

## **Benefits and Challenges of Integration Among Universities Accelerating Towards Internationalization**

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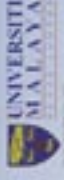
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The need to remain competitive and the ever increasing demands of various stake holders on universities have inadvertently led universities to be global players in education. Demand for recognition and the quest for a respectable position in the ranking of universities further accelerates the process of internationalization by universities.

Various strategies are drawn upon to increase the number of international students, international faculty and exchange students at the graduate and undergraduate level. In the pursuit towards internationalization, universities often overlook how their endeavors negatively impact upon existing resources, namely the human element, and to a lesser extent on support services and existing infrastructure. Accepting the notion that, benefits of integration far outweighs the lack of it, universities therefore must put greater effort towards this end. Failure to address issues on integration may result in dire consequences and in the long term, may do injustice to various components that make up the system of the university. Policies and procedures are often instituted to enable integration efforts. Laissez-faire versus interventionist policies is often debated and what approach to undertake may be dependent upon numerous variables such as age, gender, economic status, nationality and other factors and is often difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless universities' recognizes and agrees the importance of integration of international students amongst various nationalities and between internationals and locals.

Success of Integration efforts may, to an extent be reliant upon the support and commitment of various entities within the organization. Instituting organizational policies may look presentable on paper as a blue print, but the real challenge lies at the implementation stage. Thus a comprehensive and integrated approach should be utilized to enhance integration among all students thereby providing expeditious assimilation of international students into local culture and norms and therefore minimizing conflicts, distrust and anxiety among the campus populace. Best practices by established educational institutions, with high degree of success stories, may be used as a guide to be shared for the betterment of our institution.

*Paper to be presented at "3rd University Administrators Workshop: Laying Firm Foundations for University Internationalization" Kyoto University Clock Tower International Conference Hall, Kyoto, Japan, January 24 - 25, 2008*



**Quick Take**

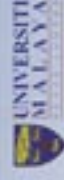
**Population - 27,544,000 (43rd)**

Malays	-	≈ 61%
Chinese	-	≈ 23%
Indians	-	≈ 7%
Indigenous groups		≈ 9%



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**Strategic Plan On Admissions by the Higher Education Ministry, Government of Malaysia**

**100,000 international Students by 2010**

**Involvement in International education Fair ≈ 60 visits per year**

**Aggressive Marketing by Public & Private Universities & Colleges**



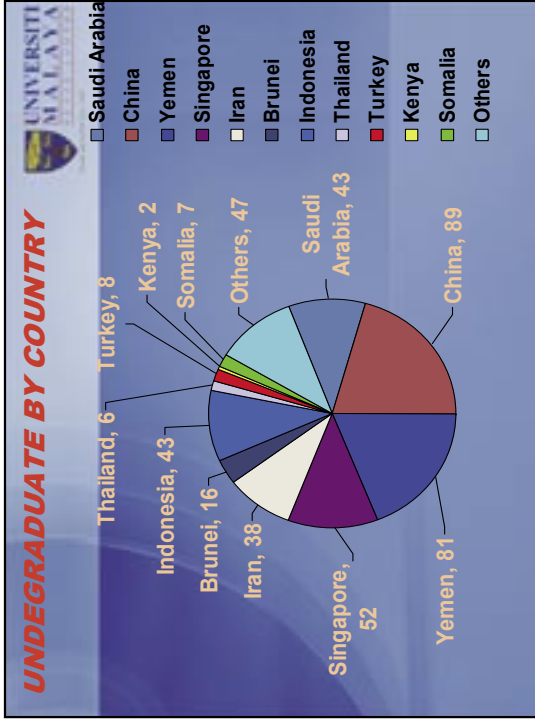
**University Admissions Policy for Undergraduate International Students**

- 5% of total enrollment i.e. 5% of 18,000 or 900 students
- 5% of annual admissions i.e. 5% of 4,500 or 225
- Reduce by 10% undergraduate students every year

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## University Admissions Policy for Graduate International Students

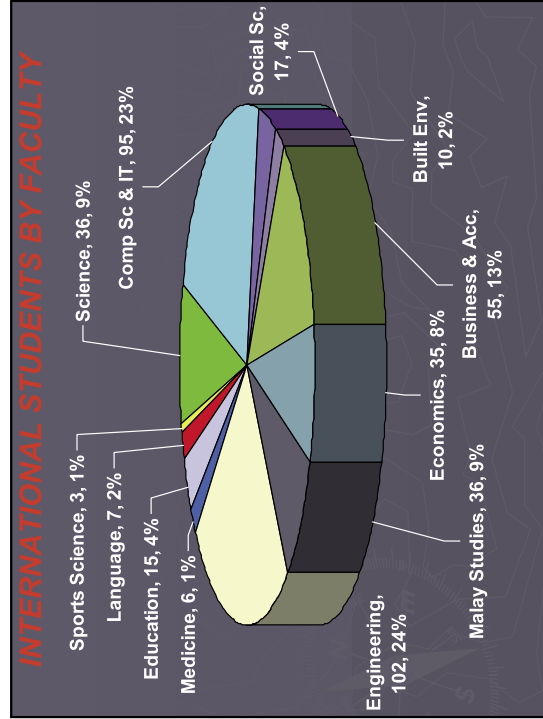
- Increase by 10% every year
- 50% Graduate: 50% undergraduate by 2010
- 50% International: 50% local by 2010

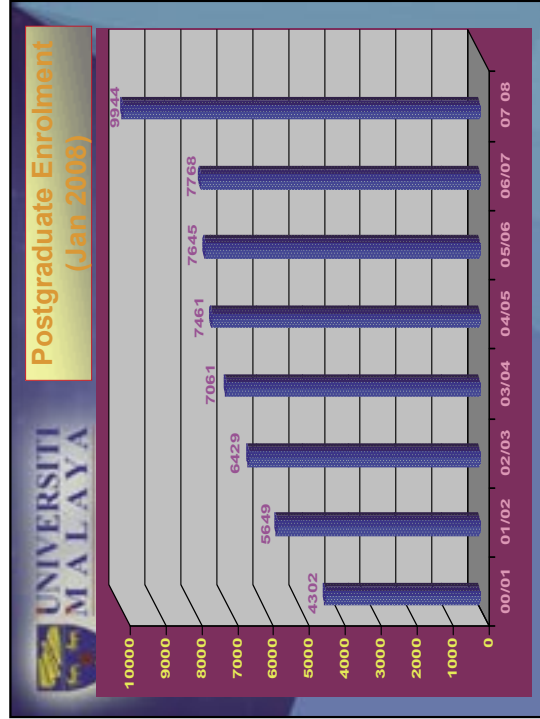
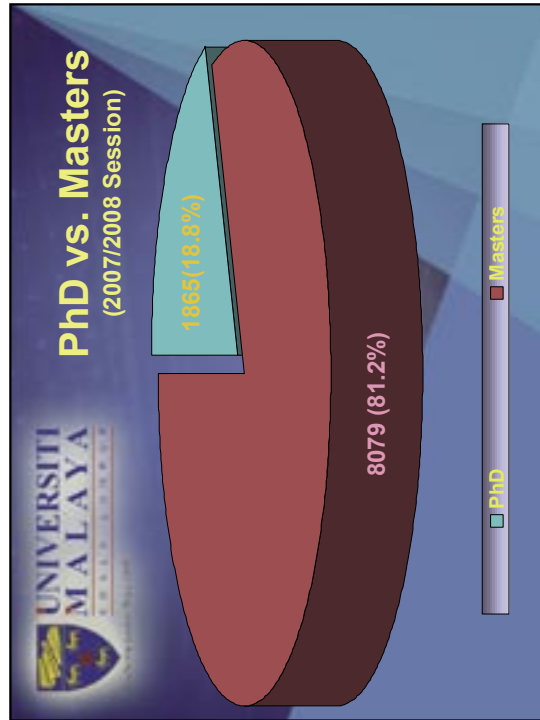
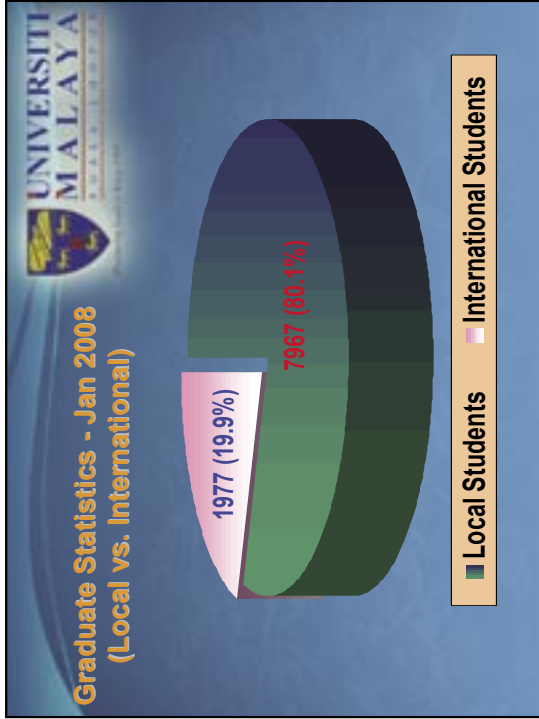
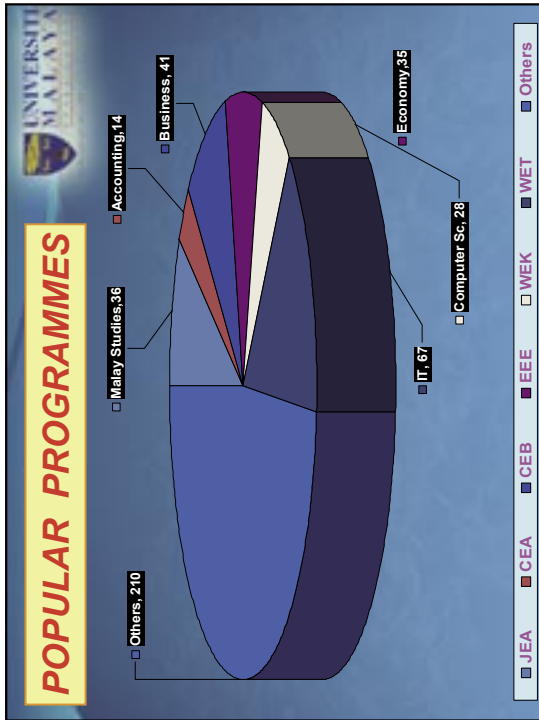


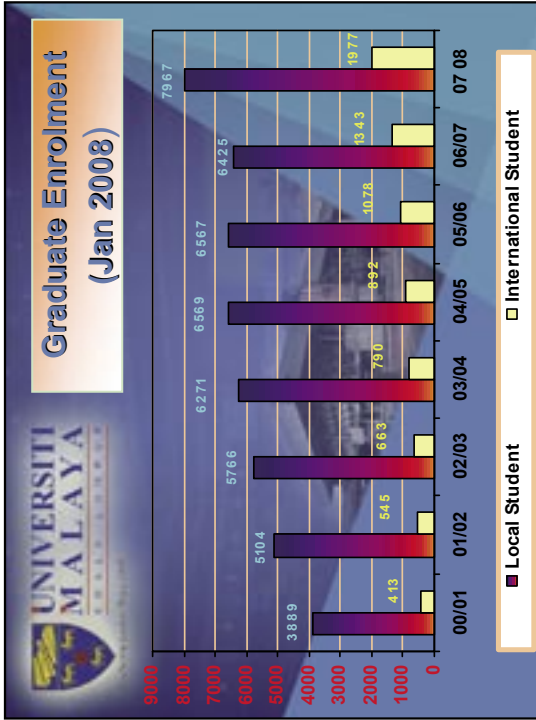
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## OTHER COUNTRIES

- Algeria – 1
- Bahrain – 3
- Ethiopia – 1
- India – 2
- Iraq – 5
- Libya – 1
- Maldives – 3
- Myanmar – 1
- Oman – 2
- Palestine – 4
- Qatar – 1
- Sudan – 9
- Uzbekistan – 4
- Laos – 2
- Utd Arab Emirates – 1
- Mauritius – 2







## Benefits of Integration

Minimize adjustment period  
 Reduce conflicts and distrust  
 Increase knowledge on:

- diverse cultures,
- beliefs,
- customs,
- language and
- traditions

Contribute towards understanding people of diverse backgrounds  
 Reduce anxiety and stereotyping  
 Speedier assimilation of international students into campus life  
 Reduce impact of cultural shock

## Strategies Towards Integration

### Housing Policy

- ❖ Different nationalities mixed in hostel rooms
- ❖ International students housed with local students
- ❖ International House - 70% International and 30% local

### Classes organized to facilitate integration

- ❖ Lab classes
- ❖ Tutorial classes
- ❖ Intensive English Language Classes

## Strategies Towards Integration

### University-Wide Policy On Activities

- ❖ Activities must have racial mix before approval
- ❖ Funding proportionate to level of integration
- ❖ International Student Activities must involve locals



## Activities for International Students

### Involvement in Various Religious Festivals

- Eid ul-Fitr & Eid ul-Adha (muslims)
- Awal Muharram (Muslims)
- Wesak Day (Buddhis)
- Deepavali (Indian)
- Thaipusam & Ponggal (Indian)
- Mid-Autumn Festival (Chinese)
- Chinese New Year & Chap Goh Mei (Chinese)
- Christmas & Thanksgiving (Christians)
- Good Friday (Christians)
- Vaisaki (Sikhs)
- Gawai (Ibans of East Malaysia)
- Harvest Festival (Kadazan-Dusuns of East Malaysia)



## Activities for International Students

- International Day
- International Week –all Public & Private Universities
- International Food Fair
- Community Service week
- International Cultural Shows
- Annual Dinner
- Home-Stay Programme



## Activities for International Students

- Inter-Hostel Sports Carnival
- Inter-Hostel Cultural Festival
- Inter-Hostel Debates (Chinese, Malay & English)
- International Student Orientation
- International - Local Student Orientation Week
- International Film Festival (throughout the year)



## Challenges to Integration

- Unswerving Management commitment
- Incompatible needs of different nationalities
- Diverse population (79 countries)
- Embedded customs and traditions
- Resistance to change
- Distrust between internationals and local students





## Challenges to Integration

- Differing shared beliefs
- Unpredictable support from existing campus community
- Involvement of politics and politicians
- “Birds of a feather flock together”
- Laissez-faire versus interventionist policies



# THANK YOU