

From the ground

Under one roof

THE rigorous efforts to strengthen private IPTs is part of the ministry's agenda to improve the co-existence between public and private IPTs in Malaysia.

The long term goal is to have no difference in standards between public and private IPTs by 2015, uniting both sectors under a common umbrella.

And the overtures have started with Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin talking up the prospects for greater collaboration between public and private IPTs and subsequently, assimilation.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has stressed the concept of 1Malaysia and implemented policies to support it," he said. "In the same context, the ministry hopes to have a single form of IPT in the future."

"The ministry will facilitate this by identifying emerging competencies in IPTs and bringing them together. We have more than 200 centres of excellence in public IPTs but they're largely working in isolation."

"We will identify common niche areas in private and public IPTs and look at grants to enable joint research."

"As Malaysia needs an innovation-led economy, the ministry is looking at maximising research and development (R&D) projects which can result in wealth creation."

In part, the ministry will seek to widen the definition of R&D to allow more projects to receive double deduction for tax exemptions with the hope that lower R&D costs will encourage more endeavours.

"It is good that we are benchmarking ourselves using international standards. I'm sure good private IPTs will not only fulfill the requirement to fully migrate to the Malaysian Qualification Agency's framework, but also seek international accreditation."

"Private IPTs should only accept qualified foreign students and the ministry's move to diversify Malaysia's foreign student populations is good."

ALTHOUGH the top brass of private IPTs were largely positive to the ministry's proposed incentives, not all were as keen in acclimating to the new requirements.

The facial expressions of those at the closed door meeting were a clear giveaway of the differing takes of the situation and while time seemed to stand still for some, it just ran out for others.

Here are some responses from various private IPT heads to the ministry's strategy:

"However, I'm cautious about the call to offer a wider selection of programmes. It's fine if we're talking about programmes which will add value to Malaysia's human capital development. We shouldn't diversify for the sake of it."

"We have to be clear in our strategy to benefit the nation. This is the approach we're using at UCSI and we have gone into actuarial science and applied maths as there is a need for good statisticians in Malaysia."

serious with private IPTs is good, I think a patient approach would work better as many IPTs need time to adjust to the new requirements.

"As for enforcement, there is a need for transparency and the task forces need to be trained well in the proper operating procedures. They must not come across as antagonistic and there are high standards for them to meet."



Elizabeth Lee,
Sunway University College executive director

"The government's move to meet us has given us a good avenue to raise some burning issues and it shows that our feedback is valued. It is heartening that private IPTs are recognised as engines of growth."

"I applaud the call to improve quality and it is about time to clamp down on underperforming private IPTs as they spoil the brand built by the serious players."

"I'm happy that there has and will be greater transparency in this sector and I'm sure that things will move forward with Prof Radin as Registrar General."



Prof Datuk Dr Chuah Hean Teik,
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Utar) president

"It is important to create a culture of excellence and the participation of private IPTs in Setara brings us one step closer in achieving this. Malaysian IPTs need to be competitive locally and internationally. Utar is prepared for Setara and we're participating voluntarily at the moment."

"Also, greater collaboration between public and private IPTs is welcome. We've already experiencing this as some of staff have collaborated with their counterparts from Universiti Utar Malaysia."

"While the ministry's decision to get



Dr Peter Ng,
UCSI University president and secretary general of the Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities (Mapcu)

"I feel that the Government is really forging ahead with their efforts to shape the industry. All of us at Mapcu got wind of this and it's great that it is happening."

"Participation in the Rating System for Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (Setara) requires private IPTs to at least meet the minimum requirement and this will improve the provision of quality education."