

'We were doing it for extra cash'

MISCONSTRUED:
We're not cutting grass to pay fees, say UPM students

AWAINA ARBEE

SERDANG

awaina@nst.com.my

THEY do it for extra cash, and not because they are "too poor to pay for school".

Three Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) students yesterday clarified a Facebook post that claimed they had taken up grass-cutting to finance their studies.

The trio, Muhammad Naquiddin Afiq Hapie Hazli, 21, and 20-year-olds Muhammad Ariff Abdul Razak and Mohamad Suhaimi Che Darus, said the story had been blown out of proportion.

"We are doing this so that we can be financially independent. It is not about raking in sympathy. We started this business to earn a side income," said Naquiddin here.

Present was UPM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) Professor Datuk Dr Mohammad Shatar Sabran.

He said certain quarters had misconstrued the posting by saying that they had to resort to grass-cutting to pay for tuition.

"Some claim that we came from poor families, and that we are doing this because we had no means to pay our fees. That is wrong," said Naquiddin.

He said that he and his friends started the business in July, after learning that a foreign worker earned up to RM6,000 a month cutting grass.

"Upon learning that one can earn a substantial income from cutting grass, we decided set up a business. We have been earning RM600 weekly per person."

Mohammad Shatar praised Naquiddin, Ariff and Suhaimi, whom he said were trying to be financially independent.

He said UPM had various funds to aid students, including UPM Student Welfare Fund, which is regulated by the Student Affairs and Alumni Division.

"Apart from the wide range of loans available in the country, the university's funds would be sufficient for students to pay for their fees and daily expenditure."

"It is part of our responsibility to ensure that the students are financially taken care of," he said.



(From left)
Muhammad Naquiddin Afiq Hapie Hazli, Mohamad Suhaimi Che Darus and Muhammad Ariff Abdul Razak cutting grass in Serdang yesterday. Pic by Rosela Ismail