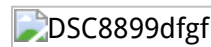


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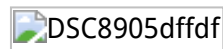
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SMEs THE WAY FORWARD FOR UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT



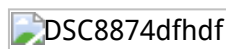
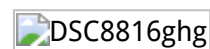
PENANG, 29 June 2015 – Malaysian universities should look to the small medium industries (SME) sector to enhance university-industry engagement. This was emphasised by panelists of the inaugural CEO Forum titled “Role of Industry in Strengthening the University of the 21st century” organised by Universiti Sains Malaysia’s Division of Industry and Community Network (BJIM).

Founding member of the Penang SME Centre, Dato’ Seri Dr Kelvin Kiew who is also Chairman and CEO of Mini-Circuits Technologies commended USM for its efforts at creating a holistic ecosystem to connect the university, industry and community through BJIM since its inception in 2007.



“A paradigm shift is taking place where the university has to move beyond its traditional functions of teaching and research, to include contributing towards economic and entrepreneurial development,” he said.

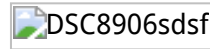
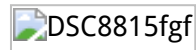
Kiew stated that the university and the industry have a symbiotic relationship, as the industry is a consumer of knowledge and technology supplied by the university. In return, the industry provides jobs and skills development for talent (which is also supplied by the university) and therefore has an important role to play in providing advice and input to develop the curriculum in line with latest developments.



Chairman of DRB-HICOM Bhd. Dato’ Syed Mohammad Aidid Syed Murtaza meanwhile drew on his career spanning more than 40 years to share with the audience on the importance of interpersonal skills and the human touch in building relationships for university-community engagement.

The final presenter, Honorary Consul General of Pakistan in Penang, Dato' Hj Abdul Rafique Abdul Karim reiterated that the current knowledge-based economy requires close collaboration between the university and the industry.

"USM is one of the foremost universities in the country to engage with the industry since over twenty years ago," noted the former Deputy President of the Penang Malay Chamber of Commerce.



Like Kiew, Abdul Rafique also urged the university to engage with SMEs, describing them as the backbone of industry with a growth rate of 6-7% per year, whilst accounting for 36% of Malaysian GDP.

He added, "Therefore they have great potential to actively engage with the university to strengthen the university-industry-community ecosystem especially in producing and marketing viable products from the university; as such industries should be given incentives to encourage collaboration with the university such as tax rebates or grants."

The CEO Forum was held at the Dewan Persidangan Universiti in the USM main campus, Penang and was well attended by representatives from various industries mainly located in Penang. - Text: Dr Nurul Farhana Low Abdullah



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