

# UMS is prepared for autonomy status – Vice Chancellor

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is prepared to be given autonomy status in line with the government's decision to award autonomy to all Public Institutions of Higher Learning in the country by 2015.

Vice chancellor, Prof Datuk Seri Panglima Dr. Kamaruzaman Haji Ampun said for the second phase this year, four more Public Institutions of Higher Learning have been selected to be audited including UMS.

"The management of UMS has studied this matter and I am happy to announce that UMS is ready to be audited to prepare for the autonomy.

"Preparations for the audit have started and the Working Committee

will implement their duties within two months," he said when delivering his keynote address at the Chancellory Hall in UMS here yesterday.

The Self-Assessment document will be submitted to the Malaysian Productivity Corporation (MPC) through the Ministry of Higher Education at least by 10 April this year and the audit visit by MPC is expected to be between 14 to 16 May.

"Even though there is a special task force for the audit, the co-operation and support of everyone in the university is most needed," said Dr. Kamaruzaman.

He added that with the autonomy status, UMS will be able to carry out its own plan to become a world standard institution and will have the power to implement its own decisions through a clear administrative structure.

As of last year, Public Institutions of Higher Learning have been audited

in stages to evaluate their state of preparedness in becoming autonomous.

The autonomous state is based on the principles of integrity and accountability. In the first phase, five Public Institutions of Higher Learning were audited using the Code of University Good Governance and University Good Governance Index.

All five were found to be in compliance and qualified for the autonomous state as of last January.

"When the audit is implemented, we will get a clearer picture of where UMS stands, its weaknesses and therefore we can improve where needed," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Kamaruzaman also announced that UMS now stands among the top three non-research public universities in Malaysia and eighth top university in the country.

He said the webometric ranking

places UMS as 28th in Southeast Asia and 1,289 in the world.

"We are aware that the location of UMS in Borneo is unique and that it is the main factor in elevating us at the national and global levels," he said.

UMS already has several Centres of Excellence and its research niche is well known but none of the Centres of Excellence has been promoted as a Higher Institution Centre of Excellence.

"Efforts to build up the capabilities of the existing Centres of Excellence are necessary to ensure at least one becomes a Higher Institution Centre of Excellence," said Dr. Kamaruzaman.

The Malaysian Research Assessment Instrument (MyRA) score for UMS is 45 per cent or three stars.

He said in order to achieve 70 per cent or four stars, the university must improve its achievement in every component.

"We will enhance data gathering at the UMS level in relation to MyRA and a mini-MyRA system will be introduced in the Schools and Research Centres to enable us to identify our strengths and weaknesses in research and innovation," he added.

He also believes in continuing efforts to commercialise research results by setting up relevant incubators, among others.

"If necessary, there should be a University Publishing Company to spur commercialisation in UMS," he said.

UMS will endeavour to increase its publication of journals to at least 80 this year from the 51 that was published last year.

"The number of research products that have been commercialised and income from the commercialisation of R&D products must also be increased," he added.