KEMENTERIAN PENGAJIAN TINGGI · MALAYSIA

Enhancing the Quality of Higher Education through Research: Shaping Future Policy

Chapter 3

University – Community Engagement in Malaysia: Practices and Prospects

Lee Mei Ph'ng, Agus Setyo Budi, Zolkepli Buang, UTeM
Norizan Md Nor, Hassan Naziri Khalid, USM
Mohd Ridzuan Nordin, UMP

Introduction

Universities can no longer operate as ivory towers independent of society. They must play active roles as members of the society towards developing the community (Ruben, 2004, p. 1). There are also authors who emphasise that it is to the universities' advantage to make themselves relevant to society and bring benefit to the community. Failure to do so would only undermine the university's ability to fulfil its duties and would cause the universities' basis of existence and operation to be questioned by members of the society (Maurrasse, 2001, p. 22). Separation from society is likely to diminish the university's ability to comprehend society's aspirations, and so lead to the failure of the university to appropriately supply society with the required human capital and to fulfil the community's other needs in general.

University-Community Engagement or UCE is a two-way active collaboration between the university and sections of the community such as residents' associations, non-governmental bodies, local community leaders, professional bodies, business community members and educational community members to undertake activities that will lead to shared benefits. Examples of these initiatives are education and community development programmes, local entrepreneur development, continuing education, community health, environmental surveillance and the enhancement of educational excellence. UCE initiatives ideally require both parties to play active roles at all stages of the collaboration starting with preliminary discussions, the formulation of collaboration, and implementation, and ending with the review stage (Maurrasse, 2001, p. 1).

Collaboration between universities and industry has traditionally been given high priority. Industry is considered an important partner of universities apart from being the main employer of graduates. Industry is considered as an important partner of universities, apart from being the major employer of graduates (Wright, 1990). In many cases, members of industries also participate in the formulation of universities' new academic programmes and in the research and development activities involving the universities. However, dependence on industry or an unchecked relationship with it has raised some concern. Bok (2003) and Aronowitz (2000) asserted that dependency could potentially compromise the quality of education offered by universities. In this study UCE refers to collaboration between universities and other parties in the community other than industry. The term community as used here is synonymous with society.

As social institutions, universities have three core functions to perform, namely to generate knowledge, to disseminate knowledge and to provide services to the community (Ruben, 2004, p. 32). The generation of knowledge, fundamental and applied, is done through research and development activities. The dissemination of knowledge is done through teaching and learning activities that are formal or non-formal and are either continuing or fixed in duration. The dissemination of knowledge also takes place through the publication of books and the publication of research findings that may be shared with fellow researchers and with the community at large.

Services to the community could be directly or indirectly rendered. Universities can make a direct contribution to society through initiatives involving its staff, units or faculties or the university at large. As an example, the role of a university professor as adviser to local professional bodies would enable the university to directly contribute towards the professional development of individuals in the community. The involvement of a particular faculty to solve problems faced by the community would help enhance the prosperity of the community. Furthermore, the involvement of the university to solve the community's problems through a multi-disciplinary approach would enable the community to resolve the problems in the best possible manner

The implementations of universities' two core functions, i.e. generating knowledge and disseminating knowledge could also be done with the third core function in mind, namely providing a service to the community as an explicit ultimate objective. Research findings could be integrated into actual practice or commercialised, and hence potentially contribute towards promoting the well-being of society. Through it, society secures returns from their investment in the university, especially in its research initiatives. Through teaching activities, society will gain human capital in the form of a skilful and knowledgeable workforce to man the economic and social activities beneficial to society. It is important that the workforce is able to perform and contribute towards the generation of benefit to society as a whole.

The ability of a university to benefit society directly is very dependent on the sensitivity of the university towards the needs of society. The onus is on the university because society has a blurred understanding on the operation of a university. In this respect, the university may have to make the first move in a formal and systematic manner on top of the informal and case-by-case approach towards responding to the community's needs. Interaction initiated by the university would allow the university to fully comprehend the needs of society and this enables it to collaborate with the community in an engaged manner to identify the best approach to help fulfil the needs.

UCE is an approach that allows the university to demonstrate its commitment to the community. In the Malaysian context, UCE could potentially contribute substantially towards the efforts of making Malaysia a developed nation by 2020. On top of the graduate workforce generated by the universities and the research findings that could be implemented and commercialised, universities could help drive the process to transform Malaysian society. As a centre of knowledge that has all the required expertise, a university could champion the transformation of communities surrounding its campus. Such a transformation would lead ultimately to the enhancement of Malaysia's capital,

both human and social. This however requires a conscious initiative on the part of the university, preceded by serious articulation and planning. This is especially important because a university also has its limitations and constraints.

At the same time, there are those who suggest that a university should not be constrained by one particular view, especially one that does not represent the prevalent views of the society. Some authors suggest that it should not be controlled by society. *Black (2004)* in his book *Freefall of the American University* argued that failure to ensure independence from such control has undermined the quality of American universities. He believed that a university should focus on its core function and on its niche areas. As such, in working with the community, universities should focus on their strengths, so that they can make more meaningful contributions to society.

This chapter presents approaches taken by universities in Malaysia to UCE. The influence of UCE on the operation of these universities will be examined. This chapter will also discuss the impact of UCE and recommend approaches that may enhance UCE's impact.

UCE in selected universities abroad

UCE is an important agenda among universities in the United States of America (USA) (Maurasse, 2001, p. 1) and in Australia (Garlick, 2000). The State of Victoria in Australia has a clear policy encouraging universities in Victoria to embark on UCE activities. In the USA, even research universities such as the University of Pennsylvania place heavy emphasis on UCE, including helping to develop the socio-economic well-being of the local community.

The service to community or UCE component is clearly present in the vision and mission statements of many universities abroad. The extract related to UCE in the vision and mission statements of selected universities abroad are given in Table 1. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the United Kingdom clearly state the contributions that these universities aspire to make to local communities. The relationships between the role of universities and their impact on society are also clearly stated in the statements of the University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA. The statements of the University of Melbourne and RMIT University in Australia also clearly depict the roles that the universities desire to make in developing the society and the industry. The same is true in the case of the National University of Singapore and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Table 1: UCE component in mission statements of selected universities abroad

Num.	University	Community and UCE components
1	University of Oxford	The University of Oxford aims to achieve and sustain excellence in every area of its teaching and research, maintaining and developing its historical position as a world-class university, **and enriching the international, national and regional communities** through the fruit of its research and the skills of its graduates.
2	University of Cambridge	The mission of the University of Cambridge **is to contribute to society** through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.
3	University of Pennsylvania	**Through our collaborative engagement with communities all over the world**, Penn is poised to advance the central values of democracy: life, liberty, opportunity, and mutual respect. As we prepare to expand Penn's campus to the east, we **strengthen our ties with our neighbours and help drive economic and technological development throughout the City and Commonwealth**. At the same time, we will share the fruits of our integrated knowledge wherever there is an opportunity for our students, faculty, and alumni to serve and to learn.
4	Pennsylvania State University	As a land-grant university, **we also hold a unique responsibility for outreach and public service to support the citizens of Pennsylvania**. We engage in collaborative activities with industrial, educational and agricultural partners here and abroad to disseminate and apply knowledge.
5	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	The mission of MIT is to advance knowledge and educate students in science, technology, and other areas of scholarship that **will best serve the nation** and the world in the 21st century.
6	University of Melbourne	As a public-spirited institution, Melbourne declares its intention **to make research, student learning and external engagement serve public ends.** This includes taking up pressing societal problems in research, producing graduates prepared for responsibility, and promoting inquiry and open debate based on evidence and reason.
7	RMIT University (RMIT)	**RMIT is a global university of technology with its heart in the city of Melbourne.** We create and disseminate knowledge to meet the needs of industry and community and foster in students the skills and passion to contribute to and engage with the world.
8	National University of Singapore	The NUS mission comprises three mutually reinforcing thrusts: quality education, high impact research and **service to country and society**.
9	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	To be a leading university with significant international impact and **strong local commitment.**

Service to the community and UCE are viewed as a core responsibility of universities in developed countries. References to community service indicate the explicit intention of the universities to make a direct contribution towards developing the community. The general approaches to implementing UCE in the selected universities abroad are listed in Table 2. The implementation of community services and UCE may however vary from one university to another. Generally, the implementations of UCE are integrated into the operation of the university and are frequently coordinated by a unit established for such purpose. In order to ensure the sustainability of UCE-related activities, they must be linked to the two other core functions of the university, namely teaching and research. It is also important for UCE to secure the support of the leadership of the university to ensure that UCE-related activities are integrated into the operation of the university and for it to secure its own allocation.

Table 2: Approach towards implementing UCE by universities abroad

Num.	University	Implementation Approach
1	University of Oxford	Public Affairs Directorate
2	University of Cambridge	Office of Community Affairs
3	University of Pennsylvania	Center for Community Partnership
4	Pennsylvania State University	Office of Vice-President for Outreach
5	MIT	MIT Public Service Center
6	University of Melbourne	Dedicated web page UCE
7	RMIT	RMIT Learning Community Partnership Unit
8	National University of Singapore	NUS Extension Centres
9	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	Office of Development and Public Affairs

As a centre of knowledge, a university must transfer its expertise to the community and contribute towards enhancing the achievements of society in the educational, social, cultural, technological and economic dimensions. In this respect, UCE could be developed as an important medium forming a link between university and society.

The successful implementation of UCE depends on many factors. The main factor is the internal and external structures of the university that are shaped by the leadership of the university through the university's organisational structure and culture. Hataneka (2004) found that in the context of university-industry collaboration, there are three types of barrier separating the university from its potential industrial partners. Similar barriers may also be present in the context of UCE.

According to Hatakenaka (2004), the external barrier of the university may be a *fuzzy* boundary that is vague and operates randomly. There is no clear cut policy pertaining to collaboration and the academic staff are normally left to their own devices. The challenge in this situation is to establish the common denominators that will enable collaboration between the community and the university, since the conditions acceptable for collaboration have not been determined by the university. The second form of external barrier may be an *impermeable* one. In this respect, collaboration is not welcomed or encouraged, and the university is not open at all for collaboration. The third form of barrier is the *regulated* boundary. In this form, proposals that have a certain characteristic are welcomed and implemented. The third barrier allows both parties to work together in a more systematic manner. Similar situations may also exist for the internal barrier separating the different units in a university. These situations have a bearing on collaboration between universities and external parties such as in the case of UCE activities.

The existence of a clear and positive policy on UCE would facilitate the effort to collaborate with sections of the community. The positive approach by the top management of the university and priority given to UCE initiatives would also facilitate the collaboration among units in the university and enable them to play their respective roles related to UCE. Approaches that transcend the departmental barriers in the university would help ensure the success of a UCE initiative. It would enable the various parties in the university to function as a team that ultimately enable the universities to deliver their key functions and in addressing critical issues facing the university (Ruben, 2004: 216-232). This situation would certainly enhance the implementation of UCE initiatives and their impact. The ability to make meaningful contribution to the community would ultimately ensure that the university would continue to be relevant.

As in the collaboration between university and industry, UCE could also be enhanced by government intervention. For example, the United States federal government introduced the "Community Outreach Partnership Programme" to encourage UCE. Similarly in Australia, the Victorian State government also provides incentive for universities in Australia to engage in UCE.

Research Methodology

The overall approach adopted in this study is qualitative in nature through the use of multiple sources of information. These include official publications, the distribution of institutional questionnaires to universities and feeder institutions, interviews with vice-chancellors or their representatives and the convening of a panel of experts. The universities' annual report and web-pages are major sources of information. Content analyses of universities' vision and mission statements were done to identify the emphasis on UCE. Similar analyses were also made of the content of vice-chancellors' reports included in the universities' annual reports for 2005.

Sample:

All public universities and six private universities in Malaysia were chosen for the study. Twelve public universities and five private universities participated in the study. There were two informants from each university. One informant, from the corporate communication department of the university, is the respondent for the institutional questionnaire. The other respondent is the vice-chancellor of the university or his representative. Eight vice-chancellors, four deputy vice chancellors and five senior officials of universities were interviewed. The representatives of the Student Representative Councils of four universities being that of Universiti Tenaga Nasional,

Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Petronas dan Universiti Malaysia Pahang were also interviewed. The impact of the universities' approach towards UCE related activities towards enhancing academic excellence at feeder institutions was also probed. This was done by sending questionnaires to 160 feeder institutions comprising of 65 secondary schools in the state of Melaka, 63 fully residential schools and MRSM, 13 Matriculation colleges and 19 Polytechnics. A total of 56 questionnaires were returned to the researchers.

To obtain a more authoritative feedback from individual universities, interviews were held with the vice-chancellors or their representatives, i.e. deputy vice-chancellors or other senior university officials. Eight vice-chancellors, four deputy vice chancellors and 5 senior officials of universities were interviewed. The representatives of the Student Representative Councils of four universities being that of Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Petronas dan Universiti Malaysia Pahang were also interviewed. The interviewers asked similar questions in all the interviews but the flow of questioning varied from one interview to another. All interview sessions were recorded and transcribed prior to analysis. Content analyses of the interview transcriptions were made in order to assess the emphasis placed by the universities on UCE and community service activities.

Instruments used

Each university was requested to complete a questionnaire reflecting the approach taken by universities towards UCE and community services. The respondents were asked to indicate the emphasis given by the universities towards various aspects of UCE. Completed questionnaires were coded and analysed using SPSS statistical packages. In the interview sessions, the interviewers asked the vice-chancellor questions pertaining to the university's policy and overall approaches towards UCE and community services. Similar questions were asked in all the interviews except the flow of questioning varies from one interview to another. All interview sessions were recorded and transcribed prior to analysis. Content analyses of the interview transcriptions were made to understand the emphasis on UCE and community service activities by the universities interviewed. The questionnaire for the feeder institutions require the institutions to list and provide details of initiatives involving universities that was meant to enhance academic excellence in the institutions. The institutions were also requested to indicate the impact of such programmes. The returned questionnaires were coded and analysed using the SPSS statistical packages.

Panel of experts: The meeting of a panel of experts was also convened. The 20-member panel comprise of representatives from Gerakan Akademik Kebangsaan (the federation of academic staff associations of public universities), youth organisations, community leaders, Puteri UMNO wing, secondary school administrators, university administrators and university professors. The deliberation of the panel was preceded by the presentation by research team leader. After the presentation, the panel was divided into two groups to deliberate on the following issues:

1. The extent to which universities have been successful in contributing to society and enhancing their contribution.
2. The approach taken by universities in Malaysia towards UCE and initiatives that could enhance the contribution made through such efforts.

Each group discussed the issue assigned, and later presented their findings in a forum-like prsentation. After the presentation and deliberation, the panel as a whole was asked to come to a consensus on their views pertaining to the UCE initiatives by universities in Malaysia and to formulate recommendations relating to UCE to be forwarded to the Ministry of Higher Education.

Overall, this study is a census of public universities in Malaysia since almost all public universities were included. The public universities were divided into two groups, namely the earlier universities established as universities, and the newer universities formerly known as university colleges. Five private universities were studied from the original list of 6 universities. The respondents to the questionnaires administered and interviews held represent their institutions and are in the best position to present their institutions' situation in relation to UCE. The information gathered were collated and triangulated to enable a clearer picture of the approaches taken by universities towards UCE to be drawn.

Findings

The findings of this study are summarised in the tables presented in the rest of this chapter. Table 3 summarises the frequencies with which the university's web-page contains information related to UCE and the implementation of UCE. For the dissemination of information, the more established public universities and the private universities tend to use the web-page as frequently as the selected foreign universities. The use of the web by the newer public universities tends to be significantly lower than that of the older public universities. The web-page was also used to implement UCE related activities, e.g. to deliver on-line courses to the community. It was also observed that the use of the web related to the implementation of UCE by foreign universities tended to be more substantial than that of Malaysia's universities. The data pertaining to the use of the web for UCE related purposes by the universities are given in the appendix as Table A1-A3.

Table 3: Occurrence of UCE related components on universities web-pages

Num.	Category of usage	Mean for earlier established public universities	Mean for newly established public universities	Mean for private universities	Mean for selected foreign universities
1	Disseminating information	20	14	18	23
2	Implementation of UCE related activities	5	5	4	18

Table 4 summarises observations from the content analyses to identify community service and UCE related content in the universities' vision and mission statements and in the vice chancellors' reports in universities' 2005 annual report. The detail observations are given in Tables A4 –A5 in the appendix to this paper. The vision statements of three universities, namely USIM, UKM and UiTM, contain phrases related to contribution to society and the nation. 14 of the universities emphasised the aspiration to be recognised at the international level without referring to their contribution at the local and national levels. As for the mission statements, the statements of two universities being UPSI and UiTM contain phrases related to community services as a means to deliver the universities' functions. The mission statements of UMP, OU, UTHM and USIM are universal in nature while the statements of the other universities contain their resolve to contribute also at the national level.

Analyses of the Vice Chancellors' reports found that the report of eight universities, i.e. USM, UiTM, UTM, UM, OU, UKM, UMS and USIM contained components emphasising the role and contribution of the university to the community. Among these universities, only UKM presented their achievement and approach objectively through the use of appropriate indicators. The reports of four universities, i.e. UNIMAS, UMP, UTHM and UNIMAP contained minimal information related to UCE, while that of UPSI and UUM only contained general statements. The reports of three universities, i.e. UPM, UIA and UTeM only reported the involvement of students in community services.

Table 4: UCE components in the official statements of Malaysian universities

Num.	Statement	Observation
1	Vision statement	Three universities being USIM, UKM and UiTM integrate phrases pertaining to community/nation in their vision statement. 14 universities emphasise the aspiration to secure recognition at the international level without describing contribution at the local and national level.
2	Mission statement	The mission statements of two universities being UPSI and UiTM contained phrases that emphasise community services. Four universities being UMP, OUM, USIM and UTHM have universal mission statements. The other universities also emphasise their resolve to contribute at national level.
3	Report by vice-chancellor	The report of eight universities being USM, UiTM, UTM, UM, OU, UKM, UMS and USIM contain sections that communicate the universities' roles and contribution to community. Among these universities UKM provided a more systematic reporting inclusive of giving objective indicators of its performance and contribution in community services. Four universities being UNIMAS, UMP, UTHM and UNIMAP have minimal statements on UCE in its reports. Three other universities being UPM, UIA and UTeM emphasise student based community services only.

Table 5 summarises the observations made from the analysis of questionnaire-based institutional feedback from universities. Fifteen of the seventeen universities that completed the questionnaire indicated giving high priority to UCE. Eight universities strongly agreed and six moderately agreed about the existence of a formal planning session for UCE-related activities by the university. Similar responses were obtained for the statement about the provision of resources and allocation for UCE by the university. The degree of agreement on the statement pertaining to incentives for academic staff to participate in UCE is lowest, with six universities indicating a high agreement, six medium agreement and three indicating low agreement and one disagreeing.

Table 5: Agreement by universities to statements on various aspects of UCE

Statement	High	Medium	Low	Disagree
High priority given by university to UCE.	15 (88%)	2 (12%)		
Presence of collaboration between university with industry that satisfies the characteristic of UCE initiatives	12 (82%)	2 (12%)	1 (6%)	
Introduction within the past 3 years of initiatives consistent with the UCE mission of the university	9 (60%)	6 (40%)		
University provides specific resources and allocations for UCE initiatives	9 (56%)	6 (38%)		1 (6%)
University practices formal planning for UCE	8 (56%)	6 (33%)		2 (11%)
Presence of 'engagement' or other term that have similar meaning present in the vision or mission statements of your university	9 (52%)	6 (36%)		2 (12%)
Presence of systematic mechanism in the university to enable multi-disciplinary approach to solve problem in the community	7 (41%)	6 (35%)	3 (18%)	1 (6%)
Presence of incentive for academic staff to participate in UCE activities	6 (38%)	6 (38%)	3 (18%)	1 (6%)

Table 6 summarises the analysis of UCE initiatives involving universities in 2006 for the benefit of feeder institutions. Out of the 134 programs reported, 46% are for academic excellence. Campus visits, discipline specific programmes and subject specific programmes made up 15%, 14% and 9% of the initiatives respectively. The majority of the initiatives (60%) produced very positive impacts while the rest result in positive impact. This could only suggest that the initiatives involving the universities benefited the feeder institutions.

Table 6: UCE initiatives involving feeder institutions and their impacts

Activity	Frequency	%
Campus visit	20	15
Seminar for students	19	14
Specialised programme	12	9
Seminar for parents	2	1.5
Educational excellence programme	62	46
Student personality	8	6
Competition	5	4
Exhibition	6	4.5
Total	134	100
Impact- Excellent	80	60
Impact - Good	54	40

The overall approach taken by the universities towards UCE was analysed from seventeen aspects as listed in Table 7.

Table 7: Interview based response by universities on overall approach towards UCE

No	ASPECT	High	Medium	Not Clear
1	Priority towards UCE	17 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
2	Prominence of students affairs program in UCE	16 (94%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
3	Agreement on the introduction of key performance indicators for related to UCE	13 (76%)	1 (6%)	3 (18%)
4	Role of centre of excellence in UCE	7 (41%)	4 (24%)	6 (35%)
5	Access by community to university's facilities	6 (35%)	9 (53%)	2 (12%)
6	Presence of university's unique contribution through UCE	4 (24%)	13 (76%)	0 (0%)
7	Existence of a platform for discussion between potential UCE partners with university	4 (24%)	12 (70%)	1 (6%)
8	Sensitivity to the needs of society	3 (18%)	14 (82%)	0 (0%)
9	Existence of university level planning for UCE	3 (18%)	13 (76%)	1 (6%)
10	Reporting on UCE at the university level	1 (6%)	2 (12%)	14 (82%)
11	Existence of performance indicator for UCE	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	15 (88%)
12	Existence of incentive for staff to participate in UCE	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	16 (94%)
13	Existence of multi-disciplinary approach to solve society's problems	1 (6%)	4 (24%)	12 (70%)

14	University level coordination on UCE related activities	0 (0%)	14 (82%)	4 (18%)
15	Training for UCE	0 (0%)	14 (82%)	3 (18%)
16	Allocation earmarked for UCE	0 (0%)	4 (24%)	13 (76%)
17	Presence of policy statements pertaining to UCE	0 (0%)	3 (18%)	14 (82%)

Based on the interviews with the Vice Chancellor or his/her representative, the emphasis of the university in each of the seventeen aspects was categorised as high, moderate or not clear. The distribution of the emphasis as interpreted from the analysis of the interview transcriptions is summarised in Table 7. All the respondents in the interview indicated a high emphasis on UCE. Thirteen universities indicated a moderate emphasis to university level planning for UCE. The emphasis on report preparation, presence of performance indicator and incentive for academic staff show low emphasis with at least fourteen of the seventeen universities having unclear emphasis. UCE is generally well accepted by the leadership of the universities. However, the observation on the implementation of UCE suggested it requires the attention and support of university leadership.

The distribution of emphasis by individual universities interviewed is summarised in Table 8. UMS, UKM and UMT place high emphasis on UCE. The other universities generally tend to give moderate emphasis on the various aspects of UCE. The details of the emphasis by these universities for the seventeen aspects of UCE are given in Table A6 in the appendix of this paper.

Table 8: Emphasis towards 17 aspects of UCE by universities

University	High	Medium	Not Clear
UMS	10	4	3
UKM	9	6	2
UMT	8	6	3
UNIMAP	6	4	7
UMP	5	6	6
UM	4	7	6
UiTM	4	7	6
UNITEN	4	4	9
UTP	4	9	4
USM	3	9	5
UTHM	3	8	6
UteM	3	8	6
UPSI	3	7	7
UUM	3	6	8
MMU	3	6	8
OPEN U	3	4	10
UNITAR	2	8	7

Discussion

The observations and inferences made are discussed in this section according to the objective of the study.

Aspects of UCE

The vision and mission statements of the universities do not seem to give high emphasis to services to the community. It was found that three universities, i.e. UiTM, UKM and USIM emphasise the contribution at the community and national levels in the universities' vision statements. Fourteen other universities state the aspiration to succeed at the international level without stating their roles and contributions at the local and national levels. Only two universities, i.e. being UiTM and UPSI explicitly include community services as part of the universities' mission. Generally, the philosophy underlining the establishment of a university does not seem to be reflected in the university's operation. However, a number of universities, namely, UKM and UiTM are trying to retain the spirit of their establishment through UCE. Generally, community services and UCE do not make up a significant component of the universities' vision and mission. The approaches taken by the universities towards these activities parallel the emphasis put on the vision and mission statements. For example, the reporting of UCE activities is not done in a systematic manner, unlike that for academic and research activities. As to whether UCE influences the universities' operation, there was little evidence for it. Student-based community services seem to be the most prominent UCE related programme in most universities in Malaysia. However, it was found that university level planning did not include UCE and community services activities while the impact of UCE activities was not discussed in a systematic manner by the senior management of the university. Moreover, the implementations of UCE initiatives depended on the ingenuity of the respective units in the university and were normally financed by the university operational allocations. One positive observation was, however, made. Community services inclusive of professional services components were included in the annual appraisal of staff performance amounting to 5% of the total appraisal points. Nevertheless overall, the operation of universities in Malaysia did not seem to be influenced by community services and UCE agenda.

Malaysian universities were also found not to take into account UCE and community services in the way they organised themselves. Even though student-based UCE related activities were organised through the student and alumni office, ad-hoc committees were normally formed to organise specific UCE activities. There are, however, new developments in this aspect. UUM and UNIMAP were in the process of establishing special units to coordinate UCE initiatives in the universities.

The contribution of all parties was central to UCE. In the case of Malaysian universities, most community services programmes involved students and their involvement was primarily meant for their development. The centre of excellence that enables staff to contribute to society could potentially be an important vehicle for the university. Its full

potential is, however, yet to be realised. Generally, it is the university that determines the nature of UCE initiatives and their implementations. The contribution of staff, students and external parties towards UCE varies from initiative to initiative and is dependent on the initiative of the organiser. Based on the current situation, the university leadership could play an important role in setting a high priority for staff involvement in UCE.

The implementation of community services and UCE programmes currently benefited the students through the opportunity to develop their soft skills through participation in community services programmes. To a certain extent centres of excellence in universities also contribute to the community, especially in relation to their niche area. This study also found that the initiatives involving universities and feeder institutions benefited the institutions substantially. This proves the significance of UCE and the need for universities to serve the community.

This study has also identified a number of challenges to be overcome. The major challenge seems to be understanding what community services and UCE are. Different universities and different sections of a university seem to have different understandings on UCE. As a result the integration of UCE related initiatives at university level does not seem to occur. Misunderstanding the core function of a university and overly focussing on the university's aspiration to excel at the international level may have caused the core duty of serving and benefiting the community to be underemphasised.

This may, however, change for the better in the near future. Vision 2020 and human capital are two important contexts for the development of Malaysia requiring universities to enhance their UCE initiatives. Universities are expected to contribute substantially since they are still highly regarded and serve as centres of reference for many members of the community. Moreover, there exist a lot of opportunities to synergise UCE initiatives by the universities with that of other ministries and agencies. Furthermore, the requirements for a multi-disciplinary approach to solve most problems in society continue to require input from expertise in the universities.

The positive impact from UCE initiatives may help propel more UCE initiatives by the universities. The feeder institutions have been found to have benefit from initiatives involving universities in Malaysia. As for the involvement of university students, student leaders interviewed for this study acknowledged that student involvement in community services helps them to develop good personalities. Moreover, the involvement of lecturers as consultants and in other capacities with external organisations has benefited the organisations.

The different approaches to UCE adopted by universities in Malaysia

University UCE activities in Malaysia are managed in such a way that the boundary between universities and the community comes under the type described by Hataneka (2004) as *fuzzy*. However, due to the commitment expressed by academic leaders, the nature of this boundary is certainly not by design. This suggests that UCE and community services activities have better prospect if systematic approaches are taken by universities. UCE activities could be enhanced so that the contribution of universities in Malaysia to the development of the country could be increased further. Community

services and UCE are perceived to be of high priority even though the implementations do not reflect this Most universities in Malaysia do not include UCE in their vision and mission statements and do not conduct UCE activities in a systematic manner. UKM was found to have a better approach to UCE compared to other universities.

A comparison of the practices of local universities with those of selected foreign universities suggested that the selected foreign universities had a more systematic approach to UCE. Contribution to the local community and to the nation is of paramount importance to the foreign universities, and this is reflected in their vision and mission statements. These universities tended to assign the tasks of initiating and coordinating UCE related activities to a specific unit. The emphasis on contributing at both local and national levels tended to take precedence and serve as a foundation for their contribution at the international level. It has also been found that these universities tended to be more thorough in their UCE initiatives including the use of the web to disseminate information and to implement UCE related activities.

Recommendations

The implementation of UCE related activities by universities in Malaysia could be further enhanced by giving the priority to community services without decreasing the priority currently given to teaching and research. Implementing community services by synergising it with research and teaching activities could enhance the impact of the other two activities. This could happen due to better understanding of the society and its needs by the universities. The following approaches are recommended for universities in Malaysia to improve the implementation of their UCE activities.

In line with their approach to teaching and research, universities must have a clear approach towards community services. For this purpose, universities must clearly articulate their policies towards UCE in their official statements and documents. Universities should plan for and coordinate UCE related activities at the university level as have been currently done for teaching and research. Community services must be generally accepted and implemented as a core function of the university. Community services may in fact be integrated into the university's effort to generate new knowledge and disseminate knowledge to others.

Universities should maximise the potential contribution by their centres of excellence to the relevant parties in the community. The community services programme involving students could be further improved by organising them as long-term activities with clear programme objectives and indicators so that they would be sustainable and lead towards producing capable leaders among the students. Universities should also consider rewarding their staff who have made the most meaningful contribution to the community.

Universities should focus on making meaningful contribution to the community in its niche area and form strategic collaboration with relevant government agencies and other external parties in delivering UCE activities. The leadership of universities should

monitor and coordinate their UCE activities to ensure that they really contribute to the local community..

The monitoring of community services activity at the level of the Ministry of Higher Education would help to ensure the contribution of universities towards the development of communities in Malaysia. It is recommended that the ministry ensure that
1. universities acknowledge and demonstrate that service to community is one of the core functions of universities
2. universities focus their community service initiatives on their niche area
3. universities integrate UCE as an element to be managed at the university level
4. universities synergise with other agencies in identifying the needs of the society and the nation and contribute towards fulfilling them
5. universities report on UCE related achievement annually through their annual reports and through senior management forums and
6. the Ministry itself provides specific allocations for UCE.

Conclusion

Service to the community is accepted as a function that deserves high priority. Nevertheless, this priority is not clearly translated into systematically planned and executed actions. Most universities in Malaysia are keen to be successful at the international level and in the international arena. However, the contributions at the local and national levels are not clearly conceptualised and systematically implemented. Contribution to society through UCE related activities has minimal influence on the operation of universities. It was found that UCE related programmes organised by universities involving their feeder institutions yield highly positive impacts. This reflects the potential contribution that could be made towards the development of Malaysia's society through UCE. This paper has suggested a number of initiatives to be considered for adoption that would pave for a more organised and systematic implementation of UCE by universities. As centres that posses the expertise in all aspects of knowledge, universities have the potential to help drive the effort to transform Malaysia's society to that of a developed nation by 2020.

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Appendix: Table A1: Detailed observations on the occurrence of UCE related information in web-pages of universities

Column groups (left to right): **COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY** (UM, USM, UKM, UPM, UTM, UPSI, UIA, UUM, UNIMAS, UMS, UiTM), **SPECIALIZED PUB U** (USIM, UTHM, UTeM, UMT, UNiMAP, UMP), **PRIVATE U** (UNITAR, UTP, MMU, UNITEN, OPEN U), **UK** (OXFORD, CAMB), **US** (PENN, MIT), **AUS** (MELB, RMIT), **SNG** (NTU, NUS), **HK** (HK POLY, HK U)

Main categories and sub-categories:

Research
1. Online resources
2. Links - external websites
3. Online events/news
4. Products – to be commercialized
5. Employment info
6. Consultation/collaboration
7. Expertise directory
8. Sponsored research programs
9. List - completed/ongoing projects
#. Others
Sub-total

Community service
1. Online academic programs
2. Academic programs
3. Vacancies
4. Feeder institutions
5. Links to other universities
6. Services to public
7. Affiliated programs
8. Others
Sub-total

Professional development
1. Programs/courses
2. Online courses
3. Links - recruiters
4. Online resources
5. Others
Sub-total

Consulting services
1. Products/services
2. Online business
3. Employment info
4. Research
5. Others
Sub-total

Continuing education
1. Affiliated programs
2. Postgraduate courses
3. Short courses/seminars/courses
4. Online courses
5. Online resources
6. Others
Sub-total

Career development & placement
1. Own programs
2. Joint program
3. Links - recruiters
4. Others
Sub-total

Governance
1. Industry
2. Community
3. Government
4. Stake holders/profit bodies
5. One stop CE center
6. Policy on CE
7. CE in university mission
8. Others
Sub-total
Total

Table A2: Overall usage of universities' web-pages for disseminating information related to UCE

Main categories (columns): Research, Community services, Professional development, Consulting services, Continuing education, Career development, Governance, Total.

University rows, grouped as: COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY (UM, USM, UKM, UPM, UTM, UPSI, UIA, UUM, UNIMAS, UMS, UiTM, MEAN), SPECIALIZED PUB U (USIM, UTHM, UTeM, UMT, UMP, UniMAP, UMP, MEAN), PRIVATE U (UNITAR, UTP, MMU, UNITEN, OPEN U, MEAN), UK (CAMB, OXFORD, MEAN), US (MIT, PENN, MEAN), AUS (RMIT, MELB, MEAN), SNG (NUS, NTU, MEAN), HK (HK U, HK POLY, MEAN).

Table A3: Overall usage of universities' web-pages for implementing UCE related initiatives

Main categories (columns): Research, Community services, Professional development, Consulting services, Continuing education, Career development & placement, Governance, Total.

University rows, grouped as: COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY (UM, USM, UKM, UPM, UTM, UPSI, UIA, UUM, UNIMAS, UMS, UiTM, MEAN), SPECIALIZED PUB U (USIM, UTHM, UTeM, UMT, UniMAP, UMP, MEAN), PRIVATE U (UNITAR, UTP, MMU, UNITEN, OPEN U, MEAN), UK (CAMB, OXFORD, MEAN), US (MIT, PENN, MEAN), AUS (RMIT, MELB, MEAN), SNG (NUS, NTU, MEAN), HK (HK U, HK POLY, MEAN).

Content analysis of vision and mission statements

Table A4: UCE linked component in the vision statement of universities

Num.	University	Vision Statement	Observation
1	UNIMAS	To become an exemplary university of **internationally acknowledged stature** and a scholarly institution of choice for both students and academics through the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship	Focus on succeeding at the international level
2	USM	None	
3	UPM	The university's vision is to be a **world class university**.	Focus on succeeding at the international level
4	UIA	In this way, the seeking of knowledge is regarded as an act of worship. Inspired by the world-view of Tawhid and the Islamic philosophy of the unity of knowledge as well as its concept of holistic education, the IIUM aims at becoming a **leading international centre of educational excellence** which: 1. Revitalises the intellectual dynamism of Islam and the Ummah; 2. Integrate Islamic Revealed Knowledge and values in all academic disciplines and educational activities; 3. Seek to restore the leading and progressive role of the Muslim Ummah in all branches of knowledge; thereby 4. **Contributing to the improvement and upgrading of the qualities of human life and civilisation.**	Focus on succeeding at the international level
5	UMP	To be a **world-class** competency-based technical university.	Focus on succeeding at the international level
6	UiTM	To establish UiTM as a premier university of outstanding scholarship and academic excellence, capable of providing leadership to **Bumiputera's** dynamic involvement in all professional fields of world class standards in order to produce graduates who are competitive, ethical and with global outlook.	Focus in contributing at the national level within the global context
7	UTM	To be a **world class** centre for academic and technological excellence through creativity	Focus on succeeding at the international level
8	UM	To be an **internationally renowned** institution of higher learning in research, innovation, publication and teaching.	Focus on succeeding at the international level
9	OU	To be a leader and innovator in **open learning**	Focus on succeeding at the universal level
10	UKM	UKM is committed to be a leading university that pioneers innovation in the construction of knowledge to achieve the aspiration of producing a **society** imbued with dynamic, learned and civic leadership.	Also focus on contributing at the societal level
11	UMS	Universiti Malaysia Sabah strives to be an innovative university of **global standing**	Focus on succeeding at the international level
12	USIM	Fostering academic excellence and an ummah able to contribute towards human progress, nation building and the advancement of the world.	Also focus on contributing at the national level
13	UPSI	To become a University that is unique, distinctive in educational leadership based on its historical resplendence as well as embrace global evolution.	Focus on succeeding at the universal level
14	UTHM	Aspires to lead in the application of science and technology for the **benefit of mankind.**	Focus on succeeding at the universal level
15	UTeM	To Be One of the **Worlds** Leading Innovative and Creative Technical Universities	Focus on succeeding at the international level
16	UniMAP	An **internationally** competitive academic and research institution	Focus on succeeding at the international level
17	UUM	University Utara Malaysia aspires to be a management university that is a paragon of efficiency and of **world class** stature.	Focus on succeeding at the international level

Table A5: UCE component in the mission statement of universities

Num.	University	Mission Statement	Observation
1	UNIMAS	To generate, disseminate and apply knowledge strategically and innovatively to **enhance the quality of the nation's culture and prosperity of its people.**	To also contribute at national level.
2	USM	To lead and innovate in achieving excellence at the international level through: • advancing and disseminating knowledge and truth; • instilling qualities that stress academic excellence and professionalism; • developing holistic individuals; and • **providing a strong commitment towards the society's aspiration, the country's vision, and universal aspirations**	To also contribute at national level.
3	UPM	The university's mission is to be a leading Centre of learning and research, **contributing not only towards human advancement and discovery of knowledge, but also for the creation of wealth and nation building.**	To also contribute at the national level.
4	UIA	Towards actualising the University's vision, the IIUM endeavours: 1. To undertake the special and greatly needed task of **reforming the contemporary Muslim mentality** and integrating Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences in a positive manner; 2. To produce better quality intellectuals, professionals and scholars by integrating the qualities of faith, knowledge and good character to serve **as agents of comprehensive and balanced progress as well as sustainable development in Malaysia and in the Muslim world;** 3. To promote the concept of islamization of human knowledge in teaching, research, consultancy, the dissemination of knowledge and the development of academic excellence in the university; 4. To nurture the quality of holistic excellence which is imbued with	To also contribute at national level.
		Islamic moral-spiritual values, in the process of learning, teaching, research, consultancy, publication, administration and student life; 5. To exemplify an international community of dedicated intellectuals, scholars, professionals, officers and workers whoa are motivated by the Islamic world-view and code of ethics as a integral part of their work-culture; 6. To **enhance intercultural understanding and foster civilisational dialogues in Malaysia as well as across communities and** nations; To develop and environment which instils commitment for life-long learning and a deep sense of social responsibility among staff and students.	
5	UMP	We provide the highest quality technical education exceeding the expectations of our stakeholders by offering excellent academic programmes through a conducive environment that encourages creativity and innovativeness.	Universal mission.
6	UiTM	To enhance the knowledge and expertise of Bumiputera in all fields of study through professional programmemememes, research work, and **community services** based on moral values and professional ethics.	Acknowledge community service as core function.
7	UTM	To lead in the development of creative human resource and technology in **line with the aspirations of the nation.**	To also contribute at national level.
8	UM	To advance knowledge and learning through quality research an education for the nation and for humanity.	To also contribute at national level.
9	OU	1. To be the leading contributor in democratising education. 2. To develop quality education through multimode learning technologies. **To develop and enhance learning experience towards the development of a knowledge-based society.**	Universal mission.
10	UKM	UKM is the National University that safeguards the sovereignty of the Malay language while globalizing knowledge in **the context of local culture.**	To also contribute at national level.
11	UMS	Universiti Malaysia Sabah strives to achieve academic excellence in various fields by gaining international recognition through learning and teaching, research and publication, social services and a balanced specialisation of knowledge and personality development of students resulting in high productivity and quality in **the context of the society and nation.**	To also contribute at national level.

12	USIM	To be a leading centre of Islamic studies that utilizes advanced approaches and ICT to **explore issues for the well-being and harmony of society** and Islam.	Universal mission.
13	UPSI	Generate and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, publication, consultation and **social service** in the context of human development to achieve the country's vision.	Recognise social service as core function.
14	UTHM	To produce and train competitive professionals and technologists of high ethical values in the global arena through holistic academic programmememes, knowledge and research culture, based on the concept of Tauhid."	Universal mission.
15	UTeM	To Produce Highly Competent Professionals Through Quality and World Class Technical University Education Based on Application-Oriented Teaching, Learning and Research With **Smart University-Industry Partnership In Line With National Aspirations.**	To also contribute at national level.
16	UniMAP	To produce a holistic human capital that **contributes to the nation's development** and industrial competitiveness agenda	To also contribute at national level.
17	UUM	To serve as a centre of academic excellence in producing human resources with the competency and **commitment towards developing the nation** in accordance with the university's charter and policy.	To also contribute at national level.

Emphasis on various aspects of UCE by respondent universities

Table A6: Rating of the emphasis on diffrent aspects of UCE by respondent universities based on the interviews with vice-chancellors or his representatives
(A denotes High Emphasis; B medium and C Not Clear)

CHATEGORY	COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY											SPECIALIZED PUB U							PRIVATE U						KEKERAPAN
	UM	USM	UKM	UPM	UTM	UPSI	UIA	UUM	UNIMAS	UMS	UiTM	USIM	UTHM	UTeM	UMT	UNIMAP	UMP	UDM	UNITAR	UTP	MMU	UNITEN	UTAR	OPEN U	
Important/Not	A	A	A	A		A		A			A		A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A		A	(17,0,0)
Planned/Not	B	B	B			B		B			A		B	B	A	B	B		B	A	B	B		C	(3,13,1)
Budgeted/Not	C	C	C			C		C			B		C	C	B	C	C		B	B	C	C		C	(0,4,13)
Reporting	C	B	A			C		C			C		C	C	B	C	C		B	B	C	C		C	(1,2,14)
Coordinate at organization level	B	B	B			B		B			B		B	B	B	C	B		B	B	C	C		B	(0,14,3)
HEP Program	A	A	A			A		A			A		A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A		A	(16,1,0)
Consultative platform	B	B	A			B		A			B		B	B	A	B	B		B	B	B	C		B	(4,12,1)
Incentive for academic staff	C	C	C			C		C			C		C	C	C	C	C		C	C	C	C		B/TL	(0,0,16)
Special value of CE	B/EL	B/SC	A/MU			B/MR		B/MGT			A/UC		B/SK	B/SK	B/OMT	A/MR	B/SK		B/MR	B/MR	A/SC	B		B/TL	(4,13,0)
KPI	C	A	A			C		C			C		C	C	B	C	C		B	C	C	C		C	(1,1,15)
Multidisciplinary approach	B	B	B			C		C			A		B	B	A	C	B		C	C	C	C		C	(1,4,12)
Role of CCE for CE	A	A	A			C		B			A		B	B	A	B	A		C	C	C	C		B	(7,4,6)
Official statement on CE	C	B	B			C		B			B		C	C	B	C	C		B	B	C	C		C	(0,3,14)
Access to facilities	A	B	A			B		A			A		A	A	A	A	B		A	B	B	B	A	C	(6,9,2)
Preparation for CE	B	B	B			B		B			B		B	B	A	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	C	(0,14,3)
KPI(A/D)	C	C	A			A		C			A		A	A	B	A	A		A	A	B	A	A	C	(13,1,3)
Special concern in Community	B	B	B			B		B			A		B	B	B	B	A		B	B	B	B	B	B	(3,14,0)