

Ticket to ivy league universities

2010/11/19

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SHAH ALAM: Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) will offer 25 of its top graduates full scholarships to pursue post-graduate studies at the world's best universities each year.

Disclosing this in an interview with NST-UiTM Varsity Voice Vice Chancellor Datuk Professor Dr Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar said the project will take off next year with the first batch of students heading off in September 2011.

“Every year, we will offer 25 of our best graduates the opportunity of a lifetime to further their education at ivy league universities in the USA, the UK, Australia and other countries,” he said.

Among the universities were Harvard, Princeton, Yale and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Oxford, Cambridge and the Imperial College of London, and the universities of Sydney and Melbourne in Australia.

However, enrolment would depend on whether the candidates from UiTM are able to meet the stringent pre-requisites at these universities.

“Naturally, we hope to have as many of our graduates as possible in the world's top universities, but we understand that places at schools of such calibre are limited and highly competitive,” said Sahol.

For this reason, potential candidates nominated by their respective faculties will be interviewed by a selection committee and also undergo training in various soft skills to ensure that they are ready to face any challenge.

The Vice Chancellor said UiTM would extend the offer to graduates from every faculty although priority would be given to students of science and technology.

Successful candidates would be bonded for service as lecturers once they had completed their programmes.

This project is part of UiTM's Program Meletak Melayu Dalam Peta Dunia (Putting Malays on the World Map Programme).

It is also a reflection of Sahol's vision to transform UiTM into a top university on par with the likes of Harvard within 20 years.

He stressed: "We want to be on the world map by acquiring the best academic credentials from the world's best universities."

"I hope in ten years' time, we can become a world-class research university. People all over the world always mention Harvard as the pinnacle for education and it is not impossible for us to attain the same prestige inside of two decades," he said.

However, while Harvard gives priority to the privileged to produce the best, UiTM will continue its policy of taking in the "...underprivileged but also produce the best".

Added Sahol, "What sets us apart is that we welcome students from all walks of life and not just the rich, powerful and privileged."

(Note: The above article was published in the first issue of Varsity Voice, a monthly publication jointly produced by the New Straits Times and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) under the newspaper's Journalism on Campus project.

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