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'Worms found in fried chicken – what do you do next?'

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A fast food chain goes viral after worms were found in its fried chicken — what now?

That was the challenge facing some 80 Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) students from its School of Communication in Penang when they were assigned to take on the role of media practitioners during the Khazanah Residency Programme (KRP) "POV: Your work in comms" outreach initiative on Nov 5.

Mentored by Star Media Group deputy executive editor Dr Christina Chin, Tenaga Nasional Bhd corporate branding head Shaiful Amrin Abdul Karim, Astro Awani anchor and journalist Luqman Hariz Ahamad Shaker, Bernama economic service assistant editor Niam Seet Wei and Radio Televisyen Malaysia senior editor and news producer Ameerul Eiman Azizi, they were tasked with preparing news reports and communication strategies based on the case study.

The mentors are Khazanah Nasional Wolfson Press Fellowship (KNWPF) participants who had previously attended a fully-sponsored 10-week prestigious programme at Wolfson College, University of Cambridge.



All smiles: The mentors posing for a photo with faculty members and students after the session.

Describing the full-day session as "very interesting", digital communication student Jasmine Shameena Shabri Ali, 22, said the students learnt a lot about a myriad of topics ranging from investor relations, internal communications, and public relations to journalism and media relations.

She said the activities gave participants an understanding of the realities of the media industry.

"The first activity where we were tasked with writing news reports for various platforms was truly a crash course in journalism.

"We had to digest a lot of things in a short time but it

taught us to be open to learning new things," she said, adding that the programme was a good reminder that communication students are expected to master the art of dealing and understanding others as they will have to deal with various parties from different backgrounds and departments when they enter the working world.

"Instead of just learning theories, we picked up many strategies to tackle issues through hands-on activities," she said.

School of Communication dean Prof Bahiyah Omar, in her welcoming address, thanked Khazanah

Nasional for selecting USM for the KRP outreach programme.

"The students are very privileged to have this opportunity because it's not easy to gather so many experts in the communication field to come here.

"I hope all of you here will share the skills and competencies learnt with your peers so that the knowledge will also benefit others," she said.

Khazanah Nasional managing director, Datuk Amirul Feisal Wan Zahir said these sessions are designed to bridge the gap between academic learning and real industry practice.

"A core principle of KRP is paying it forward. Fellows contribute back to the industry through mentorship, workshops and sharing of experiences, ensuring the impact goes beyond the individual to the wider media and communications fraternity.

"I am encouraged to hear that the KRP programme is helping build a strong and diverse pool of practitioners who are excelling in their fields," he said.

The KRP outreach initiative has benefited some 250 communication students from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) and USM since its inception last year, with plans to bring the outreach initiative to more universities next year.

The KRP aims to develop mid-career Malaysians in media and arts by equipping them with the latest knowledge, skills and network in their respective fields.

Upon completion, programme participants are required to pay it forward in various forms to benefit Malaysians at large.

There are two programmes currently running under this initiative namely the KNWPF and Khazanah National Associate Artist Residency (KAAR).