

UMS continues to teach students to serve people

BP 24.5.13 A12

LABUAN: University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Labuan International Campus will continue to prepare its students with necessary skills, competency and knowledge to be able to serve populations with diverse social, ethics, economic and educational experiences.

Both the academic and training curricula in UMS are designed to provide an environment in which students can develop the skills and attitudes essential to working with people from a wide range of backgrounds after their graduation.

To realise its objectives, a number of important topics related to marketing issues and consumer behavior had been presented in a just-concluded seminar, with its final students given opportunity to access their ability, identifying weaknesses and exposing them with well-organized study plans before entering the job market.

The establishment or reinvention of university is not simply a willful institutional makeover. Rather, it is being driven by multiple and competing pressures: increased access to groups formerly excluded, the creation of human capital, the development of economically useful knowledge, greater levels of efficiency and public accountability, and demands for excellence.

Laura Lotius Bagu, who led a group of students of international marketing programme to conduct research and public survey, said in a statement yesterday a total of 25 working papers were presented detailing the analysis findings on consumer behavior, marketing strategy and execution in developing local market, that can be used as tools in the development of local market trend and consumerism.

"In preparation for the working papers for the seminar, we have been able to appreciate the importance of understanding consumer behavior in the design and execution of marketing strategy.

"It gets students to understand the concept of value and how it

is important at any price level, especially in comparing and contrasting consumer behavior across developed and developing local markets.

It also enables us to understand how marketing strategy is designed and executed after understanding consumer behavior and to understand how the marketing programmes and reinforce product positioning," she said.

Topics presented included Green Hotel Knowledge and tourists' staying behavior, Green Marketing Function in building corporate image in the retail setting, Green Food Consumption Intention and Behavior, Information Privacy Concern and Online Shopping Experiences.

She said the seminar had benefited students who gained knowledge and skills on research, analytical skills in decision-making process.

"Specifically, it has enabled students to identify characteristics and the scope of research, explore the research design and measuring scale, understand the data collection, including the preparation and analysis.

"What is imperative is that students are exposed on the use of computer software for data entry, data cleaning, data analysis and data interpretation such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 based on the developed questionnaire and collected data.

"They could apply the knowledge to solve marketing or business-related issues through research and be able to understand, analyze and interpret the SPSS output," she said.

The various marketing issues as detailed in the working papers have been analysed by interviewing random traders concerning services, ethics and quality perceived.

The findings also suggested for traders and consumers to concentrate their efforts on the improvement of quality of services to promptly respond to the target group of customers and foster a stronger relationship

with surrounding economic and productive systems.

The seminar, officiated by Associate Professor of Labuan School of International Business and Finance, Professor Dr Norazah Mohd Suki, has enabled students to examine the various key issues contributing to socio-economic and community development.

"This is one way for university students to get involved in a change process and adopting an entrepreneurial approach to better serve people after graduation. We believe higher learning institutions are now adopting a customer centric approach for students. The assignment given to students provides a wide analysis of the services perception tested and viewed through students' eyes.

"This paper examines whether or not consumers are caring about ethical behavior, and investigates the effect of good and bad ethical conduct on consumer purchase behavior. And through focus group discussions, it becomes clear that although we are more sophisticated as consumers today, this does not necessarily translate into behavior which favors ethical companies and punishes unethical firms. The papers concluded by some thoughts on how marketers might encourage consumers to engage in positive purchase behavior in favor of ethical marketing.

"We hope the information gathered can help in the teaching of concepts from marketing management (segmentation, targeting, customer perceived value, the consumer buying process, and marketing mix); competitive strategy (environmental analysis, how to chunk down information from a macro-context to a micro-context; concept of synergy; benchmarking and choosing strategic groups; industry analysis) and communication strategy (setting a communication objective; choosing the communication mix and building control measures)," Laura added.