Higher Education Seminar in Malaysia a Big Success

The University of Malaya (UM), Indiana University’s Center for International Education and Development Assistance (CIEDA), and the ICC Consultant Centre teamed up in Kajang, Malaysia from April 22-24 for a seminar on Higher Education Administration.

The seminar addressed university reform legislation recently passed by the Malaysian Parliament and discussed “responsibility centered management” as one model of decentralized management for Malaysian public universities.

Attended by over 100 participants, the meeting was covered on three of Malaysia’s national television stations as well as in the national press. In attendance were the vice chancellors (presidents) of eight of Malaysia’s nine public universities accompanied by their deans and directors, a team of six IU administrators, Ministry of Education officials, representatives of 25 Malaysian private institutions of higher education, and observers from Indonesia and Vietnam.

Dato’ Dr. Haji Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad, vice chancellor of the University of Malaya, chaired the three day seminar. Mr. Abdul Farouk Ahmed, president of the IU Alumni Association of Malaysia and managing director of the ICC Consultant Centre, was instrumental in organizing the event.

Keynote speakers for the seminar’s first day were primarily from Malaysia and included Dato Sri Mohd Najib Tun Hj. Abdul Razak, minister of education; Datuk Dr. Johari bin Mat, secretary general for higher education; and, Dato’ Sanusi.

Other first-day presenters included Dato’ Mahmud Badri bin Haji Basir, senior general manager of Tenaga Nasional, Inc., Dato’ Ir. Hj. Ahmad Zaidee Laidin, director of the Institut Teknologi MARA, and Dato’ Dr. Osman bin Bakar, UM’s deputy vice chancellor.

The first day of the seminar focused on recent legislation which will serve to “corporatize” Malaysia’s nine public institutions of higher education. UM will be the first Malaysian university to corporatize its administrative structure.

On the second and third days, the seminar addressed “responsibility centered management (RCM)” as a model for decentralized decision-making and budgetary management. Presenters from IU included William Plater, executive vice chancellor, IUPUI; Norman Lefstein, dean of the IU Law School at Indianapolis; Norman Overly (Education, IUB); James Perin, director of the University Budget Office; Oner Yurtseven, provost of the IUPUI/Tenaga program in Malaysia, and Charles Reafsnyder, CIEDA director and associate dean for international research and development.

Each IU team member gave presentations on various aspects of RCM and Indiana University’s experience with it. In addition, Abdul Farouk Ahmed gave a presentation on human resources management in a corporatized university setting and Brian Fender, executive director of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, spoke on quality assurance measures in higher education.

Dr. Mohd. Amin Mohd Sura, Director of the University of Malaya’s Consulting Centre, and his staff handled the numerous local arrangements for the seminar.

Seminar participants engaged in lively question and answer sessions with the presenters. According to responses received by Dato’ Sanusi, the ICC Consultant Centre, and the Ministry of Education, feedback from participants following the seminar was very positive. Because of the success of this initial collaboration, IU and UM are discussing possible follow-up seminars to be conducted later in 1996 or 1997.

In addition to taking part in the seminar, the IU delegation met with Tan Sri Ani Arope, CEO of Tenaga Nasional, Inc., Dato’ Mahmud Badri and other Tenaga officials, and Dato’ Sanusi of UM. The meetings served to wrap up negotiations concerning the renewal of the agreement for Tenaga’s “twinning program” with the IUPUI School of Engineering and Technology.

The project began in summer, 1994 and provides for two years of instruction in IUPUI courses on site in Malaysia, after which students transfer to upper division engineering programs either in the U.S. or Malaysia.

Dato’ Sanusi announced that the UM’s faculty senate had approved the acceptance of transfer credit from IUPUI for students who complete the twinning program and remain in Malaysia. This is the first time that UM—the top-ranking university in Malaysia—has ever agreed to accept transfer credit from a U.S. institution. As an added feature of the IU/UM relationship, IUPUI and the University of Malaya are negotiating with Tenaga to jointly manage the program for Tenaga.

The seminar and the meetings that followed have solidified the relationship between IU and the University of Malaya. The two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding last year to collaborate in just these kinds of joint ventures.

— Charles Reafsnyder Director, CIEDA