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Putrajaya, 14 January 2026 – Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has reinforced its strategic role in Malaysia's educational diplomacy through the official appointment and commencement of the 16th Tun Abdul Razak Chair (TARC) Holder at Ohio University. This transition marks a critical phase in the university's commitment to representing Malaysian intellectual and cultural interests on the global stage, moving beyond institutional boundaries to serve as a cornerstone of bilateral relations between Malaysia and the United States.

The Tun Abdul Razak Chair, established in 1980 through a landmark agreement between the Government of Malaysia and Ohio University, remains a vital platform for scholarly exchange. By steering this national mandate, UiTM facilitates high-level research and teaching that projects Malaysia's history, economy, and social fabric to the international academic community.



The appointment of Professor Dr. Shahanum Md Shah, a Professor of Performing Arts and Music from UiTM, as the 16th Chair Holder signifies a refined focus on showcasing Malaysia's

rich intellectual and cultural heritage. Beginning her two-year term in December 2025, Professor Dr. Shahanum is tasked with advancing international collaboration through specialized research and academic leadership in Athens, Ohio.

Professor Dr. Yamin Yasin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) of UiTM, noted that the program continues to play a strategic role in cultural diplomacy, fostering deep-rooted academic excellence between the two nations. This mission builds upon the foundation laid by the 14th Chair Holder, Professor Dr. Habibah Ashari, whose work ensured the long-term sustainability and coordination of the program.



This transition is the direct result of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between UiTM and Ohio University on 24 January 2024. Rather than a singular event, the current deployment of the Chair Holder serves as the tangible execution of that agreement, which established:

- Structured Stewardship: A more robust framework for UiTM to administer the TARC program as Malaysia's primary strategic partner.
- Expanded Scholarly Impact: Increased focus on joint research, postgraduate supervision, and international publications.
- Institutional Legacy: Leveraging a partnership that dates to the 1960s to enhance faculty capacity and global internationalization efforts.

As UiTM continues its trajectory toward becoming a globally renowned university, the Tun Abdul Razak Chair stands as a premier instrument of Malaysia's soft power and academic leadership.



Tags: [Ohio University](#), [Tun Abdul Razak Chair \(TARC\) holder](#), [Universiti Teknologi Malaysia \(UiTM\)](#)

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