

Post Graduate

Piecing together solutions



Maximising research potential

By IAN JEROME LEONG

WITH more than 300 published scientific papers to his name, Albert Einstein is not only regarded as one of the greatest geniuses to have contributed to the knowledge of science but his findings continue to be the foundations for much modern research.

Among his most famous quotes is, "Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it".

It is for this ongoing quest of wisdom that universities the world over invest a substantial amount of time, energy and resources into their research activities.

In October last year, however, the Malaysian Government announced as part of Budget 2016 a RM2.4bil reduction in annual allocations for institutions of higher learning (from RM15.78bil last year to RM13.37bil this year), signalling a massive blow to the administrative functionalities and, more importantly, research capabilities of local public universities.

Upon the announcement, student groups and educators were nervous about the move as it could adversely impact student and academic faculty development, raise tuition fees, impede universities' competitiveness on the global stage and in the long run thwart quality research outcomes.

Value of imperative study

Prof Azirah Hashim, executive director of the Asia-Europe Institute at University of Malaya, says, "The ethos of universities is to be at the forefront of research, teaching, human resource, talent production and problem-solving."

Very often, though, quality research outcomes go hand in hand with having a sufficient budget to fund extensive research – one of the deciding factors that separate distinguished universities from the rest.

This phenomenon can be represented in a circular chain of events where significant research findings will lead to international recognition, more lucrative grants and funds, the ability to improve university facilities and education programmes, more students and academicians, and resources to spearhead more compelling research activities.

But besides the monetary aspect, good research contributes ideas and solutions at the societal level for the betterment



All research, even blue skies, is important for the betterment of society, so universities should not let a lack of funding discourage progress in higher education.

of humankind.

According to Prof Azirah, producing research that is of high quality and integrity as well as better understanding of society's needs and finding suitable solutions are important in a globalised and competitive world.

"It is the task of researchers and universities to develop research that is important to society, justify this importance to funding committees and ensure that money is spent on projects that are truly beneficial to the society," says Prof Azirah.

Prof Bujang B. K. Huat, dean of the School of Graduate Studies at Universiti Putra Malaysia, agrees with this statement and says quality research will help build society's trust and

confidence in local higher education institutions.

"Research is the academic arm for universities to reach out to society and, in a way, a manifestation of integrity.

"The public expects universities to contribute in many aspects and be the problem solvers to the nation's economic, cultural and social crises," says Prof Bujang.

Prof Graham Kendall, vice provost (research and knowledge transfer) at The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus, says intellectual property by universities will help the local and

national economy, paving the way for job creation through mechanisms such as spin-out companies.

James Then Khong Lek, managing director of CryoCord, a stem cell bank that has a subsidiary collaborating with local universities in stem cell research for therapy in non-communicable diseases, says, "I am particularly concerned when research funds are cut as good research is the foundation for the country's future.

"Researchers who face limited funding often need to share resources, lengthen the research timeframe or cut down on their scope of study," says Then.

Sustainable procedures

Prof Bujang believes universities must not concentrate too much on the negative effects of a budget cut nor allow it to deter them from making progress in higher education but instead act upon contingency plans to achieve set research goals and optimise productivity while operating on minimal funds.

"What the budget cut means for the wider university community is that we must look upon such challenges as a test of our resilience in finding other solutions," he says.

Prof Azirah echoes Prof Bujang's view and says, "Universities must not be reliant on a single source of

Contesting for funds

AMONG the biggest challenges researchers face when attaining sufficient research funding is convincing potential investors that their studies will indeed be beneficial to society.

But it is only through adequate funding that researchers can bring forth discoveries in their respective research fields.

This has been a persistent problem throughout history as in the case of Alexander Graham Bell in the 1870s, who resorted to borrowing money from the wealthy father of one of his students at Boston University as well as his assistant Thomas Watson to develop his harmonic telegraph.

In current times, the problem lies particularly true for blue-skies research, where the results of studies are not immediately apparent, when the research is purely scientifically and curiosity driven, or when the research does not have a clear goal.

Apart from factors that include timeliness, discussion opportunity or the failure to present research ideas effectively, if the ambitions of the study seem too grand or if the ideas seem too unconventional, there is a strong chance that the research proposal will be scrapped.

As research proposals are expected to specify definitive goals, there is a possibility that companies and funding bodies accept proposals that are deemed safe or likely to yield short-term results, and perhaps favour mediocrity.

Thankfully, blue-sky research is still ongoing and there are companies and funders willing to provide monetary aid to less popular research ideas, be it for beneficial returns in the long run or as a form of corporate responsibility.

However, not only must companies and funders continue to support and be open to such research but more grants are needed to enable the possibility of genuine scientific leaps.

funding as there are many grant-giving bodies prepared to fund worthwhile research.

"Budget cuts encourage researchers and universities to look for other sources of funding, be it the private sector, foreign countries or international organisations, and engage more in a competitive and transparent research funding environment," says Prof Azirah.

Sufficient monetary resources are important to boost compelling research activities.

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A MASTER'S in business administration (MBA) is the most sought after programme in the world today. Factors such as economic globalisation and challenging economic environments in respective countries have contributed substantially to increasing its significance.

While working experience offers wonderful knowledge, an MBA programme relevant to one's industry will help sharpen managerial and soft skills necessary for management.

A university of educational excellence with transformative societal impact, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman's (UTAR) Faculty of Accountancy and Management (FAM) offers the Master of Business Administration, Master of Business Administration (Building Management) and Master of Business Administration (Corporate Governance).

Dr Pok Wei Fong, UTAR FAM's head of programme for MBA, says that the programme provides a strong platform in learning a wide range of management issues, techniques and practices as well as specialised knowledge in many areas of today's global business environment.

"As part of the university's vision and mission, it offers candidates a balance of theoretical and experiential learning, thus enabling students to develop



The UTAR MBA programmes enable students to develop business and leadership skills.

characteristics in future business leaders. Certified by the Malaysian Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (Maicsa), UTAR FAM's MBA (Corporate Governance) programme ensures excellent standards in its entire curriculum.

To safeguard the programmes' quality and excellence, external examiners from renowned universities overseas are roped in to ensure the examination questions are parallel to those of the universities.

The programmes' external examiners also contribute by reviewing all aspects of the programme to ensure the programmes are kept abreast of latest trends and developments in the industry.

An MBA is ideal for those looking forward to improve themselves in handling the myriad challenges of holding leadership positions and seeking strategic solutions. All MBA programmes at UTAR are available in full-time or part-time mode.

UTAR is having its extended counselling hours at the Sungai Long and Kampar campuses daily till June 12 from 9am to 5pm (excluding public holidays).

■ For more information, call 03-9086 0288/016-2233 559 (Sungai Long campus), 05-468 8888/016-2233 557 (Kampar campus), e-mail enquiry@utar.edu.my or visit www.utar.edu.my.

Real-world skills

business and leadership skills and an appreciation for good management practices in a challenging and turbulent globalised world," she continues.

"Case studies, business presentations and the curriculum involved in UTAR's MBA programme helped me develop critical and analytical thinking. These skills are essential in managing business issues and decision-making," enthuses Yuan

Bing, a UTAR MBA graduate from China.

"Studying in UTAR also helped me gain access to the extensive alumni network of that particular MBA programme and of others."

For students from non-business backgrounds, earning an MBA degree increases practical knowledge in business administration.

The skills acquired are also transferable to other roles, as

evidenced by the MBA's strong representation in other sectors such as fast-paced consumer goods (FMCG), healthcare, public sector, finance and consulting.

The skill sets taught in MBA provide you with hands-on training for dealing with real business problems. In addition, it can enhance your soft skills such as leadership, cross-cultural understanding and teamwork, which are important

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Quality education and facilities

PURSUING postgraduate study is a serious undertaking as people often identify you based on your choice of study and it provides a pathway for specialisation.

Here are seven things to look out for in a university when choosing a postgraduate programme and why Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) should be your institution of choice.

● **Known for its research strengths** – Pursuing postgraduate study is mainly about doing research, so choose a university known for its research strengths.

Find out whether the research area you wish to pursue is within the niche teaching areas of the university, and seek out scholarships and grants.

UPM is one of Malaysia's five research universities. It is ranked among the top 150 universities that is under 50 years old in the *World University Rankings 2015-2016* by Times Higher Education and listed among the best 100 universities in agriculture and forestry, according to the QS World University Ranking by Subjects 2015.

UPM was also ranked first in Malaysia and Asia and 17th in the world in the UI GreenMetric World University Ranking 2015.



Among the strengths of Universiti Putra Malaysia is the range of quality postgraduate programmes, including those in the field of agriculture.

UPM's recent achievements include securing two long-term research grants under its Institute of Tropical Agriculture (to be re-established as Institute of Food Security).

● **Known for its international collaborations** – International collaborations mean that the university is recognised by other institutions of good standing and that the university has attained international standards.

To date, UPM has 18 collaborative programmes in the forms of double, dual, jointly

awarded and cotutelle (co-tutoring) research degree programmes with universities from the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, South Korea, France, Canada and Thailand.

● **Received awards and recognition from famous institutions** – This means the university has been recognised and scored highly by international and national accreditation bodies for its programmes.

UPM offers postgraduate programmes in 265 fields of graduate study in agriculture,

science and engineering, and social science and humanities.

Its programmes have been accredited by international accreditation bodies such as the Royal Society of Chemistry, United Kingdom, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the Washington Accord through the Engineering Accreditation Council (EAC), the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), the United States.

● **Academic staff who are renowned in their areas of specialisation** – An important consideration when selecting a university for postgraduate study is your potential supervisor. A supervisor who is renowned in his or her field will be able to connect you to a good network of respectable academics and can guide you well in your research.

● **Excellent student support system** – UPM offers a comprehensive supervisory support programme run by the Putra Sarjana unit of the School of Graduate Studies. The programme provides support for both students

and supervisors in terms of managing the supervisory relationships and ensuring successful completion of the thesis.

● **Offering programmes that are relevant to the industry** – When you apply for jobs after your postgraduate degree, your prospective employer will want to know if you are up to date with the latest developments in your area and if your skills are applicable and beneficial to the workplace.

● **Great learning environment and research facilities** – Does the university have a nice campus that is well equipped for research and provides recreational opportunities? Is the library well-stocked with the latest publications in your field of study?

UPM's green campus is designed with quality research and recreational facilities. Apart from state-of-the-art research facilities, UPM staff and students also have access to an 18-hole golf course, equestrian centre and forest reserve for recreational activities.

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Funding cuts may very well lead to a more competitive research environment.

Stepping up amid adversity

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Collaborations between universities and external funders will create a win-win situation for all who are involved in the partnership.

According to Then, private companies and small medium enterprises are not well equipped and do not possess the expertise of universities.

He says, "Collaborations are the natural pathways for private companies to advance and be competitive, enabling access to advanced technology and technical know-how."

Current undertakings

Fortunately, public and private universities in Malaysia are adjusting to the cutback of funds.

These efforts include synchronising internal operations and income-generating entities to strengthen universities' financial systems, motivating and encouraging creativity among researchers, as well as intensifying involvement in both local and international grant processes, collaborations and environments.

Although the budget cut has no direct effect on private universities, Prof Kendall says working within a tight budget is how many companies operate and private higher learning institutions are no different.

He adds that though competitive, opportunities for government research grants are available, motivating private universities to increase the number and quality of research proposals as having these additional funds will make a difference.

"We are always seeking to diversify our income streams as we need to provide value for money as well as a good experience for anybody who wishes to invest in the

university – whether they are students investing in their future, or governments and businesses investing in research and development," says Prof Kendall.

Forthcoming possibilities

While a reduction in funds can weaken the growth of Malaysian research, there may be a reason to be optimistic about the health of higher education in Malaysia and its research findings in the long run.

Prof Bujang believes universities of the 21st century that claim to be among global educational players will strengthen internal income generation capabilities and not be pessimistic in conforming or adapting to new rules and policies, be it due to internal or external factors.

Prof Azirah says the budget cut may very well force universities and researchers to be more competitive and those who are willing to step up to the challenge should at the end find their efforts rewarded in terms of higher quality output.

She also believes the more universities are able to diversify in their grants and funding, the broader the research horizons, possibly expanding to include more internationally focused research ventures.

Five months into the year, it is still too soon to conclude if the overall reduction in funding has affected the general research quality of universities in Malaysia.

Nonetheless, universities that place high importance on research will be able to find new pathways and strategies to overcome such challenges as it is part of their culture and mission to contribute to society.

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Building a global network

THE Management & Science University (MSU) is one of Malaysia's top universities that focuses on the critical areas of studies that encompasses medicine, health sciences, pharmacy, information sciences and engineering, business management and professional studies, education and social sciences, hospitality and culinary, and music and fashion. As one of Malaysia's leading

teaching and learning universities, MSU gives priority to quality education and creative teaching methodologies to produce quality and holistic graduates.

Besides incorporating international exposure in the students' learning experience, extensive industrial training components and personal enrichment competency elements are also part of the programme of study, ensuring high graduate employability.

MSU through the Graduate School of Management (GSM) recognises that today's global companies require managers with a broader outlook. Through its internationalisation efforts, MSU attracts top students, employs faculty members with overseas experience and forms effective links with businesses.

The MSU-MBA programme offers students an experiential learning experience in cross-cultural communications, opportunities to build a global network and find future international career options.

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This programme also provides sufficient knowledge for students to understand the

various facets of an organisation to formulate successful strategies.

Active Learning Exercises act as a basis for verbal analysis and discussion, allowing a rich learning environment by integrating real-world experiences in the classroom.

This broadens students' understanding of issues by inviting them to think beyond text materials. New terms and concepts are defined in the margins to facilitate learning.

MSU-GSM has established collaborative educational links with a number of top overseas universities in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, Germany, Russia, China and others.

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Diversity inspires ideas

IN March this year, the premier dual-award Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme at Sunway University welcomed its latest intake of students from a diverse pool of backgrounds and nationalities.

On the first day of orientation, MBA programme chair of Sunway University Michael Dent stressed the importance of having a good mixture of local and international students.

According to Dent, students from diverse backgrounds often make a huge difference in the programme as the diversity allows them to gain new ideas and perform better.

Using Nottingham Forest Football Club as an example, he said the perfect combination of age and experience among its players contributed to its success in winning the European Cup twice.

"The combination of age and experience is what we need in an MBA class but with the added dimensions of culture and gender as well," he said.

Dent believes that in the 21st century, a good MBA candidate must have teamwork values and be culturally sensitive as many companies today cater to customers from all over the world.

Even the employees of a company may come from different cultural backgrounds, meaning students must learn to work effectively in an international team to succeed.

Among the students at the orientation was Zoe Tysoe, a Briton with more than 10 years of work experience in English education around the world.

Tysoe, who is from Worcestershire in the United Kingdom, is currently an e-learning consultant for a British organisation in Kuala Lumpur.

She completed her

undergraduate studies in 2008 with Lancaster University, UK, majoring in European studies.

Tysoe, who fell in love with teaching when she was with the British Council in Mexico, pursued other qualifications for teaching prior to her admission into the MBA programme.

Aside from progressing further in the MBA programme, she also hopes to gain a better understanding of her current job.

"Although I have lots of experience working with my current organisation, it is a massive and complex structure. I am always discovering new things at different departments, which is why I want to better understand my organisation and other organisations."

"Besides, I have only been in a managerial position for about four years and I like to learn about what I am doing. I think this is the right time to study and learn more about theory and to connect with other people. This seems like quite a diverse programme that comprises people from different organisations," she says.

The MBA programme at Sunway University provides cutting-edge business management theories and tools.

It aims to provide students such as Tysoe the opportunity to experience personal transformations by building and honing a set of skills that they can use for a lifetime.

This personal transformation starts the moment students step into the university. Sunway University's state-of-the-art Graduate Centre, where MBA classes are delivered, houses a faculty of the best management consultants, educators and research scholars in the world.

With the partnership between Sunway University (a leading Malaysian private university) and Lancaster University (ranked in the top 1% of universities globally), a large contingent of UK-based educators and distinguished lecturers are brought in to deliver world-class learning experience at Sunway.

To discover how you can maximise your career potential with Sunway University's dual-award premier MBA, join the preview session on May 28 at 12.30pm and June 8 at 6.30pm.

The preview session will be held at the Sunway University Graduate Centre.

■ To reserve a place at the preview or to find out more about the programme, call 03-7491 8701 or visit www.sunway.edu.my/university/MBA.



Sunway University welcomes its latest intake of students for the MBA programme.



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Zoe Tysoe, MBA student at Sunway University, hopes to gain a better understanding of working in an organisation through the MBA programme.

Making the most of your MBA

A MASTER'S in business administration (MBA) is one of the most popular postgraduate courses in Malaysia.

The postgraduate business education market in Malaysia is highly competitive as there are many local public and private universities offering MBA programmes.

Furthermore, new MBA programmes were launched recently by many international branch campuses from the United Kingdom and Australia.

To stay relevant to the industry, MBA courses should emphasise a practical approach by using many local and international case studies so that students can examine real-life situations that businesses face. In addition, lecturers should provide networking opportunities to connect MBA students.

An MBA course is a postgraduate degree in business administration that focuses on developing a good understanding of the complex organisational issues managers encounter.

It is delivered through a blend of face-to-face workshops, a web-based learning system and activities involving peer group learning.



Asia Graduate School of Business (AGSB) at Unitar collaborates with Frost & Sullivan Malaysia to be part of the teaching team of AGBS.

MBA courses differ from conventional courses as students need to meet certain criteria before enrolling in the programme and, to benefit from the MBA programme, are required to have prior full-time business experience.

Among the qualities of a good MBA course is that it provides a comprehensive grounding in general management theory, focusing particularly on the relationship between theory and practice.

Furthermore, it enhances the ability of managers to apply knowledge, theories and skills to

meet the business needs of organisations.

Besides that, a good MBA course helps produce effective and well-rounded students who are capable of contributing effectively at a strategic level across functional areas. An MBA course also develops effective verbal and written communication skills.

There are many ways students can use their MBA qualification to upgrade and advance their career. As networking is central to the MBA programme, participants forge invaluable connections that

stay with them as their career progresses. These connections are important for their future career development.

Pursuing an MBA is a life-changing and enriching experience that could maximise participants' true potential in career advancement.

With an MBA, participants could also demand a higher salary for their higher skills and knowledge.

Pursuing an MBA opens the door to a career switch. As an MBA allows individuals to focus on a new specialisation, some people enrol in the programme to prepare for their chosen career.

Like all postgraduate courses, students will face some common challenges when pursuing their MBA.

These can be time management, balancing between work, study and family, punctuality, financing the MBA programme, returning to study many years after graduating, and cultural challenges such as working with other MBA students of various backgrounds.

Students can overcome each of these challenges by having good motivation, staying focused and setting goals.

Asia Graduate School of Business

(AGSB) at Unitar International University collaborates with relevant industry partners in delivering the curriculum.

Recently, one of Unitar's industry partners, Frost & Sullivan Malaysia, collaborated with AGBS to be part of the teaching team of AGBS.

The collaboration involves experts from Frost & Sullivan giving lectures and assessment in class.

AGSB offers both business administration and management programmes at two levels – master's and doctor of philosophy (PhD).

The business administration programmes cover areas in finance and marketing while the management programmes focus on people management, including leadership, psychology, organisational development and ethics.

Registration for Unitar's June intake will be open from May 21 to June 13. For the October intake, registration will be open from Sept 10 to Oct 15.

■ For more information, visit www.unitar.my or e-mail enquiries@unitar.my or call 03-7627 7200.



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- Master of Education (Sport Science)
- Master of Education (Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL))
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AEI aims to integrate knowledge from Asia and Europe to produce specialised research.

Bridging continents

ASIA and Europe have plenty to learn from each other in terms of politics, culture, economics, business and legal practices.

At the first Summit of the Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem) held in Bangkok in 1996, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad highlighted the need for cooperation between the two continents in the field of higher education.

On this recommendation, the Asia Europe Centre was created. The centre was upgraded to a full-fledged postgraduate institute in 2000 and was renamed the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI).

Priority research areas at AEI include Asean-European relations, regional integration, Asean studies, multiculturalism, regional networks and comparative regionalism. AEI's PhD programme mirrors this focus and the institute welcomes applicants interested in pursuing research in these areas.

Candidates are assigned up to two supervisors whose expertise fit closely with their chosen field of study. These supervisors can be from the University of Malaya faculty or one of the renowned international visiting professors at AEI.

This allows students to tap into the

expertise of the best academicians from Asia and Europe. Candidates are further supported with research methods courses and other research skills programmes offered by the University of Malaya's Institute of Postgraduate Studies.

The Institute also offers three international master's programmes in Asean studies, regional integration as well as small and medium enterprises, which also contain a strong research element in the form of a research project paper.

Furthermore, the integrated two-month internship makes the master's programmes relevant.

Both master's and PhD students who have graduated from AEI have gone on to pursue successful careers in academia, government and the private sector.

Apart from its academic programmes, the institute actively organises seminars, lectures and conferences with various Asian and European universities, and embassies and ministries.

These contribute to making AEI a unique hub for specialised postgraduate studies.

■ For more information, visit www.aei.um.edu.my.

Growing potential

CURTIN Sarawak offers different levels of postgraduate study and industry-aligned programmes by coursework or research under its Faculty of Engineering and Science, Faculty of Business, and Faculty of Humanities in collaboration with its Graduate School.

In the research programmes, the Curtin Sarawak Graduate School aims to provide high-quality support and research training to students and supervisors besides assisting in the growth of a vibrant research culture.

Postgraduate qualifications gained at the university are widely accepted globally through professional accreditation and government recognition of the programmes as well as through international joint-recognition agreements such as the Washington Accord.

In addition, students can benefit from learning from highly experienced academic staff who work closely with their counterparts in Perth in teaching and research to ensure that the quality of provision reaches the same high standards.

Curtin Sarawak's location within the hub of the oil and gas industry in East Malaysia and its proximity to the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (Score) also gives students opportunities to interact and network with a variety of industry experts.

Postgraduate programmes at Curtin Sarawak are identical to those at Curtin's main campus in Perth, hence the degrees earned at the Sarawak campus are conferred directly by Curtin Perth.



Students at the Curtin Sarawak Graduate School will receive high-quality support and research training.

The master's and doctoral programmes can be taken up as full time or part time.

Curtin Sarawak offers a number of PhD and Master of Philosophy research scholarships for eligible candidates.

The current development of an RM50mil Biotechnology Centre, which is due for completion next year, will significantly boost research and development as well as knowledge accumulation in Sarawak.

This can aid in supporting small and medium enterprises to develop and commercialise new products and processes and maintain quality assurance through product analysis.

Curtin Sarawak also continues to create new learning spaces equipped with the latest technological advances in teaching and learning, including distributed learning technology, aimed at increasing student engagement, fostering collaboration between staff and students and providing flexible, technology-rich environments.

The completion of a new four-storey Faculty of Engineering and Science building this year will see the addition of even more innovative learning facilities.

■ For more information on Curtin Sarawak's postgraduate programmes, call 08-544 3939 or e-mail raihanah@curtin.edu.my.



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PACE allows students to pursue a wide range of business programmes at their own convenience and earn qualifications from SEGi University or any of its partner universities.

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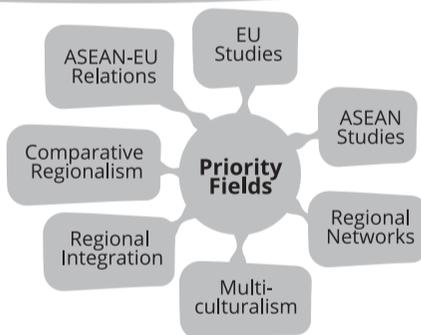


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Upskill with MBA

I WAS into my second year as a senior manager when I decided to pursue a master's degree in business administration (MBA).

Prior to assuming this senior role, my decade-long career had centred on managing manufacturing operations.

Having been given a wider scope of responsibility and significant influence on the direction of the business, I realised that more was required of me than what my accumulated knowledge and management experience in operations could offer.

I began looking for an MBA programme that would help me understand business and strategy, strengthen my grasp on key management disciplines and provide what I needed to become a better business leader.

Deciding which MBA to take up turned out to be relatively straightforward. I wanted an MBA programme of reputable standing that could deliver what I had hoped to achieve.

Only two MBAs administered in Malaysia at the time were ranked in the world's top 100 and one of them, University of Strathclyde's triple-accredited MBA, is widely regarded as one of the best in corporate strategy.

The university's strong reputation for research excellence in strategic management was a major pull factor for me.

I had the privilege of learning from academics who are not only at the forefront of their disciplines, but who possess a wealth of international experience in business and industry.

Throughout the programme, local counsellors with solid academic and professional credentials provided effective support and good group dynamics with fellow professionals enriched my exposure and learning experience.

Putting newly acquired knowledge into practice helped me bring about changes in the company that led to unprecedented



Ch'ng Poh Leong, MBA graduate from the University of Strathclyde.

revenue, profit and growth.

The business continues to thrive to this day on the back of these initiatives and I have since moved on.

The lessons gleaned from my MBA experience continue to prove invaluable in my current role as country manager.

It was a pleasant surprise finishing as the Top Malaysian MBA Student in 2015 and receiving the Dean's Commendation for Project in the process.

These are the icing on the cake because the knowledge, experience and friendships gained throughout the journey define the true value of this MBA.

I believe that it will continue to prove its worth, professionally and personally, to all who choose to pursue it. – **By Ch'ng Poh Leong**

Ch'ng Poh Leong is a Distinction MBA graduate from the University of Strathclyde.

■ For more information, visit www.cdc.edu.my.

Experiential, vital learning

THERE are more than 70 universities and colleges that provide the master's in business administration (MBA) programme in Malaysia.

The distinguishing factors that set the Monash MBA apart from the rest are the quality and experience of its teaching faculty, teaching approach and international student cohort.

Prof Richard Hall, deputy dean of leadership and executive education at Monash University, says, "Monash University has offered the MBA programme since 1968 and the programme has quality accreditation in the region.

"The learning outcomes, standards and achievements are equivalent in both Monash Australia and Monash Malaysia."

One of the distinguishing features of the MBA programme is the Experiential Learning Project.

Students participate in an experiential learning component during the final quarter of their MBA studies, working on major projects at their place of work or for client companies.

The project adds immediate impact as students garner powerful experiences from engaging in innovative thinking.

The applied business projects hone qualitative and analytical skills covered in the preceding units of the programme through practical, real-life activities.

"The nature of managerial work has

evolved. Managers are required and expected to run businesses and manage projects.

"That is exactly what MBA students will be doing as a formal part of the programme," says Prof Patrick Butler, director of MBA programmes at Monash Business School.

Another distinctive factor that separates a Monash MBA from the rest is that it develops responsible and ethical corporate and community leaders. This means students are successfully prepared to solve the next generation of problems.

Leadership and personal development activities complement the academic units and are an integral part of the MBA programme.

The programme also gives students the opportunity to learn from world-class academics and leaders of the industry.

Keeping in mind that professional relationships are the catalyst for success, each group of students attends the same classes, providing students with ample opportunities to form invaluable professional networks.

The Monash MBA is internationally accredited by AMBA (Association of MBAs) and the Monash Business School is accredited by AACSB (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) and EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System), ensuring the highest standard of

Driving innovations

> FROM PAGE 6

The study included various reflective and refractive solar concentrator designs that will help improve the maximum energy output. The technology opens the door to further development and integration for commercial and residential use.

Future applications of this technology include solar plants to increase the quota of renewable energy source, single-module generators to produce hot water, small-scale stand-alone systems to power rural areas that are not connected to power grids, and energy storage systems for street lighting and telecommunication systems.

● Maintaining sufficient power usage

In addition to solar energy, researchers at UTAR also work on the development of a cost-effective and intelligent active management system to accommodate the integration of renewable energy sources and charging electric vehicles in low-voltage power grids or networks.

The management system, called a fuzzy controller, is used to reduce any voltage excursions with the use of real and reactive power from the energy storage, hence reducing the voltage unbalance and improving the power factor.

The experimental results show that the voltage unbalance and power factors are constantly maintained below the thresholds under the high intermittent power output of the solar systems.

● Maximising biomass resources

The palm oil industry is a main economic driver in Malaysia. Universiti Putra Malaysia

(UPM) is further developing this industry by using palm biomass to create new bio-based industries, new jobs in rural areas, zero-emission systems and biodiversity conservation.

This five-year project that will last until 2018 is an international collaboration between UPM, Universiti Malaysia Sabah and three Japanese institutions – Kyushu Institute of Technology, Kyushu University and Advanced Industrial Science and Technology Institute Japan.

Results from this biodiversity conservation project include more than 40 published research papers, a prototype pilot plant in Sabah, and the dissemination of findings to the industry through seminars and workshops.

The continuous research is aimed at modernising the palm oil industry, making it more profitable, cleaner and sustainable.

● Saving lives

Cancer-related research is very important and all efforts to ensure the effectiveness of diagnostics and treatments must be emphasised for the benefit of all.

Another outstanding research conducted at UPM in its faculty of engineering is the development of a new gamma camera, which is used in the detection of cancer cells.

This wire mesh collimator structure within the camera is able to pick up extra information of cancer cells, yield higher resolution and maintain higher sensitivity than the previous camera model, allowing smaller tumours to be detected at an earlier stage and ensuring earlier treatment that is crucial to saving lives.



Prof Patrick Butler, director of MBA programmes at Monash Business School.

postgraduate business education.

By choosing Monash to pursue your MBA, you become part of one of the world's elite institutions, simultaneously paving a pathway to make a positive impact on your

career and the world.

■ For more information on the Monash University Malaysia's MBA programme, visit www.buseco.monash.edu.my/mba.

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VC COLUMN

SOME of the most dramatic innovations – innovations that have fundamentally changed the way in which we live – have emerged as a result of research undertaken in universities.

Ultrasound, MRI, pacemakers, the seatbelt, broad spectrum antibiotics, LCD and DNA fingerprinting are just a few examples of the many and major contributions to society that have emerged from research activities in universities worldwide.

University research takes many forms, ranging from work that is purely curiosity-driven (blue-skies research) to highly applied projects that focus on providing new solutions to well-known problems.

Governments and other research funding bodies are often attracted to highly applied and problem-oriented research because it generates solutions to recognisable problems and does so in relatively short timescales.

Investment in research to develop the right delivery system for a new compound to kill cancer cells or in mechanisms to improve the efficiency of wind turbines is likely to have a relatively quick payback.

In contrast, investment in speculative research that does not necessarily seek to address a recognisable problem may be seen as more risky with much less certainty of positive outcomes.

Both academics and policy-

High value in all research

makers debate the relative merit of these different types of research – often in quite emotive terms.

Academics emphasise the importance of their freedom to pursue interesting topics driven by their curiosity alone rather than any immediate commercialisation opportunity.

Policymakers stress the limited funds available to support research and the need to allocate those funds in areas where the impact is greatest. In many senses, this is a futile debate because, in reality, we need both types of research.

Fundamental, curiosity-driven or blue-skies research plays an essential role in enhancing our knowledge and understanding of the world around us. Research of this type gives rise to some of the most transformative innovations.

When my colleague and Nobel prize winner Sir Peter Mansfield was working on magnetic resonance in the early 1970s, he was driven by his innate desire to understand the interactions between materials and magnets.

But the output of his work (and those of his collaborators) were to result in the development of magnetic resonance imaging – the basis of the MRI scanner – a major

By **PROF CHRISTINE ENNEW**



revolution in medical diagnostics.

Without this fundamental research, there would be nothing for the more applied researchers – the individuals who take the principles of MRI and develop and refine them to enable the widespread application of the technique for medical imaging – to work with.

Equally, however, the groundbreaking work that developed the laser in the 1950s and 1960s would have been wasted had it not been for the imaginative researchers who developed the technology for application in areas as diverse as welding, printing, surgery, optical discs, barcodes and missile targeting systems.

As a society, if we want to advance and solve increasingly challenging problems that confront us, we must support both fundamental and applied research.

That does not mean that every country or institution needs to do both. Fundamental research is

costly with long-term and uncertain outcomes and there is compelling evidence to argue that such research is best concentrated in a small number of institutions.

In contrast, research that seeks to use fundamental discoveries to deliver social and economic impact is often best spread more widely to increase the chances of success.

But even applied research can be expensive and we increasingly see an emphasis on collaborations across institutional and national boundaries to bring together funding from multiple sources and the diversity of talent that is needed to realise social and commercial value from academic research.

While the impact of university research is most apparent in terms of high-profile innovations and major discoveries, we should not underestimate its broader value.

Worldwide, universities talk about educating their students in a research-intensive environment or delivering research-led teaching.

Such environments give students the opportunity to work with and learn from creative and innovative academics – people who are advancing knowledge, changing the world and inspiring future generations to continue this process.

Blue-skies research feeds problem-oriented research and current research inspires future research. All have the potential to be genuinely world changing.

Prof Christine Ennew is the chief executive officer and provost of The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus.

■ For more information, visit www.nottingham.edu.my.



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