ONLINE EDUCATION SUPPORT AT UCSI UNIVERSITY

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused much disruption to almost every fibre of societies. Education is one of the sectors that has been impacted, with no current certainty on the extent of its impact.

UCSI University has over three decades of record in providing a quality higher education that adhered to, and sometimes, supersedes the requirements of the regulatory quality agency and other professional bodies.

THE MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER

In the wake of the recent Movement Control Order (MCO), flexibility in learning while ensuring standards and accountability has become a priority for the University. UCSI University began fully transitioning towards online teaching and learning in mid-March by using the University's Learning Management System – CourseNetworking (CN) System, which has been in existence since 2017. Added tools like Microsoft Teams, Classcast, Zoom or Skype are also used as supplements to enhance the delivery system for a creative and effective teaching method.

ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORM

The CN, a cloud-based online learning platform used by numerous universities around the world, has a lot of useful features to support students remote learning, including the platform for lecturers to conduct real-time online classes or discussion and interactive session and for recording and class management. It has been a great tool for UCSI although Blended Learning (Classroom + Online) has been a practice at the university for over 10 years now.

Teaching online is not a problem because a majority of the University lecturers have been giving online lessons in the past. Online meetings were immediately conducted with programme directors and teaching staff to share experiences, rectify common mistakes and improve pain points along the way.

BEAUTY OF ONLINE LEARNING

Among the significant improvement of conducting online lessons include a higher attendance among students, improved punctuality and more participation among students in the question and answer session. Generally, the feedback from students were well received, according to a poll conducted. Other features that enhance this learning experience include the ability to watch recorded lectures at a later time, and the reinforcement through sharing of outcomes and follow-up readings.

In the bid to maintain social distancing, the University has adopted all the necessary measures and fully abides by the guidelines set by the Education Ministry and other professional bodies. After much discussion, the University made the decision to switch to online assessments and examination in the mid of April to ensure students' learning journey is not disrupted.

FULL ONLINE EXTENDED?

In the coming May 2020 Semester, with the current uncertainty of the extent of the MCO should it continues, the University braces itself for the possibility of having a full online lessons for the first month or so. These are unique and challenging circumstances for us all. However, we are working diligently and passionately to ensure that all our students receive an excellent online teaching and learning experience with the teaching staff and infrastructure support that they would expect from us. For courses with labs, studios, and other practical sessions, online or remote arrangements may be put in place or some may be postponed to later semesters.

A UNIVERSITY WELL PREPARED FOR NEXT

UCSI University will continue to live out its core purpose; to promote transformative education that empowers students from all walks of life to be successful individuals with integrity, professionalism and a desire to contribute to society. A new normal in education delivery may emerge hereafter. The blended learning may take a central stage and more lecturers and students will find the joy of flexibility and freedom in learning.

Staying united, and being "conditioned" together to innovate and change the mode of teaching and learning through times of crisis like this has been our biggest achievement in assimilating our community to the globalised online environment of the future.

Associate Professor Ir. Dr Jimmy Mok Vee Hoong
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Student and Alumni Affairs