



Unimas to focus on gas research

By Abdul Hakim Bujang

KUCHING – Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) will be introducing a new programme in chemical and process engineering by 2004 to help the State become a niche player in energy-related research.

“We know other universities are also conducting energy-related research, but we want to be different by focusing on gas. We will be working closely with the industry,” said Unimas’ deputy vice chancellor (Developments) Prof. Khairuddin Abdul Hamid yesterday.

He was speaking at the presentation of Osaka Gas Foundation of International Cultural Exchange (OGFICE) scholarships and donation of research equipment to Unimas’ Engineering Faculty here.

“Oil and gas industries are flourishing and this is inevitable given the continuous industrialisation and urbanisation in Asia,” Khairuddin said, pointing out that Malaysia’s gas industry had undergone tremendous development both in the upstream and downstream sectors.

“In addition, environmental issues concerning air pollution have significantly intensified the demand for natural gas, which is considered as one of the cleanest fuels,” he added.

Unimas, Khairuddin explained, had decided to help the State produce quality workforce for the oil and gas industries by introducing the new programme in chemical and process engineering.

“Therefore, collaboration such as the one we are seeing today will certainly help in developing a good undergraduate degree programme and energy-related research for the Faculty of Engineering,” he said.

Khairuddin also hoped that the scope of collaboration between Unimas and Osaka Gas could be extended to other R&D activities in the field of gas engineering, especially in downstream sectors.

He said last year, Osaka Gas awarded scholarships to ten engineering students and sponsored two academic staffers for a visit to Osaka Gas Research Cen-

tre in Osaka, Japan.

Osaka Gas also helped the staffers to visit a few universities within the Kansai region in their quest to find a suitable academic collaborator for Unimas’ new chemical and engineering programme.

OGFICE Executive Director, Mr Akira Kutsumi, who also spoke, explained that the foundation had provided educational assistance in Indonesia since 1992 and in Malaysia since 1999.

He revealed that so far, Unimas was the sole beneficiary of OGFICE’s assistance in Malaysia. The assistance comes in three forms, namely, scholarships, research grants and supply of educational equipment.

Akira added that the foundation had also invited two researchers from Unimas to Osaka to explore and define the areas in which the university would like to have technical collaboration with Osaka Gas.

Also present was OGFICE General Manager, Mr Hirohide Eguchi.



HELP FROM JAPAN .. Recipients of OGFICE scholarships sharing a light moment with (from third left) Khairuddin, Kutsumi and Eguchi. PHOTOGRAPH: RAMIDI SUBARI