

THE UCSI GAZETTE

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

UCSI'S SDG WEEK 2018

*Together,
We Shape The Future*

VOLUME 17



UCSI Education Sdn Bhd (185479-U)
ISSN: 2590-3616 • KDN:PQPP18824/08/2015(034277)

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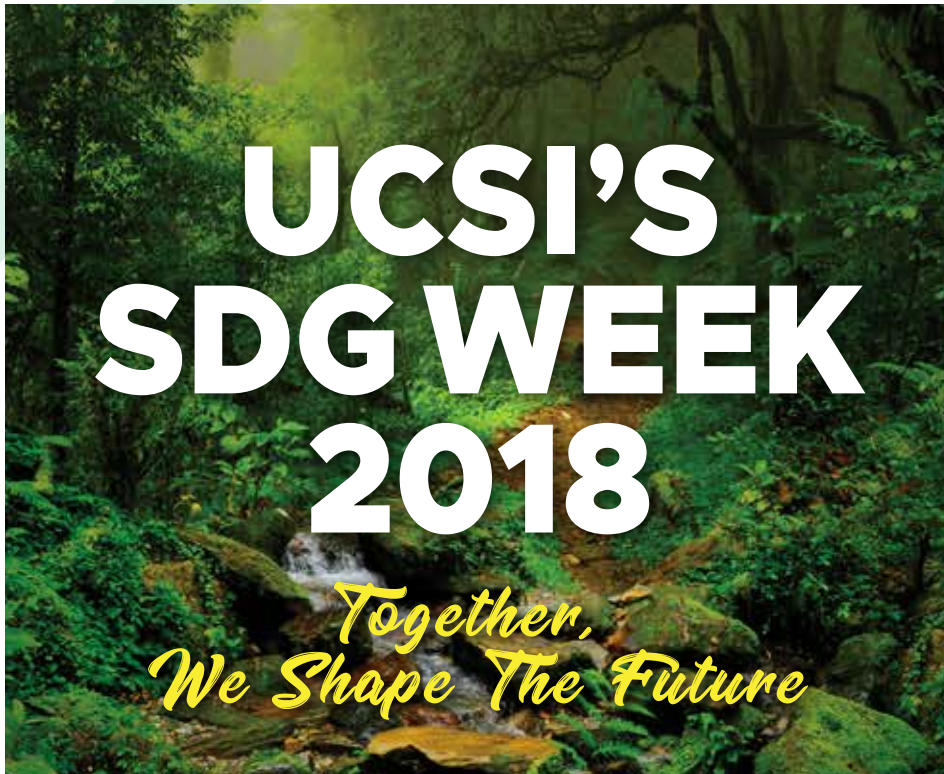
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COVER STORY: UCSI'S SDG WEEK 2018
Together, We Shape The Future



Dr Ong's UCSI University Homecoming



UCSI University's 31st Convocation Ceremony: Reaching new frontiers



While I was in Vancouver



Academic Spotlight
Professor Dr Mohd Tajuddin

DR ONG'S UCSI UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING

Homecomings are a time of great joy and Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Dr Ong Kian Ming savoured that on his recent return to UCSI University, his old place of employment before swapping academia for the political arena.

In fact, one would be forgiven for mistaking him for a rock star, given the rousing welcome he received from students and staff.

At UCSI to close the Strengthening Industry-Academia Partnership (SIAP) conference, Dr Ong used his time at the rostrum to engage the university community, encouraging students to be the change they were seeking for.

“As the DNA of UCSI University, students should use every opportunity to develop the necessary skills to contribute, not only to future employers, but to society” he said in his speech.

“There is great hope in a new Malaysia and all of you are at the right place, with good mentors and dedicated lecturers. Master the basics, be prepared to do your best and develop relationships with friends that will help you inculcate good values that come from the heart as well as the head.”

Referring to the moral compass, Dr Ong also urged students against taking shortcuts that blurred the lines of morality.

“Resist the temptation to cut corners or accept bribes in the workplace,” he continued. “If you can’t say no to RM500, it’ll be very hard when the number rises to RM5,000 or RM50,000.”

“These temptations start small but they get bigger over time. Having a firm stand and not taking the first step is crucial.”

Apart from serving as an academic who specialised in economics and public policy, Dr Ong was also a regional consultant for UCSI Blue Ocean Strategy Consulting.

Retracing his footsteps, Dr Ong said that he had many fond memories at UCSI and the successful hosting of the inaugural Malaysian Public Policy Competition in 2011 was one such highlight.

Dr Ong added that his time at UCSI gave him a glimpse of the challenges one would face in dealing with the government, especially when his team was trying to launch a Master of Public Policy programme.

Many of those challenges, he said, remained and he looked forward to playing his part to bring about positive changes.

UCSI Group founder and CEO Dato’ Peter Ng was among UCSI’s top brass to welcome Dr Ong and he spoke glowingly about the newly minted deputy minister.

“It was clear back in the day that Dr Ong was full of idealism and certainty that Malaysia could be a better place,” said Ng. “As an academic, Dr Ong enjoyed avenues to voice his opinions.

“But he did not stop there. He could not. And he stepped forward to be the change he was looking

for, following his convictions to represent the people of Serdang, and later, Bangi.

“Congratulations, Dr Ong. You started out giving your best to students and the academic fraternity. Today, you give your best to Malaysia and its rakyat. UCSI could not lose you to a higher – or worthier – calling.”

Ng proceeded to encourage Dr Ong to continue giving his all to Malaysia, assuring that the UCSI family would always be behind him.

A homecoming cake was then wheeled out as a surprise, proving that sometimes, one can have their cake and eat it – literally.



▲ (from left to right) Ng along with Dr Ong and UCSI University’s Vice-Chancellor and President, Senior Professor Dato’ Dr Khalid Yusoff.





THE SIAP CONFERENCE

▲ Speakers in the second session on the palm oil industry.

“We need to create a national platform for research; we need to develop niche technologies and R & D; nurturing young minds and having a continuous flow of expertise.”

These were the sentiments of UCSI’s Faculty of Engineering, Technology and Built Environment Professor and Academy of Sciences Fellow, Professor Dato’ Dr Ahmad Ibrahim on the topic of the rubber industry at the Strengthening Industry Academia Partnership (SIAP) conference held at UCSI University.

The conference was an avenue in which current market and technological issues in the Malaysian rubber and palm oil industries, and Malaysian rubber and palm oil in the context of sustainability and Industry 4.0 were discussed.

On the topic of sustainability of the rubber industry, Professor Ahmad emphasised that this means being profitable, suitable and beneficial to the people. The challenge is how to generate technology so that Malaysia will be the world’s largest producer of rubber-based products.

“Rubber wood, for instance, is a huge industry which provides employment, but how do we sustain Malaysia in continuing to benefit from this industry?” he posed.

The moderator for the session on rubber was Kossan Rubber Industries Bhd Technical Advisor, Dato’ Dr Ong Eng Long. In his talk, he also asked the question of whether the rubber industry in Malaysia is ready for IR 4.0. He agreed that R & D is important to support the rubber industry while the development of more industrial rubber products for the world market is needed while also venturing into ICT.

Other panelists included Tun Abdul Razak Research Centre, Malaysian Rubber Board’s Dato’ Dr Kamarudin Ab Malek and Malaysian Rubber Board Former Director General, Dato’ Dr Kamarul Baharain Basir.

Overall, in 2017, it was seen that natural rubber and rubber-based exports increased by 30.2% while palm oil exports enjoyed a 14.6% growth. Rubber and palm oil are not only produced for agricultural purposes but also for many downstream and manufacturing businesses like oleochemical products and pharmaceuticals among others.

However, growing environmental concerns and policy shifts in global markets present challenges for Malaysia’s agricultural industry - European Union lawmakers are supporting a motion to ban the use of palm oil in biofuels but this has been postponed till 2020.

The session on Palm Oil was moderated by Malaysian Palm Oil Council Former CEO, Tan Sri Dr Yusof Basiron. The panelists were Malaysian Palm Oil Council Science and Environment Division Director Dr Ruslan Abdullah, Malaysian Palm Oil Board Research and Development Deputy Director General Dr Ahmad Parveez Ghulam Kadir and Institute of Agricultural and Food Policy Studies Senior Research Fellow Professor Datin Paduka Dr Fatimah Mohamed Arshad.

According to Dr Ruslan, “Currently, Malaysia produces 32% of global palm oil while three million Malaysians are dependent on the palm oil industry.”

He also noted that The EU Resolution supports a fully sustainable palm oil supply chain by 2020

and an end to illegal deforestation by 2020 which have a positive impact on Malaysian palm oil.

According to Dr Ruslan, this will improve our narrative so as to paint the right image and provide correct information on Malaysian palm oil and it will improve strategy to educate consumers on uses and health benefits of Malaysian palm oil.

It will also bring about the need to look at new markets for Malaysian palm oil; bringing about a sense of urgency on sustainability practices and the unification of world’s palm oil producers (indirectly benefiting harmonisation of standards, sustainable practices, better price control, etc.).

Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry, Dr Ong Kian Ming, was present to give the closing remarks for the conference. He emphasised that in an age where technology is geared towards electronics, one should be mindful of sustainable living and production, especially in terms of rubber and palm oil.

Dr Ong also spoke about the May 9th General Elections and how there was a “peaceful transition in government” following the elections and how he was appointed as Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry on 2nd July, 2018.

Overall the SIAP Conference served as a successful sharing platform on the plantation industry in Malaysia in the hopes of strengthening the bond between academia and the industry while producing graduates who are empowered to shape the future and at the same time are value driven, entrepreneurial and industrial savvy.

UCSI UNIVERSITY'S 31ST CONVOCATION CEREMONY: REACHING NEW FRONTIERS



▲ A group photo of graduates.

UCSI University's Star Trek students headlined the varsity's 31st convocation ceremony by sharing their experiences on how their UCSI education prepared them for cutting-edge science at the world's best research hubs.

Representing the Class of 2018 as the Chancellors Gold Medal Award recipient and valedictorian, respectively, Cherish Chong Chiu Wern and Gary Poh Kwor Xiang took turns to address the capacity crowds over a two-day ceremony that saw 2,445 graduates receiving their scrolls.

Taking turns on stage, their speeches were a fitting recap of their shared experiences at UCSI. And while many nodded in affirmation to Cherish's speech, the loudest cheers went Gary's way for his self-deprecating humour and honesty.

"If you told me six years ago that I'd be standing on this stage as valedictorian, I wouldn't believe you," said Gary, a self-confessed late bloomer. "My grades were just average or worse and I barely made it to Form Six.

"Back in high school, you wouldn't think much of me. You wouldn't want me in your study group. And you certainly wouldn't want me as your lab partner, handling a Bunsen burner. I'd overheat many solutions and for all you know, I might even burn you."

Gary's turnaround in life started in Form Six when his Chemistry teacher, Wong Phaik Har, mentored him and pushed him to do better. He did and this

earned him a scholarship at UCSI where he read chemical engineering. The rest is history.

"At UCSI, I had many lecturers who motivated me constantly," he added. "I took my interest in science to the next level and I up-sized my ambitions by trying my hand at UCSI's Star Trek programme. I wanted to be selected by Imperial College London for research and I will never forget my excitement when I earned the golden ticket."

At Imperial, Gary contributed to a pertinent nanorobotics research project by working on silicon nanoparticles. Manipulating various conditions like temperature, chemical additives and stirring rate, Gary sought to fit more nanoparticles on a fixed surface area.

Doing so was crucial as this would improve the drug loads nanorobots could carry, enhancing their delivery of precision medicine as they targeted specific cells in the body, leaving healthy cells unharmed. This, said Gary, would be a game-changing innovation in cancer treatment and chemotherapy could, one day, be a thing of the past.

Not stopping there, Gary also worked to reduce process times and increase production yield in the pharmaceutical industry through heterogeneous protein crystallisation research.

In his element, Gary provided another decibel-raising ovation when he thanked his girlfriend, Tan Yee Huan, for being an ever-present source of inspiration.

"Thank you for always being by my side throughout my studies and being my biggest motivator," he gushed. "I've experienced so many wonderful moments at UCSI but meeting you here and starting our journey together, is truly special."

Of course, he also thanked his family, UCSI, his lecturers and his friends for contributing to his incredible reversal in fortunes.

Selected by Harvard University for a year-long intercalated research programme in 2014, Cherish made a breakthrough in endocrinology when her research showed that mineralocorticoid receptors



▲ VALEDICTORIAN SPEECH: Gary thanking his family, UCSI, his lecturers, friends and girlfriend for inspiring him during his valedictorian speech.

in the adrenal glands regulate both aldosterone and corticosterone hormones.

Her findings were pertinent as aldosterone regulates blood pressure through sodium conservation, while corticosterone regulates energy, immune reactions and stress responses. They also refined conventional understanding of adrenal gland functions and their impact on hormonal regulation.

“My years at UCSI taught me the virtue of discipline and how important it was to step outside my comfort zone in order to achieve,” said Cherish, who is also a JPA scholar. “I learnt so much here, first during my A-Levels and later, as a medical student.

“Looking back, UCSI got me ready, not only for a life-changing year at Harvard, but to contribute to endocrine research. I’ll never forget how UCSI went out of its way to prepare me for this invaluable opportunity through extra lab classes and advice.”

Providing insights on life at Harvard, Cherish admitted that her first five months were testing. Everything was tough, positive results were hard to come by and she even let a lab rat escape with its chest half open due to a lack of anesthesia. “After the rat pulled a fast one on me, I began asking: Am I good enough?” she continued. “But thanks to my grounding at UCSI, I knuckled down and accepted that my learning curve at Harvard was not something to be rushed.

“I learnt how to enjoy the process, the pressure eased and the results began to come naturally.”

Cherish even anaesthetised better and she would go on to conduct successful tests on more than 200 lab rats en route to arriving at her research findings. Her work was commended by her research supervisors and she was the principal author of a paper that was published in the *Journal of Endocrinology* – the top basic science journal dedicated to the discipline.

The impact of Cherish’s contributions made the arrangement an annual affair and six more students have been chosen by Harvard. More importantly, her pioneering experience formalised UCSI’s Star Trek programme – an initiative that sees the world’s best universities selecting UCSI students for various research programmes each year.



▲ **GOLDEN GIRL:** Cherish’s (middle) gold medal received no end of attention from her family.



▲ **UCSI University’s Chancellor, Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Abdul Rahman Arshad giving his speech at the convocation ceremony.**

Apart from Harvard and Imperial, many UCSI students have gone on to write some history of their own at the University of Chicago, Tsinghua, the University of Queensland and Nihon Pharmaceutical University, among others.

Cherish’s and Gary’s accounts served as a microcosm of the shared narrative that day – one that manifested the power of education. This was probably best summed up by Gary’s rousing refrain.

“A UCSI education prepares us for life at the forefront of change and knowledge,” he said. “Not merely following, but leading. Not just watching, but doing. Right here, right now. So be encouraged and never forget that all of us can live a life of consequence.”



▲ **Graduands feel a sense of achievement.**

Happy Graduation





▲ Senior Professor Khalid receiving the certificate of accreditation from CEO of FAA, Khairul Nizam.

UCSI UNIVERSITY'S FINANCE AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMME FULLY ACCREDITED BY FAA



▲ (from left to right) UCSI University's Faculty of Business and Information Science Assistant Professor Frankie Goh, Deputy Dean Associate Professor Dr Ganeshsree Selvachandran, Dean Professor Dr Ooi Keng Boon, School of Information Technology head Chit Su Mon and Head of Department of Accounting and Finance Radha Nair.



▲ Senior Professor Khalid (middle) with other certificate recipients at the ceremony.

UCSI University's Faculty of Business and Information Science recently received full accreditation by the Finance Accreditation Agency for its Bachelor of Science (Hons) Finance and Investment programme.

The certification ceremony was held at Bank Negara on the 3rd of July where UCSI University's recognition by FAA pushed further its excellence in the finance and investment-related field benchmarking its curriculum against international learning standards.

The accreditation not only serves as an encouragement but also a motivation to improve outcomes for students, professionals and ultimately the financial industry in Malaysia.

It increases the knowledge and skill base of personnel in the financial services industry, provides a learning pathway for personnel in the industry, provides regional and international recognition of learning initiatives and provides a recognition of quality to the training provider.

In his speech at the certification ceremony, UCSI University's Vice-Chancellor and President, Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff said that, "The FAA learning standards are comprehensive and far-reaching. By aligning ourselves with FAA practices, benchmarks and regulations, UCSI will provide students from over 110 nations with credibility, excellence and assurance that their education is future-proof."

The Finance Accreditation Agency FAA is an independent quality assurance and accreditation body supported by Bank Negara Malaysia (Central Bank of Malaysia) and the Securities Commission Malaysia.

The work of FAA includes quality assurance, competency benchmarking and capacity building programmes and it is responsible for raising the standards and quality of professional learning and development in the financial services industry.

According to Khairul Nizam, CEO of FAA, "We are in the business of developing and strengthening the support for financial industries worldwide. Over the month, we have refined our ideas for FAA to serve clients better."

To date, UCSI University's Faculty of Business and Information Science has the highest number of students in the University and offers the highest number of courses. The Faculty believes in producing graduates who will hit the ground running when they enter the working world.

Overall, the added FAA focus in the programmes will give UCSI University students an edge in the job market as they take on crucial roles in the financial sector.

WHILE I WAS IN VANCOUVER...

by Ang Yeaw Lee

Hiking with my Canadian and Singaporean friends. ▶



▶ A tour of Biopharmaceutical Research Inc. (BRI).



▶ Class photo of my course mates and I in the University of British Columbia.



▶ Photo taken at the Museum of Anthropology.



▶ Photo taken at the Garibaldi Lake, British Columbia.



▶ The computer lab in UBC.



▶ Photo taken at the Aquarium of Vancouver.

Thank you to UCSI University for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Vancouver Summer Programme in University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada from 15th July to 15th August 2017.

The Vancouver Summer Programme is an annual intensive four-week academic programme offered by various faculties at UBC for cohorts of students from cooperating universities all over the world. I enrolled in two courses: Discovery of New Medicines, and Personalising Medicines with Genomics and Biotechnology, which consisted of a total of 78 contact hours.

The courses were taught by Dr Harvey Wong and Dr Corey Nislow from the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences and guest lecturers from the biotechnology industry. I was evaluated through four exams, two presentations and participation during the lectures.

On 31st July 2017, our class attended a tour of the Biopharmaceutical Research Inc. (BRI) facilities led by

Dr David Kwok. BRI is a very specialised organisation contributing to clinical, pre-clinical and discovery innovations to pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.

We also paid a visit to the laboratory facilities of UBC and learned about the procedure to run the advanced equipment.

Apart from academics, I learned about Canadian culture and society. The faculty offered a free tour to the Museum of Anthropology to study the history and culture of Canada. I felt extremely lucky to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canada with Canadians while watching the comedy show "Oh, Canada - The True North Strong and Funny" by the Theatre Sports in Granville Island.

Using the public transport system in Vancouver was very convenient and efficient. Certainly, I never wasted a chance to look around the city, which was rated as the best city in terms of quality of living! I had many memorable experiences while abroad, from

watching fireworks competition by the English Bay, enjoying the morning walks in The Butchart Garden of Victoria Island, singing along with my international friends while enjoying the view of Bowen Island, taking a gondola from peak to peak in Whistler, to an intense 21km hiking experience at Garibaldi.

Through this programme, I learnt to strengthen my soft skills. This was the first time I have flown 16 hours away from Malaysia, alone, to a foreign country. The solitary journey required a lot of patience, courage, discipline and communication skills.

Fortunately, the locals were friendly and helpful, and I could talk to them freely despite cultural barriers. I would definitely encourage my juniors to join the annual Vancouver Summer Programme in the future if there is a chance to do so!



▲ Eager UCSI students registering for the talk on cybersecurity.

TALK ON CYBERSECURITY

“Cybercrime today is out of control. We need to understand the human side of cybersecurity.” These were the words of Florence Mwangabi, Lecturer in Information Technology at Murdoch University, Singapore in her talk on cybersecurity at UCSI University recently.

Having obtained a PhD in Information Security, the aim of Mwangabi’s talk on cybersecurity was to emphasise how important it is to know about this field and the opportunities in it as a career.

Cybersecurity includes technologies used to protect information assets and mostly, she said, cyber attackers use human weakness. These consist of unsophisticated attacks, state sponsored attacks and advanced persistent threats.

The challenges for cybersecurity are in terms of communication, network, information, application and physical security. In Asia Pacific, 45% of security incidents occur through phishing, one third occurs through mobile devices and 30% through exploitation of employees.

According to Mwangabi, the number one method of attacks is socially engineered malware followed by password phishing attacks. An interesting fact she brought up was that the first computer virus attack was on an Apple computer rather than a Windows PC.

In terms of human weakness, 63% involves the human factor. Most cybercrimes originate from the surface web, the deep web and the dark

web. Some facts about the dark web are that this is where cybercrime usually occurs. Students use it for research; it is legal; organisations use it for cyber intelligence and, interestingly, it is used for research and education.

She went on to say that the problem with passwords is that we know its weakness but still allow it. For instance, one of the most common passwords is 123456. Safeguards such as vulnerability and threat assessments are top priority as well as advanced authentication systems skills such as pen testing and coding.

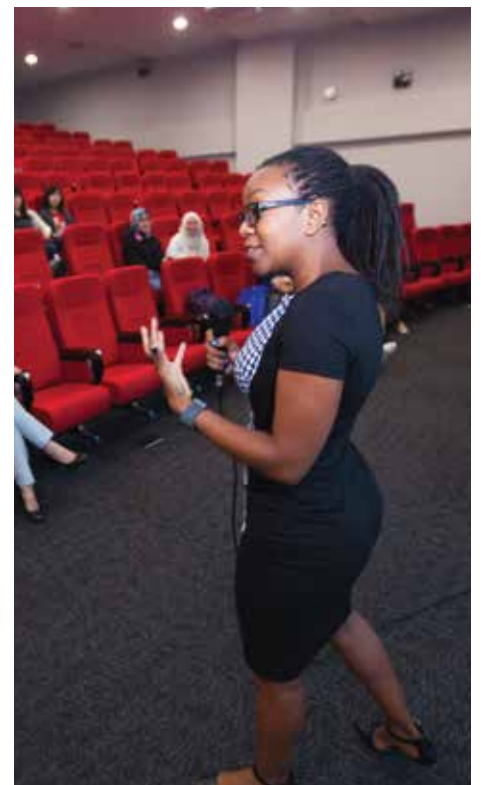
As far as job prospects are concerned, Mwangabi said there is a shortage in this industry. The most difficult careers are penetration testers and cybersecurity engineers. Moreover, a variety of skills are needed while careers in this field are the most sought after in the world.

Mwangabi’s research interest includes usability of password authentication systems, understanding the semantics of user-generated passwords, cross-cultural considerations in information security research and end-user security.

Mwangabi’s talk was an enlightening one as she disclosed a lot of information about cybersecurity and cyber-attacks not commonly known. She brought to the talk a fresh perspective on cybersecurity trends in Asia while dispelling many myths about the industry.



▲ Mwangabi receiving a token of appreciation from School Of Information Technology head, Chit Su Mon.



▲ Mwangabi engaging the audience.



▶ The panel of speakers (from left to right) Professor Leong, Isaac, Ko and Dr Nurhidayah as moderator.



▶ A group photo of the participants at the end of the Forum.

▶ The audience listening to the speakers at the Forum.



Opening speech by IEEE UCSI University Student Branch Chairman and Forum organising chairperson, Harry Hoon Jian Wen.



UCSI UNIVERSITY'S FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION SMART CITY FORUM

According to Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, we stand on the brink of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another. In its scale, scope, and complexity, the transformation will be unlike anything humankind has experienced before.

Schwab says that we do not yet know just how it will unfold, but one thing is clear: the response to it must be integrated and comprehensive, involving all stakeholders of the global polity, from the public and private sectors to academia and civil society.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution Smart City Forum was co-organised by the IEEE-HKN Mu Alpha Chapter, the IEEE UCSI University Student Branch, the IEEE RAS Malaysia Chapter, IET On-Campus UCSI University and the Information Technology Student Association (ITSA).

Founder and CEO of Plus Solar Systems Sdn Bhd, Ko Chuan Zhen, talked about the importance of renewable energy sources and the vital roles they play in reducing the environmental footprint of conventional energy generation methods which focused mainly on fossil fuels.

He also discussed the challenges and opportunities of incorporating the Fourth Industrial Revolution into the renewable energy sector using the synergy of artificial intelligence, big data analysis and Internet of Things.

This was to allow better prediction and control,

thus leading to cost savings and higher energy efficiencies enabling the formation of the smart grid which can then be decarbonised, decentralised and digitalised.

It is predicted that the zone of grid parity is already on the horizon, when the levelised cost of electricity generation from photovoltaic technologies (solar energy) is more affordable than that of fossil fuels.

Fusionex International Senior Vice President, Jacob Issac reminded us that the World Health Organisation (WHO) predicts 60% of the population will live in cities by 2030.

Issac is very much convinced that we are ready for this change in how we live, and believes that the rise of smart cities is not a matter of choice, but rather it is just a matter of time before they sweep across urbanised areas.

Smarter machines with better data processing capabilities will be implemented to bring deep insights into this load of information like never before, yielding predictions that can detect abnormalities and prevent unwanted events before they happen.

The "pillars" of Industry 4.0, like cloud computing, augmented reality, big data, Internet of Things and cyber-security, will stand firm to support the rise of smart cities, and we must invest our resources into these fields today or we will be left behind.

Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) Malaysia Vice Chairperson, Professor Ir Dr Leong Wai Yie urged us to observe our surroundings

and to be aware of the amount of data that is traversing the air today.

For instance, there were more than two billion people connected to the Internet by the end of 2011; 200 million smart metres by 2014 and today we have 4.6 billion camera phones worldwide. Twitter has received over 12 TB of tweet data every day while Facebook logs 25 TB of data daily.

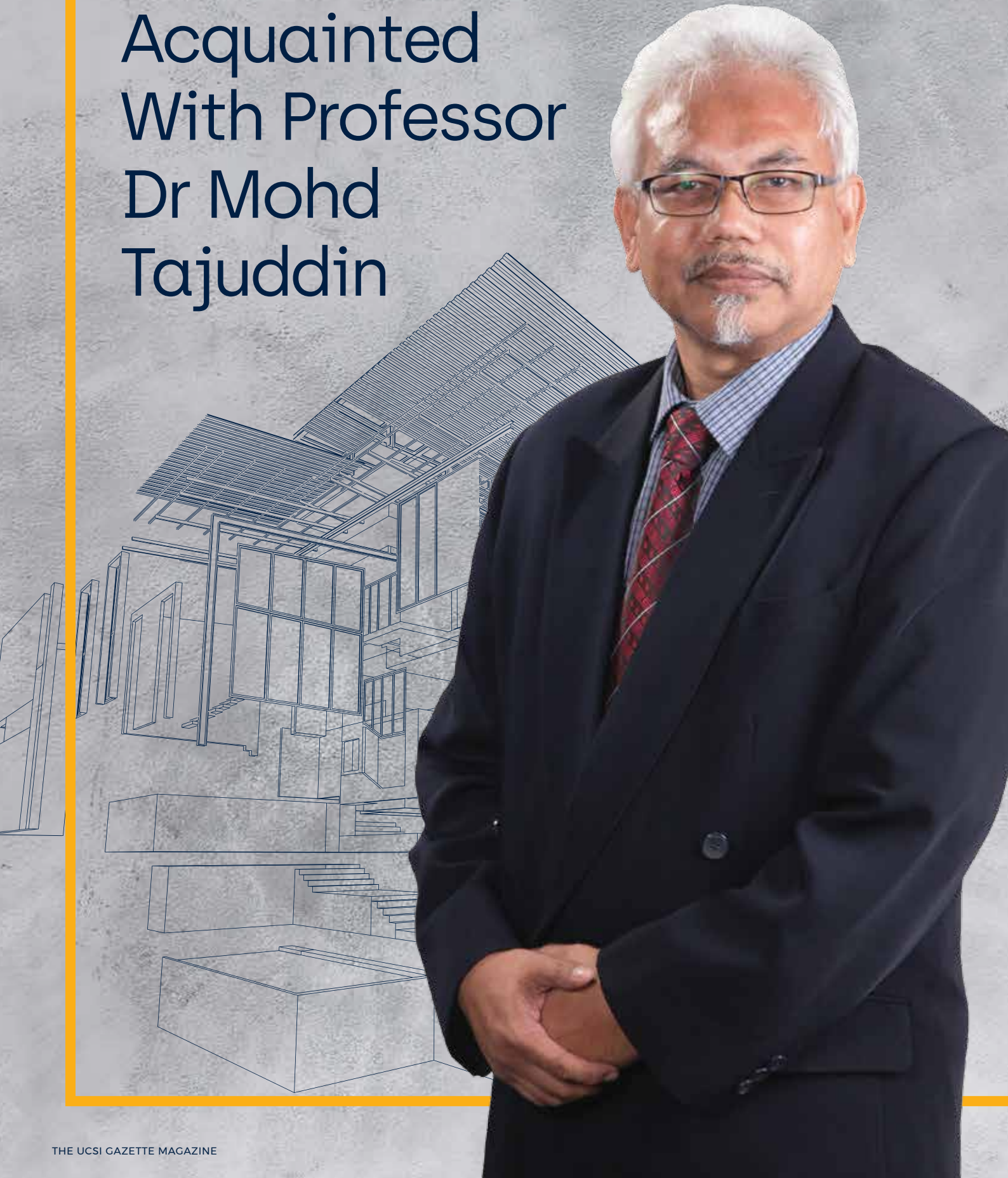
UCSI University's School of Information Technology Assistant Professor Dr Nurhidayah Bahar took on the role of the moderator for the Forum.

Among the concerns were of cyber-security and data privacy, the imminent change of lifestyles and the readiness of Malaysians to embrace this trend. Ko agreed that the technologies brought by Industry 4.0 will act like a knife, the results will be dependent on how we use it and what our intentions are.

Issac was of the opinion that Malaysians have the technological capabilities needed but have restrained themselves with the mind set of "letting someone else take the first step first" instead of pioneering in the field to be "on the safe side". He also believed that the most important skill one must acquire in this era is the skill to constantly adapt and learn.

Professor Leong urged that the academia and industry should have better initiatives to narrow the gap in terms of resources and knowledge from research and development to accelerate advancement in this area.

Getting Acquainted With Professor Dr Mohd Tajuddin



Professor Dr Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi, Professor in the School Of Architecture and Built Environment reveals what Architecture means to him.

Prof Tajuddin, what made you choose Architecture, particularly Islamic Architecture, as a field?

I chose architecture because I loved drawing and making robots and spaceships out of small cheap plastic lego-like bricks. I did not really have a clear idea of what architecture was except that architects design big, beautiful and complex buildings. With respect to Islamic Architecture as my special field of study, I chose it because I actually discovered Islam in the US! In the US, I was free from cultural and political boxes of religion. The Islam I discovered in my personal readings of the Prophet Muhammad was contrary to common notions of the religion. Thus, the Malaysian mosque design seemed wrong when I looked at it from this fresh perspective.

What was your inspiration?

While my friends spent their time travelling and having fun, I was usually holed up in my room reading about religion. One student introduced me to the writings of Abul A'la Maududi, a religious scholar in India and leader of a large Islamic Party. His books made me understand the social and political aspects of Islam clearly. While doing my drawings and drafting, I would listen to hundreds of religious lectures by Abdul Hadi Awang.

How did you put the two together (Islam and architecture)?

I discovered that the mosque and many so-called Islamic architectural buildings were not what they seemed. They were false because these buildings were designed from a cultural and historiographical understanding of the subject matter. I wanted to continue my search for true Islamic architecture based on the values of Prophet Muhammad.

What are your thoughts on architecture, in a broad sense, as a philosophy of life?

Architecture is simple because if you know how the users behave and the function of the building and spaces, you have a good building design. Architecture is very difficult when you have to define, say, the Malaysian architectural identity. You have to understand the nation's history,

politics and geography. If you know who you are in a national construct, where you come from and your critical thoughts on what is the real purpose of a building, then you can produce good design. It is a personal philosophical construct of imagined realities.

How do you think architecture can influence national identity and, consequently, national unity?

Have you looked at the Prime Minister's Office in Putrajaya? Doesn't it look like a palace? Doesn't the language symbolise Islam? If you do not feel love for the nation, then the architecture is wrong! National unity can be achieved when we have many things that we can share and many more things we can tolerate.

Tell us about your much-talked about trip to Melbourne with UCSI architecture students about a year ago.

I took the students to Melbourne mainly to make them realise that things in Malaysia can be different. We can have better educational facilities centred on students, a transport system centred on ordinary people without having to buy cars, a variety of races living harmoniously, and an Islam that is more tolerant and inclusive.

What is the relationship, if any, of architecture and moods and feelings?

Architecture can have a great influence on your moods and feelings. However, if you are determined to be unhappy, nothing can help you except your own self!

The architecture of mosques, for example, require intricate and detailed design. What in your opinion constitutes the design of a "perfect mosque"?

In order to design the perfect mosque, you have to have a 'perfect' understanding of Islam in relation to the social responsibility of the Muslim society to the general populace. Have you ever dared to enter a mosque? If you have, then that is a good mosque!

Having published over 70 books on architecture,

what are the common or prevailing themes of these works?

The prevailing theme in my writing is to understand the social, political and cultural contexts of the people and the functions that the building must perform. For instance, what is a library? If you think it is a repository for books then you are totally mistaken because you simply assume its function without understanding the subject matter in a critical manner.

You are well-known for authoring a column in the Star for a number of years. What was the focus of these writings?

In my column 'Architecture Inside Out' in the Star which spanned from 2006 to 2010, I wanted the public to know that real architecture is about the clash of people in their daily rituals against the ideal construct of important purpose of life like being compassionate, tolerant and generous. I also destroyed people's conception of mosques, schools, universities, administrative buildings, libraries, housing and reconstructed them into different ideas based on possible ideals of these functions.

You have been instrumental in engaging UCSI students with leading architects such as Hijas Kasturi. What benefit do you think they would derive from this?

Hijas is a great man because he is forthright. He sees through things. His thoughts are never subservient to simplistic perceptions of what ordinary people understand. He loves learning, questioning and daring to propose the impossible. These are traits of a successful architect that students can live by.

Lastly, what would make an aspiring architect successful in light of modern times?

Look 50 years into the future and ask: What kind of lifestyle can we expect? What kind of technology? What kind of relationship between cultures and nations? Will there be nations or a totally borderless world free from race and religious conflicts? Ask these hard and exciting questions and you can be anything you choose to be. You can even be a really good architect!

PITCH FOR SUCCESS SEMINAR 2.0



▲ Dr Mogana giving the welcome speech challenging students to be equipped with knowledge about the working environment.



▲ Tan giving an engaging speech on how to go from "Zero to Hero".



▲ Participants of the Pitch for Success Seminar 2.0.



▲ Yeo encourages students to "Find Your Character And Build On It".



▲ Committee members of the seminar.

To explore and understand life goals; to learn and discuss the skills required to work in the pharmaceutical industry and the essential skills to be successful in one's career; to discover the possibilities of working in the digital and cyber world. These were the objectives of the Pitch For Success Seminar 2.0 organised by UCSI University's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

The seminar also aimed at equipping participants with knowledge about the working environment and the skills expected by the employers, through experience sharing from the guest speakers.

The event commenced with a welcome speech by UCSI's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Dean, Assistant Professor Dr Mogana Sundari Rajagopal. Following this, Genecare Sdn Bhd Chairman, Chris Tan gave a speech titled "From Zero to Hero". It was a thought-provoking speech about the various stages of an entrepreneur discussing the key elements of sustainable businesses.

Since 2010, Tan has delivered public talks to motivate young entrepreneurs. He emphasised the opportunities in pharmaceutical and diagnostic industries for pharmacy graduates.

"Follow your goals and dreams. Each decision comes with its own prospects and challenges. You

must only concentrate on what you are doing at present and must not imagine the consequences. Don't get disheartened, if you fail initially, keep trying," he said.

"Never consider that life is a race and you should beat others to win. Instead, you must try to remain grounded even when you succeed," he continued.

Am Pm Pharmacy Pharmacist/ Marketing Manager, Hiew Kai Ming spoke on "Find Your Why". The topic focused on finding why, how and what is significant for the growth of a person. He also spoke about the key elements in business, how to grow and sustain the business.

Dong Foong Healthcare Group of Companies Executive Assistant, John Yeo Keh Hau presented on "Find Your Character And Build On It".

He spoke on developing networks, appropriate skills and acquired knowledge that are very essential to succeed in the working environment. He also shared his views on defining character and how to persevere until it becomes a part of personal branding.

Merck Sharp and Dohme Sdn Bhd PRP, Katherine Sia Giin Yuan spoke on "Goals". She shared that success is a lifelong journey achieved when hard

work meets opportunity.

"It is advisable that you prepare yourself for expected or unexpected opportunities. It is important that you keep polishing your skills so that you don't lose even a single bit of the opportunity that may lead you to success in the long run. Celebration of every victory whether small or big will boost your enthusiasm and encourage you to achieve more in life," she said.

Overall, the seminar helped students in creating awareness of skills and knowledge that have to be developed during their university lives, which will help them to align their future purposes or goals.

This seminar highlighted that students should learn from every situation and must strive to have a lifelong learning attitude. It also helped in expanding networks, developing one's own sustainable business, analysing the self and making students confident in doing what they like.

Monacella Gracia, first prize winner in the senior category of the International Piano Festival and Competition, can readily attest to the fact that playing the Étude in A Minor ‘Winter Wind’ by Chopin and the Ballade No. 2 in B minor by Liszt on the piano is no easy task, even for music enthusiasts.

The pieces are long, expressive and dramatic requiring long hours of practice and skill. However, for Monacella from Indonesia, the extensive practicing sometimes from morning till night paid off as she pulled off the pieces with grace and style.

To her the pieces were touching as well as mesmerising, depicting tragic love stories which she brought to life in her performance. She won RM2,000 and a UCSI Institute of Music full undergraduate tuition scholarship.

Recognised as a global top 100 university for performing arts by the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2018, the Institute has established itself as Malaysia’s foremost music school for both the classical and contemporary fields.



▲ Group photo of the Award Ceremony and Prize Winners' Concert.



▲ Pasit Wattanalekhawong from Thailand with his proud parents.

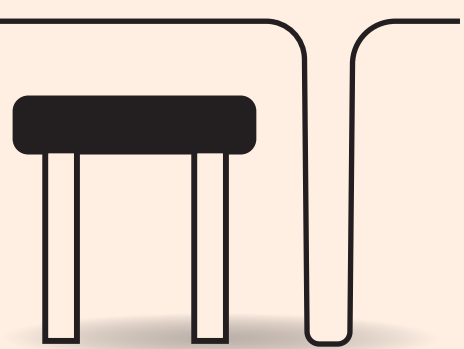


▲ The adjudicators and honoured guests at the event.



▲ Jennifer Chrysantha, first prize winner of the young artist category.

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL PIANO FESTIVAL AND COMPETITION



UCSI University’s Institute of Music Third International Piano Festival and Competition (IPFC) this year saw 130 contestants from 11 different countries including Singapore, Thailand, China, Indonesia, Australia, Japan, Korea, Ukraine and USA.

Launched in 2014, the IPFC is designed to be a catalyst that advances music education in Malaysia as well as the region. Essentially it sets the stage for a dynamic meeting of minds where contestants can expand their network as they mingle with fellow enthusiasts.

According to UCSI University’s Institute of Music Director, Professor Dr P’ng Tean Hwa, “The competition is marked by its high level of performance where contestants can perform, compete and meet. It is a festival of teaching and learning.”

This is even so for winners, such as nine year old Pasit Wattanalekhawong from Thailand. He won the hearts of the judges in the finals junior category with his bold and lively pieces.

“I am very happy to win in this category as I tried my best and practised very hard for it - five hours a day. As for my future, it will definitely still be in the field of music.”

Also one of the adjudicators for the finals, Professor P’ng commented that, “The first prize

winners of all categories have offered challenging repertoires in their programmes.” “They demonstrated impressive technical and musical mastery in all of the pieces they performed, all the more so when we consider their young age,” he said.

Professor Dr Thomas Linde from Tunghai University in Taichung, Taiwan was also impressed with the performances saying, “The talented contestants gave a positive impression seeing that they were selected based on how well they communicated the expressions of the piece. They were also judged on their technique and command of the instrument.”

Sylvia Wang, also one of the judges said that she took great pride in seeing all the strides in classical music during the competition.

For her, it is that “spark” in a musician that makes a difference where they can play just one phrase and people are captivated. Furthermore according to her, pianists should be able to communicate a sense of “self” in their music.

UCSI’s Institute of Music also holds various different recitals, seminars and other initiatives that impact the music scene which feature its academics and music experts from around the world.



▲ Monacella Gracia, first prize winner of the senior category.



UCSI'S SDG WEEK 2018

▲ UCSI SDG Week 2018 student participants.

Peace and harmony. These are probably the highest aspirations on our list when it comes to national and personal security. In connection with these two aspirations are the subjects of race and religion. It is believed that with the acceptance and tolerance of one's race and religion, peace and harmony will follow.

This topic was one of the highlights of UCSI's SDG Week 2018, and part of a forum on National Education for Peace and Harmony – Readdressing Race and Religious Extremism. The related SDGs for the forum were SDG 4 – Quality Education; SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

Many insightful perspectives were shared including the philosophy of “a Malaysian Malaysia” - which is the new vision of Malaysia which institutes a multi-cultural society where all are equal citizens with good governance encouraging openness and democracy.

This philosophy and other opening reflections were given by Institute of Ethnic Studies UKM Principal Fellow, Professor Datuk Dr Denison Jayasuria. He emphasised the concepts of assimilation and integration in the process of dealing with cultural diversity.

Assimilation, he said, was about making everyone follow the dominant culture while integration involves cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. He also distinguished between state and nation where he asserted that a state consisted of population, territory, government and sovereignty and the nation consisted of a group of people who have a

strong sense of unity and common consciousness.

He touched on the guidelines that need to be followed including having no exclusive claims, respect for diversity and human rights approach for all. For him, life is a compromise; you give and take to build better nations.

On the same topic, Zubedy (M) Sdn Bhd Director, Anas Zubedy went through 10 principles for a moderate Malaysian. Some of them included having a common unity and consciousness, refraining from racist remarks, to be critical of oneself and the community first and embracing diversity and inclusion.

He also gave practical advice such as to add value to everyone and every situation; to practice mercy and not be greedy; to worry about the poor in our midst; embrace the spirit of thankfulness; and to be honest.

Parent Action Group for Education Chairman, Datin Azimah Rahim highlighted that education should be a choice according to the wishes of parents and advocated more exposure to English because it is a neutral language. In fact, she said, English can bring Malaysians together.

“Diversity should be celebrated not suppressed and we must focus on the similarities in different religions”, she said.

IIUM academician, Associate Professor Dr Isham Pawan was of the opinion that we should emphasise political freedom and democracy and not wholesale adoption of Western culture.

“The SDGs promote an inclusive society which tackles issues head on where no country should lose their identity. We need to have human dignity; respect each other; we are all children created by God,” he said.

Reverend Dr Sivin Kit was in agreement with the other speakers stressing that moderation and unity was the way forward. The problem nowadays, he said, is that we coexist but struggle to talk about religion and that we have to be familiar with the kind of Malaysia we want to construct.

“I believe the way to start is by training teachers. There is a basic fundamental ignorance in terms of religion and we need to have an encounter beyond the book,” he added.

UCSI's SDG Week 2018 also included another forum entitled “Sustainable Consumption, Our Responsibility” where the focus was on smart consumer habits relating particularly to SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production.

In his opening speech, UCSI University's Vice-Chancellor and President, Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff emphasised that many countries in the world today are facing extreme poverty and gender inequality where life is short and poor.

He said, “Greenhouse gas emissions are higher, giving rise to irreversible consequences and income inequality is increasing. Hence, developing sustainability is relevant to all.”

“The SDGs are forward-looking and inclusive. The young people today must have a say and a



▲ Professor Denison emphasising the concepts of assimilation and integration.

hand in shaping the future. It should happen not tomorrow but today. They must develop skills and also a sense of mission and space for them to function,” he said.

“We want to empower the university and the community by reaching out and reaching in, breaking down barriers to achieve the SDGs,” he added.

In his opening speech, President of Malaysia Consumer Movement, Darshan Singh Dillon expressively illustrated his concern that Mother earth “is in pain” and that we have to “ease her out of her misery”.

His said that we need to have a clear commitment to make a difference and practice sustainability. His expectations were that the participants of the forum would leave with a commitment and promise to be better consumers, rising together because we have to, but because we want to.

This was followed by a speech by Consumer Claims Tribunal Malaysia Chairperson, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Affairs, Wan Rufaidah Dato’ Haji Wan Omar. She was impressed that UCSI is among the few universities promoting and advocating the SDGs.

She posed the question of: Will the future generation have access to resources like us now? Her advice was to act now and stop the damage while consuming less, and consuming responsibly. “Purchase what we need rather than what we want. Let’s do this not only for ourselves, but for future generations,” she said.

In his keynote address, 14th President of the UNESCO-Affiliated International Association of Universities (IAU) and Chairman of Islamic Science University of Malaysia, Tan Sri Dato’ Dzulkipli Abdul Razak, gave a talk on how sustainable consumption is everyone’s responsibility.

He highlighted the worrying fact that every year during the month of Ramadan a total of 270,000 tonnes of food go directly into the dustbin and if stacked, would be the equivalent of 30 KLCC buildings.

He emphasised that we need to ask the question, do I need this? He coined the phrase “sustainability means enough for everyone forever”.

Waste Management Systems Sdn Bhd Executive Chariman, Dato’ Mizan Yahya addressed the issue of rewiring consumerism and how to look at it as a personal investment that needs to be fully understood.

He said that we should stop and re-evaluate by understanding our weaknesses, looking deep into our motivations, seeking usefulness, giving more things away and doing what makes us happy.

Universiti Malaya’s Associate Professor Dr Sumiani Yusoff advocated sustainable consumption based on the integrated approach of Refuse, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair and Recover.

For Tesco Malaysia Corporate Services Director Azliza Baizura Azmel, her pledge was to reduce food losses and food waste across production lines, and to reduce the use of plastic bags; instead using recyclable items for the packaging of Tesco products.

As part of its ongoing efforts to promote awareness of the SDGs, UCSI University students set up 17 booths representing the 17 SDGs where they explained a little on the SDG itself, the targets, current progress and what can be done.

For example, for SDG 5 on Gender Equality, it was all about empowering women. “By educating people, we are diminishing inequality and creating awareness about the problem through education. Our activity is about putting yourself in someone else’s shoes and implementing gender equality rights, said Enas Ahmed, one of the students at the booth.

For students Peter Toh and Lin Sherson, their focus was on SDG 1, No Poverty. Their solutions were to enable access for poor people to education and to implement social protection systems. Some of the organisations that they talked about were UNICEF which helps children in Malaysia and HATI a voluntary organisation in support of the under-privileged.

SDG week was certainly an eye-opener for all as new ideas, thoughts and insights on the SDGs were shared, discussed and debated. Above all, it was a good opportunity for all of us to self-reflect on how we can contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle and shape a better future.



▲ (from left to right) Zubedy, Datin Azimah and Dr Isham debate on diversity and democracy.



▲ Darshan Singh postulates about the need to have a clear commitment to make a difference and practice sustainability.



▲ Dzulkipli sums up his talk by saying “Sustainability means enough for everyone forever.”



▲ UCSI students representing SDG 14, Life Below Water.

UCSI UNIVERSITY'S ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGN



▲ (left to right) UCSI Pharmacy's Assistant Professor Dr Bontha Venkata Subrahmanya Lokesh, Sunway Velocity Mall Assistant-Marketing Shafeera Anuar, UCSI Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) Associate Professor Dr Yeong Siew Wei, UCSI's Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, Cheras District Health Office public health medical specialist Datin Dr Noriah Hajib, UCSI Public Health Campaign 2018 organising chairperson Kon Zhien Hung and UCSI's Clinical Pharmacy head Assistant Professor Fazlollah Keshavarzi.



▲ UCSI students serving the community by administering health screening tests.

Inspired by the government's efforts to improve healthcare nationwide, the Pharmacy Student Association of UCSI recently launched their annual public health campaign of 2018 under the theme 'Chronic Kidney Disease: A Silent Killer'.

The event, spanning the weekend of the 14th and 15th of July, was held at Sunway Velocity Mall, supported by the Malaysian Kidney Foundation.

To date, UCSI's Annual Public Health Campaigns have been held in states including Melaka, Pahang and Selangor. More than 10,000 members of the public have been positively impacted by these campaigns throughout the years.

The campaign aims to promote and educate the public on health-related issues and encourage healthy lifestyles. It also seeks to help bridge the community-academia divide and to provide an excellent platform for members of the community and students to learn from each other.

38 UCSI University Pharmacy students gave free basic health checks at the shopping mall under the supervision of five qualified pharmaceutical lecturers.

Vice Chancellor and President of UCSI University, Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff said, "While the students and faculty always strive for excellence in the field of academics, the organisation of the annual public health campaign fosters a sense of community service and this is one of the main

values that we hope to instill in the learning process at UCSI."

"I am proud that UCSI students have taken the initiative to spend quality time with the community today," said Senior Professor Khalid.

The campaign was primarily launched to spread awareness on the importance of early prevention in combatting kidney failure. Free screening tests featuring waist-to-hip ratio measurements, blood pressure tests, body fat tests, and blood glucose tests were carried out. A drug compounding demonstration was held on how to mix ingredients in the exact strength and dosage required by patients.

Marzita Maarof, an employee at Sunway Velocity, was one of the members of the public that was screened.

"I never seem to have the time for a decent check-up due to work. I am delighted and impressed with UCSI's efforts especially with the free check-ups. Now I know my body and my kidneys are in good shape. I just need to watch my blood sugar level. Thank you UCSI for helping me find out more about my well-being. Hopefully this initiative continues to benefit others in the future," she said.

Chiang Kai Yeou, a UCSI Pharmacy student involved and actively engaged with the public for this event admitted that being part of this was early training for him to chase his dream of being a professional pharmacist. It helped to enhance his skills in approaching the public and allowed him to learn to understand their

problems by providing a rational solution.

Today, 10% of the population worldwide simply cannot afford access to kidney treatment and kidney disease increases 45% every year for those aged 55-64. According to the 2010 Global Burden of Disease Study, chronic kidney disease is ranked 18th in the list of causes of total number of deaths worldwide from its previous standing of 27th in 1990, a jump in rank that is only second to AIDS on the list.

UCSI University's effort in creating awareness on the subject was seen as noble and impressive by Datin Dr Noriah Najib, public health medical specialist from the Cheras District Health Office.

She said, "Congratulations to the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences of UCSI for their dedication and commitment towards the health and well-being of the community. I believe that the campaigns launched by the university in the previous few years have contributed to a greater sense of awareness and I hope there will be more of these programmes in the future. Keep up the good work!"

UCSI University strives to achieve academic excellence while encouraging its students to contribute to the community through initiatives such as this. For the University, making an impact on the community in a positive way remains one of its priorities.

BEAUTY TO SOME PURPOSE

EVIAN WILL NOW REPRESENT UCSI AND THE NATION IN OCTOBER.

The adage goes that the third time's a charm but Evian Lee Yee Vian got the job done at the second time of asking when she was crowned as one of three finalists at the Miss CosmoWorld 2018 Malaysia final.

And in doing so, the 21-year-old UCSI University student won the golden ticket to represent Malaysia at the international finals, crossing another item off her bucket list.

Struggling to soak in the euphoria, Evian attributed the milestone to perseverance as she had to pick herself up after falling short in the audition stages a year ago.

"The result was so unexpected and I'm very happy to hear the judges' praises that I've improved a lot," said Evian who is a second-year fashion design and marketing student at De Institute of Creative Arts and Design (ICAD).

"I was a greenhorn last year but I learnt much about pageant rules and judging criteria after my first try. I sought to apply the knowledge at other pageants. I gained valuable experience and this gave me the confidence to seek some redemption at Miss CosmoWorld.

"There were many beautiful and talented ladies in the Malaysian final and the final scores were decided on razor thin margins. The way you present yourself in front of the judges is crucial and I'm happy to come good on discipline and personality."

By discipline, Evian was alluding to a gruelling pageant boot camp which involved a strict diet, exercise regimes, endless photo shoots, interviews, etiquette and grooming classes and countless hours of catwalk training.

To prepare herself mentally for the pageant, she even learnt the industry's ropes from Jojo Tan, the first Malaysian to win the Supermodel International crown in 2016.

Interestingly, the hard work isn't over yet. Evian is working hard to improve her catwalk for the international leg of the Miss CosmoWorld pageant.

"I was fortunate enough to stand out amongst 12 contestants in the Malaysia finals – only the top three are chosen to represent the nation – but I'll be up against 30 beautiful women from around the world at the international finals," she continued.



▲ Evian (left) crowned one of the three finalists at Miss CosmoWorld 2018 Malaysia.

"I'm happy with the improvements I've made in terms of skills and posture but I know I can further improve my catwalk. Look at the international fashion shows and you'll see the high bar the top models set. I'm going to work very hard and I'll give it everything I've got."

While Evian's monumental achievement is celebrated by her family, she confesses that it wasn't easy to get her mother on her side. Pageants were seen as an unwanted distraction and there were concerns that her studies would be adversely affected.

So Evian decided to keep her involvement quiet. In fact, she did it so well till she had no family members in her entourage to witness her crowning glory at Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, choosing to break the good news to them after her win.

Her sister, however, suspected that something was amiss after chancing upon her Instagram feed that contained stockpiles of pageant-related photos in the run-up to the final.

With the cat out of the bag, Evian has now reverted to the more prosaic routine of study life. Originally an aspiring fashion marketer, she admits that her pageant win may have opened up other doors in her career plans.

Despite this, she has her feet firmly planted on the ground, maintaining her desire to do well in her studies at UCSI.

"I believe that one should have multiple plans in life and having a degree is important as it acts as a springboard to bigger things," she mused.

"My experience at UCSI has been very positive and it's great compared to my last institution. "At UCSI, or rather, ICAD, I am encouraged to think critically

Evian is poised and elegant. ▶



and I've become far more independent as a learner."

Never one to forget the ties that bind, Evian proceeded to thank her friends and support network at UCSI, singling out her close friend Natalie for being the "secret weapon" behind her pageant win.

"I was a bit nervous the night before the final and I wanted to improve my introduction as it was quite an important criterion," she laughed. "I wasn't very confident and I decided to get some help from Natalie as English is her first language.

"She coached me on certain things and calmed me down. That's the UCSI connection for you."

Evian will represent Malaysia at the Miss CosmoWorld international pageant final that will be held in Kuala Lumpur on 20 October.

We wish her well and we will be watching this space.

And Natalie, do pay more attention to your phone on 19 October. You could be in for a long chat.

THE JOYS OF TEACHING ENGLISH ABROAD

Teaching Away in Shanghai

From Geoff Rickert's Perspective...

Four weeks teaching in Shanghai was quite an experience. It gave me the opportunity to notice the stark contrast between English language education in parts of China and here at UCSI University.

The largest difference, perhaps, is in the expected roles assumed in the student-teacher relationship. Chinese students were used to direct, explicit instruction where communication was relatively one-sided in the form of a lecture.

In other words, the students found it difficult to break their habit of silence by volunteering answers or speaking directly to the teacher. One class even expressed surprise when I asked to see their written essays in order to give feedback.

The students claimed that they were not used to receiving such formative feedback on their writing skills. Similarly, the learners were initially very stressed about the idea of having regular speaking assignments.

This was the first time they had ever used English to share their ideas in front of a class. By the end of the course, most suggested that they found these speaking activities to be the most helpful.

Another noticeable difference was that the classes in Shanghai were monolingual where all the students spoke the same first language. I found it difficult to facilitate lessons at times when the use of their mother tongue replaced the use of English.

A final significant distinction between the English language education experienced in China and Malaysia is in the teaching methods. Learners in Shanghai explained that direct translation was a large part of their courses and could even account for up to one quarter on their final marks.

Another relatively rigid teaching approach was encouraging the use of scripted speaking answers. In addition, language lessons at CFL tend to find an appropriate balance between focus on forms and focus on meaning. To facilitate student-centred activities, CFL encourages group work and the moving around of student seating within the classroom.

This teaching experience has provided a great



platform to encourage reflection on effective classroom methods and how to more thoroughly understand the international students that we work with each week.

▲ *Spring is always a good time to conduct classes outside the classroom.*



From The Eyes Of Parveen Gill...

When I was first offered an assignment to teach English at two educational institutions in Shanghai, China, I repeatedly kept asking myself if I was excited about the trip but found no answer to my question.

While I was fully prepared to deliver my best, the words of my immediate superior-cum-mentor echoed in my ears "Just remember to be flexible."

▲ *One of the students speaking about her fears in front of her classmates.*

When I first walked into the classrooms of both the educational institutions located in Pudong New Area, I was taken aback to see blackboards still being used. Students were also constantly on their mobile phones.

I was aware that in many educational institutions in China, students were taught English in Chinese, that is, using the translation method. For this reason, while many students

are good at memorising grammar rules, they lack listening, speaking and writing skills.

To overcome these challenges, I implemented five simple classroom rules: firstly, all students were required to keep their mobile phones in their bags; secondly, students were discouraged from translating any questions or statements for their classmates; and thirdly, students should raise their hands if they did not understand what was being taught.

Students were also reminded to complete all homework as it would either be graded or they would be randomly selected to present their homework in front of the class. Last but not least, all students were expected to be in class on time.

Needless to say, once students began to obey classroom rules, there was a significant improvement in their level of commitment in learning.

The next hurdle I had to overcome was building self-confidence and love for learning the English Language.

And I had no choice but to be flexible in my approach. I recall my first speaking exercise: each student had to speak about their strengths and weaknesses for two minutes on the topic “character.”

Except for three students, the remaining students completed their session within a minute or so.

The next day, I started my class with a high pitched “hello”. I told them that we were going to re-do the topic learned the previous day, but this time we were going to do it outdoors.

I divided the class into four groups and each group had to identify the different types of characteristics based on the definition provided. The group that was the last to complete the crossword puzzle had to pay a penalty such as dancing. And they did dance while the rest of us laughed our hearts out.

In short, my teaching experience in Shanghai taught me many things. Creative teaching methods and a hands-on approach are of paramount importance in English Language classrooms, but they should also be complemented with mutual respect, open communication and ample encouragement.

On the night I was leaving for Malaysia, I received a message from one of the heads of department which read: “As a teacher myself, I do envy the love you gained within the short time... I struggled, am still struggling and will continue to struggle to win their love.” I smiled and thought to myself that was the greatest compliment I could ever receive from a fellow academician.



▲ (left to right) Parveen Gill, Chen Cheng and Xia Yangyang

First Time For Everything! Xia Yangyang’s Story...

This is my first time teaching away from Shanghai Industry and Commerce Foreign Languages College (SICFL). I came feeling excited but nervous at the same time. I kept asking myself: “Are the students going to accept me?”, “How would native English-speaking teachers look at me, a Chinese from China teaching English to International students, and in Malaysia?”

My concerns and worries vanished the moment I arrived on campus to meet my colleagues at the Centre for Languages. Their going on first name basis and active-teaching approaches put me at ease. For a start I was given an ice-breaking role with some Korean students using language activities. I was surprised to find that Korean students were more dynamic and enthusiastic than my students in China. I appreciated the experience of teaching English using games – games can bridge the distance between teachers and students.

Once I was adjusted locally, I was introduced to the students by the lead teacher. I noticed the curiosity in my students’ eyes – with more than fifteen pairs of eyes from South Korea, China and Yemen. Much to my comfort, the students welcomed me warmly and soon I found myself enjoying the interaction. I enjoyed interacting with my international students so much I now look forward to putting my course prep to practice every morning.

This experience allowed me to immerse myself in a foreign culture, enhance my cultural competency, gain inspiration on teaching skills, reach out to more people and probably leave a mark on the lives of my foreign students.

Teach Abroad; Change Lives.

Chen Cheng

Director – English Department;
Deputy Dean – School of English Studies
Shanghai Industry and Commerce Foreign
Languages College (SICFL)

Summer 2018 became memorable when two English teachers from UCSI University’s Centre for Languages joined us in Shanghai for a short teaching exchange. Although Geoff Rickert and Parveen Gill each stayed for only a fortnight at SICFL, the administrators of the School of English Studies engaged them in helping to coach more than 20 MODEL APEC candidates as well as Thomas, the candidate for the 14th National Practical Speaking Contest for Professional College Students.

Geoff and Parveen familiarised themselves with the two contests within a short period of time and went the extra mile to ensure that our students were polished beyond ordinary.

Two of our students won the first prize in the Regional MODEL APEC contest in May, and Thomas won the first prize in the national English speaking competition held in Qingdao in June.

The elated Thomas told SICFL teachers that the different styles of coaching he received from both our teachers and teachers from UCSI University enriched his experience and illuminated him in many ways.

Encouraged, 18 SICFL students under the leadership of two head teachers travelled to Kuala Lumpur to pursue a one-month intensive English programme in July; and eight more teachers joined UCSI College to participate in its TESOL programme. This rewarding collaboration between SICFL and UCSI University has proven beneficial to both institutions paving the way for more initiatives between our institutions in the near future.



▲ Thomas the national champion and Wang Xiaorui, first-prize winner of the non-English major team.



▲ Assistant Professor Teoh elaborates on the importance of real world issues.



▲ The "Re: Market" exhibition at White Box, Publika.

FACES OF MARKETS

Have you ever stepped into a market and been overwhelmed by its sights, smells and sounds? Have you ever wondered what market culture really is and whether it exists at all? Some may prefer indoor markets to outdoor ones while some may avoid going to the market altogether because they tend to be crowded and noisy.

Either way, one may not think much about markets except that they are an ordinary routine of daily living. However, for UCSI's School of Architecture and Built Environment (SABE) students, markets in Pudu, Sentul and Old Klang Road became platforms on which to base their architectural masterpieces.

Together with exhibits from the Hong Kong Design Institute, their pieces were featured prominently in the exhibition cum workshop and sharing session appropriately titled "Re: Market" which was held by UCSI's SABE and co-curator One Bite Design Studio in conjunction with KLAFF 2018.

To the UCSI University students, the traditional market is a place of social inclusion and is a place to be experienced between work, home and leisure.

Their proposals suggest a new form of interior planning where the market is more than just a place to shop. It is more of a community hub that has a social function.

Focusing on the five propositions of Retrace, Rethink, Re-edit, Regenerate and Reconnect, the exhibits in "Re: Market" explore the future of the market in various perspectives of city living - social, economical, cultural and environmental.

For Tien Jun Xiang, it was his first time taking part in an exhibition. His exhibit of 'Pasar Sentul', was about connecting the old and the new so that they co-exist together.

"I was inspired by walking around Sentul to other zones in order to really understand the site, their issues and how they operate. My idea was to bring more people to Sentul by rethinking the future of the market."

Vivian Wong describes it as a new typology of market where it can be an interactive and fun platform. "Young people don't come to the market anymore. I got my inspiration from Chinese traditional games...something like chess and also to make the transformation to moveable stalls."

"My proposal was to turn an egg store into a breakfast place with vending machines for eggs. Traditional markets are seen as dirty and wet but this would be a good opportunity for the public to experience markets as important community hubs," said Mah Yi Jun, another UCSI student at the exhibition.

According to UCSI University's Architectural Design and Stream Coordinator/Lecturer James Lim, "We see this project as the beginning of the documentation and rejuvenation of traditional markets. The interaction between international architects and the local public will facilitate cultural exchange and the sharing of knowledge in the discussion about markets."

"Our project will carry out the investigation of traditional markets through their heritage significance, environmental challenges and cultural relevance. The investigation in these three areas will help to develop a methodology

to develop markets in the new era for long-lasting repositioning," he said.

On the benefits of such events to UCSI students, Lim had this to say: "We at UCSI University's School of Architecture and Built Environment always make sure that our students are not only focused on classroom-based learning but also out-of-classroom learning. Collaborating on research with practicing architects and also international designers will eventually open up their thinking to real issues."

From the perspective of the Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI), the market is the place of the people.

Society has a social structure and these social structures have offered us a freer society to construct our cities. The rethinking of new market spaces can be programmed, designed and inserted into our cities.

HKDI Lecturer Eddie Chan commented that the exhibition itself was a good collaboration where students got to showcase their projects in relation to the theme and not to a given brief.

In his talk titled "Architecture Education for Milleniums", he highlighted that one challenge of architecture today is the specialisation and categorisation of the field which goes beyond comprehensive knowledge. One opportunity is that essentially architecture can contribute to a more sustainable, diverse harmonious and democratic society.

Furthermore, he emphasised that the opportunity lies in the 'inherent freedom' for students to develop their own voices and to search for their own paths.



▲ UCSI University's Architecture student, Vivian Wong, next to her exhibit.



UCSI University SABE's Acting Deputy Head, Assistant Professor Teoh Chee Keong elaborated that it was essential for students to be exposed to real world issues.

He talked about the Kuala Sepetang project, a fishing village in which students had hands-on experience in the construction and architectural design of the spaces converting it into a children's library, playground and homestay for volunteers. They were also involved in the refurbishment of the Sungai Buloh Leprosy Settlement.

By participating in "Re: Market", students got the opportunity to transform the mundane into something meaningful. Their collective work illustrated their creativity and innovation in architecture and allowed them to apply what they learnt in UCSI to situations outside the classroom.



▲ Tien Jun Xiang's exhibit combines old and new.



▲ UCSI University's Architecture students excited to be at the "Re: Market" exhibition.



▲ Capturing the essence of market architecture.



UCSI UNIVERSITY SPREADS THE BLUE

UCSI University recently invited Mohd Adli Yayha, father of an autistic son aged 19 years old and founder of the Autism Café Project Malaysia, to speak on autism.

Mohd Adli's story of his son, Luqman, is one of denial and acceptance and is a touching example of how to 'let go' and 'let live'.

"It was hard to bring Luqman up as most of the time, he does not maintain eye contact with the other person, hates sunlight, walks on tiptoe all the time and doesn't talk very much," he shared.

When the doctors told Mohd Adli about Luqman having autism, he just could not accept it. Like most people, he went through the stage of denial.

"The one mistake I made was to treat him as a normal person, instead of accepting his condition. I had to deal with many emotions such as anger, resentment and suffering in a heart-breaking situation," he said.

In the end, all that Mohd Adli wanted from his son was forgiveness and to give him a future. After starting therapy, Luqman showed remarkable improvement. He talks freely and even sings.

"He has improved in leaps and bounds. Now we can celebrate his achievements. I have learnt not to judge him anymore," continued Mohd Adli.

Mohd Adli then gave a touching video presentation on the difficulties he and his family went through and also about forgiveness and the unconditional love that went with it.

Inspired by his son and the need to help other autistic children, Mohd Adli opened the Autism Café Project Malaysia. This is a café to teach



▲ Boon from FujiFilm X giving his talk on framing photos.

youths with autism to be independent and earn an income whether it is washing dishes, greeting people or helping pack food.

Although they only opened in 2016, autistic young adults working at the cafe have shown tremendous improvement.

Inviting Mohd Adli to speak at UCSI University was part of the University's campaign to 'Spread The Blue' and increase awareness on autism.

Additionally, UCSI University's Department of Psychology as well as its Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Healthy Aging, Medical Aesthetics and Regenerative Medicine Department also organised another talk on Autism: What It Is and What It Isn't by Gan Huey Sien Principal, SEED Autism Services and also a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst.

According to her, it can be said that autistic children have difficulty in showing emotions; difficulty in nonverbal communication and in developing and maintaining new relationships.

According to her, in 2018, one in 59 individuals has autism. Research shows that one factor could be exposure to agents in the environment

or even air and food. The ratio stands at four males to one female.

Educational strategies could be early intervention, intensive instructional programmes, using systematic instructions and one-to-one and small group instructions. However, it is not all about on strategies, there needs to be evidence-based practice in that the procedure should have been repeated and peer reviewed.

UCSI University continued advocating for autistic individuals through the "Frame Within A Frame" workshop held by Lim Kim Boon from FujiFilm X. This involved the most basic and common photography compositions where a foreground or front subject can be used to frame another scene in the background.

The workshop proved to be fun and educational as participants got to apply their photography and artistic skills to make the best composition.

As another movement in support of the autistic community, UCSI also held an Autism Poster Contest designed to educate students about autism and to show their concern for this community. The poster contest was open to all UCSI students with the theme "Autism Awareness and Acceptance".

To cap it off, UCSI University went all out and had an Autism Awareness day where students and staff were encouraged to wear blue in support of individuals with autism.

UCSI University's pledge to increase awareness and acceptance about the autistic community is on-going. There are more activities in the pipeline and the University will continue to do its part in furthering this worthy cause.

The Sound of Kindness

UCSI University's music students raise RM10,000 for Rohingya refugees.

Maxy Chan knows how to move audiences. And after performing in Seoul and Taipei, the talented pianist is now moving her audience towards a new cause: charity.

Seeking to raise funds for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Maxy and 90 of her peers from UCSI University's Institute of Music conjured a musical tour de force during their sell-out charity concert that paid tribute to some of the most famous tunes in film animation.

Organised by UCSI's Institute of Music Student Association, the concert raised a grand total of RM10,000. RM6,080 came from ticket sales while a further RM3,920 was raised in donations that surged as the concert drew to a close. All proceeds have been channeled to Unicef.

Themed The Sound of Kindness for Every Child, the concert's repertoire featured 10 timeless soundtracks from animated movies like Remember Me from Coco and the timeless One Summer's Day from Spirited Away.

Other songs from Frozen, Moana, Tangled, How to Train your Dragon, My Neighbour Totoro, Pocahontas and The Lion King were also played before Maxy closed out the concert with a medley from La La Land.

Maxy, a gold medal winner in the 2013 and 2014 Asia Music Competitions, also gave the audience a treat by dedicating a rendition of Keith Jarrett's Köln Concert Part IIc to Ismat – a 15-year-old refugee – and other victims of violence and sexual assault.

"I feel extremely happy and fulfilled because many who were involved in this concert – committees, crews, performers, audience, and donors – expressed their delight in being able to contribute to the cause," expressed Maxy, who aspires to be an acclaimed pianist.

"If we put things in perspective, we are so fortunate compared to the refugees who are stranded in foreign nations. They face constant uncertainty and their children face a daily uphill battle when it comes to education and life chances."

Maxy added that the collective desire to ease the plight of refugee children influenced the song selection of the concert. The shared commitment also saw the team practising ceaselessly to put on a show.

Interestingly, Maxy first donated to Unicef five years ago to support victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. She was armed with a burning desire to contribute to those in need



▲ **MISSION ACCOMPLISHED:** Professor P'ng (front row, 10th from left) takes a post-event group photo with some of the performers, crew and lecturers from UCSI's Institute of Music.



◀ **PITCH PERFECT:** UCSI's many student choirs were out in force during the charity concert.

ever since and she raised RM420 for the needy through her first piano solo fundraising recital last year.

"Tonight's concert is a much bigger improvement!" she continued. "It shows us what we can do as a team and I'm sure the younger students took note of the high attention to detail one must commit to when it comes to organising events."

Lauding the music students for their effort, UCSI Institute of Music director Professor Dr P'ng Tean Hwa said that the charity concert was a microcosm of what the Institute was all about.

Sharing the joy of music, he opined, was the responsibility of every musician. And doing so to champion a noble cause was a big bonus.

"At UCSI, we encourage our students to impact society with their talents," he said. "I'm very proud that so many music students have come together to highlight the plight of refugees. The Institute has a long history of reaching out to society and I'm delighted that our students have continued this tradition."

UCSI's Institute of Music is ranked as Malaysia's best music school in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2018 when it made the top 100 in the field of performing arts. Many of its alumni like Dr Joanne Yeoh, Dennis Lau and Onn San, among others, have gone on to chart great careers.



▲ **DRAGON SONG:** UCSI's music students delivered a rendition of a song from How to Train your Dragon.



◀ **FEELING THE RHYTHM:** Maxy, the project leader of UCSI's charity concert, gave another virtuoso performance for the anticipating audience.

Annice Teo Ann Lyn

Bachelor of Science (Hons) Architectural Technology, graduated 2015

Currently working as a Project Coordinator in Rumah Charis, Home for Senior Citizens and Children and running her personal venture - Anntopia as a visual artist, designer and photographer. She is the first female photographer based in Malaysia to be accredited for the XXIII Olympic Winter Games Pyeong Chang 2018. She is also a Canon Malaysia EOS Youth Ambassador Candidate.

In this column, The UCSI Gazette celebrates the achievements and accomplishments of its alumni after their education at UCSI. These individuals are now doing what they love; some furthering their studies or pursuing careers and others involved in other exciting endeavours. In this issue, we catch up with Annice Lyn, a Bachelor of Science (Hons) Architectural Technology graduate now working in Rumah Charis, Home for Senior Citizens and Children.



What or who inspired you to want to study Architectural Technology at UCSI? Was this always your ambition when you were young?

Growing up, I often found myself gravitating towards sketching, water colour paintings and other manual renderings. I figured if words fail, the expression of art would always speak for itself. I attended an architecture exhibition by a young brilliant Danish architect – Bjarke Ingels at Aarhus. The exhibition was an eye opener for me. Upon coming back to Malaysia I made the decision to take up Architectural Technology at UCSI University.

How did your studies in Architecture lead you to pursue a career in Photography?

While obtaining my architectural degree, we would often make a couple of site visits per semester, to carry on assigned site analysis, assess the community or study the façade and structure of a building. That's usually when I find the need to have a camera at hand. We often have to make our final work visually presentable requiring us to photograph our own manuals which also taught me the technicality of lighting and set-up, composition and focusing.

Tell us about your work with Rumah Charis.

I started off as a Piano, English and Mathematics tutor and eventually was asked to take on the role of a project coordinator seeking sponsors, funds, planning projects for the organisation, helping to develop

shelter homes and to update their social media. Also, I took it as an opportunity to venture into humanitarian photography where I can capture their portraits and give voices to unheard individuals.

Tell us more about 'Anntopia'.

The idea of Anntopia is basically Annice + Utopia, to be perceived as a safe haven for myself within exploring the endless possibilities and work produced that sincerely comes from me. It involves everything from my designs, to creating artwork, photographing weddings and sports, articulating and transposing fragments of moments to timeless imagery.

Tell us about your role in the Olympic Winter Games in Pyeong Chang 2018.

I was accredited by the International Olympic Council as a code "EP" photographer, representing Malaysia under The Ice-Skating Association of Malaysia and Anntopia to photograph our national athletes. Three years prior to Pyeong Chang 2018 I was visually documenting the development of one of our national skaters Julian Yee-Zhi Yie. Thus, when the accreditation got through, I was involved with visually documenting a piece of Malaysia's history.

Tell us about your position as a Canon Malaysia EOS Youth Ambassador Candidate.

I expressed a willingness to LEARN, whether through understanding the significant features

of both camera and lenses, or having the opportunity to participate in Canon professional photography workshops, to be trained under a list of esteemed Canon Malaysia's EOS Ambassadors, participating in Canon events or campaigns. I hope to be an asset to use the platform that Canon has provided to empower and inspire younger generations in photography whether through the university or by initiating photography workshops for students.

What is your advice to UCSI students who want to follow in your footsteps?

I would say perseverance is key; it is alright if you end up not pursuing what you majored in. Know that the four years of higher education you obtained is certainly not in vain. What you learnt and experienced ultimately makes a colossal impact and shapes you into who you are today. There's no perfect life; follow your own convictions.

What excites you about photography?

Being able to photograph raw moments at any point in time to tell a visual story in a frame. It doesn't matter if it is in unplanned shoots. I get to capture someone's spirit or a concept collaborating with other talented passionate, driven individuals. It is about humbling yourself and learning. As a female photographer, I long to share and voice out my visions. It is about having perspectives fairly represented in a creative culture which is a male dominant industry.



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