

Students encouraged to use IT

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Rectors say universities should encourage students to make use of information and communication technology for more knowledge transfer purposes.

"We have a quite advanced information technology system and it is too bad if students only make use of it for entertainment purposes," University of Indonesia (UI) rector Gumilar Rusliwa Somantri said Thursday on the sidelines of an international conference to discuss campus IT infrastructure.

UI was hosting the second conference of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU), a consortium of research universities in the Pacific Rim that consists of 37 members from the United States, Asia and Australasia.

The three-day seminar, which kicked off Thursday, is aimed at sharing information and challenges in developing campus IT and to facilitate resource sharing and collaboration.

Gumilar said as the university was aiming to build a knowledge-based society, he expected students to develop

their research by benefiting from the available technology.

"UI has already a cyber library and a computerized research data system. What we don't have now is the mindset among students to make use of that technology investment to produce more research," he said.

Gumilar said all universities would sooner or later strive to become electronic universities given that it promoted not only comfort but also efficiency and was environmentally friendly.

"Technology does not only provide us with easiness and briefness in searching for more data. It offers a paperless system that can help save our environment," he said.

Gumilar expected the conference to inspire UI in developing its web-based study and research as the university was also preparing to open an integrated international study program in August 2009.

The program would use English as the course language and apply an international curriculum taught by foreign lecturers.

Gumilar said the new program would be applied in 11 schools, includ-

ing the schools of culture and medical study, which have hosted the most international students.

"We have around 5,000 international students, mostly coming from Korea, Japan and European countries," he said.

He said UI was expecting to increase its ranking among top international universities by providing an advanced IT campus.

According to a Webometrics index, UI ranked 1,966th among the 5,000 top universities in the world last year. It is below Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, which ranked 939th. There were 12 Indonesian universities on the list.

APRU secretary general Kenneth McGillivray said the merging of information and communication technology infrastructure was a challenge faced by member universities in the association.

He said APRU needed to better explore and experiment with ways to collaborate with one another beyond bilateral dealings, and find diverse and innovative solutions for issues confronting all institutions.