Local varsities are champs at international debate

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Winners all: (from left) Vinodhan, Leeroy, Sharon, Ameera, Sara and Mubarrat pose with their trophies and medals following their wins at the championship.

UNIVERSITI Malaya has emerged as champions in the English as a Second Language (ESL) category of the 2016 Australasian Intervarsity Debating Championship (Australas).

The team from UM comprising third and second law students Sharon Kaur Jessy, Leeroy Ting Kah Sing and Vinodhan Kuppusamy, beat teams from Korea and Indonesia in the semi-finals and finals.

The students defended the title as the university were champions as well last year.

The tournament which is the second largest debating tournament in the world, was hosted at the University of Western Australia from July 13 to 21.

The finalists debated the motion “This House as a middle class African American parent, given the choice between an under-performing but predominantly African American school and a high-performing but predominantly white school, we would choose to send our children to the predominantly African American school.”

The UM team opposed the motion and won on a 9-0 decision.

The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) debate team won the Australas this year, a first for any Asian university in the tournament’s 40-year-history.

The three IIUM debaters comprising Economics students Mubarrat Wassey, Sara Abdul Rahim and law student Ameera Natasha Moore won the prestigious title in the grand finals against Sydney University. They debated the motion “This House believes that feminists should oppose drag culture.”

On the Australas, Sharon said it involved months of preparations.

“We read the news regarding current events, carried out in-depth research regarding issues that might come out and had meetings almost every night to discuss motions before flying to Perth,” said Sharon.

She said the team was coached by Assoc Prof Dr Chandran Somasundram and Dr Zuliana Razali from the Institute of Biological Sciences.

Vinodhan and Leeroy were debaters in secondary school while Sharon started debating at varsity level.

Sharon said the team has attended tournaments such as United Asian Debating Championship held recently in Thailand, adding that the university will also be taking part in the Asian British Parliamentary Debate and World Universities Debating Championship later this year.