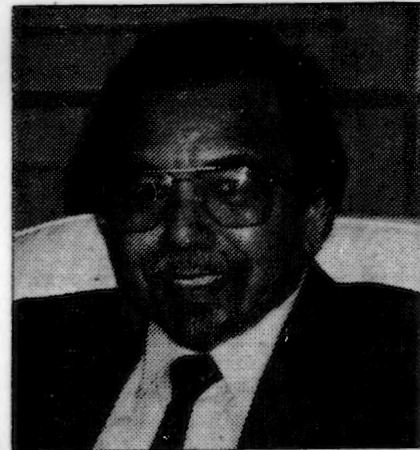


# UMS opens up limitless academic possibilities



Prof Abu Hassan: UMS' motto is "Strive to Excel"

Come Tuesday next week, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed will officiate the ground-breaking ceremony for the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) at Sepangar Bay.

The ceremony is significant on two fronts. One is marks a new milestone in the development of education in Sabah. Second it silences once and for the skeptics who put the university down as a product of political exigency, and that it will not develop beyond its temporary facility now sited at the

Yayasan Sabah Community College premises at Likas Bay.

UMS registered its pioneering intake last July with 207 undergraduate and 24 post-graduate students. The undergraduates, about 40 percent of whom are from Sabah, are pursuing courses in three faculties — science & technology, business economics and social sciences.

Of the 24 postgraduate students, 90% are from Sabah. Nineteen of them are pursuing Masters degree in science, business and social sciences.

The high number of local

students indicate that establishing UMS has opened up a wide range of opportunities for them at home," said UMS vice chancellor Professor Dato Abu Hassan Othman in an interview.

Apart from the three faculties, there is a fourth which is a centre for the promotion of knowledge and languages. The Centre's main objective is to provide a more liberal structure of education in which students will be trained to master one or more languages.

It also aims to develop students' capabilities in public speaking, the art of

negotiation, computer literacy and net working including Internet usage, and allow them to better understand the Malaysian society, culture, Constitution and development policies.

Students at the Centre will also be taught to better understand Malaysia's regional and international relations and world affairs.

"We want to provide the students with a broad-based knowledge, exposing them to areas such as comparative philosophy, Islamic civilisation and science, among others," Prof Abu Hassan elaborated.

On UMS' immediate future, the vice chancellor said schools of engineering, information technology and education & social development will hopefully be a reality by the middle of next

year, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Education.

The new faculties will offer mechanical, civil, electronic and marine engineering courses including many others; while information technology will see sources in computer science, management information systems and software engineering.

The anticipated School of Education and Social Development will offer education accompanied by the various sciences like social and sports, and possibly, pre-school education and others.

UMS has 24 experienced lecturers and this, said Prof. Abu Hassan, is enough to cope with the present situation. With the coming expansion and new intake, the teaching staff may be expanded to 50.