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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **University of Malaya (UM) and University System of Taiwan (UST) Establish Research Collaboration**

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**KUALA LUMPUR, ..... DECEMBER 2011 – The University of Malaya (UM) today announced that it will collaborate with the University System of Taiwan (UST) which comprises four top research universities in Taiwan, namely, National Central University, National Chia o Tung University, National Tsing Hua University and National Yang Ming University.**

UM and UST aim to improve understanding between their respective academic institutions and to establish mutually beneficial collaborations benefiting their students, graduate students and academic as well as administrative staff exchanges. Specifically, UM and UST will conduct joint research activities, exchange publications, reports and other academic materials and information and share other activities and programmes in areas of mutual interest which will benefit both institutions.

For the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will be held on 23 December 2011 at UM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the University of Malaya will be represented by Tan Sri Dr. Ghauth Jasmon, Vice-Chancellor of UM, while the University System of Taiwan by Professor Dr. Yan-Hwa Wu Lee, Chancellor of UST.

The MoU signing ceremony will be followed by a talk on “Global Higher Education Challenges: Building World Class Universities” by Chairman Ovid J.L. Tseng.

Professor Dr. Ovid J. L. Tzeng is Chairman of the Steering Committee of the University System of Taiwan (UST) and Academician at Academia SINICA, the national research academy of Taiwan. He is a respected scientist recognized for his work in memory, psycholinguistics, and cognitive neuroscience. He has gained particular recognition for his extensive analysis of reading behaviors across different writing systems, and he is a leading pioneer in the field of cognitive neuroscientific studies of the Chinese language. In 1994, he was elected as a fellow academician of the Academia SINICA.

While working at Academia SINICA, Professor Tzeng devoted himself to the research of cognitive neuroscientific studies of memory and language. During his tenure as the Vice President, he launched numerous programs to promote interaction between Academia SINICA and the International Council of Science Union (ICSU). He also represented Academia SINICA at the Human Network of National Academy. In February 2004 he was elected as a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science and in 2006 he was elected to the Committee of Freedom and Responsibility in the Conduct of Science (CFRS). Recently he was invited to the panel of the European Research Council to review Advanced Grant proposals, particularly those concerned with the human mind and its complexity.

### **Abstract of the Talk**

What is it to be a “world class university”? Is it a myth? Or, a reality to be put into place by the effort of most Asian universities? We need to consider this problem very seriously and quickly, because we are right in the middle of an attempt to transform our universities in order to make them world class universities.

In his speech to his fellow colleagues at the Royal Society, London, England, President Richard C. Levin (Feb. 1, 2010) noted that:

“In the Gulf States, hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent to open branches of top U.S. and European universities such as Cornell in Qatar and the Sorbonne in Abu Dhabi.

This past autumn, the new King Abdullah University of Science and Technology opened in Saudi Arabia. Its \$10 billion endowment exceeds that of all but five American universities.

In Singapore, planning is underway to build a new public university of Technology and Design, and a new American-style liberal arts college affiliated with the National University.

In China, the nine universities that receive the most supplemental government funding to enhance their global competitiveness recently self-identified as the C9-China’s Ivy League.

In India, the Education Ministry recently announced its intention to build 14 new comprehensive universities of “world-class” stature.”

Let me add another note from my perspective on this issue. That is, in Taiwan, where I came from, MOE just launched another five-year term of funding for excellent research universities and research centers, with flexible salary scale for recruiting top professors and researchers. In other words, in line with the new balance of economic power in the world, an emerging world map of intellectual power is being drawn, with particular emphasis on the reconstruction of higher education in the Asian region. In search for academic excellence from a non-European and non-American perspective becomes a MUST mission for top universities in the region. What are the characteristics of excellent universities from an Asian-centric perspective but embedded in a global network, and in a high-tech driven context of modernity? The answer is culture and in this talk, I'll try to spell out my thoughts on how the cultural universality with differentiated cultural specificities can lead to a harmonious intellectual power in the changing contexts of future high-tech “knowledge societies.”

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### **About the University of Malaya**

The University of Malaya (UM), Malaysia's first university, is situated on a 812 acre campus in the southwest of Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. It was the first university established in Malaya on 8 October 1949 with the merger of the King Edward VII College of Medicine (founded in 1905) and the Raffles College (founded in 1928).

The university has undergone rapid development since its establishment, and has been designated as a Research University (RU) by the Malaysian Government since 2006. As one of the RU in Malaysia, UM is committed towards excellence and aspires to be a premier Research University known internationally. It aims to elevate itself to the world's top 200 within 2 years and to the world's top 100 within 5 years.

UM is now a research-intensive, comprehensive institution, conducting research across a wide range of disciplines, and continues to actively spearhead various research projects. A considerable amount of resources is invested in enhancing its research activities, building on

existing strength as well as creating new opportunities and progressing aggressively to meet new challenges.

With the Nation's aspirations as its guide, UM continues to strengthen its status in the academic world, both within the Nation and internationally. It has been ranked 167<sup>th</sup> in the 2011 QS World University Ranking and 39<sup>th</sup> in the 2011 QS Asian University Ranking. The University of Malaya is also the only university in Malaysia listed in the top 500 Academic Ranking of the World Universities by Shanghai Jiao Tong, China.

### **About "University System of Taiwan (UST)"**

The University System of Taiwan (UST) is a first university system of its kind in Taiwan. It models after the University of California System in the sense that UST is composed of four top universities (National Central University, National Chiao-Tung University, National Tsing-Hua University, and National Yang-Ming University). Its organization was first initiated in 2002 and formally established in 2008. The main goal of UST is to share educational and research resources among the four campuses, to enhance the teaching quality by arranging cross-campus course program, distant learning and network learning programs, and to promote integrated research facilities. UST's total number of faculty members is 2274, total student enrollment is 44272 with about half as graduate students working on their Master degrees and PhD degrees. Among the increasing number of international students, about 200 are from Malaysia. The UST libraries are highly integrated with 2,700,000 volumes of books distributed among the four campuses. The UST Headquarters is presided by Chancellor Yan-Hwa Wu Lee and her administrative tasks are assisted by four Vice Chancellors in the areas of academic affairs, student affairs, research and development, and international cooperation. Under UST, there are several joint research centers of excellence covering brain science, photonics, nanotechnology, information technology, environmental and energy research. In addition, UST has just launched three major international graduate degree programs on inter-Asia cultural studies, interdisciplinary neurosciences and photonics with a view to attract the best brains in Asia and the whole world to Taiwan. Over the last few years, 14 Nobel prize winners visited Taiwan at the invitation of UST. Six of them have been appointed honorary chair professors with constant contacts to Taiwan's scientific community. The University System of Taiwan is also running the UST-Sinyi Lectureship on Academic Integrity and intellectual conscience and spearheading a research project on academic integrity sponsored by Taiwan's Ministry of Education. The four UST campuses are each located in strategic places of Taiwan's high-tech industry, cultural and biomedical centers. The faculty and alumni of UST as a whole have been the driving force of the economic, technological, cultural and educational developments of Taiwan. The present visit of the Taiwanese delegation on December 23 led by Minister Ovid

Tseng and Chancellor Yan-Hwa Wu Lee will give the unique opportunity and high prestige for the UST leadership to meet with the leadership of the University of Malay to discuss the ways and means strengthen the academic exchange and international cooperation in higher education between Malaysia and Taiwan.

**Media contacts:**

**Ms Rohaizan Ramli**

International & Corporate Relations Office (ICR)

University of Malaya (UM)

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

603-7967 3424 / 6012-924 9437

[rohaizan@um.edu.my](mailto:rohaizan@um.edu.my)

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Issued by:  
International and Corporate Relations Office (ICR)  
University of Malaya  
50603 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel: 03-79673238/3273 Fax: 03-79560027 Email: [icr@um.edu.my](mailto:icr@um.edu.my)