

Varsity students hold own polls

By **CHRISTINA CHIN**
educate@thestar.com.my

STUDENTS are fully capable of carrying out campus elections without interference from the varsity.

This was proven during the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) polls held in Serdang and Bintulu, Sarawak.

Two candidates were chosen from each of the 16 faculties and one school.

The exercise was successfully conducted in five locations to elect 45 student representative council (MPP or Majlis Perwakilan Pelajar) members on Thursday, said UPM deputy vice-chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) Prof Dr Mohd

Roslan Sulaiman.

Campus elections are conducted at all public universities yearly to select student leaders.

"The 11-hour voting period from 9am to 8pm was to let everyone cast their votes without disrupting lectures.

"The campaign period was held from Nov 24 to 28. They were allowed to campaign through various mediums including on social media," said Prof Mohd Roslan, who is also the main MPP election committee chairman.

"We're happy that everything went smoothly. All students were keen to be involved.

"So, I hope that those elected will do their best to represent their fellow students."



UPM students voting in their campus polls, which are run without interference from the university.

The official results would be announced after objections are heard.

In September, the Education Ministry said that campus polls would be carried out in a transparent and independent manner by the MPP, without interference from their university's management and authority.

The MPP, however, must still comply with the current constitution, rules and laws, when carrying out their respective campus elections.

The management of universities are to assist their respective MPP by providing infrastructure and guidelines on the elections, said the ministry.

Aida Fitri Peli, 21, ex-UPM MPP head for 2017/18, and cur-

"While we're capable of conducting our own elections, we still needed some technical advice to ensure that everything was transparent and fair."

Students Raden Nurul Araf Kartini Zailan, 22, and Nur Hazirah Hamdan, 21, who were present to cast their votes, said the elections should not have been held during exam week.

"The atmosphere is also not as 'festive' as previously. And, we were busy with the exams."

While they were happy that students are now allowed to conduct the polls themselves, they hope to see candidates coming from the colleges, rather than faculties, the next time around.

"Representatives from the faculties are involved in academic