

Challenges ahead for new deputy VC

By REBECCA RAJAENDRAM

educate@thestar.com.my

It is not enough for fresh graduates to have just technical and soft skills. They also need to possess negotiation skills in order to meet the increasing expectations of employers and stakeholders.

"Our new challenge is to produce graduates with all three of these key elements," said Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) deputy vice-chancellor (Academic and International) Prof Datuk Dr Mad Nasir Shamsudin.

"Negotiation skills can be developed via the curriculum by getting students involved in group discussions, assignments, presentations," he continued.

He was speaking to reporters after assuming his new appointment as Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) deputy vice-chancellor (Academic and International) in a hand-over of duties from outgoing deputy vice-chancellor Prof Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris.

His new portfolio will include improving the development of academic policy, overseeing the quality of teaching and learning, as well as supervising the progress of international affairs and promotion of the university.

"Prof Aini had laid a good foundation which Prof Mad Nasir can to continue to build on," said UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Fauzi Ramlan.

Prof Mohd Fauzi advised students to look at the quality of teaching, learning and research when deciding on a course and varsity to enter.

More than 80% of the teaching staff at UPM possess a PhD and they undergo lifelong learning to ensure they are able to effectively impart their knowledge and skills to their students.

The courses in UPM that see the highest number of applicants are engineering, medicine, veterinary sciences, biotechnology, economics and accounting.



Good luck: Prof Mad Nasir (right) receiving a file containing his duties from outgoing deputy vice-chancellor Prof Aini while UPM vice-chancellor Prof Mohd Fauzi looks on.

Those being accepted into economics and accounting having a CGPA of 4.0 even though the minimum requirement is lower.

Before this, Prof Mad Nasir was the varsity's Faculty of Agriculture dean and is a renowned expert in the field of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

He received his PhD from Mississippi State University, USA in 1985. On the international front, he is a member of Pacific Food System Outlook Forecasting Panel under the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), a network of forecasting experts in the agricultural and food sector from all the PECC countries.

In education, Prof Mad Nasir had been primarily teaching in the fields of International Agricultural Trade, Development and Agricultural Policy and Environmental Economics, whilst his research areas include International Agricultural Trade Policy, Commodity Market Analysis and Agro-environmental Economics.