

'UMP has schemes to help needy students'

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KUANTAN: Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) undergraduates face a low possibility of hunger pangs as the varsity provides welfare schemes for the needy.

Vice-Chancellor Datuk Dr Daing Nasir Ibrahim said there were schemes such as *zakat* (tithe), subsidised lunch, emergency financial aid and loan facilities for students facing dire straits.

At the Gambang and Pekan campuses, he said, UMP provided 250 meals at RM1 per meal, five days a week.

"Each meal has a value of RM5 outside the campus. Starting this year, we will double the number of meals at both campuses. We plan to provide such affordable meals for dinner later," he said here yesterday.

Daing Nasir said 2,412 deserving students received *zakat* payments between RM300 and RM700 as pocket money, tuition fee and medical needs last year.

He said the university also provided part-time jobs on campus with an hourly rate of RM4 to 43 students last year for them to earn extra pocket money.

Under the work-study scheme, he said, UMP spent almost RM30,000 last year to pay the participants, who only worked when they had no

classes to attend.

"If our students have the will, there is a way for them to survive university life."

Moreover, he said, UMP had a network of students' representatives and university administrators to check on cases of poor students facing difficulty on campus.

He said there were groups of UMP students from wealthy families who had initiated charity programmes to help the needy outside campus.

"If they can help outsiders, it is unlikely that they can miss the plight of their fellow course-mates."

This, Daing Nasir said, was not an outright dismissal of the possibility that some students

might have suffered quietly as they were too embarrassed to get help from the campus administrators or friends.

"After getting feedback from UMP students' representatives on this issue, I can conclude that UMP students do not suffer starvation as portrayed in the media."

He said it was normal for some segments of UMP students to have tight finances in the final weeks of the semester after spending extravagantly the loans or scholarships they had received earlier.



Datuk Dr Daing Nasir Ibrahim