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## USM IS COMMITTED TOWARDS RAISING THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE



PENANG, 6 September 2016 - Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) remains committed towards maintaining and also raising the quality and excellence in academics, while striving to remain as the nation's Research University.

USM puts the emphasis on the needs and demands in ensuring its academicians are duly recognised especially in relation to the quality of publications in indexed journals, highlighted through the number of citations on the university, as well as in the enrolment of students with excellent academic backgrounds.

"Therefore, USM recognises the fact and reality that its ranking in the 'QS World University Ranking' (QSWUR) would be subjected to a 'rising or falling' position, which could change at any time and when the measuring instruments are beyond the control of the university.

What is certain is that, USM has been positioned at number 2 for four years in a row in 'Employer Reputation' and number 3 in 'Academic Reputation' (at number 2 for 3 years) in Malaysia, while for the 'Citations Per Faculty' category, USM has been at number 1 in Malaysia for 5 years in a row.

The achievements of USM in relation to the citations in research journals has so far been maintained within the past five years, to be the best in the country and among the best at the international stage," said the USM Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr. Omar Osman.

The same situation is evident when 3 out of 4 of the nation's researchers recognised as 'The Most Cited Researchers' by Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2016 are from USM. This is further supported by the ranking identified by QSWUR of academic subjects such as Chemical Engineering and Environmental Science, where USM has been positioned among the top 50 in the world.

Six aspects which were taken into account in the evaluation made by QSWUR were Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Faculty to Student Ratio, Citations per Faculty, International Faculty and International Students.

USM face a significant drop in the aspects of International Faculty and International Students, both of which are closely related to the need to increase the amount of investment in order to attract more international lecturers and students of quality.

Explained Omar, in principle USM is maintaining its total number of approximately 24,500 full-time students and its academicians of close to 2,200, in comparison to other universities which may have a much lower number of students, as USM believes that it would be more appropriate for the local universities to provide more places for the local students to pursue their studies, even up to the postgraduate level.

"This situation would automatically lead to a higher ratio between lecturers and students, which would lead to a decline in the rankings, as compared to a more favourable position for a university, whereby the student ratio per faculty is lower," said Omar.

He further said that, the situation is similar with the current number of international students and lecturers, as USM is giving emphasis on the admission of international students of quality, which is in line with the directive of the University Senate, in deciding on quality and not quantity as the factor in determining the number of students to be admitted.

This also explains why only around 3,700 undergraduates have gained admission into USM for the new 2016/2017 academic session, compared to more than 21,000 applications received, and with the selections done based on merit and the autonomy accorded to USM.

"Generally, USM remains committed towards achieving a higher position in the rankings, however at the same time, would not compromise on the number of student admission, the quality of students and also excellence in academics, in the aspects of publications and citations which are closely-related to the acknowledgements on the research efforts done so far."

From the aspect of employer reputation, USM has been improving and with not much difference compared to previous years."

"Within the last five years, USM's achievements in the ranking has overall increased, but at the same time accepts the situation where there would be ups and downs due to other global factors, such as an increase in the number of universities involved and the competitiveness in deciding on the available positions," stressed Omar.



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