

GRADUATES NEED SOFT SKILLS

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KOTA KINABALU: Some 760 graduates received their scrolls at Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) eighth convocation held at the university's Dewan Canselor here yesterday.

The two-day convocation, which continues today, will see a total of 3,702 graduates receiving their scrolls.

Head of State Tun Haji Ahmadshah Abdullah, the UMS Chancellor, presented the scrolls, beginning with the award of the title Professor Emeritus to Prof. Datuk Dr Abdul Halim Othman, a psychologist who is now adjunct professor at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in Bangi, Selangor.

In his speech, Tun Ahmadshah said the graduates, besides their specialised skills, also need the soft skills in order to enhance their communication, negotiation and diplomatic skills while continuing to preserve the country's culture.

"However, practising noble cultural values does not mean we are prepared to be bullied or stepped upon, because our dignity should always be upheld," he said.

Refinements in language, thoughts and actions should be mediated with

wisdom as enjoined by Islam Hadhari and other belief systems, he added.

In another context, he said, studies have shown that the important factors determining a graduate's employability are experience, ethics and a command of foreign languages especially English.

"If we want to maintain our progress in an era of globalisation, we should mix with the other races, and language command is key to maintaining this progress," he added.

The eighth convocation at UMS has been especially meaningful, he said, for the award of a posthumous honorary Doctor of Philosophy (Social Development) to the late Tun Datu Mustapha for his leadership and integrity in freeing the state from the colonialists and bringing development to Sabah to a level where it is now in the country's mainstream of development.

Tun Mustapha's son Datuk Amirkahar received the award on his behalf.

Also present were Chief Minister and UMS Pro-Chancellor Datuk Seri Musa Haji Aman, who later presented the scrolls to the graduates in the afternoon session, UMS Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Yeoh Tiong Lay, UMS board of directors chairman Tan Sri Abdul



Some of the special award recipients at yesterday's convocation

Hamid Egoh, and Vice-Chancellor Datuk Dr Mohd Noh Dalimin.