

MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	07 Feb 2013	Language	English
Circulation	136,530	Readership	330,000
Section	Local News	Color	Full Color
Page No	22	ArticleSize	355 cm ²
AdValue	RM 11,582	PR Value	RM 34,745



15 varsities vie to produce 'top entrepreneurs'

TRADE SAVVY: Simulation competition exposes students to the real processes of business world

ADIB POVERA

TODAY is D-Day for 75 public university students competing in Universiti Utara Malaysia's National Business Simulation Competition for Public Institutions of Higher Learning. After a series of tasks, students from 15 universities will know which "entrepreneur" team has the wits and perseverance to come out tops.

The prize-giving for the two-week competition, jointly organised by UUM's Cooperative and Entrepreneurship Development Institute (Cedi) and Malaysian Practice Enterprise Centre (MyPEC), and supported by the Higher Education Ministry, would be held at the Sheraton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

UUM second-year law student Syafiqah Md Shafie, 21, and her four teammates took three months to prepare. Together with Mohamed Azad Uzair Mohamed Azli, Carmen Chan Jia Min, both 22, Ethan Tan Ho Eng and Nur Fitriah Hani Kashfi, both 21, the five formed Kelvative Sdn Bhd which provided an innovative learning space.

"We learned a lot during the competition. It was like mastering two years of business theories in 14 days," said Shafiqah, who is the chief executive officer of Kelvative.

Also taking part were 22-year-old Chim Wei Wen and her accounting studies course mates from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in Johor. She is the chief executive officer of E-Z Sdn Bhd, which she formed with Nur Anasuha Ilias, Nurmalia Abd Samad, Hani Shamilah Mohd Noor, all 21, and Nurul Afiqah Rozaini, 22.

"We have given our all and we are hoping for the best," Chim and her team said after presenting the company's business report on

the sale of their E-Z refillable markers to a 10-member board of directors.

Others students taking part were from Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Malaysia National Defence University, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn and Universiti Teknikal Melaka Malaysia.

The challenge, which was held at UUM in Sintok, Kedah, operated on a simulation platform, courtesy of training provider MyPEC that connects 7,000 businesses (dubbed practice enterprises) in 44 countries.

The teams registered their practices as enterprises and tried to convince venture capitalists to invest in their ideas during the first round. At the end of the competition, the group would present their financial reports to their respective "board of directors", which was headed by MyPec chairman Datuk Radin Firdaus Radin Lockman.

MyPec director Matsham Ahmad said besides exposing students to the real processes and vigorous nature of the business world, the competition tested the contestants' creativity and drive to execute their plans. Cedi executive director Professor Hassan Ali said the competition, which was introduced last year, had been included in the Higher Education Ministry's annual calendar.

The team with the highest score would take home RM10,000 and a trophy.

The second team will receive RM5,000 while the third and fourth teams will walk away with RM3,000 and RM1,500, respectively. The best "chief executive officer" will also receive RM1,000.

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The **'chief executive officers'** with the challenge trophy for UUM's National Business Simulation Competition for Public Institutions of Higher Learning. Pic by Lim Poh Chin