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DEVELOPING TALENT EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS



PENANG, 9 May 2017 – “Local universities need to be bold in taking the steps to have a more inclusive and supportive promotional development exercise for its academicians,” said the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Professor Datuk Dr. Asma Ismail today in her welcoming remarks at the University Transformation Programme (UniTP) Orange Book Northern Zone Roadshow earlier today.

Asma said that in order to promote Talent Excellence, there is a need to move from a one-size-fits-all model to one in which the higher learning institutions (HLIs) have diversified models of career excellence for its academic staff and institutional heads.



By using the New Academia Talent Framework (NATF) provided in the Orange Book, Asma said that Talent Excellence can be developed by means of the Differentiated Career Pathways (DCP) which has been laid out for every academic staff. DCP provides a framework in developing excellence and leadership in:

1. teaching,
2. research,
3. professional practice, and
4. institutional leadership.

Such models would allow the HLIs to move towards achieving institutional excellence by specialising on the strengths and focus areas of their academic staff. This in part would assist and support Malaysian academics towards attaining excellence, and to be respected, referred, and relevant, both locally and internationally.



The first speaker to give a briefing on the plan was Professor Dr. Abdul Karim Alias. Currently the Director at the USM Centre for Development of Academic Excellence (CDAE), Abdul Karim also highlighted the need for talent excellence to ensure institutional excellence. The aspirations of the talents need to be aligned with the mission of the institution.

He mentioned Boyer's Four Domains of Scholarship being the basis of this plan, which has materialised into the four pathways available for selection, namely as the:

1. inspiring educator
2. accomplished researcher
3. experienced practitioner
4. institutional leader

By allowing academicians to choose a preferred pathway, institutions could focus on recruiting, nurturing, developing and retaining the best talents to further benefit the institutions. This would result in enhanced professionalism and career satisfaction for the selected talents too.



The next speaker to provide the briefing, Dr. Roszana binti Tapsir, from the Programme Management Office, Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) touched on the exercises in aligning the aspirations of academicians to the missions of the institutions. Aspects to consider would be:

1. the guiding principles for a successful implementation of the plan,
2. timelines set for each stage of progress,
3. simulations of preferred choices made by the academicians,
4. institutional support and review, and
5. workload distribution.

All these need to be implemented in stages and by different departments in the respective institutions: the plan, the 'buy-in' period, the execution and the support provided.

In addition, Roszana also highlighted in brief the progress that each public university (UA) has made in terms of the implementation of this plan.



The final speaker for the roadshow, Deputy Director of AKEPT (Higher Education Leadership Academy), Associate Professor Dr. Mohd Rushdan bin Mohd Jailani, talked on the philosophy and ideas in developing and sustaining leadership excellence.

Rushdan highlighted the idea of the Qalb-guided leadership as the basis in the selection and development process of future leaders in higher education. He stated that it is from the capabilities in academic leadership that future leaders in higher education could be identified and trained to be part of the institutional leadership.

The roadshow was held at Auditorium Murad at the [Sains@USM grounds \(mailto:Sains@USM_grounds\)](mailto:Sains@USM_grounds) in Bukit Jambul, Penang. Also present were representatives from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), Heads of Departments and key university officials.

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