

UMS graduate represents M'sia in academic fellowship

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KOTA KINABALU: A University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) graduate has been chosen as one of the five from Malaysia to the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Academic Fellowship program in the United States (US).

Lua Pei Ling, 24, the UMS alumnus from the Faculty of Psychology and Education was selected for the Spring 2022 cohort under the theme of civic engagement.

When contacted, she informed the program was conducted in a hybrid format, with an initial virtual component held in April-May 2022, followed by an in-person at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) and Arizona State University from March 3 to March 22, 2023.

"There are three of us now at University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), while another two are going to Arizona State University.

"This YSEALI Academic Fellowship is a US government program that provides skills training to young leaders in Southeast Asia.

"This exchange program is fully sponsored by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which includes lodging, transportation and stipend," she said.

According to Pei Ling,



Pei Ling (second left) with YSEALI Academic Fellowship participants from across the ASEAN region.

the Academic Fellowship focuses on one of the three themes: Civic Engagement, Environmental Issues and Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development.

"My primary interest is in mental health advocacy, and participating in this fellowship has enabled me to establish a wide network and gain insights into civic engagement topics such as active citizenship, community building and volunteerism.

"Throughout the virtual component of fellowship I joined last year, I have developed

several mental health advocacy plans that promote inclusivity to the tertiary education students in line with my civic interest," she added.

The receiver of the Gold Alumni Award in UMS 24th Convocation also expresses her gratitude as one out of five to represent Malaysia in that prestigious international program.

"I am thrilled and honored for the opportunity which has allowed me to expand my horizons, develop my skills, and connect with young leaders from across the ASEAN region.

"This is my first time visiting the United States, and I'm absolutely in love with the culture here as well as my host institution, the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

"I hope to use this experience to inspire and empower other young people in my country to pursue their dreams and make a positive impact in our communities," said Pei Ling.

Also representing Malaysia at the YSEALI Academic fellowship program were Raenuga Indran, Jit Lee Woon Kiat, Nur Irdina Jailani and Ahmad Alif Halimi.