

COVER STORY

Student activism on campus

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THE need for campus elections at varsities is important for young people to get their voices heard. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Student Representative Council president Adib Ashman Burhan Burhanuddin said, the campus election sees candidates from two coalitions contesting to gain majority and control of the council.

One party is pro-university, while the other provides different viewpoints.

Usually, each faculty is represented by two candidates. There are a few general zones, depending on the university, and each zone comprises four or five faculties.

Each zone is represented by two candidates. A faculty representative is akin to a state assemblyperson and each general representative is similar to a Member of Parliament.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) architecture student Muhammad Firdhaus Razali, 24, said the campus election trains undergraduates to be leaders.

"The campus election process is similar to the general election — candidates have to be nominated and there is campaigning and voting.

"Student leaders fight for students' welfare and campus development, rather than political issues.

"It is a stepping stone for those who want to embark on a political journey in the real world after graduation," added Muhammad Firdhaus.

Rafidah Ruzmi, 23, a publishing undergraduate from the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), said the campus election exposes students to the general election in the country.

"It may not be exactly the same but we get an idea of the overall election process," said Rafidah.

She added that the campus election chooses a group of people to be the channel between students and the university management in voicing the former's opinions.

Another undergraduate, Patrick Lim, 24, from one of the local public universities, believes it is important to have "an independent student body in place."

ELECTION PROCESS

Campus elections come under the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 (Act 30).

This Act, apart from emphasising the establishment, maintenance and administration of the university, provides for the setting up of the Student Representative Council.



Adib Ashman
Burhan
Burhanuddin



Muhammad
Firdhaus Razali

Candidates must uphold the dignity of the university as stipulated in the UiTM Act should they want to contest in the campus election.

ABDULLAH MOHD SAID
UiTM deputy vice-chancellor
(student affairs)



UM students taking a shuttle van to a polling centre during a campus election.

Annually, the University Student Election (campus election) is organised in every public university concurrently, or around the same time.

Elected students form a body, namely the Student Representative Council, and channel their opinions to the university, similar to the Members of Parliament elected by the people to lead, care for and defend the rights of the people.

An election is a mechanism by which people choose their representatives at regular intervals and change them if they wish to do so.

The electronic voting system (e-voting) has been implemented in campus elections at local universities since 2004, replacing the

manual system.

The e-voting system uses the student registry to determine the eligibility to vote.

After verification by the e-voting system using the student's MyKad numbers, student will be then allowed to vote, which saves time and reduces the error margin and spoil vote during the voting process.

UiTM deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs) Professor Datuk Dr Abdullah Mohd Sa said student elections are part of the learning process.

He added that leadership skills enhance marketability and help students learn time management.

"However, candidates must uphold the dignity of the university as stipulated in the