

Govt to revert UPM's focus to agriculture

WITH agriculture gaining prominence today, the Government plans to revert Universiti Putra Malaysia's focus to agriculture in efforts to boost the sector.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Shafie Salleh said a practical approach would be taken to ensure that undergraduates applied what they learnt in classrooms on the

ground.

"I have asked professors at the university to bring along their undergraduates to the rural areas so that they will learn about the farmers' problems and aspirations," he said in his winding-up address.

The university, which was previously known as Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, was renamed Universiti Putra

Malaysia a few years ago and started offering more IT and professional courses.

He also told lecturers at the universities to introduce a "report card" system, whereby their peers and undergraduates could rate their performance.

"I may have lost my supreme council seat in this election, but the university election was a

success. I told the vice-chancellors and deputy chancellors not to subscribe to any other religious sect but the Shafie sect," he said in jest, drawing laughter from delegates.

He also said the Government would ensure that community colleges were able to provide a second chance for students who did not do well in their SPM examinations.

"Students have the chance to obtain certificates from community colleges, pursue their studies at polytechnics and then go on to the universities," he said, adding that community colleges should be set up in every district.

On *Islam Hadhari*, he said Malays should avoid bringing down others and speaking ill of them.

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