



# THE 16TH HRH SULTAN ZAINAL ABIDIN DEBATE COMPETITION CHALLENGE CUP 2020

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By definition, a debate is 'a contention of words or arguments on any subject matter by a group of people' (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Alternatively, those actively involved in the local debating scene consider it as a competitive, intellectual sport in which the main aim is to outwit and 'outspoke' your opponents in order to win an argument. Beyond winning the arguments, however, debates can also bring about a lot of long-term benefits to students: reasoning, critical thinking and other oratory skills that are essential in forming sharp, thinking individuals. With that in mind, it is no wonder the Debate and Orator Clubs of UiTM Negeri Sembilan are constantly urging and training students to participate in the healthy sport.

Recently, the Debate Clubs of UiTM Negeri Sembilan sent a contingent of debaters to participate in the 16th HRH Sultan Zainal Abidin Debate Competition Challenge Cup 2020. The competition boasted teams from 19 public and private institutions of higher learning from all over Malaysia. Held in two categories (Bahasa Malaysia and English), all participating teams had to debate in the Asian Parliamentary format, in which three speakers representing a Government side argue their case against an Opposition team, also comprising of three speakers. The debate motions range from a myriad of themes such as 'Health', 'Education', 'Science and Technology', 'Politics', 'Economy', 'Environment', 'Arts' and et cetera.

In preparation for the competition, our debaters stayed back and sacrificed a significant amount of their time during the semester break to undergo a centralised training programme conducted by the lecturers in charge as well as former debaters of UiTM Negeri Sembilan. Day in and day out, they rigorously read, dissect and discuss articles on various issues; trying to form arguments that could convince their audience on why their case is better than their opponents'. From Trump's wall to the civic unrest of the Middle East to the degradation of our local cultures, the debaters left no stone unturned in preparing for the tournament. That would explain why sometimes their training sessions ended at 2am in the morning!

During the competition, teams had to debate a total of 5 rounds in the preliminaries. Based on the speaker and team points, a ranking system was established to decide which teams would break into the knock-out rounds. With the right strategies, arguments and a healthy dose of good luck, the English Debating team from UiTM Seremban managed to emerge as the top team in the preliminaries of the English Category of the tournament. Comprising of Muhammad Ridzwan, Muhammad Harith Haiqal and Melor Syaza, the team also managed to go all the way to the Grand Finals. This is a massive achievement considering it was their first time competing in the competition.

In the Grand Finals, the team from UiTM Seremban debated as the Government against the Opposition team from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA). The motion was set under the tricky 'What If' theme, fitting for a Final round of a tournament. It reads: "Assuming Possibility, This House Believes that Environmental Activists and Allies should Leave the Earth instead of Trying to Save It". It was a tight and splendid debate, one where both teams went back and forth in presenting solid arguments and refuting their opponents' cases. Nevertheless, there could only be one winner in the competition. At the end of the debate, a panel of 5 adjudicators unanimously decided that the motion would stand, siding with the Government team. Hence, UiTM Seremban was announced as the Champion for the 16th HRH Sultan Zainal Abidin Debate Competition Challenge Cup 2020 (English Category), bringing home a cash prize of RM1,500 and the Championship Trophy. In addition, the team was also presented with the following awards:

1. Grand Finals Best Speaker (Melor Syaza)
2. Top 10 Overall Best Speakers: Rank #1 (Melor Syaza, 314.5 points)
3. Top 10 Overall Best Speakers: Rank #2 (Muhammad Ridzwan, 309.5 points)
4. Top 10 Overall Best Speakers: Rank #6 (Muhammad Harith Haiqal, 308 points)

Congratulations to the winners for their hard-earned achievements. It is hoped that their success will be the impetus for future successes especially for the young debaters in UiTM Negeri Sembilan. Commiseration also goes to all the participating teams. In the words of the Adjudication Core of the tournament, "You didn't lose. You just haven't won yet".

