Unity club for integration

By A. Hafiz Yatim
supplements@nst.com.my

KOLEJ Universiti Teknikal Kebersaan Malaysia's Student Affairs office may be only three years old but it has managed the affairs and well-being of 4,271 students pursuing diploma, degree and master's programmes efficiently.

Initially, it had four units - Sports and Recreation, Residential College, Welfare and Activity - when it was formed in 2001.

However, the Student Affairs office has undergone restructuring and five more units have been added: Discipline and Special Functions, Religious, Counselling, Culture and Administration.

The college has the largest number of staff (80) managing the Student Affairs office among all government college universities.

Dean Associate Prof Dr Suhardi Datuk Safi has headed the Student Affairs office since 2001, which looks after the affairs and activities of students.

"The office seeks to provide a service as well as develop students to be harmonious and well-balanced physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually."

"It also implements programmes to create well-disciplined, motivated and dignified students, ensuring that their welfare and well-being is always taken care of, and organise programmes for students."

He said despite the university being young compared with other public universities, the unit recognised the importance of curricular and co-curricular activities for students in building their leadership skills.

He said being tomorrow's generation of leaders, students had to be equipped with leadership skills and other skills to become leaders in the community and nation.

"Recognising this, students at the college are required to have two credits, one for each semester, that come from participation in co-curricular activities."

The university has 29 clubs, covering academic, sports, self-defence, and religious societies.

They include the Students Representatives Council, Rakaman Muda Secretariat, Unity Club, Dakwah and Spiritual Club, Debate and Oratory Club, Sabah and Sarawak Children's Association, Technovate and Entrepreneur Club, and Culture and Arts Club.

He said KUTKM was the first public university to form a unity club that sought to integrate the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural student population. The club was formed in 2002 as a result of the vision and idea mooted by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

KUTKM board chairman Tan Sri Salleh Sulung, at the launching of the club, said the club's formation was appropriate considering the cultural and societal mosaic of society.

The club appointed Abdulrah Shuhaimi Roslan, Lee Yew Loon and Sarjeet Kaur Baldev as joint presidents, representing the three main communities in Malaysia.

The Student Affairs office can be contacted at 06-2332435; or e-mail: hep-kp@kutkm.edu.my

BREAKING THE WAVES: Forty-six KUTKM students participating in the kayak expedition across the Straits of Malacca to Dumai, which was registered in the Malaysia Book Of Records.