

from

**POLIMAS**

with love

...from Deputy Director's  
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The first polytechnic, PUO in Ipoh was established in 1969 by the Ministry of Education and assisted by UNESCO. It was not until 1981 when the second, POLISAS, followed suit in Kuantan. It first shared premises with a vocational school in Alor Akar before moving to its permanent site, Semambu. In 1984, POLIMAS (initially known as PAOR) followed the same step, residing at Alor Setar Vocational School with 120 students while the campus in Jitra was under construction. Finally in 1987, they moved in and the opening was graced by the revered Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah; hence his majesty's name. The development of polytechnics continued with PKB (Kota Bharu), PKS (Kuching), PPD (Port Dickson), PKK (Kota Kinabalu) and by 2012, there were 32 all together. We have grown by leap and bound and definitely to stay, contributing towards nation building.



I started off with POLISAS in January 1985. At the time, it was under Ahamad Sipon (later Datuk Dr). When he moved to Politeknik Batu Pahat (which later became KUITTHO and then UTHM), it was taken over by 42-year-old Hee Tien Fook. Hee was later succeeded by Cheong See Leong, a 6 footer who had served PUO before. His deputy was Mohlis Jaafar (later Datuk) who is currently the Director General of Polytechnic Department Education (JPP). When I received a transfer letter to POLIMAS in September 1993, I was called to the office. I was served coffee. In return I had to stay back another 3 months to help them with industrial collaboration. All in all, I served POLISAS 9 long years. Among my close friends were Suhaimi Aminullah (Raub), Matzlan Ismail (Kota Bharu) and M. Sharif M. Lani (Muar) to name a few. Those who reported about the same time as I did were Mohd Isa Azhari (Kuala Lipis), Ho Men Boon (Johor), Azman Adam (KL), Abdul Karim Jaafar (Jitra) and wife, Rubiah Ismail (Langat). While Suhaimi and Sharif have retired, the rest moved on to other places.



In POLISAS, I served the Commerce Department. Initially, it was headed by Ahmat Sukeri Yusop, followed by Mat Daud Mat Saud and finally Amzah Ahmad who came from the land of Hang Tuah. Ahmat Sukeri was transferred immediately after returning from a course in the USA (1987) to head Commerce Department in POLIMAS. He came from the royal town of Kuala Kangsar and his house is just across a field to the palace. He retired in 2005 and decided to settle in Jitra. His love for POLIMAS is beyond question.

When I joined POLIMAS in 1994, it was under Imran Idris (later Datuk) who served POLIMAS for 12 years. He was moved from Politeknik Batu Pahat after the buildings were declared unsafe. In the early 2000, he was transferred to the headquarters and later on assumed the DG post. Incidentally, the first POLIMAS director was Abdul Aziz Hasbullah (deceased). Imran was then succeeded by Gan Chee Kuan, who had previously served as PJB director in Johor. After Gan retired in 2005, the change-of-guard turnover was rapid; Khair Mohamad Yusof (Dr, 1 year), Hashim Buyong (1 year), Gomenon Su (1 year), Md Noor Baharom (a few months), Md Nor Yusof (2 years) and Kamaruzzaman Ismail (2 years). Now the institution is steered by a lady for the first time, Asmara Sulong. Apart from the era of Kamaruzzaman Ismail, I was around to witness what made POLIMAS tick.



Imran Idris hailed from Kuala Ketil. He went to the elite school, MCKK (STAR nemesis), and further his studies in the UK. He held a few records like the youngest Vocational School principal ever. The man himself is simple. More often than not, he fasts. That is why he is slim until after retirement. Even though his physical size is considered average his vision is not. During his time, POLIMAS was famous. He spearheaded cooperation with multinational companies. We used to have labs sponsored by FairChild and robotic centre by Mitsubishi. The companies like Sharp-Roxy, Sime Tyre, AMD and many others regarded POLIMAS as their training partners. University and colleges from Southern Thailand frequented POLIMAS. Being humble, he drove an old Mitsubishi car. It was very much later that he was seen driving Sarena around. The polytechnic was abuzz with gossip. Actually, Sarena turned out to be a Nissan brand car, not the lady in one of our departments.

When he became the DG, he kept close contact with POLIMAS. From time to time, he would visit us. He used to tour the labs and workshops to see how we were getting on. I do not recall him losing his temper in any way. Every time we have convocation, he would be our guest of honour. I believe the Sultan of Kedah enjoys his company. Whenever we had problems, he was prepared to listen. He would not interrupt until you have said your mind. I had a couple of such experiences with him. I don't think any other director would match him. Dato' Imran, we would like to record our sincere thanks for what you have done to POLIMAS. Do enjoy your retirement days and you are always welcome here.

Gan Chee Kuan started off in POLIMAS as deputy director. He assumed the director post after Imran moved to JPP. He is very philosophical. He never raised his voice or lost his cool. You need to think to understand his words or speeches. I started to be close to Gan after getting involved with the budget. He also supported my computer project until we won first place in the MOE Innovation Award in 2001. Gan was always my partner to practise English. I have a lot of fond memories with him. Five years after retirement, I still keep close contact with him. Sometimes, I would drop by his Shooting Club or his house whenever I am on my way to KL. Other times, I would just report to him through SMS that I am passing his territory. He would always make an effort to attend our yearly convocation. Thank you Sifu Gan.





Dr Khair served in JPP prior coming to POLIMAS in 2005. At that time, I was the Mathematics HoD and doubled up as POLIMAS PRO. He liked to do management by walking-around. He had his fair share of problems too. After a year, his hair turned grey. His old friends complained that he grew old by a few years after joining POLIMAS. But, a jewel remained a jewel. I heard he was hand-picked to head IAB in Genting Highland. I remember visiting his office and his house while attending a course there. He remains to be one of the most famous directors ever to serve POLIMAS. Now, he is a top shot in MOE. We wish you all the best.

Dr Khair was succeeded by Hashim Buyong who came from Simpang Pulai, Perak. He was among the pioneer students of PUO. Hashim used to be as cool as a cucumber and as kind as an angel. The thing I remember most about him was when we hosted MSP in 2007. He was an easy boss to deal with. I had never heard he turned down anyone request. After retirement he was involved in selling water filter (Coway) from Korea. While delivering my speech during his retirement in Kuala Perlis, I joked that we should have no hesitation to buy hair-cream or slimming pill should Hashim were to sell them. Until his death two years ago, he kept his hair dark and his body lean. We all miss you Master Hashim Buyong. Will your soul rest in peace. Amen.



Gomenon Su took over the directorship seat. He was no stranger to POLIMAS because he made a comeback a few times. His time was the era of peace. He joined us for a trip to a few universities in Bangkok over several days. We invited Datuk Dr Ahmad Sipon to have dinner with us on the boat cruise along Chao Phraya. At that time, he was the director of Seameo in Bangkok. Gomenon, who came from Kangar, likes to grow "puding". His house bears hundreds of them if not all the varieties in the world. He retired at 56 and continued to teach as contract lecturer at PTSS, Perlis. His favourite phrase was, "*be part of the solution and not part of the problem*". Now, his role is taken over by his daughter, Nor Zuraida who is teaching ICT there.

After Gomenon retired, Md Noor Baharom took over. He actually had served POLIMAS as a lecturer for a long time. He was moved to PSP, Penang as the Commerce HoD, came back as POLIMAS deputy director, then was promoted as College Community director in Sungai Petani. His stint as POLIMAS director lasted only a few months due to upgrading exercise to Jusa C Grade.

There was an exchange of directors between POLIMAS and PTSS. Md Noor's background is accounting with special interest in entrepreneurship. Many years ago, he helped his wife to operate a stationery shop in Tanah Merah but disposed it off to concentrate on polytechnic management. He was PTSS director for about 4 years before moving to PSMZA, Dungun, Terengganu. I knew he is longing to be back in the north. By mid-July 2013, his wish has been granted. He is now back in PTSS. Then Md Nor Yusof (now Datuk) took over POLIMAS. He preached us a slogan, "*Betulkan yang Biasa, Biasakan yang Betul (Right the Normals, Normalise the Rights)*". I was very keen about it.....*to be continued*

