



Yap



Karthigeyan



Qistina

Calm environment, friendly locals helped – UMS top graduates

By Fiqah Roslan

KOTA KINABALU: Friendly locals and a calm environment contributed greatly to the success of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) first class graduates.

Yap Ho Jin, who graduated with honours in Biotechnology, said the overall environment in UMS, including the lecturers and fellow students, encouraged her to persevere in her studies there after previous attempts in other higher learning institutions.

"Before I came to UMS, I actually went to two other universities in Perak and Terengganu to follow my dream of becoming a doctor.

"However, I found that medicine was not what I expected it to be and I ended up putting a lot of pressure on myself.

"Eventually, I decided that I needed a break because I felt that I lost direction. I couldn't continue with my studies because my heart just wasn't in it," said the Johorean who was relieved after finally graduating and making her parents proud.

After realising that medicine was not suited for her, Yap took a year off to work before continuing with her studies, which led her to a teaching job in an orphanage.

"When I was at the orphanage, I saw that the kids there needed a lot of help and love, which made me realise that whatever I was going through was not a big deal compared to the children's reality.

"I'm grateful for that experience because it served as a wake-up call and it stopped me from continuing to feel sorry for myself," she said.

Despite her momentary detour, Yap's parents remained supportive of her decision to gain working experience before

returning her focus to her studies.

"I only have one younger sister, so my parents have always had high hopes for me since I was young.

"Of course they expected me to get my degree, but when I told them that I needed a break, they understood and let me do what I needed to do, as long as I could get myself back on track," she said.

Karthigeyan S/O Al Ramanathan, who is also a first class Bachelor of Science with Honours graduate, shared Yap's sentiment that a conducive environment plays a big part in facilitating positive academic growth.

As the only son to an engineer and accountant who grew up in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, studying in The Land Below the Wind was quite a change in scenery for Karthig, not that he minded.

"It's always busy and noisy in KL, so when I came here, I found it to be very calm and relaxing and there aren't many distractions," he said.

Although he admitted to having a narrow view of Sabah prior to arrival, Karthig had no complaints about his experience in UMS.

"My first impression of Sabah was shaped by my relatives, who had something of a stereotypical view of Sabah. Nonetheless, the environment here did contribute to get me where I am today," said Karthig.

He added that his seniors advised him to join in on campus activities, and he said that taking that advice enabled him to acquire many different experiences while pursuing his studies.

"I joined the taekwondo club and represented UMS in the Sukan IPT (SUKIPT) which was held in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) back in

2014.

"There were also many tournaments around Sabah, which I participated in as well. I also took part in a lot of marathons and runs, which made me more outgoing," said Karthig.

As for his future plans, the Geology major is keeping his options open to explore his areas of interest.

"I'm currently working in a construction company back in KL, but I'm still keeping my options open and I might even get my masters after this.

"I actually see myself as a lecturer, but not as a permanent staff and more like a freelance visiting lecturer, who would offer extra input on a certain subject.

"Another part of me wants to be a project manager of a construction company, so we'll see how it goes," he said.

Meanwhile, Selangor-born Second Lieutenant Qistina Mohamad Ludin summed up her experience in UMS in one word: awesome.

"A lot of things in Sabah are awesome because of the people," she said.

"Sabahans are very unified. We get along well with each other in one class, regardless of race or religion. Everyone also looks out for each other and is very concern about one another."

Qistina, who is the second child of five, aims to get her masters next and maybe her Ph.D afterwards, as her dream is to be a lecturer like her mother.

Yap, Karthig and Qistina were among the 874 UMS students who graduated during the sixth and final session of the university's 18th annual convocation. They received their degree from UMS Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah.