



Idris (third from left) and Harun (second from right) pictured shaking hands with the people during the meeting.

UMS awarded 5-star rating last year: V-C

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) was awarded a five-star rating last year in teaching and learning, said its Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah.

"This is better compared to two to three years ago when UMS was only ranked three stars. The production of students who passed has also been increasing the last two years.

"This is an indicator that the university is moving towards the right direction and we will continue to improve to achieve a higher level," he said, adding that their students have also represented Malaysia in the Enactus competition about five years ago held in Mexico, Germany and Washington for three consecutive years.

Second Education Minister Dato' Seri Idris Jusoh also commented on the recent invitation to UMS students to attend the United Nations session.

"It is not easy to be selected to attend the event. We have seen a progressive and uplifting of the Malaysian universities' standard.

"It is unfair to compare UMS with other prominent universities such as Universiti Malaya (UM), Oxford University or even Harvard University," he said during the Townhall Meeting on the Higher Education Development Plan at the university's chancellor's hall.

According to him, the programme was a continuation of the Malaysian Education Development Plan for the school sector.

"It is held so that we can receive feedback from the people and we have decided to go down the ground to listen to the people's opinion on the Malaysian Education Development Plan," he said, adding it was also held simultaneously in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in Kuala Lumpur.

"Our team will be heading to Kuching tomorrow and the same programme will be held in Pulau Pinang as well," he added.

"We have also uploaded the blueprints on the website since two months ago for others to read and they can comment on it as well...but today we are doing it face to face," said Idris.

He was happy with the positive feedback and the improvements that they have made to the plan.

"Among the improvements we have come up with are closer collaborations with the industries, distribution of researches and resources we can benefit from in the State apart from ways for the universities to gain autonomy in the implementation of tasks.

According to Idris, the universities are required to produce holistic graduates with good communication and character.

"We want to produce enterprising graduates...one that will not only be job seekers but job creators as well. However, we must remember that good graduates are produced through good lecturers also.

"Sixty-five per cent of jobs will no longer be available in the future and we also have people changing jobs numerous times. This is all part of the challenges our world is facing at the moment. It is important for universities to adapt to this.

"Therefore, we must be prepared to produce holistic graduates. Universities must change from time to time and be relevant...that is why we have individuals from other industries who are coming in to teach students, blended learning and usage of technology to change the teaching and learning scenario at universities," he said.

Meanwhile, Harun said UMS has followed accordingly to the university's strategic plans in line with the national strategic plans.

"And if we are given the authority, we will definitely enhance the university's autonomy to increase the quality and performance of the academics, apart from being self-sustainable in terms of financial aspects," he said.