

UMS sets up a Speaker's Corner

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) wants its students to speak their mind without fear or favour.

It has established a Speaker's Corner to enable them to give their views and feedback on the issues of the day.

"All these activities are now wholly managed by the Students Representative Council (MPP) so that they know how to be more responsible and do things the right way, peacefully, said Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Kamaruzaman Ampon here Friday.

Although the students were free to speak their minds or even sing, he said they still needed to observe certain guidelines while at the Speaker's Corner.

"They can talk about almost anything, from academic issues to community issues, but they are not allowed to curse, slander, nor have demonstrations of any sort in contravention of the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971," he cautioned.

"We are aware of the need to set up the Speaker's Corner as there has to be some freedom of expression. The students will be given flexibility on the issues they can raise.

"However, they have a responsibility to speak decently and considerately,

not just attack the good reputation or defame certain leaders or individuals," Kamaruzaman told reporters after closing the UMS' book exhibition at its main library.

"Action will be taken if they violate any rules, they can use this platform for critical thinking and discussions, for solutions to cases that benefits others but certainly not to spur any kind of chaos," he added.

In the 1960s and 70s, a speaker's corner was one of the hallmarks of local universities, including Universiti Malaya.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Khaled Nordin recently said that every university had a right to set up a speaker's corner and that his ministry had no objection.