

Inti College has grown by leaps and bounds and its new main campus in Bandar Baru Nilai reflects its confidence and commitment to providing choices and quality in education.
HANIZAH HASHIM
writes.

THE tall Roman-style columns that adorn the facade of the Inti College campus in Bandar Baru Nilai, Negri Sembilan, certainly impress and never fail to draw visitors' eyes skywards.

Though an air of newness still permeates the campus, those imposing columns lend a sense of tradition students would expect to find in Western university campuses.

College president Tan Yew Sing said the campus was designed to reflect the Inti College philosophy of quality education.

"Quality is the essence of Inti education. We aim to conduct education modelled after the West in an Eastern setting.

"That means we combine the best of Western education with Eastern values such as discipline, diligence and respect for elders while giving a certain level of freedom.

"By taking into consideration the strength and weaknesses of both East and West, Malaysia is the ideal meeting place of various cultures.

"Inti is the right place for students to prepare themselves before going to Western countries. Parents are concerned that their child might change if they go abroad when they are too young.

"If they can do their undergraduate studies in Malaysia, the parents will have their children home a bit longer and can let them go overseas for postgraduate studies.

"Each year in my orientation speech, I tell the new intake that if an Inti student goes overseas and doesn't come back to serve the nation, I see it as a failure on our part."

Senior vice-president for administration Dr Lee Fah Onn said he hoped that parents get the message that Inti would like to mould their children into independent adults.

"It's not enough to get an education just to get a job. When we mean giving them a quality education, this includes helping to build their character.

"That means providing the physical infrastructure and putting the facilities in place for quality learning and character building to take place.

"A purpose-built campus provides the conducive environment. We moved into the new campus in April 1998. The campus is the epitome of our long-term plans, a dream realised."

Inti is well into its plan to become forward looking by having internationalised e-campus that stress holistic education to better prepare graduates for the 21st century.

The college was founded in 1986 in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. It then moved to Jalan Sungei Besi and then Subang Jaya before moving into the 22ha main campus in Bandar Baru Nilai.

It has branch campuses in Selangor, Sarawak and Sabah with the newest in Penang. Total student enrolment for the Inti Group of Colleges is 11,000, with more than 4,000 in the main campus.

Inti established the Beijing Inti

Inti a pillar of education



MIX OF EASTERN AND WESTERN VALUES ... The imposing pillars of Inti's main campus



TAN
 ... Right place to prepare

Inti College in Bangkok, Thailand, next year.

Students can obtain an overseas degree under the 3+0 programmes or enrol in the British, Australian and New Zealand advanced standing degree programmes and the American University Programme.

The college was awarded the Special Award For Export Education (Industry Excellence Award 1997) by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

Inti College Subang Jaya was awarded the ISO 9002 certification in the conduct and management of its academic programmes in 1998 by Sirim for its quality system in education.

The attainment of MSC status for Inti College Malaysia and Inti College Subang Jaya was another boost in the colleges' commitment towards training knowledge workers.

Inti Universal Holdings Bhd, the company which operates the Inti Group of Colleges, recently became the first private education company to be listed on the main board of the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange.

Lee, a former dean of applied sciences of the then Institut Teknologi Mara, saw potential in the credit transfer arrangements with overseas universities already in place at ITM.

On retirement, he got together with Tan to initiate a similar programme in the private sector as an alternative for Malaysians planning to obtain foreign tertiary education.

"The Education Ministry's wisdom to liberalise education policies



LEE
 ... Build students' character

placed on higher education by Asians.

"The education industry is more enlightened now and has become more transparent. People have become more demanding and come up with specific questions, unlike 10 years ago.

"Parents need more information before they decide (on what school to enrol their children in). This is a healthy trend because private education is an industry, but it is not a 'for profit' one."

Tan said: "Parents and students want to see the facilities available as well as our commitment to their children's education. On looking back we did the right thing by putting in quality.

"When we formulated our plans, we merely wanted to see if it would be financially viable, but we did not think it would be an industry. Fortunately, we came in at the right time.

"We invested more than RM150 million in the new campus. I cannot claim to have the foresight, but when we started, I never anticipated that Inti would grow this much.

"The campus is important to create an atmosphere conducive to study. Considering that the site seemed like no-man's-land five years ago, building it was a risk well-taken.

"We try to strike a balance between academic and non-academic pursuits. Campus life has to be more than just study. There are *mamak* stalls and the cybercafe to go to after class.

"The whole venture for Inti has been fulfilling but it has been hard