Convocation

Mohammed Shawal Ian Fitri earns two degrees in Railway Engineering

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BEIJING, 8 January 2024 – Mohammed Shawal Ian Fitri, 25, gained a unique and valuable learning experience as he graduated from two universities, completing a Dual Degree Programme in Railway Engineering at Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) during his first and second years before continuing his studies at Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU), China, sponsored by the Public Service Department (JPA) for his third and fourth years.

He is one of 45 UMPSA pioneer students from the first cohort who completed their studies in electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, and civil engineering and were celebrated in a Graduation Ceremony held recently at BJTU, China.

According to Mohammed Shawal, he was exposed to an academic approach focused on theoretical and engineering fundamentals at UMPSA, while at BJTU, he had the opportunity to engage in more practical training with an emphasis on solving real-world problems.

“These two approaches complement each other and strengthen my understanding of the field of study.

“The significant difference is the curriculum structure and teaching styles.

“In Malaysia, the approach is more student-centred with a lot of group activities, while in China, it is more formal, emphasising discipline and punctuality,” he explained.

However, he admitted that his main challenge was adapting to the competitive education system at BJTU and mastering the Mandarin language.

“I took extra language classes and built good relationships with locals here to improve my speaking skills,” he shared.

“Having degrees from both UMPSA and BJTU gives an advantage in the job market as both universities are renowned in the fields of engineering and technology, making graduates more competitive globally.

“Moreover, living and studying in China has opened new perspectives on life as an international student,” he said.

As the only child in his family, support from his mother, Regina Tinio, meant a lot to him.

He also learned to become independent, adapt to new cultures, and expand his international network.

Additionally, the biggest benefit was exposure to different cultures and languages, which enhanced his communication skills and cross-cultural understanding and broadened his global outlook by studying abroad.

He also gained practical work experience in the railway industry in China.

Currently, China is leading the railway industry with its high-speed trains and extensive railway network.

After graduation, he plans to work in the railway engineering industry and contribute back to his home country.

The most memorable moments included building friendships with peers from various countries, witnessing the joy of loved ones when achieving success abroad, and experiencing the close camaraderie among Malaysians abroad.

He was also active in student associations, becoming one of the first Malaysians to hold the position of Public Relations Officer in the Association of Malaysian Students in Beijing (AMSIB) from 2023 to 2024.

He is currently serving as the Public Relations Officer in the Malaysian Students Association in China (MSAC) since 2024.

He hopes that students in the UMPSA-BJTU programme will not only excel academically but also actively participate in extracurricular activities.

He advises students to join programmes organised by the Malaysian Embassy in Beijing and the Malaysian Students Association to build extensive social networks, strengthen interpersonal skills, and gain experiences that will help in personal and career development in the future.

Mohammed Shawal Ian Fitri is one of the outstanding students who received an award from the Secretary of the CPC Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) during the Graduation Ceremony for the UMPSA-BJTU Dual Degree Programme, recently held at BJTU.

Also present was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International Affairs), Professor Dato' Ts. Dr Ahmad Ziad Sulaiman.

He was joined by his peers, M Zheng Sheng, Chay Hew Shen, Lim Wei Jie, and Hsm Leng Yee.

Currently, a total of 101 UMPSA students are pursuing bachelor's degree studies in the dual degree programme at BJTU.

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