Shaping nation-building graduates

University in Putrajaya and Pahang competitive in getting their students into the workforce

story by MELIZARANI T. SELVA

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BUILDING a nation begins with building every individual human being. Knowing that classroom education alone is insufficient, Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten) has designed programmes to ensure students are not just employable but valuable towards building Malaysia.

Roasting a 97.9% employability rate, Uniten vice-chancellor Prof Ir Dr Kamal Nasirudin Mutapha said the university was highly competitive in getting their graduates into the workforce.

“They are the most employable graduates among other universities,” he added.

The employability measurement is conducted by the Higher Education Ministry based on six months after the students graduate.

So far, our graduates have not had any trouble in securing jobs in multinational companies locally and overseas,” he said.

Thanks to industrial training projects that tie in with Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), known as the “Better, Brighter” programme, Prof Kamal said all Uniten graduates were equipped with soft and leadership skills following their two to five-year programmes.

“In our graduate requirements, each student must not only participate actively in academic activities but also co-curricular,” he said.

“Each semester, they are required to gather 10 points and it will be captured in a system called SCORN. We have been using this system since 2012.

“As of August 2015, Uniten has produced 22,970 graduates,” he said.

Prof Kamal said the university was looking at expanding its facilities.

“We have received RM6.7mil from TNB to upgrade our facilities over the next two years to improve Uniten into a more vibrant campus,” he said.

“With the budget, we will build a sports centre and an additional multipurpose hall for the campus in Pahang besides upgrading 100 classrooms to be multimedia-friendly,” he said, adding that he hoped to encourage a “green campus environment at both the branches as well.”

Currently at 251th in the QS University Rankings (Asia), Prof Kamal said the university intended to improve its rankings internationally by 2020 with a systematic plan.

While the Education Ministry is in constant worry of brain drain, Uniten cuts the risk with attractive student exchange programmes and adjunct lecturers comprising TNB and other industry-trained professionals.

Personally, I would advise students to get as much work experience as they can abroad and then come back to contribute to Malaysia.

“There must always be loyalty and consistency when you work for an organisation.

“They must learn to stay and work for at the very least three to five years. But they should return to help grow the country.

“We at Uniten are very proud of what we have achieved, but we are not going to rest on our laurels.

“We are going to keep working very hard to be the top-ranking university internationally and produce more employable graduates,” he said.

Uniten’s holistic education and nurturing environment is reflected in its scholars.

Yuvan Pillay, a Universiti Tenaga Nasional scholar-ship recipient from Klang, is looking forward to being part of the student mobility programme to Germany in his next semester.

Being raised by a single mother, I am very grateful to TNB for helping to fund my education,” he said.

Pursuing his second year in Computer Science degree with a major in system networking, the scholar is at the top of his game in class and in co-curricular activities.

“Malaysia lacks talent in the field of security and proper networking and that is where I want to contribute.

“I want to work closely with the Government and provide expertise as we need to have stronger IT security systems.

“TNB is a big company with a lot of international corporation links and opportunities. I am excited to work for them because I believe it will help me grow in this field,” said the scholar who maintains a GPA of 3.88 each semester.

Though it was her father’s suggestion to join Uniten, Pradhanthini Marajn, 22, said she had no regrets.

“It is like being in a pressure cooker, but in a good way.

“Studying here has improved my ability to solve problems and to think critically.

“After a year of working experience, I want to do my Masters and hopefully I can do it at Uniten as well,” said the final-year student who is pursuing a degree in IT and majoring in graphics and multimedia.

Learning English five years ago upon arriving in Malaysia from Hodramat, Yemen, Business Management PhD student Abhijit Al Tamimi, 36, found a home at the Putrajaya campus.

“I feel like I am part of this place. It will be very difficult for me when I leave because I am close to all the lecturers, staff and students here,” said the postgraduate student who also pursued his Masters in Business Administration at Uniten.