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Academic Collaboration on Ecological Sustainability Between UiTM and Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat

MOU

20/12/2024 / MAS AIYU JAMALUDIN



Padang, 11 December 2024 – Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat (UMSB), Padang, Indonesia, successfully hosted an academic visit and guest lecture session featuring esteemed lecturers and students from the Department of Park and Amenity Management, School of Geomatic Science & Natural Resources, College of Built Environment, UiTM Shah Alam. This collaboration, which included 3 accompanying UiTM lecturers and 25 final-year UiTM students, marked an important milestone in international partnerships focusing on ecological sustainability, research, and community engagement. The event took place at the main auditorium of UMSB in Padang, Indonesia, with active participation from students and representatives of both institutions.

Insightful Sessions on Sustainability and Community Development

The first lecture session, moderated by Dr. Zulmardi from UMSB, featured UiTM speakers Dr. Siti Noorbaizura Bookhari, Datin Seri Mazzeuen Md. Khalid, and Puan Mas Aiyu Jamaludin. Dr. Siti Noorbaizura shared insights on the impact of recreational activities on natural trails in Peninsular Malaysia, highlighting key challenges such as resource degradation, declining trail integrity, and conflicts

arising from unmanaged tourism activities. Meanwhile, Datin Seri Mazzueen Md. Khalid presented an engaging study on Geoparks in Malaysia, emphasizing the challenges in achieving UNESCO World Geopark status. She highlighted the importance of preserving geological heritage while balancing conservation efforts with community and economic development. To conclude, Puan Mas Aiyu Jamaludin introduced the *International Sulam Program*, which focuses on fostering community development through education and intellectual collaboration. The program explored ecotourism potentials, conservation initiatives, and community-based projects. Notable examples included community engagement in the preservation of giant Asian softshell turtles and the establishment of birdwatching camps in Pahang, showcasing sustainable practices that empower local communities.

The second session, moderated by Dr. H. Marganof, featured UMSB presenters Dr. Hernawati and Dr. Gusmardi Indra. Dr. Gusmardi highlighted the exoticism of Siberut Island, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 1981 and a National Park since 1993, known for its endemic biodiversity, Mentawai culture, and tropical rainforests. Dr. Hernawati discussed ‘*Nepenthes Sumatera*’, a unique pitcher plant species endemic to Sumatra, sharing her research spanning nearly two decades across various regions, including Kerinci, Solok, and Riau.

Following the lectures, an engaging Q&A session allowed participants to delve into topics surrounding sustainable ecotourism, conservation challenges, and community empowerment.

Interactive Dialogues and Collaborative Prospects

After the Zohor prayer, representatives from both universities held a focused discussion session, building on the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UiTM and UMSB. The dialogue centered on exploring expanded opportunities for long-term collaboration in research, education, and student exchange programs.

Simultaneously, students from UiTM and UMSB participated in an interactive session titled “Forestry and Environmental Sustainability”, where they exchanged ideas, shared perspectives, and fostered cross-cultural understanding. The session concluded with a birdwatching activity, providing students with a practical experience of observing local biodiversity while reinforcing the importance of conservation efforts.

Community Outreach: SULAM Project with Panti Asuhan Sayyidah Adawiyah

Another significant purpose of UiTM’s visit to Padang was their involvement in a 3-day SULAM (Service-Learning Malaysia – University for Society) project with Panti Asuhan Sayyidah Adawiyah. This program focused on educational outreach, community engagement, and skill-building activities with orphans. The SULAM project emphasized the importance of education, empowerment, and sustainability while strengthening the bonds between Malaysian and Indonesian communities.

Strengthening Partnerships for the Future

The visit underscored the importance of academic and practical exposure in addressing ecological sustainability challenges at both local and global levels. Dean of the Faculty of Forestry at UMSB, Dr. Teguh Haria Aditia Putra, warmly welcomed UiTM’s participation, highlighting the Faculty of Forestry’s 28-year history and its commitment to education, research, and community service.

This collaboration provided valuable insights and strengthened ties between UiTM and UMSB, paving the way for future joint initiatives that benefit students, researchers, and the broader community.

Penulis: Mas Aiyu Jamaludin, Datin Seri Mazzueen Md. Khalid & Dr. Siti Noorbaizura Bookhari.



Tags: [Kolej Pengajian Alam Bina \(KAP\)](#), [Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat \(UMSB\)](#), [Universiti Teknologi MARA \(UiTM\)](#)

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HUBUNGI KAMI

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
40450 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul
Ehsan
Malaysia

Tel: +603-5544 2051 / 2000

