



MANAGING THE CHANGE PROCESSES IN UUM TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC

Zarifah Abdullah, Hafizah Abd-Mutalib, Muhammad Rosni Amir Hussin

This case was written by Zarifah Abdullah, Hafizah Abd-Mutalib, Muhammad Rosni Amir Hussin, Universiti Utara Malaysia. It is intended to be used as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management situation.

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Institute for Management and Business Research (IMBRe)
Universiti Utara Malaysia

Tel : +604 – 928 7607/7608/7609 | Fax: +604 – 928 7611

<http://www.imbre.uum.edu.my>

Prologue

Professor Yusnidah barged into her office, laid her belongings on the coffee table and walk straight to her working desk. The session with the State Government she had with earlier was quite worrying. "I need to get the feedback from the Ministry. They have to make the decision fast. Or else it's going to be problematic for universities to manage the students and the teaching and learning activities". Prof. Yusnidah was thinking to herself. The State Government has instructed for universities not to receive any students from China, since China was heavily affected by the Covid19 pandemic. People are beginning to be more alert, wary and conscious now when the situation in China was already at its Covid19 worst with 7736 confirmed cases and 170 deaths. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Risk Assessment reported cases in China as very high risks. (WHO Novel Coronavirus [2019 nCoV] Situation Report-10 as reported on 30 January 2020). However, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has yet to come up with their decision and instruction on the matter whilst the National Security Council (MKN/ Majlis Keselamatan Negara) were still allowing foreign visitors into the country at this time. What would be the best thing for UUM to do? Students from China provide the second largest funding contribution to UUM in terms of academic fees. If UUM were to hinder them from coming to study in the campus, that would be a great loss to UUM, and if they were allowed to come and stay in the campus, what impact would that be on the existing students who have just started their new semester on campus? "How I wish I have the answer to all these complications", Prof Yusnidah was uttering to herself again. What would be the best thing for the university to do?

Introduction

Professor Yusnidah was the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic and International (DVCAI), thus was in charge of academic matters in UUM. When the first Movement Control Order (MCO) announcement was made on the 16th March 2020, Prof. Yusnidah thought that the MCO, which started on 18th March 2020, would have ended within a fortnight. Therefore, the DVCAI's office had announced that the semester break which was supposed to be on the 27th March to 2nd April (one week) was rescheduled to 18th to 31st March to suit the MCO period. However, the second MCO announcement which came out on 29th March 2020 prompted Prof. Yusnidah on the uncertainty that the MCO would come to a halt in a short time. No one knew when the pandemic would come to its end, however, teaching and learning processes must continue, with or without the pandemic. Prof. Yusnidah realized that actions need to be taken for the continuity of teaching and learning in UUM. At the same time, the safety of students who were staying in the campus and the quality of the teaching and learning processes were treated to be of the same importance.

Due to the MCO, Prof. Yusnidah was aware that it was impossible to conduct the face-to-face classes, as there were students who were already back home, therefore, it was impossible for them to come back to the campus. Furthermore, although there were students who were staying in the campus, face-to-face classes still could not be initiated as the MCO had limited the students' movement to only areas within their residential colleges. Prof. Yusnidah saw that the only thing to be done in ensuring the continuity of the learning process was through the learning management system or the UUM's online learning (OL). This method would not only guarantee the continuity of teaching and learning, but also would ensure the safety of the students. The only thing was that Prof. Yusnidah was not sure at the beginning, if the quality of online teaching and learning could be maintained as that of the face-to-face meeting.

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