

UMS students relate their experience

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has doubled its efforts to ensure students on campus are comfortable, enjoy uninterrupted food and safe from infections as long as they abide by safe personal hygiene practices.

UMS's Strategic Management and Corporate Communications Centre (PPSKK) recently interviewed several students who shared their personal experience staying in campus during the on-going Movement Control Order (MCO).

Mohd Ridzuan Hussin, a Year 2 student, Programme Marketing, Faculty of Business, Economics and Accounting, from Karamunting Sandakan, said when the MCO came into place on March 18, he initially intended to return to Sandakan by bus to fulfill his parents wish for him to do so.

Fortunately Ridzuan was able to think rationally and contact them again, stating that his chances of getting infected during the five to six hour bus ride to Sandakan were greater.

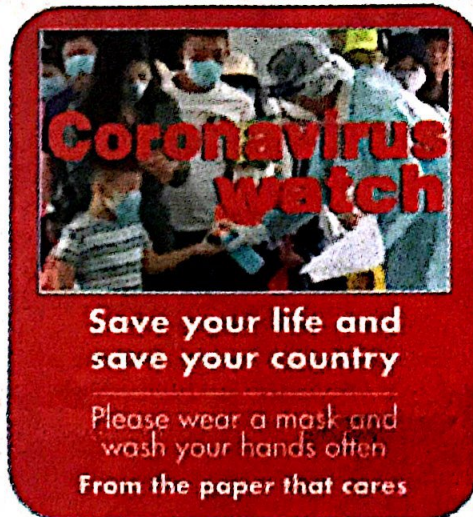
So he convinced his parents that he would be better off staying at UMS Residential College.

On how he spends his time during the MCO, Ridzuan said he joined the university's secretariat volunteer team which serves as one of the frontline bodies to look into the welfare of students in college.

It was only a few days after the MCO that he decided to join the secretariat after seeing his roommate who was active in the secretariat always showing a happy face. This prompted Ridzuan to join the secretariat instead of just staying in the room.

He is happy to be part of the secretariat's volunteer team where he is able to carry out charity work and help other students.

"Before the MCO, I was always in a state of stress because I had to finish the task by myself. This may be due to my own unwillingness to share problems or difficulties



Ridzuan



Martika

with my roommates. But when this MCO happened, everyone, students and staff I meet will ask if I have eaten or not, if I was healthy or not. This led me to realise that stress can be overcome if we are willing to share our feelings," he said.

Meanwhile, Martika Muhamad Rezuan, a Year 1 student, Geography Programme, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, from Satok, Kuching, Sarawak said that on March 16 she received a call from his father stating that some money had been put into her account to enable her to buy a ticket home.

But what worried Martika was the

crowded situation at the airport a few days before March 16.

She found that the condition did not guarantee safety from Covid-19 infection. As a result, she delayed her intention to return to Kuching until the situation subsided.

Martika said she shared a room with three friends from Sabah, adding that all of them went back to their hometown before the MCO was implemented.

And just like Ridzuan, she decided to join the secretariat's entrepreneur team to avoid being alone.

"I instill in myself a positive attitude. I see the experience of the Covid-19 crisis as an extraordinary experience that not everyone in different civilisations can experience. It strengthens my spirit to be steadfast all the time," said Martika.

Another student, Nur Afla Binti Zakaria, a Year 1 student in the Hotel Management Programme, from Pendang, Kedah, recalled contacting her aunt on March 17 for money to buy a ticket home apart in addition to the money sent by her father to book airfare from Kota Kinabalu International Airport to Bayan Lepas Penang where she will take a ferry from Georgetown to Seberang Prai before taking the commuter from Seberang Prai to Pendang, Kedah.

The costly ticket and the crowd she will have to face during the long journey home has left her worried. After consulting her family, she decided to stay back in UMS.

She shares a room with one student from Sabah and another from Selangor. "My Sabahan roommate went back before the MCO. It's just me and the student from Selangor now.

"There is a very strong bond between me and my friends at UMS not just at the Residential College, which previously I am only acquainted with. Now I know the names of everyone I just met," she said.