

# Taking your professors to lunch

MURNIATI ABU KARIM  
murniati@nstp.com.my

**UNIVERSITI** Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Graduate Centre recently launched the Lunch Date with Professor of Your Choice programme for its postgraduate students to bridge the gap between students and professors.

Inspired by Take Your Professor to Lunch programme at Harvard Kennedy School, UKM Vice-Chancellor Professor Tan Sri Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali, who proposed the programme, said students can invite a professor of their choice to lunch to exchange interests in both academic and personal matter in a casual setting.

"The simplest way to understand a university is to look at it as a universe. It is a place of knowledge and experience where people learn and explore new things every day.

"Therefore, I would like to call all postgraduate students to take up this opportunity to invite their professors to a lunch date and engage in a conversation where they could exchange thoughts and experience. This is also a chance for students to become better acquainted with the professors," Noor Azlan said.



*UKM vice-chancellor Professor Tan Sri Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali spending time with students during the launch of the Lunch Date with Professor of Your Choice programme.*

Students can go to lunch with a professor of their choice in a group of four. Once the application is approved, they must contact the professor, and set the time and place for lunch at preferred restaurants.

Each student may participate in the programme twice a year and are encouraged to reach out to professors

from different faculties.

Noor Azlan said engaging in informal conversations over lunch is a great way to explore educational and research opportunities outside a student's area of study.

"Postgraduate studies are more than thesis writing and meeting with supervisors. Students should be exposed to many things outside of their comfort zone that could enrich their learning experience at a university," he said at the launching ceremony.

By engaging in a dialogue with professors of other faculties, students are free to trade ideas of their areas of academic expertise and personal interests that may lead to bigger and unexpected discussions.

"A university is responsible for providing platform for students to take their knowledge beyond their focus areas. Through the programme, professors can share their unique experience, struggles and journey to success as motivation for the students.

"I look forward to having lunch dates with more students next year," said Noor Azlan.

Present at the launch were UKM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (academic and international) Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Marzuki Mustafa and UKM Graduate Centre director Professor Dr Andanastuti Muchtar.