General

# Trash for Cash Programme supports UMPSA Sustainability Agenda

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GAMBANG, 11 January 2024 - Universities are hubs for knowledge and innovation. However, with a large amount of waste generated within universities, it becomes the university's obligation to enhance UMPSA community's commitment to minimizing waste while preserving the environment.

Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) continues to move towards sustainable development by implementing the UMPSA Sustainable Campus Action Plan for the period of 2022-2025.

Aligned with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the action plan goes beyond mere physical development.

This initiative is benchmarked against the UI Green Metric criteria, which assesses universities worldwide based on environmental sustainability initiatives.

One of the key focuses in the UMPSA Sustainable Campus Action Plan is waste management to foster a sustainable environment.

This approach encompasses six components that align with SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 14 (Life Below Water), 15 (Life on Land), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Furthermore, UMPSA's policy is also established to reduce the use of paper and plastic on campus as part of UMPSA's commitment to sustainable practices.

In line with this, the UMPSA Sustainable Development Centre (SDC) was established on 1st December 2023, to support various sustainability initiatives.

According to the Director of SDC, Dr. Suhaidah Hussain, there are six clusters emphasized in UMPSA Sustainability Policy.

"Among them are waste found in Cluster 3 and also education and research found in Cluster 6.

"The waste cluster is important to raise awareness for sustainable development and better quality of life for individuals, the environment, and others.

"This aims to promote the use of sustainable and efficient resources, reduce food waste generation, and manage waste disposal, including hazardous materials while reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling," she said.

She said, in summary, this cluster supports minimizing environmental risks.

"Managing waste on campus is a challenge that requires a lot of manpower and has implications for the environment, budget, efficiency, and other social factors.

"It is very important but often overlooked.

"Considering the increasing concern about the environment and the pressing need for sustainable practices, UMPSA will strengthen waste management plans through responsible centres at the university," she explained.

Furthermore, one of the main components in creating a sustainable environment is recycling.

"Implementing the Trash2Cash programme at UMPSA can address these issues continuously.

"This has inspired the offering of Technology and Innovation Management courses and Technology Management courses under the Faculty of Industrial Management (FPI), UMPSA in collaboration with the Campus Sustainability Committee and the University EKSA Committee to organize the Let's Collect Used Items Programme.

"Inspired by this initiative, the 'Trash for Cash' programme by students from these courses aims to bring about small positive changes in the UMPSA community," she said.

According to the Advisor of the 'Trash for Cash' Program, Associate Professor Dr. Puteri Fadzline Muhamad Tamyez, the programme started with a series of meetings for each group to discuss their programme goals.

"Among them is by providing suitable locations for waste disposal.

"With the assistance of UMPSA Services Sdn. Bhd., they were able to deliver recyclable waste to the UMPSA Compost Centre on the Gambang Campus with the approval of the UMPSA Campus Sustainability Committee.

"They separate plastic waste, paper, mineral bottles, and cardboard.

"Each waste is wrapped and clearly labelled before being weighed," she said.

She further clarified that each waste material's weight reading would then be recorded.

"At first, they found it challenging to do.

"But after they regularly separate the waste, they became more efficient in this waste separation process.

"The students use social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to develop interesting content related to the 'Trash for Cash' initiative to UMPSA students," she said.

Furthermore, the students also share how to separate recyclable waste and collection methods in their respective dormitories.

In addition to maximizing the collection of recyclable waste, students also volunteered to clean public areas at UMPSA while separating recyclable waste after organizing any events.

At the same time, students also competed against each other to achieve the highest waste weight and studied existing waste management technologies through interviews with local companies.

EKSA Gambang also greatly assisted in the success of this programme. Each EKSA PTJ, Gambang has collected recyclable waste for collection by them from 1st to 11th January.

Through the programme, a total of 267.3 kg of waste was successfully collected and received RM140.85 from the recycling waste company.

Cardboard boxes and plastic bottles and containers were the most abundant waste, followed by paper.

The collection proceeds were then donated to the Palestinian Care Fund.

Rewards were also given to student groups with the heaviest recyclable waste and to all students above their contributions to the programme.

The programme also provides valuable learning experiences to UMPSA students.

The 'Trash2Cash' or 'Trash for Cash' programme has great potential for UMPSA to support environmental sustainability, minimize waste, and encourage collective responsibility for environmental protection.

Additionally, UMPSA residents can receive rewards for deposited recyclable items in the form of cash, vouchers, or other incentives.

Among the initiatives is to provide waste bank collection centres around the campus and ideal locations for the convenience of students and staff.

By realizing this programme, it will fulfil one of the six clusters, Waste, in the UMPSA Campus Development Plan from the UMPSA Sustainable Campus Action Plan 2022-2025.

Students of the Bachelor of Business Engineering program in FPI who enrol in the Technology and Innovation Management course believe that using technology in modern waste management methods can make waste separation more efficient.

"For example, by developing a mobile recycling app for UMPSA students and staff. Students can earn merits from the recycling programme by linking it to UMPSA's E-Community.

"The Merit System can show UMPSA's involvement in recycling and make the E-Community a bank for recycling proceeds.

"In addition, this merit amount is beneficial, especially to students to help them secure a place in UMPSA residences.

"Let us as the UMPSA community embark on this journey together with an unwavering commitment to transforming a sustainable campus," she said.

**By: Dr. Suhaidah Hussain, Sustainable Development Centre (Sdc) and Associate Professor Dr. Puteri Fadzline, Faculty of Industrial Management**

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