Finance for the future

ACCOUNTING, actuarial science, Islamic banking, investment and economics are some of the most in demand fields of study today.

While popular programmes indicate that those particular job markets are robust, it does have the problem that comes with being popular – too many institutions have them.

This dilemma was foreseen by UCSI University's Faculty of Business and Information Science (FoBIS).

"We want to give our business students an edge now and not wait until the market is overloaded with conventional business degrees," according to acting dean Melissa W Migin.

Going to the source of student employment, the academic staff members touched base with industry practitioners.

Interestingly enough, the industry needs graduates with knowledge of finance in addition to a conventional business degree.

Migin credits this demand to the flexibility such a degree provides, as both the student and employing company have the option of utilising either skill.

Industry feedback, coupled with the fact the financial services sector is targeted to raise the country's Gross National Income by a staggering RM121.5bil by 2020, led Migin and her team to realise that it is time to equip their students with financial knowledge.

FoBIS has designed a new range of programmes that incorporates the trusted business degree with the growing finance potential – Bachelor of Financial Economics (Hons); BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance; BSc (Hons) Actuarial Science and Finance; BSc (Hons) Finance and Investment and BBA (Hons) Islamic Banking and Finance.

This foresight also means UCSI is one of the few private tertiary education institutions offering these degrees.

The question is, are these degrees with added financial knowledge more challenging?

Migin acknowledges that the new programmes have a wider scope in terms of courses covered so they could be somewhat more challenging.

"Nonetheless, for students to select these degrees, they must love numbers in the first place. So, the challenging part isn't because they can't cope. They just have a wider field to study," she explained.

To ensure its students excel academically as well as in the working world, the faculty emphasises hands-on learning.

This is in line with UCSI's Praxis University approach that advocates the application of theory to practice.

While its two-month Co-Op attachments for every year of study send students to intern with some of the best names in the industry, FoBIS also brings the industry to the students through the presence of adjunct professors – industry professionals who deliver lectures on the ins and outs of the industry.

Additionally, the faculty also organises forums, seminars, workshops, and talks by key industrial partners such as the Securities Commission, Apple and Tricor.

As a testament to its esteem, FoBIS also has an excellent relationship with accrediting bodies like the Association of Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA), Certified Practicing Accountant (CPA) Australia and the Society of Actuaries (SoA).

With its finger on the pulse of the industry and lecturers who are experts in their field, UCSI University's Faculty of Business and Information Science will help students make the numbers count.

To find out more about the UCSI University Faculty of Business and Information Science's new programmes, call 03-9101 8882, e-mail www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlinenquiry or drop by its Open Day on Dec 14-15 (9am-6pm).