

Essay

Academic Exchange between Malaysia and Japan toward the Prosperous Global Collaborations of Universities in Asia-Pacific Region



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The Asia-Pacific region covers 60.7 percent of the world population, 41 out of 196 countries in the world. Regarding the number of Internet users representing the recent ICT, it reaches 43.6% of the world's Internet users. Under the current environment, it is exactly expected to promote the higher education and research in collaboration with those universities toward the prosperity of the region.

The pursuit of knowledge has been likened to a dwarf standing on the shoulder of giants – metaphorically implying that the seeker of knowledge is able to develop the future intellectual pursuits by understanding research and works of notable thinkers of the past. At the University of Malaya (UM), we recognize that the pursuit of knowledge is not only dependent upon the understanding of past intellectual works, but also achieved by standing shoulder to shoulder with other contemporary intellectual giants. Consequently, the University of Malaya realizes the value of bilateral academic exchange with notable academic institutions worldwide, especially with its neighbors in Asia. Whilst UM has signed many Memorandums of Understanding with Asian universities – in China, Taiwan, Korea, and other ASEAN countries, UM's relationship with Japan is perhaps the most unique and well structured.

UM prides itself on being a pioneer in Malaysia-Japan collaborations in higher education, through the "Look East Policy" which was conceived in 1982. In 1984, UM's Japanese Preparation Centre started conducting a two year preparatory program specifically to prepare students for entrance into Japanese Universities. This preparatory program to Japan has the distinction of being the only program in UM which prepares its students for university enrolment in a foreign country. The success of this program has resulted in its model being emulated by other similar preparatory programs in Malaysia. This program is based on the collaboration between the University of Malaya, Japanese Government and Public Services Department of Malaysia. An important feature of this program is the involvement of Japanese Language Teachers and Science Teachers from Japan, in ensuring complete immersion into the Japanese syllabus through teaching in Japanese. As a result, to date, this program has produced over 5000 graduates from Japanese universities, who are employed in industry and academia. The majority of these graduates are in the field of Engineering and Technology, although a significant proportion also possess degrees in Management, Medicine and Biotechnology. Many of them have returned to Malaysia and contributed as professionals experts in their specific fields. The educational experience of these graduates in Japan has also

brought a new scheme of work ethics for the Malaysian work force.

Following on the postgraduate level academic staff, if the staff who experienced the academic training scheme sponsored by either UM, or various Japanese-based companies, or Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) are taken into account as well, the presence of Japanese trained academics in UM is considerable now. On a formal level, internationalization efforts by UM is managed by UM's Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic and Internationalization issues. In addition, its International and Corporate Relations Office is responsible for building, expanding and improving UM's relations with its international counterparts through exploration of collaborative efforts in research, academia and cultural exchanges. UM's international student community has also grown exponentially in the last few years. UM's International Student Centre was established as a one-stop centre to address the international students' needs, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. Whilst the majority of these long term undergraduate or postgraduate students are from Indonesia, China, Bangladesh, and the Middle East, UM has had the pleasure of hosting short-term exchange students from Japan and hope to host many more Japanese students in the future. On an equal level of importance to the institutional support provided by UM for collaborative efforts, is the personal effort in teaching and research between academics in UM and those of it's collaborating institutions.

A current example of a successful collaborative network is the AUN/SEED-Net, which involves the University of Malaya, other academic institutions in ASEAN and Japan. Based on the intention of developing human resource capital for ASEAN Region, the AUN/SEED-Net organization provides another valuable channel for postgraduate students and academic researchers intending to further study in Japan or other ASEAN countries. It was initiated by Japan during the ASEAN-Japan Summit in 1997, with the objective of developing human resources in engineering within the Southeast Asian region. Mainly supported by the Japanese Government through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the ASEAN Foundation, AUN/SEED-Net comprises of 19 leading universities in the Southeast Asian region, supported by 11 renowned Japanese universities. Its core programs are to provide scholarships at the Master's and Doctorate level at the member institutions in Southeast Asia or Doctorate level only in Japan. For example, UM hosts a Master's degree program in Manufacturing Engineering under the auspices of AUN/Seed-Net, and has attracted a diverse group of students hailing from Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos and other countries. Such programs are complemented by the Collaborative Research Program in which the postgraduate research is co-supervised by academics from the Member Institutions and Japan. Other support programs such as the Japanese Professors Dispatch Program and Short-term Study Program are devised to allow visits of Japanese professors to Member Institutions and visits of doctoral students at the host institutions to Japan, respectively, in order to strengthen academic and research capabilities. The Short-Term Visit Program in

UM needs to consider its future policy regarding Malaysia-Japan relations through strategic placement of its position as the Malaysia's premier research university. According to the Malaysia-Japan Economic Partnership established in 2003, it was emphasized to consider bilateral business activities, and the promotion of new research areas in high technologies including biotechnology, and information technology. As such, UM is able to play its role in creating common programs in the targeted areas of high technology, and to play a major part in establishing international academic networks which will benefit both countries. One example is the involvement of UM with the Asia-Oceania Top University League on Engineering (AOTULE), which was formed in March 2007. UM is the only Malaysian institution in this league, which has the objective of improving the quality of engineering education and research, and to facilitate international collaborations among 12 leading universities in the Asia-Oceania region. Another strategy for UM to pursue is perhaps to emulate the successful model of Japan's Centers of Excellence, as embodied by its 21st Century COE program. UM admires the objective of this program to cultivate a competitive academic environment among Japanese universities, through targeted support to the creation of world-standard research and education centers of excellence. UM recognizes Japan's leadership in science and technology, and hopes to learn from it. This will hopefully benefit not only UM as an institution, but also Malaysia, through fostering intellectuals of talent and creativity who can lead the progress within the nation and globally.

The author, Ms.Suhana specializes in Liquid Crystal Technology, She has served the University of Malaya since she received her M. Eng. degree from Durham University, UK in 1997 and PhD from Oxford University in 2003. Meanwhile, she had an opportunity to join R&D activities at the Research Institute of Electrical Communication, Tohoku University, in 2006-2007, Her Essay will impress younger generation interested in academic activities through IEICE and widely general readers of this journal.

Complete English Session BS-7 Successfully Held at 2010 IEICE Society Conference



Seiji Okumura,
Telecom Engineering Dept. no.1,
ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation (CTC),
Session Organizer, BS-7,
IEICE Communications Society

The Session was divided into subsidiary sessions and set up every day during the Society Conference. As a result of the

It shows how effectively this Session contributed to the globalization of IEICE through this Session that 34 papers were presented by international students studying in Japan and foreign researchers working in Japanese companies. In addition, the 80% of the attendees were from foreign countries.

Some comments were proposed from the speakers. For example, “We can discuss much and make progress through this Session. It provides a platform that helps researchers to make friends each other”, “Every speaker could receive a lot of valuable and constructive questions or suggestions after their presentations. Speakers could easily find researchers interested in or studying the same area of technologies.”

- (1) "Minimum backup configuration creation method for IP Fast Reroute", Shouhei Kamamura (NTT)
- (2) "Green DTN: Delay Tolerance for Energy-Efficient Mobile Communications", Haruki Izumikawa (Universität Bremen, TZI)

The 4th Asia-Pacific International Symposium on Advanced Reliability and Maintenance Modeling, at Wellington in New Zealand, on Dec. 2-4.

ISADS 2011 – IEICE Communications Soc. and Information Systems Soc. The 10th International Symposium on Autonomous Decentralized Systems (ISADS 2011), in Tokyo and Hiroshima, on March 23-27, 2011. (Due dates for papers and panel proposals is Aug 31. <http://www.isads2011.info.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp/>).

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