

UMS to work together with KPTM

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Dr Arsiah (third from right) exchanging LOI documents with Mohd Aziz, witnessed by KPTM Semporna Director, Zolkifli Mohd Sidek (fifth from right) and other guests

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) School of Business and Economics (SBE) yesterday signed a letter of intent (LOI) with Kolej Poly-Tech Mara (KPTM) Semporna to pave the way for academic collaboration between the two institutions.

Dean of SBE, Assoc Prof Dr Arsiah Bahron welcomed KPTM's proposal to collaborate with UMS and that the matter had long been discussed.

"Prior to obtaining the approval of the UMS Senate and to initiate a memorandum of understanding (MoU), it is better to sign a LOI to facilitate discussions at the next level," said Dr Arsiah at the LOI signing ceremony held at UMS' Chancellor's Building, here.

She said SBE was very pleased to help in terms of providing expertise and learning content to students pursuing certificate and diploma level studies at KPTM Semporna.

In the meantime, she said, the collaboration would also pave the way for KPTM Semporna to forge academic cooperation with other schools in UMS.

Meanwhile, Chairman of KPTM Malaysia, Mohd Aziz Jamman said cooperation with institutions of higher learning such as UMS is one of the initiatives of KPTM to upgrade more of its branch campuses to a university college.

"Collaboration with UMS will be a catalyst to turn KPTM Semporna, the first KPTM rural campus into a university college," he said.

Mohd Aziz said KPTM Kuala Lumpur was upgraded to a university college in September 2014 and KPTM Bangi was

expected to become a university college by early 2015.

He said although KPTM planned to upgrade all its branch campuses to university college status, the target dates had not yet been fixed as various aspects such as qualification of academic staff and infrastructure as well as financial aspects had to be taken into consideration.

KPTM Semporna, which was set up more than three years ago, has two campuses to accommodate 650 students. Its permanent college building, which is expected to be ready next year, can accommodate about 3,000 students.

The site for the permanent college building had been identified and land acquisition will be carried out before construction work begins early next year, Mohd Aziz said.

He hoped that the signing of the LOI with SBE will accelerate the process of upgrading the qualifications of the college's teaching staff, especially by studying abroad.

Among the requirements to become a university college is that the teaching faculty must have at least a Bachelor's degree and 15 per cent of KPTM staff must have a PhD degree, he said.

Mohd Aziz said KPTM Malaysia now focused on building colleges in states that are yet to have its branch campuses such as Sarawak, Penang and Negeri Sembilan.

He said this was in line with the government's move through the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development to build KPTM in rural areas so that students would not have to go to the cities to pursue higher education.

"If we have sufficient funds and approval from our proprietor MARA, KPTM will be set up in Sarawak next year," he said.