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Inculcating critical thinking

CONTEST BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Inculcating critical thinking

Statistics dept competition sees contestants use its data as evidence for their arguments

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In conjunction with National Statistics Day 2022, the Statistics Department introduced its inaugural statistics debate competition between higher education institutions.

Chief Statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said this competition was a constructive way of creating substantive interaction among students where they argued

and counter-argued using facts, statistics, reasoning and rational analysis.

Uzir said debating provided a platform for discussions on critical world issues, and was thus, an important means of creating a better world.

"In conjunction with the National Statistics Day, we (the department) introduced the competition.

"We would like the participants to focus on using of statistical data available on the department's system. We want them to use the latest available statistics in their arguments.

"The department has been gathering statistical data from time to time. The participants from 10 public and private universities accessed our statistical data. Most of their arguments were brilliant and they presented reasonable hypotheses.

"Debaters need to have a critical

thinking mindset. This can be seen in how they argue.

"It also shows their level of maturity based on their use of facts.

"This is what we are trying to achieve in the country.

"We want to produce students with critical-thinking skills who can provide constructive views," he said after attending the Statistics Debate Competition at the Malaysia Statistical Training Institute here on Monday.

The two-day competition was jointly organised by Universiti Malaysia Debate Council, Higher Education Institution, Economic Planning Unit and Prime Minister's Office.

Students from International Islamic Universiti Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Multimedia Universiti, Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Universiti

Utara Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia participated.

Uzir said the competition was a platform for students to present ideas through scientific debate and encouraged the use of census and survey data published by the department as evidence for their arguments.

"This will improve statistical literacy among higher education students," he said, adding that the competition adopted the parliamentary debate concept.

During the competition, he said that the "government" submitted proposals or motions while the "opposition" analysed and argued them, which saw both sides using data from the department in their arguments.

"This programme has the potential to produce more students that can speak on their constructive ideas. It is a tool to improve intellectual and critical thinking, as

well as shape their personalities," he said, adding that the debate competition would be held annually due to the overwhelming participation from private and public universities.

Uzir said the department's statistical data system was an important medium of information that could be accessed by the public.

"Our data is up to date, relevant and can be viewed by everyone. It is up to date and important as we can use it to make predictions. With the availability of statistical data, it can greatly reduce uncertainty."

He said parents should use statistical data to determine the right university course or career for their children.

"What is more important is the accessibility to get the statistical data from our system. By having an Internet connection, you gain access to it anytime, anywhere," he added.