

TARUMT to Focus on R&D



THE recent status upgrade of Tunku Abdul Rahman University College (TAR UC) to a full-fledged university known as Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TARUMT) is good news for its students, past and present.

Postgraduate student representative and student representative council member Chew Huei Chin, 25, said she feels honoured to be part of a historical moment for the higher education institution (HEI), where she has been studying since her bachelor's degree days. Now pursuing her Master of Science (Food Science) course, she said she would be able to gain more exposure in the field of research as more opportunities will be available through a full-fledged university.

Chew said she also plans on continuing her PhD at TARUMT now that more opportunities would be opening with its new status. Over the years, the HEI has churned out many notable alumni members, one of whom is former transport minister Tan Sri Chan Kong Choy, 67.

He said Tunku Abdul Rahman College (TAR College), as it was known back then, had given a chance for many to pursue a higher education, including a "kampung boy" like him.

“During the early 70s, we could not find many opportunities for tertiary education, unlike today where there are hundreds of HEIs.

Those days, there were very few universities and very strict criteria to enter Form Six (the course he took at TAR College in 1974),” he added.

“I’m very grateful to TAR College. Because of that opportunity, I could turn my life around, join Universiti Malaya (after Form Six) and become successful after that,” he said. Chan was the culture, arts and tourism deputy minister from 1990 to 1995.

He was appointed the energy, communications and multimedia deputy minister from 1995 to 1999, and then the deputy finance minister from 1999 to 2003. He became the transport minister from 2003 to 2008.

Currently the chairman of the TAR UC alumni council and a member of the board of governors, he said it feels very good to see it become a full-fledged university.

“I have seen all of its developments; we have come a long way,” he said.

When making the announcement on the status upgrade on April 12, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong said TARUMT aims to become a renowned and prestigious talent development hub that contributes significantly to the growth of industry and the socio-economic well-being of the communities in Malaysia and Asean.

“We have worked so hard over the last 53 years to build TAR College into a respected institution of university status,” he added.

Dr Wee, who is also TARC Education Foundation Board of Trustees chairman, said the HEI is well-known in Malaysia for producing high-quality graduates in accounting, computing and information technology, business, quantity surveying, applied sciences, engineering and many more.

“TAR College and TAR UC graduates are in high demand by industry for

their strong technical knowledge, practical skills, and good work ethics and values.

“In the last 53 years, this institution has grown to be widely acknowledged and recognised for its excellent education and training, especially in the areas of management and technology,” he said.

He added that the university will be placing a bigger emphasis on research and development to benefit Malaysia, including helping it achieve its aspirations outlined in the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint and in future initiatives launched for the betterment of the communities, society and the nation.

The university, he also said, will play a significant role in assisting the country in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), as well as the Asean Digital Masterplan.

“Malaysia’s participation in the RCEP is set to unlock enormous potential for local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) looking to export their goods and services to a much greater market outside the country,” said Dr Wee.

“TARUMT must position itself well to help Malaysia contribute towards the whole digital vision of the Asean bloc,” he added.

Dr Wee also announced that in conjunction with the upgrade, the university will be organising a TARUMT logo design competition.

TARUMT began as TAR College with an enrolment of 764 students in 1969, following former MCA president Tun Tan Siew Sin’s suggestion that a non-profit private HEI be established.

In 2013, the HEI, which was named after Malaysia’s first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, was upgraded to a university college. It has produced more than 220,000 alumni members and currently has a student population of over 28,000 in six campuses across the country.



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