

THE UCSI GAZETTE

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



HEATING IT UP

UCSI represents the Malaysian Pepper Board
in promoting the world's most traded
spice and wins big at the Battle of the Chefs

VOLUME 07

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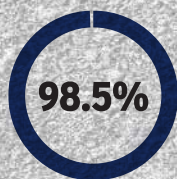
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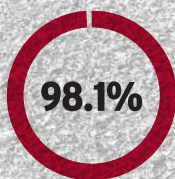
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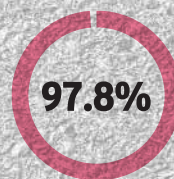
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04

UCSI WELCOMES THREE DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEMBERS



09

HEATING IT UP

UCSI represents the Malaysian Pepper Board and wins big at the Battle of the Chefs



15

PERSON OF THE MONTH

Dr Joanne Yeoh



07

UCSI CELEBRATES 29TH CONVOCATION CEREMONY



19

HANDS OF HOPE

Gifting refugee children with free education



23

WRITE RIGHT

Jason Kwong

Insights from some of Malaysia's most experienced authors and journalists



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WELCOME TO OUR NEW STUDENTS.

As the curtain rises for the next important stage of your life — university — you must be going through a period of mixed joy, excitement and anxieties. I believe that this chapter is going to be a little different. The preceding ones were largely written for you by others — your parents or guardians, families and teachers. Now, you are the leading author and you will be helping the direction, plot and height of your story. Daunting as it may be, do rest assured that all of the members of the UCSI University family will be there for you as you navigate the opportunities and challenges in the course of your studies here.

As we celebrate UCSI's 30th anniversary in the education industry, we are setting new goals to realise and targets to attain. We are constantly subjecting our programmes to rigorous revision and revamp while introducing new courses each year to ensure that we continuously cater for the human talent needs.

Under our Star Trek programme, our Faculty of Engineering, Technology and Built Environment has sent students for research attachments at Imperial College London and Tsinghua University in China. And they intend to send more, in particular to France and Germany, the world's best in engineering innovations. Going toe to toe is our Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, who will be sending more of their students to Harvard and University of Melbourne, and will be linking up with established labs such as the Ministry of Education's Higher Institution Centre of Excellence and UM's High Impact Research. University British Columbia in Canada will soon be receiving our Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Star Trek students. The faculty's research prowess will also receive a boost from the UCSI research lab networking endeavour, with upcoming collaborators such as the Malaysian Institute of Pharmaceuticals and Nutraceuticals's iPharm Animal Research Facility.

Second to none in musical calibre is our Institute of Music and they will be reaffirming their stronghold with new courses in music teaching and music performance. They are also enhancing performance opportunities and support collaborations to create transformative experiences for their students. Our Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management is sinking their teeth into driving the MyCentHE national initiative further with the impending completion of UCSI Hotel. Enhancing the career prospects of our students even further by providing additional recognitions from bodies such as the Malaysian Institute of Accountants, Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and Finance Accreditation Agency is our Faculty of Business and Information Science. It is also worthy to note that UCSI's Actuarial Science programmes under this Faculty have been granted module exemption for the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) Fellowship and CAA exams, making UCSI the only private university in Malaysia to gain this prestigious recognition.

Other faculties in UCSI such as our Faculty of Applied Science, Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts, and De Institute of Creative Arts and Design will be enhancing the learning experience of our students by increasing student mobility with leading universities across the globe, stepping up our industry-academic partnerships as well as introducing new programmes. Thus, our roadmap is set for the next five years. With a defined path to follow, we aim to become Malaysia's top private university by the year 2020. Our focus on innovative teaching, practical learning experiences and impactful research across all disciplines will certainly move this university higher and further.

UCSI also stands out as a melting pot of diversity; we are home to 10,000 students from more than 110 countries. Take this opportunity to embrace the difference and diversity. Get to know someone from a different part of the country, or from another country, of a different ethnicity, a different religion, who has different views to you, or who has different interests and perspectives. A keen sense of cultural appreciation is a vital trait in today's borderless world.

Remember how the saying goes: If you don't go after what you want, you'll never have it. If you don't ask, the answer is always no. If you don't step forward, you're always in the same place.

So sit up, take a deep breath and:

Go beyond; Be profound: Make a difference.

Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, FASc.
Vice-Chancellor and President
UCSI University

DPSK, PSK, MBBS (Melb.), DMedSc (*honoris causa*) (Melb.),
 MRCP (UK), FRCP (Lond.), FRCP (Glasg.), FRCP (Edin.),
 FACC (USA), Hon. FRACP (Aus.), Hon. FPCP (Phil.),
 FIAS, FNHAM, FMSA, FAMM



Left to right: Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Salleh Bin Mohd Nor, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman and Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak

UCSI welcomes three distinguished University Council members

UCSI University has recently appointed Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman, Tan Sri Dr Salleh Mohd Nor and Professor Tan Sri Dr Dzulkifli Abdul Razak as members of its University Council.

All three are Fellows of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM). Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman and Professor Tan Sri Dr Dzulkifli Abdul Razak are Old Boys of the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, while Tan Sri Dr Salleh Mohd Nor is an Old Boy of the Royal Military College. They hold important positions in national and international organisations and they have contributed greatly to the nation's progress in science, technology and education.

As council members, they will be part of the University's push to be the leading private university in the country.

Announcing the appointments, UCSI Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff said that they would have a major role in further accomplishing the University's goal and ideals.

"I'm delighted to welcome them to the Council and I'm certain that their contributions will propel UCSI to the

higher echelons of higher education," he said.

"They have made many important decisions that benefit society and their contributions to the nation cannot be understated. UCSI will benefit immensely from their thoughts and insights."

Prior to joining UCSI's University Council, the trio served with distinction in academia and policy making.

Professor Emeritus Omar was Malaysia's first Science Advisor to the Prime Minister from 1984 to 2001. He had served on the United Nation's Council for Science and Technology for Development, as well as on various UNESCO committees. He stands out for being the ASM Founding President and the past President of both the Federation of Asian Scientific Academies and Societies and the Third World Network of Scientific Organisations.

He began his professional career in 1960 in veterinary research. He joined Universiti Putra Malaysia in 1972, where he served as the Founding Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences and later as its Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

Well-known for his passion for the environment, Dr Salleh served as the first Director-General of the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia. He had served as the Malaysian Nature Society President from 1978 to 2014. His contributions have influenced national policies on the environment and wildlife conservation.

Dr Salleh is a former ASM secretary-general and the former President of the International Union of Forestry Research Organisations. He is distinguished for being the organisation's first President to hail from a developing nation. He is also the former Pro-Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Professor Dzulkifli is the former Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). He oversaw the effort that led to USM's selection as Malaysia's Apex university and he is a firm advocate of sustainable development.

He is also the 14th President of the International Association of Universities — a UNESCO-affiliated organisation, a Fellow of both the World Academy of Art and Science and the Malaysian Institute of Management, as well as an honorary lifetime member of the Asian Academy of Management.

4th APPLIED SCIENCE WEEK

UCSI INSPIRES PASSION TOWARDS STEM FIELDS



INNOVATIVE: Students selling a healthier spin on local cuisines during the annual Applied Science Week.



ALL SMILES: Secondary school students were invited to visit the booths and attend workshops organised throughout the event.

UCSI University's (UCSI) Faculty of Applied Sciences (FOAS) recently organised its 4th Applied Science Week (ASW), which was attended by prominent figures namely, Yang Berhormat Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, and Professor Dato' Dr Ahmad Hj. Zainuddin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs and International and Director of UCSI's Institute of Creative Art and Design.

Themed 'The Science, The Experience & U', the event aim to showcase UCSI students' innovative creations and engage the community to regenerate enthusiasm towards the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The event also served as a platform for UCSI students to present their research work and test their credibility in conducting research as well as enhance their public speaking skills.

During Yang Berhormat Datuk Mary Yap's speech, she emphasised the importance of Malaysian's youth interest in the STEM field and congratulate UCSI for seizing the many opportunities to discover knowledge, nurture passion for science and prepare students to succeed in an increasingly competitive world.

"A key concern for higher education is

always the provision of quality higher education for our citizens. In this light, it is very comforting to know that private universities like UCSI are performing beyond expectations.

"Education can change society and it is reassuring to know that UCSI will always be ready to be the change agent," she said.

The two-day event highlighted a range of activities involving the fields of food science, biotechnology, nutrition and aquatic science. Students from the fields of food science showcased their very own formulated food and beverage products with commercial potential whereas students from the aquatic science field demonstrated the concept of 'aquaponics' and 'aquascaping'.

Various workshops were also held for students from several local secondary schools in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan to introduce them to the importance of nutrition, biotechnology and microbiology. Approximately 100 student leaders attended the workshops and visited the booths at the event.

The event was renamed after the faculty when the biotechnology programme students participated along with the food

science and nutrition students in 2012. It has been held annually since 2007. Profits generated from the event was channelled to Yayasan Sunbeams Home.



CALL FOR ACTION: Deputy Minister of Higher Education Yang Berhormat Datuk Mary Yap emphasising the importance of Malaysian's youth interest in the STEM field.

UCSI pharmacy students get the ball rolling on mental health awareness

The efforts to bring awareness on mental illness gained momentum as UCSI University's (UCSI) pharmacy students made it a theme for this year's UCSI 15th Annual Public Health Campaign 2015.

With mental illness expected to become Malaysia's second biggest health concern by 2020, more than 900 people were schooled on its signs and symptoms during the two-day event held at Hatten Square Suites and Shoppes, Malacca in hopes to reduce the number.

The campaign — themed, 'Healthy Living Makes Healthy Body and Mind' was graced by Malacca Health Director Datuk Dr Ghazali Othman, as the Guest of Honour. Also present was Malacca Mental Health Society President, Dato' Dr N Rajagopal, UCSI Group Founder and CEO, Dato' Peter Ng, Sri UCSI School Chairperson Datin Lily Ng, and UCSI University Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) and Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Dean, Associate Professor Dr Yeong Siew Wei.

In light of the recently released National Health and Morbidity Survey 2015 which revealed that 4.2 million Malaysians between 16 and above suffer from mental health conditions, Dr Ghazali described this year's campaign as timely and relevant to public health.

"I congratulate UCSI for organising this campaign, an effort in line with the Health Ministry's initiatives to remove misconceptions on mental illness and drive awareness on the importance of mental health into the minds of the public," Dr Ghazali said.

Stressing that mental illness is a problem affecting many Malaysians regardless of their age and background, Dr Ghazali recommended other higher education institutions to emulate UCSI and assist the ministry in bringing the numbers down by casting light on mental health through similar campaigns.

Meanwhile, Dr Rajagopal tipped his hat off to UCSI's students and lauded the campaign's theme as adequate and apt.

"The students' interactivity with the public, getting to know their problems and then providing the necessary information and help is commendable. The country and her people require such initiatives through



(from left) Malacca Mental Health Society President, Dato' Dr N Rajagopal, UCSI University Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) and Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Dean, Assoc Prof Dr Yeong Siew Wei, Malacca Health Director Datuk Dr Ghazali Othman, UCSI Group Founder and CEO, Dato' Peter Ng, and Sri UCSI School Chairperson Datin Lily Ng kick off this year's UCSI 15th Annual Public Health Campaign 2015.



A student shares with Malacca Health Director Datuk Dr Ghazali Othman (far left) and UCSI Group Founder and CEO, Dato' Peter Ng (middle) the apparatus used during the 'Know Your Drug' session as UCSI Public Health Campaign 2016 Organising Chairperson Tan Jun Hua (second from right) looks on.



Since 2002, close to 10,000 people have benefitted through the free health check-ups through UCSI's Annual Public Health Campaigns.

I hope, through this campaign, the stigma surrounding mental illness is cast away

*— Dato' Dr N Rajagopal
Malacca Mental Health Society President*

our youths. I hope, through this campaign, the stigma surrounding mental illness is cast away," Dr Rajagopal said.

Since 2002, UCSI Annual Public Health Campaigns have been held in multiple states that include Malacca, Pahang, Perak, and Selangor.

Close to 10,000 members of the public have been positively impacted by these campaigns.

The UCSI University Public Health Campaign is a community project by the Pharmacy Student Association (UCSIUPSA) of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. It aims to promote and educate the public on health-related issues and encourage healthy lifestyles.

The campaign included various health screening tests such as waist-to-hip ratio

measurements, blood pressure tests, body fat tests and blood glucose tests. An interactive session with the public on the safe use of drugs titled, 'Know Your Drug' was also held. There were booths and displays on the types of mental health conditions along with the signs and symptoms that the public should be on the lookout for.

Supported by the Malacca Mental Health Society, Alpro Pharmacy, Cerebos and Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK) the campaign also had professional counsellors who provided free consultations to the public.

The campaign aims 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.



Happy receiving the Chancellor's Gold Medal Award from Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Abdul Rahman Arshad.

UCSI UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES

It would be easy to give up when life repeatedly deals you hard blows, especially when the next is always more catastrophic than the last, but Happy Hong Jia Wen refused to stay down. Suffering from severe financial constraints, completing her university degree seemed like a dream that would cruelly never come true but today, Happy graduates with first class honours and the Chancellor's Gold Medal Award — which honours a graduate who demonstrates excellence in study as well as outstanding personal attributes in the face of adversity.

Raised in a single-parent family, Happy went without parental guidance for the first eight years of her life when her mother decided to work abroad to earn a better salary. This was the first of many deprivations that poverty would inflict on her. When their financial situation did not improve, she was urged by her mother — who also noticed that she did not like school very much — to start working after Form 5. That moment was her awakening.

"I realised that if I did not seek a higher education, my opportunities will always be limited and I would spend the rest of my life struggling to make ends meet," said Happy, "I didn't want that for myself or for

my family. I believed that a good education would lift me up, away from the cycle of poverty."

She enrolled in UCSI in 2010 but financial constraints tightened its chokehold and she was forced to halt her studies to procure a job. She traversed the skies with Singapore Airlines as a flight attendant but her heart remained set on getting her feet back on the ground and obtaining her degree. After two years, she did just that.

"A lot of people were against my decision," shared Happy, "They thought I was making a huge mistake by leaving a job that was offering such a decent pay but I knew what I wanted, and that was to learn more and grow."

She returned to UCSI armed with her hard-earned savings and for a while, all was well. Then fate blindsided her with the toughest trial yet: her mother was diagnosed with advanced stage cancer.

Overwhelmed with worry for her critically ill mother and the medical expenses incurred, Happy thought that she would again be forced to put her studies on hold but she made one last rally.

"I told myself that I didn't work so hard and study so long only to give up now," she said, "I am going to keep going no matter how difficult it may get and I will see this to the end."

And she did. Happy graduated at the top of her class with the BA (Hons) English Language and Communication. With her degree in hand, she is now charting a promising career in Singapore and believes that she will finally live a life worthy of her name.

"The first step towards achieving success is recognising that life doesn't become easier," she said in her address, "Instead, we have to grow stronger and make up our minds to be better than yesterday."

Happy's success is matched by that of the valedictorian, Charis Wong Yi Huey who graduated with the BSc (Hons) Food Science with Nutrition. A bright and caring young lady who wanted her career to revolve around improving the lives of others, her tertiary education was made possible with a scholarship from the UCSI University Trust.

"As food and health are directly related, my degree equips me with the knowledge



Charis celebrating with her doting parents, Peter Wong and Annie Poh.



29th CONVOCATION CEREMONY

and skillsets to improve quality of life," said Charis, who aspires to tackle the critical problem of malnutrition in third world countries one day.

And she has already been preparing hard for that day. Charis has been to China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and the Philippines on humanitarian and education-related missions. She has volunteered with AIESEC for education programmes, championed community development through the UniYouth initiative and reached out to orphans. She also played a number of integral roles in the University's Christian fellowship.

The many commitments on and off campus did not derail her academic performance. In addition to graduating with first class honours, she has made the Dean's list thrice and won accolades including the prestigious Canadian governor general's academic bronze medal.

In her valedictorian address, Charis urges her fellow graduates to measure up to ideals larger than themselves. "There is a lot going on in the world and we must realise that our lives are not meant to just revolve around ourselves. Let's step out of

our comfort zones and be the change that the world needs."

Charis herself isn't planning on wasting much time. She has already begun making plans on how she can work towards her goal in serving the needy. Currently, she has her sights set on the World Health Organisation in hopes that the international health agency would accord her the opportunity to reach out to the underserved, whether in other countries or in our backyard.

Reflecting on her time at UCSI, she remembers her lecturers for their steady guidance and willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. "I would like to thank each one of them — especially my supervisor Ms Carolyn Loong — for inspiring my generation with their love and dedication."

She also credited the University for equipping her with the complementary competencies that she needs to shine. "Apart from core knowledge, I learned many other skills at UCSI that are just as critical like leadership, teamwork, communication and problem or conflict-solving.

"When I look back at the person I was during high school and the person I am now, I see two completely different individuals. I believe I have grown and matured a lot during my years here at UCSI, and I am confident that I am well-prepared to face the future."

Happy and Charis were among the 2,567 graduates who threw their mortarboards into the air during UCSI's 29th Convocation Ceremony, a two-day event attended by its Chancellor, Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Abdul Rahman Arshad and Vice-Chancellor and President, Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff.

The ceremony this year is celebrated in conjunction with UCSI's 30th anniversary.

In his speech, the Chancellor said, "The scroll that you have received today bears the significant weight of three decades of academic innovation and excellence, of education that has been rigorously developed and refined over the years. This knowledge is now yours so go forth boldly. Take another leap for mankind."



Prominent Technologist Enlightens UCSI Students on Cyber Security

Asst Prof Dr Tan Chun Wei (left), Head of UCSI's School of IT, presents Dr Suresh with a token of appreciation.

UCSI University's (UCSI) School of Information Technology (IT) kicked off the new semester with a public seminar on cyber security conducted by renowned technologist Dr Suresh Ramasamy, former Head of Information and Cyber Security at Digi Telecommunications.

A regional guru in informational technology management and strategy, Dr Suresh has had over 19 years of working experience with major telecommunications and ISP organisations like Maxis, Motorola, Time Dotcom Berhad and Bell Labs.

His work in digital security and privacy subsequently caught the eye of the government, and he was selected to devise industry standards for information security management systems and to establish legal and regulatory frameworks with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. Today, he continues to contribute to the creation of ISO/IEC 27000 family of specifications for Malaysia.

"The whole world is coming online and so is crime," said Dr Suresh, who took the audience through real life examples of security and privacy breaches. "It is critically important that organisations and individuals take the necessary precautions to prevent information theft."

He also guided students through a rousing discussion on best cyber practices.

"I saw a lot of potential in these students," he said after the seminar. "The cyber security industry is booming — the World Economic Forum recently projected that the industry is worth at least USD50 billion in Asia Pacific itself — and demand for talent is huge. If they have the passion for it, I'd strongly encourage them to pursue a career in this field."

This is the first in a new series of talks organised to provide students with the opportunity to gain first-hand insights and network with both academics and industry professionals.

"Exposure to real life industries is important for students to relate their theoretical knowledge to the practical aspects of their study, and UCSI has been rigorous in that respect," said Assistant Professor Dr Tan Chun Wei, Head of UCSI's School of IT. "Dr Suresh is very established in his field and our students stand to gain much from his experience."

This will not be Dr Suresh's last visit to UCSI. He was recently appointed as a member of the university's Industry Advisory Board and will be working cooperatively with UCSI's Faculty of Business and Information Science — under which the School of IT is parked — to ensure all study programmes are aligned to deliver industry and professional competency requirements.



Dr Suresh shares his experience in combating cyber threats with students from UCSI's School of IT.

WALKING THE BASS LINE

Malaysia's bassist extraordinaire
Andy Peterson conducts masterclass
for UCSI's music students

Andy Peterson brings his favourite G&L L-2000 on stage to demonstrate his impeccable playing techniques to the rapt audience.



Students from UCSI University's (UCSI) Institute of Music learnt from the greats once again when Andy Peterson, Malaysia's legendary slap bassist, held an exclusive masterclass at UCSI — something he rarely does due to his many commitments on tour.

Renowned in the music industry for his speed, precision and technicality — music reviews have described his tempo as 'insane' — Andy's expertise is regularly sought by music icons around the world. To date, Andy has performed with David Foster, Boys 2 Men, Peter Cetera, Natalie Cole, Billy Cobham, Steve Thornton, Randy Bernsen of the Zawinul Syndicate, and many other illustrious performers. Just last month, Malaysian mando-pop singer Penny Tai flew him to Taiwan to play at her concert.

This tour of duty has taken him to more than 15 countries including Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Switzerland and the United States. He has graced famed venues like Caesar's Palace, Dolby Theatre Hollywood, Royal Albert Hall and the Wembley Arena.

Imparting decades of performing experience to his eager audience at UCSI, Andy urged aspiring musicians to practice purposefully — never rushed — by guiding them to establish the right tone and emote their playing.

"You need to dig in. It's not just about hitting the right notes," he shared. "You need to feel what you're playing and if you do it right, the crowd will feel it too."

"Every musician has a unique style and as you continue to play, you'll discover what

works for you and what doesn't. Eventually, you'll establish your signature sound and that'll be what people will know you for."

Andy's insights were well-received and he was impressed with the abilities of the UCSI students, and more importantly, the way they responded.

"Musically, the youngsters are better than most because they are learning music in a structured manner," he observed. "What they need to do now is to work on the quality of their performances — they need to know how to play with people, how to be attuned to their band members and how to recover when they make a mistake on stage. One learns all this by performing regularly."

Speaking in hindsight, Andy stressed that doing so diligently might just be the start of an illustrious and far-reaching career.

"It's important to always give your best because you'll never know who's watching in the audience," he continued. "One seemingly ordinary performance could change your life. Next thing you know, a band is coming up to recruit you and then you're playing with them in Germany."

That actually happened. Two years after Andy made his public debut in 1976, Malaysian pop band The Falcons picked him up at a pub gig and shortly after, he was touring Europe with them. The rest is history.

Andy concluded his masterclass by initiating a jam session with a few students to the classic Stevie Wonder hit *Superstition*. One of them was Hor Chee

Seng, a guitarist who is currently reading his degree in Contemporary Music.

"He freaked me out!" laughed Andy. "He was killing it! He's so young but he's so good. UCSI is doing a good job here."

Honoured, Chee Seng was equally effusive with his praise.

"I had a great time trying to keep up with Andy," said the prodigy in question. "He taught us different musical perspectives and approaches which I found really valuable."

Chee Seng is already making the rounds in the local circuit, having performed with icons like Michael Veerapan and at international jazz festivals.

Andy joins a star-studded cast of established classical and contemporary musicians who have crossed UCSI's doorstep to conduct masterclasses, lectures and recitals of all instruments. His contemporaries include Malaysia's foremost jazz pianist Michael Veerapan; drum virtuoso John Thomas; renowned violinists David Frühwirth and Polina Borisova; award-winning composer Onn San; flutist laureate Andrei Sannikov; acclaimed saxophonist Greg Lyons; the iconic Orfeo Trio ensemble, and more.

"We frequently invite artists of the highest calibre and to come and teach here so that our students can hear them live in action," said Professor Dr P'ng Tean Hwa, Director of UCSI's Institute of Music. "That's one way to grow as an artist yourself — by listening, watching and learning from the very best."



HEATING IT UP

At the vanguard of culinary excellence, it is more than just cooking; this quarter, UCSI represents the Malaysian Pepper Board in promoting the world's most traded spice and wins big at the Battle of the Chefs.



THE CULINARIANS: (from left) Kueh Wun Thiin, Gary Jali Lim Chee Howe, William Anthony Abong and Joseph Martin Pudun at MIFB 2016.

The King of Spices has led many a dish to triumph for over 2000 years and counting, infusing its earthy zing into cuisines from all corners of the world. As the most widely traded spice, it has even been demanded as a ransom during Ancient Rome whenever the Romans besieged a city. Today, its popularity has not flagged the slightest.

In Malaysia, the pepper trade has been under the purview of the Malaysian Pepper Board (MPB) since 2007. The Board's mission is to implement various policies and programmes to ensure the growth of the plant while promoting its research and usage.

Recognising the level of excellence sustained by UCSI University (UCSI) and the prominence of its Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management (FHTM) in the culinary industry, MPB in 2014 selected UCSI to join them on their crusade.

UCSI has the distinction of being the first university to be given this honour — to promote the usage of pepper in cuisines and other pepper-based products both locally and internationally — by the Board. One of the avenues to achieve MPB's objective is by representing the Board in cooking competitions and food and beverage (F&B) exhibitions.

FHTM had their first opportunity to represent the Board in 2015 for events such as the Penang International Halal Chef Challenge (PIHEC 2015), Food & Hotel Malaysia 2015 (FHM 2015) and the 16th Malaysian International Food and Beverage Trade Fair (MIFB 2015).

This year, the 17th Malaysian International Food and Beverage Trade Fair (MIFB 2016) that was held from 27 to 29 July at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre made the perfect platform for the culinary arts team from UCSI's Kuching campus to once again champion the use of the spice.

Led by culinary arts lecturer Joseph Martin Pudun, the team consisted of fellow lecturer William Anthony Abong and two culinary arts students Kueh Wun Thiin and Gary Jali Lim Chee Howe.

Black, white, and green pepper — the culinarians used it all. The team showcased 10 pepper-based dishes including an appetiser named 'Chicken Mouseline'. The appetiser was specially created by the students for the event using minced chicken meat and raw rolled oats.

The edible experiment, according to Gary, transpired when their lecturers urged them to create a new healthy dish that is easy to make. The keyword for the experiment was 'healthy sausage'.

"When you think of sausages, you think of processed food. Though 'Chicken Mouseline' is supposed to be 'a healthy dish that is easy to make', it really isn't," chuckled Gary. "It requires good culinary knowledge and skills. This is where our lecturers step in to guide us."

The experiment, as stated by Joseph, is one of the better ways to give students the confidence and space to refine their culinary skills and techniques.

"Our students have a basic selection of dishes they are able to cook without a recipe.



Now it's down to exercising their creativity and applying their skills. As lecturers, we just need to help them tap into their potential and get them to challenge themselves," he said.

According to Joseph, to create a menu that contains pepper, one must first be familiar with the taste of the spice and how well it blends with other ingredients.

"Peppers have different taste and aromas. Too much of the spice may overwhelm your taste buds. Black pepper is often used for barbeques and roasts as it is hot and pungent. White pepper is often added to soups while the green one is commonly used in Western Cuisine for its fresher taste. In order to apply them in their cooking, our students need to know what complements the spice," he said.

MIFB 2016 was indeed a perfect opportunity for the team to share the unique flavour of pepper with the attending food enthusiasts, culinary experts and major players of the F&B industry from across the globe. Their 10-dish menu also included signature drinks such as 'Green Pepper Fizz' and 'Sparkling Black Pepper Soda'.

According to MPB's branch supervisor of the Johore region Stephen Maria Somalia, this experience achieves MPB's main objective while also providing students with the opportunity to enhance their complementary skills.

"Exposure is very important for students. Such events do not only allow them to showcase their culinary talents but also to improve on other competencies like their communication skills," he said. "For example, they'll be responding to food enthusiasts who will ask about the dishes on display and the pepper-based products. As they already have the knowledge, managing to educate and inform the public well will only boost their confidence level."



TALKING PEPPERS: MPB's branch supervisor of the Johore region Stephen Maria Somalia spoke about the pepper trade and UCSI's role.

One for the books

UCSI's collaboration with the Malaysian Pepper Board doesn't stop there. In addition to creating awareness and promoting the pepper industry in the country, this partnership solidifies a strong relationship between the University, the government and major industry players. It opens doors to a variety of culinary-related settings and foodservice ventures.

This is advantageous to UCSI's students as it introduces them to the current needs of the industry and helps them build their professional network. This emphasis on industry collaboration is in line with UCSI's praxis" approach that emphasises the application of knowledge.

One such project that is worthy of note is a recipe book that is currently in the works. To be jointly published by MPB and FHTM, the recipe book will showcase signature dishes created by UCSI's culinary arts team to the public and food enthusiasts.

Said Joseph, "What we do here is not limited to cooking. We encourage our students to contribute to the industry as

culinary artists and this is one such perfect platform to push the envelope. We are proud to have them involved in this project."

Other members from FHTM who are also working on this book are Christopher Wan Sageng, Head of the Department of Hospitality and Culinary Arts in the Sarawak campus and fellow lecturer Judy Sung Pei Sia.

Commenting on the project, Associate Professor Dr Kashif Hussain, Dean of FHTM said that among other faculty initiatives, the most important step to take is to identify ways and opportunities for the staff and students to advance and contribute to the culinary landscape.

"In the hospitality industry, the F&B segment reigns supreme. As educators, we are aware of the fact that our students can do a lot more with their talent. Through our collaboration with MPB and other industry partners, we hope to equip them not only with skills and confidence but also with connections and to attune them with the needs of the industry," he said.





LEADING IN EXCELLENCE

UCSI caught the eye of MPB through its sustained excellence in the culinary circuit with part of it stemming from its standout achievements at competitions.

The team has had the privilege of the spotlight at national competitions such as the Penang International Halal Chef Cooking Competition, Penang International Halal Chef Challenge, MyCenTHE Skill Challenge and Nestlé Professional Culinary Arts Awards. They also shone bright at international competitions such as Culinaire Malaysia, Global Taste of Korean Contest and the Youth Cooking Competition that was held in Guangzhou, China.

Early this year, the team cooked up a storm at the 3rd Penang International Halal Chef Challenge (PIHEC) and returned with a silver medal, a bronze medal and seven diploma awards for their efforts.

Describing the competition as an insightful learning experience for the team, Christopher Wan Sageng — who heads the Department of Hospitality and Culinary Arts at the Sarawak campus — said that PIHEC was the perfect platform for the team to up their game. And they did not disappoint.

Six months later, the team came on strong and once again won widespread recognition for the University through its grand slam at the Battle of the Chefs 2016. They won a total of 13 accolades — one silver medal, four bronze medals, and eight diploma awards — in seven cooking categories.

The competition organised by Penang Chefs Association was held over the course of three days at Spice Arena, Penang.

The team comprised of six lecturers and 14 culinary arts students from both its Kuala Lumpur and Sarawak campuses. They competed against more than 1,000 students and professionals in the Malaysian hospitality, tourism, and culinary industry.

Dylan Chan, who is currently pursuing the Diploma in Culinary Arts programme at the Sarawak campus, bagged a bronze medal in the Main Course V – Norwegian Salmon category. His winning dish was 'Pan-Seared Salmon served with Sautéed Potato, Green Peas, Mushrooms, Carrot and Cream Dill Sauce'.

This was Chan's first participation in a major competition and he was elated by his win. The budding culinarian said he did

▲ **CULINARY CHAMPS:** Chef lecturers and culinary arts students from Kuala Lumpur and Sarawak campus sharing a light moment at the competition.

not expect to receive a medal but certainly was humbled by the judges' decision. "The experience was nerve-racking. As a first timer with no working knowledge about the proceedings of a culinary competition, I depended a lot on my lecturers' guidance and coaching to prepare myself. I truly owe it to them for improving my skills and boosting my confidence."

A fellow student who bagged another bronze medal in the same category is Batrisya Binti Amiruddin. Her winning dish was 'Pan-Seared Mackerel and Trout served with Purple Sweet Potato Puree, Sautéed Vegetables and Honey Mustard Sauce with Rocket and Snow Crab Salad'.

The young lady said that her achievement could not be compared to the learning experience that she has gained from taking part in the competition.

"I wanted to produce a dish that will leave a unique taste on your tongue; winning is a bonus. I'm very grateful for the experience and the lessons that I've learned throughout the preparation process as it will serve me well in the future."



PEPPERY FIZZ: The menu included a unique beverage, the 'Sparkling Black Pepper Soda'.



PLATED WELL: 'Black and White Dessert' by Kong Jun Quan — diploma award winner for the Three Course Western Set category.



PEPPER INFUSED:
The signature 'Seared Black Pepper Beef with Vietnamese Rice Roll infused with Sarawak Green Pepper Emulsion'.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Each culinary competition highlights the creative abilities of each member of the team. There certainly is no room for error as they are evaluated on taste, presentation, skill, teamwork, safety, as well as sanitation.

To prepare for competitions, the students will work hard for months to hone their skills under the guidance of their lecturers. It was no different for this year's Battle of the Chefs.

The team met at least three times a week in addition to their already demanding study schedule to practice. They also dedicated a certain portion of their time every day to perfect their skills during the final week before the start of the competition.

According to Wan Sageng, a competition such as this plays a fundamental role in

training culinary arts students. He said that it is important for the students to have the opportunity to put their skills and knowledge to the test in a competitive setting.

"The students have gone above and beyond to improve themselves. They did their best in the competition and we are truly proud of them. Their ability to stay calm and confident under immense pressure was also impressive to witness," he said.

Tan Aun Chee and Yap Jia Ying along with lecturers Muhammad Haziq, Wong Choon Hau and Nursyafiqah Ramli won a silver medal in the Modern Western Cuisine Restaurant Category. Lee Wei Ming and Poon Wing Chong won two more bronze medals for UCSI.

While they did not place in the top three,

Kueh Wun Thin, Foo Jee Xin, Cindy Lai Ik Von, Kong Jun Quan, Lim Jing Xuan, Shaun Wong Wen Jin and lecturer Muzzamir Musa did not return empty handed; their dishes collectively earned them eight diploma awards.

Success does not happen overnight, and it certainly would not happen without the extraordinary efforts and accomplishments of committed talents. The victory of both lecturers and students at Battle of the Chefs 2016 was truly a joyful moment and is a testament of UCSI's teaching and learning excellence.

Wan Sageng enthused, "We are proud of our team. Watching everyone in action was a thrill and winning several awards from this competition speaks volumes of our quality and commitment towards producing the best talents for the industry."





Dr Joanne Yeoh

Violinist extraordinaire, dubbed the Vanessa-Mae of Malaysia, credits discipline and diligence for the impressive collection of awards that she has been amassing from a young age.

Violin — the instrument that oozes class, energy, and sensuality. And the instrument of choice for this maestro. Be it abroad or in our very own backyard, her performances tick all of these boxes, and then some. Dr Joanne Yeoh sat down with The UCSI Gazette editorial team to talk about her experience in triumphing in the music industry.

"I believe talent is given but if you take it for granted, you will not go far."

Talented as she is, Dr Joanne Yeoh practices for several hours a day — a habit cultivated since a young age — to hone her skills.

While most children would hate being forced to take music lessons, Dr Joanne was not one to complain about hers. The accomplished violinist who first tried her hand at the piano has enjoyed tinkling the ivories since the tender age of four though she admits that at times, she had struggled with self-discipline when it came to practising.

"Discipline, hard work and behind-the-scenes effort — that is what music is all about. But when I was a teenager, I found it tiring," she recalled with a chuckle.

Dr Joanne's love for the violin ignited at the age of eight, after giving up ballet in favour of the instrument. As the years passed, she kept on playing and eventually began to consider music as a viable career.

"I was in Form Four or Form Five when I had to start thinking about what to do with my life. At that point, I was already pursuing my Diploma in violin, so I thought, 'Well, music is easy for me, and it is something that I like', so I decided to continue with it. It felt like a natural progression for me."

She later furthered her studies at UCSI University from 1995 to 1997 through a twinning programme with the University of Middlesex, eventually obtaining her Degree in Music with First Class Honours in 1999. Upon her graduation, Dr Joanne was awarded a Luther and Ernest Gaunt Scholarship for Strings to study at the University of Leeds.

During her study there, she was also chosen to receive a Foreign and Commonwealth Office Scholarship, in association with British Council and the University of Leeds to pursue a Masters in Music Performance degree. She continued to dedicate her life to music and eventually earned a PhD from Heriot-Watt University in the United Kingdom.

While studying abroad, Dr Joanne had the privilege of participating in several

prominent music festivals, including an active role with the Sorrel Quartet during the Leeds Annual Music Festival 1999. After returning home, she was selected to join the Asian Youth Symphony which saw her performing on many international stages.

The talented violinist has had a slew of prominent performances to date, but the ever-humble Dr Joanne singles out performing alongside Hong Kong superstar Jacky Cheung during his world 'Music Odyssey Tour' as one of the most significant moments in her career. Jacky Cheung was hailed as one of the Heavenly Kings of Hong Kong entertainment, and his tour covered over 40 concerts around the world. It was then that her career really started to blossom and it was an experience Dr Joanne would never forget.

"I was the solo violinist, and I had some solo parts where I had to go out to the front of the stage and play next to him," she recalled. "I remember my first show — it was in Australia, and I was super excited. I had new clothes to wear, and I was really geared up for it!"

In 2003, she was selected to perform with Taiwanese singer David Tao in his 'Soul Power Tour' and then was invited to play with another Hong Kong superstar, Alan Tam during his 'Live in Genting' concert in 2008.

"Each of these renowned celebrities had a different style and different way of interacting with the musicians hence it was always a new exciting experience for me. Jacky Cheung is a perfectionist and had high expectations of himself and of his musicians, whereas David Tao is more of a musician's musician. One day, he would want a certain style, and the next, something different. He was always changing, improvising and creating.

"With Alan Tam, he believed in the enjoyment of music. It did not matter to him if we made mistakes as long as the intention of the music was expressed clearly. Just get the 'feel' right!" she said with a laugh.

Not one to remain in her comfort zone, Dr Joanne ventured out to launch her first album in 2005, titled *Pulse of the Metropolis*. It was not an easy endeavour — being a first timer, and having not signed under any label, she had to source

out everything from the designing of the CD to getting it licensed. Eight years after her first, she introduced to the world her second album, *After A Dream*.

"The first album was more of an experimental endeavour. I wanted to explore other facets of music-making apart from performing. There was a lot more consideration given to the second album, in the sense that I had more freedom in song choices, arrangement styles, and the whole direction of the album."

Dr Joanne is not a stranger to receiving impressive accolades. She has received The Outstanding Young Malaysian Award 2004 for the category of Personal Improvement and Accomplishment, Martell's Rising Personality Award 2008 and the National Academic Award 2012 for the category of Arts and Creativity. More recently, her second album was awarded Gold at the Global Music Awards 2014.

"I am blessed and thankful that musicians in the industry are now being recognised as worthy of an award. I am honoured to be given the opportunity to play a role in promoting musical arts."

Reflecting back on her academic years at UCSI University, Dr Joanne is glad that she chose to study at the University.

"UCSI had an incredibly conducive environment for studying and learning. Classes were very interactive and there was a close bond between lecturers and students strengthened by our mutual love for music.

"My journey has so far been absolutely extraordinary, and I could never have imagined that I would be where I am today when I began my studies at UCSI. UCSI was my stepping stone to greater things in life and who I am today, I owe it largely to UCSI."

With her illustrious career and myriad of experiences, what advice would she give to young aspiring talents hoping to become a professional musician like her?

"Don't pursue this career mainly for the fame and money," she said. "Instead, pursue this because it is your passion. Everything else will fall into place."



(Sixth from right to left) Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts Dean, Asst Prof Dr Chan Nee Nee, keynote speaker Prof Dr Zuraidah Mohd Don, a professor of Linguistics and English language from the University of Malaya, and UCSI Research and Postgraduate Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Faculty of Business and Information Science Dean, Prof Dr Ooi Keng Boon, in a group photo along with the presenters, participants and organising team of the 2016 Student Research Colloquium.

INSPIRING RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES AMONG STUDENTS

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts (FOSSLA) recently organised the 2016 FOSSLA Student Research Colloquium on 23 July 2016 at UCSI KL Campus, South Wing. The research colloquium themed 'Celebrating Student Research' aimed at raising the University's stature in engaging students in research and scholarly activities.

The event began with a warm welcome speech by Assistant Professor Dr Chan Nee Nee, Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts of UCSI University (UCSI). The Colloquium opening was officiated by Professor Dr Ooi Keng Boon, UCSI Research and Postgraduate Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Faculty of Business and Information Science Dean, and the event was chaired by Associate Professor Dr Tan Bee Hoon, Head of FOSSLA's Research and Postgraduate Studies department.

The Guest of Honour and keynote speaker was Professor Dr Zuraidah Mohd Don, a professor at the Department of English Language, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya. Her

research interests include English language teaching, pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics and prosody. She has published in refereed international journals and her most recent publications include two co-authored books titled *Malay Word Class: A corpus-based Approach* and *Malay Adverbs: Problems and Solutions*.

During her speech, she highlighted the importance of research and the essence of contributing to the society. "You can do research in any area of knowledge or within an existing research paradigm, i.e. where other researchers are already active. There is no limit to research."

Students from the departments of psychology, mass communication and English language and communication were provided a setting to showcase their works and research projects. The main purpose of the colloquium was to encourage students to participate in research activities, to provide an avenue for students to present their research findings, and to receive feedback to improve their research. Furthermore, the

Colloquium also aimed to motivate students in producing quality research work through the provision of the 'Best Paper Awards'.

Two parallel sessions under five themes: Movies, Novels and Short Stories, Emotions and Relationships, Media and the Internet, Language, Culture and Identities, and Advertisements were held throughout the Colloquium. Each theme-based session had eight presenters including representatives from undergraduate and Master's levels. Each of these sessions were graded and moderated by lecturers and researchers from the various departments and the Best Paper Award was selected for each category.

According to Associate Professor Dr Tan, "We believe that the knowledge shared will help immensely in the development of the research and scholarly activities in the faculty and eventually make us better researchers. I am glad that students are confident in displaying their research works."



(Second from right) UCSI Group Founder and CEO Dato' Peter Ng, Chairperson of SUHAKAM Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Razali Ismail, Chairman of UCSI University Trust Yang Berbahagia Dato' (Dr.) Hj. Mohd. Karim bin Hj. Abdullah Omar, UNHCR Representative for Malaysia Richard Towle, Head of UCSI University Trust, Shannen Choi and UCSI scholars.

UCSI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS RAISING COGNISANCE ON STATELESSNESS

The UCSI Scholars' Circle (U-Schos) — formed by scholarship recipients of UCSI University (UCSI) Trust — launched an initiative titled 'Journey to Belong', with the aim to create awareness among the public and UCSI community on the issues of statelessness in Malaysia under the umbrella of UNHCR's Global '#IBelong' campaign to end statelessness by 2024.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the mandated agency to work with refugees and stateless populations, has reported that there are at least 10 million people worldwide who are stateless and that a stateless child is being born somewhere in the world every 10 minutes.

"We are all very fortunate because we belong. We need to use this privilege now to help those who don't," said Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Razali Ismail, Chairperson of The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM). "Listen to the needs of these communities. Stand up and speak out. Involve yourselves in positive activism. Educate yourself, then your friends and your family so they too, can join this historic movement."

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Razali also commended the UCSI Scholars' Circle for helping to raise awareness and alleviate the plight of the stateless persons within the country and beyond.

"I am heartened to witness their leadership, compassion, ethics and civic-mindedness which speak highly of our Malaysian youth today. These are indeed the qualities that we want for the future leaders of our country," he said.

Yang Berbahagia Dato' (Dr.) Hj. Mohd. Karim bin Hj. Abdullah Omar, Chairman of UCSI University Trust shared that the aim of forming the Circle is to empower UCSI scholars by providing them with a platform to drive social change, transform ideas into actions, and create opportunities for personal growth and development.

"U-Schos have been responsible for many impactful programmes on campus and in the surrounding communities," he said in his welcome address. "They have worked tirelessly to inculcate leadership values amongst the student body, instil volunteerism, and inspire positive activism. Indeed, they have surpassed all our expectations by going above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of others."

The prevention and resolution of childhood statelessness have become one of the key goals of UNHCR's 'Global Campaign to End Statelessness' by 2024. This campaign has galvanised U-Schos to join the endeavour who believe that stateless people deserve better and that young leaders have a great inclination for social change.

"Even today, the level of awareness towards statelessness is still disproportionately low," said Kelvin Lai, organising chairperson of the event. "We wanted to help bring the plight of these individuals to the public's attention in hopes that it would spur solutions and greater protection of the stateless."

The event was attended by individuals from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil societies, public and private sectors, education institutions, youth organisations and university student councils, among others.

Also present was UCSI Group Founder and CEO Dato' Peter Ng.

The awareness programme features the 'Journey to Belong: Once Stateless in Malaysia' social media campaign by U-Schos, UNHCR's teacher's guide to teaching children on statelessness, youth roundtable on statelessness in Malaysia, UNHCR's '#IBELONG' campaign as well as a multimedia exhibition on statelessness by both UNHCR and U-Schos.



Chairperson of The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Razali Ismail applauded UCSI scholars for raising awareness towards the plight of the stateless persons within the country and beyond.

I am heartened to witness their (U-Schos) leadership, compassion, ethics and civic-mindedness which speak highly of our Malaysian youth today.

— Yang Berbahagia
Tan Sri Razali Ismail
Chairperson of The Human
Rights Commission of Malaysia
(SUHAKAM)



(from left) Hands of Hope co-founders Tanasha Suhandani, Kim Lim and Suzanne Ling all smiles as UCSI Group Founder and CEO Dato' Peter Ng contributes on behalf of UCSI University to provide access to education among the underserved communities.



Gifting refugee children with free education

Ten refugee children from Burma received the gift of free education through the Sponsor-A-Child Project, a brainchild of the Hands of Hope social initiative by UCSI University (UCSI) students and alumni that provides free education to the underserved communities.

Fully funded, the children — aged between seven and 15 — will now undergo education programmes at IDEAS Academy, Chin Student Organisation (CSO) and Project Self Help for a year. Five children will study at CSO, three at IDEAS, one was sponsored for transportation to study at Project Self Help while another had resettled at the United States of America.

The children were offered the sponsorship due to their academic excellence with the certificates presented by the Founding President of IDEAS, Yang Amat Mulia Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin Tuanku Muhriz at UCSI's Kuala Lumpur campus on July 18.

Hands of Hope is co-founded under the UCSI Scholars Circle (U-Schos) by Suzanne Ling, Tanasha Suhandani and Kim Lim in January 2014 with only 12 volunteers.

"Today, the initiative has grown to over 150 volunteers – majority being the students of the University who resonated with the cause," Tanasha said proudly.

The Nutrition with Wellness degree year-three student said the aim of the project is to serve as a solution to

improve access to education among the underserved communities.

"It is also a platform to instil volunteerism among youths to raise awareness towards the importance of education in changing one's life," Tanasha added.

The volunteers teach for two-hours for a total of 10-weeks while facilitating public events such as concerts, vocational classes, recycling projects through art and music to spread awareness on their cause. Among the volunteers are the Burmese refugee children themselves who excelled in their subjects.

Taking inspiration from the Hands of Hope volunteers to give back to their community is 15-year-old Burmese refugee, Cherry, who dubbed the Sponsor-A-Child Project as a 'movement from darkness to light'.

"I hope this project continues because education is an important tool in addressing issues around the world," the IDEAS Academy student said, adding that she enjoys assisting her friends when it comes to learning English.

In lauding the project, Tunku Abidin hoped that the refugee children in Malaysia will always associate this country with happy memories wherever their talents and pursuits take them.

"I am impressed with UCSI's students and graduates who have been making important

SUCCESSFUL RUN: Among the 1,000 UCSI Freedom Run participants.

HAPPY OCCASION: (left-right) Dato' Peter Ng, Tan Sri Arshad and Senior Prof Dato' Dr Khalid cutting the cake during UCSI's Family Carnival and Charity Drive.

contributions in assisting the refugee children. No doubt, there will be challenging times but as long as they use failure to adjust and adapt, then the future can be bright indeed. I hope society can benefit from their creativity and hard work," he said.

UCSI Group Founder and CEO Dato' Peter Ng, contributed RM12,362 on behalf of the University towards the project.

The contributions were collected through the UCSI Family Day Charity Carnival-cum-Freedom Run marathon which was held in May this year. At the marathon, 1,000 people including UCSI staff, academicians and members of the public ran between the distance of 6km and 10km to raise an additional RM40,000.

The funds were raised to assist 10 various non-governmental organisations including the Hands of Hope in their social initiative.

"I am sure everyone would echo similar sentiments but it is the courage of our students who venture out and make a difference to the world out there, my congratulations to these deserving scholarship recipients of UCSI Trust," said Dato' Peter Ng.

Also present were UCSI Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff and UCSI University Trust Chairman Dato' (Dr) Haji Karim Bin Haji Abdullah Omar.



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SMJK Hua Lian emerges Champion of UCSI's Science and Maths Quiz 2016 National-Level Challenge

RELIEVED: (from left) Ng Jiann Rin, Lim Sze Chen and Ong Teng Keng from SMJK Hua Lian, Perak talk about their preparation process and experience at the event.

UCSI University's (UCSI) Centre of Pre-U Studies (CoPUS) recently organised the Science and Maths Quiz 2016 National-Level Challenge on campus grounds.

With questions covering a variety of topics — mathematics and a range of science disciplines including biology, chemistry as well as physics — the Quiz saw 15 teams of secondary school students battle it out to win the Champion title.

Students of SMJK Hua Lian from Taiping, Perak ultimately edged out the other finalists for the bragging rights. The vibrant minds were surprised and elated at their win.

"We did not even expect to make it to the final round let alone winning first prize because the other semi-finalists were really good. Our scores were not far from each other but apparently we had more faith in them than in ourselves," chuckled Lim Sze Chen.

Team member Ong Teng Kheng added, "We were not prepared for the final round at all especially for the Biology questions because none of us are good at it but I'm glad we made it through."

When speaking about their preparation process, team member Ng Jiann Rin said that the team would meet up a few times a week after school to study and brainstorm every topic together.

Ng also added that without the help of their teacher Mdm Ong Moy Kean, their journey and their win would not have been possible.

"Our teacher has been very supportive and helpful. She was not hard on us, as she did not want to put us under pressure. Even though this was a competition, she did not want us to feel like it was the end to all. Whether we win or lose, the most important thing is that we worked hard for it and we did our best," he said.

Ng also said that studying for the Quiz had an added benefit. "We learned a few things during our preparations and brainstorming sessions that would certainly help us in our SPM exams."

For placing Champion in the Quiz, the team brought home RM1,000 in cash and the members were each awarded a full tuition fee bursary by the UCSI University Trust.

Coming a close second was a team from Chong Hwa Independent High School. They walked away with RM500 in cash prize and a bursary worth RM45,000.

The 2nd Runner-up was a team from Kuen Cheng High School. They bagged a cash prize worth RM300 and a bursary worth RM30,000.

The first Science and Maths Quiz was organised in 2013 to promote the study of science and mathematics. Since then, the

Quiz has become an annual affair in which many schools across Klang Valley look forward to being part of to test their scientific knowledge, mathematical skills and mental endurance.

This year, the Quiz was organised on a bigger scale whereby the invitation was extended to secondary schools from Penang, Perak and Negeri Sembilan. The State-Level Challenge was held simultaneously in those four states on 9 April 2016.

The Science and Maths Quiz 2016 National-Level Challenge was officiated by Leong Sat Sing, the Vice-President of UCSI Group Corporate Affairs. In his speech, he spoke about the importance of science and mathematics in daily life.

"If mathematics is the music of reason, then science is the art of logic. They both go hand in hand and are extremely important in discovering the intricacies, mechanics and wonders of life. Great scientists and mathematicians did not become successful overnight. Many turned their personal struggles into success stories over the years and became masters in their respective fields," he said in his speech.

Last year's Quiz saw a participation of 99 teams with 297 students from 27 different schools in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. This year, the number of participants has risen to 549 students from 74 secondary

schools from Penang, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and the Klang Valley.

Assistant Professor Dr Mabel Tan, current President and CEO of UCSI College who pioneered the Quiz three years ago as the former Director of CoPUS applauded the organising team on the event's success. She also talked about how the Quiz will benefit the students in the future.

"Our world is constantly changing and evolving. Today, we rely on science and mathematics in ways we could not imagine 30 years ago. Through this Quiz, we want to raise the awareness of the importance of these subjects and encourage the younger generation to cultivate an interest in them," she said.

She also added that a strong background in science and mathematics would certainly prepare the students for college or work after graduation and open doors to higher paying jobs and greater opportunities over a lifetime.

Also present at the event were Willie Tan, the Vice-President of UCSI's Student Enrolment Centre and Assistant Professor Ting Hock Chin, the Director of CoPUS.



DELIGHTED: Winners of the Science and Maths Quiz 2016 National-Level Challenge share a light moment with their teachers, the Organising Chairperson Choong Wai Seng and the President and CEO of UCSI College (middle) Asst Prof Dr Mabel Tan.



MOMENT OF GLORY: The team from SMJK Hua Lian, Perak emerged as the Champion of UCSI's Science and Maths Quiz 2016 National-Level Challenge.



A CLOSE SECOND: The 1st Runner-up, Chong Hwa Independent High School, walked away with a RM500 cash prize and a bursary worth RM45,000.



SECOND RUNNER UP: A team from Kuen Cheng High School walked home as the 2nd Runner-up of the Science and Maths Quiz 2016 National-Level Challenge.

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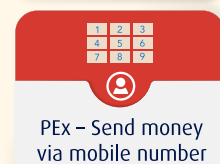
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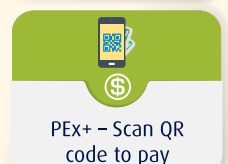
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WRITE RIGHT

Insights from some of Malaysia's most experienced authors and journalists.

Constantly on the pulse of lifestyle propositions in Kuala Lumpur and beyond with six years of working experience under his belt, **Jason Kwong** is an esteemed authority in his own right. Growing up reading *MEN'S FOLIO* was a natural thing for him — after all, it is the style bible for discerning, affluent men — but never would he have anticipated this is where he will discover his passion for writing.

Starting out as a writer in *MEN'S FOLIO* Malaysia, Jason Kwong eventually joined the ranks in *FHM* Malaysia and has since honed his skills in renowned magazines such as *THE SCORE* and *NEWMAN*. He has also contributed feature articles for *WORLD OF WATCHES*, *THE PEAK* Malaysia, *ESQUIRE* Malaysia and *FOURFOURTWO* Malaysia/Singapore. He later re-joined *MEN'S FOLIO* Malaysia in 2015. The **UCSI Gazette** editorial team interviews him to understand what it is like to be an editor and writer in Malaysia.



Please tell us more about yourself. How was your career like?

Before joining the publishing industry, I was in banking in Singapore for seven years. I returned to Malaysia in 2009 because time was rather tough there and things were getting stressful. I became a stockbroker for a while but because the market was very quiet, it was no longer challenging for me.

One day, a friend contacted me and asked if I was interested in assisting with writing for a catalogue. Before this, I have never even used inverted commas because in banking we never handled things like these. That was how my career in the publishing industry began. I learned there was an opening in *MEN'S FOLIO* and I decided to try it out. I started out as a junior writer and fashion was my focus. After a while, I moved to *FHM Malaysia* where I spent a year as a senior writer and web editor. The next three years was spent as an editor for *THE SCORE* and subsequently *NEWMAN* before joining back the ranks at *MEN'S FOLIO Malaysia* in 2015.

You are currently an editor of *MEN'S FOLIO Malaysia* and *WORLD OF WATCHES*. Can you tell us more about your job scope?

There are more to the job than the public understand. The job scope of an editor is not as glamorous as everyone thinks — you don't always get to sit in front row seats at fashion events and you still have a fair bit of work to do. We share our content with our Singapore counterpart but we try our best to localise it, give it a bit of Malaysian flavour. For instance, when *Ola Bola* was quite hot, we shot JC Chee. I believe my banking experience did help me out quite a lot in terms of time management; I panic less as an editor.

Was it always your passion to be in the publishing/fashion industry? What made you move from banking sector to the publishing sector?

In banking, it is always a race. You always have to work hard to remain on top because it is possible for your junior to eventually be your superior — it is a very challenging industry. What made me prefer the publishing sector over the banking industry is the lifestyle. There

are hectic times as well and heavy responsibilities, but there is the fun side where you get to write about the things you enjoy in life and it is very satisfying to see it in print.

What or who inspired you to write about fashion and what are the aspects that keep you going?

When I was working in a bank, it felt more like a job than a career. Here, as an editor and a writer, I get to meet a lot of interesting and colourful people which made my working experience a whole lot exciting. I believe that if I have entered a different industry, I would not have met all these interesting people. I was lucky to have had many opportunities to work with different magazines.

How do you hone your editorial instincts?

I believe there are two ways to become a good editor or writer: improve your writing skills — be very good at it — and then slowly specialise in a certain topic. Reading is still the number one way to improve your writing skills. I make sure to do some reading before bed — it is also a good way to put myself to sleep.

What are the memorable moments throughout your career?

I get to meet interesting individuals and sit in front row seats during fashion shows. But the highlights would be interviewing Jackie Chan, Donnie Yen and Jay Chou.

What are some of the challenges you have met as an editor?

Time and people management would be my main challenge. You need to have good communication skills — you cannot go all diabolical editor *Devil Wears Prada* on your subordinates!

Do you have any writers that you look up to? Who are the Malaysian and non-Malaysian writers that have left a deep impression on you?

I love reading books of the humour genre. I am a fan of the American novelist Carl Hiaasen and the renowned English author of fantasy novels Terry Pratchett. I am also a fan of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.

Have you ever written in different genres or mediums? If yes, what are they? If no, why? And will you consider trying in the future?

I have experience working with *FOURFOUR TWO* — the world's number one football magazine — but I did not enjoy it as much as I am completely not a football fan, I am a basketball and badminton fan, but nevertheless that was an interesting experience. When I was working freelance, I wrote for *THE PEAK Malaysia* — a luxury lifestyle magazine for entrepreneurs and businesses — and I had the opportunity of interviewing Malaysia's First Tech Billionaire, Goh Peng Ooi, for a cover story. I believe it all depends on interest to cultivate a passion for writing in specific genres.

Do you think writers should stick to what they know, or should they get out of their comfort zones and explore new topics?

One should always begin their career with exploring, and when they discover what they are good at, they should stick to it. Always be willing to test the waters but know where your limits lie.



Jason Kwong (right) with Godfrey Gao, a celebrated Taiwanese-born Canadian model and actor, at an event.



UCSI fashion students exhibit exclusive designs at KL City Gallery



- 1. THE PAPER DRESSES:** Four non-wearable dresses made entirely of paper by UCSI fashion students.
- 2. PLEASED:** Leong See Wen and her partner Ng Yen Lynn with their 10-foot-long outfit.
- 3. INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE:** Carol Khan, Communication Director of KL City Gallery spoke about the benefits
- 4. BRIGHT TALENTS:** [from left] Leong See Wen, Ng Yen Lynn, Li Miao, Zhanna Otegen and Ng Kai Ting sharing a light moment with Carol Khan, Communication Director of KL City Gallery.
- 5. URBAN SKETCHES:** The exhibition also featured the sketches and illustrations of 'KL Town' themed outfits by over 10 fashion design students from ICAD.

Five students who were involved in the showcase each created an exclusive 10-foot-long outfit made entirely of paper.

According to Ng Yen Lynn, she and her partner Leong See Wen took almost a month to create the non-wearable outfit—from sketching to constructing the materials.

Despite it being part of their assignment, the young designer said it was an exciting project to work on.

"The exhibition was part of our assignment. It took us a few weeks to work on our outfit and it was really challenging, especially having to use papers instead of cloth. But it is very rewarding to see the completed work that is up and ready to be seen by the public," said the young designer.

Ng also said that the exhibition is a valuable opportunity for them to obtain constructive and professional feedback.

"We have all enjoyed working on our creations for this exhibition," she said. "It is always exciting to design for a specific space. We certainly look forward to the public's feedback, positive or negative, as it will help us hone our skills."

The exhibition has not only become a showcase for the young designers but also a vivid testimony of the Institute's commitment to educational excellence where students are highly encouraged to participate in competitions, exhibitions, and industry projects under the guidance of their lecturers.

In addition to the paper outfits, the exhibition also featured the sketches and illustrations of 'KL Town' themed outfits by over 10 fashion design students from the diploma and degree programmes.

Speaking about the exhibition, fashion design lecturer Lucas Lim Boon Leong enthused, "We're very grateful to the management of KL City Gallery for once again allowing our students to exhibit their work. They have always given us support and offered their gallery as a space to allow the public, tourists and art enthusiasts to appreciate our students' craft up close."

Lim also added that ICAD is more than thrilled to have KL City Gallery's continuous support in the years to come.

"Support and encouragement from the local art scene and major industry players definitely have a profound impact on our

teaching and learning at ICAD. Through their involvement, our students have the opportunity to expand their horizons in the art industry. We hope that we will have the honour of working with KL City Gallery again in the future," he said.

Carol Khan, the Communication Director of KL City Gallery said, "At some point during their study, students will want to start exhibiting their work to the public. The work they produced is a notable achievement in their field of interest. I am genuinely impressed by their work for this particular project and the professionalism they demonstrated during this opportunity."

She also added that the exhibition not only provides good publicity for the students but also serves to promote community involvement and will benefit KL City Gallery as one of the most visited tourist attractions.



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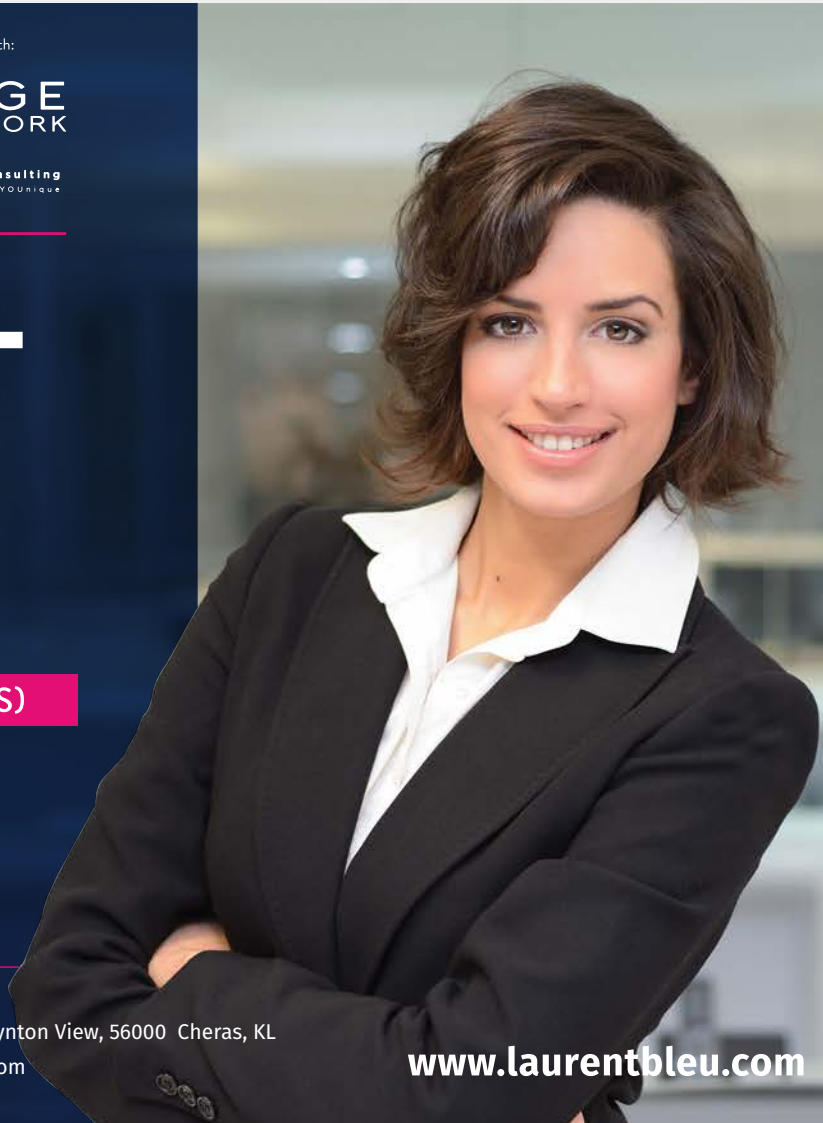


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ENGINEERING CHANGE AT IMPERIAL

In 2015, two UCSI University Chemical Engineering students headed to Imperial College London for an intercalated research programme. They had the opportunity to work with renowned Dr Jerry Heng, a Malaysian academic who conducts cutting-edge research at Imperial. Now, following in the footsteps of her seniors is Lee May Yan, a third-year chemical engineering student.

Driving innovation at a world-class institution like Imperial College London is a distant dream for most people but at UCSI University, it passes as an annual affair for engineering students.

Just ask Lee May Yan, a third-year chemical engineering student who was recently selected to advance the progress of the 'Cenosphere Enhancement and Optimisation Project' at Imperial.

Despite gaining inside information from the pioneering batch of UCSI seniors who went to Imperial last year — May Yan is leaving nothing to chance as she prepares for her upcoming stint in London.

For starters, it isn't any British university. Imperial is consistently rated among Britain's top three — and the world's top 10 — universities. It is also affiliated with 14 Nobel Prize winners like Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, and Dennis Gabor, the inventor of holography.

And if that intellectual exhilarating environment isn't challenging enough, the 22-year-old Subang Jaya lass has never been overseas.

"I've never travelled before and this is practically the first time I'll be getting out of my comfort zone," muses May Yan who is also a UCSI scholarship recipient. "Going to a new country presents a new set of challenges and I'll have to be more independent."

"I'd better be. Imperial's heritage is steep in scientific discovery and it'll be the first time I'll conduct research at such an advanced level."

Her mission in London: To optimise existing research on functional particles,

specifically coal fly ash, in the bid to improve current methods of extracting cenosphere — a lightweight, inert, hollow sphere made largely of silica and alumina that varies in colour from grey to white.

The extraction process is as exacting as it is time-consuming.

First, the coal ash — the very same pulverised ash found under a barbecue grill — must be pre-treated, undergoing a process called sifting, until it reaches a suitable particle size.

It is then measured and heated at high temperatures to make the ash particles hollow — imagine bubbles with solid surfaces. With a lesser density than water, the particles become extremely light.

And why is something so small — and light — so important?

"Cenosphere is used to create lightweight cement and it's also a good filler for polymers," explains May Yan. "Its benefits are tremendous, particularly in the construction industry."

"Cement made with cenosphere is much lighter and construction workers can deal with lesser loads of cement. Less physical exertion reduces the body's wear and tear and we are looking at long term health benefits for workers in the sector."

At Imperial, May Yan will work under the supervision of Dr Jerry Heng, a senior lecturer at Imperial who co-leads the university's Surfaces and Particle Engineering Laboratory (SPEL).

She will also have the invaluable opportunity of working alongside other

world-class researchers who advance knowledge in particle, materials and surface science.

"Dr Heng's principal area of research has advanced scientific understanding on the impact of particle engineering unit operations on surface properties," says May Yan. "He has also advanced modelling tools that positively impact the prediction and control of scientific operations and furthered the development of gas chromatographic characterisation methodology."

"He's also a leading Malaysian academic — who studied locally — and it's heartening to see him pushing the boundaries of science at one of the world's best universities. I look forward to learning more under his guidance."

May Yan's endeavours in London will further the pioneering work on cenosphere done by Soh Wei Ming, her UCSI senior who was first selected to drive research at Imperial with his classmate, Leon Tan Kuan Leong, in 2015.

Apart from spending hours training at UCSI's engineering labs, May Yan religiously read Wei Ming's research paper and progress logs. The two also identified research parameters May Yan could work on like various temperature settings and acid washing to remove impurities.

Like her seniors before her, May Yan had to undergo an arduous selection process with 16 other hopefuls who topped the class with their CGPA scores.

The two-stage crucible first involved two gruelling interview sessions on the technical and non-technical aspects of research that whittled the shortlist down

to six students. They were then required to submit essays and May Yan's strong showings finally led to her selection.

Dr Heng was part of the selection process and May Yan admits to being nervous throughout the ordeal.

"My research endeavours at Imperial will also involve an understanding of physics and that's not exactly my strongest point," she admits. "I had to get myself ready for tough questions and I started early by watching educational videos from the Khan Academy — a non-profit provider of free education.

"I also received lots of guidance from my dedicated lecturers and regular group studies with my friends. UCSI helped me improve my knowledge in physics and I'm grateful for everything."

Commenting on the selection process, UCSI Chemical and Petroleum Engineering head Assistant Professor Jully Tan opines that May Yan's personality and technical base set her apart.

"May Yan is independent, proactive, open minded and most importantly, capable of taking criticism," she says. "Taking comments and challenges positively is extremely important at Imperial as its part of the learning culture.

"She is also someone who does not sit waiting for answers. Instead, she will do her best to come up with her own solutions. I am confident that she will do very well in London."

May Yan's recent selection is the latest milestone in UCSI's Star Trek initiative that sees the University collaborating with the

world's best universities, opening doors for students and staff.

Star Trek began in 2014 when UCSI's top medical student was selected for a year-long research programme at Harvard Medical School. This was followed with the selection of two engineering students to further research at Imperial in 2015.

Since then, more students have been selected on an annual basis and more arrangements will be made with other institutions and research centres of global repute.

May Yan's selection continues the trend and highlights the progress UCSI has made in the engineering field. The University also offers programmes in the following fields: civil, communication and electronic, electrical, electrical and electronic, mechanical, mechatronic and petroleum.



*"UCSI helped
me improve my
knowledge in physics
and I'm grateful
for everything."*

– Lee May Yan



Seniors Leon Tan Kuan Leong (right) and Soh Wei Ming returned with an experience worth more than gold.



Jeremiah Joseph Fonseka

BA (Hons) Hospitality Management, graduated 2014
General Manager, Century Langkawi Beach Resort

As we celebrate UCSI University's 30 years of student achievements, *The UCSI Gazette* catches up with the University's alumni to shine a spotlight on their career and achievements after graduation, and glean some words of wisdom from the alumni themselves. This issue, we liaised with **Jeremiah Joseph Fonseka**, affectionately known as **JJ** among his friends and lecturers, a BA (Hons) Hospitality Management graduate who is making a name for himself in the industry.

Please describe your career journey.

I am an hotelier by profession with 8 years of experience in the Hospitality industry. My career begins as a front office assistant in Park City Everly Hotel Sarawak, a 4-star luxury commercial hotel. From there, I have worked my way up to the Front Office Executive working closely with the Hotel Manager.

In the year 2012 right after my 6 months internship, I joined the Starwood Hotels and Resorts team as an Accounts Assistant in Four Points by Sheraton Kuching, a 4-star hotel with 435 rooms and suites. I climbed up the ranks from Accounts Assistant to Assistant Financial Controller and began working closely with the founder for the financial and budget plannings of the company.

In the year 2015, Sheraton Langkawi Beach Resort (the sister property) had been appointed as the main caterer for LIMA 15', the largest maritime and aviation show in Malaysia. During that period, I have successfully led my team in hosting and organising the event and on top of that, I recorded the highest profit margin ever achieved in my company.

Currently, I am holding the post of General Manager for Century Langkawi Beach Resort — formerly known as Sheraton Langkawi Beach Resort — a property under Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc. Being the pioneered team of the resort with 130 dedicated team members, we successfully transformed the once worn-out hotel into the currently preferred 4-star resort destination in

Langkawi. I am also the Financial Controller for the Century Group of Hotels.

Is your current working experience similar to what you imagined when you were still a student?

I would say the experience is almost similar to what I imagined. I was blessed to have completed my degree with UCSI as the knowledge I have acquired throughout my studies here provided very useful in my career. What is great about UCSI are the lecturers — their knowledge and experience in the industry is an added advantage to the students' learning experience.

What motivated you to pursue an education in Hospitality Management? How did your interest in this field come about?

My first experience in this industry was right after my SPM examinations. At the age of 17 years old, being short of cash at the time, I decided to earn some money by working part-time as a bellman in one of the hotels back in my hometown. I think it was there that my passion and love for the service industry blossomed. Being able to meet people from all over the world — not to mention the big tips I received daily — kept me motivated to explore more in this industry. Besides that, my parents always had my back in whatever career path I choose to take. They were always 100% supportive and my number one financial supporter of my education.

Can you describe to us your experience studying in UCSI? What was your most unforgettable memory?

Everything about UCSI was just wonderful. But I must say my most memorable time in UCSI is the people, both the students and lecturers, I met and befriended over the years. Until this very day, I remain in contact and maintain a strong relationship with everyone from campus.

How did UCSI affect you in terms of personal and professional growth?

Without a proper education and the knowledge I have gained here, I will not be able to control my future. The education, knowledge and experience I acquired during my time in UCSI definitely gave me the confidence and basic knowledge of what I am going to face in the real world. But of course, the best part of all is the recognition I received from companies upon graduation. I would say, all the theory classes I attended in UCSI really did pay off in the end.

Which lecturers have you connected with in UCSI University and why? Would you like to leave a message for them?

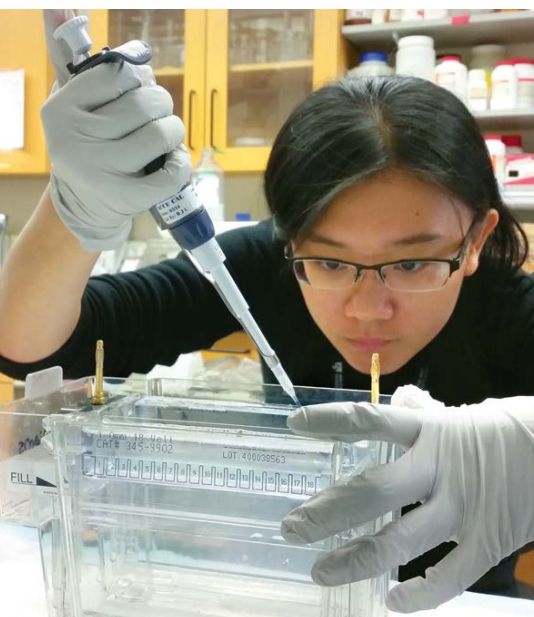
I still keep in touch with all my lecturers through social media and so on. Special thanks to the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management team, Assistant Professor Danial Yong, Chef Abang Fairudy, and all the other lecturers.

Never really had the chance to show my appreciation to them, so here I would like to say 'thank you' to all the wonderful lecturers who educated me and guided me throughout my entire education in UCSI. I know I can be hard-headed sometimes, no hard feeling there. Cheers.



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DENNIS LAU
Graduate

*CEO of Mosaic Music Entertainment.
Electric violinist, composer and
music producer.*

At UCSI University, turning 30 is more than a milestone. It's a legacy of excellence — one that sees UCSI standing out as a leading university in Malaysia and Asia. It's a reason to believe for thousands of students from more than 110 countries. More importantly, it's a commitment that changes lives. Not just in Malaysia but around the world. One year at a time. One life at a time.

From the refugee camps in Darfur to the hallowed halls of Harvard, our students apply their skills and talent for the greater good. This is more than knowledge in action. This is social change. That's what turning 30 means to us at UCSI. And that's why our world revolves around expanding yours.

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