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UM breaks into top 50

NATION

Wednesday, 7 Feb 2018

By **Christina Chin**

PETALING JAYA: Two local universities have done the country proud in the Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University Rankings 2018.

Universiti Malaya (UM) broke into the top 50 list, while Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) made it into the top 100.

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For the first time in the table's six-year history, UM joined the top 50 after making its debut in the list last year, said THE global rankings editorial director Phil Baty.

According to the THE "top 350+" Asian universities list published today, UM jumped 13 spots up from 59th to 46th position.

UTAR, which was in the 99th spot, ranked between 111 and 120 last year.

The 2018 ranking includes 359 universities.

Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Utara Malaysia also made the list (see graphics).

THE acting rankings editor Ellie Bothwell said UM improved in all five areas underpinning the ranking – teaching, research, citation impact, industry income and international outlook.

UTAR received a much higher citation impact and also achieved higher scores for its teaching and research environments, she said.

A total of 12 Malaysian universities submitted data for the rankings.

UM vice-chancellor Datuk Abdul Rahim Hashim said that the university's participation in ranking systems was to benchmark itself against other higher learning institutions to plan for further improvement.

"Over the years, UM has improved in building on its fundamentals but it's also pertinent for us to continue improving our graduate employability, networking and collaboration with industries and international strategic partnerships."

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He expressed hope that the Higher Education Ministry would continue to support UM in rising further in future rankings.

Abdul Rahim said this is a great achievement for the university and a further indication of UM's continued improvement in the ranking system of THE.

The improvement in rankings is an affirmation of the university's strategic plan as UM continues to strive to be an internationally renowned institution of higher learning in teaching, research, publication and innovation, he said.

Describing it as a "great recognition", UTAR president Prof Datuk Dr Chuah Hean Teik said the university uses ranking exercises as a benchmark to further improve, not to compare itself with others.

Different rankings are focused on different areas, he said.

"In some, reputation based on survey is given high weightage, while THE rankings gives high weightage on research and citation of published works," Dr Chuah said, adding that it is important for UTAR to keep improving, and to continue providing affordable and high quality tertiary education.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh said UM's performance proved that the country's oldest university was on the right track to joining the world's top 100 universities.

"Having our universities on the list shows that we're serious about benchmarking at an international level.

"We want to better understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to improve.

"This will bode well as we embark on quality research that is relevant to the challenges of Industry 4.0," he said.

National University of Singapore topped the rankings, followed by China's Tsinghua University and Peking University.

TAGS / KEYWORDS:

Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2018