



From left: Choo, Chia, Tan, Foo, Ho, Assis, Diana, Sarimah.

TBP 17.07.2025 P. 12

UMS, SEAC to strengthen ties between industry players and academia

KOTA KINABALU: A special task force from the Sabah Economic Advisory Council (SEAC task force) led by Prof Datuk N.K. Foo paid a courtesy visit to the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

It accepted an invitation by Prof. Dr. Ho Chong Mun to explore ways to strengthen ties between industry players and academia.

The meeting focused on understanding current industry needs and develop student-industry engagement pathways; and also to explore and foster collaborations in joint research initiatives, industrial training, academic-industry exchange, and innovation commercialization.

The visit also laid the groundwork for joint efforts in addressing real-world challenges in Sabah's natural resources development, human resource development, and business development sectors.

In his opening remarks, Foo emphasized the urgency of aligning academic outputs with industrial needs.

"The time has come for stronger integration between our institutions of higher learning and the industry ecosystem. We must work together to ensure that Sabah produces not just graduates, but graduates/professionals with skills that can be readily applied on the job. This will then be easier for industry to offer more attractive remuneration when

employing graduates," he stated.

Ir. Ts Tan KJ, JP shared that the collaboration could pave the way for meaningful internships, joint workshops, and multi-disciplinary research programmes.

"We are committed to building a pipeline that connects our brightest students to Sabah's future growth sectors. This includes support for the scientific innovation, natural resources management and development, and SME capacity building," he said.

Ir. Chia KF and Ir. Eugene Choo echoed the sentiment, stressing the importance of SME participation in research-based problem solving, industry-focused curriculum development, and mentorship programmes to cultivate young talent and entrepreneurship.

UMS representatives responded with enthusiasm and optimism.

Associate Professor Assis Kamu, Head of the Mathematics with Economics Programme (UH6461001) – which combines rigorous mathematical training with practical economic applications, offering specialised expertise in forecasting and analytical methods – acknowledged the need for such synergy, saying, "This is a timely initiative. We welcome the SEAC task force's proactive engagement and look forward to formalising strategic collaborations that benefit students, researchers, and the broader

community."

As part of the proposed collaboration, the SEAC task force and UMS are exploring the formation of an Industry-Academia Engagement Framework, involving internship placements, applied research projects, guest lectures by industry professionals, and knowledge-sharing platforms.

The visit concluded on a high note with all parties expressing strong commitment to work closely in advancing Sabah's science, technological advancement and natural resources development to align with the goals of Sabah Maju Jaya (SMJ) 2.0 and the State's long-term development agenda.

The delegation was warmly received by senior academic leaders of UMS, including, Prof. Dr. Jualang @ Azlan Abdullah bin Gansau, Dean, Associate Professor Dr. Assis Kamu, Head of Programme; Professor Dr. Ho Chong Mun; Dr. Sarimah Surianshah; and Dr. Diana Hassan.

The SEAC task force included prominent engineering and business leaders: Ir. Ts. Tan KJ, JP, Vice-President of the Sabah China Chamber of Commerce (SCCC), Vice-Chairman of IEM Sabah, Past President of the Sabah Engineers Association (SEA), and Past Chairman of ACEM Sabah; Ir. Chia KF, Vice-President of SME Sabah and Past Vice-Chairman of ACEM Sabah; and Ir. Eugene Choo VJ, Past Vice-President of SME Sabah.