Proud: From left are Abdul Razak Saleh, Ruzelan (holding the award) and Azman Taa' at the awards ceremony.

UUM scores with evaluation system

NST 5/12/05 C19:1.

UNIVERSITI Utara Malaysia (UUM) has received the prestigious *IPTA* (*Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam*) *Award* for an evaluation system that it developed in-house to manage its students' scores in various academic assessments.

The *IPTA* awards were given out during the recent *IPTA R&D Expo 2005* that was organised by the Higher Education Ministry.

The awards were to recognise the success of research works by public universities, and UUM managed to win a total of 13 awards from its total of 20 research submissions.

The award-winning student automated evaluation system (SAES) that leverages SAS Business Intelligence technology has boosted the academic evaluation capabilities of the university's existing academic and student information system (Asis).

Professor Dr Abdul Razak Saleh of the UUM Center for Research & Consultancy said, "Although Asis provides general collation, scoring and reporting features, we were looking for a more simplistic way to manage student assessment scores in different appraisal schemes such as assignments, quizzes, tests, projects and final examinations".

EduTech

The increasing number of students, together with complex score weightage conditions called for an intelligent solution which could monitor all the assessment scores on an on-going basis, and perform statistical analysis of the coursework information.

What began as a research project has resulted in a highly effective administrative tool that UUM is planning to extend throughout the university.

According to SAES project researcher Ruzelan Khalid, with the Web-based SAES, UUM academicians can now monitor their students' coursework performance in a much more efficient and accurate manner.

"Automation is a key element of SAES as it eliminates the work duplication of compiling the sum of assessment scores and re-input into a final evaluation application," he said

Ruzelan stressed that SAES integrates with UUM's main Asis infrastructure for a completely automated student evaluation system, giving lecturers the capability to monitor students' performance on an on-going basis, regardless of the volume of course registrations.

Director of UUM Computer Center Azman Taa' believes that the deployment of SAS analytical technology brings much benefit to UUM in terms of making better decisions in matters that involve coursework planning in fine-tuning the existing academic process.

"In fact, we have pipelined a project to develop a campus-wide knowledge management portal, leveraging SAS Business Intelligence technology. We believe that this is an important endeavour in the university's effort to integrate its islands of information in a much more significant and advantageous manner," he said.

UUM has been licensing SAS software since 1989, whereby the software has been used for teaching and learning purposes. UUM was upgraded to the *SAS Academic Initiative Programme* that provided the university with an unlimited usage campus licence.

The programme provides the tools necessary for institutions such as UUM in their research and development quest for world-class solutions.

It acts as a bridge that lessens the reality gap between the academic world and the working challenges of commercial business.

UUM/0049/NST/05.12.2005/P: C19 (1)