

A good week for freshies

FROM excitement, nervousness to trepidation, the new students experienced a roller coaster ride of emotions upon stepping into the universities for the first time.

Perhaps the fear that also loomed in the minds of these freshies was not knowing what was in store for them during orientation week.

Foong Yee Wen came to Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) thinking that she would get a heavy dose of ragging from her seniors.

Being asthmatic, she was also concerned about the type of physical activities that she might be asked to do.

Her father Foong Sai Leong who had driven Yee Wen to UPM, was also concerned about his daughter and other freshies with similar medical problems.

However, Yee Wen when interviewed again on the fifth day of orientation week, said that her fears were unfounded as she had enjoyed the activities.

"Yes, it was tiring to wake up at 6am every morning but we sang, we danced, and I've made many new friends," she added.

When asked if there were any ragging incidents at the varsity, she replied that the seniors treated the freshies well.

"It was definitely a wonderful experience for me," she said

Marliana Mahat, 20, from Pekan, Pahang, was not too afraid of the challenges that awaited her during the orientation week at UPM.

However her father army veteran Mahat Abis who had accompanied his daughter to the varsity, said freshies should speak up against any form of bullying or ragging.

Marliana said that she felt like going home on the first day but the timetable was so packed that there was hardly any time to think of home,

The Human Development Science student said the freshies were kept busy with talks, games and a string of other group activities.

"It has been pleasant so far, but exhausting," she shared, adding that the group

activities were great for her to get to know other freshies and the seniors.

She said that there were no complaints of freshies being bullied by seniors.

Meanwhile, freshie Khaw Kuan Ren, 19, from Universiti Malaya (UM), just shrugged off the worries about being ragged by seniors during the orientation week.

"I am sure that the Student Affairs Department has set up its own rules and regulations to deter the seniors from ragging freshies," said the Civil Engineering student.

True enough, Kuan Ren said that the freshies were not ragged, but orientation week was no bed of roses either.

"We slept well past midnight and woke up at 5am every morning, then it was a mad rush to the different meeting points in the campus for the activities," he said on the last day of the orientation week.

"The freshies can count themselves lucky for finding some time to eat," he joked.

According to Mohd Hamzah Zainul Abidin of UKM's (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) student representative council, all student facilitators were required to undergo training to learn about the proper procedures in conducting orientation.

"Although we did not draw up a list of the do's and don'ts during orientation, the seniors were given guidelines to abide by, and were told not to subject the freshies to humiliation in the activities that were carried out," said Hamzah.

"For example, the seniors were told not to mete out punishment such as forcing the freshies to do

ear squats (*ketuk ketampi*) in public," he said.

Marliana is ready to face the challenges ahead.

