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UBD LAUNCHES NEW PIXELA LAB FOR PHOTO-CATALYTIC COATING RESEARCH



Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and its partners today launched its latest research facility, the Pixela Laboratory at the Science and Technology Building on UBD campus. As part of UBD's transition into a research university, the Pixela Laboratory will provide full access for students and academic staff to carry out research works to develop and demonstrate technologies of planned project outcomes.

A collaboration between UBD, Brunei Development Economic Board (BEDB) and major Japanese manufacturer, Pixela Corporation, the laboratory is a facility for research in the field of coatings for the development of photo-catalytic coating for tropical climate applications. Undertaking research under the Brunei Research Incentive Scheme (BRISc) funding, UBD, BEDB and Pixela Corporation aim to attract and encourage both local and foreign companies to conduct R&D activities in Brunei, with a long term plan to establish their business activities in Brunei. BRISc is also aimed to support Wawasan 2035 of developing Brunei into a knowledge based economy.

The launching ceremony was officiated by Deputy Minister of the Prime Minister's Office, Dato Paduka Hj Ali bin Hj Apong. Also in attendance were Associate Professor Dr Azman bin Ahmad, Acting Vice Chancellor UBD, Dr Lim Chee Ming, Director of Centre for Advanced Materials and Energy Sciences (CAMES), Dr Toru Kitamura, President of Pixela's subsidiary company – Pialex Technologies, and Dr Susumu Kuwabata, Senior Advisor of Pialex Technologies attending on behalf of Pixela Corporation.

The laboratory was established with aims to train graduate students in the field of photo-catalytic coating. In efforts to promote a knowledge economy in line with Brunei Vision 2035, it is hoped that the research facility will lead into commercialization of research in Brunei and attract potential investors. In addition, it is much anticipated that the new laboratory will build up UBD's internalization profile and research reputation to be the University of Choice for local and international students.

Under the BRISc project, the Government of Brunei Darussalam covers up to 70% of the research and development funding for manpower, training, equipment and materials, consultancy and rental. Companies, both foreign and local, are encouraged to collaborate with local research agencies to enhance domestic scientific capabilities through the exchange of knowledge, experience and technology transfer. Pixela Corporation's collaboration with UBD is one such example.

The ceremony begun with welcoming remarks by Director of CAMES, Dr Lim Chee Ming, followed by an address by Dr Kuwabata, who is also a Professor of Osaka University, attending on behalf of Pixela Corporation. Dr Kitamura delivered a video presentation explaining the BRISc Project. Researchers and guests at the event then proceeded to tour the laboratory to explore its facilities.

CAMES is a research facility in UBD focused on energy conversion and functional materials for energy applications. It provides a platform for researchers from various fields to come together to conceptualize ideas, and find solutions to problems pertaining to energy. CAMES has been involved in a number of high profile projects, including a research to develop a method to produce electrical power using pigments from tropical mistletoe, *Scurulla ferruginea*. The said project was granted patent by the Brunei Darussalam Registry of Patents in April 2012.

