

Two UMS graduates overcome illness, disability to earn degree

TBP 28.06.2022 P.02

KOTA KINABALU: Two students did not let their illness and disability to prevent them from graduating from University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) with degree honours during the convocation ceremony.

Nur Farina Amalia Mohd Isa, 24, who was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) graduated with a Bachelor of Psychology with Honors (Youth and Community Development).

The graduate of the Faculty of Psychology and Education (FPP), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) from Lahad Datu even managed to obtain a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.42.

According to Farina, she was diagnosed with SLE in 2019 while on a semester break.

"During the three-month break, I became so ill that I was unable to walk. My joints hardened suddenly and I had difficulty getting up. I went to see a specialist and was diagnosed with this disease," said Farina when met by the media after receiving the degree scroll at UMS' 23rd Convocation Ceremony.

Farina said she can now lead a normal life but will have to take SLE medication for the rest of her life.



Ahar Tabe

"But I am very grateful to have friends who understand and support me. SLE is a disease that makes mobility difficult and sometimes I have to use a wheelchair to get around. I am grateful to my friends who often help push me around on days I have to be in a wheelchair.

"I also want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family members for their understanding and support all this while. All of you are the key to my success today," she said.

Ahar Tabe, who is from Tawau, graduated with honours for the Sociology and Social Anthropology subject despite being born visually impaired.

He said that his disability did not stop him from achieving his dreams.

"But this also gives me an opportunity to get creative to solve the problems I face during

my studies and even in my everyday life," said the fifth of seven siblings.

Ahar said the availability of technologies and OKU-friendly facilities helped people like him go about easier.

He also explained how studying in UMS was right for him as the university provided transport for the disabled, as well as other facilities for them.

For instance, he said the university recently set up an OKU management centre where the disabled or differently-abled students can get the assistance and support needed, depending on what was available.

"I am happy that I am able to reach this far in my academics and in life, thanks to all the support from my family, friends, as well as the community and the university," he said.

Ahar is now undergoing a six-month internship as a consultant with a local company and hopes to secure a permanent position.

To those born with limitations, Ahar told them not to ever give up.

"Do not ever give up on yourself and your dreams because regardless of your limitations, you can actually achieve more than you think if you have faith and work hard," he said.