

# Ventures outside the classroom

**CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** These contribute to a good student experience, boost skills and are an important part of university life

**ZULITA MUSTAFA**  
zulita@nst.com.my

**S**TUDENT days are one of the most memorable of a person's life. In addition to academic pursuits, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities make up a valuable part of the overall university experience.

Undergraduates develop social and interpersonal skills by running clubs or societies. This will help to improve teamwork skills and the ability to build meaningful relationship with friends and peers.

Responsibility, good judgment and persistence can also be learnt while working on a club project.

In addition, internships offer a glimpse into the working world, are good for personal development and enhance the curriculum vitae.

University of Malaya student affairs and alumni deputy vice chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Rohana Yusof said the tertiary institution has two types of co-curricular activities — the graded and non-graded.

Graded co-curricular activities are coordinated by the Centre for the Initiation of Talent and Industrial Training, which offers some 70 courses that cover sports and cultural components, professional image and protocol, oratory skills, volunteerism and community services.

Non-graded co-curricular activities are organised by the student affairs and alumni division, residential colleges and any other recognised institutions and agencies.

By joining these activities, students are awarded merit points which are recorded in their co-curricular transcript.

"Students are free to choose activities based on their interests. There are a lot of opportunities to participate in activities through registered clubs and societies,

uniformed bodies, volunteer groups and residential colleges.

"These activities are suitable for all undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as local and international students," added Rohana.

Information on these activities is widely disseminated on campus through emails, websites and social media channels.

"By actively participating in such activities, students will be able to build their soft skills as well as entrepreneurial capability and volunteerism awareness. These elements are vital to be a holistic graduate."

The university also encourages students to take part in activities outside class.

"We want them to be aware that they need to be fully ready to engage in the real world upon graduation. We also help them to be globally competitive."

UCSI University student affairs and alumni deputy vice chancellor Associate Professor Dr Yeong Siew Wei said there is a wide range of co-curricular activities on campus for both local and international students.

"This support for student activities goes a long way in ensuring students become dynamic and charismatic graduates who have both the academic knowledge as well as the soft skills they need to succeed."

"Most importantly, organising activities and executing plans provide students with skills that can only be learnt through hands-on experience."

"We want to avoid the scenario where students make big plans, but stumble when it comes to execution," said Yeong.

More than 80 student clubs —

recreational, international, faculty associated and external affiliated — are active in organising various events at all levels (faculty, university, state and national). "These activities contribute to a good student experience and are an important part of university life."

The student council of the university, which represents student bodies, is actively engaged in supporting the clubs and is in the midst of planning an international event.

UCSI head of student activities and recreation Chang Hau Shen said the university has various activities, which range from community engagement events, conferences, workshops, cultural exchange events and health campaigns to leadership camps, on campus.

"We focus on preparing students to hit the ground running when they join the workplace — this is why we organise leadership conferences and career workshops with our Co-Operative (Co-Op) Placement Programme industry partners," said

Chang. The Co-Op is UCSI's flagship programme which involves more than 3,500 industry partners.

For special projects initiated by or held in collaboration with external parties, students are invited to participate. Those who are interested may have to go through a selection process conducted by an organising committee.

Chang added: "Our community engagement events such as Public Health Campaign and Make a Difference Project mainly serve rural communities."

"Conferences and workshops strengthen students' academic knowledge as well as expose them to the industry to prepare them for

their careers.

“We also value the importance of understanding the diversity of cultures. We hold events that promote cultural exchange to embrace differences between each other.”

At Monash University Malaysia, students have a choice of more than 50 clubs and societies on campus.

From sports to social and environmental to cultural, activities are student-led and overseen by student associations such as Monash University Association and Monash University Postgraduate Association.

Monash head of student experience Selwyn Ng said it is

imperative for graduates to be equipped with people skills such as good inter-personal communication, strong analytical thinking, cross-cultural competency and social intelligence.

Students are encouraged to venture out of the classroom and take part in competitions such as the annual Shell Eco-Marathon, L’oréal Brandstorm and Microsoft Imagine Cup.

“This allows them to hone the ability to work in teams, think out of the box as well as develop problem-solving and presentation skills,” she added.



**“We want them (students) to be aware that they need to be fully ready to engage in the real world upon graduation.”**

**Rohana Yusof,  
University of Malaya  
student affairs and alumni  
deputy vice chancellor**



**Chang Hau Shen**



**Yeong Siew Wei**



UCSI Scholars' (U-Schos) Circle former president **Suzanne Ling** (right) with squash player **Datuk Nicol David** at one of the U-Schos events.