

# WHY GO TO UNIVERSITY



By

**Professor Dato' Dr Ahmad Ibrahim**

*Fellow, Academy of Sciences Malaysia*

*Department of Chemical & Petroleum Engineering*

*Faculty of Engineering, Technology & Built Environment (FETBE)*

We now live in unprecedented times. The whole world is impacted by this humanitarian crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has jolted the world into a new reality. A reality which is set to change the way we live, the way we conduct our business, and the way we socialise. In fact, the way we pursue knowledge and acquire new skills will have to be different. Education, including schools and universities, will undergo a major transformation.

Notwithstanding, education will continue to be a priority for all. That will not change. In fact, what will happen instead is that more will seek to better themselves through education. Education will therefore assume greater importance in the post-COVID-19 era. The demand for higher education is set to rise.

So why go to university? In order to understand that, let us first look at what the world is grappling with now. Then, we will appreciate why the demand for qualified talents is critical to the survival of the world. The current pandemic has exposed the world to many risks, with health and economic risks being the major ones. In fact, many countries are now concerned that the economic fallout from the pandemic will wipe out all their years of efforts to lift people out of poverty. We need new talents to rethink the way forward. Therefore, university education is critical.

Scientists who have studied past health epidemics are not optimistic that COVID-19 is going to be the last pandemic. If we continue to live the way we have been living for the last many decades, where we take nature for granted and upset the natural habitats of dangerous microbes, then there is no stopping the emergence of new and more life-threatening health pandemics. Some climate scientists are even predicting that the emerging forces of climate change will be even more devastating and destructive for humanity than the COVID-19 pandemic. The current upheaval is only a pale shadow of the potential devastation from climate change. Again, we need new wisdoms to battle this. Where else but universities to nurture such talent.

What is clear is that the world will face more similar threats in the coming years. Without the skills to counter such threats, the world will be at tremendous risk. We may even lose the quality of life that we have been taking for granted all these years. This just means we need more educated and skilful global citizens who will have the ingenuity and creativity to offer workable solutions to neutralise such threats. We are also in need of global leaders who are better equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide leadership to galvanise the world into the right actions and responses in facing such threats. Universities are the best place to build such talents.

It is a fact that education is a lifelong pursuit. Seeking knowledge is a command that is inherent in all cultures. And university education is where we truly learn and are exposed to all the tools to help us pursue lifelong education. It is the most critical stage when students will acquire the right personal discipline to embark on that long journey of amassing knowledge. A knowledge that will make us constructive citizens of the world, serving society, government, industry and the entire humanity. All these are best embodied under the global pursuit of sustainability.

Studying at UCSI offers the opportunity to build such a foundation to serve humanity. As a praxis university, UCSI emphasises on the skills to make practical use of knowledge. As they all say, knowledge is worthless if it is not shared for the benefit of all. As a university which champions the UN-SDGs, UCSI provides education that will prepare students to make meaningful contributions to the global push for sustainability. Therefore, going to the right university is an extremely worthwhile investment.

