

UMS students experience forest camp

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KOTA KINABALU: A total of 66 students from the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Tropical Forestry Faculty took part in a forestry camp from March 2 to March 11.

"Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the event was held with full SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) according to the new norms set by the Health Ministry and the university," said the chief coordinator of the event, Associate Professor Dr Andy Russel Mojilol.

Dr Andy said that the students participating were in the third year of the Bachelor of Forestry Science and from five programmes in the faculty, namely Forest Management, Forest Nature Park Recreation, Agroforestry, Wood Based, and Conservation Biology.

He added that the forestry camp was actually an annual activity held by the Faculty of Tropical Forestry of the university.



Zailan Firdaus



Nur Fatin Aqilah



Dellrrion Francis



Abdul Indara



Kee Yong Hao

"This course emphasizes theory and practice in the field of forestry. The students were exposed to topics that included usage of forest resources for jungle survival skills, non-wood forest resources, soil science studies, wildlife management, forest inventory, dendrology, forest management, forest protection and forest recreation," he said.

He added that the camp was also to help the participants to sharpen their communication and leadership skills through group assignments and presentations.

Aside from that, mini projects and field work would also provide the physical and mental strength experiences that are crucial as foresters, he said.

"The forest camp experience is very important for the students who weren't able to experience this as they were learning online," said Dr Andy.

One of the participants, Zailan Firdaus is elated to have the 'real experience' in camping in the forest.

"It gave me good experience, especially hands-on experience in the fieldwork. We have only been doing online studies before

this," he said.

Nur Fatin Aqilah, who is from Johor, shared that the forestry camping has taught her the criteria of selecting good camping sites in the forest.

"We were also taught how to avoid dangers in the forest like branches falling on our head; and the site selection for a camp must take into consideration aspects like rain. We needed to create drains to ensure the rainwater does not flow to our camp."

She added that she enjoyed being up at the canopy and carrying out plant sampling activities that would be used

for restoration or plantation activities.

"For a long time, we only did online studies. Now we can experience it," she said.

Dellrrion AK Francis shared that due to the exposure, he felt keen to venture into zoology studies concentrating on birds.

"Birds are pretty and amazing. I adore them," he said, adding that they learned how to handle birds captured in bird traps that they have set up.

Abdul Indara, who is from Kudat shared that the camping experience has taught him about surviving in the forest and

finding edible food when one is in the forest such as ulam, bananas and tubers.

Kee Yong Hao from Selangor also shared Abdul Indara's statement and added that the camp has taught her how to survive in the jungle.

"From my friends, I also learned how to use the parang, make camp, and just be with them, cooking together, laughing together. This camp is an unforgettable trip. That is my experience."

"I also enjoyed the bird watching session. I was surprised to learn about so many birds."