Convocation

Dr. Siti Hawa receives Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum Inclusive Excellence Award Postgraduate Category

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GAMBANG, 8 November 2025 – We plan, God determines; we accept this decree, we only ask that everyone pray for the health and safety of our beloved daughter.

Such was the expression of a mother who attended on behalf of her daughter, Dr. Siti Hawa Apandi, 36, who was supposed to walk onto the stage to receive the Abdullah bin Ummi Maktum Inclusive Excellence Award Postgraduate Category but could not attend the 20th UMPSA Convocation Ceremony held at the UMPSA Sports Complex Hall as she is currently receiving treatment at the Intensive Care Unit, Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital (HTAA) Kuantan due to a lung infection.

Dr. Siti Hawa Apandi, who is also the former President of the OkUMPSA Club (DAMAi), successfully earned the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree from the Faculty of Computing today.

Her mother, Zaidah Tamjis, 62, who attended with her husband, Apandi A. Hadi, 62, became the representative to receive the award presented by the Pro-Chancellor of UMPSA, Tan Sri Dato' Sri Abi Musa Asa'ari Mohamed Nor, in the hall before the presentation ceremony for the graduating students.

Her mother is grateful that Dr. Siti Hawa's dream of holding the Doctor of Philosophy degree was achieved, although this time she could not walk onto the stage to receive it herself.

"What we hope for is Hawa's health," she said.

Siti Hawa suffers from spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), a condition that has weakened her nerves since childhood and has caused her to be unable to move except with full assistance from her mother, yet her spirit was never shaken in continuing her studies at UMPSA.

Even more special is that throughout her studies at UMPSA, she successfully obtained a Diploma in Computer Science (2010) with a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.79, a Bachelor of Computer Science (Software Engineering) (2013) with a CGPA of 3.88, a Master of Computer Science (2016) and now a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree (2025).

Throughout her studies at UMPSA, she was always accompanied by her beloved mother, Zaidah Tamjis.

Indeed, Zaidah is an extraordinary individual who tirelessly stayed by her daughter's side, whether in the hostel or in the lecture halls from the diploma level up to the PhD level.

Such perseverance and extraordinary spirit also received the attention of the public, resulting in various awards including the 2024 Pahang State Level Special Youth Award for Persons with

Disabilities (OKU) presented by the Crown Prince of Pahang, Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah Al-Sultan Abdullah at the Pahang Youth Festival in conjunction with the National Youth Day Pahang State Level, the National Premier Youth Award Ceremony and the 2024 Pahang Government Special Youth Award.

Besides being active in academics, she has always been outspoken, especially on social media, in defending the rights of people like her due to the lack of facilities for the PWD community.

Zaidah also conveyed words of encouragement to mothers out there who have special children.

She said that as a mother, one must always give support and encouragement in whatever interests the children pursue.

“Never give up,” she said.

Dr. Siti Hawa is one of the 4,259 graduates celebrated at the ceremony.

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