An impressive fair by students

THERE is no doubt an increased concern in our society regarding food production, food quality and, of course, food health and nutrition. Doing its bit for societal awareness, UCSI University hosted an annual food fair that brought in the crowds for a gastronomic extravaganza.

Run by the university’s Faculty of Applied Sciences, the fair’s uniqueness is best reflected by the level of student involvement – the University's Food Science students virtually run the show by coming up with epicurean delights.

Aptly themed WOW, which stands for wholesome, original and well-balanced, this year’s edition was held in conjunction with the faculty’s Applied Sciences Week, adding appeal to an event that is regarded as a perennial attraction.

Looking back on a successful event, UCSI University’s Food Science and Nutrition department head Stephenie Wong Yoke Wei opines that the fair is a good avenue for students to apply what they learn within the classroom.

“The fair is essentially a showcase of our students’ abilities,” says Wong. “By coming up with unique recipes to handling promotional activities and product briefs, the students really run the show,” she said.

“Students are evaluated for their performance at the fair and this exemplifies UCSI University’s concept of project-based learning that puts the focus on hands-on experiences and practical industrial exposure,” Wong added.

With supervision and advice from the faculty’s teaching staff, the University’s Food Science students also venture into unchartered territory by sourcing for sponsors.

Under the arrangement, a sponsor’s product would serve as inspiration or a core ingredient for students and a number of food companies like Brand’s, Naturel, Vico and Vochelle supported the cause.

Preparations for the fair often start early – sometimes up to a semester ahead of time – and despite the hard work involved, students only have good things to say about the entire experience.

“It is really fun to try out different things and come up with a popular creation that brings in profit,” says Esther Chee, a second year Food Science and Nutrition student who was involved in the fair.

“We (the students) are also exposed to elements of marketing, leadership and entrepreneurship. On hindsight, the experience was enriching as it took us far beyond the traditional scope of studies.” Chee said.

Chee adds that students also learned a great deal about perseverance as many had to go through trial-and-error sessions in the lab before coming up with satisfactory creations.

Tan Lea Ngar, UCSI University’s valedictorian for the graduating class of 2012, looks back on the fair with fond memories. A proactive learner, Tan was also involved in co-curricular activities and she excelled at organising events when she was appointed as the events director of the UCSI University student council.

“Apart from enjoying a great academic experience, I really learned how to manage and balance my time at UCSI University,” she reflects, pausing at times to recall the hours of sleep sacrificed in hosting a successful event.

“I was blessed to have great support from dedicated lecturers and staff who guided and mentored me throughout my time in university. They helped me greatly with personal or school-related issues.”

To find out more about UCSI University’s Food Science and Nutrition programme and other courses under the Faculty of Applied Sciences, visit from Monday to Saturday (9am – 6pm) for course counselling or contact counsellors at 03-9101 8880.

Those interested may also direct their enquiries about the programmes by logging on to www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry or visit the UCSI University website at www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my.
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