

Ministry wants more students' parliaments at public varsities

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PUTRAJAYA: Public universities have been encouraged to establish their own students' parliaments so that a national-level body can be set up in the future.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said that the students' parliament pilot project was going well at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and other universities have been encouraged to

follow suit.

He added that a national-level body could be set up once 75% of public universities had their own "parliament".

"We are aware that students are eager to be involved in nation-building and we want to encourage this," he said at a press conference yesterday after delivering his New Year's message to the ministry at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

"However, students must voice

their opinions based on facts and not emotions," he added.

Mohamed Khaled also said that the ministry would grant more autonomy to public universities who were deemed to be "ready".

Each university would be assessed to gauge its readiness in four aspects, namely, governance; academic record and student intake; financial health and income generation; and human resource.

"We estimate that all research universities should get full autonomy

by 2015," said Mohamed Khaled.

Presently, USM, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia are the five research universities.

Khaled also announced that all private colleges and polytechnics in the country will be rated this year.

Universities and university colleges are already being evaluated under the Rating System for Malaysian Higher Education (Setara).

"It is important to know where

our many colleges stand.

"We hope to come out with the results at the end of the year," he said.

The 402 private colleges would be rated through the Malaysia Quality Evaluation System (MyQuest) according to six tiers – from Tier 6 (excellent) to Tier 1 (very poor).

The score will be based on a breakdown of 40% for students and facilities, 30% for recognition of courses and graduates, and 30% for the quality management system.