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Renowned for research

Finding solutions is at the core of UKM's mission to improve lives.

UNIVERSITI Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) prides itself on impactful and beneficial research.

The varsity has produced many outstanding alumni who have contributed to important research in many fields over the past 40 years.

Research should never be confined to the walls of academia, said UKM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr. Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukor.

"Research findings should be relevant to the nation and society so that it can benefit and provide direct impact to the community and industry."

"In as much as we can, we hope to tie up UKM research with our partners, be it industry, NGO or other government agencies."

"We also want our researchers to venture into international research collaborations," said Prof Hamdi.

UKM deputy vice-chancellor (Research and Innovation) Prof Datuk Dr. Abdul Wahab Mohamad said UKM's research is centred on five pillars, namely Frontier and Digital Technology, Advanced Health and Well-being, Social and Economic Transformation, Sustainable Resources, Environment and Smart Living and Heritage and Civil Society.

"UKM is proud that our researchers are actively involved in high-impact publications of



Prof Hamdi believes engagement with stakeholders is crucial in producing impactful research.

supported by organisations such as the Sime Darby Foundation, CIMB Foundation, Hasariah Foundation and ExxonMobil, he added.

"We recognise that a university has an important role to play in nation building."

"Apart from producing graduates of calibre, we also need to produce research output which is relevant and impactful to the society and community."

"Otherwise the university will become irrelevant," he said, adding that UKM's Langkawi research centre had contributed to the local geopark being named Southeast Asia's first United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) Global Geopark.

The UKM-Yayasan Sime Darby Research Chair on Zero Waste Technology collaboration has been active in promoting the use of zero waste technology in the palm oil industry.

Prof Abdul Wahab added that UKM is collaborating with CIMB Islamic Bank Bhd to create a learning ecosystem for indigenous chil-

dren in Pts Gob, Kelantan, which also emphasised their health.

In arts and humanities, UKM Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities dean Prof Dr Hazita Azman said UKM was a leader in several areas such as geopolitics, literacy and language acquisition in multilingual societies, health communication and strategic communication policies, strategic information diplomacy and human security, and Malay culture and civilisation.

"In 50 years we have grown in research significance and have been acknowledged for our contributions in developing new ideas, resolving societal concerns and formulating pivotal national and international policies," she said.

Most researchers in the humanities usually struggle to get large grants, Prof Hazita said, but UKM has always strived to promote its science and humanities departments, which forms almost 60% of its makes-up.

Past achievements, Prof Hazita said, includes their research in strategic communication and trauma counselling for grieving families

during the MIEFTO tragedy in 2014. In the field of medicine, UKM also had a long history of research achievements, said Faculty of Medicine dean Prof Dr Raja Afendi Raja Ali.

This began in 1988, when the varsity provided clinical expertise to Prof Dato' Dr Mahmud Mohd Nor, the first Malaysian surgeon to successfully separate a set of conjoined twins.

"The Faculty of Medicine upholds professionalism, transparency and integrity in conducting research," he said, adding they have a human and animal ethics committee to ensure strict professional integrity.

Multiple patents, including a natural supplement preventing metabolic syndrome, were obtained by a bone and osteoporosis research team led by Prof Dr Ima Nirwana Soelaiman.

Currently, the faculty is focused on researching the Covid-19 pandemic.

They are also conducting studies to look into the fundamental aspect of the virus with ACE2 receptors, the virus' psychological effect and the development of a GPS system to track Covid-19 patients.

He added that they were also looking into using drones to transport healthcare supplies to hard-to-reach rural communities.

There are many other clinical and basic research in the fields of neuroscience, rhinology, pulmonology and more, he said.

journals, papers and books.

"But more importantly our researchers were among the most active in engaging with the government and communities," said Prof Abdul Wahab.

UKM works actively with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the local community,

Strong muhibbah spirit

Owen Yap
News anchor and TV host
Bachelor of Business Administration, 1999

FUIR award-winning news anchor and TV host Owen Yap, UKM was his only choice of public university.

"My first 10 fifth choices for university were all UKM," said Yap, 46, who studied business administration.

He fondly recalled being asked to sing impromptu onstage during the Orientation Week of Cam D, when he performed a Malay and Hindi song.

"I really enjoyed my varsity days. It was from there that I learnt the true spirit and value of muhibbah as I had friends from all over Malaysia (East and West), regardless of race or religion," reminisced Yap who wanted to

study theater his home in Seremban.

"It was also then that I started to observe puasa with my Muslim friends and we had solat and iftar together. We would go to the Ramadan bazaar every day in Bandar Baru Bangi. As I had a car at that time, I became their appointed driver," shared Yap, who continued to fast during Ramadan for a few years after graduating from UKM.

The personable TV star went on to become a household name in Malaysia after joining local TV station STV as a prime time Mandarin news anchor, and television host for English and Mandarin variety shows.

His versatility and diligence paid off when he won both Best



Yap (centre, front row) took to fasting during Ramadan with his UKM friends.

Current Affairs Host (STV Mandarin News) and Best variety and entertainment programme host (Deal Or No Deal 2), during Malaysia's inaugural Golden Awards (2018) which recognises excellence in the production and performance of Malaysia's Chinese language television.

Yap's message to his alma mater: "I wish UKM every success and look forward to it thriving in the next 50 years." - **Seto Kit Yau**

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Juli (seated, first from left) made good friends in UKM.

Going far and beyond

Prof Dr Juli Edo
Director-general, Orang Asli Development Department
Bachelor of Arts, 1985
Masters of Philosophy (Anthropology), 1988

In 1981, Prof Dr Juli Edo was accepted as UKM's first Orang Asli anthropology undergraduate. He was initially worried about fitting in but his peers and lecturers welcomed the rural student with open arms.

"Everyone was supportive, friendly and never judged me based on my background. Back then, students got along well, regardless of race, colour or wealth," recalled Juli, 61.

One of the most important lessons that I learned in campus was friendship, camaraderie and associating with people of different races," shares the father of four.

Juli was a member of the communications club and anthropological club, and represented UKM in sports activities.

He also remembered waking up at 5am for early lectures.

"As a student, I studied that particular subject, but it taught

me to be more disciplined, dedicated and focused on my education," said Juli, who also improved his command of English in UKM.

His lecturers, the late Ruziani Sani and Prof Emeritus Dato' Dr Hood Salleh, were instrumental in encouraging him to pursue his Masters in Anthropology.

"My lecturers were very helpful and supportive. They motivated me to further my studies and research on Orang Asli communities in Malaysia," said Juli, citing Prof Dr Auliah Berti as one of his favourite broadcast lecturers.

After completing his tourism in 1988, Juli went on to earn his doctorate at Australia's National University of Canberra.

"UKM taught me that anyone can soar high if given the opportunity. I would like to congratulate the university for being a good training ground. Those lucky individuals have managed to come up in life and contribute towards nation-building," shares Chandra.

Mini bus and 555 notebooks

Datuk Dr Hussamuddin Yaacob
Chairman, Karangkraf Group
Bachelor of Economics, 1978

"In 1974, I enrolled in UKM to study economics. Back then, the Economics faculty was located at Jalan Pantai Baru in Kuala Lumpur, and I stayed at Kolej Yayasan Pelajaran Mara in Bangsar. Some of my lectures were held at haji bilik Malaysia (now International Islamic University Malaysia) in Section 17, Petaling Jaya. For reference books, we could use Universiti Malaysia's library. As my classes were at different locations, I had to shuttle via the Simen BMW (Dua Milya) Wharfedale. The biggest problem was my BMWs were never on time!"

Along the way, I learned to manage my time. University life taught me how to live independently. I also had to survive with little

money. For cheaper meals, I frequented the food stalls around Kampung Haji Abdullah Hakim along Jalan Bangsar. Since I was so poor, my meals were on credit, recorded in Buku 555. Thinking back, I am grateful the stall owners never demanded for money when I was broke. Even though times were hard, I never complained.

My university life was happy because my course mates were helpful. Everyone was much more trusting and accommodating. It was more multiracial, and everyone knew each other.

Another beautiful memory was the fellowship that I had with lecturers. I could go to their room and



When bell-bottoms and Funfair magazines ruled, Hussamuddin (right) with his room-mate, Joe Karagarajah.

consult them when I need ed help. The bond was strong between lecturers and students.

I am honoured to be one of UKM's first graduates. I have watched it develop from a small university to a sprawling campus. The university has done well, and contributed so much to the