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Season's greetings to all. Looking ahead, year 2011 is projected to be another eventful year for Taylor's University as far as research and development is concerned. After a good year in 2010, the pressure is on to further position and brand Taylor's as a reputable institution that is able to produce top notch research output. Hence, we are currently restructuring the 5-year research strategic plan for 2011-2015.

The 10th Malaysia Plan emphasises the importance of research and development as a means of propelling Malaysia towards a high-income nation, recognising that the foundation of any productive high-income economy lies in its globally competitive, creative and innovative workforce. For Malaysia to survive in the new economy, it is imperative that research and development (R&D) and commercialisation of the R&D products become the national agenda of the country.

Hence, the role of all institutions of higher learning, both public and private, is critical. All modern universities in the knowledge-era need to (i) generate knowledge; (ii) disseminate knowledge to facilitate translation of knowledge into tangible and intangible products in a trans-disciplinary manner; (iii) train the human capital to be relevant and support the innovative culture; (iv) enhance commercialisation of R&D products and development of knowledge-based enterprises; and finally, (v) provide sustainable solutions to the community via community engagement so as to enhance their quality of life. In short, all universities are expected to go through R-D-C-I-O, that is, Research-Development-Commercialisation-Innovation-Outcome.

Subsequently, all institutions of higher learning including Taylor's University need to change the paradigm to do research in Malaysia. In the new economy, a discovery has no value until it can benefit the public. Publishing and winning gold medals for innovations created are not enough. It has to be commercialised or at least add value to society or industry. Discoveries and products cannot reach the public until it has been innovated or commercialised. Research performed must be client based rather than researcher based. It must be priority driven rather than investigator driven. Experimental design strategy must be from Z to A, rather than A to Z.

Thus, Taylor's University needs to be aligned with the changing landscape in the research front, both nationally and internationally in order to succeed in this competitive field. We need to be aware of the change in the paradigm to do translational research. Thus, we need to (i) carry out R&D that has impact by combining fundamental and applied research; (ii) work in a cluster/team of multi-disciplinary experts to provide solutions to problems; (iii) learn concepts of entrepreneurship so that the innovation is commercially viable; (iv) choose technology platforms well and acquire the technology foresight to predict the trend of technology; (v) be prepared years in advance so that the innovation we produce will remain technologically competitive in the global market; (vi) and finally prepare Malaysia today for the unknown tomorrow.

In line with this, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has come up with MyRA, the Malaysian Research Assessment instrument that is used to assess mandatory Research Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for every institution of higher learning in Malaysia. All Malaysian universities, if they want to retain their university status, are required to achieve a minimum MyRA score of 30% by the year 2015, while those aspiring to research university status are required to achieve a minimum score of 75%. Additionally, the MoHE Rating System for Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (SETARA), that significantly influences public perception of an institution's quality and subsequently its attractiveness as a potential alma mater, will soon be closely linked to MyRA.

Hence, every academic at Taylor's University has no choice but to play a role to contribute towards this translational research agenda. The Centre for Research & Development will provide all support, where possible, to your journey towards becoming a successful researcher and knowledge contributor in line with the research agenda of the nation.

Cheers and happy researching,

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