

UMS scores a first in IT development

KOTA KINABALU: The Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is the first university in Malaysia to be chosen as the centre for Information Technology (IT) development, the Internet Training Centres Initiative for Developing Countries (ITCI-DC).

The ITDC-DC was started by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and aimed at addressing the acute shortage of skilled networking and IT professionals in developing countries like Malaysia.

The initiative is a model for public-private partnership to bridge the Digital Divide and aims to establish 50 Internet training centres in educational institutions such as UMS around the world by 2003.

"UMS is honoured to be selected to participate in the Internet Training Centres initiative," its Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Prof. Dr. Abu Hassan Othman said at the launching of the programme

at the university, near here, yesterday.

He said UMS was established with the expressed objective to train experts in science, technology and management to meet the Vision 2020 goals.

UMS Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof. Zaidi Daud delivered the text of Abu Hassan's speech.

Cisco Systems' Cisco Networking Academy Programme is the only IT education programme being delivered at ITU's Internet training centres at present.

He said the world class curriculum from the Cisco Networking Academy Programme will greatly enhance UMS ability to meet its objectives.

The Cisco Networking Academy Programme curriculum that UMS will be offering consists of a 280-hour course that trains students and in-transition workers to design, build and maintain computer networks.

The programme is an e-learning model that delivers web-based educational content, online testing, student performance tracking, hands-on labs, and instructor training and support.

It is available in eight languages including English, Chinese and Japanese.

The programme provides students with IT knowledge and practical training they need for employment in professional networking occupations.

"Cisco is committed to ensuring that the next generation of professionals and workers are equipped with the necessary skills for success in the Internet economy," Johnson Khoo, managing director of Cisco Systems Malaysia said.

He said the Cisco Networking Academy Programme is providing access to everyone regardless of geography, age, gender, socio-economic status and their level of access to technology.

He added there are now over 1, 200 students in Malaysia enrolled with the programme.

Johnson said the programme is being carried out by more than 10, 300 academies in 149 countries with 400, 000 students and some 143, 000 have graduated globally.

ITU first announced the ITCI-DC with Cisco in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2001. In Asia-Pacific there are 10 Internet Training Centres selected in Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa and Malaysia.