

UMS, Apple discuss collab for Borneo Digital Hub

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) received a courtesy visit from a delegation from Apple Inc. for a strategic discussion on the establishment of a world-class "Learning Space" digital learning hub in Borneo.

Chairing the session, UMS Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Prof Dr Rossita Shapawi, said the visit was aimed at strengthening bilateral ties between UMS and Apple Inc, while also exploring potential collaboration in digital talent development and learning technology.

"Beyond serving as a key centre for technical professional development in Borneo, this initiative also supports the National Digital Skills Action Plan and the AI Nation aspiration.

"It focuses on developing courses in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), iOS app development, and the creative industry," she said.

Prof Rossita added that the discussion also emphasised project implementation costs as a critical area requiring joint



UMS Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Prof Dr Rossita Shapawi (left), chairs a discussion with the Apple Inc delegation led by Dominic Liechti (centre).

strategies.

"The project involves high initial capital expenditure (CAPEX) for hardware provision and trainer training, as well as ongoing operating expenditure (OPEX) for equipment and software maintenance.

"UMS stressed the importance of an official commitment from Apple to ensure this investment can be implemented sustainably.

"The high start-up costs must be offset by shared financing strategies, including hardware contributions, development

licences, and subsidies for UMS master trainer programmes.

"In addition, UMS has proposed that Apple provide an official letter of confirmation from its top management to guarantee the project's credibility and boost investor confidence," she said.

Other proposals included a joint investment model, with Apple contributing to core infrastructure.

"This model would reduce UMS's financial burden while sending a positive signal to strategic investment partners,"

Prof Rossita added.

The Apple Inc delegation was led by Dominic Liechti, Senior Director for Worldwide Development Relations, Enterprise and Education Marketing, accompanied by senior officials including Erli Valdez, Wan Noraini Wan Daud, Kartini Mohd Basri, Sathes Narayanan and Adeline Lim.

Also present from UMS were chief librarian Zawawi Tiyunin and director of the Centre for E-Learning, Prof Dr Fong Soon Fook.