Fostering understanding

Prof Barker conducting a supervisory workshop at AEU’s main campus in Kuala Lumpur.

THE School of Graduate Studies (SGS) of Asia University (AEU) organised a special supervisory workshop for practising doctoral supervisors and PhD students at AEU’s main campus in Kuala Lumpur on Aug 12.

More than a hundred participants from different universities and fields joined the event.

The primary objective of this professional workshop was to provide an opportunity for supervisors and students to discuss issues relating to their doctoral supervisory relationships that they found difficult to broach.

The topic of the workshop was Fifty-Seven Questions That Doctral Supervisors Worry About, facilitated by Prof David Barker from the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, School of Education, the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Prof Barker has worked at institutions in Malaysia - including in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Tanjung Malim and Kuching - over the last 25 years.

Now semi-retired from the University of Waikato, Prof Barker has, over the years, presented workshops in places such as China, India, Thailand, South Africa, Kenya, Sweden and Germany.

While his specialist areas are science and environmental education, he is interested in teaching and learning in general as well as the history and philosophy of education. He has around 150 publications to his credit.

During the workshop, Prof Barker introduced his list of 57 questions, garnered from the experiences of supervisors in New Zealand, and grouped the questions into 10 clusters:

- Acquiring my own students
- Assessing the best mode of PhD
- Coordinating expertise and functions
- Advising how to write the proposal
- Obtaining ethics approval
- Supporting my student
- Deciding on the structure of the thesis
- Giving feedback on the writing

They found the workshop interesting and all of them gained more in-depth understanding of what should be expected of supervisors.

"This workshop was extremely helpful to me in realising I need to speed up my work, as I have been procrastinating for some time. The workshop is an eye-opener for PhD students who plan to supervise other postgraduate students in the future," said Chan.

About AEU

AEU is a collaborative multinational university established under the auspices of the 33 Asia Cooperation Dialogue countries. All academic programmes are internationally benchmarked, approved by the Education Ministry and accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. Established in 2007, AEU has grown to become one of the leading providers of open distance learning (ODL) with an enrolment of more than 21,000 students in 65 countries. As an ODL institution, AEU’s focus is to provide accessible and affordable higher education for all.

There are three intakes every year - January, May and September. Though registration is open based on the month of intakes, registration for postgraduate (by research) programmes is open throughout the year.

A Postgraduate Research Conference will be held on Oct 4 at AEU’s main campus from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

The conference will cover research topics in business and administration, education, information, communication and technology, arts and humanities and social science.

The objectives of this conference are to promote the research culture and provide a platform for researchers to discuss their knowledge, experiences and findings.

Registration fee is RM100 per attendee. The closing date for registration is Sept 25.

For more information, call 1300 306 238 or visit www.aeu.edu.my