



SYMBOLIC LAUNCH: Azib preparing to free a pigeon to mark the launching of the Unimas 'Minggu Seni dan Budaya Warisan'. Also seen are Fadzil (third right) and Shanmugan (partly hidden, right).

Unimas looks forward to smart partnerships

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KUCHING: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) looks forward to having smart partnerships with airlines to ensure that its staff and students gain exposure at major events in West Malaysia.

Dean of Faculty of Applied Arts and Creativity, Associate Prof Mohd Fadzil Abdul Rahman, said cost and financial constraints as well as availability of seats were the main concerns whenever they planned to send delegates to participate in major educational events.

By promoting Unimas in other states as well as abroad, the airlines could also gain publicity from such 'win-win' smart partnership and to lend their support, he told reporters after the launch of the three-day Unimas' culture and art heritage week (Minggu Seni dan Budaya Warisan) at the campus yesterday.

"However it is very expensive even to send one student to the event. Imagine spending around RM1,100 just on return air ticket for one student. If we need to send 10, we will be spending about RM13,000," he lamented.

"If we can establish collaborations with, say Air Asia and MAS, we would be able to solve some of our problems in regards to financial constraint or cost. Otherwise the number of our students going to events will be restricted," he said.

When compared to its counterparts in West Malaysia, they could send more than 40 students each to any event there since they would be travelling by bus,

he pointed out.

He said cost was one concern, but certainty of seats and flights was another.

He said he would be looking forward to some MoU with the airlines in providing certainty of seats or flights.

He explained that the 'smart partnership' did not mean they were taking things for granted or for free because Unimas was also paying for the airline services.

He said smart partnership with the airlines could help the state to promote tourism, national integration and unity.

"As we have students from West Malaysia, definitely their parents and relatives would want to attend convocations apart from taking the opportunity to visit Sarawak. And then the students themselves would also want to return home during festive seasons like Hari Raya. Though there are discounts, they also need certainty," he said.

The faculty, having four departments and about 800 students, was the most active, he said.

On another matter, he said the faculty encouraged students to improve on self-development as theoretical knowledge alone would not be sufficient to ensure success.

This would only be acquired through exposures obtained during their industrial placement or training, he added.

"Although students are excellent in academic, people do not want to know

the theories but rather what the students can do for them (people). Theories only come in when you analyse things. Therefore we want students to be out-going and having the ability to communicate well at all level, especially with people in the corporate world," he said.

Students from the faculty are expected to be independent and they have wider opportunities compared to those from some other faculties.

"They can be very independent. We teach them various skills and arts management. When they come out they can become freelancers and consultants.

"Those with music major who are good with PCs can also do jingles for advertisements and earn RM5,000 just for a three second advertisement," he said.

He added that the faculty is always mindful of the government's policy in wanting to improve the SMEs industry and thus would produce students who could match works in the sector.

Unimas Vice chancellor Prof Dr Mohammad Azib Salleh launched the culture and art heritage week which highlights an exhibition called 'Spiritual Borneo' and a talk on Sarawak heritage society apart from showcasing traditional cultures. It is also held in conjunction with the Merdeka month.

Regional Manager for East Malaysia and Brunei, Shanmugan Nathan Suppiah was also present at the launch.