

Protect their welfare and safety

I AM saddened by the recent expulsion of many students from Kolej 17, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The final years in medicine are the most crucial time in all their collective years.

This is the year when they have to stay late in the hospitals for on-calls, up to midnight. Indeed, there have been numerous reports of burglaries, thefts and rape cases in UPM. One student had his bag snatched and held at knife-point.

Unfortunately, UPM Kolej 17 forced many students to stay outside college after they have failed to collect enough "merit points", which are earned via activities done at the college. However, this system has been a failure right from the start as 72 per cent of final-year students have not achieved the minimum points to stay there, due to the ambiguity of the merit point system and unsuitability of time of activities held by the college.

Medical themed activities, such as health screening, campaigns and community reach programmes, are deemed less valuable compared to cultural and religious activities. I suggest that the UPM Hepa (Hal Ehwal Pelajar) ensure that the students' welfare and safety are safeguarded. College management staff and fellows must be elected by the students themselves, so that any rules implemented are fair to all. Hepa must ensure that the elected college staff and fellows are there to assist the students.

More importantly, the college office should always be manned and opened during the work hours. Currently, the fellows in the college are seen taking advantage of their free accommodation.

Shockingly, 82 per cent of the final-year students find the management staff and fellows unhelpful and rude.

The Education Ministry must ensure that all medical faculties in public universities have enough accommodation for all final-year students for accessibility and convenience to reach their faculties and hospitals.

Public universities are entrusted with educating, inspiring and promoting a well-rounded individual. It is also their top priority to safeguard their students' safety whilst on campus.

Other public universities provide accommodation for their final-year students close to their faculties and hospitals. Why can't UPM?

M.F. Kota Kinabalu, Sabah