

Positioning Borneo as premier destination

MIRI: A newly-formed consortium of 16 Bornean universities in Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei is priming itself to be the foremost destination for higher education in Southeast Asia.

It will effectively foster collaborations, build connections, and promote mutual understanding and integration to accomplish the universities' shared goals for Borneo.

Professor Simon Leunig, Pro Vice-Chancellor, President, and Chief Executive of Curtin Malaysia made these remarks when a delegation from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Bintulu Campus made a courtesy visit to Curtin recently.

He said like UPM Bintulu, Curtin was proud to be part of the consortium, working together with the other universities in Borneo to advance education and international research in the region.

During the meeting, Leunig signed the Consortium Declaration of Understanding on behalf of Curtin.

All 16 universities in the consortium are signatories to the document, affirming their commitment to its ideals and goals.

Leunig added that the consortium is well aligned with Curtin's Vision 2030 and its focus on People, Planet and Partnerships, as well as its commitment to innovation and excellence in teaching and research, engaging local communities and transforming lives through leadership, innovation and excellence.

Curtin is also keen to strengthen its longstanding relationship with UPM Bintulu, he said.

Leunig underscored the respective strengths of the two universities, saying UPM's strengths in academia and research and its role as one of the most prestigious public universities in Malaysia, could be leveraged with Curtin's own

strengths in education and research, as well as its position as Curtin University's largest global campus and hub in ASEAN.

"Through collaborations, internships, and industry placements, our students gain practical exposure and develop industry relevant skills," he said, adding that these partnerships further contributed to the advancement of the education they provided.

The UPM delegation was led by Fakhzan Bujang, Senior Language Instructor at its Bintulu Campus and head of the secretariat of Konsortium Universiti Universitas Borneo (KUUB), representing Director of UPM Bintulu Campus Professor Dr Shahrul Razid Sarbini, who is also the current chair of the consortium.

Fakhzan, meanwhile, said Leunig was one of the strongest supporters of the establishment of the consortium and continues to work towards fostering stronger relationships between the universities in Sarawak and Borneo, reflecting Curtin Malaysia's passion for advancing education in the region.

This includes hosting the first KUUB Postgraduate by Research Colloquium 2024 this December, which will see delegates from the universities in KUUB; Curtin's campuses in Australia, Malaysia, Dubai, Singapore and Mauritius; and other universities in the region gathering in Miri.

Also present at the meeting were Curtin Malaysia's Dean of Research and Development John Curtin Distinguished Professor Ramasamy Nagarajan, Dean of Learning & Teaching Professor Tang Fu Ee, Dean of Faculty of Engineering and Science Professor Tuong-Thuy Vu, Dean of Faculty of Humanities and Health Sciences Professor Roy Rillera Marzo, Dean of Faculty of Business Professor Pauline Ho Poh Ling, and Director of the Curtin Malaysia Graduate School Professor Agus Saptoro.