

# THE UCSI GAZETTE

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

*Shine Like  
Stars*

UCSI UNIVERSITY  
30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
GALA DINNER

SPECIAL EDITION

VOLUME 08

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# 10 *Cover Story*

## Celebrating 30 years of empowering aspirations

Reflecting on 30 years of accomplishments and raising a glass to the anniversary celebrations



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### UCSI Co-Op Luncheon

UCSI awards outstanding Co-Op partners during annual event



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### Person of the Month: Benjamin Yong



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### Write Right: Grace Lim

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



The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. UCSI's first was taken three decades ago when the world was experiencing the early waves of the digital revolution. Our first course was a part-time evening class organised for working professionals who wanted to learn how to use a computer — a machine so foreign then but so ubiquitous now. And as we stand in the 21st century, in a full-fledged campus far from the modest shop lot in SS2 that was UCSI in 1986, that very spirit remains with us: Knowledge for the willing. Academia for the industry. Education for the future.

2016 has been a year-long celebration of our 30th anniversary in education. We value our rich history and the milestones that brought us to this very moment by continuing to do more for our students and the communities around us. Under the UCSI banner, we organise charity fundraisers and build houses for the underserved; raise awareness on a variety of important issues from mental health to stateless refugees; advocate eye care and sponsored glasses for underprivileged teenagers; and hold leadership camps, literacy campaigns and national quizzes to encourage a love for learning, early.

As we commemorate our past, we do not forget to look towards the future. This year, we sealed partnerships with leading universities including the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University and Queen's University Belfast; through our Star Trek programme four of our top medical and engineering students were selected by Harvard University and Tsinghua University to pursue cutting-edge research there; we connected with the industry to bring our Co-operative network to more than 4,000 partners; and our students continue to host and win intellectual, artistic and sporting competitions across the nation.

All this is but a microcosm of the year we have had and a certain indication of greater accomplishments in the years ahead. We have accomplished much over the past few decades but the journey is long from over. More than how far we have come is how far we will go.

Physically, you can see our buildings — old and new — stretching towards the horizon today. The tower cranes which have been sharing our space for the past few years are evidence of more growth to come: Malaysia's first private teaching hospital. A Green-certified campus in Kuching. Two new academic blocks in Kuala Lumpur.

Less overt to the eye is the cogs within. Our strategic plan for 2016 to 2020 is in place and the roadmap towards becoming Malaysia's top private university plotted. The mission to push the University to further and higher continues. Faced with an ever-changing landscape of higher education, we are on the edge of a revolution ourselves — in education excellence, research innovation and industry synchronisation. Our next steps will be to further consolidate our core programmes, intensify strategic expansion overseas, strengthen research and postgraduate studies, expand our Complementary Competency Programme, and venture into uncharted territories. The future has never been more exhilarating. But we are keen to have the future synergised and aspirations challenged.

There is much to do but just like we have proven in the past, I know that each of us — academics, students and staff — will rise to the occasion with enthusiasm, dedication and spirit. Thank you for your invaluable contributions; we will not be here without your support and I look forward to another 30 years of achievement with you.

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





(Second row, fifth from right) Deputy Minister of Education Yang Berhormat Dato' P. Kamalanathan surrounded by students and staff volunteers of UCSI University.

# UCSI encourages recycling initiative to help build a better world

More than 40 UCSI University (UCSI) students and staff under CAREton Project @ UCSI University came together with volunteers from Sime Darby to build a house with an *Orang Asli* (aboriginal) family in Kampung Orang Asli Serendah, Hulu Selangor, from September 23 to 25, 2016.

This community service initiative is in support of the CAREton Project @ UCSI University, which supports the main CAREton Project, a carton recycling campaign organised by Tetra Pak and supported by Nestlé, to promote the collection of used beverage cartons for recycling into building materials.

These materials are then donated to non-governmental organisation EPIC to lead the construction of homes for aboriginal families together with volunteers. The project is championed by UCSI's Faculty of Applied Sciences (FOAS).

Present at the Key Handover Ceremony as the Guest of Honour was Deputy Minister

of Education Yang Berhormat Dato' P. Kamalanathan A/L P. Panchanathan.

During his speech, Yang Berhormat Dato' P. Kamalanathan commended the University's strong commitment to foster civic-minded learning experience among their students.

"We need to encourage growth in terms of their leadership skills, ethical and civic responsibilities, as well as instill volunteerism, and inspire positive activism. And I am happy to note that UCSI University is doing just that.

"I hope that all of you will continue to do what you are doing here today, and expand it throughout the country."

UCSI is the first university in Malaysia to be a CAREton Project family member and the collaboration was initiated by Associate Professor Dr Crystale Lim Siew Ying, a lecturer of FOAS and the advisor of the CAREton Project @ UCSI University.

Fully supported by the Faculty and the University, the CAREton Project @ UCSI University is also now a Student Enrichment Programme (SEP). As an SEP, UCSI University Trust Scholarship students can choose to volunteer for it as part of their community engagement work. This ensures the Project has a steady stream of volunteers to foster its continuity.

The event, which was organised by a student team led by Chong Poh Sim and Nurul Asikin Asad, was also attended by UCSI University's Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff and the Faculty's Dean Associate Professor Dr Bimo Ario Tejo.

The CAREton Project @ UCSI University Homebuilding 2016 was supported by Sime Darby Holdings Berhad, Proguard Technologies, Ford Malaysia, Yayasan Dayadiri, Tetra Pak, iM4U and Volunteer Malaysia.

Students and staff working together to build a house with an *Orang Asli* (aboriginal) family.





# UCSI awards outstanding Co-Op partners during annual event



UCSI's Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Prof Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff highlighting the importance of universities maintaining a good relationship with the industry.

UCSI University (UCSI) recently awarded 10 renowned and prestigious companies in conjunction with their annual Co-Operative Education Placement Programme (Co-Op) Appreciation Luncheon. More than 200 individuals from various local and international companies attended the event.

Divided into three award categories, among the 10 companies to receive these awards are Leo Burnett who won 'The Most Engaging Co-Op Partner' award, AIA Shared Services for 'The Most Supportive Co-Op Partner' award, and Aladdin Street Sdn Bhd for 'The Most Supportive Co-Op Partner: Premium Co-Op Supporter' award. Top Glove and Public Bank Berhad were also among the list of recipients to receive these awards.

"We are indeed very delighted to receive this recognition given by the University. Since 2006, we have been accepting students from UCSI coming in with a lot of excitement and anticipation, and we are proud to offer them what they wanted; real-life working experiences, opportunity to speak with clients and attend training sessions at our training centres," said Shawn Keng Teck Ee, Marketing Support Executive of Eppendorf Asia Pacific Sdn Bhd

on receiving 'The Most Supportive Co-Op Partner' award.

Organised by UCSI's Student Affairs and Alumni Division (SAA), the Luncheon aims to show gratitude towards the support from the esteemed partners of its Co-Op programme.

UCSI University's Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, who was present at the event, highlighted the issues graduates faced upon entering the workforce and stressed the importance of universities staying ahead of global trends.

"On the quality of graduates, the Ministry aspires to increase the current 75% graduate employability rate to more than 80% in 2025. According to the Malaysia Education Blueprint for Higher Education 2015–2025, there is a mismatch in the supply and demand of graduates, with employers reporting that graduates lack the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes.

"This mismatch is only expected to get tougher to resolve as technological disruptions reshape industries and alter the types of jobs available.

"Preparing Malaysian youth to thrive in this complex and ever-changing future became an utmost importance to all higher learning institutions. Universities are hard pressed to nurture human talents and widen their graduates' horizons beyond providing an avenue for deeper learning, fostering analytical and critical thinking, objective enquiry and presenting research. And UCSI University has made this multitask agenda its own."

Also present at the event was Dato' Ir. Dr Gue See Sew, G&P Professionals Sdn Bhd's CEO; Dato' Ku Yee Fei, iTrain (M) Sdn Bhd's Executive Director; and Dato' Wesley Ong, Aladdin Street Sdn Bhd's Executive Director; among many others.

UCSI's Co-Op programme formally integrates classroom learning with workplace training in Co-Op employer organisations. As part of their degree requirements, students enrolled in UCSI programmes are required to complete a Co-Op module comprising two months' working experience for each year of their degree programme; beginning in Year One right through to the Final Year. As of today, UCSI has established more than 4,000 Co-Op partners.





**AWARD RECIPIENTS:** (From left) Shawn Keng Teck Ee, Marketing Support Executive of Eppendorf Asia Pacific Sdn Bhd; Faiz Sulaiman, Regional Manager of Rock Flow Dynamics (RFD); Ivan Chong Wai Hong, HR Business Partner of AIA Shared Services; UCSI lecturer as representative of Top Glove; Ryan Ong, Assistant Manager in Human Capital Management of Public Bank Berhad; Prof Dato' Dr Ahmad Hj. Zainuddin, UCSI Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and International and Director of Institute of Creative Art & Design; Senior Prof Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, UCSI Vice-Chancellor and President; Assoc Prof Dr Yeong Siew Wei, UCSI Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs and Alumni; Maureen Gomez, Head of People and Culture of Leo Burnett Malaysia; Daphne Lok, HR Director of Averis Sdn Bhd; Mohd Ajeemin Othman, Director of Human Resources of Concorde Kuala Lumpur; Dato' Wesley Ong, Executive Director of Aladdin Street Sdn Bhd; and UCSI lecturer as representative of Piau Kee Live & Frozen Seafoods Sdn Bhd.

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Altus® HPLC/UPLC

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DSC4000



DMA8000



LS-45/LS-55 Fluorescence Spectrometers

WITH PERKINELMER  
YOU DISCOVER A  
WHOLE NEW  
**WORLD**





The UCSI-UTM duo sharing a light moment at the launch of DBP's 'Lori Ujana Buku' project.

## UCSI-UTM duo wins the highest state prize in scientific writing

Professor Dr Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi, a professor at UCSI University (UCSI) and Dr Gurupiah Mursib, an associate professor at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) recently received the Prize for Scientific Work 2016 from Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) as an appreciation of their book at Dewan Sri Siantan, Perbadanan Putrajaya, Putrajaya.

The prize given annually by DBP represents the highest state prize in scientific writing in the Malay language. From the success of the book classed under the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities category, the professors won an award certificate and a cheque worth RM5,000 each.

Professor Tajuddin said he was thrilled to receive the prize on the collaborative work from an organisation that serves as an excellent platform to encourage scientific writing in the Malay language among academics.

"I have won several book awards in the past but this one is special. In the past, there were not many architecture books out there. Today, more and more are being published and the competition is getting tougher. I'm truly honoured to be part of this collaborative work and receive this prize," he said.

According to the professor, the book titled '*Regionalisma Dalam Seni Bina Malaysia Era Moden, Pascamoden dan Global*' published by DBP is about the regionalism approaches in Malaysian architecture and design. The book is part of a research by Dr Gurupiah from UTM's Department of Architecture in the Faculty of Built Environment.

The prize was presented by the Minister of Education, Dato' Seri Mahdzir bin Khalid at the launch of DBP's 'Lori Ujana Buku' project — a mobile bookstore that will be touring the country in conjunction with the National Language Month, organised nationally by DBP and the Ministry of Education.

Professor Tajuddin has been a professor at UCSI's School of Architecture and Built Environment since 2015. He is a renowned academic who specialises in the theory and history of architecture. He is also an authority in national architectural identity, Islamic architecture, the framework of early Western modernist architecture and mosque design.

To date, he has published over 50 books and articles focusing on Islamic architecture, Western modernist architecture

and mosque design. He also anchored a monthly column in *The Star* on the related topics for four years since the year 2000.

When asked about what drives him, the professor said, "I choose to write books rather than journal publications because I want to spread my ideas to the people and the policymakers. In a democracy, I believe you have to educate the masses rather than in an autocracy where you pander to the whims of the King or monarch or dictator."

Professor Tajuddin also spoke about his take on the significance of Islamic architecture.

"My understanding of Islamic architecture has evolved with my understanding of Islam in the modern world with democracy as the political framework. My theories and ideas are governed strongly with my progressive and liberal outlook on Islam in the modern world and as part of the global society. Regionalism is also one of the answers for this approach to Islamic Architecture."

Also present at the ceremony were Minister of Federal Territories, Yang Berbahagia Datuk Seri Utama Tengku Adnan bin Tengku Mansor and Director-General of DBP, Tuan Haji Abdul Adzis bin Abas.





## Prestigious recognition from Australia's University of Southern Queensland

UCSI University (UCSI) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Postgraduate Studies) Professor Dr Ooi Keng Boon has won many accolades but a recent award from the University of Southern Queensland (USQ), his alma mater, leaves the rest in the shade.

Sentimental value aside, receiving the Highly Commended Award for Research and Academic Pursuit evinced recognition from his peers and the USQ fraternity for his scholastic contributions in the fields of information technology and industrial management.

To date, Professor Ooi has authored over 100 research papers and around 70 have been published in Thomson ISI-indexed journals. He has received more than 3,800 citations to date, earning him a Harzing H-index score of 38.

"This award means a lot to me as I've always wanted to teach; to create and disseminate knowledge," averred Professor Ooi at USQ's 2016 Alumnus of the Year Awards ceremony in Toowoomba, Australia. "My career allows me to live that dream and it is gratifying when you empower others with knowledge.

"My time at USQ taught me that success has to be earned and effort is a prerequisite in every successful endeavour. Hard work will always pay off."

Professor Ooi, who also serves as Dean of UCSI's Faculty of Business and Information Sciences, was one of the 12 standout USQ alumni at the ceremony. His fellow achievers hail from Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, UAE and Britain.

Held annually, the USQ Alumni of the Year Awards formally recognises outstanding alumni in a broad spectrum of achievements including in their professional careers, academic excellence, or individuals who made a major contribution in community service or overcame significant personal adversity.

The founding editor-in-chief of the International Journal of Modelling in Operations Management, Professor Ooi also serves on the editorial advisory and review boards of numerous Thomson ISI-ranked journals from reputable publishers

like Elsevier, Emerald, Inderscience, as well as Taylor and Francis.

He has been inducted thrice — in 2011, 2014 and 2016 — into the elite Emerald Literati Club Award for Excellence, a distinction that recognises the outstanding contributions of authors and reviewers to scholarly research.

Being able to walk the talk, Professor Ooi is a firm advocate of high impact research at UCSI. He works ceaselessly to spur research endeavours and postgraduate study at the University.



Prof Dr Ooi Keng Boon (second from left) pictured with the winners and finalists of the University of Southern Queensland's Alumni of the Year Awards 2016.





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COVER STORY

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CELEBRATING  
30  
YEARS OF EMPOWERING  
ASPIRATIONS

THIS COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF UCSI'S GROWTH, CHANGE, OPPORTUNITY AND IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF OUR COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS GLIMPSE INTO UCSI'S PAST AND PRESENT, AND WILL CONTINUE TO EMBRACE AND SUPPORT ITS BRIGHT FUTURE.

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# REWINDING THE CLOCK. UCSI THROUGH THE DECADES.

The story behind the origin of UCSI University is an empowering tale of what a single-minded, driven spirit can accomplish when brave enough to take a leap of faith. Today, we take you back to the very beginning and show you some of the milestones achieved throughout the years.



The flagship campus in Taman Connaught (South Wing) is built.



The University College status is received and the UCSI brand is born.



A second campus in Sarawak is established.

2000 - 2004

2005 - 2010



Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Abdul Ahman Arshad joins us as the Chancellor.



UCSI gains full university status.



A third campus is launched in Kuala Terengganu.



1986 - 1990



Dato' Peter establishes the Canadian Institute of Computer Science with capital of RM2,000.



The Institute is granted a status upgrade and renamed Sedaya College.



A growing student population necessitates the move to a larger building in SS19.



The College relocates to Taman Segar, Cheras.



Tan Sri Ahmad Razali is appointed Chairman.



The Board of Directors is formed.

1991 - 1999

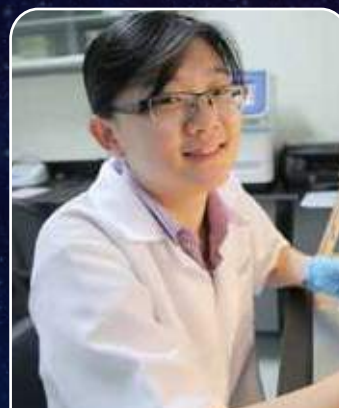
2011 - 2015



Official launch of MyCenTHE.



The construction of UCSI Hotel in Kuching begins with a ground breaking ceremony.



The beginning of the UCSI Star Trek Programme.



*January*

**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**THE FUTURE SYNERGISED**  
 SINCE 1986

## A TOAST TO 30 YEARS

To celebrate our 30th anniversary, we launched a year-long series of events including faculty and departmental initiatives, rich offerings of arts and cultural programmes, and signature commemorative campaigns. Enjoy some of the highlights.

### UNVEILING OF 30TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE LOGO

Launched during the January 2016 intake orientation day. The logo captures the metamorphosis of UCSI, from its humble beginnings to its position today as one of the few Malaysian private universities to be placed in the top 350 QS Asian University Rankings for two years in a row.

*June*

**WE HOSTED THE GLOBAL  
TASTE OF KOREA  
CONTEST 2016  
ORGANISED BY THE  
KOREAN EMBASSY IN  
MALAYSIA**

**UCSI OPTOMETRY  
CAMPAIGN  
PROVIDED PAIRS OF  
SPECTACLES TO 53  
UNDERPRIVILEGED  
STUDENTS OF SMK  
TINGGI SETAPAK**

*May*

### UCSI FAMILY DAY CHARITY CARNIVAL

Our birthday celebration made better with the fundraising of RM40,000, which was distributed to 10 various non-governmental organisations.

*July*

### WELCOMING DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Three of Malaysia's most eminent academics namely, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman, Tan Sri Dr Salleh Mohd Nor and Professor Tan Sri Dr Dzulkifli Abdul Razak joined our ranks as new University Council members. The trio are Fellows of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) and they have been instrumental in shaping Malaysia's progress in education, science and technology over the last two decades.

*August*

### 'THE DISEASE, THE PLACE, THE PEOPLE' STUDENT EXHIBITION

School of Architecture and Built Environment's students shines the spotlight on the world's second largest leprosarium through a story museum located in the Sungai Buloh Settlement.



*January - March*



#### EMINENT PERSONS SERIES PRE-CONFERENCE TALKS

Spearheading the drive for constant relationship improvement between tertiary education and industry, we collaborated with the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) to organise a three part forum that featured Dato' Dr Hafsa Hashim, Chief Executive Officer of SME Corporation Malaysia; Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, the Chairperson of AirAsia X Bhd; and Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Zakri Abdul Hamid, Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia. The Series led up to the Strengthening Industry-Academia Partnership (SIAP) Conference which featured notable leaders who shared their insights and experiences.

*April*



VISIT FROM  
PRODUCTION TEAM  
AND CAST OF  
'OLA BOLA' ON  
CAMPUS GROUNDS

*March*

GREAT MINDS  
GATHERED AT THE  
STRENGTHENING  
INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA  
PARTNERSHIP (SIAP)  
CONFERENCE

#### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

Organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts in collaboration with the Early Autism Project (EAP) Malaysia, the event celebrates hope for families affected by autism and advocate acceptance for individuals with autism.

*September*

OUR ACTUARIAL  
SCIENCE PROGRAMMES  
GRANTED PRESTIGIOUS  
IFOA RECOGNITION

*November*

UCSI UNIVERSITY  
30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
GALA DINNER

Here we are now!



Now you know UCSI's history but  
**DID YOU KNOW**

BEGAN IN  
**1986**

as a computer centre  
with **ONE** staff -  
**DATO' PETER** himself

Today ...

**10,000 +**

students on campus.



OVER  
**30%**

student population  
is international.

Over

**100**

acclaimed undergraduate and  
postgraduate programmes



**OVER 30%**

of UCSI's academic staff are  
PhD holders and a further 17%  
are pursuing their doctorate.

The 2015 average at private  
higher education institutions in  
Malaysia is 16%



in the Rating System for  
Malaysian Higher Education  
Institutions (SETARA).

Tier 5 is classified "Excellent"  
and it is the highest rating  
accorded to Malaysian  
universities so far.

The  
**Pioneer**

of Aquatic Science,  
Biotechnology, Food Science,  
Music and Nutrition.\*



\* In Malaysia's private higher education landscape

**TOP  
250-350  
IN ASIA**

UCSI is one of the few  
Malaysian private universities  
to break into the 2015 and 2016  
QS Asian University Rankings.



The  
**FIRST**

university in Asia that facilitates  
industry placement for students  
each year.



**COLLABORATES  
WITH**

**4,000+**

Global companies to provide our  
students with internships.

Total of **22,719** students carried  
out industry placement from  
2004-2015.



## A SAMPLING OF STAFF VOICES THROUGH THE DECADES

### What are you most thankful for, being here in UCSI?

I am thankful about being in an organisation where I work with many good people. I am also thankful for the supportive environment that allows me to grow as a professional.

#### PROFESSOR DR P'NG TEAN HWA

Director, Institute of Music  
Joined since December 1997

### How was your experience working here in UCSI?

For me it is a good working environment because every day is indeed a new experience and also a learning process for me. I am always learning new things from the students I interact with.

#### ASSISTANT PROFESSOR DR NALINA A/P THURAIRAJAH

Academic Advisor, Centre for Pre-U Studies  
Joined since September 2000

### What are you most thankful for, being here in UCSI?

For having given the opportunity to work here. This is actually the first job I applied for 14 years ago and I am still here! I am very thankful that they accepted me despite being a fresh graduate with no working experience. This has been definitely a great journey and I have learned a lot.

#### LAW LI FERN

Course Coordinator (Biology), Pre-U Studies  
Joined since July 2002

### What is your most unforgettable memory here?

My favourite memory here would be when we went for a company trip to Pulau Tioman, and Dato' Peter and Datin Lily made *nasi lemak* for us. They actually cooked *nasi lemak* and served us at the back of the bus. We were like one big happy family — that was the best memory ever!

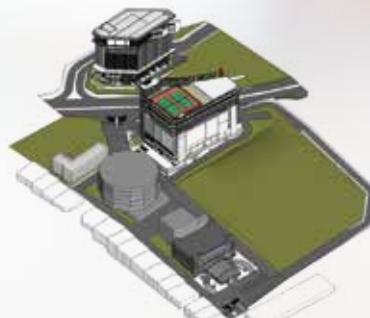
#### ERNIE CHITRA DZUREEN BINTI AWALLUDIN

Manager, International University Collaboration Centre  
Joined since November 1998

## FORGING AHEAD

The launching of Block E and Block F is merely the first phase of our planned expansion of the university. Much more will be done in the near future to make UCSI the private education provider of choice. Designed to epitomise the spirit of 21<sup>st</sup> century dynamism and interconnectivity, the new blocks will house state-of-the-art science labs, distinctive lecture theatres and commercial areas, among others. We want to provide a campus that reflects our commitment to quality education — one students can take pride in.

The final phase will result in UCSI Tower - a high rise building that will be an unmistakable feature of UCSI's main campus.



Phase 1



Phase 2



Phase 3



Final Phase



A portrait of Benjamin Yong, a man with dark, curly hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a light blue shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a solid, muted blue-grey color. The entire image is framed by a white border.

# BENJAMIN YONG

His love affair with food and cooking has set this culinary pioneer up for a successful rendezvous with the gourmet and dining business.



*Offering the best places in Kuala Lumpur from brunch venues to speakeasy bars, founder and Group CEO — or Chief Eating Officer as Benjamin Yong calls himself — of the BIG Group offers a large repertoire of new experiences to his customers. Responsible for transforming the city's dining scene, Benjamin Yong graciously accepted to tell The UCSI Gazette's editorial team all about his winning formula and his restless appetite of leading a business revolving around food while dishing out insightful pieces of advice.*

Having founded the BIG Group and managing — not to mention, successfully — over 26 BIG restaurants, cafés, stores and bars, is no small feat. And he is not showing any signs of slowing down. So what is the secret behind his success?

The practice of compartmentalising and prioritising.

"As the business expands, the issues increase. Just when you thought that you have resolved one matter, three more turn up. No amount of standard operating procedure can get you 100% the outcome you want because miscommunication and misinterpretation are bound to happen and it is normal — we are dealing with human resources, not robotics, after all. How I manage my time is by compartmentalising one problem after the other, and then from there list down and start prioritising which is the most urgent."

The same concept is applied to Benjamin Yong's personal life.

"You need to draw a line and differentiate what is personal and work, and what needs to be addressed at which point. You cannot pay too much attention to your career alone and disregard your personal life. It is important to achieve emotional fulfilment, deliver what you set up in your mind, instead of constantly putting it off in favour of your work.

"In other words, being able to say no to certain things," he said with a laugh.

"The whole building is on fire — it always will be — you just have to find out which is the most hazardous to the foundation and you will want to put that out first, before addressing the smaller and less life-threatening issues."

His tongue-in-cheek tagline is: "Peeling one potato at a time."

Benjamin Yong's success story began with the opening of the restaurant Delicious in his mother's clothing store Ms Read in 2004, which grew so fast that the E&O Group came knocking to buy a portion of his stake in the business three years later. After selling his enormously popular Delicious chain of restaurants in 2010, he moved on to new

culinary adventures — 16 new restaurants and a supermarket in just one year.

"People told us that it was a crazy idea to open so many outlets in such a short time. They were right," he recalls with a chuckle.

"At one stage, we were opening three restaurants in a month, and we didn't get much sleep. It was hectic; everything from setting the menu, choosing the crockery and checking the stocks, to training the staff. It is amazing how everybody in our team managed to pull it off."

Today, his veritable culinary empire includes four Ben's restaurants; eight outlets of Plan B; four Ben's General Food Store that functions as part café, part delicatessen; a supermarket at Publika as well as several bars and entertainment space in and around Kuala Lumpur.

"It is really through a series of coincidences and circumstances that led us to where we are today. We were initially looking for a place to set up a central kitchen when the landlord at Publika approached us and said: 'we got the space but we need a supermarket so if you can open a supermarket for us, we will give you the space for a central kitchen'. And that was how we ventured into the supermarket business.

"Looking back, I have to admit that they were very, very brave to have invested or believed in an operator who had no experience in running a supermarket. But through trial and error, supportive and understanding partners, I managed to expand into this business."

For Benjamin Yong, the momentous milestones in his career are not the expansion of BIG Group — Malaysia's first home-grown F&B empire stretching from Kuala Lumpur to the United Kingdom, nor is it the way his string of restaurants and grocers reinvented the way KL-ites ate and shopped. It is when he succeeds in unifying a team of workmates to achieve a goal together.

"Generally, when individuals work as a team, we go a little further and we achieve a lot more. When that happens, my sense of accomplishment far exceeds that

of achieving a material thing such as the opening of a new store.

"To me, it really is about the people, the business, and working together as a team. That is my definition of achievement and it is something that I am most proud of."

With his illustrious experience in entrepreneurship, what advice would he give to young students wishing to be a job provider instead of a job seeker in the future?

"Don't jump into the deep end too quickly without sufficient exposure."

Benjamin Yong explains that he was fortunate enough to grow up in a family of entrepreneurs. His father was one of the driving forces at the Metrojaya department store back in the 1980s prior to establishing the home-grown lifestyle brand, British India. His mother, before founding the Ms Read boutique, was in the manufacturing industry.

"I had the support network of my family, who has been in this retail business for a long time, and they assisted me in building an infrastructure. Without them, I think I would have failed. I would not have considered cash flows, or the financial side of the business as much as I did with the insights from my experienced family members.

"One should really think about their business model, look at it from a 360-degree perspective and understand it fully, recognise what they are getting into before diving in."


The man who has leveraged upon the nationwide obsession — their love for food — to build a multi-million ringgit business, also shares his winning formula when it comes to introducing new eateries: lots of research and a little bit of intuition.

"Observe global trends, what the in-trend is at the moment and what people are looking for. Place yourselves in the shoes of the consumer. 'If I am the demographic that this business is targeting, is this something that I would want to go for, participate in, or be proud of?' Ultimately, this will help you think of what you can create to cater to that market."






## Poets highlight pressing issues at annual Poetry Slam




Seasoned poetry slammer Enbah Nilah said the Poetry Slam Competition 2016 was a good platform for her to test some of her lesser known poems.



Sarah Rani

Sarah Rani returns this year to clinch the joint second spot with UCSI's Gwendoline Esther Hay Ai Yin.



UCSI's English Language & Communication (ELC) degree student, Gwendoline Esther Hay Ai Yin mimics a gunman during her poetry slam performance.

**Can poetry deliver change? Thirteen amateur poets explored the role of poetry in bringing change when they participated at UCSI University's (UCSI) recent Poetry Slam Competition 2016.**

Poetry Slam Competition is a live literary performance where poets take to the stage to express and challenge themselves through the recital of poems crafted on their own.

Themed '*Poetry for Change*', the competition saw the talented poets highlighting pressing issues concerning women, racism, patriotism and even mental health.

Bagging the first prize for courageously performing poems based on personal experiences was Mok Jee Wen. The award was her first.

"I've been slamming for two years and this is the first competition I took part in. It took me two-months to practise with a lot of time and effort going into the mental preparation rather than memorising the poems," the 26-year-old external auditor said.

Mok revealed the hardest part was maintaining a stage presence — something she always had difficulty with until this very competition where she decided to let go of her fears.

"Stage presence is everything along with the strength to maintain composure as each audience member has different expectations."

Mok's poem on mental illness touched the judges and members of the audience who snapped their fingers in approval — a common practise among poetry slam-goers.

Coming in second place was UCSI's English Language & Communication (ELC) degree student, Gwendoline Esther Hay Ai Yin who shared the first runner-up prize with returning competitor, Sarah Rani.

The first year ELC student said she had to obtain pointers from seasoned local poetry slammers such as Melizarani Selva and Enbah Nilah to prep herself for the competition.

"I started muttering my poems under my breath everywhere I went as the competition date drew closer. It was so funny when people caught me doing it," the Malacca-born related.

The award came as a shock as this was the first time she entered a competition after picking up poetry performing earlier this year. Her poems tackled patriarchy head on in a witty way that left the audience in stitches.

"Poetry has always had a certain sway over the minds and hearts of those who encounter it. Looking back, majority of poets wrote about things they cared most deeply about and that kind of sincerity speaks to people whether it's coming off a page or off a stage," Gwendoline said.

For Sarah, experiencing elimination from last

year's competition made her determined to better herself this time around.

"Last year's competition was my first and I was proud for pushing through to the second round unexpectedly.

"Since then I started attending various poetry gigs and events to prepare for this day, hoping to make it to round-three," she said.

The second runner-up was seasoned poet Enbah Nilah, who experimented with some of her lesser known poems.

"This competition served as a great avenue for me to test the waters. I refrained from using some of my popular poems and tried the less comfortable ones to gauge the audience's response," she said.

The UCSI Poetry Slam Competition 2016 was organised by the English Language Student Association (ELSA) in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts (FOSSLA). The competition was preceded by the Poetry Slam Workshop 2016, held on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

The workshop was led by well-known poetry educator, Elaine Foster. Both the Workshop and Competition were organised to encourage creative cross-disciplinary communication through the spoken word. Both events are part of UCSI's ongoing Right to Read campaign that aims to encourage the passion for reading.



Vice-Chancellor and President of UCSI University Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, who was present to officiate the event, said, "poetry will remind us of human values as we progress further into a digitally sophisticated age."

The Competition was judged by prominent figures in the Malaysian art scene namely, Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre Executive Producer and Co-Founder Dato' Faridah Merican, former academician Associate Professor Che Fatimah Dinna, Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre Artistic Director and Co-Founder Joe Hasham, Kakiseni President Low Ngai Yuen, as well as academician and poet Sheena Baharudin.

Also present at the Competition was UCSI's Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts Dean, Assistant Professor Dr Chan Nee Nee.



UCSI University Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Prof Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff having a light moment during his speech.

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# MEDICINE GETS PERSONAL

**Harvard's Professor Gordon Williams makes a case for precision medicine at UCSI University**

UCSI University's (UCSI) medical students received a glimpse of the future of healthcare from their visiting professor Dr Gordon Williams, a Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School as well as the Director of the Hormonal Mechanisms of Cardiovascular Injury Laboratory at Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital.

He spoke at both the University's Kuala Lumpur and Kuala Terengganu campuses on precision medicine, an emerging treatment model that proposes the customisation of healthcare with medical decisions, practices and products tailored on the basis of the patient's genes.

How precision medicine works is that it uses the patient's genetic profile to identify the multiple genetic variations that influence how people respond to medications. This allows for more accurate predictions as to which treatment or prevention strategies will work best for the patient.

It is advocated as a better alternative to current models which are devised from population-based data and does not account for possible individual differences. Individuals sharing the same condition can react in vastly different ways to treatment, resulting in the physician having to use 'trial and error' to prescribe the right medication.



Tan Jia Wei (left) and Ting Pei Yee (right), who were selected to pursue research at Harvard, both credit UCSI for significantly enhancing their learning experience.





"The cost of healthcare continues to increase around the world and we need to be more specific in terms of treating and preventing the illnesses that affect us," said Professor Williams.

"Clear treatment guidelines don't exist and the one-size-fits-all treatment model is time-consuming, costly, exposes patients to unnecessary side effects and is often clinically ineffective. We need to give what the population needs both in terms of appropriate care and feasible costs."

Precision medicine has been gaining traction in the past decade, thanks to tremendous advances in genetics and gene sequencing. It was a key agenda in US President Barack Obama's administration which he highlighted in his State of the Union address in 2015, putting it on par with Nixon's war on cancer in 1971. However, there is still much to be done.

The approach is far from fully developed and it may take a few more decades for precision medicine to become the new treatment standard. Issues like privacy and having to achieve a balance between public healthcare practices and personalised medicine are just a few waiting to be resolved but Professor Williams, for one, is cautiously optimistic.

"Getting it structured for everyone in the next 20 years is not very likely but I think it might start to happen within this decade," he said. "And if you can take care of, let's say, 20% of the 1.4-billion hypertensive population that's still about 280 million individuals treated."

Professor Williams's recent visit to UCSI saw him engaging not only the students but also the healthcare community at Hospital Sultanah Nur Zahirah where UCSI's students undergo their clinical training.

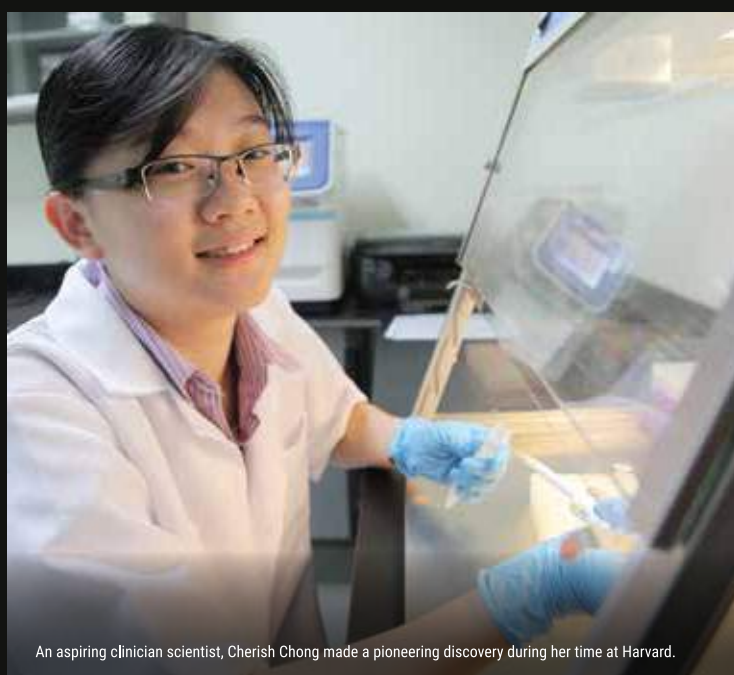
"If something looks like that's really the way things are going to be in the future, I embrace it and I want to share it," he said. "With some restraint of what might be feasible tomorrow, I am enthusiastic about the concept of precision medicine."

UCSI has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with Harvard beginning in 2014 when UCSI sent its top medical student, Cherish Chong Chiu Wern, for a year-long intercalated research programme in Boston. She was mentored by Professor Williams and under his guidance, went on to make a pioneering discovery on the regulation of aldosterone and corticosterone hormones by mineralocorticoid receptors.

Cherish was not the only student from UCSI to experience research at the Ivy League university. Last year, UCSI sent two more of its second-year medical students, Tan Jia Wei and Ting Pei Yee, abroad. Their research endeavours are currently supervised by Professor Williams, with Jia Wei tackling human genetic phenotype-genotype correlation and Pei Yee extending Cherish's research in aldosterone regulation.

"All three of them have been just marvellous," said Professor Williams who estimated that between them, the girls will generate up to 18 peer-reviewed publications by the time they are done with their data. "I like to say that students who are interested in research are the ones with a fire in their belly. They want to find answers and we need to continue nurturing and encouraging them."

UCSI is the only private university in Malaysia whose students are annually selected for high impact research programmes at leading universities such as Harvard, Imperial College London and Tsinghua University. Such collaborations provide invaluable opportunities for students to be engaged in the pursuit of knowledge at its cutting edge.



An aspiring clinician scientist, Cherish Chong made a pioneering discovery during her time at Harvard.



Prof Williams's outstanding contributions to the field of medicine, specifically in the areas of genetics and hormonal mechanisms, have been honoured by several major professional bodies including the American Heart Association and the Canadian Hypertension Society.



# WRITE RIGHT

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

From managing podcasts and assisting producers in writing scripts as an intern at BFM89.9, to working at *The Edge Galerie* — the art gallery owned by *The Edge* — as an arts and culture events executive, to writing for *MW Magazines* — a collection of pullouts distributed with the business weekly *Focus Malaysia*, **Grace Lim** is nothing short of experienced and an admired authority in her own right.

Her exposure at BFM89.9 helped her polish her writing skills on topics such as health, art, culture and education — which later proved useful when she joined *Focus Malaysia* in 2015. While at *The Edge Galerie*, she was involved in organising exhibitions and auctions, interviewing artists and putting together exhibition books, coordinating photo-shoots and publicity material as well as assisting in sales with interested parties. Currently, she writes for the lifestyle pullouts on dining, alcohol and beauty as well as travel. *The UCSI Gazette* editorial team interviews her to understand what it is like to be in the Malaysian publishing industry.



Grace Lim (right) with renowned celebrity pastry chef Anna Olson during an event.



**Was it always your passion to be in the mass communication/print industry? How did this interest come about?**

Yes, it was. I have always taken to writing as I was an avid reader growing up — so much so that I ended up having to wear glasses due to my incessant need to read in the car. I would borrow books from the library and read them on the way home, with only the dim glow of street lamps to aid me. I always wanted to be able to give others the same wide imagination and variety of emotions I got whenever I read, so I decided I would be a writer when I grew up.

**What are the things you love most about your job as a writer? Why?**

I enjoy meeting new people very much and hearing what they have to say about absolutely anything — I take a deep interest in finding out what stories people have, even if it may seem petty and unimportant to others. It is always delightful to see people's eyes light up when they speak about what they do or what they are passionate about. Sometimes they tell you candid things about themselves — which make for an interesting article (not without their permission to include it, of course), and I have befriended some of the people I have interviewed along the way. Getting to try all sorts of dining or living experiences I would never have thought of is also a plus, and discovering new eateries (I love to eat!) and travelling to new places is always interesting.

**What are the main challenges you have met as a writer?**

Getting the angle and direction of my article right. It is good practice to ascertain the direction in which you would like your article to flow, but sometimes the interviewee may tell you something else completely different which you can use to reframe your article as well. My editor has always told me to pick the most important bits and to always write the article from the perspective of the reader and assume the person reading knows nothing about the topic at hand. That way you can be sure that your article will not be vague or confusing.

**How do you hone your writing skills?**

As cliché as this is going to sound, practice makes perfect! The more you write, the better the understanding you will have of your own writing style. There will be articles that you write which will interest you very much, but there are days where you will have to write articles on people or subjects

that you know close to or absolutely nothing about. It always helps to look for articles similar to what you have to write, so research is very vital. For example, if I were to interview the owner of a newly launched piece of technology, I will search for interviews he or she has done prior to my interview and pick up on questions they have been asked then and improve on them. This is so I can get information from them that they may not have given before, instead of writing an article that is similar to another ten out there on the same person.

**Have you ever encountered a writer's block and how do you overcome it?**

All the time! More often than not, I have problems with starting an article — the first paragraph is always what people read first and decide if the article is interesting enough to continue reading, so I always try to find new ways to begin my writing. I try to curb it by reading magazines and interviews — I have challenged myself to read one interview every single day to examine different styles of writing to see if I can adopt it for what I am working on. If I am really struggling to get the words rolling on the page, I usually take a break and get some fresh air or listen to music. Sometimes inspiration comes when you least expect it, so it is always handy to have your phone or paper with you to jot down ideas that come to you when you're moving about.

**What is the most interesting story you have ever written?**

This is a tough one! I'm what you may call a food person, so I'd have to pick between speaking to chef Peter Kuruvita on tea and how it can be used in food, the complexities of each flavour and even carrying out a tea-pairing session (very much like a wine pairing one) with dishes of varying origin; and a recent interview I had with Dr Bill Lumsden (*Whisky Magazine's* Master Distiller/Master Blender of the year at the Icons of Whisky Awards 2016) on whisky. I am not a whisky enthusiast myself, but the way he spoke with such vigour about it very nearly changed my mind on the drink. He was also very friendly and engaging, answering each question with detailed answers, which made speaking to him a dream.

**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 and why?**

I recently finished reading *'In Cold Blood'* by

Truman Capote, and was very impressed with the way the story was told — it is about the horrific murder of a family in the 1950s — not something I would consider to be a light reading. But even if you knew the ending of the story, Capote's story-telling will compel you to stick to the book, page after page until you have finished it. Another is Salman Rushdie. His *'Two Years Eight Months and Twenty Eight Nights'* was most impressive. His attention to detail and workings around putting the story together was incredible. Of course, I do enjoy Murakami and his quirky manner of writing — his collection of short stories in *'The Elephant Vanishes'* remains as one of my favourite books today.

**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've worked on radio scripts before, and I found it very interesting that although an article and a radio podcast could be talking about the same thing, the way it is presented is very different. I enjoy listening to podcasts every once in a while and would love to be involved in the production of one, one day. I absolutely adored the first season of *Serial*, the podcast by *This American Life* which followed the trial of Adnan Syed who was arrested for murdering his ex-girlfriend in 1999, and examined interviews, articles, with the host even speaking to his friends and those involved in the case at the time, all in order to find out what really happened. There's just something about getting to know a person or subject beneath the surface of what is usually presented, and going even deeper. Those are the things I like about writing or bringing loose ends together to bring forth a story.

**Your current career is one of the future career options for UCSI students reading Mass Communication and English Language and Communication programme. Do you have any recommendation or advice for the students pursuing a career in the mentioned field?**

Always be willing to do more and go the extra mile, and be open to learning new things even from people who are not in your own line of work. Always be humble, be teachable, be hungry to learn, and never ever assume you know all there is to know. You don't know how a person you meet one day can be of great help in years to come, and you don't know how your written/spoken word can influence or inspire others, even in the simplest of moments.



# UCSI'S FASHION STUDENTS GRADUATE WITH STYLE

While models calmly strutted down the runway to thumping bass lines, backstage was a paradoxical whirlwind of activity. In a corner was Nurfilzah Zaireen Zaidi who was struggling to turn on the miniature lights embedded in her pieces. A friend rushed over to help her with it and with barely a minute to spare, coaxed the bulbs to light up for the very first time.

"I was so nervous because I thought they weren't going to work at all," said Nurfilzah, still sounding out of breath after the show. Or maybe it was because she just won the Best Collection Award in the Diploma category at UCSI University's (UCSI) De Institute of Creative Arts and Design (ICAD) fifth graduation fashion show.



Receiver of the Best Collection Award in the Degree category, Xu Ya, drew inspiration from the human blood cell for her cohesive five-piece collection.

Dubbed 'NEXT', the show featured the collections of five graduating students from the BA (Hons) Fashion Design with Marketing programme and four from the Diploma in Fashion Design.

Tasked to incorporate their vision of the future in their designs, students looked to various sources of inspiration including urban architecture, folklore, the metamorphosis of a butterfly and for Nurfilzah, Chiaroscuro — the ethereal art installation by Canadian artist Sougwen Chung that deftly played with the contrasts between light and dark.

Her three-piece collection incorporated netting with dark linen fabric to create a soft and mysterious vibe, resulting in gentle silhouettes that floated pinpricks of brightness in the darkened hall — an eye-catching effect.

"I was inspired by the art of lights which, similar to Chung's, is what gives life to my designs," she said, "each piece is a contemporary interpretation that continues the theme of contrasts, such as it is handmade yet digitally enabled."

Nurfilzah's senior, Xu Ya, turned to biology for inspiration. Referencing the human blood cell, she used fresh white brush cotton, silk and yarn to form simple A-lines and handstitched bright red embellishments for a pop of colour. "Biology can be artistic too," she explains, "my collection is for young girls who love the arts and who want a unique lifestyle."

To complete her five-piece collection, Xu Ya laboured continuously through the 14-week preparation process. "Fashion is not easy, you need to work very hard," she said, "I think I only slept three to four hours each day."

And her efforts paid off when she was presented with the Best Collection Award in the Degree category.

"I am so happy!" she enthused, "I love fashion and beautiful clothes, and this win validates all that I have worked for. I'd like to thank my lecturer Mr Lucas Lim for being my sounding board whenever I needed to thresh out the complications I ran into during my process."

While Nurfilzah and Xu Ya's creations stood out for the judges, their course mates did not cede the spotlight without putting up a good fight.

"Today's showcase was fantastic and beyond all expectations," said Professor Dato' Dr Ahmad Haji Zainuddin, Director of ICAD. "I am very proud of my students; they have each demonstrated boundless creativity and innovation under an ironclad commitment to their craft. This is what design is all about."

He continued, "As a university, our responsibility is to provide an environment for our students to thrive, explore and develop their individual talents for once they graduate, they will be creating their own brands and industries. This is the value of design programmes — we are producing not just designers but employers."

ICAD's well-received fashion show is but a microcosm of the Institute's continued success. Its tenacious commitment to design excellence has led to a rapid ascent to prominence, with emerging talents arresting the attention of the creative industry.

Lee Bao En — a fresh graduate — notably headlined KL Fashion Week RTW 2016 by showcasing a 10-piece collection, sharing the runway with Malaysia's most notable designers.

Her claim to fame started long before graduation when she won the AirAsia Runway Ready Designer Search 2015, besting 350 regional contestants with an acclaimed collection that won praise from Malaysia's design heavyweights Jovian Mandagie and Khoon Hooi.

Also the winner of the Best Collection Award for her year's graduation fashion show, Bao En fondly remembers the invaluable guidance of her mentors at UCSI.

"My lecturers were my fiercest critics. They set a high bar for all of us because they understand what it takes to make a name in the industry, and that has helped me improve tremendously," she said, "I'm grateful that they were a part of my journey."





The 'NEXT' Graduation Fashion Show was officiated by Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, UCSI's Vice-Chancellor and President. It was also graced by Dato' Peter Ng, UCSI Group's Founder and CEO and members of the industry.

“*I am very proud of my students; they have each demonstrated boundless creativity and innovation under an ironclad commitment to their craft. This is what design is all about.*”

– Professor Dato' Dr Ahmad Haji Zainuddin  
Director of ICAD



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# Exploring the limits of artificial intelligence with Dr Joseph Manning

INSIDE UCSI

Dr Joseph Manning (right) answers a student's question on non-computable functions.

Terminator, The Space Odyssey — these are just a few of Hollywood's classic blockbusters depicting supercomputers taking over the world. And with the incredible advancements made in technology over the past several decades, these plots today don't seem quite far-fetched anymore.

But Dr Joseph Manning, who leads the Department of Computer Science at University College Cork (UCC) in Ireland, was at UCSI University (UCSI) to explain why that will never happen.

"Computers are getting faster and more powerful all the time," he said, "so most people will be surprised that there are very clear-cut technical problems that, even a thousand years from now and with the brightest minds behind them, will always be impossible for computers."

Speaking to students from UCSI's School of IT on the topic of 'What Computers Can Never Do', Dr Manning presented a series of non-computable functions serving as the Achilles' heel to the best of artificial intelligence such as the post correspondence and Halting problems — simple algorithms that confuse computers because they are unable to analyse different pieces of data and relate them to each other.

These problems are mathematical proof that computers cannot perform abstract reasoning — a product of sentience — like the human brain, no matter how fast or how much memory the computer may have. This effectively ends any notion of computers achieving full consciousness and spelling the end of the human race.

"There's kind of a concept that computers are all-powerful and to a certain extent, it is true. They can and will do amazing things but this is conclusively beyond their scope."

Dr Manning also spoke of the huge demand for computer scientists back

home. In the recent years, Ireland has established itself as a global technology hub, attracting tech giants the likes of Google, Facebook, IBM, Intel and Microsoft.

"I think it is a worldwide trend," he said, "and the beauty of a computer science qualification is that you can work anywhere in the world. Computers know no borders; they abide by the same rules and contexts wherever you are, unlike law or medicine. It's very flexible."

Some might perceive computer science as very technical and logic-oriented, and Dr Manning concurs but he assures that there is equal scope for out-of-the-box ideas.

"A good example is Facebook," he said, "about 12 years ago, using computers to send messages to each other would've been a crazy idea but here we are, with Facebook being an incredible success. So you'll actually need a good amount of creativity and imagination to invent new functions for our computers."

Dr Manning's guest lecture followed a meeting with UCSI's Vice-Chancellor and President Senior Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Dato' Dr Ahmad Haji Zainuddin, Deans and Academic Heads.

They were also joined by UCC's International Coordinator Dr Christopher Shepard who had facilitated the partnership between UCSI and UCC inked last year.

"UCC is one of the leading universities in Ireland and we're delighted to call them our partner," said Professor Dr Ooi Keng Boon, Dean of UCSI's Faculty of Business and Information Science under which the School of IT is parked.



"We are currently looking into international degree pathways and articulations, and I'm confident that together, we'll be able to offer the best in education to our students, not only in computing which UCC is well-known for but in other fields as well."

Earlier this year, Shin Nay Lin became the first UCSI student to be awarded UCC's prestigious George Boole Merit Scholarship worth €11,000 (RM50,100) to pursue her Master's in Computing Science. Dr Manning was on the panel that reviewed her scholarship application.

"We receive a lot of submissions from students around the world but Nay Lin's really stood out not only with her grades, but with her extra-curricular achievements," he said. "She's a very bright student and there was no question about awarding her the scholarship."

"I'm really proud to study at UCC," said Nay Lin, who recently graduated with first class honours in mobile computing. "This opportunity will pave the way for better job prospects and I intend to work hard and strengthen my portfolio while I'm here."

It is trusted that she will for she did the same at UCSI.

A recipient of the UCSI University Trust scholarship, Nay Lin made the most out of her time at UCSI by experiencing to the fullest all that university life had to offer. Beyond the classroom, she actively participated in campus activities, assumed leadership roles in multiple student clubs and associations, and even found time to tutor her course mates.

She sought for a well-rounded education because she has an aspiration to fulfil — she wants to run an IT training centre back home in Myanmar for underprivileged teenagers.

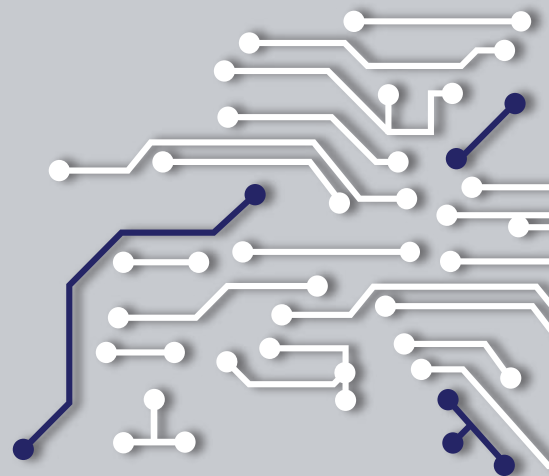
"My country is very much into mobile technology so I believe that by having solid IT skills, they'd be able to enjoy a stable income in this industry," said Nay Lin.

In regards to her own career, she believes that UCSI has built her a strong foundation for the future.

"When I first came to UCSI, I was young and

inexperienced and didn't know much about the world," she reflected, "thanks to the support of my lecturers and the truly dynamic learning environment at UCSI, I've grown immensely in knowledge, confidence and leadership."

Dr Manning's guest lecture is the second in a series of public seminars coordinated by UCSI's School of IT for the new semester which started in September. The inaugural session featured Dr Suresh Ramasamy, former Head of Information and Cyber Security at Digi Telecommunications.



Shin Nay Lin, who aspires to establish an IT training centre for underprivileged teenagers, started her first semester at University College Cork last month.



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





# Alan Foo Nyuk Loon

**Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons), graduated 2008**  
**Senior Product Manager, Hovid Bhd**

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 **Alan Foo Nyuk Loon**, a Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons) graduate who has ventured into different aspects of the pharmaceutical industry and is now charting a career trajectory for himself.

**Please tell us more about yourself – where you came from and how was your childhood like? What was your favourite childhood activity?**

I came from a small town in Kampar, Perak. It was once famous for tin mining but now it is one of the education hubs in Perak. It was also well-known as a culinary paradise. I grew up with my parents and grandparents, and our relationship is very close. Throughout my schooling days in Kampar, I have been quite active in sports like badminton and football. Almost every day, I will be on the field or on the court with my schoolmates and friends. I have known my classmates and friends since kindergarten and we still keep in touch with each other.

**Please elaborate your career journey.**

I started my career as a houseman in Hospital Kuala Lumpur in the year 2008. I underwent a pupillage training for a year before I was granted the license of a fully registered pharmacist. Later on, I was transferred to Kelantan as an enforcement pharmacist where I worked for a year. I learned a lot regarding the regulatory and the procedures involved in the pharmaceutical sector. In the following year, I was transferred back to Hospital Kuala Lumpur as a clinical pharmacist. After completing my compulsory service with the government, I ventured out into the retail sector where I was a branch manager for a chain retail pharmacy. I ventured into marketing for a local pharmaceutical company after earning myself an MBA before joining Hovid Berhad in 2015.

As the Senior Product Manager, I provide significant input into the annual marketing plan specifically in the sales forecasts for each product (taking into consideration past history, market trends, competitive activity and required sales effort), allocation of expenses between products (taking into

consideration stage in product life cycle, potential for future growth and profit contribution, potential competitors), as well as several other matters relating to marketing while I oversee the marketing department. My job scopes also include developing good relationships with key opinion leaders, patient support groups and other healthcare organisations to ensure that significant developments in the field are identified and monitored.

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

It is somehow similar to what I imagined when I was a student. During my studies, we were well-equipped with the knowledge on the dispensing of medications and also the types of illness. But with new diseases and the introduction of new medications and treatments, it is forever a challenging and interesting field to be in. There are always updates in the healthcare sector. And as a marketer, the market is forever changing and we need to keep ourselves abreast with the healthcare trend in the world.

**What motivated you to pursue an education in Pharmaceutical Sciences? How did your interest in this field come about?**

It was always my childhood ambition to be in the healthcare line. I always dreamt of being a doctor or a pharmacist when I grow up. It gives me the satisfaction to help those who are sick and it was instilled in me since I was young. As to why I ended up studying pharmacy, there are a wealth of job prospects in the field of pharmaceutical science; you can be in retail, hospital, regulatory, corporate (marketing or sales) or in education. We can apply our knowledge in different ways to provide back to the society either directly or indirectly.

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

As I came from a small town, to study in UCSI was really an eye-opener for me. It was a totally different culture for me — the pace was faster and as I was new, I lacked the sense of togetherness. It took me some time to adjust to the big city lifestyle and I have my course mates to thank for, who have supported me throughout my days in UCSI. I get to meet new people and have more opportunities to lead and organise events. It gives me the chance to develop myself to be a leader in the society. I learned various life lessons from my course mates who came from different walks of life and we were able to work together well. And of course, I met the soul mate of my life who is now my wife.

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

We were given opportunities to voice out our opinions and also chances to lead. The syllabus for the course has fully prepared us in facing the actual working society as a pharmacist. We were groomed well to be confident and knowledge savvy. All the staffs and lecturers in UCSI have provided us with the skills and training that meet the expectations of the industry and thus it reflects positively on us and also on the university.

**UCSI University is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Would you like to say a few words and shout out a birthday wish?**

I would like to wish UCSI University a happy anniversary and big thanks for educating us to be the leaders of the world. Thank you for providing us with a quality education. It was an honour to be a part of the UCSI family.





WERE YOU BORN ON THE

30<sup>th</sup>?

If **YES**, you are in  
for a treat by UCSI!

Whether you are a staff of the UCSI Group or a student of UCSI University, you are eligible to receive **RM30 worth** of vouchers and merchandise.

**Find out how to claim your treat!**

Please contact 03-9101 8880

Ext. 3711 (Anggraeni) / 3719 (Siew Siang) / 3713 (Muzira)

Remember to collect gifts on the **prescribed date/time**. Any claim other than timings provided will not be entertained.

Staff and students from Kuching/KT Campuses: Please liaise with your respective COO Office for the date of merchandise disbursement.

## UCSI 30th Anniversary Car Sticker Campaign

Cars spotted with UCSI's sticker will be shortlisted  
to win attractive prizes at UCSI University!

**GET  
SPOTTED  
AND WIN!!!**

Each winner  
will receive  
RM500 worth  
of cash and UCSI's  
merchandise

Four (4) winners  
every month  
in 2016

All staff and  
students at  
UCSI University,  
and members  
of the public are  
eligible to  
participate





# THE UCSI GAZETTE

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