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Greening efforts at UNITEN take off

IN LINE with the government's green technology policy and Tenaga Nasional Berhad's focus on energy, University Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN) recently followed through by turning its campus into an environmentally sustainable one.

Prof Ir Dr Kamal Nasharuddin Mustapha (pic), UNITEN's deputy vice-chancellor of Student Affairs, Alumni and Management said, "People think if you want to embark on a green mission, the exercise is bound to be costly or time-consuming. Yet the simple act of driving to the corner shop means having to find parking and your car will be burning a form of fossil fuel – petrol. It not only costs money but also affects the environment," he explained.

UNITEN's plan to go green campus wide affects staff and students alike. In doing so, the university hopes to cultivate a culture of



energy efficiency and conservation among students and staff members.

To achieve the important aspects in life, one is to promote healthy living and reduce traffic congestion in campus.

"Students these days drive big cars, some even larger than those of our lecturers. Providing parking

space becomes a never-ending process. The solution is to reduce traffic flow within the campus," said Prof Kamal.

He also mentioned reducing the cost of shuttle buses in the campus. UNITEN's Kajang campus has six buses that run internally every day, transporting students from their apartments to lecture rooms. This is costly and adds to the carbon emission.

UNITEN's solution was to propose cycling within the campus, with cycling routes plotted out within the campus, complete with dedicated cycling lanes and bicycle parking bays. The university will also provide covered walkways connecting one building to another, starting from the main gate.

About half of these walkways have been completed and Prof Kamal said the whole length will be done by next year. While the structural implementation is taking

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place, the more intangible campaigns to increase awareness and create a sustainable culture have also been running concurrently.

"There is little point in introducing all these infrastructural changes if the students themselves are not convinced about implementing the new plans," said Prof Kamal.

The greening exercise has the support of the student representative council. The university actively sought their views and feedback – which was largely positive – during the planning stage.

Waste minimisation is overseen by the Waste Minimisation Committee, and chaired by UNITEN's vice-chancellor, with heads of departments in attendance – to minimise waste within the campus.

Over the last three years, the university has reduced electric usage by 8% annually. This was achieved via the awareness campaigns of

conserving energy, such as switching off power whenever it is not used. For water, the main concern was leakages, which was solved by reviewing the piping system.

Prof Kamal added, "Students are very active in supporting this initiative. Most projects are done on their own, like avoiding the use of polystyrene materials and separation of rubbish."

UNITEN has three intakes, the main one in May/June, in September/October and the last one in February/March. Students can register for the upcoming February/March intake on Saturday, Feb 28 at UNITEN's Administration Building at 8.30am to 2pm. Registration, however, will remain open until March 15. Lecture sessions will begin on March 9. Students can also apply online until Feb 25.

■ For details or to sign up now, visit www.uniten.edu.my.

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Chia June Yong
03-7966 8237
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Kamariah Noor
03-7966 8227
kamariah@thestar.com.my

