

**BISMILLAHIRAHMANIRRAHIM
SELAWAT DAN SALAM KEPADA JUNJUNGAN
BESAR
NABI MUHAMMAD SAW**

FOREWORD

1. It is my hope and prayer to the Almighty God that every UMS heart in this august Chancellery Hall today is on the same path with me guided by ‘One Direction, One Purpose’. My sincere intention is for this Address to be a guide for all of us in UMS to strive for a common purpose, and not a mere symbolical doctrine of unilateralism.

2. To uphold the trust as Vice Chancellor is not an easy task. Our beloved University cannot move towards the realisation of its vision and mission on the strength and conviction of the Vice Chancellor alone. I have never doubted the need for every one of us to share in this responsibility and ensure that our institution is able to forge ahead. It is only when we sincerely come together as one cohesive entity endowed with a shared vision and aspiration that we can carve pathways and trails towards sustained progress and achievement. We do not want to look behind or stop in the midst of our quest because some

of us are weak and stumbling. We have to walk together, help each other and ensure that everyone successfully reach our intended destination without any casualty. United we stand, in disunity we fall. I have observed that we all have equal responsibilities in UMS, and our only differentiation is in our job positions or designations. Regardless of what our work might be in the University, our entrusted role and responsibility are for UMS to continuously improve, develop, evolve and ultimately achieve the level of excellence that all of us aspire for our Institution.

3. The rise and fall of UMS is our collective responsibility; every member of this august Institution is entrusted with the upkeep and upswing of the University, be it the Vice Chancellor, lecturers, assistant registrars, administrative assistants, or students. God willing, with our combined cooperation, work and commitment, I will be unceasing in my effort to emplace UMS in the correct forward direction, unencumbered by failure and adversity. Let us always reflect on the analogy of the branch:

*The branch in itself is easily bent and broken;
However, many branches tied together become strong and
unyielding.*

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2015

4. We ushered in 2016 with high hopes and expectations that our achievements would be better than in previous years. A challenging and uncertain global economy has led to severe reductions in government financial allocations for institution management. However there is a need for us to be resilient and not use this as a basis to slower down our momentum for excellence. We have to prove that regardless of the situation, we are earnest and committed in our aspirations of emplacing our University in a position of pride. Triumphs and accomplishments are not built on empty talk, nonsensical dreams, and indulgent hopes. The true worth of success is measured by the effort, hard work, sacrifice, and conviction that everything done with sincerity would bear rewards that could be collectively shared.

Allow me therefore to share the success stories of UMS in 2015. These achievements here were not overnight victories; rather they were the culmination of the engagement and toil of University people who managed challenges, barriers and impediments with acumen, perspicacity, and deep intellect. ‘*He who reaps a bountiful harvest must first toil*’. Let us hope the successes of 2015 would drive us to continuous and better achievements in 2016.

5. Currently, the quality and excellence of a university is measured according to the criteria set by international professional bodies such as the *QS University Ranking*, *Times Higher Education* and *Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)*. Public universities in Malaysia including UMS presently are ranked based on the *QS University Ranking* which utilises a more effective Higher Education Institution (HEI) assessment methodology as proposed by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). In 2015, our University surged upwards into the 201-250 institutional ranking compared to the 301 position in the 2013 *QS Asian University Ranking*. The UMS score in the *QS Asian University Ranking* has consistently demonstrated an upward

trend since 2013. For 2016, our collective aspiration is for UMS break into the 191- 200 ranking.

In the 2015 *QS World University Ranking- By Subject*, three of our courses have been listed in the Top 5 ranking in Malaysia. These are *Agriculture and Forestry* at number 2, *Economics and Econometrics* in 5th position, and *Sociology*, also at number 5. UMS is thus ranked 8th among public universities in Malaysia in terms of the number of courses listed in the Top 5 in the country.

We are indeed proud that in 2016, UMS for the very first time created history as the only Borneo university listed in the *QS World University Rankings- By Subject* Top 200 worldwide for *Agriculture and Forestry*. This acknowledgement on the global map is indeed the highest level of achievement for UMS since its establishment 21 years ago. Insyah Allah, we will strive to ensure the attainment of more such accolades at the international level this year. For us to realise this, we must have a very clear vision of our future pathways, be willing to step out of our comfort zones and strive to become a world- class entity on par with other world- renown universities.

There is still much we can do to improve the quality of the subjects offered in UMS. For example, the Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy could initiate the attainment of international recognition of their courses from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), or the Association of MBAs (AMBA). Such recognition would not only guarantee the standard of quality in the courses offered but also serve to increase the visibility of UMS in the world academic map. Acknowledgements of this nature in addition to the affordable tuition fee factor could become the plus point for attracting or encouraging more international student enrolment in popular UMS courses such as Economics, Finance, Management and Accountancy. World recognition of the courses offered by UMS can be turned into a solid strength or niche of the University, compared to similar courses on offer from other Malaysian public universities.

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

ECOCAMPUS ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2015

6. In 2015, UMS aimed to be in the Top 200 global ranking in the *UI Greenmetric World University Ranking*. The outcome however far exceeded our expectations when our University leapt 72 places to 173th ranking compared to the 2014 position of 245th. In the Asian region ranking, UMS stands at 66th position, and 7th among all public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia. This gigantic leap was the result of the collective planning and work of eight Committees under the purview of the EcoCampus Management Centre comprising EcoTourism Campus, Waste Management, GreenMetric and EcoCampus Report, Energy and Water, EcoCampus Leadership and Awareness, Campus Landscape and Greenery, Environmental Management System and Transport, and Low Carbon.

This year we aim to improve on our position by focussing on the identified criteria for ranking promotion. This includes the development of green infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste management, water utilisation, and management of transport and education.

When the EcoCampus Action Plan was launched on 23rd February 2013, among the avowed directions of UMS was to

significantly decrease the level of carbon footprint in the Institution. I am glad to announce that in the three years since the inception of the EcoCampus, UMS has successfully achieved this set target. Electricity usage in the last three years has continuously decreased especially in 2014- 2015. The amount of electricity consumption in UMS in 2015 was recorded at 34,978,990 kWh, a significant 23% or 91,010 kWh reduction compared to the 2014 usage of 35,070,000 kWh. This translated into an overall energy bill saving of RM2,126,912. This also reduced our carbon footprint to 4,413,574 kg carbon in 2015 from the 4,425,057 kg carbon in 2014, a decrease of 11483 kg carbon.

Water usage has also been progressively reduced. In 2015 alone, usage was capped at 1,941,389 m³ which was 15.5% or 356,085 m³ lower than the 2014 figure of 2,297,474 m³. However, the reduction could not be translated into actual savings since water tariffs were increased by the relevant authorities in January 1st 2015 from RM0.90 to RM1.20. Due to this, the eventual 2015 water bill instead saw an increase of RM261,940.60.

7. In line with the UMS aspiration to achieve one of the key elements in sustainable management of waste recycling, work is in progress by the EcoCampus Management Centre to establish a UMS Recycling Centre funded to the amount of RM1,000,000.00 by Binapuri Sdn. Bhd. under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding. This project is expected to be operational in August 2016. To be located at the Faculty of Engineering, the main component of the Recycling Centre will be on the management of waste such as paper, plastic bottles, and tin. The collected waste is targeted for re-sale and set to become a future source of revenue generation for UMS.

In our effort to promote a sustainable environment, the Recycling Centre will focus on the implementation of green technology application such as the use of solar energy and rain harvesting. This Centre will also provide seminar or workshop facilities for sustainable environment awareness activities for students, staff and external agencies or communities.

8. For the information of my colleagues here this morning, UMS EcoTourism was launched to promote the concept of nature- based tourism. This programme was officiated by the Honourable Datuk Hajah Jainab Datuk Seri Panglima Hj.

Ahmad Ayid, the Minister of Community Development and Consumer Affairs on September 27th 2014. In this aspect, UMS is several steps ahead: it was only in August 2015 that MOHE through the University Community Transformation Centre (UCTC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia) launched the "Malaysia 101 Edutourism Packages" to encourage tourism-in-campus by offering various knowledge-based tour packages. UMS therefore has assumed a proactive or pioneering role here. The EcoCampus Visitor Information Centre (EVIC) and the UMS EcoTourism Package will be launched in March 2016. At the same time, the University through the EcoCampus Management Centre will kick-start the Visit UMS Year 2016/ 2017. We are set to become the first institution in Malaysia and the region to launch such initiatives.

EVIC will be housed at the Faculty of Science and Natural Resources and is projected to become a veritable source of information on tourist attractions and tourism packages in UMS. Among the main components of this Centre will be a Gallery, tourist information, centralised ticket and tour package purchase, and a souvenir shop. To ensure the beauty and

attraction of the locality, a unique landscape will be created and an EcoCafe set up for the convenience of visitors. Future plans involve the expansion of the EVIC area to include the Faculty lake which has been designated for development as EcoCampus Park.

There are currently 5 UMS Tourism Packages on offer. These day packages and overnight stay excursions are based on Green Tourism and Nature Tourism:

- Gallery & Museum Tour Package;
- Nature Delight Tour Package;
- Architectural Heritage Tour Package;
- Sunset Tour Package, and
- Nature Education Camp Package (at affordable rates).

Apart from promoting EcoTourism campus packages, EVIC will also become a one- stop ticketing centre to facilitate the purchase of tickets to preferred tourist destinations. A electric-powered buggy service will also be made available for the convenience of tourists to enjoy the panoramic views of the sprawling UMS campus. This mode of transportation will

effectively help reduce the carbon footprint of the EcoTourism initiative.

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

SPEARHEADING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

9. As Vice Chancellor, I am aware of the concerns and misgivings of my fellow academics with regards to research grant allocations. It cannot be denied that the current economic downturn and volatility has led to drastic reductions in research grant allocations. We must therefore exercise prudent spending with every allocation for research targeted towards achieving a 'ringgit to ringgit' output. If we were to spend RM10,000.00 on a project, the impact and output of that research should match the amount invested. There is no economic sense in conducting research that is of low quality, fall short of international standards and does not accrue any benefit for society. I truly believe that high- impact research can become very tangible assets of a university as it would enable the dissemination of findings and new knowledge through publication in indexed journals such as *SCOPUS*, *Web of Science* and *ISI-Thomson Reuters*. The benefits of high- quality

research output would definitely bolster the UMS position in the Malaysia Research Assessment (MyRA) and the QS Asian University Ranking.

10. In 2015, UMS received an allocation of RM7.1 million as funding for 69 new research projects. This amount comprised RM4.7 million obtained from government agencies, RM720,000.00 from private corporations, and RM1.7 million from international institutions. The 2015 grant amount when compared to the 2014 allocation was a decrease of RM12 million. This reduction was due to the small number of UMS research applications approved by the relevant agencies although the University had submitted many proposals. The inavailability of several grants (not open for applications) in 2015 also contributed to this drop in the amount of research fundings obtained by UMS. In terms of intellectual property rights, two (2) of our research outputs were successfully patented and four (4) products filed. Likewise, 18 products were registered as trademarks or copyrights. 2015 also witnessed UMS winning 12 gold medals in research and innovation at both national and international levels. We are proud of the achievement of UMS in its maiden foray at the British Invention Show (BIS) with a bumper haul of two (2)

Platinum Special Award, four (4) Gold, two (2) Silver and one (1) Bronze medals. This victory clearly demonstrates the ability of our researchers in producing internationally- acclaimed high quality research outputs.

To encourage research activities among postgraduate students, the University has introduced the Postgraduate Research Assistance Grant (UMSGreat). This Grant seeks to inculcate a culture of research among postgraduate students and encourage the on- time delivery or completion of research projects. This Grant is envisioned as a key attraction point for more people to enrol in postgraduate studies in UMS. We also hope to witness increased research collaborations with external agencies through the inception of the UMS Research Collaboration with External Institutions Grant. At the initial stage, the grant allocation is capped at RM200,000.00 for research collaborations with foreign institutions and RM70,000.00 with local universities. The Grant is expected to increase the number and quality of research, make available more opportunities to produce high- impact publications, and enhance the visibility of UMS in the international academic arena.

11. One of the requirements of a lecturer is for him or her to have publications which is also a pre-requisite for job promotion. Our 2015 records show UMS academics publishing a total of 282 articles in SCOPUS-listed journals and proceedings. For 2016, our target is to increase this number to 420 SCOPUS articles and achieve the University's *Key Performance Indicators* (KPI) as determined by MOHE. With regards to the impact factor, UMS publications in the last 5 years have maintained a citation rate of 11,400.

UMS has also published 12 academic journals in various fields with the most prominent among these being the Asian Myrmecology Journal under the auspices of the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation. This internationally-acknowledged Journal has an impact factor of 0.625 and is ranked in the Top 5 in Malaysia. It is my sincere hope that more UMS journals would soon achieve international level excellence including index in *Web of Science* and *SCOPUS*.

The UMS publication and writing profile was given a very significant boost at the 2015 National Book Awards with three accolades bestowed on our Institution. The UMS Publisher was chosen as the recipient of the Premier Award for Best Publisher

(Government Agencies). Two publications, “*Sejarah Amalan Pengurusan Kewangan dan Perkembangan Praktik Perakaunan di Borneo Utara 1881-1963*” won in the Best General Book (*Peradaban* Category) while “*Kimanis: Negeri Tua, Tanah Keramat*” took home the prize for Best General Book (*Khazanah Warisan* Category). This is indeed by far the best UMS achievement in high quality publication of public reference and reading material.

12. The Malaysia Research Assessment (MyRA), introduced in 2006 by MOHE, assesses the research dimensions of HEIs. MyRA assigns star- ratings to reflect institution research rigor and capacity in terms of input, process and output in eight key criteria. UMS successfully retained a 3- Star rating for 2015; however, four criteria that the University must focus on to improve MyRA ratings for 2017 are Quantity and Quality of Researchers, Quantity and Quality of Research, Professional Services and Awards, and Network and Collaboration. Our aspiration is for UMS to achieve 5- Star rating in 2017. The following measures therefore have to be implemented, emphasised and monitored by both Administration and academic staff alike:

- To ensure at least 50% (500) academic staff assume the role of Lead Researchers (only 389 were Lead Researchers in 2015);
- To ensure every academic staff publish at least one (1) article in a SCOPUS/ WOS/ ERA listed journal and two (2) other publications;
- To encourage academic book writing based on the research conducted;
- To ensure research grants achieve 70% utilisation in a year;
- To increase the number of registered and graduating PhD students, especially international candidates;
- To secure the commercialisation of at least two (2) products;
- To increase revenue through consultancy, conferences, training and laboratory services;

- To secure the signing of five (5) international Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) and 20 national MoA in a year;
- To encourage all academic staff to obtain professional membership in their relevant fields of expertise; and.
- To secure the accreditation of at least one (1) laboratory.

13. Apart from high- quality research output, we also need laboratories equipped with state-of-the-art instrument and technology. The Haemostasis Laboratory in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences was awarded the MS ISO 15189 Medical Test: Haematology accreditation in 2015. This Laboratory places UMS as a national and international centre of reference and training in aspects related to the diagnosis of bleeding/ haemorrhage. Our future plan is for this Laboratory to generate revenue for UMS through the provision of specialised services to the private sector including hospitals and clinics. Our research capacity would be further strengthened with the establishment of the UMS Integrated Laboratory

which is currently under construction and targeted for completion in 2017.

At the same time, the Instrumentation Section in the Centre for Research and Innovation has been upgraded into the Centre for Instrumentation and Science Services with science services staff now centralised here. This new Centre will strengthen research activities specifically those that require laboratory facilities and services besides enhancing the management of the science services staff in UMS.

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

REBRANDING OF THE CENTRE FOR INDUSTRY RELATIONS

14. The University and industry are interlinked in view of the role of the latter as employment provider for our graduates. Not every graduate is destined for work in the government sector; in fact only a small percentage would be absorbed into the civil service. The private sector, a major player and contributor in the nation's development and economic progress, would be the source of employment for the majority of our graduates. The

Centre for Industry Relations is therefore entrusted with the task of establishing links with industry to pave the way for graduate employment in sectors such as plantation, oil and gas, agriculture, automotive, and banking and reducing the knowledge gap or divide through knowledge transfer with the local community. These role and responsibility have since multiplied with the absorption of the Endowment Section into the Centre.

15. 2015 witnessed many achievements for the Centre for Industry Relations. Among these triumphs were the 100% KPI attained for the placement of students on industrial training, being adjudged Best Career Development Centre (Public Universities) by the GTI Media in collaboration with TalentCorp, being selected as the Industry Centre of Excellence (ICoE) Agriculture Cluster, and success in securing 16 *Knowledge Transfer Programme* grants worth a total of RM2.6 million. UMS fully supports the Malaysian Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015-2025 whereby in Phase 1, the CEO@Faculty Programme will witness the participation of industry giants, Heads of corporations and public sector leaders in the teaching and learning in public universities. To date, two

industry icons, Tan Sri Azman Hashim dan Adjunct Professor Mark Chang, have delivered their lectures in UMS.

In line with the MOHE aspiration of reducing university dependence on government grants for the management and administration of their respective institutions, the establishment of external funding and endowments has contributed to the revenue sources of UMS. The Tabung Sumbangan Dana Warga UMS and Tun Said Keruak Scholarship are currently two (2) endowment trust funds in operation in UMS. Industry participation such as that of Bina Puri Holdings Bhd has contributed a total of RM1 million to the EcoCampus Centre. We are also fortunate that the Azman Hashim Foundation has agreed to construct the Azman Hashim UMS Gallery at the cost of RM15 million. Felda Global Ventures (FGV) has consented to provide RM2 million for the establishment of Professor Chair in the Sustainable Palm Oil Research (SPOR) Unit. Scholarships worth RM 1.6 million will also be made available to qualified UMS Civil Engineering and Accountancy students by construction giant YTL Corporation. The total value of funding and endowments channeled into UMS in 2015 was close to RM20 million.

16. The award of the ICoE Agriculture Cluster is a national acknowledgement to UMS. As Leader in this Cluster, institutional support will be provided by seven other institutions under the Agriculture Cluster i.e. UPM, UTM, UiTM, UNISZA, UNIMAS, and all Polytechnics and Community Colleges throughout Malaysia while the Federal Agriculture Marketing Agency (FAMA) together with several other agriculture agencies at State and National levels will form the agency support for UMS. The establishment of the ICoE Agriculture Cluster is to put focus on human capital development and the exchange of technology between institutions of higher learning and the agriculture sub- sector industry. The main objective of ICoE Agriculture Cluster programmes would be the implementation of technical training for students based on industry needs and the dissemination of high- impact research outputs to industry for the purpose of sustainable development in the national agriculture industry. Another envisioned outcome is the development of professional, innovative and resilient agriculture entrepreneurs.

Six key programmes offered under the the ICoE Agriculture Cluster are:

- i. Structured Internship Programme (SIP);
- ii. Graduate Employability (GE) Programme;
- iii. Industrial Training ICoE;
- iv. Training of Trainers (TOT);
- v. Technology Sharing Programme; and
- vi. Agro Mentor.

Apart from producing graduates who are competitive and match the needs of the job market, ICoE will also create professional entrepreneurs in agriculture capable of generating job opportunities for others.

17. As part of the initiative for enhanced community engagement, the Centre for Industry Relations has proposed the establishment of the University Community Transformation Centre (UCTC) which will operate as a *‘one-stop community outreach centre’* for the community and visitors of different age levels to participate in various programmes and facilities geared towards the enhancement of the quality of life. This is

in line with several thrusts in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015-2025 PPPM (PT) which was launched on April 7th 2015. With these additional functions and the establishment of the UCTC, I hereby announce the rebranding of the Centre for Industrial Relations into the Centre for Industry and Community Network (CICN) as approved at the 70th Meeting of the UMS Board of Directors. The new CICN is fully operational effective January 19th 2016.

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

PRUDENT SPENDING IMPLEMENTATION

18. The volatility of the current economic scenario, compounded by the slide in the price of oil to USD30 a barrel, has had massive impact on government revenue and led to drastic cuts in the fund allocations for universities. The UMS annual budget is similarly affected by these reductions since 90% of the amount needed for the administration and running of the University is dependent on government grants. MOHE has approved a budget of RM351 million for 2016 inclusive of RM35 million from UMS internal sources. The government allocation of RM316 million for administration is 17% or

RM64 million less than the amount allocated in 2015. Although this reduction impacts the financial planning of the University, UMS is obliged to maintain a projected 2016 expenditure amounting to RM415 million to support the growth of the University specifically in teaching, learning, and research activities. Taking into consideration costs including monetary incentives and annual salary increments for staff, UMS estimates a total of RM99 million (including the agreed RM35 million) that has to be sourced from within the University itself. It is therefore imperative for UMS to periodically readjust and restructure institutional spending with due priority given to more urgent or pressing needs.

19. In view of the large amount necessary for the smooth administration and running of UMS, the University financial reserves will continue to decrease if no strict control is applied or adjustments made to spending trends. To prevent deficit in revenue, it is imperative for every Dean, Director, Head of Department, and staff in UMS to strive towards increasing income-generating activities and inculcating or observing a culture of judicious spending. Deficit prevention strategies that must and will be implemented in 2016 are:

- (a). Increasing income generation activities of internal sources with the KPI set at at least 15% of the administrative allocation by reducing dependency on government grants, exploring alternative sources of revenue, acquiring financial management autonomy, and the strengthening of UMS subsidiaries.

- (b). Enhancing efficiency in the usage of available resources, implementing austerity programmes, preventing wastage through the optimisation of asset utilisation, maximising returns from existing resources, and re- examining binding university contracts for the purpose of 'value for money'.

20. From the beginning, MOHE has initiated measures to reduce public universities' dependency on government funding and increase efficiency in financial management. Starting from 2015, UMS implemented various cost- cutting measures that resulted in the reduction of spending in VOT21000 (Transportation and Allowance) by RM675,000.00, VOT23000 (Communication and Utilities) by RM2.7 million, and VOT24000 (Rental) by RM2 million in comparison to the figures presented for 2014.

Among these austerity measures were the use of corporate credit cards in the purchase of flight tickets and bookings of hotel accommodation, the implementation of video-conferencing for meetings and briefings involving distant locations, centralisation of night class venues to reduce the use of chillers, campaigns to conserve electricity usage during the lunch time period between 1pm – 2pm, control over rental of vehicles and photostate machines, and optimisation of the utilisation of available resources.

21. Several measures to generate revenue for UMS are through the collection of student fees, accrual of interest from fixed deposits, rental of university space and facilities, endowment funds, the organizing of workshop and conference activities, collaborative projects, and other faculty- level programmes. The UMS Income Generation Policy was established in 2013 as guideline for the management of the University's internal revenue generation ventures. Up to 2015, the UMS Responsibility Centre had successfully generated a revenue total of almost RM2.6 million.

22. In early 2016, MOHE introduced the New Funding Formula which is based on the *Input- Based Funding* principle.

Under this Formula, 5% of the allocated funding for the particular institution would be temporarily put on reserve by the Ministry in line with the concept of *Performance Based Funding*. For UMS, this 5% figure translates into RM15 million, an amount to be released to the University only upon attainment of the following targets:

- i. 3% for agreed KPIs;
- ii. 1.5% Incentive for Special Initiatives related to and in line with the Malaysian Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015- 2025;
- iii. 0.5% Incentive for Innovation

23. To consolidate the financial management of UMS, the National Audit Department Malaysia will undertake a Financial Management Accountability Index audit of the University in June 2016. This Audit exercise focusses on the Accountability Index compliance in public universities specifically in matters related to current financial management procedures. UMS, as the ‘foster university’ of the Chief Secretary in MOHE, is expected to receive a 4 or 5 star rating

from this audit exercise and we in UMS are duty bound to ensure that this aim is achieved.

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

INTERNATIONALISATION OF UMS

24. The establishment of the UMS Satellite Office at the Heilongjiang Academy of Sciences Harbin (HAS), China has led to the signing of several collaborative initiatives such as staff mobility programmes and joint supervision of postgraduate students from both institutions. The Satellite Office, officially launched by Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching, the Deputy Minister in MOHE, functions as a ‘*One- Stop Centre*’ for academic and non- academic collaborations, staff or student exchange, and opportunity to experience different institution and learning environments. An example of this collaboration is the *halal* accreditation initiative for *Black Garlic* and *Black Fungus* products of China whereby a UMS group comprising staff and two officers from JAKIM conducted a halal certification audit inspection of the production processes and facilities. This UMS endeavor could potentially become major source of revenue for the University due to the sheer size of

China and the need for the country's products to acquire halal certification if they are to expand internationally and comply with the global halal market requirements. Let us hope that these initiatives would reap continuous benefits and uplift the image of UMS on the international arena.

25. The *ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS)* programme was the outcome of the collaboration between the Higher Education Secretariat Office and member countries in the *Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED)*. UMS was selected by MOHE to participate in this programme and the Faculty of Science and Natural Resources subsequently appointed as the Coordination Centre to oversee implementation in the University. 20 students from various courses in the Faculty were chosen to participate in an AIMS programme in Indonesia this year, made possible by a RM150,000.00 MOHE grant.

26. A 2016 UMS KPI set by MOHE is for our University to achieve an international student enrolment figure of 650 out of which 120 should be postgraduate students. I am happy to

announce that we have achieved, in fact exceeded, this target with 682 international students currently enrolled in UMS and 20 students from Timor- Leste expected to register in March 2016. The former Prime Minister of Timor- Leste, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão has been appointed Patron of the UMS Alumni Asia Pacific Chapter.

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

CLEAR FORWARD DIRECTIONS

27. The Malaysian Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015-2025 provides the basis for Higher Education transformation in the country. The core thrusts of the Blueprint are strengthened by 10 identified shifts which would spearhead the holistic development and transformation of Malaysian Higher Education. These shifts are:

- i. Producing holistic, entrepreneurial and balanced graduates
- ii. Focusing on talent excellence
- iii. Enculturing lifelong learning
- iv. Cultivating quality TVET graduates

- v. Ensuring financial sustainability
- vi. Strengthening administration and management
- vii. Nurturing ecosystem for innovation
- viii. Attaining global excellence
- ix. Fostering global- level online learning
- x. Transforming delivery of Higher Education

These shifts are incorporated in the UMS Strategic Plan 2013-2017 according to the 7 Key Result Areas (KRAs). However, MOHE has recently introduced the concept of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which would have bearings on the University's financial allocations based on 'Performance-based funding' which I have earlier elaborated on at length. The performance of the University is evaluated according to the attainment of specific KPIs. In relation to this, I would like to announce the establishment of the Transformation and Performance Management Unit which will monitor the implementation of both Blueprint shifts and KPIs. This Unit, under the jurisdiction of the Chancellery Department, will function as the main coordinating body in charge of receiving, compiling and preparing summaries of implementation processes, stages, progress and achievements for scrutiny and review in PBPU and LPU meetings.

The purpose of emplacing the coordination of the Malaysian Education Blueprint shifts and KPIs assigned to UMS by MOHE under one specific Unit is to facilitate the monitoring of implementation in view of several elements in both being directly interlinked. Your commitment and cooperation towards the realisation of the Blueprint shifts and KPIs is therefore necessary and deeply appreciated.

28. Human resource is the most important element in any organisation. However detailed our plans might be or however comprehensive the KPI, without quality human resources, these would remain exactly that – detailed plans and comprehensive hopes. I must emphasise and cannot reiterate often enough the need for trust and a deep sense of responsibility to ensure planning is transformed into action. I have faith that everyone of us in UMS are the chosen ones; whether we are students, lecturers, contractors or cleaners, we share a common aim – to push our University forward to be on par with the best in the world.

One of the steps taken to enhance skills and work capacity of staff is through the provision of continuous training. The UMS Human Resource Section is entrusted with the organising of

high- impact courses in collaboration with AKEPT and leadership and citizenship programmes with BTN. In 2015, 213 academic and non- academic courses were conducted successfully with each course costing on average RM3070.00. This is in comparison to the 2012 overall figure of 117 courses costing RM7704.00 each. This points to very visible savings made eventhough the number of courses held had in fact increased. The training system administration has also been improved with the introduction of *Individual Development Plan* (IDP) to replace *My Continuing Professional Development* (MyCPD). IDP emphasises on aspects of competency and individual needs as defined by the respective job descriptions. The IDP point accrual system is divided into Core (50%), Elective (30%), and General (20%) which constitute 15% of the overall LNPT evaluation.

29. To inculcate the culture of innovation among UMS staff, the Innovation and Administration Quality Committee was created and placed under purview of the Registrar's Office. This Committee is tasked with coordinating the management of innovation and quality administration activities according to 6 clusters: *Lean Management*, Innovative Group, 5S/EKSA, MS-ISO, Desk File, and Quality Inspectorate. Innovation is the

result of sustained improvements. I am fascinated by the Japanese culture known as *Kaizen* which means *continuous improvement*. This should not be alien to us all here since every year- end, all JFPIU would usually organise retreats to examine how far they have progressed, how much they have achieved, and how they could further improve in the coming year.

The Kaizen model was introduced by Masaki Imai in 1986 in his book *The Key to Japan's Competitive Success*. In the Kaizen strategy, the cycle of continuous improvement requires the involvement and effort of every member of the organisation. Kaizen has 5 main principles that form the guiding framework for organisations. First, the Kaizen strategy highlights the dependency on human effort to achieve good outcomes. A result- oriented approach is one that refers to the *plan-do-check-act* cycle for process development. Second, emphasising quality by improving achievements based on three main dimensions of quality, cost and work delivery. Third, practising effective and efficient problem- solving through data collection and analysis. Fourth, viewing the entire work exercise in the organisation as an inter-related process for example the relationship between students and university staff. Lastly, implementing visual management due to some

processes being outside the sphere of control and need to be addressed. The Kaizen model is definitely applicable in the management and administration of UMS.

My Beloved Students.

PRODUCING HOLISTIC AND BALANCED GRADUATES

30. The establishment of UMS was in response to the hopes and expectations of the local community for a highly- educated society to initiate change. In this rapidly developing era, tertiary education has become a pre- requisite with people of all ages eager to pursue university studies. The knowledge available in UMS is without limits, as long as our quest does not infringe on the aspect of God and divine power. Besides solid academic grounding, UMS students are also exposed to facets of campus life by way of the many activities and events organised by Faculty, Students' Affairs, and the various Residential College Committees. Please take this opportunity to fully immerse yourselves in campus life; avoid being passive onlookers unwilling or not eager to participate in University activities.

You must remember that your academic transcript alone will not shape you or instil in you the confidence necessary when you enter the job market. Participation in university activities can help hone your confidence and social skills. Observe the current successful leaders around you today: as university students, they were actively involved in pursuits that mattered. I truly believe the learning process should be a balance between the lecture room and campus activities. Excellence is not measured by the number of As alone; rather a person truly brilliant is someone with academic intelligence, communication skills, leadership ability, critical thinking and problem- solving skills, teamwork inclination, the passion for lifelong learning, entrepreneurship traits, and ethical in his dealings.

31. The success achieved by UMS graduates is a proud point for the University. Although UMS at 21 years is considered relatively young compared to other tertiary institutions, many successful personalities in Malaysia are outputs of the University. Among the notable graduates are YB Datin Nor Sabrina Mohd Noor, Chairman of the Kedah Science, Innovation and Information Technology, Communication and

High Technology Committee; Chin Yik Lin, a former masters student under my supervision who is now pursuing PhD studies in the field of *Climate Change and Earth-Ocean-Atmosphere Systems* at the University of Cambridge; Low Ngai Yuen, a TV producer and presenter; Heliza Helmi, a successful artist; and Tan Sri Dr. Rahim Tamby Chik, a former Chief Minister of Malacca. Look upon these personalities as examples of success in their own fields of expertise. You are on the cusp of a meaningful lifelong journey and there are still miles to go; learn as much as you can while you are still a student of UMS.

32. The University's Entrepreneurship Research and Development Centre (ERDEC) has successfully trained 1700 students and 60 UMS staff through the implementation of 10 courses. The total cost of training at RM2 million was borne by the Sabah Economic Development and Investment Authority (SEDIA). ERDEC provides opportunities for students to develop and enhance their entrepreneurial skills by participating in the courses conducted by the Centre. A Student Business Centre (SBC) will be set up in the near future and managed by the Entrepreneurship clubs in the various

Faculties/ Institutes. For students keen on entrepreneurship, the ENACTUS Club would be a very appropriate affiliation. This Club had in the past represented Malaysia at the 2013 ENACTUS World CUP in Cancun, Mexico. I would like our students here in UMS to be active in entrepreneurship because I believe in the adage that 9 out of 10 fortunes come from business. When our students become successful in their enterprise, they would effectively create job opportunities for the community around them.

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

NEW INITIATIVES

Transformation from K (Knowledge) -Academic to E (Entrepreneurial)- Academic

33. We must realise that public universities in Malaysia today cannot depend fully on funding from the government in view of its increasing commitments and responsibilities. The situation is further exacerbated by the challenges brought about by the current regional economic downturn and volatility. Universities in developed countries such as those in Europe,

Australia, Taiwan and Japan are independent and able to forge ahead on their own. A major portion of the revenue of such universities is self-generated, with only token assistance from their governments. Private universities in fact do not receive any form of funding. These institutions nevertheless have consistently demonstrated academic excellence and at the same time established solid and sustainable sources of income. The UMS community has to be able to keep in step with this type of capability and strive to excel and take centre stage in areas such as aquaculture and agriculture. Natural resources and its potentials need to be developed to benefit not only teaching and research but as an industry that would generate revenue to sustain and develop the University. The established industry would also provide a hands-on platform and training ground for students as it could create an actual business industry ecosystem. It is therefore imperative that we work together and collaborate with industry to realise this transformation from an institution grounded on K (Knowledge)- Academic to an educational entity anchored cohesively on E (Entrepreneurial) - Academic.

34. To facilitate this transformation, UMS has to forge links with industry partners supportive of the philosophy of E (Entrepreneurial) - Academic. Beginning from 2016, I urge all Heads in UMS to step forward and formulate collaborative plans, programmes and activities with industry. I will ensure this become a main agenda in the planning and future direction of UMS. This transformation has been set in motion with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Syarikat Yun Fook Resources Sdn Bhd, a company successful in the agriculture and animal husbandry industry. The company is not only able to generate revenue but also implement environment- friendly practices in its dairy farming. The benefits accrued from this collaboration with the company are in terms of opportunities for various Faculties to use the farm for the purpose of student internship, research, and graduate job placements.

35. It is my hope that this transformation would break the stigma of our Institution being solely academic, and instead project UMS as a university that seeks to apply knowledge to real- life industry (applied industry). This will help change community thinking and subsequently uplift the quality of life.

We do not want an academic learning that is confined only to journal writing or mesmerising oration. The E (Entrepreneurial) – Academic concept is not new and in fact has been practised in universities in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the USA. Stanford University for instance produced graduates who went on to create high- technology companies like Google, Hewlett-Packard, Nike, Sun Microsystems, Instagram, Snapchat, Yahoo and others which formed the basis for the emergence of the *Silicon Valley*. The companies established by Stanford University alumni are collectively generating revenue to the tune of USD2.7 trillion annually, equal to the economy of France. The sophisticated-technology companies in the Valley are always open to cooperation and collaboration with their Alma Mater whether in the form of industrial internship, research, grant allocation, and other such agreements. This is exactly the type of win- win situation that we hope to create between UMS, industry and the community. To launch a transformation based on E (Entrepreneurial) - Academic, it is necessary for the Centre for Industry and Community Network (CICN) to organise a workshop involving all Deans and Directors to identify the

strengths of their respective Faculties and Institutes, and put into effect a cohesive and systematic plan of action.

Leading in the Field of Agriculture at Higher Education Level

36. Sabah is blessed with abundant natural resources, fertile land, and the production of a wide range of agriculture products. The state is the main palm oil producer in Malaysia. Alhamdulillah, the Sustainable Palm Oil Research Unit (SPOR), established in 2013, has been very prolific in obtaining research grants from external agencies and is active in research collaborations with industry. UMS as a public university in Sabah is well-placed to take the lead in agriculture in the Higher Education sector due to the state's more conducive environment and available natural resources. The potential for UMS to develop and succeed in this niche area, be it in terms of infrastructure or academic staff expertise, is without doubt. The Agriculture Campus in Sandakan is equipped with many facilities and various farms for teaching

and research purposes. Another on- going project is the construction of the UMS Agriculture Research Station on a 74-acre plot of land in Keningau. UMS has continued to enjoy the support of the Chief Minister of Sabah, YAB Datuk Seri Musa Hj. Aman. I am very certain that UMS has the capability to uplift the field of agriculture to higher levels through industry collaborations. We have to be resourceful in obtaining funding from industry and a concrete strategy here would be for UMS to offer research- based solutions to issues faced by industry.

My friends. My colleagues. My beloved UMS family.

Incentives for Excellence

37. 2016 will witness the introduction of an incentive system for staff who demonstrate excellence at work. The evaluation will consider aspects of willingness, commitment, involvement in other non- academic duties, sincerity, teamwork, workload, deference to Head or leadership, working over and above normal working hours when necessary, and other positive attributes that contribute towards the progress and success of the individual's Faculty or Department. This incentive will be credited into the monthly salaries of the identified staff without

announcement. It is my sincere hope that this would further motivate our people to exercise their work responsibilities with commitment and dedication. Bonus payments in the initial phase of this incentive system will be from the J/F/P/I/U of the identified recipients and limited to 3 individuals per year. The Bursar Department and Development & Maintenance Department have been chosen to pilot this incentive system. The selection committee will consist the Registrar, Bursar, Deans, Directors and Heads of Department.

My Respected Colleagues.

CONCLUSION

38. Academics are a group of people entrusted with the heavy responsibility of teaching and being role models to impressionable minds. No academic in UMS should exhibit negative attributes and unethical behaviour that might tarnish the good name of the University. UMS has never and will never compromise on this aspect. Be the teacher who teaches well. Be the person who sows good deeds. Be the one who effects change in the student. Our lives acquire more meaning when

we are certain we have given our very best. An educated mind devoid of integrity is not an asset to his surroundings; he instead becomes a liability to others through his lack of refinement, courtesy and ethics. Such is the reflection portrayed in the words of Imam al- Ghazali:

*Verily the heart of man is dead
Except those with knowledge
Verily they with knowledge sleep
Except those who do good deeds
Verily they who do good deeds are misled
Except those who are sincere.*

We are entrusted not only with shaping the academic worth of our students but also exposing them to how knowledge could be utilised for everyday benefits. A student in Entrepreneurship for instance can apply his acquired knowledge and skills to set up an internet- based business by utilising social media to promote and sell agriculture products.

39. In light of the many issues and challenges that confront our country, it is only proper that the young especially UMS

students learn from the struggles of the old generation to emancipate the country from the shackles of colonialism. Our young people do not have the benefit of experiencing life in the initial post- independence era and are not privy to the toils, difficulties and dangers that accompanied the quest for independence and self- governance. As I have shared just now, the educated person who is not imbued with a deep sense of love and commitment to his country could never truly be an asset to the nation. We in UMS are committed towards producing capable and educated minds fully dedicated to the country and in making Malaysia a better place. To the UMS academics here today, take some time before you begin your lectures to share thoughts with your students on patriotism and what it really means to be free in our beloved land.

40. I believe those who love their workplace are people willing to sacrifice material, effort and time to ensure its progress and excellence. Love your University. Be committed to UMS whether in your role as staff, student, worker, or contractor. It is only right that we nurture together our awareness and concern for the University in all aspects, be it the management, campus security or well- being of every member of this institution. If not us, who else? If we could not

even be bothered about the upkeep of a small space on campus, what more on much bigger issues that concern our country? If the sense of collective responsibility is not even present, how are we to work together to propel UMS to higher levels of achievements in the academic arena? Let me use this analogy: if we were on a ship that suddenly sprung a leak, we would be in imminent danger of sinking. However small the breach might be at first, the leak would become bigger and bigger and eventually endanger the ship and put every single one of its passengers at risk of drowning. The most practical and right thing to do would be to find the leak and fix it in the first place. We cannot afford to ignore or take lightly our surroundings if we are to rapidly move forward.

41. Let us avoid a culture of allowing one negative element affect everything else that we do. Address this negative aspect, build on the positive ones, and move on to the agreed directions. It is only when we share common aims and aspirations that we can take forward steps towards progress and development. I pray that we are always blessed with resilience and good health to bring to fruition the trust placed on us. In all our endeavours, we can make the very best of plans, but it is

God who decides. Allow me to conclude my speech with the following Surah:

"...But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and you know not."

Surah Al-Baqarah: 216
