

Dr Mahathir agrees to be patron of Unimas Alumni

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KOTA SAMARAHAN: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) said former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had agreed to accept his appointment as Unimas Alumni patron effective Feb 29, 2012.

Unimas deputy vice-chancellor of student affairs and alumni, Prof Mohd Fadzil Abdul Rahman said the university decided to appoint Dr Mahathir Unimas Alumni patron as he was a well known figure and statesman.

"The appointment of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will impact the university alumni," he said during a press conference at the campus yesterday.

Mohd Fadzil said he respected Dr Mahathir for his integrity, a culture he wanted instilled in student leaders and students.

Before accepting the offer to be

patron of the university's alumni, Dr Mahathir said his name should never be used to obtain sponsors or special privileges for Unimas.

"I informed him not to worry as we want him to be there as a symbol and not use it to obtain allocations and so on," Mohd Fadzil said.

Mohd Fadzil said the appointment was significant as Unimas was the first university in the state to be established after he announced Vision 2020, and he was the first prime minister to announce the establishment of a full-fledged university in the state.

"He came to officiate at the ground breaking of our old campus and both he and wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali were conferred honorary doctorate by Unimas.

"Our statute clearly mentioned that those conferred honorary doctorate will automatically become Unimas' alumni," Mohd Fadzil stated.

He said Unimas had done everything possible to get its alumni to contribute to the development of the university.

"We have done everything including establishing the six chapters throughout the country and appointing a patriot as our alumni patron, so now the ball is in the alumni's hand to contribute to the university."

Mohd Fadzil said in conjunction with Unimas' 20th anniversary celebration this year, it would be holding its first homecoming parade this October with the participation of alumni from class 1997 to 2011.

"We are determined to make Unimas Alumni the role model for other universities not only as the network for the alumni but to instil the spirit of alumni; we believe that when the alumni are strong, the university is strong as well."

He said since its first convocation in 1997, Unimas had produced more than 17,000 alumni.