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CONTENTS

List of Tables xxii
List of Figures xxiii
Message: The Constitutional Head xxvii
Foreword: The Honourable President xxix
Preface xxxi
Acknowledgements xxxv

PART 1: THE UNIVERSITY

Chapter 1
International Islamic University Malaysia: The University with a Soul
Zaleha Kamaruddin & Abdul Rashid Moten 3

Chapter 2
Malay Intelligentsia’s Quest for an Islamic University and the Future of
“Islamisation of Human Knowledge” in International Islamic University
Malaysia
Mohd Kamal Hassan 23

Chapter 3
Principles of Good Governance at the International Islamic University
Malaysia
Nik Ahmad Kamal Nik Mahmod 47

Chapter 4
Strategic Planning: Steering the Ship through Changing Circumstances
Mohamed Ridza Wahiddin 63

Chapter 5
Internationalising a Model of Islamic Educational Excellence
Abdelaziz Berghout 79

Chapter 6
From a Ramshackle Estate to A Garden of Knowledge and Virtue:
A Campus for a Premier Global Islamic University
Ismawi Zen 101
Chapter 7
Islamisation and Internationalisation: The Kuantan Campus
Kamaruzaman Wan Su

Chapter 8
Promoting Islam through Research and Publications: Theses and Journals
Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi

Chapter 9
The Effectiveness of an Integrated Curriculum: Economics Programme at the International Islamic University Malaysia
Ruzita Mohd. Amin, Selamah Abdullah Yusof, Mohamed Aslam Haneef

PART II: KULLIYYAHs & INSTITUTES

Chapter 10
Relevantisation and Islamisation: The Experience of the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
Ibrahim Mohamed Zein & Hazizan Md. Noon

Chapter 11
Islamisation, Harmonisation and Convergence: Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyyah of Laws’ Journey
Syed Khalid Rashid

Chapter 12
The Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences: Integrating Conventional Economics with Islamic Values and Ethics
Rafikul Islam & Khaliq Ahmad

Chapter 13
Islam and Science: The Kulliyyah of Science at the International Islamic University Malaysia
Torla Hassan

Chapter 14
The Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design: Building on a Rich Heritage
Ismawi Zen
Chapter 15
The Kulliyyah of Engineering: Producing a Muslim Engineer
Waleed Faris

Chapter 16
International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization:
An Island in a Sea of Trees
Sayyid Mohamed Ajmal Abdul Razak al-Aidrus

Chapter 17
The Institute of Education: Premiering Global Islamic Education
Roshani Hashim

Chapter 18
The Institute of Islamic Banking and Finance
Ahamed Kameel Mydin Meera

References

Index
CHAPTER 10

RELEVANTISATION AND ISLAMISATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE KULLIYYAH OF ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Ibrahim M. Zein
Hazizan Md. Noon

Muslim intelligentsia in Malaya has been aspiring for the establishment of an Islamic University for a long time. The dream became a reality in 1983 with the establishment of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The spirit behind such an effort was to re-establish “the primacy of Islamic values in all fields of knowledge and the propagation of knowledge in the spirit of submission to God (tawhîd)” (Mohd. Kamal Hassan, 2009b: 13). As IIUM celebrates its 30th anniversary, it is perhaps appropriate to reflect on what this “Garden of Knowledge and Virtue” has accomplished in realising its mission of Islamisation of Knowledge.

When IIUM was established in 1983, it was clear that the central objective of the University was to integrate knowledge with Islamic values, norms and worldview. This resulted in the formation of the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge (CFK). It was a non-degree awarding centre responsible for offering courses relating to the Islamic worldview, Islamic creed, ethics, and spirituality. The Centre since its inception up until it has been transformed into the Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (IRKH) offered 38 courses, 14 of which were taught in Arabic. These courses were all service courses to students of Kulliyyah of Laws and Kulliyyah of Economics and Management. Moreover, the CFK organized both ḥalāqah and ‘Ībādah Camps as co-curricular activities which were obligatory for all students, with the exception of non-Muslim students. The objective was to create professional Muslims in the law, economics and management professions. However, in 1990 the second Rector of IIUM AbdulHamid AbuSulayman established the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS). The new Kulliyyah aimed at integrating the social sciences, humanities and the religious sciences. It may be noted that specialisations in “Islamic studies” and “social sciences” are referred to in IIUM as “Islamic Revealed Knowledge” and “Human Sciences” respectively. Students majoring in IRKH were required to take their minor in one of the human sciences discipline and vice versa.