

Unimas R&D expo to highlight its aim to become a research varsity

KUCHING: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak's (Unimas) Research and Development (R&D) Expo 2012 will be held on March 21 and 22.

The theme will be "Progressing with research, innovation and commercialisation through academia and industry linkages", which is in line with Unimas's aspiration of becoming a research university.

The expo is divided into three different clusters namely pure sciences, technology and engineering, as well as social sciences/humanities.

The exhibits include creative designs utilising recycled materials, environmental engineering, robotics technology, medical tools, information and communication technology (ICT), augmented reality systems

and soft sciences.

The main objectives are to publicise R&D products and findings among Unimas staff and students, and to select research projects to represent the university at national and international R&D exhibitions.

It is also hoped that expo will encourage Unimas undergraduate students, upon completion of their studies, to pursue postgraduate programmes.

Last year, the university won one gold and seven bronze awards at the national level PECIPTA 2011 competition.

Unimas also bagged seven gold, two silver and three bronze medals at South Korea's Seoul International

Invention Fair 2011.

Associate professor Dr Pang Suh Chem of Unimas' Faculty of Resource Science and Technology, was awarded the "Advanced Materials Letters Scientist Award 2011" — an international recognition for his notable and outstanding contribution in a research entitled, "Conversion of cellulosic waste materials into nanostructured ceramics and nanocomposites".

Unimas had secured 41 projects worth RM7.15mil under the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry's Science Fund.

A further RM6.58mil was attained from the Higher Education Ministry for 125 research projects.

Researchers from Unimas have

also obtained numerous international research grants such as from the Global Environment Foundation, Asia Pacific Tele-community, International Fund for Agricultural Development (iFAD), The Toyota Foundation, The Japan Foundation and the University of Southern Denmark.

Recently, the university had set up the Centre of Excellence in Disability Study (CoEDS), headed by associate professor Dr Ling How Kee and two research institutes namely the Institute of Social Informatics and Technological Innovations (ISITI), and the Institute of Design and Innovation (InDI).

With the birth of CoEDS, ISITI and InDI, Unimas now has eight centres

of excellence and five research institutes.

In an effort to establish a strong research culture in the university, Unimas deputy vice chancellor's (research and innovation) office together with the Research and Innovation Management Centre, have been conducting various research workshops and seminars for academic staff to enhance their research capabilities.

Therefore, the coming expo will be a step towards achieving excellence in research for the university.

The public are invited to attend the expo to discover the wealth of research findings and innovative products generated by Unimas' researchers.