

Higher Education innovation can turn crisis into opportunity

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Investments in renewable energy, such as installing solar panels on campus buildings, adopting smart energy management systems, and implementing energy-efficient building designs, can reduce dependence on conventional energy sources. FILE PIC

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LETTERS: Rising fuel prices present opportunities for reform and innovation within the higher education sector. Universities should view this situation as a catalyst to accelerate the transition towards sustainable campuses.

Investments in renewable energy, such as installing solar panels on campus buildings, adopting smart energy management systems, and implementing energy-efficient building designs, can reduce dependence on conventional energy sources.

Moreover, hybrid and digital learning approaches should be strengthened strategically, not merely as a post-pandemic measure.

The use of technology in teaching and learning can reduce the need for physical mobility, thereby lowering transportation costs for both students and staff. Its implementation must be supported by robust digital infrastructure and continuous training for educators.

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From a policy standpoint, the government is encouraged to introduce more targeted support mechanisms for the higher education sector. These may include special grants for energy efficiency initiatives, tax incentives for investments in green technologies, and expanded financial assistance for students affected by rising living costs.



Support schemes such as transportation subsidies or food vouchers specifically for higher education students could also be considered to alleviate their burden.

At the institutional level, universities can take proactive measures such as optimising space utilisation and class scheduling to reduce energy consumption, introducing carpooling systems among campus communities, and expanding efficient and environmentally friendly campus bus services.

In addition, collaborations with industry players in renewable energy can open up alternative funding opportunities while benefiting research and student training.

Equally important is the role of students in adapting to these challenges. Awareness of sustainable lifestyle practices, such as prudent energy use, shared transportation and sound financial management, should be cultivated.

Sustainability education as a subject can also be further embedded into the curriculum to nurture a generation that is more conscious of energy and environmental issues.

A holistic and collaborative approach involving the government, institutions, industry and students is crucial to ensure that the continuity and quality of higher education in Malaysia are preserved amid global uncertainties.

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The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Straits Times

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