

# UKMS to become Sabah varsity?

## Academician fears not enough Sabahans for new university

**THE sprawling Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Sabah campus in Menggatal might be turned into the proposed Sabah university which is expected to take in its first batch of students in June when it is set up, according to educationists.**

Education Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud said recently that the university might use the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Sabah campus temporary and that the UKMS campus would close once the Sabah university is set up.

He said the Sabah university would be sited in urban areas to attract academic staff.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai had been lobbying for it to be established in Tawau.

A UKMS academician yesterday proposed that the Sabah university should lower its entry requirement to accept form five students who passed their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examinations, otherwise there might not be enough in-take for it from Sabah.

Associate Professor Dr Mohamad Noh Dalimin, of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Sabah campus, said few students in Sabah would have Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) qualification, the minimum entry requirement for local varsities.

Educationists said the reason was because most Sabah students preferred to sit for external A-level or foreign university matriculation examinations to enter foreign universities than to sit for the STPM as they generally thought that they had less chances of securing limited

places in local varsities.

They said the purpose of the Sabah university could be defeated if Sabah students could not take advantage of it.

Mohamad, a committee member of the UKM Sabah campus Academic Staff Association, said SPM students from Sabah should be allowed to take matriculation courses of the Sabah university.

"Once they passed these courses, they can pursue diploma courses of the university, graduating to degree courses," he told a press conference in Kota Kinabalu yesterday.

Mohamad, who is also deputy dean of the UKMS science and natural resources faculties, said this proposal was among several resolutions which his association had drawn up for consideration of the education ministry after a three-hour meeting yesterday with 27 academic staff of the UKMS campus.

He said UKMS campus supports the establishment of the Sabah university.

"We also agrees with the minister that UKMS campus should close once the Sabah university is set up," he said.

Mohamad said his association also called on the education ministry to expedite the appointment of top officials, such as the vice-chancellor and deputy vice-chancellors in view of the urgency to set up the Sabah university in two months from now.

"This will enable campus academicians to give their views on running of the university to the officials,