


The Number of Laboratory Assistants in Universities is Declining

Thursday, 27 July 2017 WIB, By: Marwati



The Educational Laboratory Assistant Institution is an essential entity in the development of education and research in a university. A higher number and quality of laboratory assistant will encourage the implementation of *Tri Dharma* (education, research, and community service) of the university. However, career path and enhancement of competence have to be considered by the leader of the university, because there is a tendency of the declining number of laboratory assistants. “The number of lab workforce in the universities is declining,” said Development Expert Team of Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, Tri Joko Raharjo, M.Si., Ph.D., during a seminar entitled *The Synergy Enhancement Between Educational Laboratory Assistant and Non-Teaching Staff in the Laboratory Development* on Wednesday (26/7).

According to Tri Joko, there is a high possibility of the decline was due to the lack of attention to their career path and promotion of laboratory staff which is caused by the change of civil service management system under the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education that was previously under the Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture. Moreover, each university has to give concern on the career path of non-government laboratory assistants. “The laboratory assistants who are non-government employees have to be regulated the same.”



Tri Joko said the laboratory assistants can also enhance their competencies in maintaining and utilizing laboratory equipment for education and research necessities. According to Tri Joko, the indicator of good laboratory management is based on the effectiveness and efficiency of the laboratory work, the satisfaction of its users such as lecturers and students, the recognition of its competence through laboratory accreditation, as well as the minimum number of accidents.

Chairman of Lab Assistants unit at UGM, Muhammad Irfan, said the number of these staff at UGM is 170 people. All of them are government employees. "There is a possibility of the addition of non-government laboratory assistants to this profession," said Irfan.

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