



# UMT NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 1, January 2022

Ocean of Discoveries for Global Sustainability

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

# 2022

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UMT truly excelled in the year 2021, exceeding the expectations. We surpassed our targets in terms of ratings and rankings at the national and international levels, especially the ones in QS Asia Rankings and THE World Rankings by subject. Our staff were listed in the top one percent scientist in the world, appointed to various boards at the international level, awarded the prestigious Merdeka Award Grant, and chosen to receive outstanding research grants to name a few. On the international front, we embarked on various collaborations with top universities, such as Ghent University, to offer dual degree programmes. We take pride in all our exceptional staff and students, as they are the catalysts for the university's excellence in academics, research, and knowledge transfer.



The new year brings more hope of tremendous growth in terms of achieving the KPIs as laid out in the university's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. It is the final year of the strategic plan, and we are optimistic that most of the targets set will be realized. Specific action plans are being laid out to ensure that the university is on track to be the leading university in marine science and aquatic resources, regionally and globally.

We take this opportunity to wish all our colleagues and collaborators a Happy New Year 2022. May this year be more fulfilling and successful, and may we prosper together, with shared initiatives and missions.

Professor Dr. Fauziah H. Abu Hasan  
Executive Editor

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# UMT Researcher Wins Grant for International Attachment



One of UMT research officers was among the five Malaysians recently selected as recipients of the 8th edition of Merdeka Award Grant for International Attachment (MAGIA), a national programme that offers successful applicants a three-month attachment at internationally recognized institutions.

The officer, Dr Aini Hasanah Abd Mutalib, who was selected for the Environment category, said she has proposed an attachment at Cornell University's Centre for Conservation Bioacoustics (CCB). "I plan to go sometime between July and September this year."

Dr Aini is currently with the Institute of Tropical Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (BIO-D TROPIKA). Her research specialisation is bioacoustics, a cross-disciplinary field that combines biology and acoustics. She studies the production, transmission, and reception of animal sounds for biodiversity monitoring and conservation purposes, spending most of her time at UMT's Nature Research Station at Kenyir Lake.

MAGIA is one of the two signature programmes established by the Merdeka Award Trust, a trust set up by Petronas, Shell Malaysia, and Exxon Mobil Exploration and Production Malaysia Inc., with Sultan Nazrin Muizzudin Shah as its royal patron and chairman. In this programme that is offered every two years to Malaysians aged 22-35, five recipients are selected, each from the specific fields that include Education and Community/Social Work; Environment; Health, Science, and Technology; Sports; and Arts. Established in 2012, MAGIA has sponsored 15 Malaysians to complete their attachments at international institutions of their preference.

As per the tradition, the selection of the five recipients for this year's programme, which began in May 2021, involved several rounds, including the proposal write-up, the pitch session, and the video presentation. Dr Aini submitted a proposal that highlighted passive acoustic monitoring as a non-invasive method in biodiversity studies.

Dr Aini and the other four recipients were presented with the award certificates during the 12th edition of the Merdeka Award Presentation Ceremony in Kuala Lumpur.

At CCB, Dr Aini will be studying the bioacoustics of small apes such as white-handed gibbons (*Hylobates lar*) and siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*) that thrive in Terengganu's Kenyir rainforest. These two species are classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List, so they and their habitat need to be better protected, Dr Aini said.



"Small apes such as gibbons help keep the forest intact by dispersing the seed of the fruits," Dr Aini said. "However, gibbons are currently being threatened by habitat fragmentation and illegal pet trade."

Small apes are elusive, so assessing their habitat occupancy by standard methods, such as line transects, is tricky. Passive acoustic monitoring is the more effective method, Dr Aini said.

Dr Aini is looking forward to the attachment. "I hope that the attachment will become a good training ground for me and a steppingstone for setting up future comprehensive collaborations between research institutes, governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and communities to improve habitat and species management," she said.

# UMT Distinguished Fellow Appointed to IOC-UNESCO Decade Advisory Board



UMT Distinguished Fellow, Professor Dato' Dr. Nor Aieni Haji Mokhtar, has been appointed to UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Decade Advisory Board.

Professor Nor Aieni was among the 15 experts selected from 13 countries to assist IOC-UNESCO in coordinating the implementation of Ocean Decade 2021-2030.

"It is a great honour to represent UMT and the country," Professor Nor Aieni said. "I will do my best to assist in the forging of regional and global strategic networking alliances towards the implementation of the UN Ocean Decade Agenda 2030."

Professor Nor Aieni, a physicist and an inventor (physical and computer modeller), will serve on the board for a period of two years.

Professor Nor Aieni's research specialisation is sustainable coastal management and best practices. She is currently with the Centre for Ocean Governance at the Institute of Oceanography and Environment (INOS). She is also the head of Ocean Science and Sustainable Environment research cluster at the university. She is also serving as the Chairman of UMTJaya Holding Sdn. Bhd., the commercial arm of the university.

Professor Nor Aieni is also a Distinguished Fellow of Maritime Institute of Malaysia. She formerly represented Malaysia in IOC-Executive Council and also in IOC/WESTPAC as Vice Chairperson. She was the focal person and co-founder of Women Leaders Forum in Coral

Triangle Initiative-Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF). She was the former Director of the National Oceanography Directorate, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) and Vice Chancellor of UMT.

IOC-UNESCO is the United Nations (UN) body that coordinates the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030, or Ocean Decade. Ocean Decade provides a convening framework for various scientists and stakeholders to harness advances in ocean science to better understand the ocean system and deliver science-based solutions to achieve the 2030 agenda.

The Decade Advisory Board will provide advice to the IOC Executive secretary on the endorsement of global and major regional programmes that will form the building blocks of Decade Action over the next 10 years. The board will also provide strategic advice to the IOC Governing bodies on Decade implementation including major gaps or priorities to scope future calls for Decade Actions, advising on resource mobilization strategies, supporting broad engagement and outreach.

The board members, selected from a list of over two hundred nominations globally, are from the governments, private sectors, civil societies, and scientific communities. The selection is based on knowledge, skills, and influence in subjects related to the oceans and sustainable development, such as intergovernmental process and coordination, ocean science, ocean economy, and marine technology transfer. The experts come from the different parts of the world, including Malaysia, China, and the USA.

The Decade Advisory Board will meet four times a year, with the first meeting to kick off virtually this coming 26 January.



# UMT Collaborates with Several Agencies for Greater Benefits

UMT has entered into strategic partnerships with three different agencies, namely Terengganu Strategic & Integrity Institute (TSIS), MSET Inflatable Composit Corporation Sdn. Bhd., and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), which will allow the university to utilize the different expertise it has towards greater causes.

“UMT is ever ready to collaborate with outside agencies for the sake of progress that will benefit the community, the state, and the country,” said Professor Dr Mazlan Abd Ghaffar, UMT Vice Chancellor.

UMT has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with TSIS to carry out research on the development of an east coast logistics hub in Terengganu.



Professor Mazlan said that the logistics hub will contribute to the economic growth of the state once the hub has been established.

“UMT, being a university that focuses on maritime affairs, has the assets and the expertise to make the strategic partnership work,” Professor Mazlan said. “The project will be carried out to identify the main factors that influence the development of a logistics hub in the east coast, study the connection between ports and a logistics hub, and examine the implication of the hub on the development of the east coast region.

“Based on the findings, we will set up guidelines for the implementation to ensure the hub’s effectiveness and sustainability.”

In addition to partnering with TSIS, UMT has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with MSET Inflatable Composit Corporation Sdn. Bhd. to develop a prototype

of new, modern fishing boats that will offer several advantages to the fishermen who earn their livelihood from the sea.

According to Professor Mazlan, the new boats will help the fishermen improve their catch rate while helping to minimize the environmental damage caused by excessive use of fuel such as petrol.

Professor Mazlan said that UMT has experts who can help with the boat design as well as experts who are knowledgeable in the field of fisheries.

Successful commercialisation of the boats will help the government achieve its aspiration towards reducing dependency on imported seafood, Professor Mazlan said.

UMT is the first university in the east coast region of Malaysia to have built a prototype of new, modern fishing boats.

UMT has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UiTM to carry out research on the history of the Malay Sultanate and Islam, with the aim of publishing a book on the subject matter.



According to Professor Mazlan, the upcoming research will examine all aspects of history, including legislation, administration, boundary delimitation, economy, religion, and international relations.

UMT is more than willing to share its expertise on this, and it is also planning to establish a gallery relating to the royal institution.

The collaboration between the two universities will benefit both in that pertinent information regarding history, culture, customs, Islam, and Malay Sultanate may be shared.

# Second Series Completes UMT's 18th Convocation Ceremony



UMT successfully held its 18th Convocation Ceremony (2nd Series) in December as a fully physical event, with all the graduands being presented with their degree scrolls at the Sultan Mizan Hall. As a preventive measure, UMT adhered to the new norms and complied with the standard operating procedure set by the National Security Council.

The convocation ceremony consisted of seven sessions, with each session taking place on a different day. The session was held only in the morning to allow for sanitation work in the evening.

A total of 2878 graduands were conferred degrees and diplomas. Of the total, 52 were conferred Doctor of Philosophy degrees, 152 master's degrees, 2559 bachelor's degrees, and 115 diplomas.

Also conferred degrees were the first cohort for the Information Technology and Computer Science Master's Programmes. Seven among them are colleagues, currently working at UMT's Digital Ecosystem Centre.

UMT Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Samsudin Osman in his speech congratulated the graduands on the successful completion of their academic journey amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He also congratulated UMT's management for its constant commitment to ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the academic and national education system, especially during the present situation. He expressed hope the UMT community will join hands to further improve UMT's image and reputation as well

as its teaching and research, thereby enabling UMT to continue its contributions to society and the country.

UMT Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Mazlan Abd Ghaffar in his speech said that threats of the COVID-19 have altered the norms the people were accustomed to, including those concerning the national education system. He added that the pandemic may be considered a blessing in disguise as it has forced people to leave their comfort zones and adapt to the current situation especially involving digitalisation for continued survival.



Professor Mazlan said that graduates must be ready to face the reality of the ever-challenging working world and be able to adapt to the current situation by equipping themselves with new skills needed by employers. They must also be willing to venture into the world of businesses that promise unlimited income, he added.

Also in attendance were Tan Sri Dato' Sri Shamsul Azhar Abbas, Chairman of UMT Board of Directors, members of UMT Board of Directors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, and principal officers.

The first series of the 18th Convocation Ceremony was held in March, in a hybrid manner. Only selected graduands were gathered at Sultan Mizan Hall for the degree conferment, while the rest joined in via a virtual platform. In the first series, UMT awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Technology to First Admiral Dato' Ir. Dr. Haji Ahmad Murad bin Haji Omar (Retired) and Emeritus Professor status to Professor Ir. Dr. Ahmad Jusoh, who was a full professor at UMT until his retirement in 2015.

# Frontliners Acknowledged at UMT's Special Event



To show its appreciation to the frontliners who have sacrificed their time and energy during the Movement Control Order (MCO), UMT recently held a special event.

The event at UMT Sultan Mizan Hall on 22 December was attended by UMT Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Mazlan Abd Ghaffar, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) Associate Professor Dr. Hafiz Zakariya, Terengganu Fire and Rescue Department Director Md Hilman Abd Rashid, and State Health Department Deputy Director Dr. Saiful Rahman Mohammad.

"UMT truly appreciates the contributions given by the frontliners during the Movement Control Order period," Professor Mazlan said. "The special event is our way of saying Thank You."

The frontliners, comprising UMT staff and students as well as those from government and private agencies, were presented with certificates of appreciation and books published by UMT as souvenirs. "This gesture of appreciation is very meaningful, as it shows that UMT thinks highly of the sacrifices made by the frontliners during the Covid-19 pandemic," said Zainuddin Mamat, a UMT staff who was one of the frontliners, after being presented with the certificate.

UMT campus was temporarily closed beginning 18 March 2020 in line with the government's Movement Control Order. UMT staff were required to work from home. However, a few staff had to be present on campus because of their job requirements, these being the staff at Security Unit, University Health Centre, and Student Affairs and Alumni Division (HEPA). Also required to be on campus were technical staff and those manning the

Covid-19 operations room.

The operations room was open 24 hours. Among the activities carried out were disseminating information to students and their parents on the welfare, accommodation, and academic matters, and providing services needed by the students. The operations room was under the supervision of HEPA, and to date, more than 300 staff and students have been stationed there.

"The Covid-19 operations room was set up because UMT cares about the safety, health, and welfare of students, whether on or off-campus, during the MCO period," Professor Mazlan said.



UMT has also documented all the events and experiences related to the Covid-19 pandemic in two Malay books, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu Prihatin: Mengharungi Cabaran Pandemik Covid-19 (18 Mac – 31 Mei 2020) (Universiti Malaysia Terengganu Cares: Facing the Challenges of Covid-19 Pandemic (18 March – 31 May 2020) and Perjuangan Yang Belum Selesai: Bahagian Hal Ehwal Pelajar & Alumni UMT Mendepani Cabaran Covid-19 (1 Ogos 2020 – 30 Jun 2021) (Unfinished Battle: UMT Student Affairs and Alumni Division Faced the Covid-19 Challenges (1 August 2020 – 30 Jun 2021).

The books outline some of the main challenges, initiatives taken, the role of UMT Disaster Operations Room, and the silver linings behind the pandemic. "These pictorial documentations are important, as they capture past events that can serve as useful references in the future," Professor Mazlan said.



**FPEPS**  
FAKULTI PERNIAGAAN, EKONOMI DAN PEMBANGUNAN SOSIAL

# MASTER [COURSEWORK]

## MASTER OF COUNSELLING

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Master of Counselling is designed to prepare individuals for a variety of counselling services in communities through government, non-profit organizations, corporation and private practice.

This programme develops competent, ethical, culturally appropriate and professional counsellors who become leaders in the profession.

Based on curriculum standards required by the Board of Counsellors, Malaysia.

## MASTER OF ECONOMICS

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Master of Economics offered the comprehensive study of managing the current issues concerning with the field of natural resource economics and microfinance.

The programme is designed for the economics and management graduates in order to strengthening the skills and knowledge cope with the challenges of a rapidly changing work environment.

The main focus area of the program includes two specialized fields:

- Natural Resources Economics
- Microfinance

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# MASTER [COURSEWORK]

## MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Our MBA programme is designed or train executive to think strategically and analytically through intensive series of stimulating lectures, seminars and conducive small team projects.

The programme add value to your first degree and enhances your knowledge in any of the four concentrations of your choice as below:

- Strategic Management
- Islamic Finance
- Marketing
- Maritime Logistics

## MASTER OF MANAGEMENT INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT (ICZM)

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Our ICZM programme is an interdisciplinary programme that offers integrated knowledge in economics, environment, management, law and policy.

The programme is designed for science and social science degree graduates. ICZM offers distinctive subjects as follows:

- Environmental Impact Assessments
- Coastal Zone Concepts and Theories
- Introduction to Geoinformatics
- Economics Structure in the Coastal Zone
- Environmental Accounting
- Project Management and Evaluation
- Coastal Laws and Policies

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