

Zucademic Model and book writing to target community and grant opportunity

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Does academia in higher education institutions nowadays have a vision? Or it is merely a personal fight for living one's legacy? or just being trapped in the conservative system and being tired of holding on to the stagnant practices?

Today, higher education institutions are emphasized for global ranking through the competency of high-impact research and publication. This comes with prerequisite tasks of being a lecturer, mainly teaching, research works, student supervision, book writing, thesis evaluation, and additional management activities. These tasks are further loaded by the need to develop products and commercialization. University has also been questioned for its contribution to the local community, hence the introduction of community engagement-based activities. Community engagement (CE) has now become a crucial platform for academia which serves as a new and effective way of developing, transmitting, and applying knowledge. The main goal? To bring benefits to the public and to help tackle real-world problems.

Rather than asking what the university should do, I challenged myself with two big questions. One; what do I fight for in life? And two; where am I heading? And I discover that a clear vision could provide a holistic initiative to empower both university and community simultaneously. In a framework of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), the goal setting for an educator should start with contributing to educational mission. This is followed by advancing knowledge in the field, with and the engagement in educational community coming in last.

My experience has, however, points in the opposite direction. CE should come first or together along with my academic career towards my vision where it has indirectly become a medium for knowledge validation. In this initiative, my intellectual mission was designed along with community empowerment that I termed as my humanity mission towards achieving the vision and life goal. These two missions are connected via one lifelong learning bridge (LLB), forming an "A" metric known as Zucademic Model. For the LLB, I wrote a module book and conducted beekeeping workshops to over 3000 community participants. They constitute the "stingless beekeepers tribe" that act directly in producing high quality honey. To date, the stingless bee honey industry is becoming a new commodity for the country. Several spill-over impacts promote the activity to become a new agro-economic opportunity for rural development and transformation. The project also facilitated me as academia into owning 1 granted patent, 4 patent-pending inventions, 2 copyrights, and 2 trademarks as well as securing RM3.5 million worth of grants. The project has also been acknowledged in a 2019 national stamp by Pos Malaysia and the Ministry of Higher Education as a new flagship project for Universiti Sains Malaysia.

It's true liberty when I realized that my credibility as a scholar is not merely for personal-expression, but more importantly, as a medium to serve the people whom I belong to. Don't confuse between our legacies and the life objective of a scholar.