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PERSPECTIVES ON BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

Volume 37 2019

THE GAY AND DOUGLAS LANE
JOURNAL OF THE
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THE NEW MALAYSIA

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PERSPECTIVES

Perspectives on Business and Economics is the journal of the Martindale Student Associates Honors Program founded and run by the Martindale Center for the Study of Private Enterprise at Lehigh University. Each year, a faculty panel selects twelve of Lehigh's finest undergraduate students to become Martindale Student Associates. The students each undertake a research project focusing on an aspect of the economy and business environment of a foreign nation. The country of focus changes each year. During the following year the students complete their research and prepare their articles for publication as a volume of the journal.

The students' study of Malaysia began in the spring of 2018. After several on-campus orientation seminars, the group made its annual trip to Washington, DC, for a series of in-depth country briefings at the Malaysian Embassy, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, and US Department of State. In May 2018, the Student Associates and faculty advisors traveled to Kuala Lumpur and Penang for an intensive 13 days of travel, meetings, lectures, briefings, and discussions with leaders from government, business, and academia whose expertise and enthusiastic participation in and support for the program are key to the success of our mission.

Special Thanks

The Martindale Center acknowledges the critical role played by alumni, parents, and friends and the many experts in Malaysia and the US who gave generously of their time and expertise as advisors, co-organizers, and speakers to help make the 2018–19 program and Volume 37 of this journal a success.

Our sincere thanks begin with the Raja Zarith Sofiah Foundation, our partners in Malaysia. Her Majesty Raja Zarith Sofiah herself graciously enabled us to work closely with the Foundation. In particular, heartfelt gratitude to Safuan Fadzli, Secretary of the Foundation, for his friendship and invaluable assistance throughout our many planning months and for accompanying us and handling logistical details throughout the time we were there. Thanks, too, to Dr. Muhammad Ridzuan Salleh, Chair of the Foundation. A longtime friend of Lehigh, he worked decades ago as Director of the Lehigh-affiliated Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat. So too, the Foundation's CEO, Ghazali Mohamed Yusoff, was remarkably hospitable, facilitating our planning trip in January, helping us make connections to his vast professional network, and joining us for many of our meetings.

Kamaruzzaman Abu Kassim, President & CEO, Johor Corporation, deserves special thanks for his keynote address to us during our stately dinner—at the Ritz—with members of the Johor royal family and the Foundation's leadership.

Our fruitful partnership with the Foundation would not have happened but for the extended engagement of Lehigh's Matthew Mattern, Senior Director for Nonprofit Engagement, who has interacted with them over many years.

Thanks to these partners, we were able to meet with officials at the highest levels. We were honored to be able to have a morning's conversation with Dr. Zaini Ujang, then Secretary General, Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water. His frank, open dialog about the environmental and energy challenges in Malaysia spawned interest that led to two of the research articles in this issue. Dr. Zaini also graciously arranged for our group to meet with Dr. Rohaizat Yon, Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Health, whom we thank for sharing his vast insights into the nation's health care system—again a session that fostered two health-related articles in this issue.

We also met then Chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, Razali Ismail, who previously served as President of the UN General Assembly, and his commissioner colleague Dr. Aishah Bidin—another high-level conversation that together with a visit to the NGO Sisters of Islam stimulated one of the articles, on human trafficking, in this volume.

Shams Rusli, Director of the Malaysian Investment Development Authority in New York City, helped support and facilitate several meetings, including briefings here at Lehigh and connections to sister economic development organizations in Malaysia.

We wish to thank Dr. Lim Teck Ghee for all his help and support. We were fortunate to find

him. He generously gave contacts, and our freewheeling discussion with him at the Gerakbudaya Bookshop was an immensely valued contribution to our program. That event would not have been possible without the warm welcome of Gerakbudaya Bookshop's owner Chong Ton Sin and colleague Charles Brophy, who went the extra mile for us. Gerakbudaya's positive energy was infectious; it's great to know such places still exist to foster discussion and inquiry.

Professor Din Merican, now an Associate Dean at the University of Cambodia, was the starting point for many of our Malaysian contacts after we found his marvelous blog. He put us in touch with various friends and colleagues back home, including Dr. Lim and Dr. Ooi Kee Beng, Executive Director of the Penang Institute, a policy think tank where we had an extraordinarily informative roundtable.

We visited with the Martindale Center's long-term partners at the University of Nottingham at their Malaysia campus. Sincere thanks to Dr. Anita Chakrabarty for organizing that day for us.

Finally, we appreciate the three Martindale Student Associates alumni from Malaysia who were so generous with their time and suggestions, Ariff Kamarudin '12 (Greece cohort), Sue Nee Tan '09 (Benelux), and Soo Hooi Oh '06 (Hungary), and our Lehigh faculty colleague Professor Nandkumar Nayar who shared so much of his time and energy helping set up the program there and sharing insights into the culture, business landscape, and political economic history in his native country.

The Martindale Center thanks the following individuals:

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The Martindale Student Associates thank Program Director, Janice Johnston Howie, for organizing the itinerary; faculty mentors, Professors Fennell, Nayar, Ridings, Watkins, and Weisman, for guidance on research and writing; and Professor Emeritus Stephen Cutcliffe along with Barbara Love and Nancy Watkins for their editorial rigor and patience. The students also thank the faculty spouses for support and friendship throughout. On behalf of the Martindale community of students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends, we express immense appreciation to Douglas Lane '67 and Gay Lane for their support of this journal and, finally, to Professor Emeritus J. Richard Aronson for founding the program and creating such an enduring legacy at Lehigh.

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**RECOGNIZES AND THANKS OUR MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS
FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT**

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