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English News

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USM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT 25th ANNIVERSARY: STRIVING FOR HOLISTIC GRADUATES WITH SOUL

PENANG, 19 August 2015 – The proud achievements of the School of Management (PPP), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) ever since its establishment in December 1989 until the present time, have encompassed various aspects in stamping its name as the pioneers of excellence among the providers of business management studies in the country, with acknowledgements from various international authorities in the efforts to produce excellent graduates who would be sought after by employers locally and abroad.

The Dean of PPP, Professor Dr. Fauziah Md. Taib shared her views and insights with MARZIANA MOHAMED ALIAS, SITI NAQUIAH ABDILLAH and MAZLAN HANAFI BASHARUDIN in an interview with her at her office recently.

After being in operation for the past 25 years, PPP can now take pride to be enlisted among the best globally in offering academic courses such as accounting and business management.

Fauziah continues the legacy of the former deans in leading PPP towards excellence, with achieving excellence with 'qalbu' (purity of the soul) being in harmony, which she viewed as the basis in achieving continued success.

She said that, qalbu or purity of the soul which contributes to the actions and behaviours of an individual represents the key in achieving excellence in a steady and sustainable manner.

"We are committed towards cultivating the concept of excellence in harmony, being committed in fulfilling responsibilities and having aspects of spirituality such as sincerity and trustworthy, sense of responsibility, and accountability among others, while combining academic excellence and good performance with such spiritual values, which in turn would bring positive reflections to the school, university or even organisation and society in general," said Fauziah.

She further explained, she and her colleagues have practiced this idea in the various agenda to drive excellence at the school and until currently, results have been really good and very encouraging, including in producing holistic graduates who are highly-sought by employers, able to function as leaders and lead the nation in the future with sustainable and accountable leadership values.

What's more fascinating is, the business and management courses at PPP are now listed in the QS Rankings as being in the top 100-150 in the world.

In addition, the MBA programme which was initially managed by PPP and is currently under the Graduate School of Business (GSB) was also listed at number 25 as the Best MBA Programme by Asia Week Incorporated (1997), and was later followed by other accolades which include the acknowledgement for being the Pioneer School of Business in Malaysia in Accounting (2003), Most 'Excellent' University in Malaysia by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and many others.

PPP has also been given recognition by other local and world-renowned accreditation bodies including the Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA), Institute of Chartered Accountant in England and Wales (ICAEW), The Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (MICPA), The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), and the Australian Society of CPAs (CPA Australia) among others.

From the aspect of character-building of its graduates, Fauziah said, PPP receives thousands of applications every year and only a small number successfully gain entry to the school, with its academic workforce consisting of 52 lecturers of varied backgrounds, and the selected students need to be above-average achievers as they have to undergo a strict and transparent selection process for them to be enlisted.

"For those selected, we are committed towards moulding them to be excellent graduates through the various programmes organised, covering the aspects of solidifying their academic achievements, and corresponding with the inculcation of other added values such as leadership, entrepreneurship, self-worth and others which are considered essential, as the world currently requires human resource who do not just excel in academics, but also possessing added values which include the ability to communicate and the mastery of more than one language, abilities to lead and express opinions, being committed and having various skills which are not available in academic textbooks," she said.

PPP is also fortunate to have a pool of academic staff of varied backgrounds which have formed an environment that is truly conducive for the students to take advantage of from the teaching and learning process.

"Lecturers having high levels of academic knowledge would provide encouragement to the excellent students, while those with industrial experience would be able to inject the necessary elements to enable the students from PPP USM to have their own unique characters and to be different from others in the employment market.

"We have also received positive feedback from our industrial partners concerning the graduates from PPP USM, with a majority of them being commended for having outstanding skills compared to the rest," said Fauziah.

In fact, she added that there are among the industrial partners which have already gone "head-hunting" for graduates of PPP before they even complete their studies and the performance of these students have been assessed during their industrial training, resulting in the marketability of the graduates from PPP to reach more than 90 percent, a truly commendable achievement.

Fauziah also named those among the alumni members of PPP USM who are currently holding key, high positions in the public or private sector, locally as well as abroad such as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Dato' Sri Idris Jala; Higher Education Minister of Indonesia Muhammad Nasir; Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of National Power Company who is also a member of the Syura Council of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Fareed Ali; and CEO of Texchem Industry Brian Tan are among some of them.

She further said, PPP now has more than 13,000 Bachelor's degree graduates, with the student enrolment up until 2014 stands currently at approximately 1,700 Bachelor's students, 391 postgraduate students and 142 foreign students from more than 34 countries worldwide. PPP also possesses an academic workforce consisting of 3 professors, 5 associate professors, 40 senior lecturers, 3 lecturers and 18 administrative staff members.

Fauziah also stressed that, the success of PPP was the result of the strategy implemented effectively in strengthening the roles of all its academicians, management and administration staff, students and others; with the governing principle being the openness of all parties in realising the agenda to achieve excellence which is collectively upheld.

"PPP is aware of the concept on humanising excellence, comparing it to a tree that needs to be cared for; this refers to when there is strong determination in seeking excellence, there would be a tendency to overlook what impact it might bring on other individuals.

"Hence, we should be combining these two aspects to ensure a continuous development in excellence, not something that is short-lived and excellence that includes aspects of fulfilling worldly needs and qalbu (spiritual purity) requirements."

All these need to be embodied with the presence of the qalbu (purity of the soul) element, as such excellence in achievements would be more pleasantly enjoyed and able to be sustained regardless of expected rewards," said Fauziah.

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