UMS award winner goes from average to top achiever

By Mariah Doksil   BP 23·11·4 3

KOTA KINABALU: Muhammad Yusuf Sobery learned two important things in life after spending three years pursuing a degree at Universiti Malaysia Sabah -- there is always room for improvement in life, and unity is the key to living in harmony.

He completed his matriculation with 3.0 CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) in 2011, an average result for a university student.

With a determination to achieve better results, he decided to travel from Kedah to Sabah for a fresh start.

Yesterday, he was the recipient of the Royal Education Award, the top award in the UMS 16th Convocation under the Bumiputera Category.

"From an average result, I managed to improve my CGPA to 3.82, and today it was like a dream receiving the top award witnessed by my parents who came all the way from Baling.

"I am overwhelmed and extremely happy with this achievement. This is the best gift I could ever give to my parents who have been supporting me to put education as a priority in life," said the 22-year-old, the second of eight siblings.

After the university contacted him recently to inform about the award, Yusuf said he still could not believe it until he was called on stage to receive the scroll yesterday.

"This is the most important thing I learn after three years in Sabah. Although our past has not been that bright, there will always be room for improvement. We just need to be focussed and determined to achieve better results.

"Apart from that, I also learn something special in the Land Below the Wind. I saw closer ties between the multi-racial community in Sabah. They are more united and understanding. I

UMS 16th Convocation top achievers: Yusuf (centre) with Kimberley (right) and Azliza.

Graduates throwing their caps in celebration during the UMS 16th Convocation yesterday.

harmony. This is something that I always share with my family and friends in Peninsular Malaysia," said Yusuf who studied industry and psychology.

Meanwhile, the recipient of the Royal Education Award in the non-Bumiputera Category, Kimberley Yap Chun Yeng from Selangor, said graduating with an award was like

She was given the award after graduating in her Business, Economy and Accounting degree programme.

"This was unexpected, but it sure means a lot to me. I want to contribute to the women society in Malaysia, and hope I can represent businesswomen in the country to be at a higher level in the eyes of

"I believe the participation of women in business is still low compared to other developed countries. This is something that I want to improve. Hopefully, more women can achieve higher grades in their business studies and compete with men to hold high positions in any organizations," she said.

Chancellor Award recipient Azliza Sanimin from Kuala Lumpur, said whatever she had learnt at UMS Psychology and Education Faculty, was not the same thing as in the real working world.

The sixth of seven is currently working as a consultant in one of the firms in Kuala Lumpur.

"Working for a few months after completing my studies is very challenging. Everything is practical and we are dealing with real life. At first it was tough for me, but I am catching up.

"My interest is in business, but working in a company located at the heart of Kuala Lumpur is something that I should continue, to gain more experience. I am hoping to explore new things and improve my knowledge," said Azliza.

A total of 4,490 graduates will be receiving their scrolls at the three-day 16th convocation ceremony this year.

During the opening ceremony yesterday, UMS chancellor cum Sabah Head of State Tun Juhar Mahiruddin reminded the students, parents and educators that education was very important as contribution to develop a nation.

He also stressed that a university was a place where knowledge was being explored and collected, channelled to the students and shared with the community.

"Knowledge has no meaning if only shared among intellectuals. It must be shared for the benefit of the nation and its future," he