

**EFFECTIVE WAYS TO
REDUCE RED TAPE AT UPM**

By CINDY YEOH

UNIVERSITI Putra Malaysia (UPM) was awarded the Finance Management Quality Award (Anugerah Kualiti Pengurusan Kewangan) at the recently held Public Sector Quality Awards (AKSA) 2007 ceremony.

UPM is proud of the fact that the university is among the pioneers of customer service via Internet banking, cash deposit machines and Electronic Fund Transfers.

According to UPM Vice Chancellor, Prof Datuk Nik Mustapha R Abdullah, "Most students use these services because of convenience, and also because they are paper-free. Besides this, transactions can be done every day as these services are operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

According to him, as a research university acknowledged by the Ministry of Higher Education on Nov 16, 2006, UPM needs to be successful and distinctive in the aspect of financial management.

Effective and systematic financial management based on quality is key to UPM winning the award.

He noted that UPM had obtained the "Sijil Bersih" in financial auditing from the

National Audit Department for seven years in a row from 2000.

At the same time, UPM is also among the biggest users of the Standard Accounting for Government Agency (SAGA) starting from the year 2003.

"In the early stages, SAGA presented a few problems, however, after being rebuilt, the system is functioning well. For example, we are able to balance accounts, close accounts and generate reports every time in a fast and accurate manner.

"In my opinion, every government agency should ideally use SAGA, but because of some barriers, many do not do so."

According to him, SAGA is very important because of UPM's intention to reduce bureaucracy.

Additionally, the Bursary of UPM has obtained ISO 9001:2000 certification on Aug 3. This helps to simplify work processes and sending information through the usage of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), such as the study leave system, student information and Student Accounting System (SAS).

Besides this, UPM is also running support systems to help simplify administrative work, such as the Docuflo system, time recorder and online leave, stock inventory, cheque display, appli-

cations and staff training evaluation.

This is how UPM can serve 23,000 university students, 6,000 postgraduate students and 5,000 staff through existing facilities.

"On a town concept, the university is able to control transactions for 44,000 users at any one time. This is why it would be good if the system were to be a model in other universities," he said.

Nik Mustapha explains a flexible system also makes it easier for the university to solve students' problems via the student portal through complaints or enquiries made online.

According to him, UPM also puts preference on asset management and inventory using the Fixed Asset Management System (FAMS). Through this system, assets can be tracked using a bar code containing information such as type, value, user and location of the asset much faster.

"In today's scenario, we need competition from both within and outside the country if we are to move forward. In view of this, ICT can be used to enable work to be done more easily in matters pertaining to exam results, assets and subject registration, all of which can be done online," he said.



UPM Vice Chancellor, Prof Datuk Nik Mustapha R Abdullah with the award

ONE FOR THE ALBUM

