

## Time to bring about innovation

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TODAY, Universiti Sains Malaysia will make history. It will witness yet another milestone in moving its research and development to the next level in tandem with its newfound status as Malaysia's research university.

Much has been said about the need to commercialise the R&D outcome from universities, but in reality this is easier said than done given a host of other inter-related factors that must be in place before one can hope to see a good success story. Generally, the overall success rate of commercialisation is less than 10 per cent. Currently, in Malaysia, it is about half of that.

One of the reasons for this is not the lack of quality R&D carried out at the universities. Rather, it has something to do with the culture of risk-taking among investors, especially the local ones.

Currently, the number is still wanting. Some are keen but not aggressive enough to instil the confidence that researchers need to move on.

Hence, most of the work done either remains academic, unable to take off beyond the laboratory or the pilot scale. It was only recently that funding schemes were established to make this possible despite acknowledging that "commercialisation" is an important outcome of any R&D.

In other words, while people, ideas and wisdom are the ingredients for the survival of a nation in an increasingly fragile planet, singularly none will be able to unleash the creative energy needed to make the difference that will see us through.

More so in a siloed environment where the fields of science and arts are not pursued in tandem with one another, even in the context of R&D.

These are some current artifacts in knowledge design that have artificially created several barriers in the processes of commercialisation.

In the age of convergence, where not only geopolitical boundaries are transcended, there is an equally urgent need to remove traditional man-made barriers between knowledge so that it is more reflective of the real world we live in. The reality is that all knowledge continuously intersect with one another, and people-ideas-wisdom is one nexus that allows for a flux of inspiration in a variety of creative and enterprising ways towards commercialisation.

This is where the journey to the world of *sains@usm* begins. It is a neverending journey towards the vision of oneness through the fusion of science and arts; the interconnectedness of people, ideas, and wisdom, as well as that of the tangibles and the intangibles, of modern and indigenous, and of commercialisation and humanity.

The pioneering Science and Arts Innovation Space at USM, or *sains@usm*, will provide the "space" required to promote highly integrated and innovative search and research platforms to nurture trans-disciplinary ways as the way forward.

We envision *sains@usm* as the new idea factory-driven beyond just the mere spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, but one that is also endowed with wisdom to benefit humanity as part of the universities' social obligation to the community at large.

Supported by sophisticated shared facilities and a range of expertise, it taps directly into the richness of the nearby main campus of Malaysia's leading research institution, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), as well as its health and engineering campuses. These campuses house a number of satellites of *sains@usm* to be used in the generation of talented human capital.

Thus, *sains@usm* will not only represent the ideal space for the academe and businesses to thrive, but also reach out to the larger communities near and far, local and global, in a truly comprehensive and wholesome manner.

The ultimate goal is to make a lasting difference by meeting and addressing the needs of billions at the bottom of the wealth pyramid by synergising creativity and nurturing enterprise.

In this way, *sains@usm* aims to take its rightful place as a vibrant nursery to sow the seeds of a new sustainability-led mindset that is gravely missing in today's knowledge paradigm.

Today, we proudly welcome you to discover the wonders of oneness at sains@usm—the Science and Arts Innovation Space, a concept humbly presented by Universiti Sains Malaysia.

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