UMS adds Islamic Studies

Arifin (left) interacting with students, including from Brunei Darussalam, who are taking up the new Islamic Studies programme during the registration session at UMS.

Hayati Dzulkifli

KOTA KINABALU: A seven-year struggle to include an Islamic Studies programme in Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) finally became reality, Monday, with the admission of the first batch of 35 students.

Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Arifin Mohd Arif, who fought for a Faculty of Islamic Studies to be set up in Sabah, was pleased with the development although it started out as a programme under the Faculty of Humanitarian, Art and Heritage.

He commended UMS for its noble effort in establishing the new programme of "Pendarasan Islam".

"I was made to understand that many people had applied for the programme but only 35 were selected.

"I am very delighted to see the registration of 27 women and eight men, including four women from Brunei Darussalam, to take up the programme in UMS," he said, adding there will be a second intake due to encouraging response from applicants.

Arifin said eight lecturers have been assigned as teaching staff for the new programme.

Arifin, who is also Sabah Islamic Religious Council (Muis) Chairman, said this after interacting with some of the students taking up the new programme.

He said he was confident that UMS would make the effort to enhance other programmes related to Syariah, Islamic banking and empower the halal industry that might be expanded under the programme.

"I was also made to understand that after the first batch completed their degree level, they could take up a halal certification in UMS and those who have the halal certificate would be given priority for employment opportunities in the halal industry.

"This is crucial as the Government has a plan to emplace a halal officer in big industries and factories so as to monitor and ensure all requirements and procedures are complied with in order to get the halal logo," he said.