

Unimas building new hostels to accommodate more students

KOTA SAMARAHAN: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) will have new blocks of hostels with a capacity of 6,000 by next year to address the shortage of accommodation for students.

Its vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi said the university already achieved its target of having 15,000 students now.

He said the existing hostels could only accommodate 8,000 students.

"About half of our students are living outside the campus. We're now building new hostels with a capacity of 3,000 inside the campus at a cost of RM58mil, including furniture. This will be completed by next February.

"We will be buying 19 blocks of apartments from Syarikat Perumahan Negara Bhd (SPNB) which are located outside the campus but not too far. This will cost RM50mil, out of which RM10mil will be from the state government.

"In terms of policy, the university only has to provide 70% of the accommodation. By next year, ours will be at 90% which is very high," he told reporters after an oath-taking ceremony for new students here yesterday.

The 2013/2014 intake has a total of 3,969 freshmen, among them are two disabled students.

Mohamad said other facilities such as lecture halls and library were sufficient for the higher number of students this year.

He said several hundreds more students, including post graduates, would be enrolled in the next few weeks.

"We have applicants appealing to be accepted at Unimas and their applications are still pending approval."

Earlier, Welfare, Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah who officiated at the oath-taking ceremony said the merger between Higher Education Ministry and Education Ministry would spearhead moves in transforming the country's overall education to be at par with other parts of the world.