

Veteran and young sportsmen share experience at forum

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SEVERAL former international sports personalities were among the panellists at a forum titled "Towards a balance ideal sports and academic" held at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in Serdang.

The panellists were Datuk Marina Chin, Datuk Zaiton Othman, Norasheela Khalid, Sharon Wee and Johnathan Wong.

Chin, a former national hurdler, is the Malaysian contingent's Chef de Mission for the 2017 SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur while Zaiton, a former heptathlete, is the Sports Commissioner at the Youth and Sports Ministry.

Norasheela, a former national hurdler, is the chairman of the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) athletes' commission while Wee is a former national squash champion and Wong was a member of the Malaysian shooting team at the recently concluded Rio Olympics and a UPM student.

OCM deputy president Datuk Seri Norza Zakaria and vice-president Datuk Paduka Mumtaz Jaafar were also present to share their experience with the participants.

The forum was organised by the UPM Sports Academy, headed by Dr S. Shamala, a former hockey international and Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) vice-president.

Shamala said the forum was attended by about 180 participants, from the UPM Sports Academy community programme.

"We had also invited members of the Negri Sembilan Women's Association and about 80 students who are active in sports and co-curricular activities. The main purpose of the forum was to

enlighten the students as well as parents on the importance of sports and education.

"The forum gave the participants a chance to learn more about the programmes offered at the UPM Sports Academy as well as the opportunities for sportsmen and sportswomen to pursue their academic and sporting careers," added Dr Shamala.

The UPM Sports Academy was established in 2004 and offers professional consulting services to corporate and national sports organisations. The Sports Academy has been running programmes to ensure that UPM does its part to contribute towards the development of local and international sports.

The programmes include the Sports Leaders Empowerment Programme with the National Sports Institute, the development of the Integrated Sports Management System for the Youth and Sports Ministry, the development of the SEA Games 2015 contingent management portal, conducting the strategic planning workshop for the 51 National Sports Associations jointly with the OCM and Parents Sports Certification Programme.

UPM vice-chancellor Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris said they were initiating several programmes to get closer with the public.

"The Sports Academy has organised programmes for the community. We hope the participants have gained some knowledge from this programme.

"We are eager to see more of our students excel academically and in sports.

"We are also proud that several of our students had represented



Aini (second from right) greeting (from left) Chin, Zaiton and Mumtaz who were among the panellists at the 'Towards a balance ideal sports and academic' forum at UPM.

Malaysia in the recent Rio Olympics. We hope to see them bring glory for the country in other competitions," said Aini.

Besides Wong, sprinter Zaidatul Husniah Zulkifli and diver Cheong Jun Hoong were in Rio for the Olympics. The trio were presented with Suunto watch.

Jun Hoong partnered Pandelega Rinong to win a silver medal for Malaysia in the women's synchronised 10m platform event.

Norza said members of the panel had proven their capabilities in both studies and sports.

"They are role models to the younger generation and would be an inspiration to other budding sportsmen and sportswomen,"



Aini (right) signing the congratulatory message for Olympian Johnathan Wong (second from left) as Norza (left) looks on.