Presidential Address 2012

Career Fair 2012

LAW MOOT COMPETITION

MMU TRANSFORMATION PLAN 2012
In the Face of Adversity

This is not an economic journal, but here are some numbers that could prove very relevant to us in MMU quite soon. On 15th February, it was reported that Moody’s Analytics announced that Malaysia’s economic growth is expected to grow at 4.2%, less than the 5.1% actual growth Bank Negara Malaysia reported for 2011.

These numbers seem to be in general agreement with a report from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) released last November, outlining economic growth for six Southeast Asian economies; Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The gist of that report relevant here is that the actual average GDP growth during the 2003 – 2007 period is lower than the projected average growth for the 2012 – 2016 period. This is true for Malaysia alone (6.0% actual, 5.3% projected) as well as for a six-country average (6.1% actual, 5.6% projected). The jury is still out on this one, but it seems that the general opinion is that, as exports slow down, our economy will become increasingly dependent on local economic consumption. It is almost certain that people will be earning less money and keeping an ever tighter hold on their wallets. What does this mean for MMU?

As our President, Prof. Dato’ Dr. Muhamad Rasat Muhamad, pointed out in his 2012 Presidential Address (see next page), if our revenue continues as it is, in 2015 MMU can expect to spend more than it earns. Nobody needs to be an accountant to know that that’s not good news.

While Prof. Rasat will announce the detailed plans in March on how to overcome this challenge, it doesn’t look like a revision in tuition fees can be delayed for much longer. MMU’s Founding President, Professor Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Ghauth Jasmon, in an interview with the Lead Editor last year, considered such a hike to be “inevitable if MMU wants to remain relevant.”

But, given the economic outlook described above, a hike – which would have to be substantial if it were to be more than a short-term fix – could hardly come at a worse time. Tertiary education in Malaysia might be recession-proof, but when the crunch comes, ringgit-sense might cause some of our prospective students to look elsewhere.

Regardless of what strategies the President announces, one thing is for sure. From this point onward, there is even greater need to show respect and care to each other, to display uncompromising integrity at all times, become customer centric, and boost our innovativeness. Only by doing all this could we hope to attract the best students regardless of their financial situation, regardless of the country’s economy. We must become their number one choice to further their education.

This challenge sounds daunting, but it comes with the package of being the first private university in Malaysia. We paved the way for Malaysian private higher education in 1996, and we are still doing it now in 2012. As long as we stand united behind the President, success is always within reach.

And, who knows. Stranger things have happened. In his 1991 book Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name, David A. Aaker gave an example of a manufacturer that found it very hard to break into the market, until it raised the price of its product to be higher than all of its competitors; customers quickly welcomed it as the superior product, and the brand that once was difficult to sell outsold its rivals.

This might happen with MMU, or it might not. What is sure is that there is always hope. We just have to give ourselves the chance.

铅编辑
On 12 January 2012 in Cyberjaya, our President Prof. Dato’ Dr. Muhamad Rasat Muhamad, gave the MMU Presidential for 2012. The theme of the address was “to make MMU the industry-preferred university with global recognition.”

The address was divided into three parts – MMU’s achievements so far, the issues and challenges that stand in our way, and our plan for 2012.

In terms of achievement, Prof. Rasat lists our Excellent SETARA rating; our graduate employability of 91% after six months of graduation; our improvement of achieving 3 stars on the Malaysian Research University Assessment (MyRA) score; our being conferred the Brand Excellence Award 2011; our biggest student intake ever in 2011, registering 5166 students both under and postgraduate; as well as our revenue in 2011 continues to be higher than our expenditure.

MMU also just missed being listed in the Top 200 Asian Universities. However, our score of 27.00 assures us that we are still the top private university in Malaysia. Equally reassuring is the fact that for the 2000 – 2009 period, MOSTI’s Malaysian Science and Technology Indicators 2010 found us to be the best Malaysian private university in terms of number of citations.

On the issues and challenges, Prof. Rasat began by describing the kind of competition we are facing today. In a comparison with UTP, UNITEN, UTAR and UTM, despite our strengths, in 2010 the thing we did best in comparison was achieving the lowest OPEX per student. Also, our research output could be a lot higher, and our presence in ISI publications is declining. Our average intakes are quite high, but our average number of graduates is lower; this gap could be caused by the quality of student intake, our own internal processes, the quality of teaching delivery, and even the personal commitments of students.

Most notable, however, is that in 2015 our revenue will cross with our Operational Expenditure. If this does happen, MMU will no longer be financially self-sustaining. MMU became financially self-sustaining within the fourth year of its life, and this has becoming something of a point of pride.

To avoid the fallout that comes with incurring a loss, Prof. Rasat announced that MMU will be adopting an action plan dubbed “2012 Transformation Plan – MMU 2.0”. The plan will be launched in March 2012.

The plan will involve five MMU elements – academic, research and development, human resource, finance and facility, system and process. Prof. Rasat concedes that the transformation process will be challenging, requiring many things, including an upgrade of staff mindset. Everyone, including all members of management and both academic and non-academic staff, will have to show respect and care, uncompromising integrity, customer centricity and innovativeness in everything that we do.

Prof. Rasat concluded by stating MMU’s aim of becoming a Top 100 University in Asia that is globally recognized for our quality students and staff, innovative academic programmes and R&D, as well as our highly profitable academic and commercial revenue streams.
Prof. Tou Teck Yong’s job is rather tough.

MU, in the Vice-President’s (R&D) own words, was established to ensure that the nascent Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) had the necessary manpower. Together with the government, MMU had worked hard to attract foreign experts as well as locals who are staying overseas into Malaysia, as part of the brain-gain initiative, so it would have only been appropriate that the MSC had the best knowledge workers.

Since the beginning, MMU aimed to be a true university, and not just a teaching institution. It needed to create new knowledge, interact with industries and support social advancement. Yet, as a private university, MMU’s main source of revenue comes firstly from the training of undergraduates, and secondly from postgraduate studies and research. Unfortunately, it is the postgraduate studies and research that is actually essential for MMU to gain wider and global recognition.

To drive postgraduate studies and research, MMU provides two types of internal grants: (1) small-scale research projects, and (2) capital expenditure for infrastructure development. The university is consistent in its search of additional funding, especially from the government. However, such funds as MOSTI and MOHE are highly competitive, owing to the large number of applicants and stringent screening. As such, managing the limited internal grant always involves careful planning and some priority setting.

Despite these limitations, MMU is hitting some milestones. The Malaysian Science and Technology Information Centre (MASTIC), a unit under MOSTI, in its 2010 report ranked MMU as the Top Private University in Malaysia for the 2000 – 2009 period, based on the number of publications and citations in Scopus database. The MyRA scores, conducted by MOHE, has been increasing steadily over the last few years.

Then, there’s the paper by Aryati Bakri and Peter Willet from the UiTM and University of Sheffield’s Information School respectively. Their paper named MMU as having the most productive Computer Science faculty in Malaysia, and it ranked MMU ahead of all Malaysian universities, including the Research Universities. The article “Computer science research in Malaysia: a bibliometric analysis” appeared in Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives, Vol. 63. When asked about the paper, Prof. Tou pointed out, “It is not really surprising. We have got “Multimedia” right in our name; it has always provided us with direction and focus.”

When asked if, judging by the achievements above, MMU is doing well in conducting research, Prof. Tou was quite positive. “Well, based on the increasing number of journal papers published by MMU each year, they can and will do a lot better because most of them staff are still young and with positive mindset. We may be a young university, and limited by a lack of large funding, but we can improve by optimising our physical space, internal funds and by the way we manage things and communicate with staff.”

MMU lecturers and researchers have additional advantage, that is, by engaging in contract research and consultancy with TM and TM subsidiaries. “TM is adopting new technologies, even the concept of Green Technology, in their business development and daily operation,” said Prof. Tou. He gives the example of RM4 million research grant awarded by TM via the TM R&D in December 2010.

He is quick to say that every staff, young and old, must start their research somewhere and somehow. For this, the R&D Division was established to provide assistance and support, in addition to the internal grant. For example, the division had started mentor schemes in which the senior staff will coach the young staff in writing their research proposals. Prof. Tou offers a piece of reminder for all researchers, both current and would-be ones. “MMU hopes to continue improving in R&D, and if your contribution is necessary to bring MMU to greater heights also.”
On 4th and 5th January 2012, the MMU Career Fair 2012 was held at the Cyberjaya campus. The Melaka campus edition took place on 11th and 12th January. By now a tradition of sorts in MMU, this year’s Career Fair attracted 46 exhibitors, including some big names in the industry. The Platinum, or the biggest sponsors, were DHL, Maybank, and Walton.

Gold sponsors were Shell, Juris Technologies, Dell, RHB, KPMG, P&G, Great Eastern, CPA Malaysia, IBM, Quintiq, UnifiedComms, TM Berhad, Rhythm & Hues Studios, Capital Dynamics and First Solar. Just a notch below that were accenture, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, PayPal, CPA Australia and HP.

The 19 exhibitors were Deloitte, Public Bank, Manulife, Flextronics, Silverlake, GPS Bay, OCBC Bank, CIMB Group, Top Glove, Plexus, Prudential, Speedwing, Recruit Express, Ann Joo Resources, Finisar, Capital Asia Group, ACCA, Rinato, VKA Wealth Planners, Excel Force, Parkson, Time and eProtea Finexus.

The event was launched on 4th January by MMU’s President, Prof. Dato’ Dr. Muhammad Rasat Muhamad.

Some of the exhibitors gave eye-opening feedback about our students. Madam Hanim Mohd Safri, Head of Maybank’s Apprentice Management Programme under the Resourcing Centre of Maybank’s Group Human Capital, describes setting up booth in MMU as a singular experience. “We participate in many university career fairs across Peninsula Malaysia, and I must say the quality of students I’ve spoken to so far is remarkable. It’s barely hours after the fair started, and I’ve already spoken to about twenty students unlike any I’ve come across in other universities.”

“I find the students I’ve spoken with here very confident,” Hanim explains. “The way they carry themselves are different, the way they approach you is different, even the way they ask about employment opportunities is different. They’re that much better. I’ve already recruited MMU graduates in the past, and they’ve performed very well in the company, but being here it is clear that MMU produces great graduates that any employer would find it hard to turn down.”

Walton International Property Group is a pre-development land investment firm headquartered in Canada. While Walton Malaysia is not a technology-based company and seems at odds with the bevy of engineering and IT firms at the fair, its Vice President for Operations & Training in Malaysia, Mr. Jeffrey Lim, says there was a very good reason for Walton’s presence.

He describes that regardless of what a company actually does, the most important criteria an employer looks for in job applicants is attitude. “In Malaysia we are a sales company, and we are always looking for great sales people. We are here because we know Multimedia University produces very good graduates. We’ve hired MMU graduates before, and they have produced very good sales for Walton.” “We are impressed with the way the university trains the students,” Jeffrey says. “It’s not just educational, but I think you train them more on logical thinking and nurture their leadership skills as well. This is very important in our line of work. We need entrepreneurs, people who can work independently, people who can think independently. And this we find in Multimedia University students.”

To all MMU academics, management and support staff, congratulations. Your hard work has contributed towards making some very marketable graduates.
During the Star Education Fair 2012 on 7th and 8th January 2012, MMU did our part to provide financial assistance to deserving Malaysians by making a contribution to The Star Education Fund.

As we are aware, The Star Education Fund provides financial aid to Malaysians pursuing higher education locally and abroad. For 2012, as many as 249 scholarship awards valued at more than RM10 million were pledged by 31 Partners-in-Education.

MMU’s contribution this year is more than RM150,000, and the funding is offered for three courses: Foundation in Management leading to a Bachelor of Economics (Hons.) Analytical Economics; Foundation in Information Technology leading to a Bachelor of Information Technology (Hons.) Security Technology; and Foundation in Engineering leading to a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons.) Electronics majoring in Robotics and Automation.

The Star Education Fund is available to Malaysian citizens not more than 25 years old as at 1st January 2012. Candidates should have excelled in extra-curricular activities and active in sports, should not be bonded to any organization or receive financial aid or awards from other sources. Those applying for Foundation / Diploma courses should have obtained reasonably good results in their SPM or UEC, while applicants for Advanced Diploma / Degree courses should have done well in their STPM, A-Levels, UEC or equivalent.

By and large the contributors of the funds were private universities, university colleges and colleges, although an International School is also present. The majority of sponsored courses were Bachelor degrees, followed by many Diplomas, some professional accreditations, a smattering of Advanced Diplomas, hints of Foundation and pre-university courses, and, interestingly enough, one Airline Cabin Crew Preparatory Course.

If you know anyone who might be interested in tapping into this fund, tell them to be ready – application forms must be received by the secretariat within two weeks of the release of SPM and STPM results. Late applications will not be accepted.

The Star Education Fund was launched by Dato’ Dr. Hou Kok Chung, Deputy Minister of Higher Education on 7th January. During his opening speech, Dr. Hou highlighted, among other things, of how MOHE is currently looking very closely at advertisements by institutes of higher learning. Apparently they have a dedicated unit for this, and in 2010 it issued 61 notices to various institutions. The offences were advertising that were either false, deceptive, offensive or misleading. Guilty institutions could be fined a maximum of RM50,000 for these offences; so far only one institution has been hauled to court and had a compound of RM10,000 slapped onto it. We are 98 per cent certain this is not MMU.

MMU’s contribution to The Star Education Fund comes as tuition fee waiver. While it does not include stipends or living allowances, for the right candidate, it will be a life-changing contribution.
9 JAN, MELAKA – Today, the Facility Management Department (Melaka Campus) organised The Melaka Hostel Commemorative Bench Launch at the hostel compound and pathway. The event, launched by MMU Chairman YBhg Datuk Dr. Halim Shafie is another effort in providing more facilities and a better environment for our students. These benches are placed in several spots in MMU, such as the hostel compound and the green area between FET and FIST.
Multimedia University (MMU) received its first batch of 45 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) leavers at the campus in Malacca recently. Their enrolment is part of the MARA Special MRSM Scholarship programme on 30 January 2012.

Shortly after the registration, MMU President Prof. Dato’ Dr. Muhammad Rasat welcomed them before various other divisions such as Yayasan Universiti Multimedia and Student Affairs and Sports Division briefed them and helped them settle in.

This enrolment is the 2nd batch of students receiving the scholarship but the first time the students were chosen based on their SPM trials. The students will be able to undertake a foundation course first in either the fields of Information Technology, Management, Creative Multimedia and Law.

However, from 31 January – 2 March 2012, the students will first undergo a CEO Incubator Programme and intensive courses in English and Mathematics before enrolling into various foundation programmes. The intensive courses will be conducted by lecturers from MMU Foundation Studies & Extension Education Centre (FOSEE).

Muhammad Nizam Bin Zainudin, a lecturer from FOM, seems to be a believer of while books can take you far, nothing drives home the lesson like sweat trickling down your forehead. This seems to be the only explanation why Darryl Chin Zhao Yong, a student for Nizam’s, was standing under a tent in Misri Plaza under a hot afternoon sun.

Darryl is only in his first semester of his Bachelor of Accounting programme, and Nizam’s class, “Introduction to Cyberpreneurship” is a University subject, not a Major one. Yet, the way Darryl and his teammates patiently stood at their booth seem more suited for third year students who had spent a lot of time preparing for their project.

It turned out they were patient because they were expecting customers. “We did a market test at the Central Plaza, and we found this spot to be more lucrative,” said Darryl. The Penangite could even give a Ringgit value to the spots he had tested. His lecturer had insisted, he said.

When asked about this, Nizam said that he was determined for his students to understand what entrepreneurship was about. It was more than just a subject to pass in order to get a degree. “I was an entrepreneur myself,” he said. “Entrepreneurship is a spirit. It is also social. You have to experience it for yourself, otherwise you would not understand. You might pass the exam without doing it in person, but the understanding would not be there.”

For Nizam, the understanding is crucial, not only so that students can go into business for themselves, but because it makes them better employees. “I am a supporter of Students In Free Enterprise, or SIFE,” he said. According to Wikipedia, SIFE is an international non-governmental organization which aims to bring together top leaders of today and tomorrow to create a better, more sustainable world through the positive power of business.

“When you understand entrepreneurship, you understand business,” Nizam says. “When you understand business, you understand management is and what a business need to do, and you tend to do your job better compared to other people who do not get the big picture. Students who are SIFErs understand the big picture.”

Nizam says that an increasing number of employers look for entrepreneurship or SIFE credentials when thumbing through resumes. “Companies, especially big ones like Microsoft, want future leaders they can groom. Entrepreneurship is becoming more important.”

Considering that many employers now are looking for employees who can make a difference, there is a great likelihood that entrepreneurship would be a passport for a superb career. When that happens, we should thank Mr. Nizam and all entrepreneurship lecturers in MMU for immersing our students in the experience.
On 13th January 2012, the International Institutional Collaborations Unit held a session on MMU’s Student Exchange Programme. Dubbed the “Exchange Programme – the Fast-Forward Way to Internationalization”, the session among others outlined how MMU is increasingly playing a larger role in the Internationalization scene. The event was graced by the President, Professor Dato’ Dr. Mohamad Rasat Muhamad, as well as the Mr. Senthilathiban Veeriah, Senior Director of Operations.

As most of us are aware, “Internationalization” is the process of exposing a university student, usually an undergraduate, to a study environment that is completely foreign to her own. It’s completely different from students backpacking during the trimester break. A valid “Internationalization” programme is part of the institution’s coursework, or at least receives the institution’s official endorsement.

For many European countries, Internationalization is a graduating requirement, just like MUET. Unlike MUET, however, students spend a trimester or so at a foreign partner institution taking a course with the partner institution. Popular courses usually involve language, culture or even such topics as impact of globalization on the country or region. These courses are graded and the credits transferred back to the student’s institution.

In Malaysia, Internationalization is nowhere near becoming a graduating requirement; cost issues would make it unrealistic, despite the obvious benefits of giving students eye-opening experiences. For the fortunate few MMU students who had had the chance of participating in the Student Exchange Programme, their lives would forever be changed.

According to Musfiza Mustafa who runs the IICU office, 2012 will see 55 MMU students going abroad for their Student Exchange Programmes between March and June. It is the biggest group of outgoing students so far, and they would be flying out to our partner universities in Korea, Taiwan, China and Germany.

While the Student Exchange Programme would be a truly remarkable highlight the students’ lives, it would be beneficial for MMU as well. After all, academics go on exchange programmes too, and inter-institutional collaborations could well help us conduct more research regardless of what the international or regional economies might do to our budgets.

Here are some photos of the event – hopefully there’ll be events like this one soon.
Al-Fatihah.

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of our beloved colleague, Mr. Mohamad Saiful Lizan bin Adnan, a technician from Faculty of Engineering Cyberjaya today, on 14 February 2012.

Mr. Mohamad Saiful passed away due to injuries sustained in an accident on the way to work. He was riding his motorcycle and was approaching the MMU entrance near the Chancellery at around 8.20 a.m., when a lorry from a nearby construction site swerved into his path. He is survived by his widow and three children.

His passing is a big loss to the university. We would like to remind everyone to be careful on the roads, especially around construction sites.
The Multimedia Law Society (MULS) of Multimedia University (MMU) has just successfully completed the 6th Law Moot Competition 2011/2012. The Competition, aimed at raising and nurturing the interest of mootings and legal research among law students as well as to cultivate professionalism amongst students, was held in the MMU Malacca campus, had its preliminary rounds from 17 – 19 November 2011 while the top two teams competed at the Grand Finals. The Grand Finals, held on 11 January 2012 at the MMU Moot Court saw English Moot Finalists, Goh Yi Kheng and Toh Hwei Sze (Appellants) and Wong Jyh Ling and Lim Wei Jie (Respondents) while Appellants, Raja Intan Nur Jazmine and Kay Fatima Bt Ahmat took on Respondents, Yong Yoong Hui and Phang Ja Mein for the Bahasa Malaysia category. In true spirit, the teams delivered their contentions and arguments and were “interrupted” by the learned judges of the day in the middle of their delivery of arguments. The finalists were able to handle the inundating questions with much poise while some manage to provide satisfactory arguments in return to the questions asked.

Judges Mr. Francis Hilary D’ Cruz (Othman Hashim & Co), Mr. Jaspal Singh Gill (Sekar Gill & C. Suren), Mr. Fook Meng (Chee Siah Le Kee & Partners) for the English category, and Mr. Kee Tong Kiak (Chee Siah Le Kee & Partners), Mr. Darren Yeo and Mr. Azrul bin Zulkifli Stork (Azharudin & Assoc) for the Bahasa Malaysia category were able to provide the mooters and the rest of the students seated alike on the taste of a real courtroom atmosphere with their almost ruthless approach to the case.

In both English and Bahasa Malaysia Competitions, the appeal was dismissed, thus giving the Respondents the victory. The Best Oralists were also from the Respondent teams for both categories with Wong Jyh Ling and Phang Ja Mein from English and Bahasa Malaysia Category respectively. The Best Memorial for the English Category was presented to the Appellant’s Team and the Respondents for the Bahasa Malaysia Category. The Competition was concluded with the speech of Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dato’ Seri Zaki bin Tun Azmi who motivated the students to work hard to achieve their goals. He also shared his life experiences as a student with the audience and was gracious enough to further advice students on how to be excellent.
We Have a New Name!

Congratulations to the winner of MMU e-bulletin naming contest!
MR. FAIZAL JEWARI of FACULTY OF CREATIVE MULTIMEDIA (FCM)
To those who have submitted their entries, we greatly appreciate your contribution and are grateful to have such passionate staff in making our bulletin a better one. Keep your ideas coming for future contests!
If you are wondering, here is the entry by the winner:
Suggested name: **N-Gage**

Rationale:
MMU bulletin is about MMU community engagement. By using this name, it will create a sense of belonging to the university, as we have various engagement activities happening every month, may it be with the management, academic, or the students.

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**Dr. Terrace Austin Cutler**

On 20 February 2012, MMU bade a heartfelt farewell to a distinguished member of it’s board of directors, Dr. Terrence Austin Cutler after a tree-planting session at the Cyberjaya campus.

He was appointed to the University’s board on 31 May 2004 and is an influential Australian telecommunications expert, consultant and patron of the arts. He has significant influence on public policy, sitting on many key government advisory boards, and in the private sector.

Dr. Cutler, we can’t thank you enough for all your contributions in driving MMU forward. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.
The MMU Chinese New Year Extravaganza (CNYE) came to a close after three days of celebrations at our Malacca campus with YB Dato’ Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen, the Malaysian Tourism Minister officiating the Chinese New Year Extravaganza Garden Festival. Held from 3 – 5 January 2012, the CNYE boasted an array of activities including a calligraphy competition and a cultural exhibition.

The CNYE is one of the annual events of Chinese Language Society, Multimedia University (Melaka Campus) which advocates Chinese culture and inheritance Chinese tradition customs.
Eeh Tarik Sessions with the President

@ Cyberjaya Campus 31 JAN 2011

@ Melaka Campus 11 JAN 2012

Prof. Dato’ Dr. Muhamad Rasat Muhamad
President of MMU
During the Presidential Address in Cyberjaya campus, Prof. Rasat also announced the commencement of MMU’s Energy Saving Campaign.

The campaign is designed to lower MMU’s energy consumption, and thus reduce our impact on the planet. During the launch, Prof. Rasat handed over reminder stickers to the Management Committee members to be distributed to all staff. Printed on these stickers are tips and reminders on how to save energy.

Please join us in minimizing the amount of energy used in both campuses, and hopefully together we can make the world a better place.

We want YOUR contributions!

Kindly share with us any good news, articles, announcements or just about anything that makes us proud to be MMU Citizens! Send your contributions to ccu@mmu.edu.my.