

UNDERGRADUATES URGED TO SHARPEN SOFT SKILLS, RISE TO EXCELLENCE

The Minister of Higher Education, Dato' Seri Mohamed Nordin,

urges the 40,366 students, who have successfully secured their placements in the local institutions of higher learning (IPTs) nationwide, to rise to excellence and sharpen themselves with the necessary soft skills to evolve into becoming globally competitive graduates.

The Minister said this to an audience of 1,674 students at the official opening of the Undergraduates Orientation Week 2010 (MINDS) held at the Sports Complex of Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) on July 4, 2011.

Dato' Seri Mohamed Khalid further stressed that the Ministry of Higher Education is putting more emphasis on the soft skills element as part of the main curriculum to be taught at IPTs.

Components of soft

skills are complementary to hard skills and theoretical learning, which will eventually help mould undergraduates into balanced and holistic individuals.

According to the Minister, each year the Government allocates a tremendous sum of budget for the country's younger generations to obtain tertiary education.

"Various forms of scholarships and education loans are being provided by the National Fund for Tertiary Education (PTPTN).

"To make a point in case, recently, the Ministry announced that the Government has agreed to raise the maximum level of income for parents of students who wish to apply for a full education loan from PTPTN, from RM3,000 to RM4,000," he added.

This, he said, showed that the Government has taken into account the rising cost of living and is disbursing part of its social responsibilities to lighten the financial burdens of parents and students alike.

Meanwhile, UMP Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr Daing Mohd Nasir Daing Ibrahim said the university offers 2,570 places for students to pursue various programmes at UMP. Of the number, 2,270 students have enrolled for the bachelor's programmes, while the balance 300 for its diploma's.

Professor Dato' Dr Daing Nasir further highlighted that an orientation week like MINDS is held at the beginning of a new semester to allow students to familiarize themselves, not only with the

