



THE MALAYSIAN ENGINEERING EDUCATION SYSTEM: NO SERIOUS CHAMPION

By: Ir. Prof. Abang Abdullah bin Abang Ali, IEM President

Local institutions of higher learning appear to mushroom everywhere in the country without a clear direction as to what Malaysia wants to be beyond an education hub. The concept of education for the masses on the one hand and the vision to be a center of educational excellence on the other are said in the same breath despite the fact that they seldom coexist successfully in many countries.

There are now more than 30 universities and university colleges and more than 500 private institutions of higher learning in the country, many of which were established in the last ten years. The shortage of suitably qualified lecturers to fill up teaching positions in the newly established universities and colleges is well-known, resulting in a largely lecturers' market today. The establishment of the National Accreditation Board (LAN) and the Quality Assurance Division in the Ministry of Higher Learning is a welcome move given the need to

ensure quality education in the country.

Engineering is a popular subject for these institutions of higher learning despite the relatively high cost of running engineering programmes compared to many other programmes. However student intake is a perennial problem, both in terms of quantity as well as quality. Many private colleges suffer from shortage of qualified students, making it then difficult for them to recruit the requisite number of lecturers and acquire sufficient training facilities.

The Malaysian Engineering Education System itself has no serious champion. Despite three studies on Malaysian Engineering Education, entitled *The Formation of Engineers in Malaysia*, *The Malaysian Engineering Education Model* and *The Engineering Technology Path*, interest in the Malaysian Engineering Education System remain low amongst engineers in the country. Discussions do not normally go beyond accreditation issues.

Accreditation which has become

our preoccupation of late is but a small portion of the whole engineering education and training system and yet neither the IEM nor the BEM has shown much interest in wandering beyond accreditation issues. The attributes of the local engineering graduates or the outcome of our local engineering programmes have not been properly developed for or adapted to the current local professional system, never mind for the future. The concern regarding the quality of our graduates entering the job market has not been effectively addressed. Many would have lost count on the number of engineering faculties in the country. Even the continued sponsoring of students taking the 3-year engineering degree in the UK which is not considered accredited by EAC for example, has no "whistle blowers". ■

Ir. Prof. Abang Abdullah bin Abang Ali
IEM President

CONGRATULATIONS MESSAGE

The Institution would like to congratulate the following members who were recently elected as AHLI PARLIMEN in the recent general election.

- 1) Y.B. Ir. Dr. Wee Ka Siong (M11747)
Ahli Parlimen kawasan Ayer Hitam
- 2) Y.B. Ir. Hamim bin Samuri (M14837)
Ahli Parlimen kawasan Ledang, Muar
- 3) Y.B. Ir. Hasni bin Mohamad (M08420)
Ahli Parlimen kawasan Pontian