

RM500,000 grant for red tide research

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KOTA KINABALU: More than RM500,000 has been allocated to Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to research Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB) or the red tide phenomenon in Sabah.

UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd Noh Dalimin said the Government has made the allocation to the university under the E-Science funds provided for in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP).

"We are pleased that three research studies on HAB have been approved and more than RM500,000 given to us to realise these.

"We consider the allocation as an endorsement and recognition of efforts by the HAB research group of the Borneo Marine Research Institute (BMRI) to study the red tide issue. It also means that red tide is an important issue that needs to be studied further," he said.

Mohd Noh was speaking after launching a new version of the UMS website at the Chancellor Building, Tuesday.

He was asked about a new species of the red tide that was discovered by UMS scientists in the Sepanggar Bay. It was reported that the BMRI research group was carrying out studies to determine contributing factors and eventually to examine ways and means of preventing the red tide occurrence.

"It is a first time initiative for the university to set up a special study centre under BMRI headed by Prof Datin Dr. Ann Anton last December to do research on red tides and the blooming of harmful algae species," said Mohd Noh.

"Actually this research team has long been studying the natural phenomenon. I was told that the team was doing the research in Kuala Penyu but they changed their focus of study here given the effect of the red tide on fish here a few weeks ago including the fish in the university coastal area."

According to Mohd Noh, it is the responsibility of UMS to help and work together with fishermen, Fisheries Department, Health Department and the fishing industry to find ways of addressing the red tide problem.

Earlier, Mohd Noh commended the UMS webmaster and Media and Education Technology Unit for making dynamic and positive changes to the university's website, that has been re-transformed for the fifth time.

"Having a good, reliable and accessible website for any university is like a main gateway for people to find out what the university is all about either locally or internationally.

"Even when I am visiting other universities in other countries, the first thing the top administrators would do is to surf our university's website to acquire information," he said.

He said it is also imperative for the webmaster to update the information in the UMS website regularly so that web surfers would get the latest information about the university.

Mohd Noh said public can also make use of the online registration facility in the UMS website.