

Manpower portal for SCORE to be launched

By Lee Ya Yun

KOTA SAMARAHAN: A manpower portal for Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE) will be launched in April by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas).

Unimas vice-chancellor Professor Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid yesterday said the portal would enable the government to access information related to skilled workforce produced by institutions of higher learning in the state.

"Information such as the number of engineers the government needs in a particular year or the industries that require workforce, will be made available in the portal," he pointed out.

Khairuddin said this in a press conference after the opening of Engineering Week 2009 in Unimas. Engineering Week which began yesterday will end on April 4.

Engineering Week, organised by the Faculty of Engineering, is one of the academic action plans of the faculty.

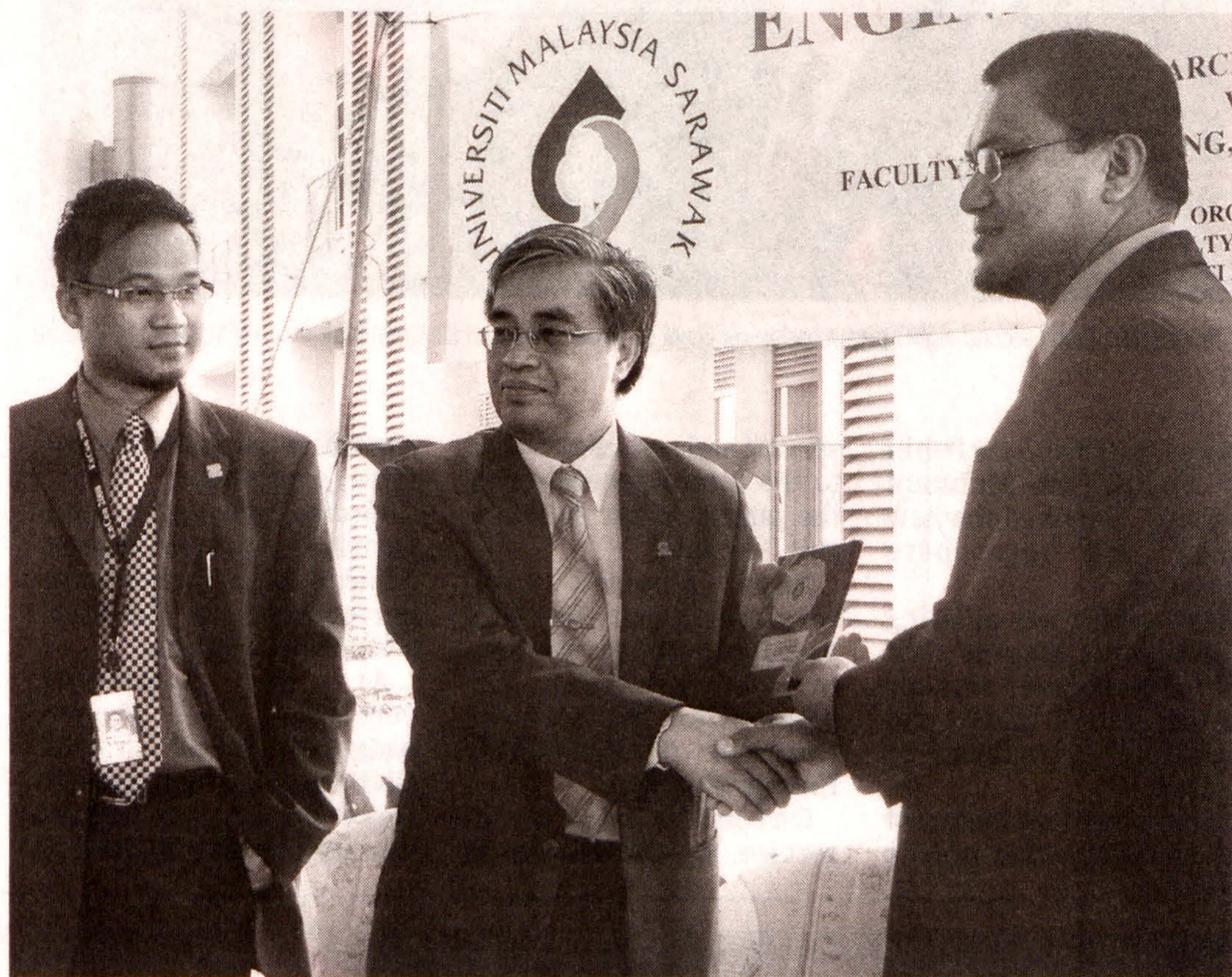
The portal is a plan developed under U-SCORE in which Unimas is the chairman.

U-SCORE is a consortium of all private and public institutions of higher learning in the state with the main purpose of assisting the state government in monitoring the demand and supply of the workforce required for SCORE.

Khairuddin said Unimas has been asked by the Ministry of Higher Education to chair U-SCORE and the project is in collaboration with the state government.

"What we do is gather statistics on the number of graduates produced by higher institutions and then inform the federal and state government of it," he said.

The statistics will be used to compare with the number of workforce required by the government and U-SCORE will make recommendations if there is a gap between the demand and supply.



BIG SUPPORT: Khairuddin (centre) receiving a souvenir from Hashim (right) as Engineering Faculty deputy dean Dr Al-Khalid Othman looks on. — Photo by Wan Ali Amit

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Professor Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid, Unimas vice-chancellor

"We might recommend the government to increase the number of intakes or increase the number of institutions. We might also recommend the government to allow foreign workers to be part of the workforce, but only in selected disciplines," he said.

He added that U-Score was aimed at monitoring the supply of manpower, not only within Sarawak but also from overseas and hoped to provide an accurate number on the demand and supply of the workforce required by SCORE.

Khairuddin pointed out that the supply of engineers by local higher institutions is relatively small. The state produces 500 engineers every year but the number targeted by the state government is 2,000.

"The state government hopes to produce 10,000 engineering graduates in

five years, which means 2,000 graduates per year," he said.

He said Unimas so far is the biggest producer of engineers in the state. "We have produced 2,500 engineers to date since the first batch of engineering students in 1998," he pointed out.

He said Engineering Week is aimed at showcasing the achievements of the Engineering Faculty through its final year students' projects (PTA) in the Engineering Expo. It is also aimed at establishing relationships and cooperation with professional bodies, private sector and government agencies.

According to Khairuddin, the projects in the Engineering Expo are of high quality and some of them were exhibited in Kuala Lumpur last month. Earlier, the dean of

Engineering Faculty, Professor Dr Wan Hashim Wan Ibrahim said the event was organised specially for students who would be involved in industrial training, those who would be graduated soon and also for final year students to share their projects.

He said various programmes have been provided by the faculty during this Engineering Week, including a two-day Engineering Expo, a session with Jabatan Tenaga Kerja Sarawak, Institute of Engineers Malaysia (IEM), career talk with Petronas and Green Card workshop with Lembaga Pembangunan Industri Pembinaan Malaysia (CIDB).

"Besides that, the students are organising a Mekar Wawasan programme which I think is a good way for them to fulfil their social responsibility," he said.

The Mekar Wawasan programme is meant to share and promote engineering courses to secondary school students at SMK Teknik Kuching and SMK Muara Tuang.