General

Moving together to drive the nation’s technical capability

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Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) staff must all move together so as to boost the nation’s technical capability and enrich the field of technical, vocational, education and training (TVET), in line with the needs of the high-tech industries.

This was the message that UMP Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ir. Dr. Wan Azhar Wan Yusoff drove home in a meeting with the staff in conjunction with UMP Vice-Chancellor 100 Days in Office Speech that was held at UMP Gambang Campus Sports Complex on August 23, 2019.

He said the university’s management had carried out basic changes in restructuring of the organisation for three main reasons - firstly to make good the resources available in UMP for technical education with another profile that would shape TVET education to a higher level.

Secondly, to produce an academic administration system by way of participative leadership which involved sharing of power between academic leaders for a better succession plan and sustain the university’s direction, he added.

He said a Senior Dean, a post to be created soon, would assist Deputy Vice-Chancellors in their duties, adding, it was also a platform that would groom future leaders to ensure UMP’s excellence.

“As UMP grows, we need to share power with the Big Four - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & International), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs 7 Alumni) and Chief Operating Officer/Registrar to facilitate the Vice-Chancellor tasked with preparing of more strategic plans.

“In fact, this move will help nurture leadership for the university’s top positions,” said Professor Ir. Dr. Wan Azhar.

He also said that in identifying integrity risk that could cause leakages in operation, all members of the board of director would not be appointed as members of the board of director in the university’s subsidiaries.

He added that after this, all of the university’s subsidiaries would be placed under UMP Holdings Sdn. Bhd. including UMP Advanced Education Sdn. Bhd. so as to improve the organisation’s competency.

On the third reason, Professor Ir. Dr. Wan Azhar said it would involve changing of the academic delivery system from faculty-based to college-based in order to implement flexible education that had been approved by the university for quite some time now.

“For example, sharing of programme between faculties will allow students to sign up for programme at a different faculty and the same concept goes for the lecturers and trainers. In fact, more programmes can be shared between engineering and technology programmes.

“In pushing ahead with this agenda, the university has also introduced College of Engineering Technology, College of Engineering, College of Computer and Applied Science and College Of Management and Humanity.

“The benefit of having these colleges is that it can help to accelerate the process of endorsing examination results in the University Senate,” he said.

He also said in the next five years, the university expected to receive some 5,000 students taking the high-level TVET course, followed by Technology (3,000), Engineering (3,000), Computer (2,000), Management (2,000) and with Mathematics and Science each expecting some 1,000 students for the current year.

“As a technical university, we should open the gate for TVET and to start taking in students for the 2019/2020 academic session.
“UMP offers two engineering technology programmes – Bachelor’s Degree with Honours in Automotive Technology and Bachelor’s Degree with Honours in Oil and Gas Maintenance Technology. This is in line with the focus given on Automotive Engineering and Engineering Technology,’ he added.
He also said the Bachelor’s Degree in Technology programme was offered at four technical universities (MTUN) and it was an articulation programme for school leavers with DVM/DKM/DLKM certificates which would allow them to continue their studies at the Bachelor’s Degree level that emphasised on hands-on skill component.
This reflected the recognition to TVET and to enrich it as a high-level learning programme, he added.
At the same time, UMP should open the door for TVET by expanding the programme outside of campus and to set up branches in Kuala Lumpur, Terengganu and other places in order to increase the programme’s capacity, he said.
On flexibility of learning that would increase the quality of post-graduate programme, Professor Ir. Dr. Wan Azhar said the Centre of Modern Language and the Centre of Mathematics should play a more vibrant role.
He added that no great technical university in the world that did not have a Centre of Mathematics and no great university in the world that did not have a Centre of Writing.
The university management system must also be modernised in line with the changing of time and in facing the IR 4.0 Revolution which used applications and flexible working hours (flexi hour) to increase staff productivity, he said.
“The modernisation of the administration can move the organisation and strengthen technology so decision-making can be done faster and more strategically,” he said.
On meeting the objectives outlined in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, Professor Ir. Dr. Wan Azhar had aimed to increase the number of international students, to increase online programmes (MOOC) that were more practical in nature, to strengthen its Centres of Excellence and to increase commercialised products that would become a teaching factory for the university students.
He hoped that one day, UMP would have a research group that made fundamental research products and to be the first university to come up with products that had yet to be founded by others in the world.
He expressed his confidence that given sufficient time and resources and based on the expertise available in the Material Group, which was very advanced, this dream could be realised.
On efforts taken to bring the university closer to the community, Professor Ir. Dr. Wan Azhar said UMP would continue to organise the Pekan Dialogue 1.0 Programme and the Distinguished Scholar Talk Series (Siri Bicara Cendekiawan Mulia) for these programmes could help to bring about benefits to the society especially the people of Pahang and enrich the high-level TVET learning.
He also assured that UMP would stay committed in its role as an agent of transformation that surpassed its role as an ivory tower and a knowledge centre and that it would strategically build up its talents to ensure that its technology expertise could be brought to the field, produce high-impact research and innovative works and to drive its technical capacity to the highest level in the country.

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