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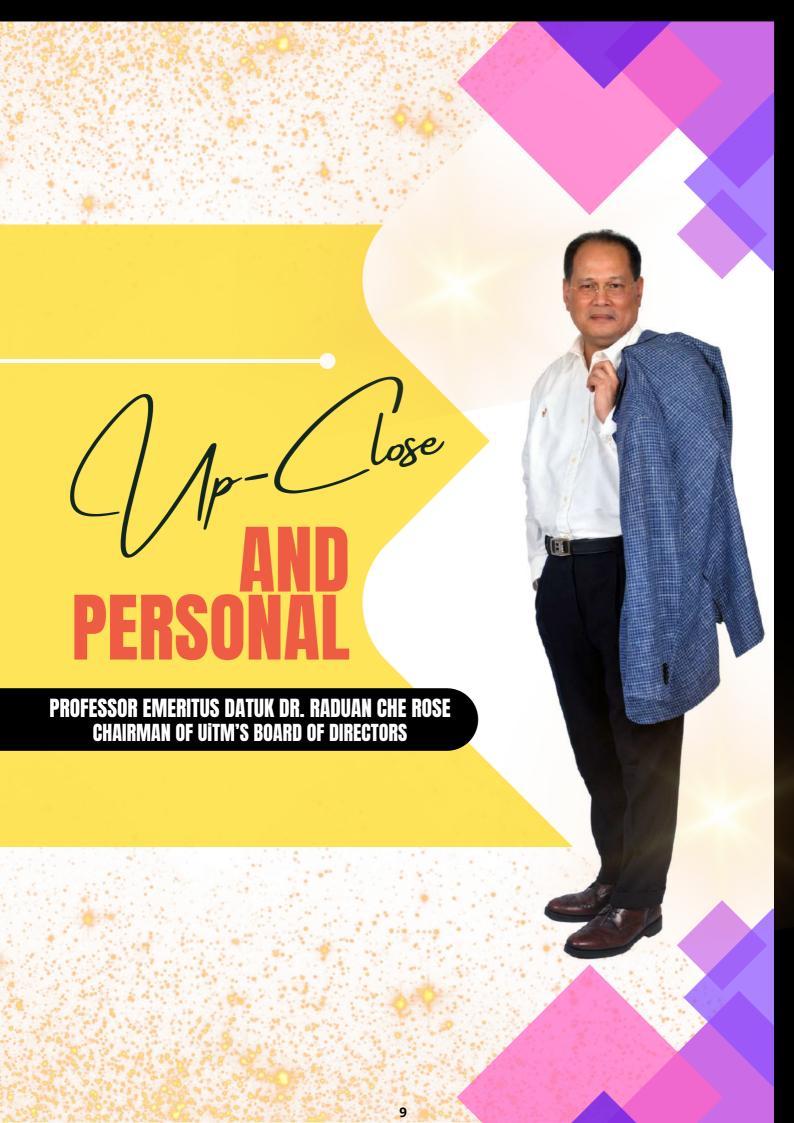












BREAKING BOUNDARIES: THE TRANSFORMATIVE VISION OF UITM'S CHAIRMAN FOR THE FUTURE



AUTHORS: DR. NORLIZA CHE YAHYA & DR. MOHAMMAD ZULFAKHAIRI MOKTHAR On the 26th of December 2023, SOCENTIUM had the privilege of an exclusive interview with the esteemed Chairman of UiTM's Board of Directors, Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr. Raduan Che Rose. This enlightening discussion delved into UiTM's goals, challenges, and its pivotal role in shaping Malaysia's future. In an open and insightful dialogue, Datuk Chairman addressed UiTM's commitment to academic excellence, challenges surrounding Article 153 of the Federal Constitution and UiTM 173 Act, and the delicate balance the institution faces between tradition and global competitiveness.

Datuk Chairman opened the conversation by sharing valuable insights on UiTM's strategic goals and impending challenges. In response to a question about UiTM's role in advancing its present agenda and the strategic challenges it faces, Datuk Chairman emphasized the university's crucial mission.

"The fundamental purpose of UiTM is clear — to serve as a leading institution for the education of Malays and Bumiputera, meticulously preparing them for a prominent role in the economic sector.

However, this mission goes beyond mere inclusivity; it aspires to elevate these communities to the highest levels of education."

Datuk Chairman acknowledged the delicate balance UiTM needs to achieve. Besides meeting the educational demands of Malays and Bumiputera, UiTM must be positioned as a major player in the global education arena. The goal is clear: UiTM should rank among the top universities globally and lead the country in shaping the educational landscape, fostering innovation, and producing respected and entrepreneurial graduates, contributing significantly to the nation's progress.

This dual commitment entails protecting UiTM's competitiveness globally developing local talent, especially in the underprivileged B40 segment. UiTM faces hurdles as it charts this ambitious course. Pushing students, particularly those in the B40 segment, to new heights while standards upholding academic is challenging. In UiTM's ideal world, Malays Bumiputera and will not only fulfill international academic requirements but also play a major role in advancing the university's reputation for excellence abroad.

When asked about strategic actions to address the educational challenges faced by the B40 segment, Datuk Chairman widened the perspective, stressing that this issue extends beyond UiTM and is, in fact, a outlined national concern. He fundamental solution of enhancing access to tertiary education as imperative for Malaysia.

"It is essential for at least 50% of Malaysian youth to have the opportunity to pursue higher education. In this context, UiTM plays a pivotal role, acting as a major player in providing these opportunities in particular to ensure enrolment of students with zero withdrawal rate."

His response seamlessly tied into the national imperative with UiTM's unique position, leveraging its size and facilities to contribute significantly to this ambitious goal. Referring to the targets set by the former Prime Minister in 2005, where UiTM aimed for 200,000 students by 2015 and 250,000 by 2025, Datuk Chairman injected a note of realism. He emphasized the need for a balanced approach, considering UiTM's resources, academic capabilities, facilities, and budget.

This nuanced perspective aimed to set realistic expectations, aligning aspirations with the practicalities of managing a large institution like UiTM.

In outlining UiTM's strategies for income generation, Datuk Chairman has proposed a comprehensive three-pronged approach. Firstly, the institution will leverage its academic programs, with a particular focus on offshore, postgraduate, and franchise programs. Secondly, the exploration of avenues from asset monetization stands as a key initiative, aiming to contribute significantly to the university's coffers. Finally, establishment of smart partnerships with alumni is envisioned, seeking both financial support and active alumni involvement in advancing the institution. With ambitious financial targets, UiTM aims to generate 30% of its allocated budget and achieve an impressive RM1 billion income by the year 2025. These strategies underscore UiTM's ensuring proactive stance in financial sustainability and active engagement with its academic community and alumni network.

When the conversation delved into the intricate realm of Article 153 of the Federal Constitution and UiTM 173 Act, Datuk Chairman provided a comprehensive explanation of these articles, explaining why the UiTM community should understand these two main sources of UiTM's establishment and emphasizing their role in granting special privileges to ensure Malays' and Bumiputera's access to higher education.

"To grasp the essence of Article 153 and UiTM 173 Act, we must contextualize our nation's current situation. We are confronted with a stark disparity in achievements, economic participation, and asset values."

"The Malays and Bumiputera find themselves lagging behind, a concern that prompted the inception of the National Economic Policy spanning from 1970 to 1990. However, despite these efforts, the gaps persist."

Article 153 and UiTM 173 Act, as explained by Datuk Chairman, extend special privileges to Malays and Bumiputera, addressing the historical imbalance. The intent is not to overshadow other communities, as they are free to pursue education in alternative systems. UiTM stands as a dedicated institution aiming to uplift Malays and Bumiputera socio-economically, commitment to enrolling a significant number of students from these groups in alignment with the broader goal of reducing disparities and fostering a more equitable prosperous future. Datuk Chairman's emphasis on understanding the historical context and intention behind these provisions reinforces UiTM's role in in addressing inequalities and contributing to a more dynamic Malaysia.

In envisioning the future trajectory of UiTM during his tenure and anticipating significant transformations ahead, Datuk Chairman responded,

"I am resolute in aligning our aspirations with Malaysia's goal of becoming a leading tertiary education hub in the region, positioning the university as a key player in both national and international academic landscapes."

"In forging ahead, UiTM maintains a dual focus that underlines our distinctive commitment. Despite our primary dedication to meeting the educational needs of the Malays and Bumiputera, our commitment to global competitiveness stands unwavering. This vision extends beyond national borders, signifying our ambition to be a genuine global player, and this is not just an objective it's a mandate we fervently uphold."

To concretize this global perspective, UiTM is committed to meticulously measuring each against rigorous international step benchmarks. The pursuit of excellence is reflecting the ceaseless, determination to ensure that every facet of its programs attains a stature aligning with the very best across the globe. This global mandate serves as a testament to Datuk unwavering dedication Chairman's providing an education that not only meets international standards but sets new heights. In essence, this commitment signifies UiTM's determination to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the finest institutions worldwide. This journey toward academic distinction is further underscored by the institution's embrace of the 5S Framework proposed by Datuk Chairman, which includes Shared value, Structure, System, Strategy, and Staff development. Through this comprehensive framework, UiTM aims not only to boost organizational efficiency but also empower its staff and students for a dynamic future.

Lastly, in rebuilding UiTM's image, the vision extends beyond financial considerations to encompass robust governance and holistic institutional development.

"The transformation I seek goes beyond the superficial; it is a profound shift in mindset and operation. UiTM is not merely a repository of knowledge but a dynamic force shaping the educational landscape. Therefore, as we navigate the complexities of academia, my aspiration is for UiTM to not just meet but exceed the benchmarks we set for ourselves. Each program, each initiative, should be a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence. In essence, the transformation I envision is a continual journey toward academic distinction, global recognition, and societal impact."



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