



Project blueprint: UCSI campus and its proposed development project.

Building a green future

UCSI believes in sustainable development.

THE study of architecture is not just about working with or designing inanimate objects. Architecture involves many areas that require the architect to learn about human building activities, building systems and their integration for human comfort, as well as the social, legal, political and economic influences of design and construction.

The UCSI University's School of Architecture and Built Environment is fully aware of the need to expose students to various aspects of architecture and is consistently encouraging them to join industry-level competitions and events to hone their skills and expose them to industrial standards and practices.

Recently, the university presented tokens of appreciation to students who represented the school and UCSI University in events, competitions and exhibitions during the last academic year.

This positive response from the university was well-received and appreciated by those who had worked doubly-hard in winning the competitions and receiving commendations from industry organisations on their work.

One such student was second year architecture student Suevy Khor.

"Tokens of appreciation from the university propel us to not only do better in our studies, but encourage us to do more. By participating in events which enable us to apply the knowledge we learnt, out of the normal classroom setting," she said.

Recently, the university's architecture students participated in competitions and exhibitions organised by Pertubuhan Arkitek Malaysia (PAM), the Selangor Turf Club, Malaysia Society Interior Design (MSID) and UiTM. The students are currently busy preparing for yet another workshop at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Recently, Malaysian architect Clement Wong gave a talk on sustainable development, and how students could apply green technology to their building designs. The talk was part of the School of Architecture and Built Environment's lecture series, which feature talks by industry experts.

According to Suevy, Green Architecture is emphasised in the university's curriculum and activities.

"I look forward to learning more about sustainable development, as it is an issue that concerns everyone. Architecture is always synonymous with development, but with newer technology and better knowledge, I believe that architecture can become 'greener' and create a better environment for all," she added.

The school also emphasises on engaging with the community.

According to UCSI University School of Architecture and Built Environment associate dean Mohamed Zani Mohammad Zain, this is the key to achieving success as an architect.

"Architecture should after all, exhibit the spirit and the needs of the people," he said.

At UCSI University, both the diploma and degree courses offered for architectural study incorporates this philosophy.

Mohamed Zani emphasised that many prospective architecture students have the perception that a diploma and a degree are distinctively different in terms of the quality of graduates produced.

"The diploma programme is structured to introduce students to various functional issues related to construction and architecture," he said.

"Design, however, will not be the primary focus, as the objective of the course is more focused on technical competencies."

It is when a student takes on higher level of studies in architecture and interior architecture that the technical competencies and basic design skills have to be nurtured in a more holistic, design-intensive environment.

Mohammad Zani explained that a diploma programme merely provides a pathway that recognises the academic standing of students. It also provides students with a more solid foundation in the field of architecture and interior architecture, before they proceed to the more design-based degree programme.

The degree programme focuses on design, which is considered the core of any architecture and interior architecture studies.

"The more comprehensive nature of design along with its integration with technology, structures, theory and services necessitates a higher academic qualification, as it requires more critical thinking skills combined with creativity," he said.

□ For more information, visit UCSI's Open Day from June 25-27. Their counsellors can be contacted at 03-9101 8880, e-mail www.ucsi.edu.my/onlineenquiry/ or visit www.ucsi.edu.my.