

Top UMS student active in co-curriculum

BP 21/10/2012 A2

By Sandra Sokial

KOTA KINABALU: Pricynthia Nesha A/P M Selvaraja was at work when she received a rather surprising news from Sabah. It was not bad, just unexpected.

"I immediately called my mother to tell her the good news, who later related it to my father," said the lass from Kuala Lumpur.

The 22-year-old, who did her Bachelor of Science with Honours majoring in Marine Science at Universiti Malaysia Sabah School of Science and Technology, was the only one who completed her three-year course with First Class Honours.

In addition, she was presented with the Gold Alumni Medal for her outstanding performance, both in her studies and also co-curriculum.

Met at the 14th UMS Convocation Ceremony, here, yesterday, she disclosed that the call was such a shock as she did not expect such recognition from the university.

"It is not that I did not study hard, but I did not expect to do that well since I was also active in co-curriculum, so my time was very much divided between study and other activities," said Pricynthia.

In fact, she admitted that Marine Science was not exactly her first choice when she registered to further her studies in UMS.

But being an outdoor-type-of-person, Pricynthia took the challenge and accepted when she was offered to study Marine Science.

"I have always been fascinated with the sea, islands and marine life. I fell in love with the subject and looking back, I never regretted accepting the subject. In fact, I do not even remember what was my first choice now," she said with a smile.

The eldest of two daughters, Pricynthia, who is now attached to the United Nations official community-based reef monitoring programme, the Reef Check Malaysia as the Education Programme manager, plans to gain as much experience as possible through her current job before pursuing her education in marine-related subject in the future.

When asked of her recipe for success, she said her ability to balance between class and fun paid off well.

"I believe being active in co-curriculum builds a person's character. I developed communication skills and learned how to deal with people. But we must not also neglect our studies - we must know how to balance these two," she said.

Meanwhile, Mohd Fitri Arif Kadiru said the day he had to use spectacles made him change his mind of his future plans.

"Growing up, I wanted to be a pilot. But when my eyesight was affected, forcing me to wear glasses, I had to find an alternative for my



UMS Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah presenting Ong Sheu Li with the Excellence Award in Research (Science) during the convocation yesterday.



Fitri



Pricynthia

future," said the 23-year-old, who was among the 4,336 graduates who received their scrolls, yesterday.

Mohd Fitri, who hails from Kampung Tengah Batu Darat, Tawau, turned to learning stones and minerals, instead, and registered to do the Bachelor of Science with Honours, majoring in Geology, three years ago.

"Playing with mud was my favourite past time, so I do not mind dirtying my hands to earn a living," he said.

The second child of five siblings said he already had an offer from an oil company in Sarawak, and if everything goes well, he would be reporting for duty as a mud logger by the end of the month.

"I love challenges and I love to challenge myself. And geology is a very interesting and challenging subject.

"In terms of studying, I do not actually believe in having a timetable. I study when I feel like studying but I put extra effort listening to lectures in class, that is my recipe to my success. But at the same time, do not pressure yourself too hard, you must spend some time to play and de-stress ourselves, those are the spices of our life," he said.

Meanwhile, UMS vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah said a total of 49 students graduated with first class honours in

their respective courses, stressing that it showed the graduates' academic and intellectual qualities have improved.

"UMS Key Performance Index for our graduates' marketability for last year showed that at least 55 per cent of them secured jobs in just within six months after completing their courses," he said in his speech.

He added that UMS also secured a total of 128 education grants totaling RM8.6 million, and that as of July, a total of 27 research grants were received with an accumulated fund totaling RM2.6 million.

"This shows that the research carried out by the university is competitive and has improved. In fact, between 2004 and July this year, we have published over 70 research papers in journals.

"I believe that if this momentum continues, UMS will be among the best research university by 2015," he said.

In ensuring that UMS was recognised at national and international levels, he said they had continued to foster greater rapport with other universities academically, through research and innovation.

At least 150 MoUs (memorandum of understanding) have been sealed between UMS and higher learning institutions abroad, and that between 2011 and 2015, they will have 22 active MoUs.