

Allocate the Science and Natural Resources Faculty to S'kan, UMS told

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Winnie Kasmir

SANDAKAN: The Higher Education Ministry (Mohe) should increase the number of programmes offered at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Sandakan Campus by locating the Science and Natural Resources Faculty from Kota Kinabalu to Sandakan.



Sandakan MP Vivian Wong said this after raising the issue parliament last week regarding the limited number of postgraduate programs available for prospective students at UMS Sandakan Campus.

"The Sustainable Agriculture Faculty in UMS Sandakan Campus was established in 2006 at the Sg Batang Batu 10 Sandakan Education Hub, offering study options to prospective students to further their degree in Crop Production, Horticulture and Landscaping, and Stock Production.

"However, after 14 years of operation, the programme remains the same and has not changed.

"This limited option also results in the Sandakan campus in not being fully utilised, when it fact it can accommodate up to 1,000 students," said Vivian.

Currently, there are 396 students at the UMS Sandakan Campus.

The Science and Natural Resources Faculty, which is currently located in the UMS Kota Kinabalu mother campus, offers various programs such as Conservation Biology, Aquaculture, Marine Science, Interna-

tional Tropical Forestry, Agroforestry, Wood Technology and Industry, Environmental Science and Recreation.

Currently, there are 1,600 registered students with 200 staff under this faculty.

Vivian called on Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Noraini Ahmad to consider the proposal which could benefit specific sectors and fulfil strategic needs for Sabah.

She said it would benefit the Sabah Forestry Department Headquarters located in Sandakan, with various forest research facilities established in Sepilok, Imbak Canyon, and Deramakot Forest Reserve.

In addition, it would also benefit the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, Borneo Honey Bear Conservation Centre, Rainforest Discovery Centre (RDC), Turtle Islands Park and Kinabatangan Wildlife Protection which are also located around Sandakan.

In a reply to Vivian, Dr Noraini said as of Nov 2020, several factors need to be evaluated carefully before any decision can be made regarding relocating the faculty to Sandakan.

These factors include the cost of infrastructure and staff needed to support the new faculty in Sandakan.

However, as a medium and long-term strategy in line with the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the Ministry is in the process of introducing new programmes at the Sandakan Campus.

These include an Agro-Tourism Degree, Diploma in Agriculture and also Precision Farming to meet the needs of the country.