

NEWSFEATURES

UMS fits into future Sabah's plans and needs

UNIVERSITI Malaysia Sabah (UMS) fits snugly into Sabah's plans and needs for the future.

Because of the circumstances surrounding the realisation of setting up a full-fledged university in Sabah in November 1994, skeptics have trivialised UMS as merely a fruit borne out of a political quarrel between the State and Federal governments.

The Federal government established UMS because it was challenged by the Opposition to do so, its critics would say. And having done that, it has no serious intention to build UMS into an institution of any reckoning, not in the country nor in the region.

But all these Opposition rhetoric contrast sharply with the commitment of the policy makers and the university's administrators to attain the vision of making UMS a top-rated university in the country within 20 years with an estimated student population of 20,000.

"With the setting up with UMS in Sabah, it is hoped that it will become a catalyst university for national development, especially the development of Sabah in fields such as human resources development, business and economy, and socio-cultural development," said UMS Vice Chancellor Prof. Dato Dr Abu Hassan Othman recently.

Dr Abu Hassan talked enthusiastically about the future prospects of UMS and how Sabah, with its vast natural resources both on land and in the surrounding seas, can be developed into an international centre of learning in fields such as marine sciences and bio-diversity.

As if to counter the doubting Thomases, he pointed out that even in its infancy, UMS has achieved a unique distinction. "We are the first university to offer, from the very beginning, courses from matriculation, to undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral studies."

UMS at present squats in a picturesque spanking new complex originally built to house the proposed Yayasan Sabah Community College. It has about 200 students doing their pre-U studies at three centres in the country - the previous Universiti Kebangsaan Sabah campus in Telipok, in Sabah, Maktab MARA, Kulim in Kedah and Sekolah Menengah Sains Johor; and 207 undergraduate students (about 40 per cent from Sabah) at its main campus overlooking the scenic Likas Bay and located a stone's throw away from the Yayasan Sabah Building, in suburban Kota Kinabalu.

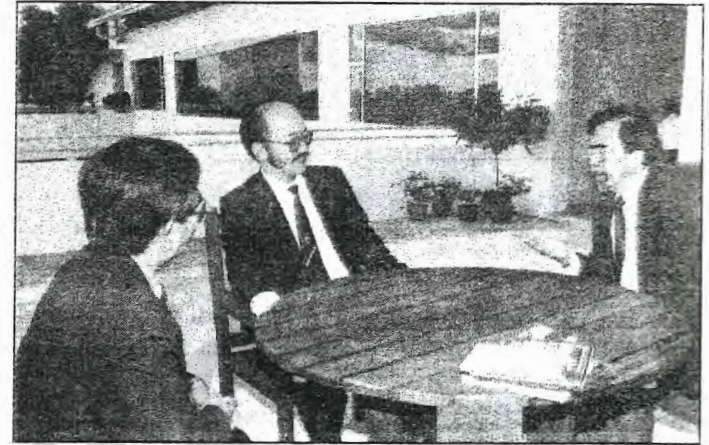
UMS has also registered 19 post-graduate students pursuing their Masters degree, and five others preparing for their Ph.Ds.

"We are delighted that all 19 of those pursuing their Masters degree are from Sabah," said Prof Abu Hassan. "This alone proves that UMS opens up doors for Malaysians in Sabah to advance in the academia. It also proves that the students have faith in us."

UMS has, for starters, just three faculties - the School of Science and Technology; School of Social Sciences and School of Business and Economics.



Datuk Yong chatting with some of the students in the library.



UMS Vice Chancellor Prof Dato Dr Abu Hassan (right) briefing Datuk Yong recently.

"We did not have a different set of (lower) entry requirements for Sabahan students. To think that we have done so is to belittle the academic potentials of students from this part of Malaysia"

PERPUSTAKAAN
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH