

# UMS to build hotel as lab for hospitality and tourism students

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Mariah Doksil

**KOTA KINABALU:** Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) will build a five-storey boutique hotel which functions as a living laboratory for the Faculty of Business, Economics and Accounting (FPEP).

UMS Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Kasim Mansor said the 18-room boutique hotel, which is expected to be completed by 2026, will be built on UMS land, estimated to cost RM10 million.

The UMS Hotel Development Project and Hospitality Teaching Laboratory will give added value and advantages to graduates in the field of hospitality and tourism.

"The construction of this hotel also aims to increase the marketability of UMS graduates," he said when officiating the ground breaking ceremony for the development of the UMS Hotel and Hospitality Teaching Laboratory of the FPEP.

According to Kasim, the construction of the building is very necessary and important, as education is the best investment to build the future of the country by producing knowledgeable human capital.

Kasim also believes the various facilities at the hotel such as event hall, training kitchen, training restaurant, front office and reservation laboratory, housekeeping lab, pastry lab and cafe lab, can give training and experience to students.

The facility that will be provided is also a programme standard to meet MQA requirements.

He added that the hotel cum laboratory have been approved by the university's Board of Directors since December 28,



Kasim (centre) with UMS Board of Directors at the groundbreaking ceremony of the UMS Hotel Development Project and Hospitality Teaching Laboratory.

2020.

Meanwhile, the RM10 million is from the allocation of the University Development Fund Reserve.

"This project proves the university's commitment in ensuring the delivery of world-class university teaching and learning in line with the KRA 2 initiative in the Universiti Malaysia Sabah Strategic Plan 2023-2027," he said.

According to Kasim, the hospitality laboratory under the Hospitality Management Programme have been operating for 22 years at FPEP.

The beginning of its existence was in 2002 in Likas Square

before going through various phases.

"After there was no more cooperation with the management of Likas Square in 2004, the students underwent practical training in a small pantry room and held classes in the basement of the FPEP building which was in bad condition.

"At that time, the students and lecturers worked together to make the existing space like a training laboratory, until little by little it was improved and became a hospitality laboratory, with the support of the university," he said.

Kasim stressed that it is

UMS's aspiration to make the project as a form of on-campus accommodation facility, capable of generating revenue for UMS in addition to being a living lab, especially for students majoring in hospitality and tourism.

"Hopefully with this facility, we will be able to strengthen our academic and practical efforts in the Hospitality Management Programme and the Tourism Management Programme, as well as producing graduates who will contribute to the development of the country," he added.

The facility that will start construction this year is also in conjunction with UMS's 30th anniversary celebration.