

“Towards a Sustainable Environment”



Department of Chemistry

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ECOLOGICAL SANITATION: THE SUSTAINABLE APPROACH FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT

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Sanitation seems to be a dirty subject and it has been neglected for far too long. There are about 40% of the world population do not have proper sanitation [1]. Majority those who are classified as having proper sanitation are merely served with unmaintained septic tanks. The result of this is the deterioration of our rivers particularly those run through cities and townships. Local examples of such polluted rivers are Sg. Sekama, Sg. Padungan, Sg. Maong and Sg. Bintangor in Sarawak [2], Sg. Juru and Sg. Pinang in Penang, Sg. Langat and Sg. Gombak in Selangor [3] and many more. Similar occurrences are observed elsewhere in the world, both in the developed and developing countries [4]. It was estimated that only about 300 million people in the world today have sewage treatment to a secondary level [5] while the rest are discharging their inadequately treated sewage to the rivers.

Message from the Head of Department

The Department has put in a lot of effort in the curriculum review. The new curriculum is expected to be implemented as early as the coming semester in July 2008. Under this new curriculum, students are required to complete 122 credit hours. The major improvements are in the industrial training and the final year research. The industrial training now has been extended to a full semester instead of only 8 weeks previously. The emphasis on research is reflected by the increase in the credit hours from 6 to 8 credit hours. The new curriculum will give students more opportunity to interact with the market forces and equip themselves with current and relevant knowledge.

Having completed the major task of curriculum review, the Department is now focusing on establishing university-industry linkages. The main objectives of this endeavour is to ensure that our research and academic activities are compatible to the current industrial needs, which in-turn will produce more marketable graduate. We are in a process of collaborating with Sanmina-SCI Sdn. Bhd. to work on its wastewater treatment processes. There will be other research opportunities in the field of electroless plating and quality assurance and process control, just to name a few. We will continue our efforts to work closely with our industrial partners in Sarawak.

I take this opportunity to wish our Dayak friends Happy Gawai.

Prof. Dr. Lau Seng