

# UMS graduate did not expect to receive Tun Zaki Award

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**KOTA KINABALU:** We can't make a change, but we can make a difference, said Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) graduate, Debbie Quah Lye Theng, a Tun Zaki Award (local) recipient.

It was one of Debbie's favourite inspirational quotes to uplift her spirit in completing her studies, especially when she is away from her family members.

"The Movement Control Order (MCO) is the most challenging period for me because as a medical student, I am required to meet patients for examination purposes. Meanwhile, lectures were conducted online, and it made it even more difficult for me. However, self-confidence is the main key in learning. To me, no matter what challenges you face, you must be confident in yourself to help yourself in making the best solution or decision," Debbie said.

The 25-year-old Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences graduate from Penang did not expect to receive the award.

"I really did not expect to receive Tun Zaki Award and to me, this is a bonus award for me after fighting for five years in medical course. I would also like to take the opportunity to express my



Debbie Quah  
Lye Theng

gratitude to UMS for giving me this award, and to the lecturers in my faculty for providing guidance, encouragement and being an inspiration throughout my studies here," said Debbie.

Another graduate who received her scroll during UMS 24th Convocation ceremony, Nurul Yusra Afiqah Anuar, is finally relieved for completing her degree in Child and Family Psychology.

As a person with mental disability, Nurul Yusra said it was not easy for her, as she had planned to quit multiple times.

"As a person with mental disability, there is a stigma in society, because I look normal. In fact, I was battling inside, thanks to my lecturers and friends from NGO who were always there for me. I am currently working in a safe space, where I am also treating people with mental disabilities.

"All the patients and trainees under my supervision are also



Nurul Yusra  
Afiqah Anuar

with mental disability, and I can understand what they feel," she said.

Nurul Yusra who obtained 3.53 Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) said she is passionate in what she is currently doing because she will be able to help those having same issue as her.

"Most persons with mental disabilities such as trauma, anxiety and stress will be having problem in staying in focus in their studies but I am glad for being there for them, helping them in going through it.

"As long as we are channeling our issue on the right direction, it is manageable and even give us a better understanding in tackling any situations in the future," she said.

Meanwhile, 27-year-old Filipina Maitha Comendador Vender @ Nur Zafirah Abdullah is planning to be a lecturer in the future.

The international student who studied Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Second



Maitha  
Comendador  
Vender @  
Nur Zafirah  
Abdullah

Language (TESL) said it was her dream of becoming an English lecturer.

The fourth child of six siblings said that she found out about UMS through her old college and made a search to find out the requirements to enter the university.

"At first, I thought UMS is only accepting local students but after asking and searching, it seems UMS also accepts international students from China, the Philippines and other countries.

"My parents initially told me to continue my studies in the field of business, but destiny can be changed. I continue to study education so that I can pursue my ambition as an English lecturer," she said.

As her father-in-law is also a lecturer in one of local universities in the country, Maitha said it even gave her the determination to continue her studies to ensure her dreams come true.