

THE UCSI GAZETTE

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

A portrait of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and a striped tie. He is standing with his arms crossed. The background is a warm, golden-yellow gradient with bokeh light effects and a large, stylized, glowing number '1' on the right side.

JAMES KOO'S *Story*

SEE
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An Auspicious Occasion



Group photo of the launching of the Award and officiating of Block G.

The much anticipated Tan Sri Dr Omar Harmony Award - a social enterprise track instituted by UCSI University to recognise students' activities that promote cohesion and harmony in an effective and sustainable manner - was officially launched on October 1, 2019 at UCSI University KL Campus.

The Award ceremony was made memorable with the presence of Minister of Education Dr Maszlee Malik, who visited UCSI University for the first time and presented the awards to three well-deserving winning teams from the competition, namely Dynamic Youth (first prize), Scholars Enrichment Programme or SEP (second prize), and MindFlu (third prize).

"We believe that our students, regardless of their age, background, gender, race or religion are some of our best change agents to inspire change and unity," said the Education Minister.

"Our vision is that our schools and universities empower our students to not just learn from theory, but experience putting into practice what they've learnt including helping their communities. This is where the very foundation of the mantra 'school for community' and 'university for society' comes in," he added.

Dr Maszlee Malik also expressed his encouragement towards all students to rise up to the challenge of making Malaysia a wonderful place of opportunity and equality.

Academician Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman, a member of the UCSI University Council and founder of the Award was also present at the event. According to him, peace and security cannot exist without harmony, and there will be no progress and prosperity if there is no peace and security.

"This is a platform where university students can provide input, ideas, plans and visions to foster and inculcate harmony in our community," said Vice-Chancellor and President of UCSI University, Academician Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff in his opening remarks.

The chosen winners were involved in subjects of interest including the usage of sports as a tool for empowering marginalised communities, mental health support, and nurturing youth leaders through experiential learning.

For instance, the project by Dynamic Youth is about eliminating substance abuse as well as depression among underprivileged children through football training. The training aims to teach them life skills such as teamwork, perseverance and hard work.

The Scholar Enrichment Programme (SEP), represented by Lee Yee Jeat and Wong Wei Hao, is a student-led programme from UCSI University that aims to equip youths with competency and social responsibility to impact their communities.



Dr Maszlee Malik officiating Block G.

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Group photo of the guests and winners.

This holistic youth development programme provides students aged 18-23 with experiential learning experience by participating in self-discovery and development workshops, community volunteering, and organising community projects to create impact and raise awareness of social issues.

"Having students to run a development programme like SEP is such an unconventional idea, that would have seemed impossible to most. But in SEP, we truly believe that youth have the ability to change the society and shake the world," said Yee Jeat.

The MindFlu project focuses on creating awareness and reducing the stigma of mental health among youth and the general public. Its mission is to unite youth to be involved in mental well-being advocacy and literacy and to encourage social inclusion of people with mental afflictions.

Next in line was a special appearance by Kim Lim, a co-founder of PichaEats – a social enterprise that empowers refugees living in Malaysia by providing them income earning opportunities in the food making business – and a UCSI University alumna, who delivered a talk on how the youths can become active agents of social change.

The Award indeed left a mark on the students, especially the winners who were very much pleased with the nominations and felt even more motivated to continue making an impact in the community at large.

"It's quite unbelievable that we've won first place in this competition as we have prepared so much for the proposals and presentation in just a month. Part of the prize money will be used for our project budget,



Kh'ng Yong Haw representing Dynamic Youth presenting on empowering underprivileged youth through sports.

which includes future expenses while the remaining will go towards celebrating our success," said Kh'ng Yong Haw, one of the 28 members of Dynamic Youth who represented the team on stage for the presentation.

"We feel honoured to have been selected as the second prize winner. The most important thing about the Award is not about getting the prize, but it's more about telling people that we, the youths are doing something positive such as this and that we are empowering other youths," exclaimed Lee Yee Jeat and Wong Wei Hao from the Scholar Enrichment Programme.

"It was such an honour and a pleasure for us to be selected as the third prize winner of the Award. We had to compile everything for the project in a span of maybe two to three months as we were informed of the Award quite late," said MindFlu representatives Federica Lorenza and Melissa Chew Meishi.

The Award ceremony was subsequently followed by the officiating of Block G, UCSI University by Dr Maszlee. The building comprises a world-class basketball court on the 12th floor, a six-floor carpark, a media centre, classrooms, lecture halls and eateries.



Kim Lim, one of the co-founders of PichaEats talked about how students can become agents of social change.

"Interestingly, this building illustrates green initiatives. I've been told that this building adopts the rainwater harvesting system and is powered by LED lights. The UCSI Group SDG Secretariat has also implemented the green corner concept whereby each department is encouraged to have a space for their little garden," Dr Maszlee said, praising the University for its sustainability approaches.

UCSI will continue championing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through its green initiatives and other events, particularly, ones that promote SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions as it leverages on being the best private university in Malaysia twice in a row according to the QS World University Rankings 2019 and 2020.

National English Essay Competition 2019



A group photo at the National Essay Competition 2019.



Kuan Kwok Yong receiving the first prize in the competition.

UCSI University granted a RM10,000 tuition fee waiver to Kuan Kwok Yong from Hin Hua High School to study at UCSI University as he was announced the first prize winner of the UCSI University-Public Bank National English Essay Competition 2019.

The announcement was made at the presentation of the awards ceremony which was held at the Grand Ballroom, Le Quadri Hotel, on September, 24, 2019. The 17-year-old student also received RM1,000 in cash, a trophy and a certificate.

"This competition is a wonderful way to allow young students to express their thoughts for a better Malaysia. I believe that if we can truly view each other as fellow citizens, standing together in times of need, then we can or will definitely propel Malaysia towards a better future," he said.

Besides Kuan, 24 other secondary school students were selected as winners for the second, third, fourth, fifth and merit categories.

The top five winners received UCSI tuition fee waivers between RM3,000 and RM10,000, cash amounting from RM300 to RM1,000, trophies, and certificates. Twenty merit winners each received a MPH book voucher and a dictionary from Cambridge University Press.

"I am grateful that my piece on achieving peace and harmony has been acknowledged and agreed with by others. I hope that UCSI and other universities can organise more meaningful events like this in the future," said third prize winner, Tan Yi Xuan, also from the same school as Kuan.

Together at this event were teachers who came to support their students. Among them was Muhammad Fadhli Mufti, an English teacher from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Layang-Layang, Johor. He helped and encouraged his student, Haikal Najwa Abdullah throughout this competition and felt absolutely proud of her.

"Generally, the theme challenges the students because they have to think beyond what they usually think as students, perhaps more to general knowledge itself and how they can apply what they write in their essays. They did a lot of reading that showed their mutual understanding of the world, and their maturity level," he said.

UCSI University's Vice-Chancellor and President Academician Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, in his opening remarks, said he was delighted with the initiative that was supported by Public Bank as the main sponsor and five co-sponsors namely Royal Selangor, MPH Bookstores, Khind Starfish Foundation, Cambridge University Press and Le Quadri Hotel.

"We have come to learn that national unity is essentially the key to success for any nation. Many factors contribute to the growth of a country such as leadership, economic standing and knowledge advancement, among others. But without unity and harmony, all will come to nil," he said.

"The National English Language Essay Competition is quintessentially the University's way of inculcating the expression of love for a harmonious Malaysia among the younger generation," he added.

"They deserve to have their voices heard. After all, this country is going to be theirs, and their future needs to be shaped from now" he concluded.

Managing Director of Public Bank Tan Sri Dato' Sri Tay Ah Lek said his team was gratified to be part of this noble endeavour to encourage youths in shaping the future of the country. Public Bank, which had contributed RM20,000 for the competition, according to Tay, had consistently funded various literary awards.

The competition was held in conjunction with the 62nd Merdeka Day and Malaysia Day celebrations with the aim to encourage students to reflect and write on the role of youth in nation building. It is a step in the right direction for students to articulate their ideas and ideals on how a nation should move forward.

This UCSI University-Public Bank National English Language Essay Competition was opened to students sitting for the SPM, STPM, O-Level, A-Level and UEC examinations. The topic of this competition was "The Role of Youth in Creating a Peaceful and Harmonious Malaysia".



Academician Senior Professor Khalid giving a token of appreciation to Centre for Languages director, Margaret Soo Boon Yoke.

New Programmes At UCSI University



Master of Clinical Psychology

[N/311/7/0045] [05/2024] [MQA/PA11366]

This programme combines the understanding of emotion, thought and behaviour as well as the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of psychological dysfunctions of the 21st century. In the pursuit of promoting psychological health, as well as preventing and relieving psychological problems, the central beliefs to the practice of clinical psychology are the use of psychological testing and psychotherapy. Learn the techniques and theories of psychotherapy. Become an expert in clinical psychopathology, neuropsychology and psychopharmacology. Gain from a rich curriculum that will expose you to a variety of settings including rehabilitation centres, psychiatric units, universities and social services centres among others. It's all possible through this comprehensive programme that focuses on intellectual as well as empirical research.



Bachelor of Computer Engineering (Artificial Intelligence) with Honours

[N523/6/0310] [05/2024] [MQA/PA11675]

This much-in-demand programme combines the new age of Computing, Engineering and Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI essentially involves knowledge engineering, machine learning and robotics. Hence, this programme will cover machine learning as well as core theoretical foundations and advanced algorithmic, statistical and computer engineering knowledge. The programme is diversified in providing three specialisations to choose from such as Business Analytics, Computational Intelligence and Control and Intelligence System. Career choices range from system, software, R&D and machine learning engineers to programmers and data scientists. Be at the cutting edge of the mechanics behind AI; gain new insights and build smarter connections that will benefit the industry as a whole.



Diploma in Finance

[N/343/4/0272] [06/2024] [MQA/PA11335]

In this programme, you will learn the basics in financial techniques pertaining to business and investment. Be familiar with financial statements that summarise a large company's operations, financial position and cash flows over a particular period and a concise summary of the company's financial performance. Students will acquire up-to-date technical skills that are relevant and competitive which reflect the complex and challenging nature of finance and business realms. The programme includes introductory courses to financial market, statistics, financial management, banking and risk management. This could be your stepping stone to something greater or could just be what you need to have a solid foundation in the field. Be a financial analyst, planner, officer or a stockbroker and treasurer with this qualification.

DEBATE AND DISCOURSE



A group photo of the Inter-University Debate Competition.

Prepared by: Kong Min Xian (Publication Director) and Sherilyn Pak Cheng Suet (Assistant Publication Director)

The Inter-University Debate Competition is an annual event organised by the UCSI University Pharmacy Student Association (UCSIUPSA). The aim of this event was to create a platform for the Pharmacy students from various universities to discuss current healthcare issues. In conjunction with the debate competition, the Youth X Talk Series was also held on the same day.

Three speakers were invited to give a talk on how the Youth from Generation X today build their personal branding. The day started with an energetic and motivating talk by the first speaker, Bernice Choy, who is the co-manager of the Tokyo Swing Jazz Concert 2019. She finished her Provisionally Registered Pharmacist (PRP) training and currently works as a pharmacist at Klinik Kesihatan Kelana Jaya.

"Know your purpose clearly. Effective communication skills and relationship with others are the three main points to build your personal branding," said Bernice.

Bernice is a multi-talented person, wearing different hats as an emcee, pianist, speaker and pharmacist. Her success is mainly due to her proactive attitude. She has grabbed every opportunity to portray her talents.

The second speech was given by Jess Chong Huei Shin, who was chosen as Malaysia's Top

100 Most Influential Young Entrepreneurs in 2018. She encouraged the participants to be successful entrepreneurs and that one should put more effort and inculcate a mind set to succeed. As Youth X, they need to dream big and not to be afraid of failure.

"Failure is not scary. What is scary is lacking the courage to stand up again after you fail. This is the life motto of Manman Lin, founder of ANMYNA," said Jess.

ANMYNA was created in Taiwan in 2009 and focuses on nourishing the skin with natural ingredients. It is popular in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Singapore, the United States and other countries.

John Yeo, a business development manager at Advanx Health was the last speaker who shared with the participants his exciting experiences during his university life in Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences [CUCMS].

He was an outstanding and unique student, brave enough to challenge his lecturer and holding on to his principles strongly. He also participated in various extra-curricular activities during his time in the university. He told the participants that successful personal branding has an association with something or someone. For instance, one would link Apple Iphone with Steve Jobs and Microsoft with Bill Gates.

Lastly, the final round of the debate competition was held in the afternoon session. The topic of the debate competition was "Should we agree on the Ministry of Health's proposal to have a price control mechanism for medicines in Malaysia?" The debate was interesting and exciting. The debaters all showed their excellent presentation and persuasion skills.

"The students were highly encouraged to participate in the debate competition to improve their persuasion and critical thinking skills. This can be a way to find out the truth about themselves," said Assistant Professor Fazlollah Keshavarzi, one of the chief adjudicators and head of the Clinical Pharmacy department at UCSI University.

The day ended with a prize giving ceremony and photography session. Overall, the event proved to be meaningful and was a source of encouragement to participants to build their own personal branding and improve their soft skills.



National Pharmacy Sports Carnival (NPSC) 2019



Gold medal award winners for the men's volleyball competition.

UCSI University bagged 1 gold medal and 2 silver medals at the 12th Malaysian Pharmacy Student Association (MyPSA) National Pharmacy Sports Carnival (NPSC) which was hosted and organised by Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences (CUCMS).

19 local and private universities from various regions of Malaysia were involved in this event. The aim of this year's sports carnival was to provide the 3E's - Excitement, Entertainment and an Enjoyable experience to all participants throughout the event.

The event was very competitive and all teams gave their best. The event saw UCSI participants successfully winning 1 gold medal in the men's volleyball competition and 2 silver medals in the men's table tennis and women's badminton competition.

The hard work and commitment of the athletes paid off. This year, UCSI Pharmacy students also participated in other activities, namely track and field, basketball and swimming.

The opening ceremony was officiated by Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports, Yang Berhormat Steven Sim Chee Keong. All the athletes and teams were energetic and excited during the sports carnival.

The track and field events such as shot put and long jump launched on the first day were exhilarating to watch while modern games such as futsal, netball, volleyball, badminton and so forth marked the second day. Swimming events, traditional games and tug-of-war were conducted on the last day.

The 12th NPSC ended with a closing and prize giving ceremony held at the Grand Hall of CUCMS. This event provided a platform for UCSI Pharmacy students to build rapport between themselves as well as a sense of competition among other teams.

Through this event, they got to unleash their talent in sports and stay physically fit at the same time. They hope to participate the next MyPSA's National Pharmacy Sports Carnival to achieve greater heights in the coming years.

UCSIUPSA's 12th TEAM BUILDING CAMP 2019



Group picture of the participants.

Every year, a Team Building Camp (TBC) is organised by UCSI's Year 2 Pharmacy students for seniors and juniors to get to know each other better and to foster team spirit among them.

The camp began with a welcome speech given by the organising chairperson, Matthew Teo. He first thanked the participants for joining the camp as the response was overwhelming. He proceeded with the rules and regulations that the campers must follow throughout the 3-day camp and told them all to enjoy themselves by making new friends.

Seniors and juniors were grouped into teams of seven to nine, challenging each other in games, presentations, performances, treasure hunts, team building activities and so forth. Each team proposed and designed their respective logos, flags and slogans to represent themselves throughout the camp.

The highlight of the camp was 'Angels and Mortals'. Each year, a lucky draw is conducted to determine who are the mortals. The angels are responsible in taking care of their mortals throughout the camp while keeping their identities hidden until the last night of the camp. In the end, a small gift will be given by the mortals to their angels as a reward and token of appreciation for keeping an eye on them throughout the camp.

On the last day, prizes were given out by UCSI's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences lecturer Yap Chuan Sheng to each group representative. Mr Yap was very proud of all campers for being sporting and energetic throughout the camp. He mentioned that without their participation, the camp would not have gone well.

The feedback from both seniors and juniors were excellent. They really appreciated the committee members and helpers in making the event a success. It was good fun and memorable for all. Besides, the event provided a good opportunity for the campers to develop and strengthen reasoning and planning skills via mind boggling activities and working together as a team which created a spirit of joy and close friendships.



The various teams with their flags and slogans.

The Pangkor Story House Exhibition



All smiles: A group photo of the students.

In architecture, everything has structure and meaning. A design may represent someone, something or even some place. It is the task of the architect not just to envision and design but also to connect with the community in giving meaning to their designs.

UCSI University's Interior Architecture (IA) students recently had this very opportunity; to understand and connect with the fishing community in Pangkor Island in their design studio project which they presented at the Pangkor Story House Exhibition.

They documented the main types of fisheries, how they operate from on shore to off shore, fishing huts and/or on vessels and how things (tools, equipment, space, fish or food, etc.) come together to form a system of living for. They took fishing huts as sites to investigate the 'mechanism' where things (object, activity, space, etc.) form a system of living. Additionally, they worked together with the local fishing community during the process of data collection.

The exhibition was open to the public in conjunction with the Pangkor Island Festival 2019. The studio project attempted to address the common question of "how to design" by asking students to draw relationships between architecture and other elements, that is through object arrangement in space.

"This project has brought me opportunities in my exposure to society. I have learned the importance of humanistic design and logical thinking to deliver to these community exhibitions, which is not available in the school syllabus," said Khoo Xiao Qi, a Year Three IA student.

"The most important thing I have learnt in this project is teamwork. Everybody plays an important role in the team. Everybody has their role to play, without anyone of us, the project would not be complete," added Oon Shu Ling, a Year Two IA student.

For Miao Annan, also a Year Two student, this kind of activity allows for more exercise in students' professional knowledge, to enrich lives, to enjoy the feeling of design, to experience design, rather than being prematurely oppressed by reality.

Essentially, this was a school assignment that incorporated the idea of a public interest project. It also provided a methodology of studio teaching that engaged with real issues of the environment and the community.

"My teaching approach is to integrate an interest in environmental impact or community engagement into the process of a design project. Through this project, we enable students to examine the true meaning of sustainability in built environment," said School of Architecture and Built Environment lecturer, Foo Cherch Kang,

"Through the idea of a public interest project, students will play active roles in the design process, at the same time, learning a democratic way of designing that always considers clients and users in the decision-making process. For that reason, they create more appropriate and quality architectural spaces that address



environmental and social sustainability," said Foo.

It was an opportunity for the 11 students to get real experience in understanding the entire process of exhibition design from content to interior space. Students also connected with the community and gained feedback from them to examine the authenticity of information of their school assignment, that was conducive to individual interpretation and the search of meaning in learning paths and creative pursuits.



One of the students engrossed in designing.

"This community engagement project is concerned with meaning and context of one place and the outcome is more process-oriented as compared with the traditional approach which is product-oriented," said Foo.

"Having themselves involved in the people-oriented process, students are encouraged to be a facilitator or advocate in a much more democratic way. This helps students deal with real situations easily either in jobs or life after graduation. Most importantly, these projects provide a platform to unlearn the old practices and relearn new ones," remarked Foo.



Gardening Together For A Better Future

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE ACTION



Participants at the event.

Horticulture therapy, which uses plants and gardening to improve mental and physical health, is by no means a new practice. In the 19th century, Dr Benjamin Rush known as the "Father of American Psychiatry," was the first to document the positive effects working in the garden had on individuals with mental illness.

But horticultural therapy is beneficial to everyone - improving memory, language skills, socialisation while strengthening muscles and improving coordination as well as endurance.

In light of this, the UCSI Group SDG Secretariat Office together with UCSI University's Psychology Student Association (PSA) organised the event "Gardening Together For A Better Future". This was an effort to incorporate the concept of horticulture therapy into the lives of UCSI students, staff and children with special needs from Sekolah Kebangsaan Melawati (2).

Other than to foster the well-being of participants, the aim of this event was to create awareness on the needs for social inclusion and climate action.

"I like kids and it's a new challenge for me to get out of my comfort zone," said Siti Humaira Fitriyah, a first year BA (Hons) Psychology student. Siti, whose ambition is to have a

career in the field of Individual Counselling, was excited to meet the children and help those with learning disabilities.

Chuah Ai Chia, also a first year Psychology student, shared similar sentiments emphasising the need to educate children on the importance of cultivating plants for the preservation of the earth.

At the school, the students got down to loosening the soil and getting the ground ready for planting various types of vegetation. Among the plants included were ladies finger, spinach, button flower, papaya, peanut, lemon grass and others.



Gardening with a purpose.

As for the children, they were divided into younger and older groups where they took turns - one group having classroom activities while the other group would be doing the gardening and vice versa. The classroom activities involved colouring and labelling plants as well as a treasure hunt.

"These activities enhance the well-being of children especially those with disabilities. It gives them a chance to experience and explore nature on a deeper level. At the same time, it contributes to a sustainable future," said PSA president Koon Wei Chung



Horticulture therapy improves well-being.

"The project went well overall as our Psychology students were able to engage children with special needs on caring for the environment including planting. The headmaster of the school is interested in discussing the next collaboration for the high school students as well," said SDG Secretariat Executive Director, Norani Abu Bakar.

"Bringing it back home, one of the key activities we are planning to implement is tree planting by UCSI students. This will instil in them the importance of saving the environment and help them in securing a 'greener future,' she said.

Green Valley Fashion Show



Fashion never sleeps. It is vibrant, dynamic and ever-changing. But the trend nowadays is to take it a step further and "go green" at the same time. UCSI University's De Institute of Creative Arts and Design (ICAD) did just this as they organised their 8th graduation fashion show entitled 'Green Valley' at Block G on 11 October 2019.

In this event, ICAD students displayed their collection of fashionable clothes from recyclable materials exhibiting their innovativeness and creativity at the same time. In doing this, they also took a stand on preserving the Earth by reusing materials for their designs.

The three-hour fashion show was nothing short of spectacular as 11 graduating students from the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Fashion Design with Marketing programme and 2 students from the Diploma in Fashion Design programme showcased their outfits in a variety of styles, patterns and colours.

Aiming to educate students and create awareness on the importance of preserving the environment, the event was a huge success where the audience marvelled at the most intricate of details in the outfits displayed. In his welcoming remarks, ICAD director, Assistant Professor Dr Khairul Azril talked about three elements that helped the students in developing the magnificent collection.

"Firstly, there is will power, followed by dedication and then discipline. All these elements are dominant enough to empower ourselves to strive for success," he said.

"If you ever get into a situation where you want to give up, remind yourself why you started it in the first place," he added.

Ending his speech, Dr Azril emphasised that the fashion show was only the beginning of a journey in the lives of the students whereby they could still take time to develop their talent and discover their true potential for a better future.

UCSI's University's Vice-Chancellor and President Academician Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff who was present with his wife, Professor Datin Paduka Dr Khatijah Mohd Yusoff stated that the annual graduation fashion show was very much anticipated by students, staff as well as key industry players alike.

"The creation of the hibiscus dress made from recyclable paper in line with National Day was proof that our students are capable of doing something creative and different," he remarked referring to ICAD's previous initiative held in August of this year.

"As a university that champions the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, we can see that the effort of sustaining the



Alaa Wahid Abdullah, a Diploma in Fashion Design student, grabbed the winner's title in the Diploma category with her "Con-refined" collection.



One of the student's inspirational collection.



Fashion Design with Marketing student, Lim Jing Lih (left) flaunted her "Apparition of Annabelle" collection which was crowned The People's Choice Award winner.

environment is inextricably linked with fashion," he added.

"Fashion has many aspects. In this fashion show, particularly, we prepare students to be relevant with industry needs and changing times. Not only that, we prepare students with entrepreneurship skills so that they understand the nature of business from marketing, retailing and branding," he stated.

At the end of his speech, Academician Senior Professor Khalid congratulated Dr Azril for his appointment as the new director of ICAD.

Others present at the 'Green Valley' fashion show were UCSI Group CEO and Founder, Dato' Peter Ng, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Student and Alumni Affairs, Associate Professor Ir Dr Jimmy Mok Vee Hoong, people from the fashion industry, as well as lecturers and students from ICAD.

The winner of the best collection for the Diploma in Fashion Design programme, Alaa Wahid Abdullah, highlighted that her collections were inspired by the architecture of her country, Yemen. She explained that the structure of the dress was inspired by the 'Gate of Yemen' and details from the buildings behind the gate.

"I am so proud to win the best collection since this has been my dream after watching my seniors receive the award. I believe that this is the start of my career in fashion and this award has motivated me to strive for bigger and better things in the future," she said.

"UCSI has pushed me to new limits and helped me to create something I had never imagined," she added.

Alaa elucidated that she is planning to expand her knowledge and skills in fashion by furthering her studies in the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Fashion Design with Marketing programme.

Celine Priscilla Ferdianty, winner for the BA (Hons) from the Fashion Design with Marketing programme, was grateful to those who supported her from her early journey up until receiving the recognition for her collection.

"Without the guidance and supervision from the lecturers of ICAD, I would have not made it to the last day of the fashion show. Not only that, the facilities and resources provided by UCSI University also helped me a lot during the creation of the collection," she said.

"My graduation collection was inspired by the unconditional love of the French impressionist painter, Claude Monet, for his dead wife," she added.

When asked about her future expectations, Celine stated that her ultimate goal was to ensure that her family, especially her parents, were happy and proud of her achievement apart from having her own brand collection. She added that she was hoping to be an influential designer in the fashion industry.

As for the People's Choice Award winner, Lim Jing Lih also from the BA (Hons) in Fashion Design with Marketing programme, winning the award was unexpected. She said it was her friend who told her she had won.

"When the emcee called my name, I doubted whether I was hearing correctly until my friend nudged me to get my award. I am grateful to be recognised with this award although other designers were great as well," she stated.

"I am very thankful for the effort and guidance by our fashion lecturers because, without them, I would not have come this far. Also thank you to UCSI University for providing a conducive environment to work on our designs," she highlighted.

In the future, Lim would like to have her own brand after learning from experienced fashion designers and industry players. In light of her collection named "Apparition of Annabelle", she expressed that it was inspired by the movie "Annabelle" where she wanted to highlight that normal people are good until they get hurt.

The fashion show ended with the presentation of certificates of participation to all graduating students and tokens of appreciation to Academician Senior Professor Khalid and Dato' Peter Ng. The after-party for the event was held at the Sky Lounge at Level 12, Block G.



Fashion Design with Marketing student, Celine Priscilla (left) showed off her collection named "Ineffable Aurora" after winning the Bachelor's category.

The National Robotics Open Competition



The NROC was an enlightening event for all.

UCSI University hosted the National Robotics Open Competition (NROC) 2019 on September 28 at the Multi-Purpose Hall in Block A of its Kuala Lumpur Campus. The organisers of the event were the Ministry of Education Malaysia and Sasbadi Learning Solutions. All participating teams combined together in their effort to champion Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education in the 21st century.

Embracing the digital economy and Industrial Revolution 4.0 requires our nation to have a workforce with expert knowledge in STEM. In order to achieve this, we must produce graduates who are passionate and educated in this field. One of the ways to encourage students to embark on this fascinating world of science and technology is by learning STEM skills through robotics.

Robotics is a platform that allows students to build their interest in STEM through making, innovating and problem solving. The skills and experience they gain will follow them through life and benefit them in the face of real world challenges.

The primary objectives of the NROC were to nurture students' interest in STEM, to mould their Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and ability to solve problems using creativity and innovation as well as to nurture teamwork.

Each team consisted of 2 to 3 students and a teacher as a mentor. With the mentor as a guide, the students worked together to design, build and programme a robot as well as to create innovative solutions using LEGO MINDSTORMS® Education Technology.

The competition provided a learning platform to shape students to achieve success in the 21st century while developing and reinforcing certain skills to achieve success in their studies and future.

These skills include problem solving skills, creative thinking skills, interpersonal communication skills and teamwork. The competition also assisted students in building a strong foundation in Mathematics, Science, Technology and Designing, as well as Information and Communication Technology through hands-on experience or research.



Dr Khan observing the various robotic projects.



Having fun while learning.



Seeing how robotics work.

Other than that, the competition trained students to solve challenging issues through effective teamwork and enabled them to conduct logical and systematic thinking while planning and executing robot programming. Additionally, it helped to increase student's creativity in problem solving to achieve desirable results, encouraging students to participate in more robotics competition such as this in their spare time.

Participants from a total of 76 schools including primary and secondary schools were able to present their best innovative and creative products at the competition.

Present at the event was Ministry of Education Malaysia, Assistant Principal Director of Private Education Division Dr Zurina Marzuki, Sasbadi Learning Solutions Sdn Bhd director Kevin Wan and Sasbadi Learning Solutions Sdn Bhd programme manager Noor Faiz Zulkiflee.

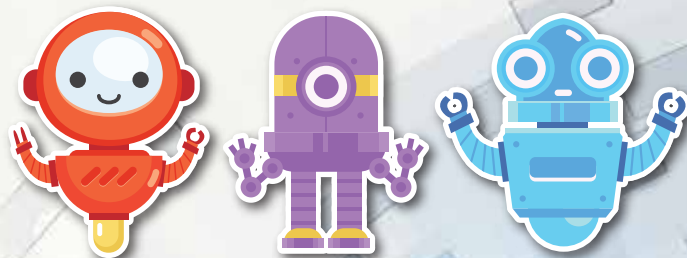
From UCSI University's Faculty of Engineering, Technology and Built Environment, its dean Assistant Professor Dr Ang Chun Kit, Assistant Professor Dr Ammar Al-Talib and Assistant Professor Dr Mohamed Khan were also among those present at the event. Members of the IEEE UCSI Student Branch also participated as assistant judges during the competition.

"Other than STEM education, the event is also in line with IR 4.0 where robotics and automation are going to play an important role. It is an encouragement to the new generation to master the use of robotics in different applications," said Dr Ammar who was also a judge in the competition.

The different themes for each category included Smart Passenger Transport dealing with the concept of self-driving cars, Smart Lighting which involved designing a robot that can replace old light bulbs with smart lights and the Smart Grid in which a robot is created that modernises the network within a city by installing new wireless node devices and establishing an optical network between them.

The Driverless School Bus theme involved making a robot that can pick up children at their houses and transport the children to school. Furthermore, the robot must also be able to deliver food to the school.

Lastly, the Green City Challenge was where students aged 10-14 years worked together to construct their own solutions. They planned, built and tested their models and programming before sharing their solutions. In this way, students easily connected with real-life challenges.



A robotic demonstration by students.

JAMES KOO'S *Story*



Receiving certificates from Dr Jack Berry, YSEALI Academic Director of UConn (left) and representatives from the US Department of State at Washington DC (both on the right).



The YSEALI Fellows from Malaysia holding the Jalur Gemilang in front of the globe at the University of Connecticut.

Some students just can't be mediocre. They seize every opportunity to excel in their chosen field. Through hard work and sheer determination, they rise to the top and sometimes, just sometimes, they keep on climbing.

James Koo Jian Wei probably needs no introduction as the years 2018 and 2019 saw him making his mark in the field of Actuarial Science at UCSI University. It started off with him completing 5 Society of Actuaries (SOA) Preliminary papers in February 2018, before the completion of his third year of study.

Then, he became the first UCSI student to pass the SoA Fundamentals of Actuarial Practice (FAP) before the completion of his studies in January 2019. He then made a name for himself on a national level by being the first student in Malaysia to obtain the Associate of Canadian Institute of Actuaries (ACIA) in February 2019.

Not surprisingly, he was made class valedictorian of 2019; an achievement that spoke volumes of his effort, dedication and commitment during his university years. This prestigious 'title' truly pushed him beyond what he had hoped for as new and promising opportunities began to open up to him.

Soon after graduation in 2019, he was selected for the YSEALI Academic Fellows programme under the Entrepreneurship and Economic Development cohort at the University of Connecticut, USA.

YSEALI stands for Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative; it was established by the former US president, Barack Obama in

December 2013. The main purpose of the YSEALI programme is to strengthen the relationship between the US and Southeast Asian countries.

James proposed the social project "Youngspiring" which focuses on connecting the underprivileged students with the scholarship opportunities.

"The whole YSEALI Academic Fellows programme was a life-changing opportunity for me; it inspired me to believe that everyone who cares about the society can make changes to it and make the world a better place," said James.



Arrival at the University of Connecticut; in front of its iconic signage.

Upon returning from the US, James began his journey in the corporate world at Great Eastern Life Assurance (Malaysia) Berhad as a Management Associate. In this two year programme, he was offered the opportunity to be rotated to different departments within Great Eastern. The programme also included a three-month attachment with the Financial Sector Talent Enrichment Programme (FSTEP), managed by the Asian Banking School in collaboration with Bank Negara Malaysia.

His first rotation was in the Appointed Actuary's Office under Great Eastern General Insurance (Malaysia) Berhad.

"Coming from an actuarial science background, I am glad that I can apply the knowledge learnt in UCSI at my workplace, particularly the 'reserving technique' for insurance. Meanwhile, I am developing both my technical and soft skills, thanks to the learning opportunities provided by my department supervisor and the Management Associate programme."

According to James, the most exciting activity for him in the programme is the Knowledge Sharing Session that is held every month. Each Management Associate will present on the knowledge and experience gained from the on-the-job training and research topics. For him, it is a great way to improve his public speaking skills as well as gain a holistic view of the insurance industry.

Some people think the past has not much significance; that what happened before does not necessarily dictate the future as much as the present. But for James, it is his past achievements that have propelled him to where he is now. And this has allowed him to write his own future and make decisions that will alter his life forever.

As James ventures into new challenges in life, he can be assured that UCSI is behind him all the way. He can revel in the knowledge that his alma mater has provided him a firm foundation on which he can stand and rely on in the coming years. Once again, congratulations James!

#FreeMarketFOBIS2019



(left to right) Logistics Management department lecturer Ho Min Yoong, School of IT head Assistant Professor Ts. Chit Su Mon and Actuarial Science and Applied Statistics head of programme Assistant Professor Lai Wan Fei.

On the morning of 23 October 2019, students and staff of UCSI University were seen bustling around the tables set at the Student Centre in Block A of UCSI University KL Campus. Used items such as clothing, kitchen utensils, cutlery sets, books and bags were sprawled across tables set by the Faculty of Business and Information Science (FoBIS) to capture the attention of curious passers-by. The best part? Anyone could take any of the items for free.

With “No Buying and Selling” and “No Barter Trade” clearly stated on the event poster, the aim of #FreeMarketFOBIS2019 was simple. It was to share items of various purposes amongst the UCSI community at no cost, all the while reducing wastage as well as impulse buying – something that almost everyone on the planet is guilty of!

The ideas behind the event were very much consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; namely Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

While the barter system may have existed thousands of years prior to the introduction of money exchange, the concept of a market where everything is free of charge is still quite young, particularly in Malaysia.

“The idea behind #FreeMarketFOBIS2019, which I founded together with Assistant Professor Lai Wan Fei (Actuarial Science and Applied Statistics head of programme) was brought to UCSI University last year. We want to share pre-loved items with our community

at UCSI University which includes students and the general staff,” said Assistant Professor Ts Chit Su Mon, who is the School of Information Technology head.

“You can display anything that you want to share with others on our tables. You can also take anything that other people want to share with you. So there is no need to buy anything. Those who come to our tables may not necessarily have to bring items to contribute. They can just come over and take anything. This is an event where you can either be a contributor or a receiver.”

When asked why the items had to be given for free instead of being sold for cheap, Assistant Professor Su Mon’s reply was simple: “We want to share.”



Books were also available at the event.

“Furthermore, handing away used items for free makes it a lot easier for those who need to get rid of their unwanted belongings, which, saves a lot of space in their homes and helps to reduce wastage,” she said.

“Some of the things we have at home are collecting dust or are not being used at all. So, why don’t we share, then? If someone has a nice bag that she no longer uses, she can always give it to someone else that needs it. Sometimes, there are also things we need but we don’t wish to spend money on them,” she said.

In ensuring that takers get the most of their experience at #FreeMarketFOBIS2019, all items that were contributed had to be usable and in good condition. But it wasn’t just the books, clothes and bags that were given away for free that day.

“We also have food,” said Assistant Professor Su Mon.



There were also bags for children and adults, as well as reusable shopping bags.

“We have 100 packs of nasi lemak sponsored by our dean, Professor Dr Ooi Keng Boon. Free market is not just about the products that you can exchange. It can also include services. For example, a financial planner is welcome to join the free market and provide his service for free. Perhaps a hairdresser can give a free haircut, too. It can be all sorts of things, really. Even the vegetables from your garden, if you want to bring them over and give them for free,” said Su Mon.

Over the span of two hours, individuals were seen coming and going from one table to another as they examined the displayed items. Unsurprisingly, some of the tables were almost left empty. After all, who could resist free stuff?

Even so, going to a market that provides everything for free is still an alien concept to many as Assistant Professor Su Mon repeatedly assured the attendees that they were not required to pull out their wallets.

“We would like to continue this by making it a yearly event. Other faculties are also invited to take part in contributing their used items and share the fun with us. Even if they don’t contribute any items, they can still be a taker and take away whatever they like,” she added.



Assistant Professor Ts Dr Ang Chun Kit: His Engineering Journey

When did you start your career at UCSI University? And describe your transition to becoming the Faculty of Engineering, Technology and Built Environment dean.

I started my career at UCSI in 2015 as a lecturer in the Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering department. Then I became the Head of Department in 2016 and subsequently the deputy dean in 2018. In 2019, I was appointed the dean of the Faculty. It is a big transformation in responsibility where I have over 2,500 students and over 100 staff under my care. From just teaching and research, my responsibilities also included dealing with student numbers, the quality of programmes and that of staff as well as the task of publishing two to three journal papers a year.

To what or whom do you attribute your success to?

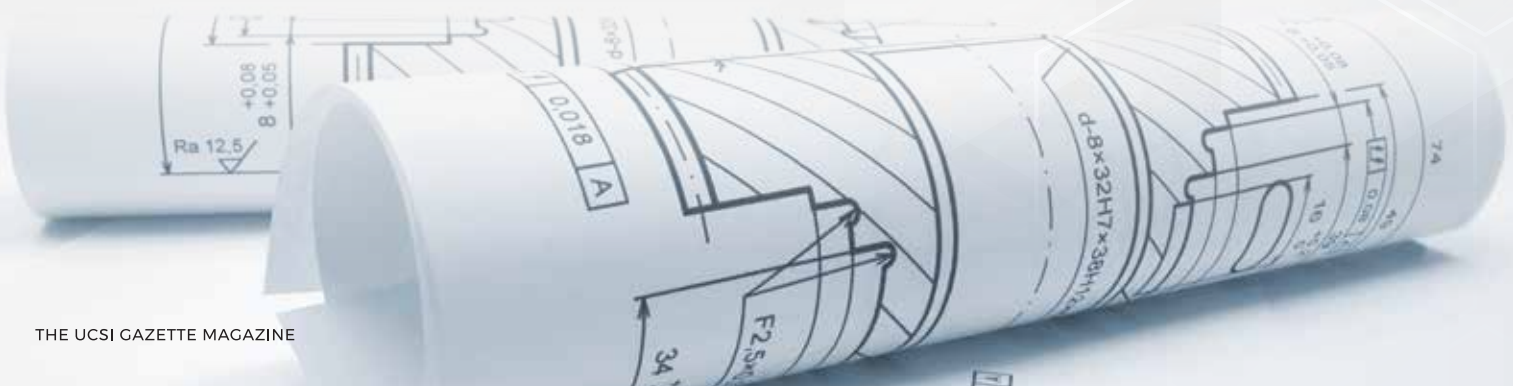
I have been fortunate in that I am familiar with the UCSI system. So far it has been quite manageable since I know the process from ground to top. I am grateful to Associate Professor Ir Dr Jimmy Mok Vee Hoong, former dean, for giving me the chance and opportunity to contribute in this way. He has guided me a lot in my career. Generally, I can't sit at a desk from 9-6 the whole day. I need flexibility and Dr Jimmy gave me this. I felt a sense of belonging; also not many dare to grab an opportunity such as this even though it is given to them.

Have you always been interested in this field or is it something you picked up later in life?

Growing up, I was always willing to take up a challenge. I was initially interested in Robotics which then led to Artificial Intelligence (AI). I loved Physics and Mathematics which are, of course, closely related to Engineering. I was never good in memorisation and preferred digits and numerical operations instead. I also like to be involved with people, to groom them and give them a platform to grow.

What excites you most in the field of Engineering?

Essentially, Engineering can add value to society. It can also make human life better. With Industry 4.0, engineers are standing tall now as compared to before. Doctors and other professionals need engineers too! This new era has started by we cannot feel it now. Soon all of us will need to be familiar with aspects such as Virtual Reality, Internet of Things and cybersecurity. I want to share my knowledge in this area especially with students.



What motivates you to keep going?

It is the discovery of new things to improve myself. In the next three years I would like to accomplish certain things. I would like to become an Associate Professor and move on to Professorship as well as become a Professional Engineer with the title "Ir". I like to come to work to share with the team and to guide them. I also like to mingle and I find the environment at UCSI to be harmonious where everyone gets to know each other irrespective of position.

What are one or two notable research projects you have undertaken?

One is 'Non-Invasive Blood Glucose Estimation using Handheld Near Infra-Red Device'. This is where we postulate that non-invasive blood glucose measurements would ease the everyday life of diabetic patients and may cut the cost involved in their treatments. This project aims at developing a non-invasive blood glucose measurement using an NIR (near infrared) spectroscopic device. The results obtained from this project indicate that the handheld micro NIR has potential use for rapid non-invasive blood glucose monitoring. Similarly, another project aimed to develop a non-destructive assessment of mango quality also using handheld micro NIR spectroscopic device. A few of my other papers have appeared in journals such as The Journal of Physics in 2019 and the Journal of Mechanical Engineering in 2017.

What would your advice be to students who would like to pursue a career in Engineering?

Everything is ultimately related to Engineering. The field is in high demand today. Students must learn to break away from conventional engineering and equip themselves with the latest knowledge. Things like IR 4.0 and SDGs will prepare students for real life after graduating.

How would you describe your journey as an academician in this field?

We need to dare to make decisions; to learn and stay motivated. As long as learning is involved, I will go for it. After all, if you never try, you never know!

Is there a specific area of Engineering that you are interested in?

I am interested in applying AI into our daily lives. For instance, using the method of spectroscopy to determine the freshness of eggs, or helping to identify real honey. These kinds of projects have an impact on society and in addition to that promotes better health practices.

How has UCSI impacted your life and career?

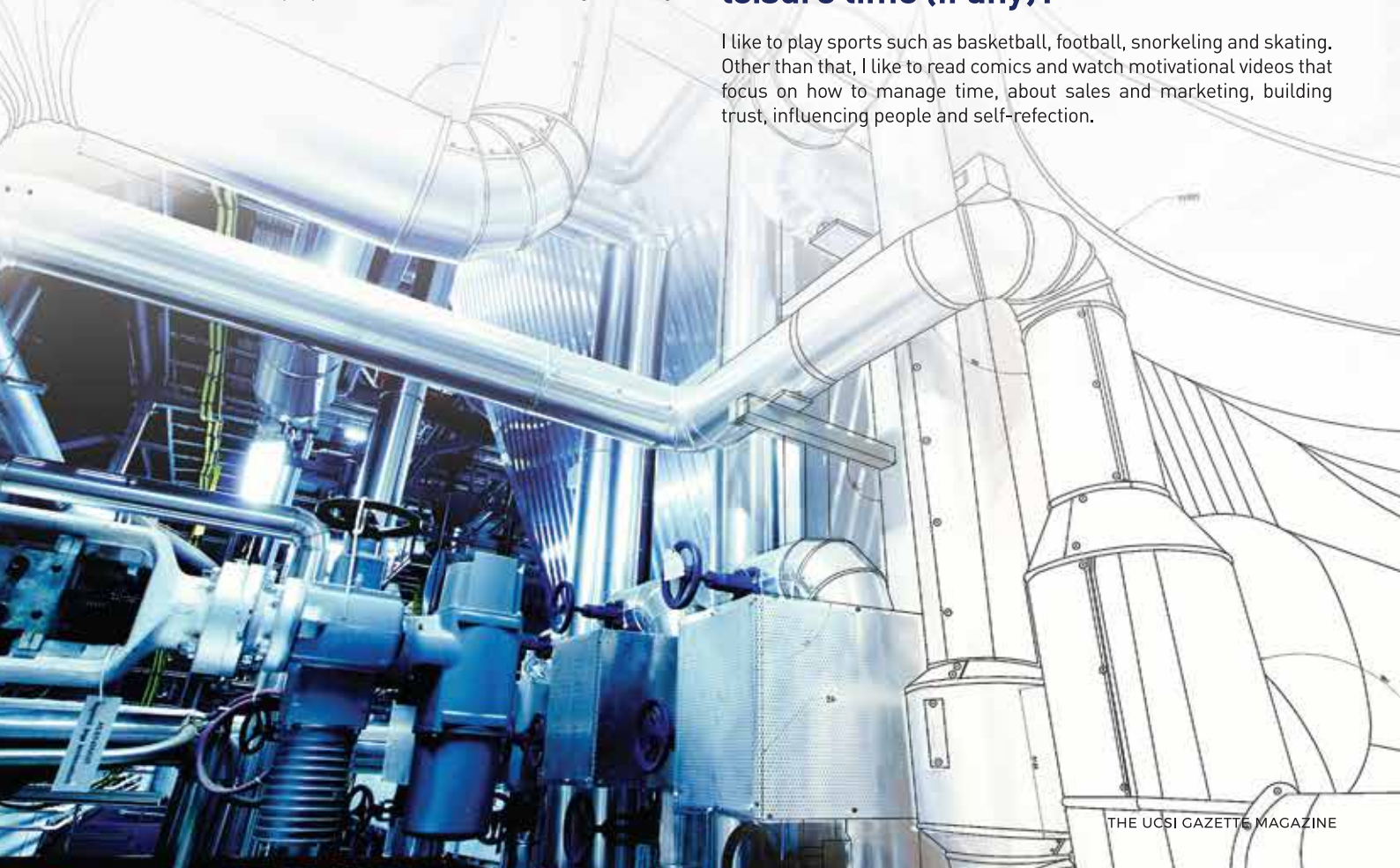
UCSI has given me a platform and opportunity to grow. You need to dare to take on new opportunities and challenges. I have learnt skills such as being more responsible, handling stress, time management and leadership.

What are some of the characteristics that one would need to succeed in this field?

Be passionate and innovative; not necessarily creative. Keep on trying and be strong at heart. Remember that innovation adds value to life.

Finally, what do you do during your leisure time (if any)?

I like to play sports such as basketball, football, snorkeling and skating. Other than that, I like to read comics and watch motivational videos that focus on how to manage time, about sales and marketing, building trust, influencing people and self-reflection.



Addressing Mental Health *By* MindFlu – Tan Sri Harmony Award 3rd Prize Winner



MindFlu Workshop 2018 conducted at UCSI College with students from government and International schools as well as refugees.

Mental health issues are prevalent in society today. With this rising problem among Malaysians, a group of students from UCSI University who call themselves 'MindFlu' won third prize in the Tan Sri Dr Omar Harmony Award for their project entitled "Addressing Mental Health Needs in Underserving Communities."

In their proposal, they stated that low income families are facing bigger health challenges particularly with regards to their mental well-being rather than just nutrition and physical function. This is because they live in poverty and cannot get proper medication or treatment.

For this project, MindFlu is targeting schools in rural Hulu Langat.

As the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 3, Target 3.4 states: "By 2030, decrease by 33% of untimely mortality from non-communicable illnesses through counteractive action and treatment and advance emotional wellness and prosperity", so Mindflu plans to lessen the shame and advance a positive picture of psychological welfare in light of the fact that emotional well-being is significant at each phase of life, from youth through adulthood.

Two of the members of MindFlu, Lew Li Ann and Federica Lorenza highlighted that this process started as early as 2017 where the first MindFlu Mental Well-being Workshop



Up close and personal with mental health professional, Dr Yasodha, a medical officer from Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah (HTAR), Klang.

was organised and attended by more than 50 students from secondary schools and UCSI University students.

"In the event, various activities were planned including simulation games to associate themselves with the people suffering from mental illness," Lorenza said.

During 13-15 November 2019, the MindFlu team set up a booth at the Lobby, Block A, UCSI University, KL campus for the people to experience mental illness particularly depression through a 4-minute video seen through Virtual Reality (VR) called Virtual Reality Video Experience.

"What we are doing here is raising awareness among the students about mental illness. We understand how stressful their studies can be, hence, the reason we conducted this VR session," Lew added.

Furthermore, MindFlu as a team hopes that their effort will enable Malaysians to have a better state of mind, reducing mental illness especially depression.



Towards A Better World *By* EcoBricks Initiative Z Tan Sri Omar Harmony Award Contestant



A group photo with the participants of the Train the Trainer Programme by Initiative Z.

Realising the importance of protecting the environment and securing Mother Earth from continuous harm caused by unattended plastic waste, Initiative Z, a zero-waste movement under the Youth Beyond Boundaries fraternity initiated their first environmental sustainability project called 'EcoBricks'.

According to Bryan Jee Choong Eu, acting team leader of Initiative Z, their commitment to turn UCSI University into a more sustainable campus should inspire others to do the same

for their community in overcoming environmental issues such as pollution.

"As plastic pollution is gaining more attention among society, instead of throwing all the non-recyclable plastic waste to the landfills, we thought it would be better to transform them into useful EcoBrick blocks," he said.

For starters, Initiative Z executed the first stage of their project by conducting a one-day hands-on workshop in collaboration with EcoBricks Malaysia called 'Train The Trainer Programme'.

The purpose was to teach the participants how to reuse plastic bottles to create EcoBricks blocks and to train them in becoming a qualified trainer themselves.

"From the workshop, we educated our participants on how to differentiate plastic items that can or cannot be recycled and how to create EcoBricks," Bryan added.

The plastic bottles were packed tightly with single use and non-recyclable plastic waste such as straws, food wrappers, department

store plastic bags, styrofoam, etc. By packing the plastic bottles with cleaned and dried plastic waste to a set density, they made suitable building blocks for constructing furniture such as sofas, coffee tables, chairs, etc.

EcoBricks, stuffed with all the non-recyclable plastic waste, can subsequently reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfills that could cause a negative impact to the ecosystem, and affecting humans and animals.

"So far through several workshops we have completed a total of 55 EcoBricks, which equivalent to 20kg of plastic waste and it is relatively a large amount as plastic is very light," said Bryan Jee.

Besides, Initiative Z will continue with their effort to build an EcoBricks corner in UCSI University that is expected to begin early next year. This corner will display furniture such as stools and coffee tables which are fully made of EcoBricks blocks.



The Mishap *By*

Tan Sri Dr Salleh Mohd Nor

UCSI University Council Member

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Birthday dinner with Aini.

It was a bright and sunny late Monday afternoon on 2 September 2019 (which was also Awal Muharram - a national holiday) when it began... the starting point of the excruciating pain on my ankle and lower leg, which led to weeks of frustration, limited mobility, and repeated medical check-ups. I was clearing my garden with the help of my good friend Hatta for hours since morning until I slipped unexpectedly over a large leaf right at the gate entrance, causing a twist on my right leg.

Upon examination at the clinic, the doctor who was my nephew-in-law, confirmed a fracture at the fibula. I was advised to visit the General Hospital Kuala Lumpur (GHKL) for a second opinion. In the midst of being rushed to the Emergency and Trauma Department of GHKL by my son Azhar (who is also a doctor), I called a friend who happens to work at the hospital for assistance.

I was immediately placed on a stretcher the moment we arrived (which was already at 7pm). Five X-ray examinations later, the doctor in charge instructed for my right leg to be placed in a plaster of Paris (POP). This was followed by four more X-ray examinations. Considering how late the evening was, I requested to be put in a ward for a night.

The swelling on my leg eventually reduced and the POP became loose a few days later but the pain worsened as I waited for another week to get the POP replaced. Finally, it was removed and replaced with a "backslap fibreglass" cast that was lighter but covered only the foot and the back of the leg. An X-ray was taken, which showed part of the ankle bone that had moved.

Unfortunately, the pain continued so my son decided to take me to see an orthopaedic surgeon at Prince Court Hospital who specialises in ankle injuries.

As a former government servant, all my medical expenses would have been covered by the government if I had gone to a government hospital but to have the operation done at a private hospital, I must have a referral letter. I requested such a letter from GHKL but no one was willing to give it.

Despite the challenge, I was eventually referred to a cardiologist who ran several tests to see if I was fit enough to go through the ankle operation. Upon passing the test, the operation was scheduled sometime in the middle of September. Two nights were spent in the ward upon the completion of the surgery, where a three-inch titanium plate was implanted into my femur.

Throughout my time at the ward, I had received a number of visitors that included HRH The Sultan of Terengganu, which was a real honour as well as my former classmates from Primary One at Tuanku Muhammad School, Kuala Pilah.

It had been a frustrating month with limited mobility and often pain in the ankle and lower leg. The confinement to bed allowed me to read although I did have the tendency to fall asleep while reading. Despite the struggle, I have managed to finish a couple of books, with three more to go. My free time was also spent watching movies and series on Netflix. More



My night at GHKL with my foot in POP (Plaster of Paris).



Birthday dinner with family at the Royal Lake Club.

importantly, the time and space for myself gave me the opportunity to reassess my own future and priorities in life, which encompassed my family, my true friends and myself.

It was also during this time, early in October to be exact, that I have managed to publish two books titled "FRIM: The Untold Story" and "Mount Everest: We Made It To The Peak" jointly with Aziz Afif Ishak and Farul Aidib Mahamad Yusof, which detailed their achievement in reaching the peak of Mount Everest in May 2016.

I am grateful to all my friends including UCSI University founder Dato' Peter Ng for their support as well as their well wishes and prayers. Not forgetting all the friends and family members from various states across Malaysia who had made the time to visit me at home. Most importantly, my recovery would not have been made possible without all the people who had been there for me, particularly my son for always being present, both my wives for their care and patience, as well as HRH The Sultan of Terengganu for paying his visit at the hospital. Junjung kasih Tuanku.

Finally, I am grateful to Allah for "testing" me with this accident. It literally was "God-sent". I realised the need to lead a new life upon full recovery, which I hope will happen soon. I learnt that one must remain positive in facing the challenges before us. At the time of writing, I am undergoing 10 sessions of physiotherapy. I am also beginning to put pressure on my right foot and look forward to walking normally again soon!

Bringing *Hope Alive* With 1973 Miles



1973 Miles ended with a huge round of applause.

The evening of 19 October 2019 was indeed a delightful one, especially for Hands of Hope Malaysia –co-founded by three UCSI alumni (Suzanne Ling, Lee Swee Lin and Kim Lim) under the UCSI Scholars Circle in 2014.

The project instils volunteerism among youth in reaching out to under-deserved communities – as well as the refugee community schools that have worked closely with them. Months were spent on turning 1973 Miles, a musical theatre showcasing a tale of tragedy yet resilience with a dollop of hope between two refugee brothers from conflict-torn Myanmar, into a huge success.

The event, which took place at Le Quadri Ballroom of UCSI College, began at 7pm with a choir performance by students of Ruth Education Centre, one of the beneficiaries of Hands of Hope.

Delivered in English, with few lines in Bahasa Malaysia, audience were brought first to the scene in Myanmar where two brothers – who are the main characters of the story – Matthew and Thomas (played by Chris and Thang Sang

respectively), were forced to leave their families following a military attack to a safe refuge.

The young boys were brought by human smugglers into the deep jungle of their homeland, before crossing the border into Thailand by foot and on wheels, and finally making their way towards Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Weaving together tales of hardship, hope and belonging, 1973 Miles – which was the fifth musical play organised by Hands of Hope – captivated the audience with its combination of humour, lively dancing and soulful singing.

The charity event was a success as RM34,460 was raised from the ticket sales and financial contributions were made by Dato' Lee Tian Hock from Matrix Concepts, Wong & Partners, and Kelvin Yong from Yong Family Charity Trust.

The proceeds were channelled to beneficiaries Ruth Education Centre and Matu Student Organization – both run by the Myanmar

refugee community. Currently, UCSI University students Yap Li Xuan (Bachelor of Science in Actuarial Science and Finance) is the president of Hands of Hope and Lee Jia Lynn (Bachelor of Science in Food Science with Nutrition) is the organising chairperson.

"Hands of Hope actually provides a volunteering platform for university students, where they volunteer as teachers to share their knowledge with underprivileged children. Currently, our focus group is the refugee children", said Li Xuan.

"Our ex-committee members also organised a charity musical night the previous year but this time around, there's more drama and music, added with some dance elements," quipped Jia Lynn.

For Li Xuan, everything came together at the last minute.

"Preparation for the event wasn't very smooth until the final rehearsal just before the event.



Most of the cast members were first-time performers.

The actors forgot their lines, what to do next and so on. We were quite worried to the point that we weren't able to eat anything but the night turned out really well. Everyone was so confident on stage and performed wonderfully!" she said.

"It took us eight months to prepare 1973 Miles. We started with drafting the script because the entire story was written by our committee members. And then we edited it. Many of the members from the programme team did not study drama; some of them come from the Engineering, IT and Biotechnology fields," shared Li Xuan.

According to Li Xuan, in spite of that, they were still able to write a great story and run the training and rehearsals among themselves.

"For the last few months, the performers had to be trained every weekend from morning until evening. It was quite a big effort. Most of the actors are first-timers, except for the main character, Matthew, but they were really confident and not afraid of crowds," said Li Xuan.

When asked what they plan to do with the funds, Jia Lynn said that the funds will be

channelled to a sponsor-a-child project, which is something like a scholarship where they receive the application from the school principals (of the eight refugee schools that partner with them) for those who can't afford the tuition fees. The applications would be screened before deciding how much sponsorship each person receives for their education. The sponsorship will be awarded to several children.

Actually, I didn't know that there was a community of refugees here at first. I used to think that they were all illegal workers. Working closely with them has been quite a touching experience for me and I have learnt a lot from them," said Li Xuan.

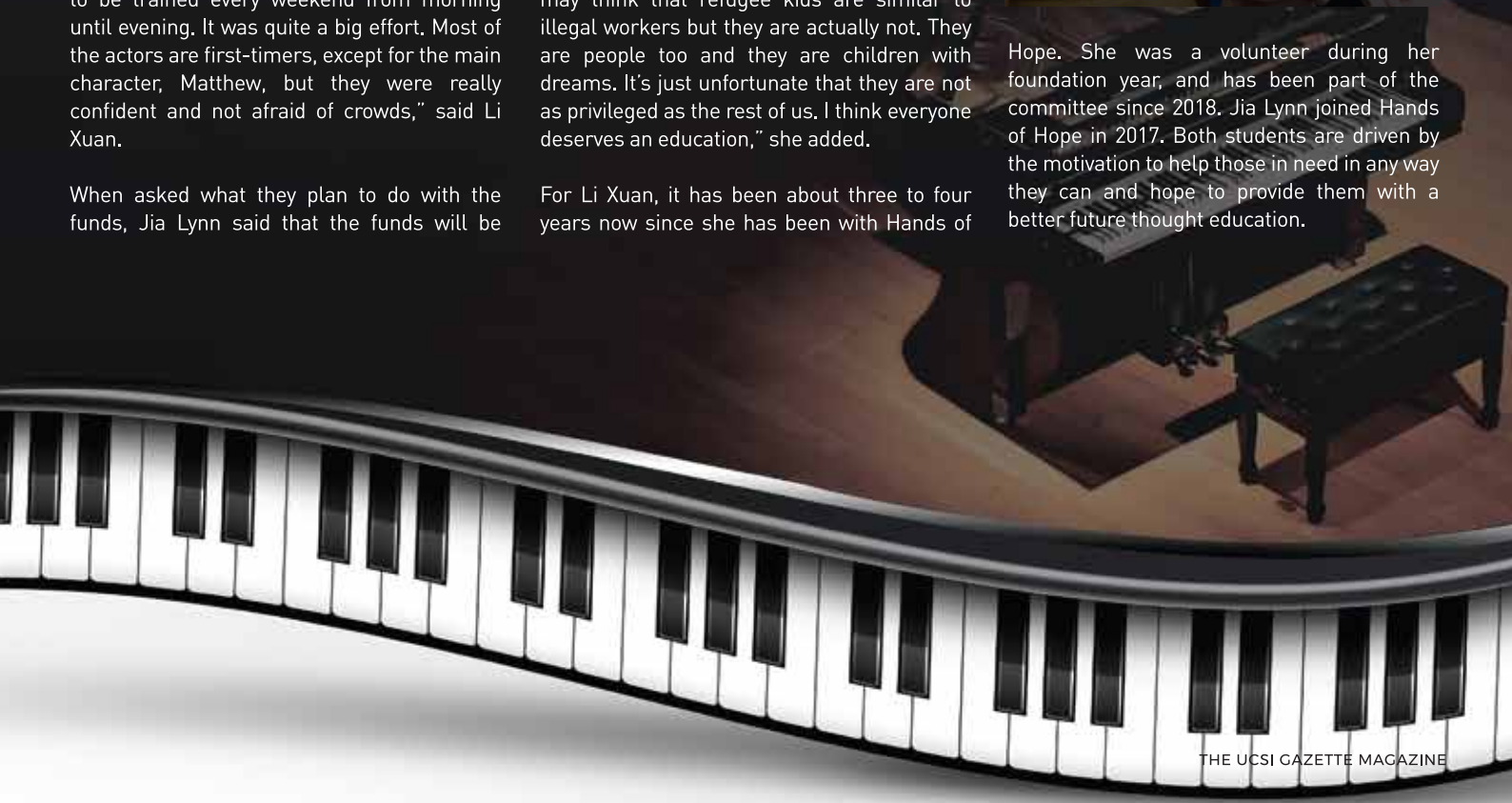
"Most of them want to work as doctors or singers just so they can make everyone happy or even help other communities. Some people may think that refugee kids are similar to illegal workers but they are actually not. They are people too and they are children with dreams. It's just unfortunate that they are not as privileged as the rest of us. I think everyone deserves an education," she added.

For Li Xuan, it has been about three to four years now since she has been with Hands of



President of Hands of Hope Yap Li Xuan (left) and Chairperson Lee Jia Lynn.

Hope. She was a volunteer during her foundation year, and has been part of the committee since 2018. Jia Lynn joined Hands of Hope in 2017. Both students are driven by the motivation to help those in need in any way they can and hope to provide them with a better future through education.



RCE KUCHING'S 5R SCHOOL CAMPAIGN



Introduction to the 5R Concept by RCE Youth Ambassadors.



The pre-questionnaire session.

First recognised as an RCE (Regional Centre of Expertise) by the United Nations University in September 2018, UCSI's Sarawak campus continues to champion the SDGs at the local level, impacting and empowering rural and urban communities in Malaysia's largest state.

In line with its tagline "Towards a Sustainable Future", RCE Kuching kick-started the 5R campaign with three schools along the Sarawak Kiri River to educate students regarding this 5R (Reduce, Refuse, Recycle, Reuse, Repurpose) concept.

The three schools were SMK Siburan, SK St Bernard and SK St Paul involving a total of 172 students. The centre expects to see the numbers growing as more schools have expressed interest to join the campaign next year.

The 5R campaign, led by UCSI University, was conducted in collaboration with various RCE Kuching stakeholders including Natural

Resources and Environment Board (NREB), WormingUp, JCI Kuching, G.A.M.E.S. PLT, Kuching Water Board, Kura-Kura Homestay, Sarawak River Board (SRB), schools and communities along the Padawan area.

The 5R campaign aims to educate youth and students to implement the 5R concept in their schools, homes and villages, in order to minimise the impact of pollution and dumping of waste into the rivers. The 5R sessions with the students are conducted once a month at their schools and the campaign comprises of three phases which include Phase I: Knowing phase (August 2019 - February 2020), Phase II: Doing phase (March 2020 - August 2020) and Phase III: Being phase (September 2020 - August 2021).



One of the recyclable inventions by SK St Paul (house sculpture).

Throughout the campaign, students will learn the concepts and benefits of 5Rs, resulting in mindset change (Phase I). It also will enable the students to do 5R activities in the schools, resulting in new sustainable habits (Phase II). Lastly, this project will also encourage the students to plan and do small 5R projects in their schools and homes, resulting in community impact (Phase III).

Since the first 5R session, the students have been encouraged to collect recyclable

materials such as newspapers, cans, bottles and other items, which is a good start towards inculcating proper habits of garbage disposal. The students who collected the largest volume of recyclable materials were awarded with 'RCE Badges' to encourage them to maintain their 5R efforts.

"Through this 5R campaign, I have had the opportunity to repurpose an empty bottle into a simple plant pot. I think I can do at least 10 more pots at home", said Eric, a student from SK St Bernard. He added that he was keen to have more 5Rs sessions and looked forward to meeting the team again next year.

"We are looking forward to having more 5R activities. We learnt so much through this 5R programme and we have started to collect recyclable materials at school and even at our home", said Michelle, a student from SK St Paul.

"Well done on the 2019 sessions organised under the 5R Campaign. I am very proud of how the RCE Kuching team has handled this.



One of the participants from SMK Siburan showing his work.



One of the recyclable inventions by SK St Paul (building sculpture).



Treasure hunt winners from SK St Bernard.

All sessions have been conducted with success! Certainly, it is satisfying to see the support we received from the school's management and the students were also very participative, engaging and cooperative. This is good news for us as we would want students to have fun while benefitting from this campaign", said Mukvinder Sandhu, RCE Kuching Vice Chairperson.

"Throughout this campaign, we have seen positive outcomes from the participating schools. The schools have designated specific areas for 5R efforts and this is good enough as a start towards a sustainable future", says Sherrymina Kichin, 5R School Campaign Chairperson.

Representatives of RCE Kuching strongly believe that proper implementation of the 5R concept starts with education. As such, students who live along the Sarawak Kiri River are urged to be proactively involved in river conservation efforts. It is hoped that this programme will engage more stakeholders in the future, particularly the youth, to raise the

sustainability literacy of the riverine community.

The August 5R Activities started with the introduction to the RCE Kuching team members and 'ice-breaking' sessions. Pre-questionnaires were also distributed to the students to determine their initial level of awareness on the 5R concept. There were also mini activities on 5R concept such as making "plant pots" and "greeting cards" from recyclable materials during the first session.

There was also a talk conducted by WormingUp, one of the RCE Kuching stakeholders at SMK Siburan. In addition, reusable bags sponsored by UCSI University were also distributed amongst the students to encourage them to stop the use of plastic bags in order to save the environment.

The September session aimed to introduce the concepts of "refuse" and "reduce" to the students. A few videos were shown to the students in order to raise 5R awareness amongst them. The students were also taught



5R designated area at SK St Paul, Bunuk Padawan.

on how to say no to plastic bags, straws and styrofoam containers or cups. The students who brought their own recyclable material during the session were also awarded with "RCE Badges".

In October 2019, RCE Kuching organised a treasure hunt for the participating schools. This treasure hunt aimed to introduce the concept of "reuse" to the students. The treasure hunt comprised of four (4) checkpoints: Checkpoint 1 – Jigsaw Puzzle, Checkpoint 2 – List down Reusable items, Checkpoint 3 – Word Search and Checkpoint 4 – Spot the Difference.

Each of the group was required to complete each checkpoint and the fastest group to complete the checkpoint was the winner. Small gifts were also awarded to the group winners as an appreciation for their efforts in this activity.



SK St Paul students solving their treasure hunt activity at one checkpoint.



5R designated area at SK St Bernard, Sadir Padawan.

Lee Bao En

BA (Hons) Fashion Design with Marketing, graduated 2016



What excites you most about your field (fashion)?

I like how fashion designers express their philosophies or ideas through their clothing. Their creativity is amazing and eventually we get to learn more about their background and can get inspiration from them.

What particular aspect of Fashion do you enjoy?

Fashion styling, I guess. I enjoy how people's styles reflect their personalities.

Your advice to UCSI students in the same field?

Studying fashion is not easy as there are many practical assignments and projects which need time to complete. Thus, it is important to keep your passion alive. This will allow you to be more satisfied and happy with your achievements whether in the future workplace or in your life as a whole.

Tell us about your work experiences.

Every year I have to travel to trade fairs in different countries in order to source for new suppliers. Sometimes I have to visit new factories for business development and site studying.

Where do you get your motivation from?

Take every challenge as an opportunity. Although there will be some hard times in your daily tasks or maybe in some important project, you will need to set your goals and figure out the solution to overcome it step-by-step. When the task is completed, you will have the sense of achievement which will motivate you to overcome other challenges.

How is your current position related to what you were studying in UCSI?

My current position is more on fashion marketing as my job requires me to source for new suppliers. So there is a lot of costing and analysis. However, strong product knowledge on fabrics is needed and I also need to know how to evaluate the workmanship of the garment which I have learned in the course of my studies.

What do you do in your leisure time?

I like listening to music and reading during my leisure time. Besides that, I like travelling because it keeps me inspired to learn from other cultures and lifestyles from different regions.

What made you choose your programme at UCSI?

The fashion business is not only related to fashion design, but also closely linked to fashion marketing. UCSI provides the Fashion Design with Marketing course where you can learn and figure out how the whole fashion industry works. Thus, students will have more selection when it comes to future career paths.

What are your future ambitions?

One of my future ambitions is to become an expert in the fashion industry and eventually take on a leadership role. Thus, I need to gain experience as much as I can at this stage.

How was your time at UCSI significant in your current success and the shaping of your future goals?

The knowledge and experience that I gained in terms of practical or theory in courses or during competitions has helped me a lot when I entered the work force. You can handle the job better as you have the basic knowledge about garments and apparel.

Where was the place you learnt the most or gained the most experience?

We keep learning new thing in different stages of our lives. However, to be specific, I am learning a lot from my current job as it provides opportunity for me to develop myself and explore my potential. From here I will know my strengths and weaknesses and eventually improve myself to achieve the next level.

Tell us about your experience studying at UCSI.

I took part in many competitions and attended a few fashion events. Sometimes, as my teammates and I needed to prepare for competitions, it took us a few months along with sleepless nights. However, it was worthwhile as we gained valuable experiences in our lives.

Did you know you were going to study this since young or was it something you discovered only later?

When I was young I liked to draw characters and design clothes for them. However, I did not know I was going to study fashion design until I started to read fashion magazines and watch fashion show videos during high school.

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