



TAR UMT IN THE LIMELIGHT

Green Light for TAR UMT Allocation



KUALA LUMPUR: A RM40mil annual allocation has been approved by the government for the Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT). This was welcomed by MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong, who voiced his gratitude to the government for the financial backing. The announcement of the allocation was made by Transport Minister Anthony Loke. Loke said the allocation was approved by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also Finance Minister, with the sum to be transferred to the institution's management as soon as possible.

"This is an amount that has been agreed on and approved. It is a yearly commitment by the government, depending on the financial health (of the government). "I hope we can give more following this," he told a press conference after a closed-door meeting with Dr Wee, TAR UMT board of governors chairman Tan Sri Liow Tiong Lai, board of governors member Tan Sri Chan Kong Choy, Deputy Finance Minister Steven Sim and other TAR UMT stakeholders. Loke acknowledged that the issue (of funding allocations for the university) had become a polemic several years ago.

"In the spirit of the current unity government, we don't want to extend this polemic. "We want to send a message that the government's support for TAR UMT will continue," he said. Loke said he had informed the Prime Minister about the funding for TAR UMT and that the issue should be resolved. "I personally requested Anwar give me the mandate to hand over the allocations and here we are. "We want to all move forward together while resolving whatever issues we can," he added. Previously, under Budget 2019 presented by then finance minister Lim Guan Eng, who was then DAP secretary-general, the RM1-for-RM1 matching grant – an annual amount given by the Barisan Nasional government to TAR UC to match the funds the university college raised – was cut off.

The institution had previously received between RM30mil and RM60mil in matching grants annually from the ministry. It was the first time in 50 years that TAR UC, set up in 1969 by MCA for students deprived of the chance to enter public universities, was denied this funding. In Budget 2020, the matching grant for TAR UC was also not reinstated, with development funds being slashed from RM5.5mil to RM1mil.

Dr Wee, meanwhile, expressed his gratitude to the Federal Government for the annual allocations to TAR UMT.

"The most important thing here is the will to develop education regardless of one's background. "We would also like to thank the government for its continuous support through the years where TAR UMT has received RM1.5bil cumulatively from 1969 to 2022," said Dr Wee, who is the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the TARC Education Foundation.

"The topic of funding for TAR UMT was among the matters discussed during my meeting with the Prime Minister last month," he added.

He described the handing over of allocations by Loke as a historical moment given that the later was the current DAP secretary-general.

"Yet, here we are sitting at the same table to relay the good news," he said. The university – with five branch campuses in Penang, Perak, Pahang, Johor and Sabah – started out as a community college in 1969 before being upgraded to university college status known as Tunku Abdul Rahman University College (TAR UC) in 2012 and upgraded to TAR UMT last year.

