

UMS launches special study scheme

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Vice Chancellor, Prof Datuk Dr Taufiq Yap Yun Hin, said UMS recently launched a special study scheme called Covid-19 Impact Recovery Grant (GPIC19-UMS).

"This grant focuses on research and innovation projects that can contribute to the solution of the Covid-19 issue, either in terms of providing suggestions and information to policy makers, or offering technology as a solution," he said in a statement.

He said that as the largest public university in Sabah, it is UMS' responsibility to focus on local issues.

"In the early weeks of the Covid-19 crisis, UMS' research team went down to the ground and communicated with various stakeholders to identify key issues and as a result of the survey, the GPIC19-UMS was initiated to help address some key issues in several important sectors," he said.

According to Taufiq, until July 15, UMS

has approved a total of 125 research projects and 36 innovation projects under the GPIC19-UMS scheme with funds amounting to RM7.6 million.

The project involves a multi-disciplinary approach that includes; health and medical Areas - 47 projects with a fund of RM2.7 million, agriculture - 15 projects with a fund of RM745,000, education - 18 projects with a fund of RM460,000, field of human social welfare - 41 projects with a fund of RM1.3 million.

It also includes economics and tourism - 16 projects with a fund of RM495,000 and fundamentals of science and environment - 23 projects with a fund of RM1.9 million.

He further explained that to facilitate the implementation of GPIC19-UMS, there are four main clusters each headed by a coordinator.

"Each cluster focuses on a specific issue domain, and all equivalent and interconnected projects will be under the

same cluster.

"This not only increase efficiency in terms of management and monitoring but can also create synergies and smart partnerships in terms of financial resources and energy," he said.

The four clusters are;

InnoForCovid Cluster led by Associate Prof Dr Jidon Janaun. It focuses on issues that require innovative solutions of equipment and mechanical technology, especially those related to medicine, health, business, and industry and community well-being.

AgriSolutions Cluster led by Dr Yasmin Ooi, who is also a member of the National Agricultural Advisory Council. It focuses on agriculture issues "from farm to plate", which includes problems related to cultivation, processing and marketing.

The DigiForCovid Cluster is led by Associate Prof Dr Syed Nasirin Syed Zainol Abidin focuses on issues that require so-

lutions in the form of digital technology and information.

BioTechTeam Cluster led by Dr Zarina Amin and Prof Dr Lee Ping Chin focuses on fundamental issues that are specifically related to the fields of genome, virology, microbiology, Covid-19 testing and vaccine development.

The GPIC19-UMS involves some 300 researchers from 10 faculties and four institutes at UMS which also involves collaboration from 10 government agencies (Federal and State), 11 private and industrial agencies and 18 communities throughout Sabah.

"The projects involved are implemented in various forms including fundamental research and applications, knowledge transfer, technological interventions and grassroots innovation.

"The output of all studies is directly linked to stakeholders in the field, whether decision makers, industry or community," said Taufiq.



UMS Vice Chancellor Prof Datuk ChM. Dr Taufiq Yap Yun Hin (second right) with UMS Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) Assoc Prof Ts Dr Ramzah Dambul during the visit.