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PROFESSOR DR. ABD KARIM BOOSTS ONLINE EDUCATION EFFORTS



Though a professor in the field of Food Technology at the School of Industrial Technology Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), currently Professor Dr. Abd Karim Alias, 53, is more involved in the efforts to boost online educational practices, especially after being appointed as the Director of the Centre for Development of Academic Excellence (CDAE) USM.

What motivates him is, he always has the confidence in the potential of 'open access education' as a way of sharing knowledge with everyone around the world, which would provide endless benefit to countless individuals and communities.

Recently, Abd Karim has been named among the Top 50 Influencers in Education – Asia Pacific by a particular website (<http://bit.ly/1JrB6ij> (<http://bit.ly/1JrB6ij>)) which has listed only two individuals from Malaysia. These two individuals were described as being responsible in shaping the educational landscape and inspiring change, initiating reformations in education and implementing innovations in today's teaching and learning practices.

"Surprised as I am, still I am grateful with this acknowledgement and at the same time feel honoured and excited that my efforts in the area of open online education has garnered acceptance and being seen as paving the way for new practices in the education process," said Abd Karim when asked how he felt.

Adds the academician from Kampung Pasang Api, Bagan Datoh, Perak further, active involvement in the education for student and open learning communities provides more opportunities to be explored. This can lead to the growth in interest and the passion for changes in teaching and learning, in relation to recent progress found in the area of education, especially higher education.

"I subscribe to the belief and practice of open education based on the notion of 'sharing is caring', with shared teaching resources available for free online, for instance the uploading of instructional slides through Slideshare, which is readily available to the masses for free. I have uploaded more than 100 videos of lectures via YouTube, which have attracted more than

300,000 views within a year and followed by those in more than 190 countries around the world, benefitting the students and teaching staff in the area of Food Technology wherever they may be,” said Abd Karim.

Currently, he is involved in assisting the Ministry of Education in implementing the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) agenda, at the same time engaging himself in the development of the Malaysian Education Development Plan - Higher Education (PPPM-PT) focusing on Global Online Education, as well as assisting the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) as a master trainer in the various training programmes held.

“My involvement in being a trainer on technology-enhanced learning is with a firm belief that only technology can provide that added value in the teaching of lessons and courses, conducted through many training programmes for the USM community as well as to those who are interested including the private sector, at the same time presenting keynote speeches relating to the future of learning and higher education,” adds Abd Karim.

A believer in living a modest life, Abd Karim holds on to the main principle that a learned individual should practice humility and respect to others.

“A significant achievement at work can only be achieved with a deep interest and enthusiasm, motivated by the confidence that a great educator need to have a firm belief in initiating change or ‘the teacher can make a difference’, which is what I have shared with my colleagues at the university,” he emphasised further.

Abd Karim joined USM in 1994 as a lecturer in Food Science and Food Technology, where he persevered to be a successful lecturer and researcher. Deep interest, commitment and creativity are true descriptions of him as a teacher and lecturer.

“I also believe that the duty of a teacher and lecturer is an interesting journey towards the discovery of knowledge, together by the lecturers and the students,” said Abd Karim.

He has produced more than 130 research papers as a result of his active involvement in various research and innovation endeavours, including those being categorised as having a high index, as well as doing supervisory duties to many postgraduate students. - Translation: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin/Text: Mohamad Abdullah



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