



Dr. Steve Voldman meets with students at Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang Malaysia

## ESD on Campus Program

# Visiting Malaysia--Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in Penang

by Steven Voldman, Ph.D.,  
ESDA Board of Directors,  
ESD On Campus Program Manager, IEEE Fellow

Penang, Malaysia.  
Selamat paggi!

As I landed in the industrial sector of Penang for the lecture at USM, I had to grab some lunch near my hotel. I asked the host, where does one eat? The Malaysia staff woman pointed around the street to Nasi Khandar and proudly stated, "This is the best one in all of Malaysia".

As you enter the original Nasi Khandar, it was empty, hot and the smell of strong Indian and Malay curries, murtabak, and roti was evident. After 10 minutes, lines began to form filled with engineers with badges from Intel, Cisco, and other corporations. When this began, I knew I was in the Silicon Valley of Malaysia - - it felt like San Jose for lunch with the lines of EEs off for their lunch breaks. The crowds? A mix of Indian, Chinese, and Malay, and even a few American engi-neers mingle and talk "tech."

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) sits in the Silicon Valley of Malaysia—the Penang industrial sector, where semiconduc-tor corporations cover the landscape on this side of the island. An ESD on Campus lecture was scheduled in the evening so that both industry and students could attend. The lecture house was full with over 100 attendees from students of USM, faculty of USM and attendees from companies such as Renesas, Solectron, Motorola, Avago, Silterra, and Intel. The host was Professor Dr. Othman of USM. Just like Silicon Valley, the lecture was delayed due to traffic in the tech corporations.

The lecture was 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. After an hour, the lecture was required to stop promptly at 7:30 pm—it was the Muslim Call to Prayer, which was beamed over loud speakers in the adjacent mosque on the university. The lecture was stopped, and those who were non-Muslim were fed a large buffet of deserts of Malay and Chinese specialties.

After the break, the discussion continued into the evening for a question-answer period. The audience was filled with both men and women faculty, where many of the women had traditional head coverings and conservative dresses. A questioning and interactive crowd all curious about the future of ESD! Talking continued through the evenings with students attentive and interested in what industry was doing, with closing greetings of Tsei jen, Salaam malam, to Salaam aleikum.