

# 51 CMBA students among 320 graduates in Unimas

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**KUCHING:** Unimas completed the first day of its 12th convocation ceremony yesterday, marking the graduation of 320 of its students from the faculty of art and creative application and postgraduate programmes.

A total of 51 of the students were from Unimas Corporate Masters of Business Administration (CMBA) programme.

The graduates make up the eighth batch of students who have completed the programme launched in July 1999.

The CMBA programme which started a decade ago is considered one of the leading MBA programmes in Malaysia. Unimas faculty of Economics and Business, which runs the CMBA programme, includes many experienced, dedicated and qualified lecturers to ensure that the programme is innovative, application-oriented and multidisciplinary.

As of this year, however, the CMBA programme will be taking a departure from the academic application used in the past by requiring students to submit a Corporate Business Project in order to obtain the degree.

Focused on a practical approach to any chosen core or elective course of interest, the Corporate Business Project requires students to demonstrate critical approach to management perspectives, producing results with practical uses.

The new requirement presents the very common business challenge. Instead of using this tool to sell a product or request new businesses, graduates are using it to present their acquired knowledge over the 18 months' coursework.

"A lot of postgraduate theses tend to be shelved after they've been completed," Dr Ernest Cyril de Run, Associate Professor of the Faculty of Economics and Business said

"With these business research courseworks, on the other hand, students will be applying their postgraduate studies to real-world corporate business, creating hands-on applicable theses that will be invaluable for their tested and proven content," he added.

When asked what incentives a professional in the senior management position could have for pursuing a CMBA course, Dr de Run said professionals return to school because of the wealth of prestigious and accredited professors in their faculty and Unimas' scholarships which cover both school fees and lodging, and the affordable school fees.

"Our courses are quite affordable. We have the second lowest fees among universities in Sarawak but that should not be equated with 'low cost means low quality'," he said, stressing that the fees are kept at an affordable rate because

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Unimas is a government-funded school and its emphasis is on ensuring the general public have access to quality education.

"The MBA is designed with the working professional in mind, which means that the course will be run over the weekends (Saturdays and Sundays)" he said, a time slot that allows working professionals the peace of mind to focus on their studies.

The CMBA professional student can also choose to finish the course in 18 months to 2 years, depending on their own time commitments.

"We require a very high rate of entry (CGPA 3.0), and once the applicant is accepted, students have to maintain that CGPA," he said, stipulating that students CGPA rates are constantly reviewed every semester to maintain the CMBA's high standards.

"If a student's grades slip for one semester, we issue a

warning, but if it stays under 3.0, then we're compelled to drop the student from the course."

Another unique postgraduate programme the Faculty of Business and Economics will be offering is a masters programme tailor-made for those working under a corporation.

"What we are trying to do is encourage people here to never stop learning," Dr de Run said, citing overseas corporations as an example where professionals keep on renewing their knowledge in their specific fields.

"If a corporation has a group of 12 staff minimum who are willing to pursue postgraduate degrees in their specific fields of profession, then we will design a masters degree for them," he said, adding that the students need not be located in Kuching.

With the bonus of postgraduate programmes being held over weekends, the Unimas lecturers are ready to commute to their students' locations.

Head of State Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Muhammad Salahuddin presented the graduates with their degrees in a ceremony at the Unimas hall.

The university's vice chancellor, Professor Dr Khairuddin Abdul Hamid, also attended the 9am ceremony at which the university's undergraduate students also received their degrees.