

THE UCSI GAZETTE

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT DAY

Be Connected. Go Global.

VOLUME 20



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 **UCSI University**[®]

MALAYSIA'S

#1

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

TOP 10 IN MALAYSIA. TOP 2% IN THE WORLD.

UCSI University is Malaysia's best private university in the QS World University Rankings 2019. Apart from UCSI and the nation's five research universities, no other Malaysian institution made it to the global top 500. This milestone also distinguishes UCSI as one of the world's top 70 universities under 50 years old.



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Connecting Students With Employment



Raj Kumar emphasising that the Co-Op Placement Centre serves to connect the community, education and universities.



(from left to right) Andrew Peters (Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad), Clayton Tan (Vinda Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Southeast Asia) Dang Cheong Lee (Averis Sdn Bhd) and Raj Kumar (UCSI Consulting Group).

After operating for more than a decade from the Student Affairs Office, UCSI University's Employment and Co-Op Placement Centre opened its own, brand new office also located at Block A within the campus.

The UCSI's flagship Co-Op programme has been providing integrated services to all UCSI students contributing to international and rewarding career journeys since 2004. With its new work place, the centre will continue to address matters related to job placement, industrial training and advice to empower students with the right mind and skill sets.

The centre's new work place was officially launched by UCSI Group founder and CEO Dato' Peter Ng, UCSI University Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, and UCSI Consulting Group CEO Raj Kumar.

With this launch, the Centre will now work closer with the industry in providing talents, both students and academics to the industry and vice versa.

UCSI aims at disproving the claims that universities today do not provide the sort of workers that the industry needs; rather the University strives to set advantages to the industry, students, staff, university, and ultimately to the community and country.

"We are indeed very grateful for the support and commitment of all our industry partners here; for being with us as we move forward with this agenda, shaping the future together for the betterment of all," said Senior Professor Khalid.

"Today, we are going to go further. Success breeds success. This Employment Centre will provide various means and information to our students seeking employment such as profiling and talent assessment, career consultation and placement, CV and cover letter reviews, interview tips and techniques, and even grooming advice as well as industry intelligence and surveillance," he said.

The Co-Op has placed students at various companies in Malaysia and across the globe. To date, it has established partnerships with over 4,200 employers.



► Group photo at the UCSI University's Employment and Co-Op Placement Centre launch.

Through the Co-Op, students will have the opportunity to get two or four months of work experience each year depending on their programme. Upon graduation, a UCSI student would have accumulated six to eight months of work experience.

As the central provider of employment support services for UCSI students as well as alumni, the Centre offers a faculty-based model of operation to facilitate employers while targeting the best and brightest that the University has to offer.

Besides the launching ceremony, UCSI also hosted a forum titled "Employers Forum: Insights On Talent Requisitions In Current Hiring Market" to discuss issues, pain points, solutions and trends with regards to talent requisition.

Panelists at the forum were Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad HR executive Andrew Peters, Vinda Malaysia Sdn Bhd Southeast Asia HR director Clayton Tan and Averis Sdn Bhd operations lead Dang Cheong Lee. The session was moderated by UCSI Consulting Group CEO, Raj Kumar.

The forum highlighted many interesting points such as how candidates can have better chances with their resumes if they are honest. This is important as employers and employees often have to deal with a mismatch of talent, especially when companies hire staff based on the contents of the resume and the interview.

"The resumes today are written by career centres and vetted through by several people.

Applicants are also trained on what to say during interviews," revealed Clayton Tan, the HR director for Vinda Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Southeast Asia.

Tan said sometimes candidates would say their hobbies were reading, writing and playing badminton.

"When we ask them what was the last book they had read, they are unable to answer because they don't really read," he said, adding how the portrayal of "one's best" during interviews would usually backfire.

This is especially true as the candidate might not be as curious in the job as he showed to be during the interview or he might not be as competent as he showed himself to be initially.

"They are unable to sustain their stated 'character' at work. This stresses both sides," said Tan.

His advice is for graduates to be honest about their interests and talents so that the hiring company is able to place them in the appropriate job areas. He said to hire the right candidates, his company would hire interns to work on projects lasting three months to a year to gauge if they were suitable for the job.

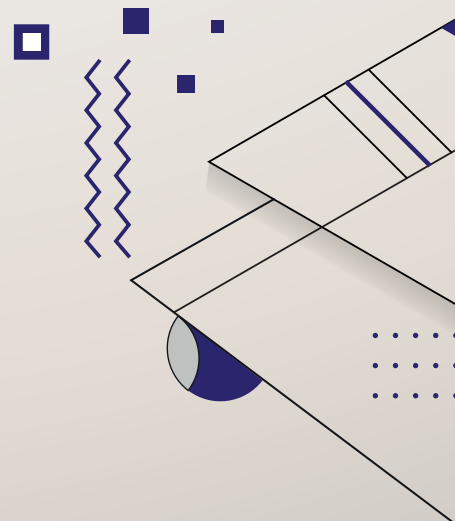
Another point highlighted was by Dang Cheong Lee, operations lead at Averis Sdn Bhd whose company dealt with plantations. He found that most young graduates reject offers when the training is provided in certain parts of Indonesia, China, Brazil as they did not want to go to remote areas to work.

"Local graduates can put up slides but are unable to present well," he pointed out, referring to their soft skills and that they were still unable to articulate well in public.

Meanwhile, Andrew Peters, HR executive at Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad, said his company would ask new staff to be involved in role-playing.

For instance, staff would be asked to arrange company products in shopping malls or promote products at hospitals. "It is our way of coaching them," he said.

With all this expertise and knowledge in the work place, UCSI University is reaching higher in continuously connecting students with employment. Not only that, the University provides avenues for students to be more employable in the market while building their networks for future opportunities at the same time.



An Award To Remember

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Representing UCSI (left to right) Mohd Fauzi Zanil, Assistant Professor Dr Elango Natarajan, Assistant Professor Dr M.K.A. Ahamed Khan and Chuah Eng Yew.

It was indeed a proud moment for UCSI's IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) Malaysia Chapter executive committee members as they were awarded the "Outstanding Medium Chapter Award 2018" at the IEEE Malaysia Section AGM and Appreciation Dinner.

The award recognises the IEEE RAS executive committee members' combined contributions and their outstanding service for the benefit and advancement of the IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) in Malaysia.

These contributions and services are in terms of conferences and meetings, publications, editing, administration, chapter services, and other distinguished services and activities.

The IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) Malaysia chapter is fully administrated and managed by its own executive committee members comprising of a chairman, vice chairman, treasurer, secretary and committee members.

UCSI's IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) Malaysia Chapter was represented by four members of the Faculty of Engineering, Technology and Built Environment who played key roles in terms of organising various activities like conferences, robotic competitions, workshops, technical talks and seminars.

They were, namely, Assistant Professor Dr M.K.A. Ahamed Khan (who held the position of Vice Chairman IEEE RAS Malaysia Chapter for 2018), Assistant Professor Dr Elango Natarajan, Chuah Eng Yew and Mohd Fauzi Zanil.

The IEEE Robotics and Automation Society's (RAS) objectives are scientific, literary and educational in character. The Society strives for the advancement of the theory and practice of robotics and automation, engineering and science and of the allied arts and sciences.

This is to maintain high professional standards among its members, all in consonance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the IEEE and with special attention to such aims within the field of interest of the Society.

RAS strives to advance innovation, education, and fundamental and applied research in robotics and automation.

Robotics focuses on systems incorporating sensors and actuators that operate autonomously or semi-autonomously in cooperation with humans. Robotics research emphasises intelligence and adaptability to cope with unstructured environments.

On the other hand, automation research emphasises efficiency, productivity, quality, and reliability, focusing on systems that operate autonomously, often in structured environments over extended periods, and on the explicit structuring of such environments.

The Society provides aid in promoting close cooperation and exchange of technical information among its members and affiliates, and to this end holds meetings for the presentation of papers and their discussion, sponsors appropriate periodicals and special technical publications, and through its committees studies and provides for the needs of its members and affiliates.

On the whole, IEEE is the world's largest professional association dedicated to advancing technological innovation and excellence for the benefit of humanity. IEEE and its members inspire a global community through its highly cited publications, conferences, technology standards and professional and educational activities.

The IEEE RAS Malaysia chapter has more than 120 members consisting of more than 30 chapters depending on the engineering area of specialisation. The UCSI IEEE RAS executive committee members have contributed to more than 50% of the total activities carried out for the year 2018.

The biggest contribution factor was the IEEE ROMA 2018 Conference which was held in India during the month December 2018, in which UCSI was the co-sponsor and contributed 12 research papers. All the papers were presented in the conference and, soon, they will be indexed by Scopus.

Another major event was the IEEE International Advanced Robotic Competition which was conducted at UCSI in November 2018.

Dr Mohammad Faizal Ahmad Fauzi, chairman of the IEEE Malaysia Section 2018 was present to give a trophy and a certificate of appreciation to the UCSI's IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) Malaysia Chapter executive committee members.



UCSI's Assistant Professor Dr M.K.A. Ahamed Khan with the trophy and certificate.

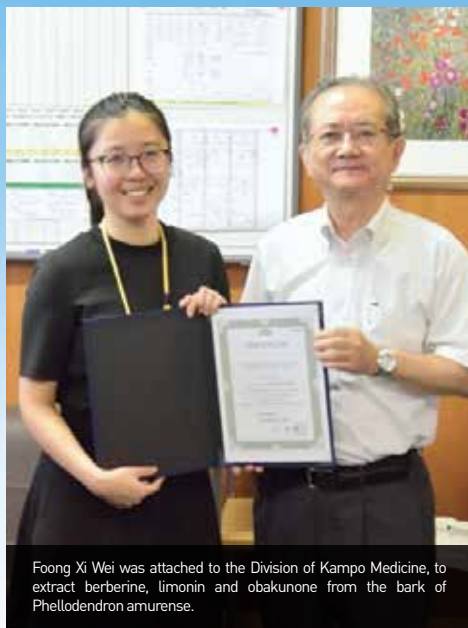


Group photo: Committee members from various universities representing the IEEE RAS Malaysia Chapter.

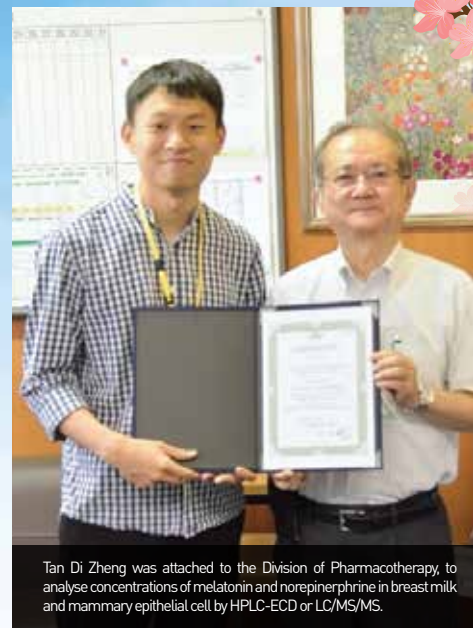
UCSI Students Venture Abroad



Cho An Nie was attached to the Division of Kampo Medicine, to study and compare the anatomical characteristics between *Cinnamomum casia*, *Cinnamomum sieboldii* Miesn, *Cinnamomum verum* J.Presl and *Cinnamomum burmannii*.



Foong Xi Wei was attached to the Division of Kampo Medicine, to extract berberine, limonin and obakunone from the bark of *Phellodendron amurense*.



Tan Di Zheng was attached to the Division of Pharmacotherapy, to analyse concentrations of melatonin and norepinephrine in breast milk and mammary epithelial cell by HPLC-ECD or LC/MS/MS.

Nihon Pharmaceutical University of Japan

UCSI University and Nihon Pharmaceutical University of Japan (NPU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for academic and educational collaboration in late February, 2018. This allows UCSI University Pharmacy undergraduates to spend one month in NPU. It is a chance for students to experience life in a foreign country and be a global citizen. It is also a good opportunity for students to pick up a new language, absorb new cultures and make new friends.

As third year students from the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Foong Xi Wei, Tan Di Zheng and Cho An Nie were awarded the chance to go for a 'Pharmaceutical Research' summer programme to NPU from June till July 2018.

During this short-term student exchange programme, they were attached to three professors in carrying out their research projects. Professor Fumihide Takano and Associate Professor Seiichi Yamaji were from the Division of Kampo Medicine while Associate Professor Tomoji Maeda was from the Division of Pharmacotherapy.

For example with Professor Takano, they learned about the isolation of active constituents from medicinal plants. To be specific, they extracted berberine, limonin and obakunone from the bark of the *Phellodendron amurense*. Berberine, a quaternary ammonium salt, is the major active ingredient of *Phellodendron amurense*.

Berberine has shown to be effective for the treatment of bacterially-induced diarrhoea and ocular trachoma. On the other hand, limonin and obakunone are believed to have antibacterial and anticancer effects. Mixture of these active compounds were first extracted by using an organic solvent and then separated by column chromatography according to their polarity.

This was followed by Thin Layer Chromatography (TLC), which helped to identify the fractions. Lastly, all the active compounds were condensed and purified. To determine and evaluate the active ingredients, they performed an Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA). The THP-1 cell line was incubated with different concentrations of the sample, berberine.

Next, two types of antibodies, TNF and IL-18 were used to assess the inflammation modulation function of berberine. Low concentration of cytokines attached to the antibodies showed the anti-inflammatory property of berberine and vice versa.

Throughout this one month research programme in Japan, the students learned interesting aspects of Japanese culture even though they encountered some challenges such as the language barrier.

They learned that politeness is essential among the Japanese. In Japan, people greet each other by bowing and this is also one of the ways of

showing respect. They found the people to be hardworking, punctual and serious about their work.

The students also saw that in Japan, the people "go green" by separating their garbage or unwanted items based on the materials they are made of like glass, plastic, PET, paper, food waste as well as burnable or unburnable materials.

As Nihon Pharmaceutical University's philosophy is "Life training via personality development", they not only focus on developing students who rigorously study pharmaceutical theories and techniques but also instil in them a deep sense of humanity and ethics.



The extraction equipment, the thin layer chromatography and needle-like tetrahydroberberine crystal.



Eugene at the University of Chicago, during his eight week research attachment there.

University of Chicago

During their few weeks in Chicago, Eugene Low Yi Ming and Doris Lee Shuo Yu worked in the clinical pharmacogenomics laboratory at the basement of Mitchell Hospital, University of Chicago Medicine.

Also UCSI Pharmacy students, they were able to revise and enhance their knowledge in pharmacogenomics. They studied and were given the opportunity to conduct assays that detect Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNPs) for several important genes in our body.

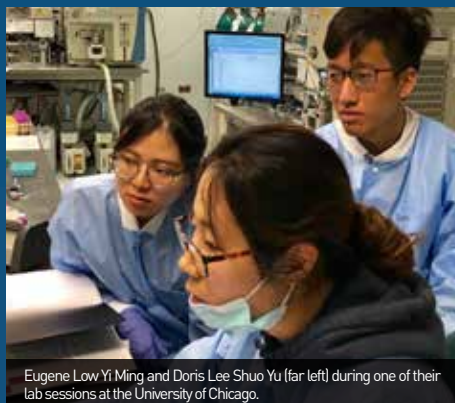
Two important assays, one of which is the CYP2D6 assay focuses on the gene itself that has more than 27 types of alleles, along with its Copy Number Variation. The other assay would be Open Array, which focuses on many types of genes, with a huge amount of SNPs that can be detected from the assay, up to 480 SNPs to be detected in a single run.

CYP2D6 and the Open Array assay were the crux of their project during their summer course training. Besides the huge portion of time spent on learning PGx (pharmacogenomics) and the assays, they were also exposed to the clinical chemistry laboratory. They were able to observe and learn the operations for therapeutic drug monitoring and blood tests in both the mass spectrometry and clinical chemistry lab.

"My experience at Chicago was eye-opening, fulfilling, and unforgettable. Other than

academics, a few aspects of what I experienced were the people, the food, the view and scenery, the festivals and celebrations, and last but not least, the climate," said Eugene.

"Due to the presence of numerous races in the state of Illinois, cultural tolerance and cultural assimilation were obvious among the people. The most important skill that I was able to brush up on was my communication skills," he said.



Eugene Low Yi Ming and Doris Lee Shuo Yu (far left) during one of their lab sessions at the University of Chicago.

"I was also able to improve my socialisation skills by meeting new people, making friends, and spending time with one another. Other skills I obtained or polished included time management, work ethics, and self-confidence," he continued.

"The knowledge and experience that I gained will be very useful in my career and in the

future, when I further my studies for a Master's degree or a PhD in any field related to pharmacogenomics, or if I extend my career to involve precision medicine," said Eugene.

Doris learned how important it was to experience new things, meet new people, make new friends, and learn about different lifestyles. She also learned to accept people from different backgrounds and not to judge people based on her own opinions as well as not to stereotype them.

"It was an extremely amazing and wonderful experience for me and living abroad was a life-changing experience," she said.

"What I learned technically from my research project greatly enhanced my study experience. I believe that the knowledge I gained would be useful for me to utilise in the future. I hope this knowledge will help me to improve the healthcare standards at my work place," shared.

Overall, it was evident that both students gained a lot from the research attachment in terms of knowledge, skills and intercultural experiences. As they continue their studies at UCSI, they will be better equipped to face challenges, both academic and social, that might come their way.



Dr Ammar Al-Talib:

Longest Serving Member in FETBE



Dr Ammar, having joined UCSI in 2001, is the longest serving member in the Faculty of Engineering, Technology and Built Environment.

When did you start working at UCSI and what compelled you to stay?

I started working at UCSI when it was still known as Sedaya College on May 2, 2001. At that time Dato' Peter Ng was the Vice-Chancellor and President. I found him to be very humble, close to everyone and accepting of new ideas or suggestions which encouraged me to keep working here. Also, our current Vice-Chancellor and President, Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff is the best example to be followed in academia and I am very happy working under his very bright vision.

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

I graduated from the Mechanical Engineering department of the Faculty of Engineering in the University of Mosul, Iraq. Being one of the top 10 graduates in my batch, I was the only graduate chosen to work in the same university from the Mechanical department. At that young age, I got the chance to supervise many of the big projects in the university, like the central air-conditioning systems for many buildings, the lifts and the indoor swimming pool of the university. My Bachelor's degree was in Mechanical Engineering but my Master's and PhD degrees were in thermo-fluid systems related to solar water heaters.

What interests you most in the field of Engineering?

Engineering is everywhere in our lives nowadays. The cars we drive to reach our destination, the hand phones we use to communicate, the pens we use to write, the air-conditioning unit we use to cool our offices, and many other uncountable things would not have existed without engineering. Having a Master's and PhD degrees in fields related to solar energy, I am well-versed in renewable energies. Recently, I supervised research in recycling and wasted plastics which has caused a huge negative impact on the environment and caused immense pollution leading to many health issues.

What motivates you to keep going?

Stagnant water is unhealthy; and I think that this rule of nature is applicable in all life aspects, and that's why everyone should keep on improving himself first, and then to have a positive impact on the society and humanity.



Up close and personal with Dr Ammar.

Tell us about your experiences in Iraq before you came to Malaysia.

According to the Iraqi system at that time, all graduates must serve in the army. Being a mechanical engineer, I was attached with many big engineering companies like Mercedes and FAUN from Germany, Hausen from Austria and Banhard from Brazil which provided military trucks to Iraq. After finishing my three year service in the army, I re-joined my university as a tutor in the Mechanical Engineering department, and then I did my Master's Degree. I worked as a lecturer in the Mechanical department until I came to Malaysia to complete my PhD at UPM. Besides working as a lecturer, I was a member in the Engineering Consulting Bureau at the University of Mosul, and have helped in many consultations for companies and industries in Iraq.

How has UCSI impacted your life?

Working at UCSI for the last 18 years has given me the great opportunity of seeing the tremendous growth of Sedaya College to UCSI University which is now the best private university in Malaysia and amongst the top 2% in the world. These achievements have been made possible through the efforts of our leader, Dato' Peter Ng the founder and CEO of UCSI Group who taught a good lesson to all on how to make things happen, and to change the impossible to be possible.

How about your career?

Also, Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff's rich experience in higher education has given UCSI University a great reputation nationally and internationally. At the Faculty level, the dean, Associate Professor Ir Dr Jimmy Mok Vee Hoong has given me the platform and support to develop all the postgraduate programmes in the Faculty, i.e. the Master of Philosophy in Engineering, the PhD in Engineering and the Industrial PhD in Engineering.

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

I used to tell my students, that "An engineer with clean hands is not an engineer"...which means that the engineering student should grab all the opportunities to learn real life engineering, and not confine themselves to the zone of theories. Fortunately, UCSI University has the Co-Op placement programme where students are well-equipped with real life engineering before graduation.



The Here and Now

with Lydia Devadas

Bright, ambitious, determined. These are some of the characteristics that describe Lydia Devadas. As she spoke about her interests and life goals, it was evident how passionate she really was about life, language and learning in general.

Having recently finished her BA (Hons) in English Language and Communication at UCSI, she says that the programme was a perfect blend of sociolinguistics, cross-cultural communication, journalism, ethnography and communication as well as other related courses that bring together the disciplines of language and communication.

But studying alone wasn't enough for Lydia who, incidentally, was on the Dean's List for three consecutive years and was a UCSI scholarship recipient.

Upon the advice of her lecturers, she went all out to pursue opportunities within the University and became the president of the English Language Student Association for a year. She was also active in UCSI's House of Talents which encouraged singing, dancing and emcee-ing.

"UCSI was a good platform for me and it opened doors to avenues other than just academics. By joining clubs, participating and organising events, emcee-ing and getting ELE points, I got to experience the 'other side' of university life," she continued.

Perhaps the most monumental achievement in Lydia's life happened last year when she received the Best Delegate award representing Malaysia and UCSI in the S. Rajaratnam Endowment – Youth Model ASEAN Conference (SRE-YMAC) 2018 held in Singapore.

She was selected to participate in this five day conference that witnessed cohorts of delegates (youths) from 10 ASEAN countries to unite and discuss on important current issues.

In the conference, Lydia was assigned to the Narcotics committee, under the ASEAN political-security pillar where the delegates gathered and discussed the current status of narcotics in South East Asian countries and the possible ways it could be curbed.

Participants were judged based on their interaction with others, teamwork, critical thinking abilities and the way they put forward ideas and their vision to deal with the respective issues.

Lydia with her certificate from the SRE-YMAC Conference 2018.



Lydia receives the Best Delegate Award representing Malaysia and UCSI.

Lydia and her team proposed that the narcotics issue be dealt with under the pillars of education, law enforcement and social empowerment.

"I was shocked and happy to receive this award. I believe change starts with 'us' and it is important for us to make a difference in ourselves first and then motivate others to do the same. It is about the individual first and then group, and then the community at large," she said.

"Through the conference, I learned to increase my confidence, improve my ability to speak and be persuasive," she added.

Upon completion of her studies, she continued her first Co-Op placement with The Star as a journalist. Her second and third Co-Op placement was as a content writer in a property-based company.

"At The Star, I was always on-the-go with busy schedules and having to be productive. My time there provided me with the platform to expand and learn more in my field as well as help me in my networking," she said.

Her undergraduate research proposal was on the topic of 'Language and Women Empowerment' dealing with sociolinguistics and how language plays a role in the perception of students when it comes to the empowerment of women.

Interestingly enough, in her research she found that male respondents perceived women empowerment more positively than the females and were more supportive towards the cause. The findings opened a new array of possibilities for her to further this research on a higher level during her PhD.

"I really have to thank UCSI for providing great lecturers in the department who are the main source of knowledge and who go out of their way to support students. The environment is also conducive for studying with study areas that are available even through the night," she added.

Lydia especially conveyed her gratitude to Assistant Professor Dr Vighnarajah, the former Head of the English Language and Communication department as well as her research supervisor who relentlessly guided and nurtured her not just in her academics but also in her participation in the conference.

As for her ambitions, Lydia has applied for her PhD both locally and abroad.

"I might venture into academics, specifically lecturing, as I love teaching; it is one of my passions. It is also my love for the English Language and public speaking that keeps me going," she confessed.

"I am encouraged and motivated to do more and bring pride as an alumna to UCSI University. Here, I have learned to take the first step in making a difference and not to be afraid," she shared.

Undoubtedly, the future is bright for Lydia who through her exemplary achievements is able to give back to the University and through her soaring ambitions is able to impact the people and communities around her at the same time.

Lydia presents her team's proposal on the issue of narcotics.



GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT DAY

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff giving a speech at the memorable event.



Students at one of the booths at the Study Fair.

UCSI University's newly rebranded Global Engagement Office (GEO) is the springboard for students towards international studies. As the focal point for UCSI students who aspire to study abroad, it offers more than a hundred pathways to reputable universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland and other countries.

GEO has put in place several goals to usher in a world of possibilities. One of them is this inaugural Global Engagement Day. The event featured more than 26 world leading universities showcasing various aspects related to studying abroad at Le Quadri Hotel's Grand Ballroom.

Themed "Be Connected. Go Global", the two-day event was tailored to assist students to decide suitable education pathways from UCSI. Besides hosting a Study Abroad Fair, the event also showcased sharing sessions of students who have traveled abroad to study.

These specially selected students expounded academically and personally on what their experience was like abroad and they were altogether a source of encouragement and support to current students.

Other than that, the event enabled students to explore programmes, speak with advisors, get to know the faculties and learn more about scholarships to pursue their studies internationally.

This event was an ideal platform for parents, students and academics to converge and share experiences and insights and get up-to date information on the available education pathways and opportunities provided by UCSI.

"Through this Global Engagement Day, I have no doubt that we are in the right path to achieve greater heights in the foreseeable future, for the benefit of our students here and overseas," said UCSI University's Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff.

The launch of GED was officiated by esteemed guests which included Hainan Tropical Ocean University vice-president Yang Ziju, Beijing Geely University president Professor Dr Hou Weidong, Embassy of Finland (in Malaysia) Deputy Head of Mission Teemu Laakkonen, UCSI Group

founder and CEO Dato' Peter Ng, and senior vice-president of the Global Engagement Office Willie Tan.

In his keynote speech, Laakkonen shared his insights by saying, "If students are unable to solve problems on their own or are unable to adapt to changes while at school, they are most likely going to be jobless later on."

Essentially, Laakkonen said the education system of a country must provide a wholesome learning experience for students to be creative and innovative.

"Technology is evolving rapidly. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is profoundly impacting almost every aspect of humankind and in all sectors. The question is: How can the education system remain relevant?" he asked.

"The key is none other than to espouse creativity in the teaching system; because only a creative mind can solve problems and adapt to changes," he added.

"On that note, even Plato once said, 'Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each,'" he said.

Aside from creativity, Laakkonen asserted that the government must give sufficient emphasis on teachers' welfare.



New Beginnings: UCSI's Global Engagement Day is about being connected; and going global.

In Finland, he said, teachers must possess a Master's degree qualification at least, adding that it was also a well-paid profession. His presentation focused on the success factors, challenges, and renewal of education in the context of learning 21st century competencies.

The basics of educational system in Finland are the underlying values of basic human rights, equality, democracy, biodiversity and environmental conservation, as well as, the viability of multiculturalism and its approval.

At the event, Laakkonen applauded UCSI University for employing exceptional lecturers.

"This is indeed the way to go. Quality teachers produce quality people. It is obvious that the tremendously skilled team of lecturers at UCSI are among the key contributors to the University's ranking as the number one private university in Malaysia," he relayed.

UCSI University's Global Engagement Office (GEO) functions as a one-stop-centre that assists students with counselling, visa

assistance, and credit transfers. As part of its primary task to lead the development of international strategy for UCSI — a fundamental component of the University's strategic plan — GEO oversees transnational education and collaboration.

To put matters into perspective, GEO strives to increase the flexibility of international opportunities for UCSI students to study abroad and subsequently ensure they secure professional careers.

UCSI University, having been distinguished as Malaysia's best private university in the QS World University Rankings 2019, has also been constantly sending its students to the world's best universities like Harvard, Imperial College London, Tsinghua University, University of Chicago and University of Queensland to advance high impact research programmes.

Through GEO, it is evident that students will be exposed to more opportunities of studying abroad. This will greatly enhance their study portfolio and will give them the experience and knowledge they need to further their career.

They will also be exposed to different cultures and ways of learning which will enable them to broaden their horizons and help in building networks. Essentially, they will have a more enriching and holistic study experience.



The launching of Global Engagement Day.



Global Engagement Day VIPs and guests.

Bringing Together The Old And New



All Smiles: A group photo of the UCSI Chinese New Year Alumni Gathering.

The UCSI Chinese New Year Alumni Gathering 2019 was the first ever held and, from now on, will be an event we will always look forward to. The night was filled with joy and laughter, and plenty of shared stories by UCSI seniors and mentors.

The evening began with our respective alumni gathering at Le Quadri's Hatton Restaurant for a meal as they mingled with familiar and new faces; catching up with each other's achievements and accomplishments.

There was a stunning performance by UCSI's Year Three Contemporary Music student, Ng Shin Khay, who sang Whitney Houston's 'I Have Nothing' and a classic crowd favourite 'Yong Qi Bang Dudu'. The crowd cheered her on as she soulfully and expressively sang the songs.

Welcoming everyone to the night's celebrations was Loo Kah Heng, UCSI University Alumni Association president, who talked about UCSI University being a wonderful and resourceful place for students.

"Tonight, we all come from different backgrounds and cultures, having studied

and graduated from UCSI and have found success in the fields that we are most expert at," said Heng.

"We would like to bring all of UCSI alumni together through our association and allow everyone the opportunity to meet and mingle with each other from different fields, so that they can expand their networking field. Or in other words, by alumni, for the alumni," added Heng.

This Lunar Year, we celebrate the boar, or in other words, the Year of the Pig. The Chinese word for 'boar', 豕, is used in forming the word 'home', 家, which connotes wellness.

In conjunction with the Lunar New Year, the Student Affairs and Alumni Division along with the UCSI's Alumni Association hopes that this first reunion dinner will gradually bring our alumni closer during the festive season.

Also, what better time for us all to kindle a bond with one another and be inspired by the successful stories of our former peers?

Around the world, the Chinese believe this celebration signifies the turn of the Chinese calendar and the start of a new chapter in

life. And to usher in the Year of the Pig, many homes are beautifully decked with red or gold-coloured Tang Lungs and auspicious greetings; many have also travelled far and wide for reunions with family and friends.

Along with new beginnings, comes the unknown challenges we have to face. Reminding us all that these beginnings are also a time of greater prosperity and advancement, UCSI Group founder and CEO Dato' Peter Ng said in his speech that it is a time for new goals and dreams; a time to write new chapters in life.

He also emphasised that often it is through brotherhood that we will be able nurture the ties that bind together our family and friends, rekindling relationships that may have been strained by time and distance.



Assistant Professor Foo Fang Eee (right) with one of the guests.

-Photos courtesy of Annisa Meriwan Putri and Nadya Realty Souisa (Mass Communication Student Association) -



Dato' Peter Ng sharing his fond memories at UCSI.

In his speech, Ng noted a few great career trajectories like Cynthia Ng and Cherish Leow who both read the Bachelor of Arts in Communication and are currently working at Astro.

"I'm thankful that this is part of the larger UCSI narrative - one that sees our students and alumni going on to achieve their goals in life, and more importantly, making a difference in society," said Ng.

"In the last few years alone, three UCSI alumni, namely, Kim Lim, Suzanne Ling and Lee Swee Lin made the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia list for social entrepreneurship. Robbie Ng was appointed vice-president at JP Morgan Chase. And Alvin Teo went on a tour of duty with Doctors Without Borders, delivering medical aid to people in some of the world's most challenging regions in Syria, Ukraine, Pakistan and Sudan," he added.

"These accounts, and yours, are the chronicles that truly make UCSI great and that a university's success is best measured by that of its students not the number of buildings it has or its respective rankings - however lofty they may be," he reminded.

Later in the evening, guests had the pleasure of listening to a few sharing sessions by prominent alumni including Seow Cheng Chien, founder and CEO of Hiton International Sdn Bhd and Kendrick Ng Tiong Heng, founder and CEO of Kendy Life Creative.



Guests having a good time at the gathering.

Faculty of Applied Sciences head of Foundation in Science, Assistant Professor Alice Phua Choon Yen, who was also present at the gathering said that this year will be her 13th at UCSI University.

"UCSI has definitely gone through massive changes and I hope that it continues to grow. And this concerns not just the physical aspect but also the relationship, governance, staff and student's satisfaction, and the

all-roundedness of the faculties that we can offer to the students," she said.

But no matter what kind of chapter you had at UCSI, staff or student, Alice is certain that without a doubt one would go far in life.

Faculty of Business and Information Science's Assistant Professor Foo Fang Ee also relayed his fond memories as he has been teaching at UCSI University for eight years.

"My first year here was definitely much simpler. And today, I am fortunate to witness the endless growth of UCSI University," he said.

"I noticed that with the current developed infrastructure, students can have the space and freedom to mingle around other than just in Block A, which was their only hang-out spot before. It is nice that students can communicate with ease all across the campus," said Foo.

As the gathering came to an end, everyone left with a feeling of gratitude as they shared cherished moments at UCSI. It was truly a gathering of the old and the new and the perfect time to exchange experiences at the University.

UCSI Pharmacy Education Fund Launching Ceremony



Rahang assemblywoman, Mary Josephine Prittam Singh receiving a token of appreciation from UCSI Group founder and CEO, Dato' Peter Ng.

Did you know that there is a shortage of pharmacists in Malaysia? According to Dr Salmah Bahri of the Ministry of Health, there were 16,714 registered pharmacists in the country in the year 2017. This puts the number of patients to pharmacists at a ratio of 1:1,600, which is below the number needed for Malaysia.

These statistics were revealed by UCSI's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences dean Assistant Professor Dr Mogana Sundari Rajagopal - at the launch of the UCSI Pharmacy Education Fund UCSI University - to 300 students from six schools around Port Dickson that was officiated by Rahang assemblywoman Mary Josephine Prittam Singh.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, Josephine commented, "Malaysia needs more pharmacists to meet the ideal 1:1,200 ratio in order to provide the best services to the people, to cater to the country's growing population."

"The scope of pharmaceutical services is very wide, from service in hospitals, community, basic and secondary treatment, as well as in the manufacturing and distribution sectors. The number of

pharmacists we have are still not enough," she continued.

She then commended UCSI's dedication in helping the Negeri Sembilan (Port Dickson) students to succeed in the field.

"I am grateful for UCSI University for helping the community at Port Dickson whereby up to RM650,000 in scholarships and grants has been set aside for SPM, STPM and A-Level students who strive to become pharmacists," she said.

"Today, we are here to witness the launching of the UCSI Pharmacy Education Fund. I welcome all students to utilise this opportunity from UCSI University towards a very successful and fruitful future career as a pharmacist," she added.

"Pharmacists are medicine experts. They guarantee that the right medicine is prescribed at the right time, and in the right dosage, to the right patient. This is the importance of pharmacists," she continued.

"Pharmacists are relatively easily accessible out of all the health care professionals and they apply their knowledge very effectively to protect the health and prevent illness of people," she remarked.

UCSI alumni Yap Chuan Sheng, then shared his experience studying at UCSI University while then proceeding to do the Master's in Clinical Pharmacy Practice programme and eventually becoming a UCSI lecturer to train the next generation of pharmacists.

Yap had this to say, "Many people think being a pharmacist is all about memorising things. The skills you need to have to succeed are knowledge on how to interpret the information that you have, and how to utilise that knowledge to help the patients".



Assistant Professor Dr Mogana Sundari Rajagopal reveals statistics about the pharmaceutical industry.

Lee Jen Nie, who is currently a third year student studying Pharmacy at UCSI University also came up on stage to share her experiences as a student. She talked about the mentor-mentee system, the modern lecture halls and updated new materials at the library as well as the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences' regular events such as the 'Annual World Pharmacist Day' and the 'Know Your Medicine' campaign.

She was also selected to do an industrial attachment at a pharmaceutical company where she was exposed to different manufacturing processes and active patient cases and will be doing her next hospital attachment at Taiwan in her fourth year of study.

Amir Izzad, who had just finished his SPM, was also inspired to become a pharmacist.

"This event encouraged me to further my studies in the Science field - but most especially in Pharmacy," he said.

"I realised that a pharmacist is the 'gatekeeper of medicine', but yet they do not get the attention they deserve in society. They do work which is just as important as medical doctors yet we do not know much about it," he commented.

The public should know that pharmacists and doctors need each other - one can't be without the other. I hope to open my own



Lee Jen Nie, a third year UCSI University Pharmacy student sharing her experiences.

pharmacy one day here at Port Dickson, where my ultimate dream is to do research on unknown diseases and find a cure for them," he shared.

And this perfectly echoes Josephine's closing remarks:

"So take up this challenge students, and go for it. I sincerely hope that this grant will help encourage students, namely from and around Port Dickson. If you want to be seen worldwide, people of PD, come here, come to UCSI University to become pharmacists - the medicine experts. I congratulate all of you this

day and I wish you all the best. UCSI, you can do it! We place our confidence in you!"

The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at UCSI University has an established track record of training pharmacists and scientists since the year 2000. The faculty, being one of the leading Pharmacy educators offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes with an emphasis on serving the community. It has collaborations with hospitals, community pharmacies, pharmaceutical and other manufacturing industries.



Members of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, UCSI staff and other guests at the launch.

The Geometry of The Market



Students working on their architectural pieces.

South East Asia is famed for its vibrant and active market activities, with its inherent stimulating experiences. With this common ground, what are the differences between Hong Kong, Chiang Mai and Kuala Lumpur that we can learn from?

The Geometry of Equality was a six day collaborative workshop between Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI), Chiang Mai University (CMU) and UCSI University which aimed to explore the market as an urban intervention.

The Cantonese word for a marketplace is 'Hui' (墟), literally meaning an urban void where vendors gather at a set time to perform activities. A shared economy is another name for it. The market is one of the oldest forms of social activities that is inclusive, and involves micro-economy.

The ecology of the market is supposed to be driven by the free market – a Laissez Faire system. In this context, we understand that markets are both an architecture of equality, and a binding agent of the community.

The universal setting of markets has been rows of grid divided by circulations. In the workshop, students were asked to explore the alternatives of such settings, and come up with an optimal geometry to form a market place.

Prior to the workshop, students had been through an excursion of the Mong-Kok

market place, which is one of the densest places in the world. This excursion to Mong Kok was led by HKDI lecturer, Julia Ting.

UCSI student Oon Wu Han described the most interesting part of the excursion as being the different typology of market stalls in Mong Kok and Malaysia where the market stalls in Mong Kok were made of expandable modular.

According to him, each modular was located beside the street all the time. The size of the modular was 1m x 1m before operation, the stalls owners will then expand their modulators into bigger territories to start their business; while in Malaysia, each market stall is operated by a set up tent or mobile stall truck.

"Due to the fact that Mong Kok is one of the densest cities in the world, every piece of

land is very precious. I then started thinking how to appreciate the utilisation of urban spaces in architecture. For instance, the use of modular designs in their market places help to reduce the occupation of streets when the stall owners are not using the stalls," he said.

"Thus, I think the issue of cramped living spaces in the future cannot be overlooked during our design process although the issue has not yet risen in Malaysia. In this context, designs that adapt the metabolism of the population are necessary," he proposed.

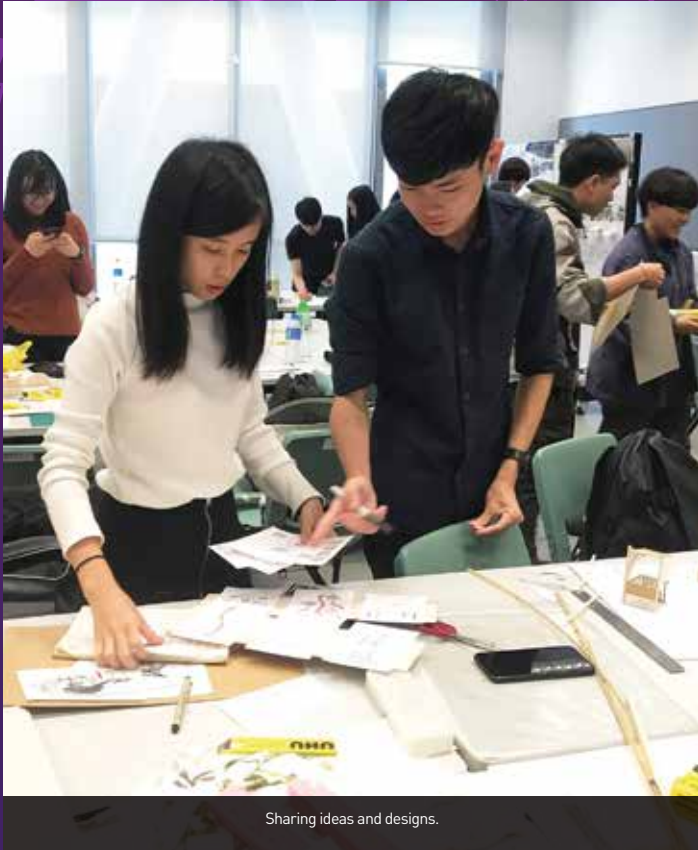
Back at HKDI, there were a series of sharing sessions and lectures by Professor Pandin Ounchanum from Chiang Mai University, James Lim from UCSI University, Eddie Chan and Julia Ting from HKDI, Assistant Professor Daniel Elkin from Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Sarah Mui from One Bite Design Studio.

The workshop was held at the design studio of HKDI. Students from the three institutions and universities formed groups of 4 to 5 to carry out discussions and to produce solutions for the mentioned objective.

For Wu Han, undoubtedly, meeting new people in the architecture field from different cultural backgrounds was the most exciting part. Each person had a very unique way of thinking in terms of architectural



Sketches, drawings and pictures from students.



Sharing ideas and designs.



Architecture students presenting their work on markets.

design and this enabled him to explore a new horizon of ideas.

However, the challenge of language barriers was inevitable as there were students from Hong Kong and Thailand communicating in various languages. These new ways of interaction were really interesting to him.

From the perspective of Ching Wee Han, also a UCSI Architecture student, "We all know that Hong Kong is an extremely compact country. After the excursion to Mong Kok, I realised that even though Hong Kong has very limited space for daily activities, the vibrant market place still plays an extremely important role and becomes a special cultural characteristic of the bustling city of Hong Kong," she said.

For Wee Han, different from Malaysia's market, the market in Mong Kok appeared to be categorised street by street. The names of every street were preserved, resembling their characteristics, for example, Ladies' Street, Sneakers Street, Flower Market Road and Goldfish Street.

"From a Malaysian perspective, I would think that the market is a place that mostly sells fresh and cheap groceries, often visited by elder people only. However, unexpectedly, the markets in Hong Kong sold a wide variety of things, and was visited also by a lot of young people," she shared.

The Hong Kong market was really unique to her. Given that Mong Kok is Hong Kong's most congested shopping and residential district, she discovered that the best time to explore the streets was around 5-6pm. In this way she learnt to compromise with its high population density.

After she joined the workshop, Wee Han was of the opinion that the markets in Malaysia shouldn't stay under the canopy form forever.

She cited the example of the Hong Kong government re-arranging the wet market within a service building. Thus, the management was more systematic where hygiene and standards of the wet market improved.

Wee Han also thought that the most interesting part of the workshop was when

there was a discussion on how to modify and improve Hong Kong's current market space.

"In my group, there were two students from Chiang Mai University, two students from HKDI and myself from UCSI. The discussion went well and successfully bonded all of us together. The brainstorming session was fun because throughout the discussion, we managed to understand the characteristics of markets from different countries," she concluded.

Overall, the workshop was enlightening and enriching for all participants where the students were required to present their ideas through various mediums: models, images, collages and diagrams of design ideas. Constructive criticism and comments of ideas were given from each panel after the students' presentations.



Putting it all together: Students share their work on markets.

- Photos courtesy of Ching Wee Han and Tee Choi Nii (SABE) -



Group photo of the EMERGE Graduation Showcase.

ICAD's EMERGE Graduation Showcase

UCSI University hosted the inaugural ICAD Graduation Showcase, an event that featured the best works from students of De Institute of Creative Arts and Design (ICAD) – the design school of UCSI.

Showcasing graphic design, multimedia design, 3D design and fashion design creations, the event lived up to its theme – 'Emerge' – as ICAD's young designers displayed exemplary work that measured up to the artistic demands of the ever-evolving creative industry.

From bold splashes of colour into the mix of opera makeup and Chinese painting, to applying silhouettes of classical instruments into a design and to mastering the art of self-expression through art, this collection was an artistic experience for all.



Dato' Peter Ng presenting a token of appreciation to Andrew Tan.

At ICAD prior to this graduation showcase, students also learned to conceptualise the entire marketing campaign for their collection – from marketing strategy to materials.

Notable industry names who attended the show included Andrews Models and Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week Ready To Wear founder Andrew Tan, who was awestruck by

the potential showcased by the talented students.

"It's amazing to see how the fashion industry is continuously growing and advancing with newer and fresher designs; and to witness the incredible efforts that go into shaping and flourishing these young minds," he said. Additionally, Zhang Jiexin (Culture Director) and Wang Shuang (Culture Officer) of the People's Republic of China Embassy's Education and Culture Department were also present.

The event showcased the collections of nine final year fashion design students of ICAD.

The use of brown and earthy tones were well represented by Ng Kai Ting's 'True of Form' collection while the Diploma graduate, Hui Qing, reflected the society's predicament in her 'Graffiti – The Words on the Street' collection.

The other collections were, 'On The Wings of Diesel' by Iqraa Rashid, 'The Silent Catastrophe' by Hoong Jee Chieng, 'Doppelganger' by Ng Kai Ting, 'Rediscovered Symmetrical Balance' by Zhanna Otegen, 'Loud and Proud' by Li Miao, 'Prison' by Khoo Sher Min, and finally, 'Subtle Distraction' by Tan Ying Qian.

The Emerge ICAD's Graduation Showcase was the pinnacle of all the programmes at ICAD as it provided an opportunity to preview students' final collections and to see the breadth of creative talent, which contributes to the University's reputation as one of the best in the country.

"ICAD's Graduation Showcase 2018 is a microcosm of the dynamic setting at UCSI that prepares students not only to meet, but exceed the exacting demands of the



Ng Kai Ting takes home the Best Fashion Collection Award.

industry," said UCSI Group founder and CEO Dato' Peter Ng, adding how the graduates would soon join a growing network of UCSI alumni who has achieved greatly in the creative industries.

"This immersive environment has brought out the best in UCSI students and many have gone on to make a name for themselves," he also said.

"From winning challenging competitions like the AirAsia Runway Designer Search, headlining the KL Fashion Week, getting lengthy apprenticeships with established designers like Jovian Mandagie, working with leading models like Amber Chia to being employed by leading video game developers like Codemasters from the UK, our students realise their potential," he relayed.

UCSI University aims to give the students an all-encompassing approach to design fields and first-hand experience of the industry. The event ended with the presentation of the Best Collection Award which was won by Ng Kai Ting.



The Preamble to Penang Fashion Week 2019



Penang Fashion Week (PFW) is set to return for its fifth year at Gurney Paragon, Penang and with runway shows from local and international designers, it will once again offer us a fine overview of the creative and diverse local fashion scene.

A platform for new and emerging talents to showcase their creations, PFW will allow designers to parade their latest creations on the catwalk specially constructed in Gurney Paragon's Atrium. Although for most shows, seating is limited to the invited guests of the designers, there is ample room around the periphery and upstairs balconies for the general public to enjoy the shows.

This year, on 5 May 2019, UCSI's Institute of Creative Arts and Design (ICAD) alumni are set to launch their own brands at the Penang Fashion Week 2019. Zhanna Otegen from Kazakhstan, Ng Kai Ting from Malaysia, and Miko from China all did a Bachelor of Fashion Design with Marketing.

Here is a description of these talented young girls' fresh brands:

Slow and Steady Wins the Race



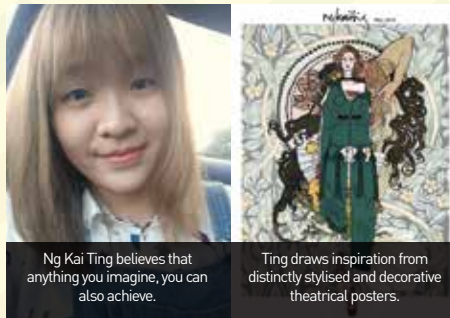
Zhanna Otegen is a new brand based on ready to wear exotic styles which focus on something very uncommon and extraordinary. The garments are often mysterious, intriguing and centres on rich colours, embroidery, mysterious patterns, prints and mosaics. The brand focuses on men and women from the age of 18 to 35.

"My inspiration is Gustav Klimt's art. He embedded allusions to sexuality and the human psyche in the rich, lavishly decorated figures and patterns that populated his canvases, murals, and mosaics. His art represents deep feelings for women's love and nature's beauty by using rich colours of gold," said Zhanna, the designer, on her

inspirations for her upcoming collection at PFW 2019.

Starting off small on social media (Instagram), Zhanna had to work hard for her brand's marketing. Knowing her vision for her brand was big, this talented Kazakhstan fashion designer is ensuring that she has a befitting business strategy.

Anything You Imagine, You Can Also Achieve



Ng Kai Ting is a designer label which provides delicate artsy-style fashion and trends. The brand concept is associated with a few keywords like unique, innovative, creative and cosy.

"I was inspired by Alphonse Mucha, a Czech artist, who was famous during the Art Nouveau period. He is best known for his distinctly stylised and decorative theatrical posters," said Ng Kai Ting, the local designer.

Thanks to social media marketing, Ting will continue to promote her brand on a virtual platform as it is the most affordable and easiest way for brand awareness.

"I will also start selling a few of my pieces online to test the market and weigh in on the responses," she added.

To all her juniors at UCSI University, Ting advised to simultaneously work hard and play hard.

"Remember to have a balanced life with both your studies and passions. The inspiration will come afterwards. Don't limit your ideas by your inner fears because anything you imagine, you can also achieve it," said Ting.

Carpe All That Diem



All the way from China, Miko is proud of her brand 'Aros Bridal Studio'; an affordable handmade bridal wear collection.

"Originally, my intention is that every girl can wear their own unparalleled wedding dress and marry their true love. So I want to make sure that custom made wedding dresses are achievable because every girl deserves to own her dream wedding dress," said Miko, the designer.

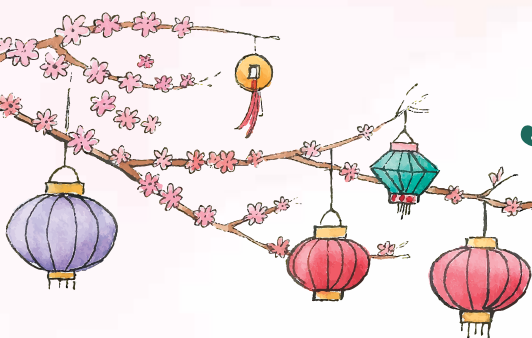
"Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" the movie is Miko's inspiration for her upcoming collection in Penang Fashion week 2019.

"The traditional wedding dress colour is white, but my collection will be something new and fresh. I want to make the brides wear layers of light gauze filled with colourful flowers and leaves like a garden," she added.

In the early stages, Miko spent most of her time in product designs. So her next step now is to market Aros Bridal Studio. She hopes to have her own franchise, locally and overseas.

"Be sure to participate in more fashion-related events or competitions and don't be shy as it will greatly benefit you in your career. Once your life as a student ends, it will be hard to find the energy and free time to partake in competitions, so don't let the opportunity slip by now," she reminded all her juniors at UCSI University.

For an exciting and glamorous weekend, be sure to catch Penang Fashion Week this 3rd to 5th May 2019 at Gurney Paragon, Penang.



The Lantern Festival

- Photos courtesy of Shan Shan (UCSI China Student Association) and Koh Seng Jian (Xiamen University Malaysia) -



The Chinese orchestra playing melodious tunes.

The Lantern Festival celebration held on 23 February 2019 at UCSI College was certainly one to remember with its lively dances, mesmerising music and stunning shows. The audience was thoroughly entertained and delighted with the performances that continued one after another throughout the night.

Organised by UCSI's China Student Association and co-organised by the UKM China Student Association and APU China Student Association, the celebration was held in the Grand Ballroom 2 and brought together people from all walks of life. Amidst the excitement and applause from the audience, the significance of the festival was not forgotten.

Marking the end of Chinese New Year, in a way, the festival symbolises people letting go of their past selves and embracing the new. They will, in turn, let go of these new selves in the next year.

The various traditional customs and activities that are held during Lantern Festival include watching lanterns and fireworks, guessing lantern riddles, performing folk dances, and eating yuanxiao - a dumpling ball made of sticky rice flour stuffed with different fillings.

Among those present at the celebration were UCSI's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) Associate Professor Dr Yeong Siew

Wei, China Student Association Malaysia president Zhang Run Xuan, Shun Feng Express Malaysia deputy general manager Jason Kong and UCSI's China Student Association president Zhang Ruize.

The night started out with a performance by the UCSI and APU Chinese Orchestra Club with their reverberating and harmonious sounds. It was a special blend of different instruments all coming together to make one resounding melody.



The captivating Diabolo show.

The rise and fall of the music were both soothing and entertaining at the same time which caught the attention of the audience right from the start. Some of the pieces played were light and others had heavy undertones.

Some were even familiar tunes, including Chinese New Year greeting songs but were improvised so that they sounded quaint and unique. The orchestra ended with a grand finale to which the audience gave a huge round of applause.



The performer showing his 'mask'.

The next performance was a Diabolo show where the performers demonstrated their deftness and coordination as they balanced two headed tops on a string stretched between two sticks. The performers were in tune with the music as they moved faster and faster, never missing a beat.

Also that night, there was a modern dance performance by the UCSI dance club. The dancers clad in red and black moved rhythmically to upbeat songs, with perfectly synchronised routines.

UCSI Music student Aina Abdul sang two songs, the first of which was titled "Shadow" which she composed herself and which was released last year. It was her second single to be released.

Her performance was expressive and dramatic with meaningful lyrics, very much like popular songs by Alicia Keys and other singers like her. Her second song was in Chinese entitled "You Exist In My Song" which was much appreciated by the audience.

As the night continued on, the audience was kept entertained with other songs, dances, a Chinese Kung Fu and a Chinese Mask Changing performance among others. Overall, although signifying a Chinese festival, it was a fun-filled and joyous event enjoyed by everyone regardless of culture or religion.

The UCSI Community Garden



Group Photo: Towards A Sustainable Future.



The Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Kuching's UCSI Community Garden Initiative sees it embarking upon a positive, practical and invigorating journey toward embracing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN). Being strong proponents of 'walking the talk', it enthusiastically launched the Eco-Campus Initiative in January 2019.

This Initiative is four-pronged, covering Energy Consumption Reduction, Waste Management, Green Procurement and the UCSI Community Garden. Through this Eco-Campus Initiative, UCSI University will be able to reduce their carbon footprint and educate their staff and students to work for nature and with nature for a sustainable future.

On the 14th of February 2019, the staff and students of UCSI University Sarawak Campus were encouraged to give a unique type of Valentine's gift. Instead of giving cards, soft toys and red roses to each other, they were invited to "fall in love with nature".

That is how the UCSI Community Garden was born. Approximately 50 students and 10 staff members laboured together for three hours on that morning to clear the land and add some soil to the garden beds.

"The wholehearted response from all the participants was received with great appreciation. We were so encouraged to see

that around 30 of the students decided to sign up to be involved on a more long term basis! With this kind of response we are sure to make this garden a great success", enthused the UCSI Community Garden advisor, Agnes Toner.

The objectives of the UCSI Community Garden are to produce organic herbs, vegetables and fruit for use in the UCSI student kitchens; to use kitchen waste as compost in the garden; to use weeds and grass cutting waste to produce topsoil for the garden; and to empower participants to be influential community garden ambassadors, leading to a future RCE programme entitled "A Garden for Every Family".

Associate Professor Dr Yeong Siew Wei, UCSI's Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Academic and Research) and Chairperson of RCE Kuching, elaborated, "In the process of cultivating and managing this garden we will be successfully addressing and directly impacting our university community with four of the UN SDGs; namely SDG 4-Quality Education, SDG 11-Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 12-Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 15-Life on Land.



Working for nature with nature.



Staff and students doing their part in the UCSI Community Garden.

RCE Kuching has formed productive collaborative connections with WormingUp and the G.A.M.E.S. PLT Urban Farming Group.

Both organisations will be providing expert advice and help on various aspects of the project including donating plants, turning kitchen waste into usable compost, preparing the soil for planting, turning weeds and grass cuttings into topsoil, and improving harvest yields.

RCE Kuching is well on its way to becoming an effective platform through which students can become more environmentally responsible while also learning their respective courses.

With the consistent, long term input from the RCE Eco-Campus Initiative, including the UCSI Community Garden, this rising generation will be better equipped to initiate green solutions as an integral part of Malaysian society.



JEREMIAH JOSEPH FONSEKA

BA (Hons) Hospitality Management, graduated 2014

Jeremiah Fonseka has been working as a Consultant General Manager in Tanjung Rhu Resort Langkawi since December 5, 2018. His interest in the industry developed after his SPM when he worked part-time in a hotel back in his home town. Since then, there was no turning back and his passion blossomed. To top it off, he also picked up fishing as a hobby while he was stationed in Langkawi.

In this column, The UCSI Gazette applauds the accomplishments of UCSI alumni. As we catch up with them, we find that they are pursuing their careers successfully in the profession of their choice, or some furthering their studies. Others are finally doing what they love while some are involved in worthy endeavours which benefit the community as a whole. In this issue, we catch up with Jeremiah Fonseka a BA (Hons) Hospitality Management graduate, who is pursuing a career at Tanjung Rhu Resort Langkawi.

What made you choose your programme at UCSI?

UCSI was one of the very few universities with a Faculty of Hospitality in Sarawak. In year 2009, I came to know that UCSI offered a Diploma in Hotel Management in Kuching, Sarawak and this was then recommended by my friends. During that time I also saw lots of adverts in social media and on the Internet as well.

What made you decide to pursue a degree in the Hospitality field?

After my diploma, I was encouraged by my lecturer Bernard Jussem to pursue my BA (Hons) in Hospitality Management. And surely I have no regrets in pursuing this degree as Assistant Professor Daniel Yong advised and matched us with the right placement programme. Nevertheless, UCSI prepared me both in theory and practice on the expectations of the industry.

How is your current position related to what you learnt at UCSI?

Being a GM of a resort requires me to have full knowledge and understanding in the Hospitality business. I was in the first batch of Diploma students from UCSI to undergo the Work Based Learning (WBL) programme majoring in Hotel Management. We had a lot of hands-on real life experiences to learn from.

What was your favourite course at UCSI? Why?

I actually liked all the courses offered at UCSI, but if I have to pick one, I would say Financial Management. Financial management has always been my forte in my career and what I studied in UCSI was surely useful.

What part has UCSI played in your achievements?

By placing me in the "talent matching programme" under FHTM in Kuching. This is where Assistant Professor Daniel Wong's advice came in and I was matched with the right placement programme to complete my six months Co-Op in Four Points by Sheraton Kuching. It all started there and today I am where I am now.

Describe your learning experience at UCSI.

It was definitely an enjoyable experience I must say. Both theory classes and on the job training really balanced out the learning experience. Being an international university where foreign students can get to be part of the programme was surely a plus in the whole experience. I also made a lot of friends during my time at UCSI.

Tell us about some of your work experiences.

In year 2012, I started off as a trainee at Four Points By Sheraton Kuching. After six months as a trainee, I joined the company as an accounts assistant. There worked my way up to assistant financial controller. Meanwhile, during my four years with Starwood I gained a lot of experience especially in the finance department.

What was your experience at Century Langkawi Beach Resort?

I started off as the assistant financial controller in Century Beach Resort. There I was mainly doing budgeting and financial planning for the owner. After two years I was promoted to the General Manager of the resort where I oversaw the full operations and financial plans of the resort.

What was your best working experience?

In 2015, Sheraton Langkawi Beach Resort was appointed as the main caterer for LIMA'15, the largest Maritime and Aviation Show in Malaysia. During that period I successfully led my team in hosting and organising the event. On top of that, we recorded the highest profit margin ever achieved by our company.

What motivates you and inspires you?

The recognition I get from companies. I would say my parents, they are my inspiration. They are always 100% supportive in whatever career path I choose.

What is your advice to current UCSI students in achieving their goals?

UCSI has given me many memorable experiences and what I gained in UCSI has made me who I am today. My advice to all current UCSI students is to gain as much knowledge, education and experience as you can during your student life and use what you gain in your future career. You made the right choice by choosing UCSI.





**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT** **GOALS**

UCSI GROUP SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

TARGET 2030

**STAND UP FOR
SDGs**

GOOD

PEACE

LIFE

ON LAND

AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

WATER

CLIMATE

ACTION

FOR THE GOAL

BELOW

NO POVERTY

DECENT

WORK

INDUSTRY

INNOVATION

INFRA

STRUCTURE

ECONOMIC

GROWTH

QUALITY

EDUCATION

AFFORDABLE &

CLEAN ENERGY

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

HEALTH & WELL BEING

CLEAN

WATER & SANITATION

SUSTAINABLE

REDUCE INEQUALITIES

CITIES

COMMUNITIES

JUSTICE



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