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UiTM grads in great demand

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STUDENTS dressed in robes and mortar boards formed a long queue while nervously waiting for their turn to enter Dewan Sri Budiman, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam.

As they slowly took their seats in the hall, gamelan music filled the air.

Nervous giggles and excited murmurs stopped and heads turned as Yang-Di Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin walked into the hall.

The experience of being conferred your first degree or diploma is something that will be remembered always.

At UiTM, two students from the faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying will be awarded a doctorate. They are among 12,483 students who will be graduating with diplomas, degree and doctorates at UiTM's 59th convocation.

Held between April 15 and April 24, the convocation is also UiTM's 6th commemorative convocation as former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be awarded an honorary doctorate of Government and Political Science.

UiTM deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Datuk Dr Ahmad Zainuddin said the university had a warm and meaningful relationship with Dr Mahathir as it was he who declared the then Mara Institute to be a fully-fledged university in 1999.

"We appreciate Dr Mahathir's efforts in developing Malaysia, especially in terms of education.

"He has always encouraged universities to create linkages with the industry. This way, our graduates will be prepared to enter the working world," he said.

This year, UiTM produced 105 first-class graduates compared with 77 graduates in October.

"We hope to increase the number of first-class graduates by 30 to 40 per cent in the near future.

"As it is, about 4,000 students manage to be on the dean's list every semester. However, not many can maintain their grades as they progress to their final year," he said.

Therefore, he said, the university constantly encouraged lecturers to pay attention to excellent students.

"However, this doesn't mean that other students are ignored," he said.

Faculty members redefine what they teach and how they teach it, ensuring that the best traditions of the academy are merged with the most latest updates.

Seventy-six students will receive the vice-chancellor's award for their achievement in maintaining a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.5 and above.

UiTM is one of Malaysia's 17 public institution of higher learning. It has experienced a phenomenal growth since its inception in 1956.

It has expanded nationwide with three satellite campuses, 12 branch campuses, six city campuses and 25 franchise colleges.

It has a broad range of disciplines that can be divided into three categories: Science and Technology, Social Science and Management Science.

These categories include UiTM's 24 faculties and over 200 academic programmes.

Its curriculum takes into account the abilities and skills of its students. Most of its students are hired well before their convocation.

"In a questionnaire distributed to our graduates, we found out that within the first six months of finishing their studies, a lot of them managed to find a job related to the programme they studied.

"Our graduates are ready for the job market as our programmes equipped them with a strong theoretical foundation, coupled with hands-on experience that they acquired while doing their practical attachment in reputable companies," he said. Besides that, UiTM students have excellent communication skills.

"Our medium of instruction is English. Therefore, most of our students don't have problems adapting to an international working environment," he added.

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