



OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 15TH CONFERENCE AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

*TITLE : Administrators' Role in Managing Changes
in Institutions of Higher Learning*



YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Seri Arshad Ayub

Chairman, PFM Capital Holdings Sdn Bhd

Pro Chancellor, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)

Tan Sri Datuk Arshad Ayub, currently the Pro-Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), and noted for his excellent leadership of UiTM, was among the earliest leaders of ITM. He graduated with a Diploma in Agriculture in 1954 from Serdang Agricultural College, Selangor and received his degree in Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Economics and Statistics in 1958 from the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, United Kingdom. In 1964, Tan Sri received his postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration from the International Institute for Management Development (IMEDE), now IMD, in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Tan Sri Datuk Arshad Ayub has had a distinguished career in the Malaysian Civil Service, serving as Deputy Governor of Bank Negara Malaysia (1975 - 1977), Deputy Director General in the Economics Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department (1977 - 1978) and as Secretary General in the Ministry of Primary Industries (1978),



Opening Address — YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Seri Arshad Ayub

Leadership can be anything from monitoring an elementary school class, fine battlefield commander to a bold CEO of a floundering company to a prime minister or president who has to take his country out of an economic recession.

Leadership can occur at just about any age, and it is much more than simply wielding power. Great leaders are not merely born; many of them develop their leadership styles through study, trial, and error, and the experience of success. Great leaders are as concerned about others as they are with themselves, and they are always concerned with change and growth of the organisation and the people around them.

Many times, people confuse "management" with leadership, because managers and leaders have much in common. They both have power, they both use their power to run a business or operation effectively, and they both have other people that rely on them for information, ideas, and the direction of their daily activities. The notion of management, may suggest preservation or maintenance but leadership implies a process towards a higher level of performance

I don't deny that a university needs to fund its activities and be less dependent on the government. I accept the fact that being dependent on the government means we have funds available. But we have to operate on tight budgets and pressure from policy makers to graduate more students

In order to keep pace with a fast-changing landscape on the operation of an institution, it must break their habit of sticking to the status quo. Therefore universities must not manage reactively but strategically. A key problem with managing reactively rather than strategically is a focus on balancing annual budgets rather than making tough, long-term financial decisions that will benefit the institution. As an academic institution a university must have the courage to plan that suits itself in tandem with the nation. To do that it must have the ability to raise its own fund and manage it with high sense of responsibility.

Universities should not wait to begin making changes when changes need to be done. What is needed is a proactive attitude. A step, towards it is to pick priorities and shift funds to them.

As an institution of higher learning a university's priorities will have to include improving rate of students graduating not only with satisfactory results but within specific period and therefore cutting costs. To ensure students will graduate within that specific period and with satisfactory results, latest teaching technology and academic staff improvement will also have to be prioritised. In setting the right priorities a university must eliminate inefficient back-office functions and activities no matter how sentimental they may be. As such funds will be available for other innovative purposes.

Universities hurt themselves by not thinking seriously about right candidates to assume posts that will provide directions. These posts include programme heads, course coordinators, deans and right up to vice chancellors (or presidents). There may be bias for and against internal candidates. Familiarity may be a liability or an asset. But whatever, the right candidate must be found and change in candidate cannot be done for the sake of change.

Minor posts must be taken and regarded as a serious post. They act as training grounds for higher responsibilities in higher posts. Hence later those who have held minor posts will go on to be qualified leaders who will take the reins at campuses in a systematic process. In fact it will be to the advantage to universities if they introduce and implement a policy by which a minor or junior post is a prerequisite for higher post in a progressive manner.

I don't have reliable statistics to back my argument that insiders rather than outsiders generally do better as academic administrators. From the cost point of view internal hiring helps to eliminate a national search, which is expensive and time-consuming. Therefore present governing administrators (including faculty deans, senate members and even lower-level administrators) should do more to identify possible future academic administrators. They should work with and encourage those identified as potential leaders.

Of course not everyone will agree. National searches may help universities identify selective candidates. Also finding future academic administrators among campus academic staff sometimes is not feasible.

Communication and relationship are determinants to a healthy environment. What to be stressed here is that a university must strive to have a healthy management staff relationship. Good communications between management and staff (academic and non academic) are the reasons for that healthy relationship.

Management must not belittle academicians. Disrespect can go both ways. Academicians on their part should not often think management as those who take pride in their positions who care only about the bottom line of cost saving. Any decision must be in the interest of all parties. It is better to have an open debate to avoid trash talking which is poisonous to shared governance.

Making good decisions together requires mutual respect. One must listen intensively and never assume the negative.

The Government has said that the era of government knows best is over. Similarly, and to be fair the governing of a university, stakeholders must not associate the management with bureaucracy, failed programmes, inefficiency, waste, and all kinds of words, concepts, and images that are in turn associated with negative emotions for the average people. There should now be an attitude of associating acts initiated by management with positive intention. The best way and most effective way to counter negative perceptions is to make all parties conscious of their responsibility and accept that acts no matter how painful, have to be implemented for a synergistic effect that benefits all concerned. Much more than management university or any organisation needs leadership.

Leadership is ability to lead a group of followers effectively, make organisations successful, and still maintain valid principles and ideals. Leaders must have followers to be successful, and they must know how to treat the followers to ensure their success. It is just in projection but in reality leaders should have values that are consistent with high moral and ethical standards, and they should know how to motivate others effectively. Leaders often must have leadership styles that fit into four highly developed categories,

and they can interchange these leadership styles when they suit and make the most sense in given situations.

Thus they will have the ability to motivate their followers and elicit change, and change is a vital element of a great leader, they have to know how to create successful change and motivate others to change, too.