No use without integrity, says top graft buster

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KOTA KINABALU: A top graft buster told a group of university students here that it is not good enough to be just intelligent and hardworking.

One has to have integrity most of all, said Ganason Periathamby, who is Deputy Director of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) here in Sabah.

"Without integrity, intelligence and energy (hard work) are useless. These two factors are not as pertinent as the first. A company will not be as strong if it is filled only with intelligent and hard working individuals."

Towards this end, he said although there are problems with integrity in the country, MACC has been doing a good job in reducing it.

He said this at Universiti Malaysia Sabah’s (UMS) Recital Hall during an integrity forum in conjunction with the closing of its integrity month which started on March 1.

"There are problems with integrity in the country. MACC has been doing a good job in reducing it."

Towards this end, Ayub Yaacob, who is Deputy Director of the State Public Sector Training Institute and also one of the members of the forum, agreed that the situation in Malaysia is still under control.

"Things like this are still being done under the table here. In our neighbouring country, Philippines, it is being done on the table and in Indonesia, they do not only do it on the table, but do it together with the table," he said underscoring, albeit humorously, how important integrity is.

Towards this end, Ayub pointed out that if there is both accountability and integrity, there will be genuine productivity.

"They go hand in hand. One can’t be present without the other."

Muhammad Suhaimi Taat, who heads the Mosque and Islamic Affairs Unit at UMS, took a more religious approach.

"All religions teach us good things. Usually, the problem arises when people are not content or thankful with what they have. They always do not feel they have enough and if this is the case, you will never feel that you have enough no matter how much money or how much wealth you have accumulated."

He added that it is not about the amount of money you have in your wallet but on how you can manage it. It’s about using it wisely."

Meanwhile, UMS Vice Chancellor Datuk Kamaruzaman Ampon, who officiated at the closing, said integrity goes beyond corruption.

"If there is integrity here, students will not copy other people’s assignments or even take a peek at other people’s papers during an exam or test. They won’t even dare to cut class without any good reason."