling rendered on short term basis and referral given if need be, adding, they would be assured of confidentiality.

"The programme has been reviewed and extracted from the best practices of its kind, with similar practices already implemented in reputable universities in the world such as in the United States of America and United Kingdom.

"It is a programme which these universities have taken to ensure excellent work performances are produced consistently and eventually, heightened to the next level.

"In the world's current state where rapid and dramatic changes continued to occur, issues relating to human resources remained to be an agenda that needed to be addressed by academic researchers or human resource practitioners," he said.

Thus, UMP viewed the facts of changes that are happening as something which should be given due focus especially in areas that can have impacts on the environment of a workplace such as increase in social network

influence, healthcare cost, low motivation among employees and personal issues that will have direct effects on work productivity.

Currently, a road show is being carried out at every responsible centre where briefings are held in order to give a clear picture about the programme such as the objectives, services offered. The road show is also a platform where feedbacks from staff are obtained.

The first few initiatives that have been implemented under the Staff Consultancy and Assistance Unit (UPBS) are drafting of the EAP Policy, setting up an official portal, an application and statistical system, building a facility and service area and conducting several pre-assessment sessions and related training programmes.

In a bid to have the programme getting the reputation and credibility equal to the functions carried out, it will be referred to EAP professional bodies, practitioners and agencies that have long been implementing this procedure.

It is necessary for the programme to go through the right benchmarking and discussed at professional conferences so the latest and comprehensive input can be obtained.