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All in the family

FIVE out of nine in a family from Sabah who were registered as Asia e University (AeU) students graduated with the same Master of Education (MEd) degrees at AeU's fifth convocation.

The five happy graduates who created history for AeU comprised four sisters and a brother-in-law.

It started from Lesiah @ Root Sabil's, age 44, who harboured the ambition of becoming a professional educator.

As the second child of the six Sabil siblings who are all teachers, Lesiah teaches in the National School Bongkud, Ranau.

The only obstacle to her ambition was the absence of suitable institutions of higher learning near her residence.

The nearest full-time learning centre to her home is located about 110km in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

Lesiah's long-awaited dream came true when AeU expanded its network of educational services centres in 2012 from all the states in peninsular Malaysia to Sabah and Sarawak.

She started receiving information through words of mouth about AeU from her friends, teachers and also through her own reading of AeU articles in the newspapers.

As a mother of five, Lesiah was determined to continue her study in AeU's Master of Education (MEd) programme.

When Lesiah shared her aspiration and intentions with her family, all her siblings and



From left: Rosline, Lesiah, mother Suliah, Jane and Rosie.

two brothers-in-law who are also teachers were inspired by her. In total, nine members of the family were registered as students of AeU.

Eight of them enrolled for the MEd programme on Jan 20, 2014 – Lesiah and her husband Fred P. Jaumis, Rosline, Rosie and her husband Edmond St Carolus, Lily and her husband, Dymson Zeno and Jane.

Only the eldest brother, Juin Sabil, was registered in September 2013 and is pursuing his Bachelor of Education programme in AeU.

Interestingly, all are teachers and graduated at the same time for the same Master of Education programme, except for Juin, Lily and Dymson who

hope to graduate this year.

Their convocation ceremony was witnessed by their families, including the Sabil sisters' mother, Suliah Kelangkat, age 70.

"We actually gained more in terms of knowledge and skills after we attended AeU's MEd programme," said Lesiah.

The sisters did not encounter any difficulties as the blended learning methodology offered by AeU was accessible anywhere anytime, which gave them the flexibility such as attending class schedules held only in the weekends.

With proper time management, they were able to cope with their work commitments and studies and

believed they can achieve their goals of lifelong learning.

"Learning materials were easily available online and the use of AeU's new technology in systems continuously made the learning process easier and cheaper," says Jane.

Through the blended learning methods, students can get study notes through the student portal, known as My Personalised Learning Space or myPLS.

Within five semesters of their studies, their hard work paid off and they created history for AeU, as this was the first time five family members graduated together with the same MEd degree.

"We chose AeU because it met our requirements in terms of knowledge, time, location and financing," says Rosline.

The unique tale of the five students in two families is not just the success story of the dedication to education but also reflected the importance of lifelong learning through AeU's personalised mode of flexible learning that can help working adults to achieve their dreams and ambitions.

Registration for this year's January intake is now open.

■ For more information, call 1300 300 238 or apply online at www.aeu.edu.my.

Wise to be early

ANOTHER year brings the perennial concern that it is harder than ever to gain admission to a selective college. Stanford, for example, admitted 5.07% of its 42,167 applicants in 2015, the lowest in the university's history. However, as in prior years, this trend should be viewed in a larger perspective – one that suggests applying early remains an important part of the admission process.

Moreover, students in the high school class of 2017 should plan ahead when it comes to standardised testing. Under Stanford's Early Action (EA) programme, 748 students – nearly 11% of early applicants and more than one-third of all acceptances – were offered early admission. Therefore, the acceptance rate for Regular Decision barely topped 3%. Similarly, Yale admitted 15.57% of its EA applicants, compared with 6.26% of all applicants; Princeton 18.53% EA, compared with 7.28% overall; and Harvard 21.14% EA, compared with 5.9% overall. Outside of the Ivy League, The University of Chicago admitted 12.12% of its EA applicants, compared with 8.4% of all applicants.

Applying for Early Decision (ED) involves a promise to attend the school if accepted.

The University of Pennsylvania offered admission to 25.5% of its ED applicants, who fill more than half the class, as opposed to 9.9% overall. Duke, too, accepted over 25% of its ED applicants, filling nearly half the class, as opposed to 10.7% of all applicants.

Northwestern accepted 32.31% of ED applicants, while it's overall acceptance rate dropped to 12.9%. What do these numbers mean?

Applying for ED is wise for a competitive student who has a clear first choice and for whom financial aid is not an issue. For such a student, the odds of acceptance are higher – because the student is showing an interest, the school will accept a higher percentage of