

UMT NEWSLETTER

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Ocean of Discoveries for Global Sustainability



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Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) continues to shine bright in the niche area of marine science and aquatic resources. The most recent achievement is the recognition from the Scuba Diving International (SDI) of UMT's dive centre as a five-star dive centre. Considering that the dive centre was just recently officiated by His Royal Highness the Sultan of Terengganu, it was indeed a great recognition of the hard work of all the staff at the centre. The dive centre also became the first at a public university to receive the ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management System) for scuba diving licensing course. The dive centre is also active in promoting marine and conservation activities and edu-tourism, and has helped in the excavation of archaeological artefacts for the National Heritage Department.



At the international front, UMT recently inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University of Saskatchewan, Canada, to collaborate in academic and research especially in the areas of future foods and sustainable aquaculture. The agreement is between the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition and School of Public Health at University of Saskatchewan and Institute of Tropical Aquaculture and Fisheries (AKUATROP), UMT. AKUATROP was recognised as a Higher Institution Centre of Excellence (HiCOE) by the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, in January 2021 for its research on sustainable shellfish aquaculture as part of the future food programme. International collaborations in research embarked by UMT will open up new avenues of funding, innovative ideas and shared knowledge, and experiences in the respective fields of research.

Professor Dr. Fauziah Hj. Abu Hasan
Executive Editor

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UMT, USASK to Collaborate in Creating Animal Food from Alternative Source

Rozita Alias@Abdul Latiff, PKK



Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) and University of Saskatchewan (USASK) officially became research collaborators when they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in late August.

UMT and UTAS will collaborate on a project to produce food using an alternative protein source, black soldier flies (BSF), which are used to develop formula food for aquatic animals.

UMT Vice Chancellor Prof. Dato' Dr. Mazlan Abd Ghaffar said USASK became interested in a research project carried out by UMT researchers and subsequently proposed a collaboration to commercialise the product for the Canadian market.

He said the project conducted by the researchers at UMT's Institute of Tropical Aquaculture and Fisheries (AKUATROP) will be applied in the aquatic animal food processing industry to produce food for fish, prawns, and crabs.

The food will also be used as an alternative food for farm animals such as chickens, ducks, goats, rabbits, and cows.

"Black soldier flies are insects whose varied species can be found in almost every part of the world, and their larvae contain high amounts of quality protein, chitin, and lipid suitable for daily needs, based on scientific studies by expert researchers," Professor Mazlan said.

"The larvae are used as an alternative to reduce the dependency on the currently used fish-based protein food considering that the cost of the current resource is high, and its use is not sustainable."

He added that the use of BSF formula food has scientifically been proven to expedite the growth and increase the immunity of the animals.

"The alternative source can meet the wide demand of the market and therefore will be the answer to the government's call for ensuring food security and future food," he said.

Also present to witness the signing ceremony was Malaysia's Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Noraini Ahmad. She was in Canada attending the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Halifax from 20 – 26 August. The conference was organized by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

Datuk Seri Noraini said Malaysia's higher education sector needs to increase its international collaborations to overcome the global food security issues that are now critical due to many challenges, including the pandemic, climate change, and international conflicts.

"These kinds of collaborations will allow us to overcome the challenges and meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," she said.

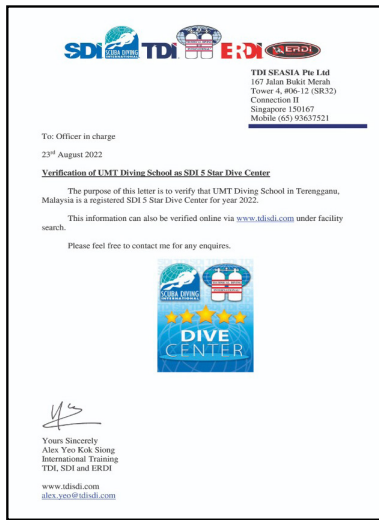
"We believe that SDG 4, which is Quality Education, forms the basis of the other SDGs, so we must develop educational programmes that transcend the international boundaries to produce holistic graduates.

"Therefore, I hope UMT and USASK will increase their collaborative efforts to develop the programmes that have been planned together," she said.

Also present were Saskatchewan's Minister of Advanced Education Gordon S. Wyant and USASK Provost cum Vice President of Academic Prof. Airini.

UMT Diving School Recognized as Five-Star Dive Centre by Scuba Diving International

Tengku Nuriah Tengku Abdul Rahman, PPPL & Wan Zulkifli Wan Kassim, PPAL



UMT Diving School has recently been recognized as a five-star dive centre by Scuba Diving International (SDI). The five-star certificate presentation ceremony took place in late August at UMT’s Marine Natural Research Station on Bidong Island. SDI representative presented the certificate to UMT Vice Chancellor Professor Dato’ Dr. Mazlan Abd Ghaffar. Also present was Her Royal Highness Tengku Puteri Utama Raja Tengku Nadhirah Zahrah, who is also UMT’s Environmental Conservation Ambassador.

“The recognition will surely increase Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT)’s visibility at the national and international levels,” Professor Mazlan said.

Professor Mazlan said UMT is the first public university to have obtained ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management System) certification for the scope “Management of Training Related to Scuba Diving Licensing Course,” and this has been acknowledged by the Malaysia Book of Records.

He said one of the objectives of establishing UMT Diving School is to help boost Terengganu’s educational tourism (edu-tourism) by offering scuba diving experiences to participants.

He added that UMT Diving School will be offering several types of scuba diving courses based on edu-tourism

as well as archaeo-tourism, which include underwater archaeology diving course, dive medicine course, recreational diving course, and scientific diving course.

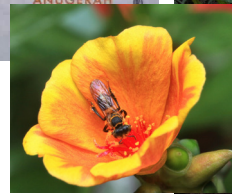
With the concept of dive4knowledge, UMT Diving School also provides scuba diving licensing service to UMT students at a reasonable fee. In addition, the school provides training to public and private agency staff and NGOs who need it to fulfil their job requirement or as part of their recreation so that they can explore the beauty of the underwater world near the waters of Bidong Island. Other services offered are scuba diving equipment rental, underwater photography and videography, and salvage and excavation of underwater archaeological artefacts.

Also present during the ceremony was Associate Professor Dr. Hasrizal Shaari, Director of the Centre for Research and Field Services (CRAFS). UMT Diving School is under the management of the centre. Professor Mazlan took the opportunity to congratulate CRAFS for the five-star recognition given to the diving school.

SDI is a scuba training and certification agency headquartered in Florida, USA, with branches worldwide. Its philosophy is to improve recreational scuba diving training by enhancing older diving practices through the incorporation of new diving technology and emphasis on safety.

UMT Researcher's Book Wins National Awards

Rozita Alias@Abdul Latiff, PKK



A book written by a Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) researcher has recently won a national award.

Kelulutologi: Merungkai Misteri Kelulut, Alam, dan Kehidupan Manusia (Stingless Bee Study: Unravelling the Mystery of Stingless Bees, Nature, and Human Lives) penned by Prof. Dr. Shamsul Bahri Abd Razak has bagged the National Book Award 2022 for the General Book: Nature and Research category.

Written in Malay, the book details Prof. Shamsul Bahri's experience being involved in stingless bee research for more than ten years. It describes the characteristics of stingless bees and their roles in the sustainability of human lives and the environment. The award-winning publication also recounts the researcher's experience travelling to Nusantara countries to obtain more information about the Indo-Malaya stingless bees.

The book filled with colourful pictures of stingless bees is suitable to be made as a reference by not just academics but the public, stingless bee entrepreneurs, and enthusiasts.

The award is a special gift to all the players in the stingless bee industry, as they have been his inspirations all this while, Prof. Shamsul Bahri said.

He said the award has motivated him to continue being active in exploring the world of stingless bees.

According to Prof. Shamsul Bahri, more and more people, academics, and researchers from within and outside the country have become interested in knowing more about these creatures.

Stingless bees are agents of environmental sustainability, and plant pollinations are their greatest contributions towards the stability and viability of the ecosystem. The honey they produce is good for human consumption for a healthier life.

Lack of available knowledge about stingless bees has led Prof. Shamsul Bahri to conduct research and gather information about the species since 2013. He has been involved in many stingless-bee-focused programmes, and these include UMT Stingless Bee Expeditions, which he has led in all its 18 series. From the expeditions he discovered many species in their original habitats such as in the forests, on the hills, by the rural outskirts, and around towns. Close-up pictures of these species in their original habitats are included in the book.

Prof. Shamsul has also met with stingless bee entrepreneurs from across the country to gather information. They have been in constant contact with him and provided him with the latest updates on stingless bee development in the industry.

Before the book was produced, Prof. Shamsul Bahri posted his writings about stingless bees on his Facebook to share with the public. After a while, the idea of putting together all that he had written into a printed publication came to him.

The book was published by UMT Publisher in 2021 and has been reprinted three times.

UMT Student Team Wins Second Place in International Debate Competition

Dr. Abdul Mutalib Embong, PPAAL



A student debate team from Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) fared well in an international debate competition held in September via an online platform.

UMT Team B, comprising Alina Pannirselvam, Wee Yee Zhi, and Liam Jing Zhi, won second place in the International Debate Johor Cup 2.0 2022 (IDJC 2.0) that received participation from both national and international institutions.

During the preliminary stages, UMT Team B won two out of three matchups, qualifying the team to move to the next round.

The team proceeded to the quarterfinal matchup against Kolej PolyTechnic Mara (KUPTM). UMT Team B won the round that motioned "This house would ban realistic video games with brutal and violent elements." UMT Team B assumed the side of the government while KUPTM took on the role of the opposition.

In the semi-final round, UMT Team B defeated Universiti Malaya (UM) Team A to book a berth in the final. UMT Team B once again assumed the side of the government while UM Team A that of the opposition. The motion for this round was "This house believes that increasing minimum wages is the solution to curb poverty."

"Being selected as a finalist in an international tournament is the highest honour," said Alina, UMT Team B's second speaker, after the team had won in the semi-final round. "We will try our best."

In the final round, UMT Team B faced off against Loco for J.Co from Universidad De Phillipines. The motion was "THBT transgender athletes should only be allowed to compete in the category to which they were born." UMT Team B was assigned to be on the government's side while Loco for J.Co the opposition's.

"I must admit that the argument was tough, with each speaker giving and receiving their absolute best during this round," Alina said. "This round was extremely intense."

In the end, UMT Team B was named IDJC 2.0 first runner up. The team persevered despite having a heavier burden of proof than the opposition.

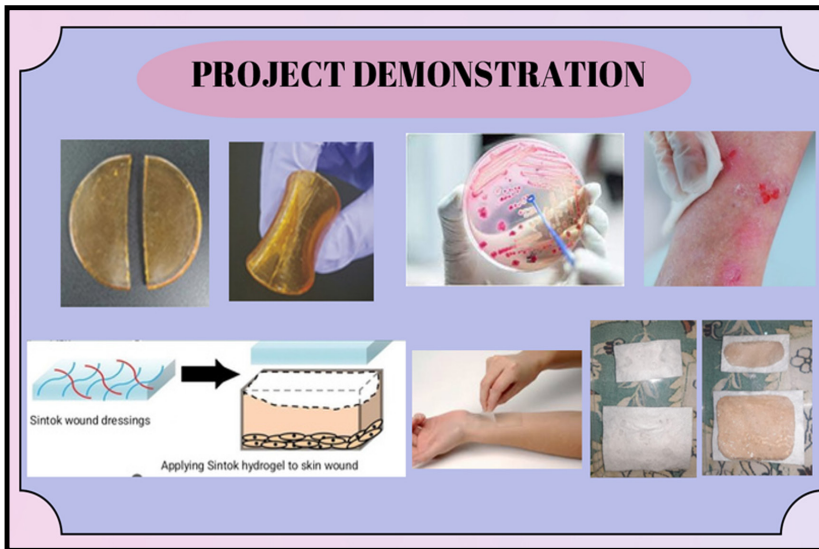
"IDJC taught me things I do not believe I will learn elsewhere," said Liam Jing Zhi, the team's whip speaker.

Alina believed the team demonstrated their ability and tenacity that may motivate other UMT students.

Two teams from UMT competed in IDJC 2.0. UMT Team A comprised Amirah Nabilah Abdullah@ Zakaria, Nuremilisa Mohd Sufian, and Vinoth Loganathan.

Innovative Product by UMT Students Wins Gold, Special Awards

Associate Prof. Ts. Dr. Mohd Sabri Mohd Ghazali, FSSM



An innovative product created by a group of first-year Nanophysics students from Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) has won the Gold Award and Special Award at the National Innovation and Invention Competition 2022 (NIICe2022).

The product, polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) healing patch, is a skin patch blended with natural ingredients that are safe to use by people of all ages.

Group leader Mohamad Firdaus Rosli, 19, said that the group never expected to win, but they were excited after the results were announced.

“We are so grateful for this, especially when considering that group members have put in a lot of effort into the project, to the extent of sacrificing some of the sleep time,” he said.

“Our winning proves that success can be achieved when each member in a group works as a team.

“Some group members sacrificed their semester break to ensure the project could be completed promptly.”

“This achievement has motivated us to continue creating innovative products that are useful for all.”

The innovative product created by the students has some advantages. The PVA healing patch was developed from a natural plant called Sintok, scientifically known as *Entada spiralis*. The plant extract can treat skin irritation, skin infection, and other skin diseases.

The product underwent an antimicrobial test to determine the ability of the Sintok extract to prevent the growth of bacteria that cause skin diseases.

The patch is environmentally friendly because it was produced from plants and no chemical substances harmful to humans and the environment were added.

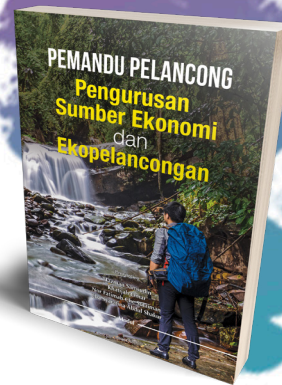
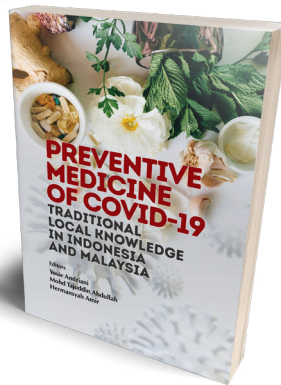
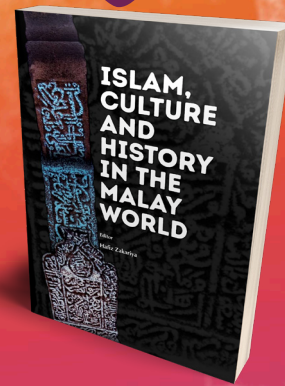
Mohamad Firdaus said the product should be kept in every house to be used during an emergency.

“The product is easy to use, and it is also economical,” he said.

The group’s technical advisor, Associate Prof. Ts. Dr. Lee Oon Jew, said that the patch will be examined further to improve its effectiveness, particularly on diabetic-related wounds, since the Sintok extract has active antidiabetic compounds.



Highlights



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