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Contents

Enhancing Private Higher Education in Malaysia:
An Interview with the Former Deputy Director General of the Department of Private Education, Ministry of Education, Ms. Arpah Mohamad

By Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan Abdullah and Munir Shuib

*P*rivate higher education institutions (PHEIs) have been active in the Malaysian higher education landscape since early 1980s. Since then, private colleges and universities have flourished to complement the efforts of their public counterpart in meeting the nation's higher education and manpower needs. To understand the development of private higher education (PHE) in the country, an interview was held with the former Deputy Director General of the Department of Private Education (DPE), Ministry of Education Malaysia, Ms. Arpah Mohamad, who held the post until 1996. With her to provide further insights were Ms. Siti Zaharah Mat Akib who was the Director of Planning Division of DPE (until 2001) and Ms. Fatimah Hanum Mohd. Daud who was the Assistant Director of Registration (until 2004). They were directly involved in the preparation of the Private Higher Educational Institution Act (PHEI Act) 1996 and overseeing the success and smooth course of the Act. The interview focused on two major issues – the background and history of the development and progress of PHE in Malaysia and the challenges faced by the DPE in dealing with the enormous expansion of PHE in Malaysia.

The PHEI Act 1996 was initiated to cater for the fast and vast expansion of the PHE in Malaysia in the mid-1990s. The Act makes provision for the establishment of private universities, university colleges, branch campuses of foreign universities as well as the upgrading of existing colleges to universities. This is in line with the goal to liberalise higher education in Malaysia so that the increasing demand for tertiary education and highly educated and skilled human resource can be met. In order to promote unity and understanding among the multiethnic society, new subjects such as Islamic Religious Education, Moral Education and Malaysian Studies are made compulsory in all PHEIs.

According to Arpah, prior to the PHEI Act, the Education Act 1961 was used for all levels of education, including higher education institutions. There were no specific acts or rules that focused on the development of PHEIs and private universities in Malaysia. From 1996, a private university could only be established when it received an invitation from the Minister of Education after meeting all the requirements stipulated in the PHEI Act.

PHEIs were closely monitored by the DPE which was established in October 1995. Its main duties included reviewing proposals submitted by potential private institutions and matching them against the requirements set in accordance to the PHEI Act 1996 which were then submitted

to the Ministry of Education for approval. The requirements for the establishment of PHEIs include building structure and safety, quality of lecturers, quality of academic programmes and financial strength. DPE also must ensure that all PHEIs undergo an annual registration process. Apart from that, it must attend to and investigate the complaints received from the public regarding mismanagement or wrongdoings by the PHEIs. The PHEI Act allows the DPE to close down any private education institution that does not comply with the rules, regulations and requirements that are stipulated. A PHEI, explained Arpah, "can be closed down and there are cases where PHEIs have been closed down for not complying with the rules and regulations subjected to them in their approval of establishment." Before the PHEI Act, a big portion of the DPE's work was focused on ensuring that all the twinning programmes in PHEIs ran smoothly especially in the facets of teaching and learning. The establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education in 2004, brought a change in the history of PHEIs. From that date the DPE ceased to be the authority responsible for matters regarding PHEIs and the task was entrusted to the Ministry of Higher Education until the present day.

As with other organisations, the DPE was not without challenges. The recession that began in the late 1990s, according to Arpah and her former colleagues, led to the increased demand for local PHEIs as students could no longer afford studies abroad. In line with the government policy to make Malaysia a centre of educational excellence, foreign students were given easy access and passage to continue their tertiary studies in Malaysia. More and more foreign students entered the country and registered with PHEIs. On the part of the DPE this overwhelming influx of foreign students was a huge challenge and most pressing due to shortage of personnel, facilities and finance to do the monitoring and enforcement activities of PHEIs as much as it was needed. However monitoring of PHEIs were then carried out in collaboration with the Police and Immigration Department since the DPE did not have power to prosecute PHEIs.

A further challenge was the "freedom" enjoyed and experienced by the students in PHEIs. Such freedom, they note, was unprecedented and may lead to many social problems that are beginning to be seen today. "This must be addressed before it is too late." Nevertheless, on the positive side, the freedom also allows for more thinking, development of the students' minds and creativity. Hence, a balance between the two must be found and nurtured.

Another challenge faced by the DPE was to safeguard the welfare of the students in PHEIs especially with regards to increase in tuition fees by some PHEIs which considered education more as a profit making opportunity rather than as a social obligation. Apart from that the DPE had to look into the interest and welfare of students in cases where PHEIs had to be closed down by their management due to financial problems.

A common scenario during their days at the DPE was the gap between PHEIs run by small companies and the PHEIs run by giant corporates. "By overall comparison, the institutions managed by corporates tend to do well and much better than the ones managed by small companies, in every sense", claims Arpah. For instance, the PHEIs managed by corporates had greater quality and were always concerned with the quality of their institutions and their good name. They also provided better facilities to the students and monitored the usage of these facilities well, and not many complaints were made against them. The small institutions could not always adhere to the requirements and regulations set. They could not sustain their operation due to lack of financial resources and inability to provide sufficient quality facilities as well as enough qualified teaching staff. Such a vacuum exists because the well established PHEIs were backed by organisations that did not focus solely on education but diversify their economic arm by involving in other economic sectors as well.
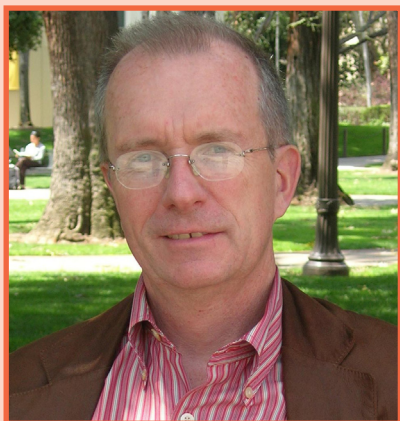
Despite the challenges faced, the establishment of the DPE, according to Arpah, succeeded in democratising and expanding HE in the sense that PHEIs were given bigger roles to play in the tertiary education in Malaysia, especially with the establishment of the four new private universities - Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP), Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Universiti Multimedia Malaysia (MMU) and International Medical University (IMU).

In contrast to the yesteryears and despite the various concerns, the PHEIs today have grown by leaps and bounds. The PHEIs, according to Arpah, have demonstrated their capabilities and potentials over the years. They have the knowledge, skills and technology in their respective fields of expertise. In fact, some such as MMU are more well-known than public institutions of higher learning (PHIL) in certain areas. Because of their financial strength, PHEIs are able to update their technology frequently, and with less bureaucratic procedures in updating their syllabus, they are able to make changes to their curriculum faster and thus cater to the current knowledge transfer.

The experience of these three officials imply the extent of changes that the PHEI scenario in the Malaysian context has undergone; from its very humble beginning in the 1980s to its current form, 25 years later. One striking development is the status achieved by many of the PHEIs – from private post-secondary institutions or colleges to international university colleges, with students and academics from different countries shaping the cores of the communities of these institutions. This has been a very positive development that has directed the Malaysian PHE into a new era of internationalisation of academia. Another is the government's concern with the quality that is being offered by all the private education institutions throughout the country, which has transpired the establishment of the very important and influential Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) which replaced LAN in 2007. These two developments, apart from the many other determinants or factors, strongly indicate a promising future for the current PHEIs in Malaysia.

Excellence and Premiership in Academia:
An Interview with Director of CHEPA, Professor William G. Tierney

By Aniswal Abd. Ghani and Munir Shuib

*E*arlier in the year Professor William G. Tierney from the University of Southern California (USC) had three months academic sojourn at IPPTN. The Institute welcomed him for a much needed contribution in an on-going research. Prof. Tierney was en-route to Australia for the next leg of his sabbatical. *Bulletin* caught up and chat him up before he left.

Academics in the know appreciate the whys and wherefores IPPTN and Prof. Tierney came together. His credential as a researcher in higher education is long accumulated and goes as far back as the 80's. Prof. Tierney is currently the Director of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Analysis of USC, a position he has held since 1994. USC, in the heart of Los Angeles, lives the accolade of one of the world's leading private research universities. Do visit their website.

IPPTN asked Prof. Tierney, "Is it possible for Malaysia to have a university in the top 100 (in the world)?" His resounding answer was, "Absolutely, yes."

Malaysian academics would find Prof. Tierney's productive three months experience here exciting. With regard to policies, governance and public versus private higher education Prof. Tierney notes two significant areas. As with many other countries, Malaysia is facing significant changes largely due to globalisation. For example, he points out that 20 years ago students in private higher education amounted to only eight per cent. He says that there were approximately 100 private institutions. The current number is, according to him, an almost tie between public and private. Malaysia in his opinion is an excellent example of a worldwide phenomenon in the growth in the movement towards private higher education. The present figure is in excess of 500. He has written a paper identifying and classifying these private higher institutions into roughly eight different kinds. He finds the categorisation confusing, having to reconcile academia with universities under the aegis of an oil company, political parties, and various and different kinds of franchises. "What happens when the political party goes out of favour" he queries.

He foresees that the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) will come to appreciate the complexity of the various kinds of private higher education institutions and what they signify in terms of funding and in terms of premier universities. Ultimately the Ministry will have to face the question, "What do these other universities do?" In the course of his research he interviewed 50 people. The general consensus veers towards all universities in Malaysia being on the same footing. Amongst other things, what these people are saying is that funding is to be the same, i.e. everybody gets a cut from the one pie. Prof. Tierney thinks that is a mistake. "You cannot have similarity." MoHE has to face the enormous challenge in identifying what it wants of these universities and how it could create more autonomy for these institutions.

> **IPPTN asked Prof. Tierney, "Is it possible for Malaysia to have a university in the top 100 (in the world)?" His resounding answer was, "Absolutely, yes."**

The other point of concern relates to the fact that all these universities are chartered and monitored by the government. These institutions may not be financially tied to the government but a judicious and transparent government would ensure accountability with regard to issues of quality assurance. Thus, the government via the Ministry has to keep tab, "Are these institutions providing what they say they are providing?" The issue of autonomy is also a real dilemma. He uses his experience of having to travel via the national carrier as opposed to a cheaper rival because governmental directive says so. If the university has a say in this, the university could save a lot of money. He notes that in this instance "there is something larger at work in the nation rather than in the interest of the institution."

Our typically Malaysian not so *Hardtalk* with him on his impression of higher education in Malaysia was in the immediate aftermath of the recent general election. He raised a sensitive issue in terms of the election and the university. Admittedly it appears that the outcome of the

election underlines that political election works in the country. He notes that Malaysians have "voted to themselves." In Malaysia, he argues, the formal organs of a democratic nation that bring about change, the press and the university, do not work as effectively as in the United States. He says that if we are serious in promoting excellence in higher education, we have "to enable a greater voice to the faculty." He has encountered scientists who paused in terms of the kinds of research they wanted to do simply because they perceived that the research would not be well received by the powers that be. He quoted an example of a researcher who "hesitated" on researching on the effects of pollution from Indonesia. According to him the researcher anticipated that the government would inevitably argue that the outcome of the research would drive away tourism. That was the end of that potential research. "That is not the condition for excellence", he underlines.

> **We need to create a system that focuses on specialisation, which is financially attractive academically, allows for academic freedom and we would have a first class faculty. The faculty, he says, "must feel ownership of the university and is not directed but directs the university."**

That view is not surprising as Prof. Tierney hails from USC, a premier private research university elected into the Association of American Universities (AAU). Located in Los Angeles, USC is very concerned with urban issues. It has the best Schools in the world in Cinema, Communication and Technology. In terms of research, Prof. Tierney says USC is "an extremely busy and a most dynamic and innovative institution … an exciting place to be." Hollywood is in Los Angeles and Los Angeles, in USC's term is the epicentre of the movie industry. It may be of interest to note that USC's Vice-Chancellor managed to get USD1.2 billion in his last capital campaign. He plans to get USD2.5 billion in the next.

Prof. Tierney appreciates that Malaysians in academia are bound by the Universities Act. As he sees it and if we are serious about moving forward academically then something has to be done. He does not mean faculty demonstrating in the streets and students take over buildings. If the Ministry were to ask him, "Are we getting the absolute best that we can get from the universities given the current situation?", he would answer, "No." MoHE needs academic staff to speak their minds. He points out that in USM, not unlike other universities in the world right now, there is a premise we are educating students in training for jobs. He asserts, "… especially at the best universities you are also educating students to participate in democracy." Therefore he questions, "How can you participate if you do not participate?"

Yet he did say we can be a top 100 university. Putting the issue of autonomy aside, we need to look into data. As a researcher, Prof. Tierney finds that verifiable and transparent data are difficult to obtain. For example, if a parent wants to assess a university, the same parent might want to know the number of admissions and the completion rate and what jobs the graduates of the university are doing. Data in the forms that he is familiar with are not available. He cited an article giving interesting statistics but the article itself did not cite its resources and he could not find the data to support the statistics. He agrees that this could mean that we are bad at record keeping, either in taking down the appropriate information and/or keeping them. It could also mean we have the information but they are not for consumption and therefore could not be openly cited. He may be too polite to say that we are not terribly academic and veer towards generalisation and unfounded argumentation.

Prof. Tierney acknowledges that Malaysia is quite advanced in terms of technology. Academics need not all be technologically savvy although he personally feels as academics, we may need to change the way we teach. Faculty can further utilise and focus on content areas and skills. Pure specialisation is preferred not multi-tasking. We must not allow ageism to creep into the faculty. Older faculty members tend to be slow with change particularly technological change. This is where younger faculty should be brought in.

Malaysia also needs to look into our desire to grow for international students. International students are mobile and there are competitions opening up in other parts of the world. Prof. Tierney notes that if Malaysia wants to continue to get foreign students then it has to appreciate that international students are a moving target. He questions our willingness in expanding energy and time. He feels that if our goal is to be first class we need to reconcile income with quality. Prof. Tierney reminds that about 50 of the top 100 universities are over 100 years old. In that respect, USM for example is still a *yearling*, but it has good science infrastructure. We need to create a system that focuses on specialisation, which is financially attractive academically, allows for academic freedom and we would have a first class faculty. The faculty, he says, "must feel ownership of the university and is not directed but directs the university." Malaysia will have a top 100 university.

Malaysian Research Universities and their Performance Indicators

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Introduction

*R*esearch universities worldwide have become more central to their societies primarily because they represent the central knowledge resources in the societies (Fieldman, 1994; Singh and Allen, 2006; Walshok, 1996). As new knowledge and its application and commercialisation increase in significance throughout the economy, the competency and performance of research universities increase in significance. This article looks at the expanding roles of Malaysian research universities, the research development goals and performance indicators.

Many national governments have launched numerous policies aimed at anticipating the development of the knowledge generation and global economy through their research capacity. In Malaysia, the government has advanced the notion that knowledge plays a dominant role in the economic competitiveness of our country in terms of our social, cultural and political position in Asia and the world. The government through its Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has recently established four research universities with their main functions to generate intellectual capital, new knowledge and advance technology. The newly established research universities are being called upon to participate more effectively in Malaysian knowledge-based economic development activities. The research universities are expected to contribute to economic development by developing knowledge-linking activities that enhance science and technology transfer, commercialisation and the competencies of workers and professionals.

Malaysian Research Universities in Context

Malaysia has expanded the public university systems while encouraging private higher education to meet the nation's growing demand. There are presently 20 public universities and 11 private universities. The public universities are funded primarily by the governments. Private universities are funded by non-government sources and tend to be independent with their own private governing boards. The government through the designated ministry is placing significant pressures on the public universities to reorganise their activities and priorities with the explicit aims of increasing access and participation, increasing research output and quality, achieving critical mass in selected areas (notably, in science and technology) and to improve the international ranking and reputation of Malaysian universities.

Consequently, the public university system has recently undergone restructuring whereby the universities are allocated a role within a total system. In other words, the new university system makes a clear distinction between research universities, comprehensive universities, specialised universities and vocational universities, allowing each to pursue clear objectives and avoid the duplication of effort. The new stratified system caters well to the varied nature of students' abilities and interests, and also allow for faculty with different skills to be best used. They are economical in terms of satisfying social needs, producing graduates who are able to fulfil a variety of roles and a generally educated citizenry. In addition, as specialised knowledge like medicine, biodiversity and ICT becomes increasingly important to Malaysian economic performance, this system enables universities to produce a mix of specialised and broadly trained graduates.

Roles of Research Universities

The establishment of the four research universities is a natural evolution in the overall Malaysian university system which has been shaped by many different influences. The main goals of the research universities are:

1. to be a leader in innovation,
2. to set up and enhance centres of excellence in prioritised areas of the nation,
3. to produce world class research outputs,
4. to generate high impact research publications,
5. to attract graduate students of high standards and
6. to provide a conducive environment for research.

<div align="right">(MoHE, 2004)</div>

In the new hierarchical university model, the research universities stand to gain additional funding for research activities, research management, quality assurance, RU incentive grants and specialised research services such as patenting, IPR and repository (MoHE, 2004).

Thus, to promote economic, scientific and technological innovations, a mix of fundamental and applied research as well as a variety of technical activities aimed at the diffusion and commercialisation of new knowledge will be carried out by the research universities. In addition, the universities must practice integrative and collaborative research which involves multidisciplinary teams, knowledge sharing and networking at national and international levels (MoHE, 2004). Internationalisation of research has become a strategic high priority for the newly established research universities. Malaysian research universities need to become more integrally linked to international research networks as full partners in research and innovation.

For these reasons, research universities must expand their roles and commitment to basic research and the development of experts and authorities in fields of study.

In addition, the universities must also expand programmes and develop staff whose primary function is leading or facilitating knowledge linkages across the boundaries. The challenge for Malaysian research universities at present can be summed up quite simply. The organisational forms and institutional expertise and identity have resulted in fragmented academic disciplines, each with distinct techniques and methodologies for developing and communicating about knowledge. Thus, overcoming this lack of difficulty in communicating and collaborating across knowledge boundaries separating faculties, expertise and authority is what needs to be addressed by the research universities if they are to be truly valuable contributors to our society's economic development needs.

Research Universities Performance Indicators

Research universities are framed by the teaching-research nexus which integrate their research missions and shape their institutional culture (Marginson, 2006). High research performing universities attract bright students and stand out staff. These institutions will then naturally accumulate prestige. They also attract cross-border faculty and enhance the universities' capacity in collaborative projects, competition for grants and drawing foreign students. An effective research infrastructure allows universities to deploy their best performing faculty or institute so as to concentrate on their niche areas and areas of strength as well as to mould and develop intellectual leadership at both national and global levels. Research universities must therefore aim to maximise their status and research performance. Research universities performance indicator is a means of rationalising the status of research universities, the concentration of research resources and of maximising research output. It is also considered necessary to ascertain and maintain the quality of university research (Henkel, 1999).

Thus, for immediate identification and recognition of Malaysian research universities, a set of criteria and standards were formulated to monitor and audit the performance of the research universities. The proposed criteria and standards for Malaysian RUs were developed by taking into consideration the needs of the stakeholders, these being the government, industry and society at large and the measures set are to be benchmarked against global standards. Thus, the set criteria and standards are hoped to afford Malaysian research universities with the opportunity to attain international best practice in assessing research quality, impact and capability. The research performance indicators are provided in table 1.

TABLE 1: Performance indicators for Malaysian research universities

Indicator	Criteria	Research University
1. Quantity and quality of researchers	Critical mass	60 per cent of academic staff will be involved as Principal Investigator
	Percentage of academic staff with PhD or equivalent	60 per cent
	Research experience (3 cohorts)	With balanced distribution of staff with > 20 years experience, 10-20 years and < 10 years experience
	Number of recognitions/awards/ stewardship conferred by national and international learned and professional bodies	100
2. Quantity and quality of research	Publications	Two papers in national/international refereed and cited journals per staff/year or cumulative impact factor for the institution of not less than 5,000
	Research grants for S&T academic staff a. Public b. Private (including contact research) c. International	At RM50,000/staff/year of which at least 20 per cent is from international sources and 20 per cent from private sector
	Research expenditure	Not less than 60 per cent of grants attained/year
	Post-docs appointed	10/year
3. Quantity of postgraduates	Ratio of PhDs graduated to academic staff	1 : 18 academic staff of which 60 per cent will be from S&T
	Ratio of postgraduates to academic staff (enrolment)	3 postgraduates : 1 staff
	Ratio of postgraduates (based on research and mixed mode*) to undergraduates	1 postgraduate : 4 undergraduates
	Percentage of international postgraduates	10 per cent

TABLE 1: Continue

Indicator	Criteria	Research University
4. Quality of postgraduates	Percentage of postgraduate intake	50 per cent of postgraduates with CGPA ≥ 3.0
	Percentage of postgraduate fellowships/grants from prestigious bodies awarded to postgraduates via research mode	Not less than 10 per cent
5. Innovation	Number of patents attained/number of products commercialised/ number of technology know-how licensing/number of IPR/copyrights (including original writings)	30/year
6. Professional services and gift	Income generated from training courses/services/consultancy/ postgraduate student fees/endowment/gift	Not less than RM20 million/ year
7. Networking and linkages	Inter-institution (national) participation	70 per cent
	Inter-institution (international) participant	30 per cent
8. Support facilities	Equipment fully operational and calibrated or physical facilities that meet safety and quality standards (accreditation to GLP/ISO17025) or library facilities including networking and shared facilities of service centres or recreational or access to high end research facilities	On site auditing 75 per cent compliance attained

Source: MoHE, 2004

Research performance indicators must be visible and measurable in ways that are generally understood (publications, grants, postgraduate students, etc.). In the Malaysian case, the criteria and standards were formulated by Department of Higher Education and a steering committee. The criteria and standard of other research universities and world-class research universities were used as guidelines. In essence, the criteria and standards would require the research universities to place a heavy emphasis on research and innovation.

The assessment uses self-evaluation and a review by an expert panel every three years. The standard measures allow for comparison and ranking based on the selected quality indicators. The performance will determine the research funding allocation. The funding allocation on a competitive basis will give quality assessment stature as government and private funding agencies will use it to guide their spending. Based on the first review exercise, the assessment was seen as having increased the quality of research more so due to the component of self reflection which forced the universities to identify and develop their research strengths. The improvement was mainly seen on the establishment of new research centres, concentration of research niche and clusters, and coordination of research collaborations and networks. This exercise has also required the universities to coordinate effective management structures and mechanisms of a research environment capable of producing measurable research outcomes. Other significant changes in research policy include increased competition for research findings, intensified competition for high quality local and international students, initiatives to generate and facilitate technology transfer and commercial application of research, development and retention of skilled researchers (professors) and an emphasis on moving from individual scholarship to institutional research activities.

To conclude, Malaysian research university environment is in a period of rapid change given the introduction of new funding avenues and the pressure being brought to bear on the universities to undertake. The research performance quality assessment is a formal part of the system and it is largely restricted to the evaluation of research output (publication, research income, post graduate student numbers, etc.). Since the focus of the exercise is research excellence, the assessment also serves a general stimulus for continuous improvement in the quality of research undertaken and disseminated by Malaysian research universities, as well as a quality assurance mechanism.

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International Student Mobility: Patterns and Trends*

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Introduction

Over the past 10-15 years international student mobility has become an increasingly important part of the global higher education landscape. The total number of mobile tertiary education students was estimated to have reached more than 2.7 million in 2005[1], a nearly 61 per cent increase since 1999[2]. Significant changes in the infrastructures and capacity of higher education systems across the world partially explain why there has been such growth in such a short time. The large majority of national governments have been allocating more funds to higher education to improve the quantity and quality of tertiary education being offered within their borders. Even so, capacity is insufficient to meet demand in the major source countries. At the same time, with higher household levels of wealth and rising gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, more students from across the world are able to participate in higher education abroad, especially those from countries with rapidly growing economies. The total number of worldwide tertiary enrolments is 40 per cent higher than it was seven years ago, with more people participating in higher education than ever before.

Traditionally, more than 90 per cent of international students have enrolled in institutions in countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with the main destinations (the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Australia) recruiting over 70 per cent of them. Interestingly, however, developments over the past five to six years demonstrate that international student demand might not continue to focus on what have been the main destinations in the past. The US, the UK and Australia have all experienced either a decline in enrolments or a 'slump' in the growth experienced in previous years. Many European countries, which traditionally have maintained significant and stable recruitment numbers from a range of nations with which they share historical or linguistic connection have stepped up their marketing efforts. Meanwhile, new players in Asia and the Middle East have entered the market with declared ambitions to become regional education centres by attracting as many as several hundred thousand international students to their countries.

Importantly, Western economies are increasingly seeking to both recruit international students and retain them after graduation because in an era of globalisation, international students hold several short and long term gains for institutions and countries. In the first instance, with public per student funding for higher education decreasing in many countries, universities and colleges are looking to diversify their generated income and the revenue earned from overseas student tuition has become one important way of doing so. In the long term, and in the wider socio-economic context, developed countries are looking to attract foreign skilled labour to supplement their rapidly decreasing and ageing populations. According to national immigration authorities, Australia will have 200,000 more jobs than people to fill them in five years' time. With one of the lowest birth rates in the OECD, Canada is expected to become increasingly reliant on skilled immigration to the country to boost the labour force. Close to 20 per cent of current Canadian citizens were born abroad, an indication that the country is arguably already reliant on the skills of the more than 130,000 international students who annually enrol there. For these reasons, concerns over enrolment trends have warranted the attention of national governments in countries such as the US and the UK, because not only do these countries want overseas students, they actually need them for economic development.

Recruitment

Given increasing competition in the market and changes in mobility patterns, many countries have started to consider how they might implement or strengthen their strategic approaches to international recruitment. Importantly, there are various elements to which countries seem to be paying increasing attention in an effort to retain or increase their competitiveness, with international student and graduate visa schemes, for example, being increasingly used as integral parts of recruitment strategies in accordance with their perceived importance and strategic value. The

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them, could arguably dissuade students even further from going to high-cost nations, since unfavourable exchange rates exacerbate the already considerable financial concerns of foreign students, especially those from Africa and Southeast Asia.

Indeed, a report recently published by New Zealand's Ministry of Education and Education New Zealand, an umbrella organisation promoting the export of the country's education services, found that the cost of higher education was amongst the top factors influencing the decision to study in the country (Ministry of Education, 2007). For Chinese students in particular, traditionally New Zealand's largest overseas student population, cost was the key factor in the decision about where to study abroad, with 51.3 per cent of students surveyed for research pertaining to the experiences of Chinese students in the country having responded that the comparably low cost of an overseas education in New Zealand was a motivational factor in their choice (Ho et al., 2007). According to Robert Stevens, Chief Executive of Education New Zealand, "the fact that quality and value are the key influences in deciding where to study come as no surprise" (Education New Zealand, 2007), and for this reason, in addition to New Zealand, countries such as Japan and Canada might do well to highlight their affordable provision, and emerging destinations such as Malaysia, Singapore and China, their low living costs to prospective students.

Conclusion

The growing number and diversification of players in the international student market partly explains why countries are seeking innovative strategies to attract higher numbers of students. Yet because the current generation of 'savvy student customers' are more knowledgeable about the opportunities available in certain countries, prospective hosts arguably have little choice but to offer targeted advantages. Research undertaken suggests that visa schemes and immigration procedures will play an increasingly important role in the decision-making process, with students not only seeking employment upon graduation, but perhaps (at least temporary) residency in their country of choice. Countries which facilitate the arrival and integration of overseas students through employment and immigration initiatives are likely to be more competitive in the market.

Institutions and countries are furthermore striving to meet, if not exceed, the expectations of prospective overseas students, because the 'student experience' and the costs associated with an overseas education, including tuition fees and accommodation are becoming significant motivational factors for application to one country over another. Given the rising fees of study abroad, the comparative cost of higher education in particular is likely to give certain countries a competitive edge in the coming years. In light of recent, and perhaps unexpected, trends in

importance of migration opportunities for overseas students is arguably reflected by the statistics produced through a 2006 survey undertaken by Australia's Monash University. According to the findings, 75 per cent of Indian students who completed a university education in Australia in 2003 applied for and were granted permanent residency visas. The author of the study, Michiel Baas, suggests that the most important reason Indian students chose to come to study in Australia was not the academic reputation of the universities but the opportunity to gain permanent residency visas[3].

In light of this realisation, institutions and countries appear to be increasingly cognisant of the importance of satisfied international graduates, and are thus looking to ensure that recruitment is not only as 'user-friendly' a procedure as possible, but that foreign students receive the education and overall student experience they were promised during the recruitment process. From this perspective, especially since 'word of mouth' and information widely disseminated via the internet have become efficient marketing tools, the little 'perks and privileges' afforded students, in addition to employment and residency rights, could go a long way in today's competitive market.

Cost, moreover, is increasingly likely to motivate students to apply for study to particular destinations, and to deter them from applying to others, not least because it can be a determining factor in the quality of the overall 'student experience'. The usually high value of certain currencies, the UK pound (£) and US dollar ($) most prominent amongst

international student mobility, however, institutional and national recruitment strategies will almost certainly consider a growing number of indicators to compete in a rapidly changing industry.

> ...institutions and countries appear to be increasingly cognisant of the importance of satisfied international graduates, and are thus looking to ensure that recruitment is not only as 'user-friendly' a procedure as possible, but that foreign students receive the education and overall student experience they were promised during the recruitment process.

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Endnotes:

1. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), there were 2,455,250 students studying in a country other than their own in 2004. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) claims, however, that more than 2.7 million students were enrolled in higher education outside their country of citizenship in 2005, representing a five per cent increase in the reported foreign student intake total. See:

   UNESCO. (2006). *Global education digest 2006*, Institute of Statistics (UIS). Canada: Montreal. Retrieved 15 May 2007 from http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/ged/2006/GED2006.pdf

   The OECD. (2007). *Education at a glance 2007: OECD indicators*, p. 299. France: Paris. Retrieved 26 September 2007 from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/4/55/39313286.pdf

2. In 1999, according to UNESCO, there were 1.68 million "internationally mobile students", a figure which refers to those students who have crossed a national border for the purposes of education, and who are enrolled outside their own country of origins. For more information, see:

   UNESCO. (2006). *Global education digest 2006*, Institute of Statistics (UIS), p. 3. Canada: Montreal. Retrieved 15 May 2007 from http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/ged/2006/GED2006.pdf

3. Universities being used as immigration factories. (2006, March 30). *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved 6 March 2007 from http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/unis-used-as-immigrationfactories/2006/03/29/1143441215915.html

Enhancing Graduate Employability through Knowledge Management

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Introduction

*I*n the recent 9th Malaysian Plan, one of the key thrusts focuses on Human Capital Development to increase the nation's capacity for knowledge and innovation among the workforce. To achieve this, the Malaysian government has allocated over RM18 billion to increase access to higher education among youths from 29 per cent to 40 per cent by the year 2010 (Munir and Shukran, 2006). At the same time, the government intends to reduce the current unemployment rate of an estimated 3.4 per cent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2007) by offering more job opportunities to fresh graduates and the unemployed. By managing knowledge that is taught in various higher education institutions (HEIs), graduates can be equipped with the right kind of knowledge and capabilities to make them employable.

> **In order to increase the employability of graduates, HEIs need to conduct a knowledge audit that would analyse the knowledge, skills and abilities already being taught within the institutions while discovering any gaps in the capabilities required by the industries.**

Knowledge Management

Researchers have defined knowledge management (KM) as the efficient process of acquiring, utilising and transferring knowledge, information and expertise within an organisation as well as to gain value from their employees (McKinlay, 2000; Scarbrough and Swan, 2001). Basically, managing knowledge is how an organisation acquires, modifies, creates, applies, stores and disseminates knowledge from their employees as well as within the organisation itself (Wickramasinghe and Mills, 2002; Ellingsen and Monteiro, 2003). In the context of higher education, it is a service industry (McQuade and Maguire, 2005), and KM can be used to increase the knowledge base and assist HEIs to be in a better position to respond to unexpected changes in the market and help meet the expectation of stakeholders i.e. students and parents, with the support of top management of the respective HEIs (Sharimllah et al., 2007).

Employability

Employability has been referred to as determining and attaining personal attributes, skills, abilities and knowledge that would assist people in marketing themselves in obtaining employment (Yorke and Knight, 2004; O'Donoghue and Maguire, 2005); continuous development and retraining (Hawkridge, 2005); the ability to use skills and knowledge in different areas of organisations (Civelli, 1998; Raybould and Sheedy, 2005) and add value to the company (Patrickson and Ransijn, 2003).

Currently, researchers have stated that academic qualification is not the sole weighing factor in employability, as it may not establish if the workplace activities are implemented successfully (Civelli, 1998). Soft skills such as human relation skills, communication skills, cognitive skills, personal skills and ethical behaviour skills (Scholarios and Lockyer, 1999; Patrickson and Ranzijn, 2003; Shukran et al., 2006) are being regarded as a more important criterion in evaluating employability over degree qualifications (Raybould and Sheedy, 2005). Therefore, HEIs need to provide students with the opportunity to develop these skills to cater to the demands of employers who wish to recruit 'work-ready' individuals (Raybould and Sheedy, 2005).

KM and Employability

In order to increase the employability of graduates, HEIs need to conduct a knowledge audit that would analyse the knowledge, skills and abilities already being taught within the institutions while discovering any gaps in the capabilities required by the industries (O'Donoghue and Maguire, 2005; Mihail and Elefterie, 2006). The information gained from this knowledge audit would help HEIs determine the training that should be provided to students to create employable graduates (McQuade and Maquire, 2005; Raybould and Sheedy, 2005). Therefore, the knowledge audit could be considered as a needs analysis

and would help to ascertain the existing knowledge as well as gaps in the knowledge base of the HEIs. These gaps can be filled through effective acquisition of knowledge from the right parties.

> **...HEIs can improve the employability of graduates through active collaboration with industries, retirees, alumni and among staff. The KM process would assist in acquiring the right kind of knowledge from the respective parties and modifying it to suit the current and future requirements of the relevant industries.**

The people that could assist HEIs in enhancing their knowledge database as well as create more employable graduates include industry representatives, retired members of the workforce, alumni, staff as well as students of the respective HEIs. Industry representatives would be able to supply information on the skills organisations are expecting in graduates (Hawkridge, 2005; O'Donoghue and Maguire, 2005). Furthermore, retirees have years of experience and they would be a major source of information (Patrickson and Ranzijn, 2003) for HEIs. Also, the alumni would be able to provide information on the needs of the industry while matching it to the existing culture of the HEIs. The academic staff of the HEIs could also assist in creating more employable graduates as well as improve their own lifelong learning by gaining more practical knowledge to enhance their theoretical knowledge (O'Donoghue and Maguire, 2005) while the students themselves should be responsible for their own skills and knowledge development towards becoming more employable graduates (Estiénne, 1997; Mallough and Kleiner, 2001).

In the KM process of HEIs, acquisition of knowledge could be achieved through collaboration between HEIs and industry representatives, retirees and the alumni (McQuade and Maguire, 2005; Sharimllah et al., 2007); research among academic staff (Yusof and Suhaimi, 2006) as well as practical training for staff and students (Raybould and Sheedy, 2005). It is suggested that both staff and students try to conduct their practical training in smaller organisations as it would allow them to learn a variety of work related tasks (Raybould and Sheedy, 2005). By encouraging active collaboration, learning and sharing of knowledge among the various parties, the knowledge and skills of the HEIs would be more industry oriented (Sharimllah et al., 2007).

The knowledge gained could then be used to modify and enhance existing course modules within the HEIs to be more practical - based learning (Hawkridge, 2005; Noor Hidayah et al., 2006). Besides increasing the know-how of a particular area of work, HEIs can apply the modified knowledge to increase the soft-skills training to suit the demands of the industry (Patrickson and Ranzijn, 2003; Raybould and Sheedy, 2005). In addition, participation in industry challenges and corporate games also helps train students to become more employable as these challenges are based on actual work situations (Raybould and Sheedy, 2005). Furthermore, students should be strongly encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities, training programmes and other activities that may assist in enhancing their competencies (Shukran et al., 2006).

Once the knowledge base has been enhanced, the KM process then requires it to be shared and retained within the HEIs so that it could be beneficial to other staff. The knowledge can be shared through discussions with staff members and training junior staff and retained through writing detailed course outlines and teaching manuals (Raybould and Sheedy, 2005). HEIs have to promote and support this sharing and retention of knowledge among their faculties to improve lifelong learning within their organisations beyond degree qualifications (O'Donoghue and Maguire, 2005) to make graduates more employable (Estiénne, 1997).

Conclusion

To summarise, we can see that the HEIs can improve the employability of graduates through active collaboration with industries, retirees, alumni and among staff. The KM process would assist in acquiring the right kind of knowledge from the respective parties and modifying it to suit the current and future requirements of the relevant industries. This knowledge is then applied, shared among staff and retained in the HEIs through adapted course offerings and practical lessons. The KM process within HEIs would help in improving the knowledge base and become the foundation of how knowledge should be gained and utilised to achieve employable graduates for the continuous growth of the nation.

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Towards Becoming Centres of Excellence: Prospects and Challenges for Malaysian Universities

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Introduction

*I*n Malaysia, the original blueprint for the setting up of research universities was proposed by the Education Ministry through the National Higher Education Strategic Plan issued in the year 2002.

According to John Niland a former Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and a Past President of the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC) there is increasing competition amongst the developed countries to attract both the best research scholars and research funding universally. Since Malaysia aspires to join the ranks of the developed nations by 2020, it should also focus on building up some core research universities as part of its intellectual capital mobilisation in order to achieve the objectives of Vision 2020.

This, therefore, begs the question "What are the defining characteristics of world-class research universities?"

Important Characteristics of Research Universities

For universities, world-class standing is built on reputation, perception and last but not least outstanding performance in many areas.

According to Altbach (2004), Niland (2000) and Samsuri and Mohamed (2001), amongst others, the most important characteristics of world-class research universities include a combination of some or all of the following features:

Operating structure

Most of the leading universities in the developed countries have an operating structure, which practices the delegation of powers and responsibilities. Research Groups and/or Centres of Excellence in these countries function solely to advance research by mobilising their workforce to ensure the successful completion of research projects. The staff of these Centres of Excellence are given the minimum possible teaching workload. The management of these in-house centres of excellence is responsible to monitor the progress of both the research projects as well as to see that they operate within their pre-determined operating budgets.

Quality of faculty

World-class universities will be widely recognised as eminent institutions, as places where the top academic staff will wish to congregate. Given the chance, staff from other universities will migrate to these world-class universities, and top faculty attracts top students. The process is auto-catalytic. This means such universities will almost certainly be research-intensive universities. They must be a place where people will want to spend time for the experience and to associate with the fame and respect that goes with this.

Students

A large pool of postgraduate students must support a research university. Ideally, the ratio of postgraduates to undergraduates should exceed 40 per cent and more than 60 per cent of the postgraduates should be involved in research based programs either at Masters or at PhD level. As a result, the role of both the Graduate School as well as the Research and Development Centres is important in leading the research effort. In order to ensure that the research output takes on a global flavour, it is recommended that at least 30 per cent of the total postgraduate student intake consist of foreign or international students.

Research staff

A research university must have enough qualified and trained staff. Aside from postgraduate students, there must also be other support staff such as full time researchers, research assistants and research officers. The research teams must be headed by experts from amongst the ranks of the academic staff of the university including post-doctoral students. It is largely through their research performance, and how this is carried through to excite and inform the learning process for all members of the university, which will most build their reputational capital.

Equitable distribution of staff workload

There must be an equitable distribution of the workload between teaching at undergraduate level and research involvement for the academic staff that are actively involved in research. Staff need to be given ample time to ensure that both their own personal self-development as well as their activities in guiding research students can be carried out effectively. In order for this to be achieved, it is recommended that the ratio of students and academic staff be in the range of 8 : 1.

The dissemination of knowledge and research output

Research activity encompasses fundamental research, experimental/developmental research as well as applied research. In order to ensure that all these research efforts are recognised there have to be concerted efforts to disseminate and propagate this research output. This recognition can be measured for example, by the number of citations and publications in internationally refereed journals, the number of patents or in exceptional cases by the number of Nobel laureates produced.

Research culture

A research university should give top priority to research activities. A programme of continuous and systematic research will help to directly create a unique research oriented work culture in the organisation. This research culture will become the "trademark" for all the university

staff generally, and more particularly for their research staff. To achieve this status, the support of all staff including the top management of the university is absolutely vital.

Physical facilities and infrastructure

Basic physical facilities and infrastructure which underpin research activities are vital. These include seminar/discussion rooms, research laboratories, common user/service labs (for fabrication) as well as business venture labs. These basic facilities will help to motivate researchers aside from the financial capability.

Funds and research grants

Strong financial support from various sources will enhance the capacity of funds and grants for research. Grants can be used widely to support the research efforts of postgraduate students, to purchase the necessary equipment as well as to pay the emoluments of all the research staff.

Challenges

In order to achieve research university status, Malaysian universities must be ready to face up to some of the following challenges:

Need to share its vision and mission

This change in status to a world-class university involves the participation of the entire campus community and will be easier to achieve if the vision and mission is shared by all. For this purpose, a series of informative workshops and joint planning sessions have to be conducted systematically involving all the academic and non-academic staff so that everyone from the Vice Chancellor down to the gardener or janitor has a sense of belonging and ownership to this proposed project.

Need for a paradigm shift and change in work culture

All major changes undertaken by organisations require a paradigm shift and a different work culture including changes in the mindset of the participants. Again, for this purpose a series of workshops on motivation and paradigm shifts have to be undertaken to ensure that the whole campus population is ready to play their individual roles towards achieving the goals of the university. The Malaysian government at the highest levels is ever mindful of this problem with the Honourable Prime Minister constantly reminding the public servants including the staff of all local universities to improve and upgrade their delivery systems.

Projections of student intake and student-staff ratio

Most research universities worldwide tend to have smaller undergraduate populations and the majority of the students tend to be postgraduates since it is the latter group that will be mainly involved in the research efforts. In this regard, the university must decide on its ideal maximum student strength over the long haul. This is important so that the academic staff have ample time for research activities. Aside from this, the ratio of undergraduates to academic staff must be maintained on the lower side ideally about 8 : 1. At the present time, anecdotal evidence suggests that this ratio is not being observed in almost all the Malaysian public and private universities. These targets are not impossible however, and Malaysian universities can achieve them through pursuing various strategies such as the recruitment of new staff, expatriate staff, contract staff, post-doctoral fellows and so on.

The virtual challenge

Traditional universities already have virtual features with information technology networks, distance delivery, internet and e-mail access, websites, e-libraries and computerised research facilities. Even for a traditional university, methods of communication, administrative processes, managing campus facilities and the actual process of research, teaching and learning can all be made virtual to some extent. The challenge is to arrive at the right balance between the physical and the virtual presence.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia has enunciated and articulated its aspirations for Malaysia to become an education hub as well as a centre of educational excellence in the region both domestically as well as internationally. The aspirations of several Malaysian varsities to position themselves as world-class research universities is in tandem with the vision and mission of the Ministry of Higher Education to make Malaysia a regional centre of educational excellence. In line with this objective, it appears that several Malaysian varsities are now well positioned to achieve their goal of becoming world-class research universities by the year 2020. The physical infrastructure is already in place. What is required now is a renewed commitment on the part of their entire staff to make this vision a reality. If careful attention is paid to some of the challenges highlighted above, there is no reason why Malaysian varsities cannot make the leap of faith towards becoming world-class research universities by the year 2020 as envisaged by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. In conclusion, the following comments made by Toffler (2000) at the World Bank conference on higher education are pertinent *'The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.'*

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Globalisation and the Incorporation of Sustainable Development in Malaysian Higher Education

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Introduction

*T*here exists a general consensus on the legitimacy of globalisation as a powerful influence in promoting and strengthening the provision of higher education in many countries, notably in its role to sustain knowledge creation and its contribution to a country's economic growth. In the context of globalisation and the knowledge economy, there has been a considerable transformation in the attitudes of international organisations towards the importance of higher education in developing countries (Naidoo, 2007). There has been an impressive expansion of cross-border higher education initiatives due to the growing imperative of higher education institutions to internationalise teaching, research and community service in order to enhance their academic excellence and the relevance of their contribution to societies. The growth of market-driven activities has to some extent influenced the following domains: increased demand for higher education, funding provisions for research and development activities, access and equity, academic freedom and innovative methods of teaching and learning. Arguably, these activities and transformations create new challenges and intensify existing ones in terms of issues concerning the scope, complexity and volume of higher education.

This article discusses how the collective forces of globalisation, in particular, and other related market forces might affect the provision of higher education in a rapidly developing country like Malaysia which has set out to identify itself as a hub of education excellence in the South East Asian region. It also raises issues for further debate and adds on to the discourse of strengthening the provision of quality higher education in developing countries while encouraging international collaboration that may lead to improved capacity building.

Key Drivers of Sustainable Growth

In identifying key elements of sustainable growth, the World Economic Forum's report (2006) outlined its global competitiveness index. With their productivity-oriented view of competitiveness, they define national competitiveness as the "set of factors, policies and institutions that determine the level of productivity of a country" (World Economic Forum Report, 2006: 3). Since 2001, the Forum has been using the Growth Competitiveness Index (Growth CI) to assess the competitiveness of nations. Using a re-worked index called the new Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), they hope it extends and deepens the concepts and ideas underpinning the earlier Growth Competitiveness Index. While being simple in structure, the GCI provides a holistic view of the following nine factors or pillars that are critical to driving a country's productivity and competitiveness: *institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomy, health and primary education, higher education and training, market efficiency, technological readiness, business sophistication* and *innovation*. This concept of competitiveness developed by the Forum explicitly incorporates notions of "public sector, accountability, efficiency, transparency and more generally, the various ways in which the government interacts with economic agents in the domestic economy, particularly the business sector" (World Economic Forum Report, 2006: 6).

The GCI index for 2006-2007 listed the following countries as the top ten performers: Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Singapore, United States, Japan, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. With the exception of good Asian performers such as Singapore (5th), Japan (8th), Hong Kong SAR (11th) and Taiwan (13th), Malaysia is ranked 26th overall in global rankings (out of 125 countries), just behind the Republic of Korea. Other Asian countries included Thailand (35th), India (43rd), Indonesia (50th), China (54th) and Philippines (71st). It is worthwhile noting that the Forum Report singles out Malaysia as a 'strong performer having one of the most efficient economies in the region; flexible labour markets, relatively undistorted goods market, and public institutions in which many areas (e.g. the rule of law, the legal system) are already operating at the level of the top performing EU members which joined in 2004" (World Economic Forum Report, 2006: 32). It is predicted that with her existing well-developed infrastructure and relatively sound regulatory environment, Malaysia should contribute to higher levels of growth and continued rapid development.

Globalisation and Capacity Building

The impact of globalisation on higher education has been widely discussed, with some experts arguing that globalisation, the Internet and the scientific community will level the playing field in terms of knowledge interdependence (Altbach, 2007). Others see globalisation as a market force that is chiefly responsible for commodifying higher education in developing countries where the increasing need and demand for higher education pose attractive market ventures to private higher education institutions. With the prevalence of such factors, there has been considerable transformation in the attitudes of international organisations towards the importance of higher education in developing countries. Naidoo (2007) likens this scenario of knowledge economy within the context of globalisation as having a considerable transformation in the attitudes of international

organisations towards the importance of higher education developing countries.

In trying to define 'globalisation', most stakeholders in higher education contexts view this concept as being mainly economic in nature but this phenomenon has profound social and cultural aspects. In attempting to understand how globalisation impacts teaching and learning contexts in higher education, one must first consider the realities of the environment in which higher education is operating as higher education environments these days are varied, face numerous challenges and are often in a state of flux. In this regard, Morshidi (2006: 6) sees globalisation as either a 'process' (a heightened tendency towards interactions and interdependencies of socio-economic spaces) or a 'fact of the contemporary world' (the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole). Generally, he loosely interprets it as a socio-economic and technological process, which tends to blur or diminish geopolitical borders and national systems. In highlighting the patterns and trends of transnational education in Malaysia, he considers the impacts of globalisation as contributing significantly to the competitive edge that currently exists among such education providers. Held et al. (cited in Marginson, 2006: 6) view globalisation as the 'widening, deepening and speeding up of world wide interconnectedness' which determines the process of growing interdependence and convergence on a worldwide and continental scale, driven by more extensive and intensive flows of people, ideas, information, technologies and money. Marginson (2006) lists the distinctive elements in globalisation as follows:

1. the open information environment with instant messaging and data transfer created by communications technologies so that higher education and knowledge are becoming thoroughly networked on a world scale; and

2. Anglo-American institutions will be affected by more plural environments because of growth of research in Asian countries like China, Korea and Singapore with the power of the Internet, air travel and knowledge.

In adopting a slightly similar stance, Altbach (2007: 6) defines globalisation as the "broad economic, technological and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and are largely inevitable in the contemporary world." In his view, these trends include information technology in its various manifestations, the use of a common language for scientific communication, the imperatives of society's mass demand for higher education (massification) and for highly educated personnel and the 'private good' trend in thinking about the financing of higher education.

In connection with this and within the context of higher education, the terms 'internationalisation and globalisation' are two key elements that feed into debates

and discourses and it is often observed that market and global forces are popular and frequently employed concepts in varying contexts and for diverse purposes. Increasingly, the view that seems prevalent these days is that the rise of the market and globalisation are interwoven factors that make any possibility of classifying marketisation and delocalisation aspects difficult.

> **There is a need for an improved understanding of the new global situation, and priorities must be accordingly re-assessed if we hope to develop human capital as the backbone of sustainable economic development.**

Development of Higher Education in Malaysia

Essentially, the origin and development of higher education in Malaysia can be perceived in terms of "three distinctive waves of expansion" (Lee, 2004: 41). According to Lee (2004), the first wave saw the setting up of a first independent university in Malaysia at the time of British rule. Subsequently, the second wave, which took place in the 70's and 80's, soon after the New Economic Policy was drawn up, resulted in the establishment of many more public universities to redress imbalances in terms of educational opportunities amongst the different ethnic communities. Finally, the third wave, in the 90's, witnessed the accelerated growth of private universities and colleges to meet the increasing demand for university education arising from the commercialisation and commodification of higher education. The expansion of higher education resulted from two factors: the democratisation of higher education and the emergence of a Neo-Fordist economy that called for "drastic cutbacks in university funding" (Lee, 2004: 4) and which then encouraged the acceleration of privatised higher education and the corporatisation of public universities.

At the time of Malaya's independence in 1957, there was no university in the country. However, there was a university in Singapore established in 1949 called the University of

Malaya, a result of a merger of two well-known institutions of Singapore. King Edward College of Medicine in Singapore, recognised as a full-fledged medical college since 1915, was the only academic institution that offered courses leading to a degree. The second institution (the Raffles College), established in Singapore in 1959 offered courses in English, history, geography and some other subjects leading to a diploma. In 1959, a campus of the University of Malaya was opened in Malaya's capital, Kuala Lumpur, and this heralded the first wave of higher education.

University of Malaya was the only university that produced trained manpower for the needs of the country when Malaysia was formed in 1963 (Abdul Rahman and Mahani, 2007: 26). It had four faculties: arts, science, engineering and agriculture and in terms of its structure and curriculum content it was fashioned after the British educational system. The racial riots of 1969 and the drawing up of the New Economic Policy resulted in the setting up of four new universities: Universiti Sains Malaysia (1969), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (1970), Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (1971) (now renamed Universiti Putra Malaysia), and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (1975) (Lee, 2004). This marked the second wave of higher education expansion.

These additional universities were established to correct the widening socio-economic disparities that existed between the Bumiputera (indigene population) and the non-Bumiputera (non-indigene) communities and the lack of national unity amongst the races. The latter was perceived as a direct result of implementing a university education that is modelled after Britain. Hence, these new universities adopted a much more "national" outlook as their main objectives, as outlined in the 2nd Malaysia Plan (1971-1975), with the intention to "encourage national integration and unity" (Abdul Rahman and Mahani, 2007: 27). More importantly, in terms of administration, the university no longer adopted an autonomous system as it came under direct "state-control". With this development, universities had to adhere to guidelines set up by the Ministry of Education with regard to "financing, staff recruitment and promotion, curricula, medium of instruction, and student enrolment" (Lee, 2004: 42).

The advent of the third wave saw a rapid increase in the number of universities and colleges as a result of the government's initiative to de-regulate higher education in order to meet the rising demands of higher education. According to Lee (2004: 42), this wave witnessed the establishment of "four new public universities, five university colleges, nine private universities and five branch campuses of foreign universities." Over time, the number of higher educational institutions grew phenomenally with an attendant increase in student enrolment and programmes offered. In 1996, enrolment in higher education institutions was 17,589 and, in 1997 it jumped to 28,344 students (MoHE, 2006). In 2000, there were 11 public universities, six private universities and 283 private colleges. As of 2007, there are 20 public universities, 28 private universities and university colleges and 486 private colleges. These are multi-faculty institutions which offer a wide range of courses. In terms of programmes, private higher education institutions offer a number of transnational educational programmes such as twinning programmes, credit transfer programmes, external degree programmes and distance learning programmes to cater to the growing demand for higher education.

Increasingly, globalisation is seen as a trend that identifies the increasing supra-national context in which higher education institutions often operate. In Malaysia, pressures from globalisation have made it an imperative upon the government to ensure that public higher education institutions become more competitive and at par with their global counterparts. In 1995, the Universities and University Colleges Act of 1971 was amended to pave the way for the corporatisation of public universities and by 1998, five of the older public universities were corporatised and as such, these institutions were expected to generate more and more of their operating expenses through other non-governmental sources. Corporatised universities are allowed to borrow money, enter into business ventures, set up companies and acquire and hold investment shares. In the Malaysian model of corporatising public universities, the government continues to own most of the universities' existing assets, and to provide development funds for new programmes and expensive capital projects (Lee, 1998). In essence, such moves aimed to provide greater access and liberalisation to public universities to manage their own finances (through a variety of revenue-generating activities such as raising tuition fees, increasing student enrolments, conducting consultancies for industry and government and running short-term courses to meet the needs of the private sector) and allow for greater dynamism at institutional level to respond to the changes taking place in the landscape of higher education. It has been noted that some of the effects of corporatisation include greater willingness to follow corporate practices of quality assurance, capital budgeting, governance and other corporate activities.

In the Malaysian context, some of the following factors have put additional pressures on public universities: the reduction in public funding for higher education, the increasing push for industry-university collaboration, the transition to a high-tech economy, value-added and innovation are assumed imperatives and the advent of private higher education institutions. As such many public universities feel the strain of having to re-engineer and re-invent themselves to cope with social and economic change. However, most public universities view this aspect favourably as they value the role they play in effectively nurturing and promoting innovation in research and teaching. Having said this, one must also consider the flip side of corporatisation and commodification and their implications for higher education which Naidoo (2007) aptly refers to as the perils and "pitfalls" assailing developing economies.

Key Challenges for Higher Education in Malaysia

In the last few decades, higher education in Malaysia has undergone major transformations and much of these changes do to some extent question the ability of higher education providers in sustaining quality in the development of their academic programmes. As a developing country still trying to establish its reputation as a viable educational hub for tertiary students in the Asia Pacific region, Malaysia needs to face up to numerous challenges plaguing her higher education system. While there are many other relevant aspects, the following issues are seen to be pressing concerns faced by the higher education sector in Malaysia:

- Supporting primary and secondary education
- Employability of local graduates
- Emphasising research and development activities
- Enhancing the student experience and sustaining international education
- Developing human capital

These challenges need to be addressed and wherever possible, a re-assessment of study programmes would also be helpful if attempts to establish direct and productive linkages between the university and external institutions can bear fruit in order to provide a basis for specialised training programmes. However, these attempts need well-organised planning and implementation. The most fundamental issue here is to be able to work towards constructive participation from a diverse array of organisations and people from several industries and disciplines. It is not enough to establish capacity; capacity must also be used productively. In order to create development, higher education and research must be useful for society and lead to good employment opportunities for the graduates. The important integration of education, research and real life applications is essential for knowledge sharing and can enhance problem-based learning. In the realm of higher education in the Malaysian context, investments in higher education and research serve a long-term development goal. Capacity building at universities through partnerships must be part of the development strategies of universities if researchers and educators are to be fully engaged. Support from ministries, other agencies and private stakeholders will be necessary. There is a need for an improved understanding of the new global situation, and priorities must be accordingly re-assessed if we hope to develop human capital as the backbone of sustainable economic development.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to demonstrate the impact of global forces and related market forces on the provision of higher education in a rapidly developing country such as Malaysia. With globalisation and subsequently, internationalisation, student enrolment had steadily increased in Malaysian institutions of higher learning as observed in their steady influx from neighbouring countries. This increase is also due to the massification and democratisation of higher education. Universities traditionally have had a two-fold approach to internationalisation: foreign student recruitment and study-abroad programmes and both these approaches have yielded success in many higher education contexts worldwide. It is expected that within the next ten years, university rankings worldwide will undoubtedly shift to include more universities from other countries such as Singapore, China, South Korea, India and Malaysia as these countries are working to "transform their knowledge economy and to develop national strategies to position their higher education institutions in a competitive world" (Spanier, 2007: 6). In order to cater to the growing need for higher education and rising student intake, private higher education institutions have been invited to set up branch campuses and to offer a number of transnational educational programmes. Viewed from an economic perspective, such cross-border delivery of education is lucrative as it brings in foreign exchange to the host country.

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Essential Skills in CALL Classes: Enhancing Searching and Language Skills

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Introduction

*I*n the quest of making learning more relevant in the contemporary era of information and communication technology, the Internet is considered a valuable resource to both language teachers and learners in computer assisted language learning (CALL) contexts (Singhal, 1997). The experience with the Internet; however, can be discouraging and often highly disorienting to novices and can be quite a challenge even to more experienced users (Rubenking, 2000). Among the students' complaints about web-based learning activities were that they took too long to accomplish, students got lost and they felt overwhelmed (Lee, 1998, Osuna and Meskill, 1998, cited in Brandl, 2002).

Locating the right information does not only require knowledge of how to search but also knowledge of the language (Coulson et al., 2003; Rupert, 2007). It has been reported that the lack of training can make it difficult to implement the Internet in language classroom activities (Singhal, 1997; Fidel et al., 1999; Nahl and Havada, 1996, Nueman, 1993, cited in Brandl, 2002).

Among other factors that led to the problem of implementing the activities was the difficulty in forming effective queries (Hill and Hannafin, 1997). To perform effective queries, the students have to use their existing vocabulary knowledge in the preparation of keywords, which will be used later as "search terms" (Rupert, 2007). Not knowing the right keywords as "search terms" might make finding the information in the Internet a frustrating experience (Laverty, 1998).

As far as second language learners are concerned, the Internet seems to pose more challenges to them. When the Internet based-activities are incorporated into the classroom activity, not only are the students expected to know how to access and pick up the information they need from the overwhelming amount that is there, but they are also learning a new language (Chafe, 1999; Chun and Plass, 1996). This challenge coupled with inability to select information related to the classroom activity could create a negative experience dealing with the Internet. It is more challenging when the Internet-based activities are done in an Arabic for Foreign Language Learning class.

As such, this study is an attempt to investigate the appropriate Internet searching skills adopted by students majoring in Arabic Language and Literature at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

Research Questions

1. Is a lack of internet search skill the only factor contributing to students' inability to get the accurate information required?
2. Is limited language proficiency a barrier for students to do effective searching?

Methodology

The research in this study involved 43 participants who were enrolled in the "Computer Application in Language and Literature" course offered by the Department of Arabic Language and Literature, IIUM. One of the tasks in this course mainly deals with getting information from the Internet. Prior to assigning the given task, search strategies were taught to the students. This is necessary as engaging the students in such activities require a variety of searching skills (Brandl, 2002). The strategies taught to the students include using:

> "search engine", "meta search engine", "cached", "advanced search", "similar pages" and "search syntax" like "+", "-", "AND", "OR".

The students were asked to retrieve a website on one of the international conferences on computer and Arabic language, which will take place in November 2007 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. One of the conference's sub-themes is "Machine Translation". It should be noted here that the exercise assigned to the students was written in Arabic language which went as follows:

((سمعتَ عن مؤتمر عالمي حول الكمبيوتر واللغة العربية، والذي سينعقد في نوفمبر 2007 بمدينة الرياض. ومن الموضوعات التي سوف تناقش فيه "الترجمة الآلية". قم بالبحث عن تفاصل المؤتمر من الويب.))

In this particular exercise, the students were required to answer the following questions:
- What is the full title of the conference?
- What are the sub themes of the conference?
- What are the important dates in the website of the conference? (For example, the submission dates for the abstract and full paper and the date of the conference itself.)

The instruments used in gathering the data include a set of questionnaires, interview and classroom observation. The questionnaires were distributed to capture possible steps taken by the students in their attempt to complete the Internet-based tasks assigned. The data obtained was analysed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with groups of two or three students during the two-week period when the students were in the process of completing the given tasks.

This procedure was taken in order to get a sense of how the students were progressing and the difficulties they might be encountering while completing the given tasks.

Findings

Findings for research question 1

The data revealed 67.5 per cent of the participants perceived the "lack of sufficient search skill" as a factor leading to their inability in getting the information. Furthermore, 76.8 per cent of the participants were found to fail in typing the correct and precise "keywords" and "phrases" given by the researcher. Examples of "keywords" taken from the question would be: مؤتمر (conference), عالمي (international), الكمبيوتر (computer), الرياض (Riyadh). And examplse of "phrases" extracted from the question were: مؤتمر عالمي (international conference), الترجمة الآلية (machine translation).

Further investigation in testing the students' ability in using the "advanced search" skills demonstrated that 88.4 per cent of them knew how to use "cached". This would help the students in getting the precise information in a shorter period of time. They used "+" sign while defining the "search terms". Moreover, 95.4 per cent of them added the "+" sign more than once to narrow down the search result. The data showed that 63 per cent of the participants attempted to answer the three questions posed to them by using "advanced search", but failed to get the correct answer.

Findings for research question 2

Some of the participants (37.2 per cent) did not attempt to change the words throughout the exercise and depended on the original words and phrases given in the question. Examples of the commonly used original words from the assigned text were: مؤتمر (conference), عالمي (international), الكمبيوتر (computer). This showed that they did not have the correct synonyms and did not have sufficient vocabulary.

This finding is supported by a study carried out by Banwell and Gannon-Leary (2000) who discovered that the students seemed to be disinterested or unwilling to change their current "information-seeking behaviour" patterns.

Most of the participants (86 per cent) admitted that if they spelt the "keywords" wrongly, the chance to get relevant information was very slim. It was discovered that when the article ال for certain Arabic nouns like الرياض (Riyadh) was omitted, there were no hits at all giving the information.

Conclusion

General assumptions that learners are familiar with searching for information in the Internet, and that they know how to do so efficiently must be avoided (Brandl, 2002). Formal "searching skills" training must be incorporated into the curriculum and not as an isolated topic (Fidel at el., 1999). Besides, having sufficient internet search skill does not guarantee the ability to locate the right information required, searchers must possess certain language proficiency in the language the search is formed. The instructors must point out certain linguistic features belong to the language that the search is formed. For instance, certain Arabic nouns are by nature prefixed with the article ال. The failure of doing so may result in getting irrelevant information. This uniqueness must be clearly emphasised especially to non-Arabic native speakers. Thus, when incorporating Internet-based activities in a language classroom teachers and students alike should think positively in trying to accomplish the tasks. Teachers will not only fulfil their learning outcomes and at the same time the students should enjoy completing their tasks.

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Students' Voice in English Course Development at the University

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Introduction

*I*n a climate of higher education which is increasingly client-based, student needs and preferences are given more attention, and the sphere of student influence extends from recreational and infrastructural facilities to teaching and learning practices and administration. In teaching and learning, traditionally the repositioning of courses is a top-down directive but bottom-up feedback from lecturers is also instrumental in course development. In the course evaluation, the lecturers may not only take account of the requirements of the discipline and the profession but are compelled to consider student preferences. It is also common practice nowadays to obtain student views through end-of-semester course evaluation. However, there has been concern that course evaluation feedback has not been used:

> "Whereas persons who commission evaluations complain that the messages from the evaluations are not useful, evaluators complain that the messages are not used." (Cronbach et al., 1980: 47)

In client-oriented institutions of higher learning, students' views cannot be ignored but the issue which arises is how seriously should their views be taken.

The Study

This study evaluated the pedagogical soundness of undergraduates' views to determine whether their feedback should to be taken into consideration in the development of course materials. The course selected for the study was a foundation English proficiency course, Preparatory English 1 at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. The course aims to develop oral communication skills for social purposes in the tertiary setting, particularly for undergraduates who are in Malaysian University English Test (MUET) Bands 1 to 3. Social communication skills were taught using the genre-based approach with an emphasis on adequate building of background knowledge on the communicative purpose through listening texts and discussions, and explicit teaching of significant language structures in context before learners are guided to produce language output (Ting et al., 2007).

Feedback from 1,016 out of 1,396 undergraduates enrolled in this course was obtained via an end-of-semester course evaluation form comprising Likert-scale items and open-ended questions. A total of 1,803 descriptive comments were analysed for positive and negative features of the course.

Findings

The undergraduates' views on the usefulness of the course for improving their proficiency in English were from two aspects: positive outcomes and facilitating factors. Note that the numbers reported refer to the frequency of the comments, not the number of undergraduates giving the comment.

Out of 1,803 comments, 1,244 were on positive outcomes of the course (see table 1). Many of the undergraduates reported language gains (n=996), mainly in terms of general improvement in English but there was also mention of specific language skills, of which speaking ranked the highest, consistent with the focus of the course. The undergraduates were also alert to distinguishing traits of the course which are relevance to immediate real life situations for interactions with lecturers and peers (n=95), knowing more about English (n=65), and use of language appropriate to different social contexts (n=55). Looking at this, it is clear that the undergraduates were able to catch on to the main objectives of the course although they did not use the language teaching jargon in their course feedback Besides language improvement, the undergraduates also valued non-language related gains, with increase in self-confidence to speak English (n=121) and broadening of general knowledge (n=94) being on top of the list. The frequent discussions and role-plays in the course provided a conducive English-speaking environment for undergraduates who have the basics in English but lack the opportunity for practice as transactional encounters in the university setting often take place in Bahasa Malaysia. In addition, the undergraduates' report of better general knowledge affirms the benefit of having adequate background building and discussions of cultural appropriateness in the course.

TABLE 1: Undergraduates' views of positive outcomes of the English course

Positive outcomes of course	Frequency	%
Language gains	996	80.06
Increased confidence	121	9.73
Broadened general knowledge	94	7.56
Realised importance of English	21	1.69
Learnt soft skills	8	0.64
Made new friends	4	0.32
Total	1,244	100.00

On factors that are important to undergraduates for an English course to be effective, table 2 shows that having a 'nice', capable and helpful lecturer is much more

important to undergraduates than expected (n=90). The ability to make the English class 'not boring' was highly valued. This finding is similar to Mahadhir, Ting and Carol's (2006) study on a similar group of undergraduates where instructors' personality was found to be valued more than professional expertise. Comprehensibility of lessons (n=20) and good course materials (n=14) pale in comparison to the instructor factor in the classroom as far as the undergraduates were concerned.

TABLE 2: Undergraduates' views of factors that facilitated their language learning in the English course

Factors that facilitate language learning	Frequency	%
Nice, capable, helpful lecturer	90	65.69
Comprehensible lesson	20	14.60
Good course materials	14	10.22
Opportunity to talk	9	6.57
Helpful friends	4	2.92
Total	137	100.00

Practical Concerns Compromising Course Effectiveness

There were altogether 422 suggestions for improvement. 192 were on variety in teaching activities and materials, 148 on policy matters, 76 on logistics and six on instructor characteristics.

It makes good teaching sense to have variety in language learning activities and materials, as the undergraduates have rightly pointed out although their wish to have outdoor activities, movies and games was more difficult to accommodate. The learning units were cast in a similar mould based on the steps in the genre-based approach teaching-learning cycle from field-building and modelling to joint and independent construction. Much depends on the versatility of instructors to adapt the materials to suit learners' needs and interests, but it is not easy to strike a balance between preference for fun (n=114) and drills (n=78). The traditional examination-oriented practice is a comfort zone that many English teachers have difficulty moving out of too, particularly where the teaching of grammar is concerned (Asraf, 1996; Chung, 2006; Farrell and Lim, 2005; Pillay and North, 1997; Ting, 2007).

The results also revealed that the difficulty level of the course may have been pitched too low, particularly for those with MUET Band 3 (n=40) although there was a small number (n=7) reporting that the course was too difficult and 20 commenting that the course was just right. Getting the difficulty level of the materials right for a mixed-ability class of undergraduates with Bands 1 to 3 is a Herculean task, and again we fall back on the instructor to make the on-the-spot adaptations in class for undergraduates to feel that their time in the English course has been worth it.

In the same way, some policy matters may not be as easily addressed. The zero credit for a four-hour per week course was not well-received by the undergraduates, and has caused them to place a low value on the course. In addition, practical problems linked to clashes of English classes with core courses, course registration procedures and teaching facilities often minimised by faculty were found to be exceedingly important in contributing to a positive language learning experience for the undergraduates.

Conclusions

The study aimed to find out whether students' feedback should be considered in the development of English courses at university. The findings show that while undergraduates were perceptive of the language and non-language benefits of the course, only their suggestions for increased variety in teaching activities and materials should be considered, not those on the focus of the course as they are not experts in the field of language teaching. However, their feedback on practical problems in the administration of the course should be noted to create a positive environment for language learning.

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Criteria Expected of Academicians in a Local University

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Introduction

*R*ecently, there has been much concern on the ranks of Malaysian universities in the Times Higher Education ranking exercise. It became clear that older and more established universities are slipping away from the top ranks. There is no doubt that the Ministry of Higher Education is trying very hard to avoid further decline and bring honour back to the local institutions of higher learning (IHLs). An outcome of their various continuous brainstorming sessions is the introduction of "National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010" (MoHE, 2007). This is indeed a noble effort to strategise the uplifting of IHLs in the international arena. This paper is an attempt to share an academician's perspective on the topic of discussion. It propounds some critical points that need attention before any IHLs can aspire of becoming a world class university.

The People Working in University

The success of any organisation lies on the quality of staff employed and their contributions towards the organisation. When Datuk Seri Idris Jala successfully resuscitated the Malaysia Airline System (MAS) from financial indebtedness to profitability, his trick was in getting the people to do it (Gabriel and Say, 2008). With respect to IHLs aspiring to achieve world class status, this paper outlined four fundamental provisos on how to get people to do it.

The Staff's Mind-Set

Any IHL that wishing to be well-known worldwide must have their vision embraced by all staff. Efforts are obligatory to give emphasis that staff grasp the notion of building the IHL to be internationally acknowledged. There should be a sense of pride instilled in all staff towards working as one team. The present misconception is that the burden of creating a worldly recognised university is assumed to be the responsibility of the vice chancellor, his deputies and members of the senate. As an example, during the time of Dato' Zawawi Ismail as Universiti Malaysia Sarawak's (UNIMAS) vice-chancellor, there used to be a special module called "Module Zero" to introduce newly recruited academic and managerial staff the history, structural organisation, vision and mission of UNIMAS. This was a visionary effort by the management then to ensure that all new recruits understood the philosophy behind the creation of UNIMAS and its direction for the future. From such programme, team spirit was being formed and people were left with a sense of belonging to UNIMAS.

Scholarship Teaching

Scholarship teaching in university is the main expectation of undergraduates and other stakeholders. In simple terms, scholarship teaching is about lecturers gaining expertise in their discipline, excelling in their research and conveying the knowledge to their students. This is opposed to textbook teaching, whereby lecturers merely present the details contained in textbook and teach only theories without genuine applications.

To evolve scholarship teaching, the teaching-learning and research activities by lecturers should be regarded as two sides of the same coin. There should not be cases, whereby some lecturers are good in teaching-learning but uncommitted in research or vice versa. Anyone who has chosen lecturing as a career should understand the role expected of a university. They should be producers of knowledge as well as trainers of elite workers. Table 1 shows four conventional roles of a modern university as outlined by McCaffery (2004). Any IHLs that can successfully elevate the ethos of scholarship teaching will naturally fulfil the first two criteria set by the Times Higher Education Supplement (Times, 2008). These two criteria are research quality and graduate employability as described in table 2.

TABLE 1: Four conventional roles of a modern university outlined by McCaffery (2004)

Roles	
Finishing school	The last stage of general education
Professional school	The training of elite workers
Knowledge factory	The production of science, technology and ideology
Cultural institution	The expression of our individual and collective sense of being

Professionalism at Work

An organisation is only as good as the people in it. It is difficult to disagree with the reality of the above statement. To be able to recruit only the best staff is not a sensible request to expect from any human resource department. Similarly, it would be inappropriate to automatically assume that all members of the organisation possess first-class ideals. However, there is a certain degree of professionalism that ought to be expected from every staff.

It is important that staff put organisation first before self. The culture inherent in private sectors, whereby employees give serious commitments towards their profession should be envied. If staff strived hard to develop their skills then the IHL will be dependent and in need of them. On the contrary, staff will be a liability when they do not enhance their skills

TABLE 2: Times Higher Education Supplement ranking criteria and weights

Criteria	Indicator	Brief description	Weight (%)
Research quality	Peer review	Composite score taken from peer review (which is divided into five subject areas) 3,703 responses	40
	Citations per faculty	Score based on research performance factored against the size of the faculty body	20
Graduate employability	Recruiter review	Score based on responses to recruiter survey, 738 responses	10
International outlook	International faculty	Score based on proportion of international faculty	5
	International students	Score based on proportion of international students	5
Faculty quality	Student faculty	Score based on student/faculty ratio	20

and play a positive role towards the progress of the IHL. Back in 2006, at a University-Industry seminar organised by University Malaya, a question was posed to Dato' Nazir Tun Razak, CIMB Chief Executive Officer, on how CIMB deals with staff having poor working attitude. His simple answer was that CIMB has no place for such people.

Another issue is that staff should be eager to work hard for the advancement of the IHLs. The willingness to work hard and sacrifice time and self for the advancement of the institution is seriously needed. Hard work always results in good progress and improvements. This has been an open secret of the Japanese society in moulding Japan into a developed country. Needless to say, the frontline groups that must exemplify hard work are the academic leaders and managers. One wonders why the ranking of local IHLs is not improving when everyone has been working so hard.

Quality of Leadership

The first issue concerning leadership in local IHL is that, staff need to cohesively work as one. A good leader is not only the one who can lead but also the one who can work along with anyone. His prime importance is to ensure that unity and productivity prevails. The nature of IHL management is such that the posts of vice chancellor, deputy vice chancellor, deans, deputy deans, and heads of department and directors of centres are offered on the basis of a three- or two-year contract. Irrespective whether one is being appointed or not to such posts, staff can nevertheless contribute within their own capacity and complement one another. Another potent issue with respect to leadership is the openness towards criticism. Leaders in university should be able to accept criticism, no matter harsh or mild. In a Malaysian scenario, most IHL leaders often err towards being defensive whenever there are any complaints against them. By respecting the views of others especially our criticisers, it opens up to the door of wisdom. It hastens to be mentioned that complaining about one's work is different from that about one's individual self. The former is encouraged while the latter is forbidden.

One last issue to highlight on leadership is the attention on continual improvements. The motto of good leadership should be continuous progress and

improvements. To achieve this, all university leaders need to keep themselves proficient in the respective task they are dealing with. The leaders are expected to be well versed with the system and running of university. A university of world class is run by people who know what it takes to improve and continuously uplift the standard of the university.

Conclusion

Table 3 attempts to summarise the important points being discussed in the earlier paragraphs. There are also other issues but the above are deemed as good starters to work on. A Malaysian university of world class standard needs to make sure that it has the fundamental strengths that will sustain its reputation. These strengths are measured with respect to the efforts of embedding positive mind-set in the staff, inculcating the culture of scholarship teaching, ensuring staff acting professionally at work and practicing of good leadership.

TABLE 3: Summary of important points discussed on the four characteristics

Staff mind-set	Scholarship teaching	Professionalism	Leadership
Visionary staff	Lecturers are real *scholars*	Staff develop their *skills*	*Unity and teamwork*
		Hard Work	*Openness* towards criticism
			Continuous improvement

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Higher Education in a Globalising World: Developing and Sustaining an Excellent System

Reported by Noraini Mohamad Yusof

On 12 January 2008, the Organising Committee of Higher Education Workshop, National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN) in collaboration with the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) organised a workshop on Higher Education in a Globalising World: Developing and Sustaining an Excellent System, which took place at Merdeka Palace Hotel and Suites, Sarawak. This workshop gathered associate research fellows of IPPTN, a visiting professor of IPPTN and academic staff from UNIMAS.

The workshop was aimed at gathering input on developing and sustaining an excellent system in higher education. The themes were:

- Roles of universities in ensuring global and local excellence of Higher Education (HE) emphasising on developing and sustaining an excellent system.
- Quality of education: quality of lecturers, quality of undergraduate education, professional development, workforce preparedness, accountability and effectiveness, admission standards, academic quality assurance, student progress/degree completion, adequacy and maintenance of facilities and establishing interdisciplinary programmes.

- Funding/financial issues: adequacy of financial support, tuition rates and overall student costs, economic development initiatives, amount and types of student financial aid.
- HE institutions as drivers of economic, social and cultural development.
- Managing ICT and e-learning in HE.
- Policy, structure and organisation of HE: Governance and integrity, leadership, key performance indicators.
- Building strategic business alliances: Opportunities for networking and sharing good practices.

There were two sessions of discourse; "Higher Education in a Globalising World: The System and Framework" and "Higher Education in a Globalising World: Selected Issues", which saw eleven papers presented. Each presentation was followed by a question and answer session by participants of the workshop.

Papers presented will be published as chapters in an edited book. In addition, an abridged version of each paper will be included in the Bulletin of Higher Education Research.

Roundtable Discussion on "Regional Education Markets in the Asia Pacific Region and Links to Research Activities and Collaborations in Malaysia: Taking Stock"

Reported by Wan Chang Da

The four research universities in Malaysia – Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) – along with officials from the Ministry of Higher Education and Monash University Malaysia gathered for a roundtable discussion organised by the National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN), held on 21 January 2008 at the Equatorial Hotel, Bangi.

Participants and presenters of the Roundtable Discussion.

This roundtable discussion served as a platform for IPPTN and the universities to keep each other abreast about the latest status pertaining to research activities and collaborations of the universities, both domestically and internationally. The discussion was kick-started with opening remarks by the Director of Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis in University of Southern California, Professor William G. Tierney, who was also a Visiting Professor at IPPTN.

The discussion also included four presentations followed by a question and answer session. The first presenter, Professor Dr. Nik Meriam Nik Sulaiman, Director of Institute of Research Management and Consultancy (UM), shared UM's experiences about Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement. This was followed by

Associate Professor Dr. Ahmad Farhan Mohd. Sadullah, Dean of School of Engineering (USM), who gave an overview about the research management and innovation system practised in USM. The third presenter, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) of UPM, Professor Dr. Abu Bakar Salleh, discussed the issue of funding and collaboration from UPM's perspectives, which was followed by Professor Dr. Walter Wong, Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor of Monash University Malaysia, who shared about the challenges and progresses of private universities in Malaysia in research and collaboration.

The discussion ended with concluding remarks by the Director of IPPTN as well as the Chairperson of this discussion, Professor Morshidi Sirat, with an invitation extended to all paper presenters to jointly work on presenting a detailed study on Regional Education Markets in Asia Pacific Region and Links to Research Activities and Collaboration in Malaysia.

Synergistic Collaboration between Research/Study Centres for Higher Education

Reported by Wan Chang Da

The National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN) hosted the Synergistic Collaboration Meeting on 20 and 21 February 2008 at the Parkroyal Hotel in Penang. This meeting gathered directors and representatives from the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA) (University of Southern California), Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) (University of Melbourne), Research Institute for Higher Education (RIHE) (University of Hiroshima), Centre of Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies (CAPSTRANS) (University of Wollongong), Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) and Associate Research Fellows of IPPTN.

Chaired by Professor Morshidi Sirat, the meeting deliberated on the topics of international university ranking and avenues for collaboration between the centres and research institutes. Each participating centre and research institute also presented an overview of its respective organisation, in regards to the organisational structure, funding mechanism as well as past, present and future research activities and direction. It was hoped that through these presentations and exchanges of ideas, more synergistic opportunities could be explored for future collaboration to the advancement and development of higher education research in the region.

In the closing session, the participants prepared a draft agreement on the proposal to the formation of Asia Pacific Higher Education Policy Alliance (APHEPA), which seeks to investigate three possible research topics; namely student mobility, training of administrators and the relationship between state and higher education institutions as well as private and public institutions.

Representatives of various research and study centres of higher education and associate research fellows from IPPTN.

PUBLICATION

This 11th monograph of IPPTN discusses the future pathway of Malaysia's higher education institutions through a hybrid scenario that emphasised on knowledge as the principal wealth-generating method without sacrificing humanistic and environmental values. This monograph underlines four main aspects which are research and development, teaching and learning, economy system and environment, as well as life-style which contribute towards the existing universities in the future. This scenario foresees the future in the changing landscape of higher education where the future development of local universities is to be decentralised to enable each university to decide and shape its future individually.

Series Editor: Morshidi Sirat
Editor: Ibrahim Che Omar

Calling for Articles and News Briefs

Guidelines on Submission of Manuscripts

1. Manuscripts should be written in English, typed using Times New Roman 12 point font, and double spaced on only one side of A4 size paper with ample left and right margins on Microsoft Word.
2. The length of the manuscripts should not exceed 1,500 words. An abstract of about 150 words should be included.
3. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to use any published material. The publisher shall not be held responsible for the use of such material.
4. Citations in the text should include the author's last name and date of publication, e.g. (Ashton, 2001). If quotations are used, page numbers should be indicated, eg. (Ashton, 2001: 30).
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6. Include tables and figures within the text. Number tables and figures consecutively.
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Examples:

Altbach, P. G. (2004). *The costs and benefits of world-class universities*. Retrieved 23 October 2005 from http://www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2004/04jf/04jfaltb.htm

Mahadhir, M., Ting, S. H. and Carol, D. (2006). *Learning materials and human factors: Looking at the chemistry in the genre-based approach classroom*. Proceedings of 2nd Science and Art of Language in Teaching International Conference, 'Change: Bridging Theory and Practice', 20 - 22 November, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Pulau Pinang.

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Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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