City varsity plan in Penang

WOU applies to hold full-time classes at George Town campus

By CHRISTINA CHIN

PN ANG will have a ‘university for the city’ if an application by
the Wawasan Open University (WOU) to conduct conventional full-
time classes at its campus in George Town is approved.

WOU chancellor Tan Dr Lim Keng Yaik said the university, which
currently offers an open distance learning model, had submitted its
application to the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) for the purpose.

He said the full-time classes would target school leavers who
have just finished their SPM examination.

‘If approved, the main campus in Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah will be
complemented by different facilities all over the city which is a similar
setup to that of the University of London’s (LU) ‘teaching’ conference
after WOU’s third conviction ceremony at its campus on Saturday.

He said WOU was on par with older, more established universi-
ties like Universiti Malaya and Universiti Sains Malaysia, and had
recently achieved a five-star excellent status under the Rating System
for Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (SERIATA) conducted by
the MoHE.

No institution was accorded the highest tier-6 ranking in the exer-
cise. Dr Lim also said ‘virtual open universities’ would be the future of
Malaysian education.

‘You won’t need to be locked up in a physical building on campus as
everything will be accessible online’, he said.

The former Energy, Water and Communication Minister said many
students did not appreciate open distance learning because of its easy
entry requirement.

‘The song musik, senang kerja (easy to get in and easy to get a
degree) perception is erroneous’, he said.

‘People think they’ll live in the Holokon dialect or a second
language but this is wrong’. He said many universities that missed out on
learning in their younger days to obtain a paper qualification.

Dr Lim earlier praised Gerakan president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon
for his pro-education approach.

In his speech, Dr Koh said WOU was the culmination of Gerakan’s
vision to contribute to educational development by setting up a not-
for-profit open virtual university for working Malaysians seeking self-
advancement.

The convocation ceremony for 365 postgraduate and undergradu-
ate students ended yesterday.

Well done: (From right) Dr Lim and Dr Koh sharing a light moment with Penang Development Corporation founding
manager Datuk Seri Chet Singh, who has just been conferred the Honorary Doctor of Letters degree during WOU’s third
convocation ceremony in George Town.

Joyful
moment:
Chair, who was
awarded the
Chancellor’s
Gold Medal,
being kissed by
his wife Datuk
Boong, 41, and
son Yau Jia, 12,
after the event.

Congratulations: Tan Dr Lim Cheng Eu Memorial Prize winner Poh showing her mother Lim Geok Hiang, 70, and husband
Lee Boon Ming, 53, the Award at the event.

Koh: Make learning a lifelong pursuit

LEARNING should not stop after graduation – it should be a lifelong
pursuit.

Newly appointed Wawasan Open University (WOU) Pro-Chancellor
Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said in accordance with the Chinese pro-
verb, wu tu mao (learning without
end limits), graduates must continue to
learn to gain knowledge and skills not just
in their fields of study but also to
widen productively, think critically
and communicate effectively.

‘We have to be passionate about your work and
compassionate to others.

‘Being meaning to other people’s lives, contribute to society and
the country and be part of building a better tomorrow’, he said.

Dr Koh, who is also Gerakan president, reiterated the party’s commit-
tment to ensure that every segment of society had an opportunity for
higher education so that they could

advance in their careers and enrich themselves.

He was speaking at the uni-
versity’s third convocation cer-
emony at its Penang campus on
Saturday.

Dr Koh’s appointment was proclaimed by WOU chancellor Tan Dr
Lim Keng Yaik.

In 1999 during the party’s nation-
al delegates conference in Penang, then party president (Dr Lim)
announced Gerakan’s mission to
contribute to education by setting up
an open virtual university to benefit
working Malaysians.

‘Besides the advantage of greater flexibility for open distance learning,
WOU’s programmes must also
be relevant to the various resources
within the key thriving sectors of
the economy’. Dr Koh said.

In his speech, Dr Lim said the per-
ception and career plans of the
present generation of learners had
changed as many were moving away
from traditional fields like
basic science, medicine, engineering
and accounting into popular career-
driven fields like events planning,
tourism and hospitality services,
healthcare support, personal care
services, management analysis and
entrepreneurship development.

‘WOU must remain relevant and
cater to the needs of these contem-
porary job seekers’, he said.

‘Institutions of higher learning like WOU need the full support of
the government to educate and train
them into employable graduates.

‘Lifelong learning is a right of the people which the government
must safeguard by instructing education policies and guidelines that
are learner-friendly’, he said.

During the ceremony, Penang
Development Corporation (PDC)
founder general manager Datuk
Seri Chet Singh was conferred the
Honorary Doctor of Letters degree.

Thanking the university, Chet
Singh said the PDC was established
to tackle challenges including an
economy which was in the doldrums, the erosion of the free port
status and high unemployment rate.

He said having training facil-
ties for workers was essential
which led to the establishment of
the Penang Skills Development Centre.

‘Opportunities for open distance
learning and the setting up of col-
laborative centres between universi-
ties and industries are necessary for growth’, he added.

He called on WOU to capitalise on its capability by providing skills
enhancement courses and develop-

programmes for the empowerment
of women.

In his address, WOU Vice-
Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Ho Sim
Chye said the university would com-
mence the Bachelor of Management (Hons) with Psychology in January
and was waiting to launch new
programmes in the areas of
mechatronics, property and facilities
management, hospitality and tou-
rism management and human
resource management.

‘Beginning September next year,
we hope to offer full-time, on-
campus, business degrees in man-
agement and accounting’, he said.

During the ceremony, valedicto-
rarians Poh Boon Fong and Chan Chun
Aik were presented with the Tan Dr
Lim Cheng Eu Memorial Prize and the
Chancellor’s Gold Medal respec-
tively.