Cultural fest celebrates diversity

The students of Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (Unirazak), recently held the Arts & Culture Festival 2011 with a 1Malaysia concept at Unirazak’s Razak City Campus on Nov 24.

Planned and organised entirely by the students with minimal assistance and guidance from Unirazak’s various departments and faculties, the event was officiated by Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office Datuk Ahmad Maslan.

Hundreds of Unirazak staff, students, and members of the public attended the fun event.

The Unirazak students at the city campus were joined by about 100 students who came from Unirazak’s campuses around Malaysia.

Altogether, the 300 students put together an entire day’s worth of cultural shows, with nine tents dedicated to traditional arts and crafts, food, games and other activities.

This included contributions from the Malay, Chinese, Indian and natives of Sabah and Sarawak.

Arts & Culture Festival 2011 director and Unirazak student Muhammad Saiful Ibrahim said “I am thankful to the Almighty for His blessings in enabling us to carry out this festival smoothly. I would like to thank the board members and students for their hard work that ensured the success of this festival.

“Hopefully, we can realise the vision and mission of this programme, which is to fuel love for Malaysian arts and culture among the people of Malaysia.”

In his opening speech, Unirazak president and vice chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Md Zabid Abdul Rashid said, “Each race and culture in Malaysia is special and unique. This festival helps to bring us closer and understand one another better in the spirit of 1Malaysia.

“We should be respectful and proud of the accomplishments that Malaysia has achieved in racial integration, in which we all live together harmoniously and enjoy one another’s language, food and tradition. I hope that Unirazak’s Centre for Languages and Malaysian Studies will develop a co-curriculum course that maintains today’s efforts and help us achieve a higher understanding and closer ties with one another.”

In his speech, Ahmad said, “Unirazak’s Arts and Culture Festival 2011 really helps us to achieve the highest level of the 1Malaysia spirit, in that it celebrates our differences as strengths not weaknesses.

“It’s wonderful to see all these young students from different cultures and backgrounds working together to achieve something special.

“We are all the same, the only difference is how hard we work, how ambitious we are, how disciplined we are. Do not look at one another in a negative light.

“I have been to many international universities in England and New Zealand and Unirazak and its facilities are on the same level. Be good students and effective contributors to Malaysia.”

At Unirazak’s Arts and Culture Festival 2011 visitors could buy a variety of food such as muruku, chicken rice, putu, mee hoon, pulut, rending, traditional cakes, Sarawak laksa, different types of sweet porridge (bubur) and kerepek.

They could also browse and purchase traditional arts and crafts, engage in some batik chanting (batik painting) and play traditional games such as the congkak and batu seremban.

The festival also featured traditional Malay, Chinese and Indian poems as well as Malay, Indian, Punjabi, Sabahan and Sarawakian dances.

There was also a performance by the Unirazak choir, a medley of songs from the winner of Unirazak Idol 2011, and a fashion show of traditional clothes and costumes. The finale was a 1Malaysia performance.

Given that Unirazak is a specialised university dedicated to providing niche academic programmes and the Razak City Campus has a student body of less than 200, their Arts and Culture Festival 2011 was an astounding success and an indicator of the students’ willingness to work hard to achieve what they had set their minds to.