Keeping research relevant

NEW FINDS: Local researchers honoured at Malaysia's Rising Star Award

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The role of research at universities is crucial not only in developing academic systems but also for Malaysia to be a part of the global knowledge society.

For Professor Dr Lee Keat Teong from Universiti Sains Malaysia, one of the five Malaysia's Rising Star Award (MRSA) Young Researcher recipients for 2016, being cited from his published papers by peers means that his research is relevant for other researchers working on their own experimental work.

He said: "This also indicates that the education system in Malaysia is capable of producing researchers that are on a par, if not better, with researchers from world-renowned institutions."

Lee, 39, has published papers in the field of biofuel, specifically biodiesel and bioethanol. Both are renewable fuel with biodiesel being used to run trucks and buses, and bioethanol to run cars. "You need to look at the positive side and be more creative and innovative in conducting research work to get the best results out of the resources and facilities made available, especially in the current unfavourable economical situation," he said.

He added that the USM management right from the vice-chancellor to the deputy vice-chancellors and deans have been supportive in creating an environment that allowed him and his research team to achieve what he has achieved today.

"I like what our VC, Professor Datuk Dr Asma Ismail has been advocating, that is to 'co-learn' with our fellow colleagues and collaborators all over the world and to be more creative and innovative in carrying out a research project," said Lee, who is also the USM Research Creativity and Management Office (RCMO) director and USM International Collaborations Office director.

Lee was also recently listed as one of the four Most Cited Researchers in the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities 2016 by Subjects in the field of energy science and engineering.

On his greatest challenge after this, Lee said that he wanted to translate his research achievements into something useful that can benefit the industry and society.

He is working on deriving renewable energy from algae which he hopes will be an alternative source of energy to the current energy obtained from fossil fuels.

Lee hopes his achievement would serve as a motivation and encouragement to other researchers in his university.

"The award is also a great acknowledgement and recognition to many parties that have contributed to this win, especially my postgraduate students, mentor, colleagues and the university."

He added that the award was also a great motivation and encouragement for other researchers working in the field of biofuel, specifically algae.

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