VARSITIES IN WORLD RANKINGS

The hard work put in by Malaysian universities is paying off with improvements in global rankings.

By REBECCA RAJAENDRAM

HAVING climbed up the annual Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2018, the country's five research universities have made it to the top 1% in the world out of 26,000, with its oldest university, Universiti Malaya (UM) on the verge of being among the world's top 100.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh said UM, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) generated more than RM6.18bil in research revenue between 2007 and 2016.

"This is a 55.3% return on research investment from the Government's initial investment of RM3.98bil," he said, adding that most of the universities also had their 15th anniversary as a research university.

UM, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) are now listed in the Top 300 according to the international rankings.

Idris was speaking to reporters after announcing the improvements made by the research universities. Also present were Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Mary Yap, Higher Education Ministry secretary-general Tan Sri Dr Noorul Ainur Mohd Nur and director-general Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir.

A steady climb

The QS World University Rankings is an annual league table of the top universities in the world, which this year saw 4,854 institutions being considered and 959 institutions being considered and 959 institutions being considered and 959 institutions were considered.

"It is the only league table involving a range of indicators that together cover the full spectrum of university activity including research, teaching and international outlook," he said.

"In our Putra Global 200 plan, the target is to be in the top 200 by 2020," he said.

"This is an improvement on the previous year, which saw 229th place jump from last year. We need to do everything possible to change things around but this time, it's by design," she said.

"The increase in employer reputation is also another milestone for UTM as a comprehensive university with over 165,000 students. UTM has grounded itself in its vision and mission," he added.

UM's rise in the QS rankings saw it jump from 264 to 230, a 34 place jump from last year.

"As a university that isn't even 50 years old, UTM is very proud of its progress," Idris said.

"We have been making certain changes to our strategic plan going forward," said UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Paduka Aini Idriis.

He added that UPM has targeted to be at 230 this year but have surpassed it and now ranks at 229th.

In our Putra Global 200 plan, the target is to be in the top 200 by 2020," he said.

"We also aim to strengthen our academic research and citations in renowned journals," she said.

She added that UPM has targeted to be at 230 this year but have surpassed it and now ranks at 229th.

"In our Putra Global 200 plan, the target is to be in the top 200 by 2020," he said.

They also aim to strengthen their academic research and citations in renowned journals, she said.

USM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Asma Ismail said their success is due to "co-learning" and working together with the other research universities.

"Although she is happy with USM's improvements, she said more work still needs to be done.

"USM now ranks 264, a 66 place jump from last year. "We need to do everything possible to change things around but this time, it's by design," she said.

Prof Asma explained that "by design" means understanding what needs to be improved on using data, strategising and executing the planned policy.

"We will have town halls to meet the schools and have a web-based monitoring system to identify problems. We will go down and meet them and ask how we can help," she said.

In terms of funding, each dean has been given a business manual to show them ways to generate income.

Remaining relevant

UKM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali said although the university's 72 place jump to 230 is impressive, what matters more is the Malaysian public's perception of the university.

"We want to be a relevant, referred to and respected university," he said.

"We want to make sure our academia are doing the right things and creating an impact on society through their scholarly achievements," he said.

"As a university that isn't even 50 years old, UKM is very proud of this rise in the QS World University Rankings," he added.

UTM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Wahid Omar said the university only received its research university status in 2010, three years later than the other four institutions.

"We have been very consistent every year (in rising in the rankings) and we achieved the highest in academic reputation with 327," he said.

He stressed that in order to maintain its momentum, the university must receive feedback on improvement.

"We have top researchers and academic staff with 80% of them holding PhDs, and we work with many top institutions in the world including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and many Japanese universities," he said.

In our Putra Global 200 plan, the target is to be in the top 200 by 2020," he said.

"They also aim to strengthen their academic research and citations in renowned journals, she said.

USM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Asma Ismail said their success is due to "co-learning" and working together with the other research universities.

"Although she is happy with USM's improvements, she said more work still needs to be done.

"USM now ranks 264, a 66 place jump from last year. "We need to do everything possible to change things around but this time, it's by design," she said.

Prof Asma explained that "by design" means understanding what needs to be improved on using data, strategising and executing the planned policy.

"We will have town halls to meet the schools and have a web-based monitoring system to identify problems. We will go down and meet them and ask how we can help," she said.

In terms of funding, each dean has been given a business manual to show them ways to generate income.

"We have top researchers and academic staff with 80% of them holding PhDs, and we work with many top institutions in the world including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and many Japanese universities," he said.

"In our Putra Global 200 plan, the target is to be in the top 200 by 2020," he said.

"They also aim to strengthen their academic research and citations in renowned journals, she said.

USM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Asma Ismail said their success is due to "co-learning" and working together with the other research universities.

"Although she is happy with USM's improvements, she said more work still needs to be done.

"USM now ranks 264, a 66 place jump from last year. "We need to do everything possible to change things around but this time, it's by design," she said.

Prof Asma explained that "by design" means understanding what needs to be improved on using data, strategising and executing the planned policy.

"We will have town halls to meet the schools and have a web-based monitoring system to identify problems. We will go down and meet them and ask how we can help," she said.

In terms of funding, each dean has been given a business manual to show them ways to generate income.