Friends From The Land Of The Rising Sun
Japanese Students’ Visit to UCSI University For English Learning & Cultural Experience Programmes

“Ohayou gozaimasu (Good Morning), sir, Ohayou gozaimasu, ma’am”, could be heard everywhere in UCSI University throughout August when two groups of Japanese students visited us for their English Language & Cultural Experience courses. Students from esteemed SEIJO UNIVERSITY and ASIA UNIVERSITY in Japan visited the university as part of our plan to enhance cultural awareness for future cooperation and development among the youth of ASEAN member countries, while, at the same time, ensuring there are academic gains in the experience.

Visiting UCSI University for 3-4 weeks, each batch consisted of 25-30 students and underwent different learning and education programmes to enhance their experience and exposure. Besides especially designed English language course for the batches, the students were provided an opportunity to be part of the organization and experience how different departments work. This was ensured by placing them in various departments and schools so they could observe closely how the professionals operate in their official environment. Each student was provided with equal exposure to maximize their experience and develop understanding.

But, all this could not be complete without a bit of fun that is such an integral part of students’ life at UCSI University. Japanese students from the two universities were no exception to this practice and we ensured that they were able to develop fond memories of their visit to Malaysia by organizing visits to famous places around Kuala Lumpur. These included KLCC, Genting Highland and Batu Caves, to name few. Though hailing from Asian origin, the students were keen to observe the Malaysian lifestyle, cuisine and culture and enjoy variety of it. This was visible from their excited faces and expressions everywhere they went; either within university or outside.

The visit by students of two of Japan’s most recognized and esteemed universities provided a learning experience to the current students at UCSI University as they could also learn few new words and expressions from their Japanese friends. The learning experience was mutual and it was a hard moment to say Konbanw (Goodbye) to them upon their return to Japan.

One department that, undoubtedly, receives many envious gazes from others is School of Music at UCSI University. The students are seen playing their drums and guitars in one room while piano and flutes in the other, thus confirming that studies can be fun and entertaining. Recently, two events were organized by School of Music to facilitate their learning experiences working with each other and different departments work. This was part of the organization and experience how the professionals operate in their official environment. Each student was provided an opportunity to be part of various depart-

Chamber Music Ensemble Concert
Chamber music ensemble (CME) concert has always been part of the regular concert series presented by the School of Music. This concert has functioned to showcase the best chamber music group of the semester. Selections were done based on the students’ performances during their CME final assessment. The groups that gave the best and most convincing performances were then selected for the concert. Students often work very hard to be chosen for the concert. The selected students were given a commendation letter certified by the Chamber music coordinator after the concert as recognition for their hard work throughout the semester.

Modern Band Concert
The Modern Band concert is another showcase concert of the best bands for the semester. Students enrolled in Modern Band were assigned to bands at the beginning of the semester and worked together on different styles and genres. They were assigned a band coach who guided and facilitated their learning experiences working with each other over the course of 14 weeks of the semester. All of the students in Modern Band class were directly involved with the concert from the performers to the sound, stage & lighting crew, and even behind-the-scenes video footages that were shown in between the program during the concert.

A total of 7 songs were performed that night ranging from Led Zeppelin to Art Blakey, Radiohead and Piazzolla, to rearranged jazz standards of Summer Time and Bolivia. A standout song for the night was Brazilian Love Affair. The original artist, legendary jazz keyboardist George Duke passed away about 10 days before the concert. The song was already in the program lineup before the news of his passing. Therefore, it was rather bittersweet for the students who dedicated their performance to him.

The Modern Band Concert is held at the end of every long semester (April and August). It receives a generous audience every time and faculty & student vow to continue to put up great performances in many more concerts to come.

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As another proof that Engineers are always working hard to save this planet and provide safe and healthy living to its inhabitants, approximately 110 UCSI University (UCSI) students - under the Faculty of Engineering, Technology & Built Environment - recently participated in a tree planting campaign at the Raja Musa Forest Reserve, situated near Batang Berjuntai. Joining efforts with the Global Environment Centre (GEC) - a non-government organization that addresses key environmental issues of global importance - the students planted approximately 2,000 seedlings in hopes of restoring the forest to its former glory. The project aims to raise greater awareness on the importance of forest conservation and climate change as well as its effects to forests.

Departing from UCSI’s Kuala Lumpur campus at around 7:00am, the students were bubbling with enthusiasm, keen to explore and learn more about the forest reserve. Reaching the forest reserve at around 8:30am, the students were briefed by GEC programme officer Nurhayati and technical officer Julia Lo. The students were later provided with the necessary equipment - like machetes, pots and hoes, to name a few - to kick-start the tree planting process.

Under the sweltering sun, the UCSI students cheerfully selected the ‘best spots’ to plant their seedlings and applied the open planting technique that they had learned during the earlier briefing. In essence, the technique necessitated them to clear their planting spot of existing vegetation and weeds before the seedling could be placed carefully in the freshly dug hole; it would then be covered with the existing peat.

According to Faculty head of Civil Engineering Ir Asst Prof Ahmad Bin Tamby Kadir, who joined the students on this trip, the annual campaign was a great experience for the students. “Not only do they learn how to preserve our forests but they also experience what a peatswamp is like,” he explained. “We have many international students here in our Faculty and this has certainly been an eye-opener for them as some have never even stepped into tropical forests before, much less peat swamps.”

In one of the exciting news from across the China Sea, UCSI University is set for an influx of students from China who will arrive on a series of Semester-Abroad Programmes. This was a result of UCSI’s memorandum of agreement (MoA) with Shunde Polytechnic, one of China’s leading institutions in the field of tourism and hospitality. Under the agreement, students of Shunde’s China-Europe International Hospitality School - the institution’s premier hotel school - will spend their fifth semester at UCSI’s Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management (FoHTM). Both institutions will also commit to staff mobility in an endeavour to exchange ideas and best practices. The first batch of 32 students from China will arrive at UCSI University’s Kuala Lumpur campus this September to learn Western culinary art and English. Subsequent batches will spend a substantial period of time at UCSI’s Kuching campus.

Xia Wei during his recent trip to China. Hailing the development, Dr Xia Wei said that the MoA was a big step forward in achieving Shunde’s strategy for continued growth. "Along with advancement in academic governance, educational pursuit and entrepreneurial initiatives, international collaboration is an area we are seriously looking at," he said after the MoA signing and continued, "I look forward to the partnership and I hope both parties will actively roll out the student and staff exchange programmes."

The University was also represented by FoHTM dean Assoc Prof Dr Li Jianyiao, UCSI Sarawak campus chief operating officer Lu Huong Ying and Prof Dr Li Li. Lu said that the MoA would further raise Sarawak campus’ international profile that has been boosted by a steady presence of Danish students and staff. The recent MoA signing is an addendum to enhance a partnership that was forged last year that saw Shunde establishing the Shun Fung Culinary School at UCSI.
Teaching English to Teachers

17 August 2013

Approximately 20 English teachers from Vietnam – mostly decked in vibrant traditional attire – attended the recent Graduation Ceremony organized by UCSI University’s (UCSI) Centre for Learning Excellence (CLE).

This was part of the four-week “Intensive English Language Proficiency and English Teaching Programme for Educators”, which provided the teachers with opportunities to enhance their teaching methodologies as well as their confidence.

Held in The Quad at UCSI’s North Wing premise, the ceremony was attended by UCSI deputy vice-chancellor (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) Assoc Prof Dr Toh Kian Kok; UCSI deputy vice-chancellor (Academic Affairs and Research) Prof Dr Teoh Kok Soo; UCSI deputy vice-chancellor (International Relations) Prof Dr Lee Chai Buann and programme director Ms Margaret Soo.

A mix of face-to-face lectures, classroom discussions, hands-on activities, peer teaching practices and even trips to hotspots around Kuala Lumpur and other areas, the learner-centred programme received positive comments from the participants.

“I found this English programme very useful – we have learned a lot from UCSI’s – in terms of methodologies, speaking skills and improving our English,” enthuses Ms Vo Thi Nat, one of the three Best Speakers in the in-class impromptu speech competition.

The exciting and fun-filled competition saw UCSI lecturers and the foreign teachers conduct impromptu speeches, whereby those who lost in the initial round ‘became judges’ to vote off contestants.

For Ms Vo, she was most grateful to UCSI’s teaching staff, who were ‘not only friendly and helpful but are also well-qualified teachers who are enthusiastic about teaching’.

Ms Nguyen Thi Yuan – the youngest of the bunch – also found the programme ‘very useful and interesting’, highlighting that she learned new teaching methodologies that would surely help with her teaching in Vietnam.

Such glowing testimonies illustrate that the programme is unique – and according to Ms Margaret Soo, this is because ‘it is not students we are dealing with but in-service teachers’.

“These teachers are very strong in grammar and comprehension but as they are from central Vietnam – quite a distance from the major cities – they do not have the natural environment to converse in and use English,” she says.

“(Through the programme), they have learned new teaching methodologies by focusing on word-based activities and to introduce creativity and critical thinking in class instead of just teaching from text books.”

The graduation ceremony is evidence that the teachers – who were awarded certificates and even ‘Best Speaker’ awards for a select few – have passed with flying colours and are now equipped with not only better English language skills but enhanced self-confidence as well.

Expanding Horizons – Regional Offices In UZBEKISTAN & PAKISTAN

UCSI University’s Regional Offices Would Ensure Students & Partners Are Provided Services Right At Their Doorsteps

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In an effort to ensure that students and regional partners are provided services and assistance immediately and effectively, UCSI University launched regional offices in Uzbekistan and Pakistan. This was achieved as part of UCSI University’s objective to deliver the updated information right to their doorstep, eliminating the long distance correspondence and uncertainty involved. The two new offices join the list of regional offices in China and Indonesia.

The office in Uzbekistan will be headed by Mr. Makhdi Rashidov. An alumnus of UCSI University from Business faculty, Mr. Makhdi is the best example of how university delivers on its promises of producing entrepreneurs who are able, prepared and willing to take on challenges right from the day of graduating to professional life. Mr. Makhdi has been with university since 2005 but was officially appointed as regional representative this year to spearhead the efforts in establishing the recognition and awareness for UCSI University in CIS nations. He has not only the knowledge and experience of academic life at UCSI University but also has the exposure and confidence of a local to operate in CIS. This combination makes him a reliable source of information when it comes to determining the future studies in Malaysia.

Managing office in Pakistan, Mr. Shahzad Akbar Khan has been with university since 2005 as well. Another alumnus from Business faculty, he has worked with university in marketing before joining again to cater for Pakistan market to serve the esteemed partners and students in a hugely populated market. His presence in market is in line with university’s efforts to provide trusted and understanding representation to the students and partners so the knowledge sharing and delivery process is seamless and without uncertainty.

The purpose of these two new offices, along with other regional offices, remains the same i.e. to allow students access to information related to procedures, industries and opportunities that UCSI University specifically and Malaysia generally offers to students and partners alike. The representatives are equipped with knowledge that would be valuable for everyone in making a right decision for their future education. UCSI University realizes that is the supreme priority over everything else.

The contact details of the new regional representatives are established below.

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