

APB Rembau e-Bulletin

e-ISSN: 2682-776X

Edition: 12/2023

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March to October 2023

Strengthening Educational Ties: UiTM's Collaboration with IAIN Palangka Raya, Indonesia

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Soo Kum Yoke, Siti Aishatul-Humairah binti Muhammad Fisol & Muhamad Khairul bin Ahmad

In the globalized world of education, international collaborations among universities have become increasingly important. These partnerships not only enrich the academic experiences of students but also foster cultural exchange and knowledge sharing. One such remarkable collaboration occurred when representatives from Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Palangka Raya, Indonesia, paid a visit to Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Rembau Campus on August 17, 2023. In response, UiTM reciprocated with a visit to Indonesia during the 7th Borneo Undergraduate Academic Forum (BUAF) from September 11 to September 14, 2023. This exchange of visits marked the beginning of significant activities aimed at enhancing collaborative efforts between the two institutions.

1. Extension of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

One of the most crucial outcomes of the visit was the extension of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UiTM and IAIN Palangka Raya. This MoU serves as the foundation for their collaboration and outlines

various areas of cooperation, including academic exchanges, joint research projects, and faculty development. By extending the MoU, both institutions solidified their commitment to strengthening their partnership and expanding opportunities for their students and staff.



Pic 1: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Soo Kum Yoke with Dr. Nurul Wahdah M.Pd (Deputy Rector 1, IAIN Palangka Raya) with the finalized MoU extension documents.

2. Keynote Address on "Culture Identities and 21st Century Education"

During the visit to IAIN Palangka Raya, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Soo Kum Yoke delivered a keynote address on the topic of "Culture Identities and 21st Century Education" at the 7th Borneo Undergraduate Academic Forum. Dr. Soo's presentation explored the intricate relationship between culture, identity, and modern education. Her thought-provoking

address served as a catalyst for discussions and reflections among the attendees.



Pic 2: Keynote speaker for BUAF 2023

3. International Guest Lecture on "Integrating Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in EFL Reading Class"

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Soo Kum Yoke was also invited as an International Guest Lecturer to IAIN Palangka Raya. Her lecture, titled "Integrating Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in EFL Reading Class," was a valuable opportunity for English language undergraduate students to gain insights from an expert in the field. Dr. Soo's lecture emphasized the importance of fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, a topic of growing significance in the realm of education.



Pic 3: Guest Lecture with English Language Undergraduates

4. Presentation at the 7th BUAF Conference: "Students' Awareness of Artificial Intelligence in Language Learning"

During the 7th Borneo Undergraduate Academic Forum (BUAF) Conference, a research paper titled "Students' Awareness of Artificial Intelligence in Language Learning" was presented by Siti Aishatul-Humairah binti Muhammad Fisol, Soo Kum Yoke, and Muhamad Khairul bin Ahmad. The paper explored the evolving landscape of language education in the context of artificial intelligence (AI). It examined students' awareness and perceptions of AI's role in language learning, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities presented by AI in the education sector.



Pic 3: Paper presentation – Lecturer (Dosen) Session

The Significance of these Collaborative Activities

The series of activities that transpired during the visits of representatives from both institutions hold immense significance for the future of education and cultural exchange between UiTM and IAIN Palangka Raya:

- *Cultural Exchange*: These visits provided an excellent platform for cultural exchange between students and faculty members of both universities. Cultural understanding and appreciation are essential in today's interconnected world, and these interactions help bridge cultural gaps.

- *Academic Growth*: The extension of the MoU and the various academic activities conducted during the visits will undoubtedly foster academic growth. Students and faculty from both institutions can benefit from joint research projects, international conferences, and collaborative teaching efforts.

- *Research Collaboration*: The research paper presented at the BUAF Conference is a testament to the potential for research collaboration between UiTM and IAIN Palangka Raya. By pooling their resources and expertise, these institutions can address complex issues in education and contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

- *Enhanced Learning Opportunities*: Students, in particular, stand to benefit from these collaborative efforts. International guest lectures, joint seminars, and exchange programs offer students unique learning opportunities that can enrich their academic journeys and prepare them for future challenges.

In essence, these collaborative activities signify more than just academic partnerships as they manage to represent the spirit of cultural exchange, academic growth, research synergy, and enhanced learning opportunities. Through these endeavors, UiTM and IAIN Palangka Raya are not only enriching the experiences of their students and staff but also contributing to the broader global discourse on education and cultural understanding. As we celebrate the journey of UiTM and IAIN Palangka Raya, we anticipate a brighter educational experience in the future where boundaries continue to dissolve, and the horizon of knowledge and understanding continues to expand.