



Mastering changes in public policy

THE Malaysian public, now more than ever, has many more avenues to display their feelings of scepticism in response to public policy announcements and initiatives, especially those which appear, on the surface at least, to be ill-advised projects.

In an increasingly complex world where public policy changes can potentially affect large groups and different stakeholders, those tasked with the responsibility of designing and implementing public policies need to be aware of three important challenges.

Firstly is the challenge of identifying the relevant variables to be changed to better achieve the desired outcome. While most of the desired outcomes from a policy standpoint are not controversial, for example better test scores under the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the means to achieve this desired outcome is not so clear. As such, policy makers need to be able to identify the panoply of pathways or variables that could potentially be used to achieve these ends.

Secondly is the challenge of putting these policies into action and taking into account implementation aspects that need to be addressed.

Most of us are familiar with the more run-of-the-mill implementation of problems such as undelivered textbooks or IT systems which are often 'off-line'.

But even if these teething problems are addressed, the bigger issue of ascertaining these policy changes is having the desired results often ignored.

Thirdly, communication of these policies to the public in a clear and convincing

fashion needs to be looked into. This goes beyond the public relations aspect of communications. It involves a process where all the important stakeholders are properly informed of the rationale of these public policy changes and the challenges associated with their implementation.

It is with these three challenges in mind that the Faculty of Economics and Policy Science (FEPs) at UCSI University is offering a unique Master in Public Policy (MPP) programme. The theoretical, analytical and practical skills which students would learn will prepare them well for life as practical problem solvers with a strong theoretical and analytical understanding of various policy issues to afford them employment opportunities as consultants, policy analysts, researchers and senior managers in both the public as well as the private sector.

Students will be given training in organising seminars, writing sample press statements, and structuring policy proposals which can be presented to the government at the federal, state and/or local levels.

With the launching of the numerous government transformations and economic transformation programmes, the relevance of UCSI's Master in Public Policy programme has also increased. The university promises a career enhancing experience for those undertaking this journey.

For more information, please visit www.ucsi.edu.my/v2/foeps/programmes/postgraduate/MasterPublic.aspx or e-mail ooisb@ucsi.edu.my