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English News

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## THREE POINTS OF FOCUS IN ENHANCING UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY NETWORKING



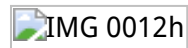
PENANG, 30 March 2015 – The 4th ASEM Rectors' Conference in Hangzhou, China which was attended by nearly 100 representatives from universities in Asia and Europe recently sought to address how universities could co-operate with the business sector to equip the university community with employability skills, foster entrepreneurship and create new learning environments.

Themed "University-Business Partnerships: Asia and Europe Seeking 21st Century Solutions", discussion centred on creating innovative partnership between universities and the business sector in order to face emerging socio-economic challenges.

Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Professor Dato' Dr. Omar Osman stated that much of the discussion focused primarily on how both parties could work together in order to benefit future graduates, lecturers and individuals in universities and industries.

He noted that these three points of focus had been discussed in much depth, including how best to improve marketability of graduates not only in terms of numbers but also from the aspect of skills.

"Discussion also centred on how collaboration between university and the industry/business sector would be able to enhance the ecosystem for entrepreneurship at university level in order to add value to students and lecturers alike who could then develop their entrepreneurial potential.



"Technology owned by industry or businesses should also be injected into the university ecosystem to create a new learning environment which complements the principle of lifelong learning," he said.

Omar added that these three points (marketability, entrepreneurship and new learning environments) needed to be addressed as a natural progression of smart partnerships between universities and industries, specifically in research collaboration and knowledge transfer.

He stated that ideas to push forward university-industry collaboration in a more structured manner were obtained, and USM would try to organise a conference on university-industry in the near future resulting from these discussions.

"A conference can be organised to study ways to co-operate, and produce an action plan for the future, bearing in mind that many universities already possess university-industry advisory councils at school or faculty level," he said.

Omar meanwhile stated that USM and the University of Nottingham, Ningbo had agreed in principle to sign a memorandum of understanding for collaboration in the area of Economics and Maritime Engineering.

"Several other universities had also expressed an interest to visit USM to study how we manage our ecosystem in innovation," he added.

"There will be a special meeting this August in Kuala Lumpur between the Vice-Chancellors of USM, Universiti Malaya and Chulalongkorn University, Thailand to discuss the setting up of a Malaysia-Thailand research university network.

"The network is expected to enhance collaborative efforts at the international level and improve the quality of higher education in a more holistic way," he concluded. - Translation: Dr. Nurul Farhana Low Abdullah/Text: Marziana Mohamed Alias/Photos: Mohd Fairus Md Isa



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