Holistic learning is the best way

HOLISTIC education puts the spotlight on “learning more and studying less”, and the Faculty of Applied Sciences is one of the many faculties at UCSI University that drives this philosophy.

“At UCSI, academicians are passionate about creating an active learning environment for students, which is why we organise events like our annual food fair,” says the Faculty’s Food Science and Nutrition Department head Stephenie Wong.

“For this event, Year Two and Three students taking Food Processing and Food Technology courses join efforts to develop food products, and convert theories into a new food product that is not available in the market.

“It is not solely about creating delicious food. Students also need to consider various business aspects and costing. This way, we’re able to nurture their entrepreneurial skills. The most meaningful aspect of this fair is that all proceeds are donated to charity,” Wong adds.

Third-year Iranian student Sara Razmkhah, who is currently reading the BSc (Hons) Food Science and Nutrition degree at UCSI, describes the annual food event as a very interesting experience.

“My team created a marmalade-chickish pulp, which resembled an oatmeal-covered snack with enhanced nutritional values, lined with a special sweet and sour sauce,” says Sara, adding that this particular food fair-cum-competition was held at the Empire Shopping Gallery in 2011, in conjunction with UCSI’s 25th year anniversary.

“We won second place and were thrilled that our hard work, especially in terms of retaining the freshness of our ingredients during transportation, paid off,” she elaborates.

Apart from the food fair, the faculty encourages its students to participate in industry trips, guest lecture sessions and seminars. The upcoming eighth Food Science and Technology Seminar will be held on March 15 and 16.

The seminar, comprising activities like food product development, a food bowl quiz and presentations, seeks to instil a strong research culture among Food Science and Technology students in a friendly yet competitive environment.

Such student-oriented seminars are similar to UCSI’s Co-Operative programme (Co-Op) as both provide a platform for creative and innovative thinking in real-life learning environments.

Co-Op fuses classroom learning with workplace training and Sara is one of the interns selected to conduct research on Progym’s Shinzui collagen-placenta drinks, a product line that is said to assist skin regeneration and improve skin suppleness.

The project is part of a memorandum of agreement (MoA) signed in November between UCSI and CS Progym Pharmaceutical Sdn Bhd, which also saw the launch of the Faculty’s new Masters programmes – the MSc Food Science and MSc Food Science with Business Management – to enhance research and development for both parties.

Uniquely structured programme

Such industry-university collaborations are important, Wong says, as they bring together the best minds in science and technology – both industry experts and academicians alike – to elevate the bar of research excellence.

Notably, the Food Science and Nutrition programme is well received by students and has been carefully designed to increase their employability or mould them into steadfast entrepreneurs.

“The course doesn’t just revolve around its core (Food Science and Nutrition) because we are keen to develop all-rounded learners,” emphasises Wong.

Courses in non-technical areas such as Entrepreneurship, Public Speaking, Marketing and Internet Technologies, to name a few, also provide avenues for learners to be equipped with other fundamental skills that can be applied in the workplace.

According to Wong, employers are pleased with the quality of UCSI students, both employees and interns alike.

To find out more about the Faculty’s BSc (Hons) Food Science and Nutrition degree or other programmes, visit the Faculty of Applied Sciences from Monday to Saturday (9am – 5pm) for course counselling.

Alternatively, contact the Enrolment Call Centre at 03-9101 8882 or e-mail www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry or log on to www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/foas/
Third-year Food Science & Nutrition student Sara Razmkhah carrying out an experiment with department head Stephenie Wong.