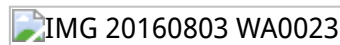


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English News

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT NECESSARY FOR UNIVERSITIES TO REMAIN RELEVANT



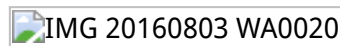
SURABAYA, INDONESIA, 3 August 2016 – In ensuring the longevity of universities for social development, the institutions would need to engage with various communities within the framework of a holistic global movement.

The Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr. Omar Osman said that, in order to remain relevant, universities nowadays are expected not only to generate and advance new knowledge for knowledge's sake but to also encompass the creation of applicable, meaningful, impactful and economically useful knowledge for the well-being of communities.

Many universities have seen a shift away towards a revitalised emphasis on building institutional bridges between university and citizenry, often termed 'scholarly engagement'.

"Universities with its resources, expertise and facilities, through the availability of improved technologies, the need to share responsibility for resolving complex issues, and good governance of managing social, economic and environmental projects, be transformed into entities that are able to move together holistically to bring about changes to the communities," Omar explained.

He delivered the keynote address entitled University Community Engagement as a Global Movement at the International Conference on University-Community Engagement which commenced here recently, attended by 350 participants from India, Canada, Malaysia, United Kingdom and Indonesia.



Omar added that if we believe that universities are to thrive for a better tomorrow, there is a need to exemplify the valorization of commitment, compassion, responsibility and service by re-visioning the roles of universities, the way knowledge is being produced, including a review of knowledge and skills vital in building the future generations which is indeed pertinent and critical.

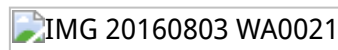
He highlighted three strategic objectives of community engagement, firstly integrating all forms of community engagement within the nexus of teaching, learning and research activities of the University; secondly establishing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating sustainable quality co-operative

partnerships with communities and relevant service sectors, resulting in the sustainable improvement in quality of life and empowerment of the community concerned, as well as community in general, and thirdly nurturing existing and the promotion of innovative, community engagement initiatives.

"In line with the rapid changes occurring in the economy and socio-cultural contexts, there is the need for us to seek for a new approach in the future, in a manner that is effective, innovative and inclusive through community engagements," stressed Omar.

The USM Vice-Chancellor has proposed for the establishment of a global movement for such a purpose, and later to become a trans-disciplinary smart partnership involving universities from all over the world.

"Referring to the Asia-Pacific University Community Engagement Network (APUCEN) headed by USM as an example, this effort demands an extension in strengthening further the relations between the higher educational institutions involved in community engagement activities."



"An integration between research, teaching and providing services through community engagement efforts would broaden the ecosystem and epistemology of knowledge, while focusing on the generation of knowledge and expertise which are both essential in the social transformation agenda," said Omar.

He added on in saying that the success of community engagement activities of universities worldwide go beyond the image of being an ivory tower, by utilising research, teaching and providing services as a globalised form of cooperation and collaboration, involving the expertise and best practices through various networks and channels implemented beyond boundaries, as exemplified by the Latin American Center for Service-Learning, the Ma'an Arab Universities Alliance for Civic Engagement, the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum, Engagement Australia, Campus Engage in Ireland, Campus Compact in the USA and APUCEN.

"What's important here is our capability to interpret all these efforts into the process of transferring such knowledge, with the aim of giving focus to current social issues in relation to the stakeholders, and how such knowledge could be useful for the development and competitiveness of communities, which could be sustained through strategic partnerships and engagements that would surely enhance the talents and expertise resulting from those knowledge, for the continued betterment of mankind throughout," said Omar.

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