

Penyampai : TAN SRI DATO SERI AHMAD SARJI BIN ABDUL HAMID  
Tajuk : THE AUAM 16TH ANNUAL DINNER  
Lokasi :  
Tarikh : 24-07-1993

I thank the President of the American Universities Alumni of Malaysia, Y.Bhg. Tan Sri Dato' Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman for his kind invitation to me to attend this function.

Tonight's function is the annual gathering of the graduates of American Universities and represents the culmination of the activities of the past year. The efforts put in by the Organization Committee is laudable for not only does the function bring together a large section of the graduates of American Universities, but far more importantly, it is an occasion to raise funds to support and subsidise Malaysian students who are proceeding to institutions of higher education in America. The efforts of AUAM are to be commended because they supplement the efforts of the Public Service in the field of higher education.

The Public Service Department also provides scholarship to serving officers in the public service to pursue their studies in US. This scheme is normally offered at post-graduate level namely Masters and Ph.D. SLAB scheme for instance is designed to enhance the teaching capability among academic staffs in institutions of higher learning and research institutions.

The amount of money invested on sponsored student in US is huge. Approximately RM 0.5 billion allocated for training each year, a big portion goes to training program in US. In 1991 alone, Public Services Department sponsored students in the US constitutes 47.4% of all students sponsored abroad. In US, the government spends between RM 50,000 to RM 65,000 for each student annually, one of the highest cost allocated per head in foreign countries.

Because of this heavy financial commitment one can hardly imagine that an individual can study in US without any financial aid at all. Are not those lucky enough to get this sponsorship feel indebted to the government? The American Universities Alumni Malaysia is a significant and a highly regarded association of well qualified professionals. It establishes and develops relations between graduates and provides a forum for the exchange of information. In this way, the members of the Alumni will keep abreast of developments both domestically and in the international arena. An alumni association is also useful from other points of view. It broadens experiences and helps to establish close links among the members. Personal friendships lead to business and government contacts, not only at home but also worldwide.

Your association plays an important role in bringing former students together to discuss issues of mutual concern. At the same time, it provides an opportunity for the dissemination of information for mutual benefit. This is the quintessence of networking, for it not only provides contacts with the necessary expertise but also helps to forge better public-private sector collaboration in the spirit of national development.

Finally, I am happy to note that the AUAM has been organising many social, cultural and academic activities for the benefit of its members. I wish your association every success in all its future endeavours.