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Disclaimer

Every effort is made to provide accurate and complete information. However, this newsletter cannot guarantee that there will be no errors.

For comments, suggestions or ideas, please contact:

Prof Alvin Ng Lai Oon
alvinn@sunway.edu.my

100% Passes for Diploma in Nursing Students despite COVID-19 Challenges



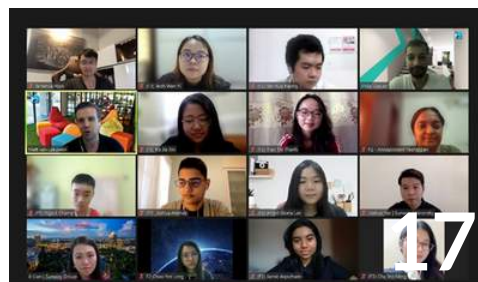
Group 201807 Diploma in Nursing Students

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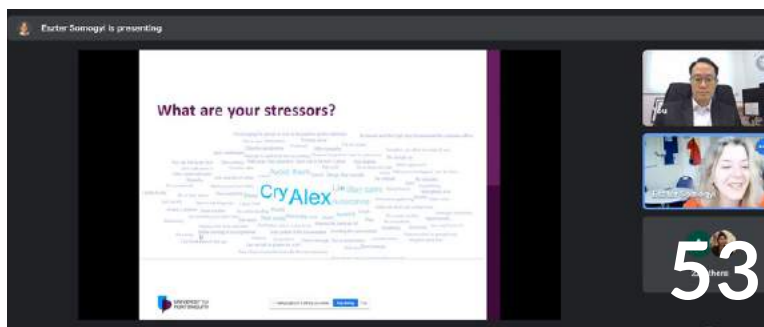
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Welcome to the third issue of **SMiLeS!**

Well, here we are, finally! The final two issues of SMiLeS for 2021, out as a single bumper issue. It had been such a packed year with many events, achievements and other stories to write that it took this long to compile and organise into newsletter content. So much for the grand idea and ambitious plan to come out with four issue per year, with less than a skeleton crew of co-editors - Kelsey Savage, Janessa Tan, Manaal Aydeed, and from December 2021 onwards - Wong Jin Wei. We have all learnt that given how much juggling of academic and administrative work we all had as staff and students, it was a tall order we gave ourselves.



In this bumper issue, we report all recorded events that happened from the beginning of July to the end of December 2021. We had many success stories to tell and therefore, having them recorded into a publication like this would allow us to have a reference to share with others. So, as an editor, I hope that you will share all our SMiLeS newsletter issues with your network so that they know what we have been up to, and about the heart and soul of the School - us, the people who make things happen - GOOD THINGS!

The team would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and effort in providing us with stories, photos and other forms of help. We sincerely apologise for the delay and less than adequate efficiency in delivering this project.

Now we're more savvy and experienced with the process and format, we hope to be more efficient in producing our newsletter issues for 2022. This year, we will have three issues only - Jan-April, May-August, September-December 2022. So we look forward to your sharing of successes, updates and other interesting stories for SMiLeS. May we all have a productive, progressive, prosperous and peaceful New Year!

*Cheers,
Alvin Ng
Chief Editor, SMiLeS Newsletter*

Sub-Editors' Profiles



Introducing Manaal Aydeed

Manaal Aydeed

BSc (Hons) Psychology Graduate (Class of 2021)
SMiLeS newsletter sub-editor
School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University

Hi, I'm Manaal, a recent BSc (Hons) Psychology graduate here at Sunway University! I am passionate about improving people's experiences and well-being. I enjoy new experiences myself and spend my time learning, volunteering, and capturing photographs. It has been an honour to work with the team and share the stories of some remarkably inspiring people. I hope that reading their work leaves you with a huge smile and the drive to make positive change (just like it did for me) 😊



Introducing Wong Jin Wei

Wong Jin Wei

BSc (Hons) Psychology (2019 - present)
SMiLeS newsletter sub-editor
School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University

Warm greetings! I'm Jin Wei, a third-year psychology undergraduate now working as a research/special projects intern with Prof. Alvin Ng at the SMLS. As the latest sub-editor who will be taking over the reporting duties, from January 2022 onwards, I'm happy to have been able to co-author this issue with my fellow sub-editors and previous interns (a shout-out to Kelsey and Manaal!) who came before me - they've taught me a good deal. We've had some great news stories this July-December - I hope you'll come away after reading this issue feeling inspired and knowing the lovely people at the SMLS better.

From the Dean's Desk



All the news, stories and achievements captured in this edition of the SMiLeS Newsletter reflect the amazing resilience of our students, alumni, and staff, all of whom have continued to thrive under such unprecedented circumstances. First of all, thank you for sharing your amazing efforts and progress that you have made recently. From serving vulnerable communities to co-writing and acting in an internationally-recognized film, improving access to verifiable mental health information, organizing various academic and social events, pursuing post-graduate qualifications, and embarking on new career trajectories – my heart is filled with gratitude, happiness and hope.

Our students are truly superstars. Reading their achievements gives me hope that at Sunway University, we are not merely training the next generation of highly relevant future-proof talent but we are nurturing highly relevant future-proof talent with heart and purpose! Your participation and success in various competitions reflect your innovative and communication skills but more importantly, it recognizes your passion to champion causes that matter. From addressing wildlife conservation to improving medical diagnostic accuracy, bridging literacy and health equity gaps - your passion and drive are an inspiration to all of us.

“ *When there is hope in the future,
there is power in the present.* ”

- Zig Ziglar -

SMiLeS

Congratulations to all our staff for an excellent year. Our commitment to education excellence and the continued significant investment in our physical, human and virtual resources ensured that all our programmes that were reviewed in 2021, successfully achieved full accreditation. The multiple individual staff accolades and team achievements as well as the latest additions of the young and dynamic talent that we continue to attract to be part of our academic faculty are a testament of our upward trajectory in producing excellent education and research impact; especially impact that truly matters in enhancing societal health and socio-economic well-being. Our School's achievements truly represent the amazing support that we continue to receive from our various partners and stakeholders within the Sunway Education Group and beyond.

Congratulations, Alvin and our dear BSc (Hons) Psychology students, Kelsey, Manaal and Jin Wei for your excellent job in producing this newsletter. Your efforts to showcase the achievements and updates of our staff, students and alumni truly captures the spirit of excellence, collegiality, and celebratory that we aim to foster at the School. The **SMiLeS** newsletter is a great archive of all these wonderful memories but it also provides a glimpse of the future that we can aspire to create together!

Prof Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam

Dean, School of Medical and Life Sciences

Associate Dean R E P O R T S



Dear SMLS colleagues and students,

The past six months have been exciting and eventful for the School. We have so many good news to share. All these would not have been possible without your contributions and hard work in making consistent improvement to the quality of teaching and learning of the School. A big 'thank you' to everyone of you.

In the second half of the year itself, we officially received full accreditations for three programs, Diploma in Nursing, BSc (Hons) Biomedicine and Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for Elderly. This is a true recognition of the hard work of all students, academics and administrative staff at SMLS. We would also like to record our sincere appreciation for various supporting departments at the University in facilitating the success of these accreditation events.

Our commitment to provide quality teaching and learning experience to our students is recognized by winning multiple Student Appreciation of Teaching Awards by academics. We also received very positive feedback at Student-Staff Committee meetings held end of last year. The 100% passing rate for Malaysian Nursing Board Examination by our Diploma in Nursing 201807 cohort students is one of the testaments to our commitment to providing the best teaching and learning experience to our students.

The School and University are also constantly looking to offer the most relevant courses that cater to the needs of the community. We are proud to share with you all that we have obtained approvals to develop multiple new academic programmes, including Post Basic in Renal Nursing, Masters of Counselling (Clinical Mental Health) and Master of Applied Behavior Analysis. We also have BSc (Hons) Nursing and MSc in Biomedical Science and Business Management in the pipeline. Stay tuned!

2022 is definitely going to be even more exciting. Let's work together and keep the momentum going! See you in 2022.

Dr Jacty Chew

Associate Dean (Education)

Associate Dean R E P O R T S

Research &
Postgraduate Studies

Dear SMLS Researchers, take a bow! Despite all the challenges we faced from the pandemic and environmental catastrophes in 2021, you managed to give our school a reason to cheer in terms of research excellence.

On the publication front, our school exceeded our internal KPI targets by more than 50%, and garnered the 2nd highest number of SCOPUS/Web of Science publications in the university, contributing to 27% of the university's total publication output.

On the external research funding front, SMLS researchers secured more than RM1million worth of grants - this comprised 23% of the total funds brought into the university. Not bad for a school that is only just a year old!

In line with the Sunway University's newly launched University Research Strategy (2022-2025), it is important that our school continues to conduct inter- and multi-disciplinary research that not only helps achieves the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, but also makes contributions towards improving the health of our planet.

Indeed, 2021 was an excellent year in terms of developing research links with Malaysia's wider society. One of the most exciting engagements with the industry has been with AstraZeneca, which has indicated interests to explore research collaborations on lung and liver cancer, chronic kidney disease and heart failure, and severe asthma. We have also teamed up with one of Malaysia's leading local universities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, to form the country's first Pandemic Resilience Institute, which will initially investigate the effects of long COVID on patient cohorts. In addition, our researchers are developing impactful collaborations with societies such as the Subang Jaya Senior Citizens Club (PAWE) to work on interventions to reduce cognitive decline, and the Malaysian Crime Prevention Society (MCPF) to develop suicide prevention techniques. Outside of Malaysia, we have also teamed up with the University of Groningen to develop a dual PhD program, which provides opportunities to our medical science postgraduates to work with their supervisor counterparts in the Netherlands.

Ultimately, strong research partnerships are key when it comes to tackling global challenges, solving practical problems and improving the health of local communities and the environment. We strongly believe that there are tremendous benefits from working in teams instead of silos. So, by all means, continue seeking out meaningful partnerships with reputable institutions outside the University, both locally as well as internationally.

In 2022, we expect our school continue being the 'rocket fuel' that propels the University to greater heights in the local and international medical and life sciences research arena. Once again, a big thank you to all of our academics, postgraduate students and administrative support staff who have contributed towards making our school one of the leading lights in the University's journey to become a world-class university. Looking ahead to next year, it's really looking like it's going to be all SMiLeS!



Prof Gopelasamy Reuben Clements

Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)

Associate Dean R E P O R T S

Engagement &
Internationalisation

The second half of 2021 went by in a flash. There were many activities - academic, research and of course, engagement and internationalisation. At the beginning of July, we had the 7th Asian Cognitive Behavior Therapy Conference hosted by Sunway University and chaired by myself. We attracted over 7,000 participants from 80 countries. The full report can be found in later pages of this newsletter. Another momentous event that happened was towards the end of the year when Sunway University signed a collaborative agreement with the Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine, signifying a synergistic partnership between the two entities, having co-developed and running the Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for the Elderly (PGDPCE) programme under the Department of Medical Sciences, led by Prof Datin Chia Yook Chin.



Part of my portfolio includes developing international relations with academics and researchers for student and staff mobility reasons, as well as to explore potentiality of joint programmes. We now have a dual PhD degree programme in medical sciences with the University of Groningen's Graduate School of Medical Sciences (GSMS). In October, the school had a meeting with Professor Han Moshage and Drs Joyce Fongers, the international relations team for GSMS Groningen to further discuss details of the programme and steps to move forward in recruiting PhD students from Malaysia. This is something that will continue into 2022 in strengthening ties with Groningen. On the Psychology front, we had visiting lecturers give talks to our students and staff. Associate Professor Maki Hirayama from the Meiji University, Japan gave a talk on "Sexual Relations in the Modern Era". We had Dr Ezster Somogyi from the University of Portsmouth, UK, to speak on health psychology and stress. More on these talks in this newsletter. Dr Somogyi, who is also the Associate Head for Global Engagement and Partnerships at the Faculty of Science and Health is keen to explore potential student mobility with Sunway. We hope to develop further relations in 2022.

After this year of feeling my way through the engagement and internationalisation portfolio, I now have a better idea of what to develop internationally for 2022. I'd like to thank all of you for your support this whole year. The School management is definitely one year wiser in planning for 2022. With a clearer strategy, I believe we can reach greater heights in our international relations. Overall, we have achieved good strides in 2021. Let's keep soldiering on in the next year!

Prof Alvin Ng Lai Oon

Associate Dean (Engagement and Internationalisation)

Achievements

100% Passes for Diploma in Nursing Students despite COVID-19 Challenges



Group 201807 Diploma in Nursing Students

An exciting news was released on 21st October 2021... **all 54 students from Group 201807 of Diploma in Nursing passed the Malaysian Nursing Board Examination, a licensure examination at the end of their 3-years of study!**

The three years of study was highly rewarding for the nursing students as they learned many subjects, experienced different kinds of working areas, encountered different patients with different diseases, participated in many events and activities as well as involved themselves in voluntary campaigns. However, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a major challenge for them to overcome.

In their final year of study, clinical posting in hospitals shut down and classes shifted online to stay observe the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) guidelines. Students had difficulties coping with online classes because of technical issues, difficulty in using a new platform and difficulty in visualizing the nursing practical procedures. In response, the kindhearted lecturers and clinical instructors at the department of Nursing geared into action to ensure the students' well-being. They encouraged students to reach out to them and made sure that no one felt left out in their studies. The group coordinator, Ms Lu Poh Lian, kept close communications with all of the students to ensure that their concerns were addressed and kept them updated all the time.

The department of nursing also managed to plan skills lab practices to prepare the students for specific competencies

needed while they waited for clinical posting at hospitals to resume. Students discussed and learned Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), providing bag valve mask, and the Heimlich Manoeuvre under the supervision of clinical instructors which they found to be very fun and beneficial for their career.

Meanwhile, the Nursing Team and Clinical Coordinator, Ms Siti Hajar Mohd Sopah coordinated with many public and private hospitals to look for clinical posting opportunities so that the nursing students could sit for their Malaysian Nursing Board Exam on time. The Nursing Head of Department, Professor Khatijah constantly reminded students to follow SOP and wear essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) during their clinical practice in hospitals as they were exposed to public and at high risk of contamination. As a result of their efforts, nursing students successfully sat for their Malaysian Nursing Board Exam and passed with flying colors!



Announcement Call of 100% Pass Rate for Group 201807

Achievements

Bryan Nesaraj George represents the Gibbon Conservation Society at The International Wildlife Awareness Forum

On 28th August, 2021 Universiti Teknologi Petronas invited wildlife conservationists to discuss on 'Awareness on Wildlife Conservation' and 'Student's Role towards Wildlife Conservation' at the International Wildlife Awareness Forum as part of their Rescue 4 Wildlife Rehabilitation (R4WR) project.

Sunway University's very own BSc (Hons) Biomedicine second year student, Mr. Bryan George was invited as a forum panelist to represent The Gibbon Conservation Society (GCS) where he works as a Secretary, Events Team Coordinator and Grants Team Coordinator. In this forum, Bryan discussed and answered questions on various gibbon related topics such as the process of rehabilitating gibbons, the threats faced by gibbons, his journey into conservation and so much more!



International Wildlife Awareness Forum arranged by Universiti Teknologi Petronas



Bryan George raises awareness on wildlife alongside conservationists Joshua Pandang (Wildlife Conservation Society), Natasha Zulaika (MYCAT) and Aidil Iman Aidid (MyHutan) at The International Wildlife Awareness Forum

"Being a speaker in a forum with other amazing and accomplished wildlife conservationist goes beyond anything I had imagined I would be doing when trying to pursue a career in conservation work, given the fact that I am still very green in the field. I am very grateful to GCS for putting their trust in me and allowing me to represent them. This opportunity has been a good learning experience and I must thank Professor Reuben Clements for his guidance in helping work towards a career in conservation. Without his teaching and advice, I would not even have had this amazing opportunity to share with others about the conservation of gibbons and wildlife. I definitely learned a lot from this opportunity and am hoping for more such experiences to further grow and develop myself as a conservationist."

- Bryan George

The Gibbon Conservation Society

The Gibbon Conservation Society is a non-profit organization that rescues gibbons who were victims of illegal trade, rehabilitates them through personalized training, and releases them back into the wild. Apart from rescue and rehabilitation, the organization aims to educate the public about threats that gibbons face in Malaysia and provide opportunities for locals to learn about the importance of Gibbons through their internship program.



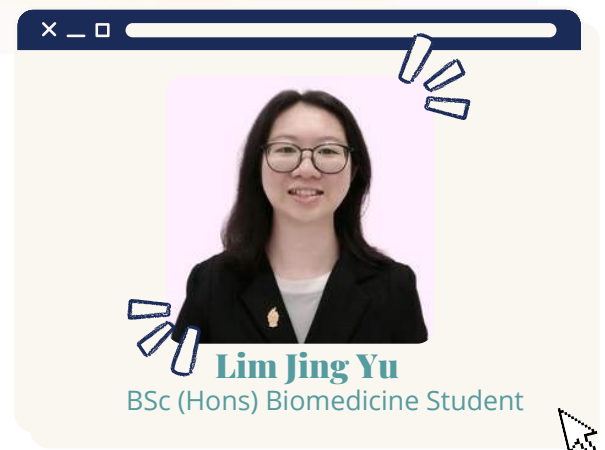
<https://gibbonconservationsociety.org/>

Achievements

Biomedicine student, Lim Jing Yu and team mates win third place at Health AI Hackathon



BSc (Hons) in Biomedicine student, Lim Jing Yu, was part of a team that won third place at the Health AI: Innovate for Health research hackathon on healthcare solutions that was organized by Artificial Intelligence for Digital Pathology (AI4DP), International Medical University, Multimedia University, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Fusionex Group.



The term "Health AI" in the hackathon brochure spurred Jing Yu to join this hackathon. Her thoughts about how artificial intelligence could advance the healthcare industry helped her develop ideas to use AI as means to fill in gaps where human resources are limited. The internet of things has made health diagnostic information easily accessible but users are not necessarily able to appropriate self-diagnose given the complexities of health conditions. Jing Yu and her team decided to create a mobile application for better diagnostic accuracy involving the use of an integrated hospital database, contactless monitoring and online medication delivery services which allow facilitate diagnosis and delivery of medications without the need for travel. This app was meant for those who are unable to access face-to-face health care services.

Jing Yu and her team proposed an idea to create the **DiagMon Health App** with an AI-powered diagnostic tool and contactless vital signs monitoring. DiagMon is the combination of words for diagnosis and monitoring. Unlike common vital signs monitoring which requires the use of smartwatches or other devices, their app idea would employ contactless vital signs monitoring with the aid of a face reader with remote photoplethysmography (rPPG). With this unique feature, users only need to video-record their faces and answer some questions for the app to generate a health report with identification of probable diagnoses and suggestions on action steps. Jing Yu explained, "This system would be integrated with hospital database to ensure that the patient's health records are used to guide the diagnostic report. We hope DiagMon would have high diagnostic accuracy that increases the convenience of health care service delivery where users can monitor their health vitals from anywhere at any time.

When asked about her third placing, Jing Yu remarked that she was surprised at the win.

"It was incredibly exciting and completely unexpected, as other groups in this event great and unique ideas, too! I am grateful for this opportunity to meet wonderful participants from various backgrounds through this hackathon, and I am thankful for my teammates, Yan Han and Maevy from International Medical University and Taylor's University, respectively. I believe our achievements is a testament to our close collaboration and effective communication."

● ● ● **JING YU'S REFLECTIONS ON THE HACKATHON...**

01. It's easy to spot problems in the healthcare industry and come up with ideas to solve them, but the execution of great ideas is difficult as it involves several precise considerations.
02. Having a team with members from different educational backgrounds and perspectives would be better in solving problems as well as supporting each other weaknesses.
03. Thinking from an investor's perspective would give us a better understanding of the idea we are trying to propose, whether or not it is practical to run in the market

The School of Medical and Life Sciences are always very proud of our students who take initiatives to participate in external events such as this hackathon. Congratulations to Jing Yu and team! Keep up the great work!

Achievements

Teoh Wan Yi wins the Singular X Sunway Innovation Case Challenge

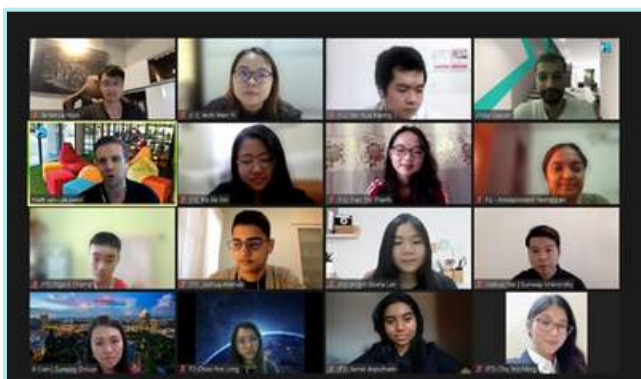
On 17th September, 2021 Sunway's Future Leadership Academy (FLA) organized a case challenge on innovation, property, and marketing as part of their four step mastery program. Teoh Wan Yi, a curious 3rd year student in Bachelors of Medical Biotechnology was delighted to be selected for the Innovation case challenge where she formed the group F3 with Sunway students from Accounting and Actuarial Studies.



From Clockwise: F3 group members Jamie Arputham, Cha Yee Ming, Teoh Wan Yi, Tan Hua Keong and Tran Trinh smile after their presentation at the Singular X Sunway Innovation Case Challenge

F3 was given a case study on Singular, an investment management application with the aim of making hedge fund investment accessible to the general public. The team was challenged to create solutions to improve Singular's product value proposition, onboarding user experience, and user engagement, as well as prepare a competitive analysis. **Being from different departments, Teoh Wan Yi and her group brought unique insights to the table and brainstormed ideas that won them the case challenge!**

Teoh Wan Yi reflected on her experience with excitement at the opportunity to have fruitful discussions with experts Mr. Terrence Hooi - CEO of Singular, Mr. Matt van Leeuwen - Chief Innovation Officer of Sunway Group, Mr. Thila Vijayan - Curriculum Specialist in FutureX Talent, and Mr. Jeremy Tay - Analyst of iLabs Ventures. She also treasured the friendships that she made with Sunway students from other departments.



“

I personally felt that all the teams did a good job and helped me to see investment and virtual apps with different lens. It was an indeed an eye-opening experience (ps: partly because it looks very foreign to me - typical bio students). And also, a big shout to my teammates who are students come from accounting (ACCA) and actuarial studies. This is what I really treasured where we get to connect and migggle with students outside of my department. Being the only science student, I learnt a lot about investment - roboadvisors from each of them!

- Teoh Wan Yi

Comments given by Chief Innovation Officer of Sunway Group and Director of Sunway iLabs - Mr Matt van Leeuwen at the day of presentation

Teoh Wan Yi wins two awards at the Clubs and Societies e-Recognition Awards 2021



Final year BSc (Hons) Medical Biotechnology student, Teoh Wan Yi recently won two awards as at the recent Sunway University Student LIFE Clubs & Societies e-Recognition Awards 2021. She received the awards for Commitment to Serve Award, and the Outstanding Leadership Award, by virtue of being the President of the Sunway Biological Society (SBioS).

Wan Yi joined as a committee member when Sunway Biological Society (SBioS) was founded in 2019 by her seniors in the Department of Biological Sciences. She continued her second year as the second President of SBioS.

When asked about her thoughts on the awards, she responded,

"It has been my greatest pleasure to work with inspiring individuals throughout my 2 years journey in SBioS. Through ups and downs, leading a team has taught me the art of being positive, passionate and humble. I won't have grown as the leader that I am today without the team. Therefore, these 2 awards are for the whole SBioS board of committees for their great effort ! Special shoutout to our advisors - Dr Kavita Reginald and Dr Jactty Chew for their guidance and support for the society ♥. SBioS EXCOs for the term of 20/21 - Veronica Soosai, Maryam Sabihah Bellingham, Farhan Rehman Sherief, Dineshwar, Courtney Wong, Suzzane Chan and Teng Zhen An!"

We wish Teoh Wan Yi our heartiest congratulations on her well-deserved awards. Her efforts have been very inspiring and we wish her continued success.

Achievements

The Psych Four wins the NGO Sector #Bangkit Challenge



Announcement of the Psych Four's Win

The #Bangkit challenge was held from 2nd August to 3rd September, 2021 where students from tertiary schools across Malaysia could pitch constructive solutions to real-life problems under Business, Science, NGO, IT, and Education in the future sectors. **The Psych Four, an ambitious team comprising of Bachelors in Psychology second year student Cheng Miao Shan, and third year students Lai Zhong Xun, Kuan Jie Meng, and Anastasia Lim Ya Nah won the NGO sector #Bangkit challenge** and was awarded the opportunity to work with the sponsoring partner MyReaders to bring their solution to the real world!

The challenge began with a one-week long preliminary round in which NGO sector participants were given the problem statement *'What would be a solution for communities with poor access to the internet and/or devices to gain access to an existing literacy curriculum without relying on a literate adult?'* and were asked to create an infographic poster on their solution.

The Psych Four was one of the four groups to win and advance to the final round where they were given 3 weeks to prepare their final pitch and create a 3 minute video about their solution which was then posted on the Sunway Student Ambassador's Facebook and Instagram page (<https://fb.watch/7LpYjwMRs/>).

With the support of their mentor Dr. Hossein Nezakati, The Psych Four presented their final pitch on 4th September, 2021 and were ecstatic to find out that they won the whole challenge!

Dr. Hossein Nezakati was very happy and proud of their win. When asked about his thoughts, Dr. Hossein said *"ReadMe!, a creative, challenging name for a project. That was a fully amazing short academic journey with the Team The Psych Four. They showed their passion and enthusiastic characteristics during the mentoring sessions. They were keen to learn all the points of improvement to uplift their presentation. They demonstrated the real meaning of multidisciplinary approaches and thinking out-of-the-box. Watch out for Team The Psych Four!"*



Kuan Jie Meng



Lai Zhong Xun



Cheng Miao Shan



Anastasia Lim Ya Nah

The Psych Four's Solution

Introducing Read.Me

A platform that connects all organizations with literacy programs across Malaysia and serves as a bridge to connect the illiterate communities with those organizations. It is built to be illiterate-friendly, and is accessible via platforms such as website, app and hotline to address the issue of poor access to devices and the internet.

How?

It identifies illiterate individuals or communities through assessments, recommends and connects these individuals to relevant organizations based on their age group, location and literacy proficiency. On a wider scale, Read.Me also informs the public of areas with deficient literacy organizations and guides the development and expansion of new and existing literacy NGOs.

Student of the Month (October): Yeu-Mynn Yeung



In October, the Sunway University Student Council (SUSC) named Yeu-Mynn Yeung as the Student of the Month.

Yeu-Mynn is a BSc (Hons) Psychology student, currently in her third year. When asked about her reaction to the nomination, she told the SUSC, “The news came as a surprise to me, so being selected as SOM is something I never expected at all! I am incredibly honoured to be given this opportunity and have my efforts recognised. I am genuinely humbled and filled with gratitude.”

The hallmarks of precocious talent were there from early on. Since the age of just 14, Yeu-Mynn has served as a journalist for The Star Media Group Berhad, regularly contributing articles to The Star Newspaper in numerous columns.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Yeu-Mynn’s experience of university life has thus far been primarily online – and yet, none of this has stopped her from making a mark during her time here as an undergraduate.

Last August, she entered the 11th Malaysian Public Policy Competition (MPPC) in which she advocated for a policy that would make healthcare more accessible to the deaf community, and emerged as the first-runner up (see page 23).

Recently, Yeu-Mynn has also graduated from FutureReady, an initiative by Yayasan Tunku Abdul Rahman in collaboration with Accenture, that aims to equip and upskill students with the knowledge relevant for modern-day technology consultants.

Additionally, Yeu-Mynn has also been selected as a “Srikandi” for Srikandi, a capacity-building programme organised by Undi 18, the 111 Initiative and the Canada Local Funds for Local Initiative.

“

*I am
genuinely
humbled and
filled with
gratitude.*

”

Achievements



Yeu-Mynn serves as Lead Curator for TEDxSunway University



Yeu-Mynn at the 11th Malaysian Public Policy Competition

Not stopping there, Yeu-Mynn has also shown that she is civic-minded. She is a member of the Policy, Research and Strategy Bureau for Gerakan Mahasiswa Demokratik, an NGO that advocates for student-centric issues in Malaysia.

Yeu-Mynn's university extracurriculars are no less impressive. She is the Lead Curator for TEDxSunwayUniversity, and has overseen many TEDx events at Sunway University, such as Limitless, When Waves Collide and The Powerhouse Within.

In her free time, Yeu-Mynn's pastimes are varied across domains. As a book lover, she indulges in literature, be it fiction or nonfiction. Yeu-Mynn is also a polyglot, able to speak Mandarin, English, Korean, French, and a hint of Tamil; she believes that being well-versed in multiple languages opens up windows to multiple perspectives and cultures.

More recently, amid the pandemic, Yeu-Mynn discovered a new interest in sewing. Always the kind-hearted citizen, in early 2021 she put her newfound sewing skills to good use by making

Achievements

handmade cloth masks that were donated to an underprivileged community in Sabah.

For all her achievements and credentials, a day in the life of Yeu-Mynn is essentially the regular life of a student, as she modestly puts it: she attends her lectures, joins tutorials, and participates in group discussions. As for how she manages her time, Yeu-Mynn applies Parkinson's Law – setting aside a specified amount of time to complete a given task. She is also a “to-do list” advocate and wholeheartedly believes in setting sub-goals.

At heart, Yeu-Mynn's drive comes from her unwavering curiosity and her courage to seek out new experiences. When asked how one can get more involved in extracurriculars, Yeu-Mynn advised, “Don't wait for the right opportunity but instead create opportunities for yourself. Oftentimes it is the things we haven't done that we regret more so than the things we have. Jon Kabat-Zinn once said ‘You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf. Embrace the tides, and surf the waves of life’.”

As a highly involved and proactive person, Yeu-Mynn however emphasises the importance of spending time with loved ones. To Yeu-Mynn, her family is her rock and she is only who she is today because of their love and support.



Yeu-Mynn is a polyglot -- she can speak Mandarin, English, Korean, French, and a hint of Tamil. She believes that knowing different languages opens her up to different cultures and their perspectives.

“

*Stay humble,
work hard
and smart
and essentially,
be kind*

”

When asked what advice Yeu-Mynn would give to onboarding university students, her answer was the need to groove to a work-life rhythm: “Although university may be daunting, it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Establish a good support system with your peers and form connections with your lecturers. Enjoy the process more than the outcome; immerse yourself in new experiences and be open to opportunities”. She also emphasised the importance of sharing knowledge: “Don't be selfish with knowledge because we don't know what we don't know. Stay humble, work hard and smart and essentially, be kind”.

We wish you all the very best, Yeu-Mynn!

Achievements

Clever Clever Squirrel Jump emerges as the first runner-up for the 11th Malaysian Public Policy Competition



The Malaysian Public Policy Competition (MPPC) is an annual flagship event organized by the International Council of Malaysian Scholars and Associates (ICMS). The case-based competition engages Malaysian students in a comprehensive public policy-making process, from ideation to implementation, with the aim of bringing the wealth of policies created by undergraduate students closer to areas of pressing need so that they become more implementable.

Team Clever Clever Squirrel Jump, first runner-ups of the 11th Malaysian Public Policy Competition 2021

Yeu-Mynn Yeung, a second year Bachelors in Psychology student from Sunway University championed the first runner-up position in the 11th Malaysian Public Policy Competition, 2021 along with her close friends Rebecca Chan from University of Toronto, and Chrystal Foo from Universiti Malaya. The three friends decided to join the competition on a whim and were excited to find out that their application landed them among the top 24 teams from a pool of 339 applicants, the highest number MPPC has ever received to date!

With such joyous news in mind, they decided to name their group Clever Clever Squirrel Jump, a direct translation of a Malay proverb '*sepandai pandai tupai melompat*', which reflected their group dynamics—witty, clever, and agile, similar to that of squirrels.

A week before the competition, Clever Clever Squirrel Jump attended an Immersion Day in which they were given the opportunity to deep-dive on a series of workshops and learn first-hand from policymakers, gaining the ins and outs of policymaking. The team was enlightened by healthcare experts and industry leaders, who aided them in crafting their policies.

In the preliminary round of the competition, Clever Clever Squirrel Jump competed with 6 other teams on their policy ideation for the deaf community and its implementation. To win the preliminary round, they were required to present their policy to a panel of three judges, review 5 policy memos, and garner the highest marks. Yeu-Mynn Yeung reflected on this moment and said "*I recall being so overwhelmed by the workload and the immense pressure; the best strategy for this was to divide and conquer.*"



Clever Clever Squirrel Jump having a conversation with one of their stakeholders, Professor Dr. Umadevi Palanisamy from Monash University



Working until the wee hours in the morning, (from clockwise) Rebecca Chan, Yeu-Mynn Yeung and Chrystal Foo still have smiles plastered across their faces and are as bright as ever.

The Clever Clever Squirrel Jump indeed conquered the preliminary round and hopped onto the Grand Finals where they presented their policy as a whole within 12 minutes, followed by a 10-minute Q&A with the judges, and 5-minute Q&A from the audience. The team was judged by 5 guest judges, including Sunway University's very own School of Medical and Life Sciences Dean, Professor Dr. Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam. With the goal bridging the healthcare gap for the deaf community, the team presented their policy with vigor and secured the first runner-up position.

Lend Us Your Ears

Making healthcare work for the Deaf



Clever Clever Squirrel Jump proposed a policy entitled "Lend Us Your Ears" that addresses healthcare accessibility for the Malaysian Deaf community.

Did you know that a vast majority of Deaf people heavily rely on the Malaysian Sign Language or more commonly known as Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia?

In fact, fluency in Malay and English within this community is uncommon. This is because phonetics is an essential part of language. After all, how can one read or learn a language when one cannot hear?

After engaging with multiple stakeholders, the team surmised that education about Deaf culture and a willingness to accept the need for Jurubahasa Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia is what stands in the way of healthcare accessibility for the Deaf.



"Lend Us Your Ears", a policy that aims to enable healthcare accessibility for the Deaf community. The colour dark blue was chosen because it is the universal colour representing the Deaf. On a side note, the three blue squirrels on the bottom right symbolises the three of us—the clever squirrels!

When asked about their thoughts on the win, Yeu-Mynn Yeung said, *"From applications to competition day, everything was so fun! It was an incredibly humbling experience, and this has allowed me to reflect on things I never realized I took for granted—something as fundamental as hearing. Furthermore, as a Psychology undergraduate, MPPC proved how vital understanding human behaviour is in policymaking, especially to put forth an empathetic approach in policy creation."*

Rebecca Chan commented on the inspiration MPPC gave her *"Because it's like all our ideas suddenly have the opportunity to become tangible and actually impact people in real ways. So, winning comes with a bit of pressure to not waste the space we've been given on this platform—but it is a good kind of pressure. I am blessed to have this opportunity in the first place"*



From clockwise: Rebecca Chan, Yeu-Mynn Yeung and Chrystal Foo were seen posing for a celebratory photo after winning the MPPC 2021 Grand Finals.

Chrystal Foo remarked, *"All in all, MPPC was an eye-opening experience. It helped me be more connected to Malaysian issues but also made me realise how much I don't know and how privileged I am to not experience the struggles of many just to access basic healthcare."*

The team unanimously agreed that they would use this opportunity to continue to champion healthcare accessibility for the Deaf community. They are incredibly thrilled to present their policy to the Malaysian Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Institute of Youth Research Malaysia (IYRES) in the coming months.

Natania Tai raises RM 8,760 for White Flag Wavers

"Giving back to the community, serving your people, and simply loving your neighbor. This was the heart of a small, but hopefully impactful contribution to those in need during these trying times."

Natania Tai, a compassionate final year student in BSc (Hons) Psychology organized a charity drive to help Malaysians who raised white flags as a sign of distress amidst harsh COVID-19 lockdowns. She raised money for white flag wavers by inviting her friends to play interactive games and challenges which she live-streamed on Twitch for viewers to enjoy and donate to the cause. At the end of a long 12 hour stream, Natania raised a staggering RM 8,760.50! She was amazed by the support that poured from the viewers and remarked that she will be forever grateful to them.

Natania identified 50 families (165 people) on kitajaga.co, a community-driven platform that makes it easier for users to signal distress or provide aid through its various resources. She delivered packages with essential food and other items to the families and found the whole process all the more fulfilling when she got to see their bright smiles!

Kitajaga

Now available as a mobile application, kitajaga can be used to provide aid to white flag wavers

Link: [Kitajaga.co](https://kitajaga.co)



"It is possible to help others in any way that makes sense to you. Use your talents and skills to bring love and joy to those around you. It's okay if you don't have the funds, there are other ways in which we can support each other. Text a friend, share informational posts on social media, or even get outside to help someone."



Food supply:

Flour, rice, eggs, oil, sugar, instant noodles, biscuits, diapers, baby formula (milk), canned fish, etc

Staff Showcase

SMLS Academics receive Student Appreciation of Teaching Award



The Sunway University Academic Staff Excellence Awards Ceremony 2021 was held on 10th December 2021 to recognise teaching achievements for academic staff. Thirty recipients from all Schools attended the awards ceremony.



Six academic staff from SMLS were proud recipients of the Student Appreciation of Teaching Award:

- Ms Chee Gek Neo (Clinical Instructor, Department of Nursing)
- Dr Chew Jacty (Associate Dean (Education), Department of Biological Sciences)
- Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin (Research Professor and Head - Department of Medical Sciences)
- Dr Eliza Berezina (Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology)
- Dr Lee Ai-Suan (Lecturer, Department of Psychology)
- Dr Yow Yoon Yen (Senior Lecturer, Department of Biological Sciences)



[From left to right: Assoc Prof Dr Felicia Chung (representing Prof. Chia), Dr Lee, Dr Chew, Dr Yow, Dr Berezina, Ms Chee]

Staff Showcase

Change of Leadership at the Department of Biological Sciences and the Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre

Good Bye



A/PROF. DR TOMMY TONG YUH KOON

Welcome



DR KAVITA REGINALD

Dr. Tommy Tung replaced by Dr. Kavita Reginald as the Head of Department of Biological Sciences

The end of August 2021 saw the **departure of Associate Professor Dr Tommy Tong** as the Head of Department for Biological Sciences. He was **replaced by Dr Kavita Reginald**. Dr Kavita is a Senior Lecturer whose research area is in immunology, with a particular focus on allergies. Her present research is on understanding the genetic factors that cause certain individuals to have a higher risk of allergies, as well as characterizing major allergens in the environment, and designing allergy vaccines for them.

She is a very active executive committee member of the Malaysian Society of Allergies and Immunology (MSAI) and has been involved in many outreach projects to inform the public about allergies, and the best management strategies.

Dr Tong is currently working as a full-time staff scientist at the San Diego Biomedical Research Institute, California, USA. While being there, he is still affiliated with the Department of Biological Sciences at SMLS, as he is still supervising postgraduate students at the Department. Dr Tong is working under Professor James Binley supervision on two vaccine development research projects: HIV and SARS-2-CoV. His work is mainly on vaccinology, focusing on inducing antibodies against viral infections. His wife, Associate Professor Dr Audrey Lim, also from the Department of Biological Sciences will be joining him in January 2022.

We also saw the **departure of Associate Professor Dr Yong Min Hooi**, who has moved to University of Bradford. Dr Yong, was the Head of the Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre (AHWRC), and a member of the Department of Psychology. She will be **replaced by Professor Alexandre Schaefer** who would be joining in January 2022 as the Head of AHWRC, and also a member of the Department of Psychology.

We thank Dr Tong, Dr Lim and Dr Yong for their tireless contributions to the School and University, and we wish them all the best in their careers. We also welcome Prof Schaefer to the SMLS, and congratulate Dr Kavita Reginald on her new appointment.

We bid goodbye to Associate Professor Dr Yong Min Hooi...



... and we welcome....



PROFESSOR ALEXANDRE SCHAEFER

Dr. Yong Min Hooi replaced by Prof. Alexandre Schaefer as the Head of Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre (AHWRC)

Staff Showcase

Prof. Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin Appointed as Assessment Panel for the Research Fund Assessment Committee of the Ministry of Higher Education

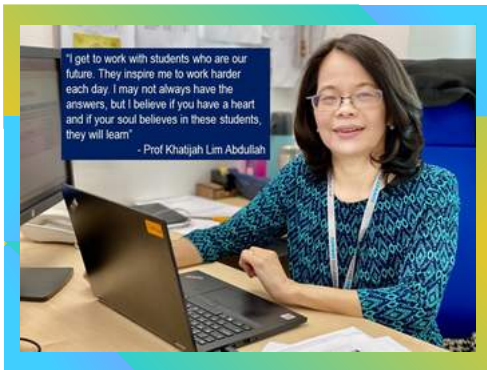


The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) is the agency that regulates the provision of the high impact research funding to various institutions in Malaysia under the Research Fund of the Ministry of Higher Education (DP KPT). Direction setting and KPT's DP strategy is an initiative to encourage, leapfrog and play an important role in ensuring that research and innovation are able to position Malaysia towards a high -income and innovation-driven nation through the discovery of Malaysian -shaped research results.

The Department of Higher Education (JPT) is pleased to appoint YBhg. Datin as the Panel of Assessor for the Research Fund Assessment Committee of the Ministry of Higher Education (DP KPT) effective 1 January 2021. The Department congratulates the appointment and hopes that YBhg. Datin can assist the Committee to perform its duties with excellence and achieve the set goals.

Staff Showcase

Nursing's Call to Action: Statement by Head of Nursing Prof. Khatijah Lim Abdullah



"Sunway Group has proactively involved itself as the first private vaccination centre in Malaysia to cater for population in Petaling district, as part of the National COVID-19 Immunization Programme (NCP). The Sunway Group is also committed to nation-building by offering its Sunway Pyramid Convention Centre in support of achieving 80% herd immunity in Malaysia, which would save many lives and put nation on the road to recovering economic sustainability.

In line with this commitment, the nursing staff and nursing students at School of Medical and Life Sciences volunteered at the Sunway Vaccination Centres from between May 2021 to September 2021. This offered the 'perfect opportunity' for nursing students to practice community health care and interact with the community as they got the opportunity to talk to people, hearing their stories which is something that is difficult to replicate in a classroom setting. They also served as ushers, observers for individuals after receiving the vaccine, in documentation roles and even cleaning stations between individuals which helps to broaden the hospital care they typically focus on.

Normally students would not have any chance in big event handling by the nation. However, the scale of the pandemic and the logistical challenge in delivering the vaccination programme resulted in a new legal framework called a National Protocol. This meant that non-registered staff could be involved if trained in accordance with national standards and supervised by a registrant. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the biggest vaccination programme we have seen in our lifetime. Undeniably, this has given good exposure to observe how a pandemic is managed, from the COVID testing to the contact tracing to the vaccination process.

This situation has brought many challenges to our team and students. However, it has also offered many opportunities that wouldn't usually arise. The students can see the relief the patients feel when they know they're going to have a vaccine and also our students being able to give them support and advice on staying healthy maintaining social distancing, wearing a mask, and washing hands and what the possible side effect could be, such as a headache or raised temperature, a lot of it all comes together to reassure them and make them feel better about things.

The success of this placement is testament to the excellent collaboration relationship between Sunway Education Group and Sunway Medical Team. I thank all those involved in supporting this learning opportunity for our students for their future development."

Dr Salima Lalani obtained a postdoctoral research fellowship at Albany Medical College, New York, USA

Recent PhD in Biology graduate under the Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research (CVVR), Dr Salima Sadruddin Lalani was accepted into the prestigious Albany Medical College in New York, USA.

At Albany Medical College, Dr Salima would be researching the role of enteroviruses in the etiology of Type 1 diabetes, as well as how specific integrins work in cancers, while also developing a bioinformatics core.



Dr Salima Lalani at the Sunway University campus

Hailing from Karachi, Pakistan, Dr Salima learnt from her friends studying at the School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University that there were research facilities available for studies into virology. Being someone who had a longstanding interest in virology, she was accepted into the PhD programme in Biology under the supervision of Distinguished Professor and Head of the Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research, Professor Poh Chit Laa. Dr Salima was on a fully funded PhD studentship from June 2018 and completed her studies in good time despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

For her PhD, Dr Salima majored in virology and antiviral therapeutics with a focus on functional insights in the host and virus-targeted antiviral agents. Her PhD dissertation was entitled "Functional Insights into the Activity of Flavonoid Silymarin and the Antiviral Peptide L-SP40 against Enterovirus A71" - a thesis devoted to discover and elucidate the molecular mechanism of natural flavonoids and peptides against EV-A71, an enterovirus which has the potential to cause severe hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) in young children, especially in Asia. Her primary work was on identifying and characterizing novel antivirals against the neurovirulent Enterovirus A71 as well as delineating their functional and molecular mechanisms. The lab she belonged to was also working on vaccine development against EV-A71, dengue, influenza and SARS-CoV-2 and she had a chance to the other viruses.

When asked about her main findings from her PhD projects, Dr Salima explained, “Enterovirus 71 (EV-A71) is a significant etiological agent of hand foot and mouth disease (HFMD). Some strains of EV-A71 have the potential to cause severe neurological infections especially in children, which could lead to death. Since there is no US-FDA approved vaccine in the global market, we studied two direct-acting flavonoids and a host-directed peptide as potential antiviral candidates against Enterovirus A71. Out of studied antivirals, L-SP40 peptide was found to be more potent and broad-spectrum against several enteroviruses in laboratory studies as well as in animal model. Furthermore, a crucial mutation in the genome of EV-A71 was also identified in this study that could cause the resistance of virus against a flavonoid (silymarin) and halt its antiviral effects. This study has explored the mechanism of antivirals and also paved the way for further development of antiviral peptide as a potential clinical candidate.”

Dr Salima also commented that she had very nice experiences while working at Sunway University. ***“Our labs in Department of Biological Sciences and Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research are well-equipped to conduct the required research activities. I was provided all kind of support to work in other universities when the facilities to perform specific type of experiments were not available on campus. I was never stopped or had trouble to do certain type of work due to non-availability of facilities or cost of an experiment. The best part of my lab was my lab-mates. They were always there to support me and never made me feel that I am away from home. Cheers to them! Besides University, Sunway city was an amazing place to live around. Everything you can think of was available in the near vicinity. Without a second thought, I would say, it was the safest and the coolest neighbourhood to live at!”***, she commented.

With regards to her future, Dr Salima hopes for her work to further advanced to translational stages and to be turned into therapeutic solutions to protect children from EV-A71, a neurovirulent agent of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD). “My dream is to gain deeper understanding of how various viruses operate and how we can target them to find/develop therapeutic options that can be taken from bench to bed”, she added.

Lastly, Dr Salima has advice for individuals thinking of doing their PhDs, ***“Do a PhD only if it is your passion. PhD is a huge challenge. It has its ups and downs. Always remember: When things go wrong, don’t go with them. Learn, unlearn and re-learn. Have determination and dedication towards your dream. Endure the pressure because that’s what makes coal a diamond!”***. She also advises PhD candidates to work closely with their mentors, and to publish their study results early to improve personal research profile and also to reduce the pressure of publication towards the end of study. She adds, ***“Take care of yourself and stay sane. Don’t let the stress get you. Shift+Delete when and where needed 😊.”***

We congratulate Dr Salima Lalani on her PhD success and wish her continued success in her postdoctoral research fellowship at Albany Medial College!



Further information on the Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research (CVVR) can be found in the April-June 2021 issues of SMiLeS Newsletter:

<https://university.sunway.edu.my/sites/default/files/magazine/SMLS/June-2021-SMiLeS-Newsletter.pdf>

A Supervisor's Testimony

Professor Poh Chit Laa on Dr Salima Lalani



Professor Poh Chit Laa in Sunway Lab

"Salima is very professional, ambitious and competent in pursuing her goals. She is highly energetic and has a very good spirit and enthusiasm for research. She has published five first-authored SCOPUS articles (4 Q1 and 1 Q2) and one co-authored book chapter from her PhD work. I found her to be a very dedicated, hardworking, talented and progressive researcher. She had the capability to diagnose scientific problems and handled them until she could find successful solutions. Salima had acquired abundant experience in virology research during her stay in my group. She adopted virology, molecular biology and in vivo techniques such as evaluating antiviral assays against peptides in mice so that translational applications using antiviral peptides against EV-A71 could become a reality in the not too distant future.

Salima expertly used aseptic cell culture techniques and has thorough knowledge and experience of immunohistochemistry, electrophoresis, western blotting, ELISA, qRT-PCR/PCR, gene knockdown using siRNA and fluorescent microscopy. She could effortlessly handle and perform experimentations using mice. Notably, she successfully designed and executed her in vivo challenge experiments independently using neonatal mice. Furthermore, she is highly adaptable and is a quick learner. This was evident by the speed with which she learnt and mastered Virology and in silico techniques and creatively implemented them during her Ph.D. research.

One of her personal attributes worth mentioning is her passion to help others in the laboratory with her knowledge, skills and experience. She displayed strong leadership abilities, logical thinking and communication skills throughout her time in my lab. These attributes make her a great facilitator and mentor for junior students and she placed herself as an excellent team player. I have supervised many Masters and PhD students in Singapore and Australian universities and without a doubt, she is one of the finest students with the highest capability and right attitude for research. I am highly confident that she will be a valuable asset to her future employer at the Albany Medical College, USA. It is a great pleasure to graduate PhD candidates from Sunway University who could be recognized for their talents immediately upon completion of their PhD work. Producing high quality PhD graduates who could readily be employed by reputable institutions in the USA will add value to our postgraduate programmes at SMLS at Sunway University.

Achievements

alumniTV

Biology with Psychology alumnus, Arjun Thanaraju shines in his movie Mentega Terbang



Arjun Thanaraju, a very talented alumnus of the BSc (Hons) Biology with Psychology programme under the Department of Biological Sciences recently released his movie, Mentega Terbang in which he is a co-writer, and a main actor. Mentega Terbang tells the story of a young Muslim schoolgirl, Aisyah, who embarks on a journey to discover different religions, specifically in the context of life after death, after learning about her mother's terminal diagnosis. Aisyah is driven to dwell deep into exploring and understanding different cultural beliefs of the afterlife in hopes of finding a better ending for her dying mother.



The film was initially created for the Kuman Pictures Feature Film Challenge (where it placed in the Top 5) and has since been screened to sold out audiences. Now, it has been accepted into the 16th Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival, which is a film festival in Indonesia that aims to nurture Asian cinema.

The e-flyer of Indonesian premiere of Mentega Terbang featuring Arjun and his co-star Syuma Shahilin, as Suresh and Aisyah, respectively.

Films that have been screened at this Festival include Prebet Sapu and Roh, which were submitted by Malaysia as the country's representatives to the Oscars in previous years. The Rakyat Post gave a very positive review about the movie (see: Mentega Terbang – A Eye-Opening Contemplation About What's Life After Death [Review] | TRP (therakyatpost.com))

Arjun initially joined the Mentega Terbang project as a co-writer but was later casted as Suresh, Aisyah's best friend). The film is directed by Khairi Anwar, an accomplished Malaysian film and theatre maker; and is produced by Anomalist Production in association with Meng Kheng Entertainment.



Arjun and the Mentega Terbang production team



The official teaser of **Mentega Terbang** can be found here: <https://youtu.be/FFSXNjvKtPI>

Nat Hew Weng Xin empowers Children as the Youth Leader of Dignity for Children Foundation



Dignity For Children Foundation is an NGO that provides holistic care and education for marginalized and urban poor children in Kuala Lumpur.

Sunway University BSc. (Hons) Psychology alumnus Nat Hew Weng Xin is a youth leader of the Dignity foundation and actively participates in events and programmes to nurture positive character in underprivileged youth. Besides developing youth's academics, Nat encourages them to keep up with their hobbies.

We at Sunway are very proud of Nat and cheer him on for all his endeavors!

“

"The students from Dignity for Children are starting their 3rd term and it's all thanks to the communities of Malaysia that help us in our trying times"

- Nat Hew Weng Xin

”

Achievements

Alumni

The Reframe Project: An initiative by Sunway BSc (Hons) Psychology alumni Shasvini Naidu, Daryl Loh, and Ethan Ganes

The Reframe Project is a mental health hub for Malaysian young adults to obtain accurate knowledge on mental health to curb stigma, encourage help seeking behavior, and connect with other young adults. **Their meticulously created stories and webinars provide mental health information that is actionable, credible and accessible in both Malay and English!**

Founded by Shasvini Naidu, this initiative was inspired by her encounter with young children who narrated heart-breaking stories of the mental health stigma they experience in their daily lives. It encouraged her to curb stigma through mental health education which she put into action by creating The Reframe Project and growing it into a platform that now educates people in all states of Malaysia! Her work at The Reframe Project demonstrated just how much mental health awareness is needed *"The feedback that we get from the webinar...really every feedback just tells us how important it is and how much we need this. It is something I realized over time, that every work we do has a significance and if it is practical, it will be more useful."* Shasvini credits her team of close friends for their role in the growth of The Reframe Project and the impact it has on mental health awareness.



Shasvini Naidu, Masters in Clinical Psychology in pursuit



Daryl Loh, Masters of Philosophy in Management in pursuit

Daryl Loh was one of the first few to join The Reframe Project where he now handles technical facets of social media, webinars, and emails as well as assists in the planning of future projects. Darryl strongly believes that mental health should be treated equally important as physical health and is optimistic about the growth in demand for mental health content online *"Before this there was very little mental health content in the public space and people theorized that there is no demand for it but I realized in the past few webinars that this is really not true. There is definitely a demand for the content and information we provide, specifically more so during COVID-19. We have a lot of people coming in from different states of Malaysia and one of the participants commented that they don't have facilities over there so they can't really get the help that they need. This really shows us that there is a demand, there is a presence of people who want to know this information and want to access these services but can not."*

Ethan Ganes plans out future directions and manages the manpower of The Reframe Project as the Operations Lead. He prides in the diversity of educational backgrounds their team has and it's collective influence on the quality of their content *"Every skill is needed for spreading mental health awareness and literacy. The diversity in perspectives of our team help us create real and more helpful webinars than we would if we just sat back as Psychology students and said - What do we want to hear?"* He encourages people from all walks of life to be curious about mental health and be involved even in a small capacity *"Be curious, figure out what excites you about mental health and then be involved in whatever capacity you can. That makes a difference because when you are involved, you are in this space and when you are in this space, this space becomes more normal and you become ready to welcome other people to the world of understanding mental health"*



Ethan Ganes, Masters of Professional Counseling in pursuit

Follow The Reframe Project on:



[The Reframe Project](#)



[The Reframe Project](#)



[@the_reframeproject](#)



thereframeproject.work@gmail.com

Where are they now?

Alumni



*Ethan Ganes,
a BSc (Hons) Psychology Alumna*

Ethan Ganes, a Psychology alumnus, pursues his Master of Professional Counselling

Meet Ethan Ganes, a 2019 graduate of BSc (Hons) Psychology here at Sunway University. Post graduation, he joined Vinda Group SEA as an HR leadership apprentice and climbed his way towards a senior executive learning & development role.

During his free time, he volunteered with Closing the Gap and Leaderonomics to support Malaysian youths which sparked his interest in pursuing a Masters of Professional Counselling at Monash University, Malaysia. Let's have a read as Ethan discusses what motivated him to obtain a master's degree in counselling and his experiences as a master's student.

What inspired you to choose a Masters in Professional Counselling?

"I spent my free time working with youths, some who are more at-risk, some from lower SES backgrounds, and even some from regular well-functioning high middle class families. I found that working with them is different, it's like working with totally different populations. You have two different types of people in one group and how do you manage that? It made me realize that in my job at HR, I will spend my whole life working with only one type of person and that is going to be a person in middle income or upper income levels. I started to ask myself who am I really helping?"

All the things I was interested in - reading, doing webinars, and volunteering for youths were related to mental health but my main job involved working with a completely different population. The distance between what I wanted to do and what I was doing at work became very large. If I wanted to do extracurricular activities I considered fun, I needed to step out of work, run a marathon towards the things I wanted to do, and then run a marathon back to work. I began feeling very exhausted and so I had a conversation with Dr. Alvin about this and he asked me, 'Who told you that being in corporate is the only version of success? And who exactly is telling you that this story must

be you in a corporate, with lots of other people, working with all these departments, getting promotions, being concerned with bigger paycheck means bigger success. Do you believe that? If you don't believe that then where is this coming from?"

So I thought to myself 'Wouldn't it be just wonderful if I can work on people development with a huge diversity of people and do it where it matters so I don't have to keep running back and forth between my job and the things I love to do?'. It was very scary because I received the offer to join MSc. of Professional Counselling in Monash only a few months I received a promotion from my job. But I told myself that it's okay, this is what I want and I will probably do much better in this field in the long-run.

Long story short, it was really knowing that I wanted to do this since even before university, volunteering and being involved in mental health activities for years but working in a completely different field, and every year I kept getting more exhausted. I finally needed to ask myself how much do I want to keep running between what I like and what pays the bills? Instead of running a marathon, why not move my interests next door to each other and work with a larger group of people instead of the group that may not need as much support."

What are the requirements to do a Masters in Professional Counseling?

"Objectively speaking, I don't think the requirements are very specific. You don't need to come from a Psychology background as the first few semesters are similar to an introductory course in Psychology. I have classmates who come from marketing, law, and English literature backgrounds.

More importantly on the non-technical side, I would say you need to make sure you can commit to these 2-3 years of the course because it can take a lot of energy from you. You also probably want some exposure to therapy yourself because in this course, you are your assignments. A lot of times, the assignments given require you to question your own beliefs, past experiences, and ensure that you are not going to be your own problem in therapy. So for example, how are you going to deal with your own unresolved issues? These are all things the Masters makes you think about. That's why it is very important to have that commitment and strongly know why you are doing this course. I think that matter so much, in fact probably more than any technical qualification because that you can always learn."

How has your Psychology course prepared you for your Masters in Professional Counseling?

"My psychology degree has helped me incredibly, I felt very prepared when I entered the course. The degree made me feel like I was adequately challenged to write well. I got to spend a lot of time with my lecturers understanding what is an excellent piece of writing and what isn't. So now in my Masters, I have a better sense of what kind of writing is required.

I've heard a lot of Psychology students ask me if they are able to use anything from their Psychology course and the answer is yes and no. When you get a job in HR, you may be required to do a lot of technical things such as documentation, administrative tasks, and know about disciplinary misconduct. The technical jargons may not be familiar but even if you don't have these skills, you are able to apply your knowledge the minute you are asked about people - what ideas work with an audience, and how do you persuade others to take on your points. So even though our skills may not be obviously tied to a job, we are able to

understand people's behavior and that can be applied regardless of where you are like marketing, HR, or business management."

What was your experience like in Sunway?

"I had a challenging and great experience. I initially chose Sunway because I was lucky enough to have received a scholarship. Nevertheless, I found myself asking, did I make the right choice in choosing Sunway? and the answer is most definitely yes! That is because in addition to the good lecturers and content, Sunway has an ecosystem where you can apply everything you learn. You don't need to worry about opportunities outside of the classroom because when you walk out, there is an event next-door. I always say when learning psychology, we learn a lot of cool facts about people but how do we use it? I joined the Sunway University Toastmasters Club and countless other events to apply the theories that I learnt in the classroom which was very useful to me.

I also didn't have to worry about learning other things as a Psychology student because there are so many clubs that I could easily just go to and learn things that I would have never learned in my course. There are literally endless opportunities outside the classroom in Sunway. Anything that I wanted to learn, I could. Either by asking a lecturer or Student Life, I could get a direction on how to do things. I thought that was very phenomenal so I had a very good experience studying in Sunway university."

What advice would you give current Sunway students?

"I think it ties back to applying what you learn. Speaking as both a former HR professional and someone who has gone through the course, I would always ask a student from whichever background, 'How are you applying what you learned?' Knowledge on paper doesn't translate to anything when you finish your degree and unfortunately employers can not scan your mind for your skills and tell you how to apply them. The best way to carry your knowledge forward is to ask yourself what subject you enjoy the most and where can you use it in your degree years outside of class. I think that if you consistently ask yourself that question, you will choose activities and enjoy them because you don't need to revise what you learn in class as much. Take what you learn, go outside, and apply it immediately."

Where are they now?

Alumni



*Carina Chon Qiong Fang,
a BSc (Hons) Psychology Alumna*

Carina Chon Qiong Fang is an Executive of Special Projects at Sunway Education Group

Back in 2019, Carina Chon Qiong Fang graduated from her BSc (Hons) Psychology degree here at Sunway University. After working as a private tutor for a year, she began her full-time employment as an Executive of Special Projects at Sunway Education Group (SEG).

Carina identifies herself as a life-long learner, growth explorer, and minimalist. She aims to contribute her life to promote growth, empowerment, connection, and service. Fortunately, we were able to speak with Carina as she shares her experiences and advise for those considering a career in the same industry.

What is your role as an Executive of Special Projects at Sunway Education Group?

"My job as an Executive of Special Projects allows me to explore different departments within the Institution such as the Government And Corporate Liaison Unit (GCLU) where I provide support to ad-hoc enquiries, requests, projects and initiatives from the ministries, government agencies and internal & external stakeholders. I'm also involved in providing pastoral care to students at the height of the pandemic and supported other philanthropic causes under the Philanthropy Office."

How has your degree in psychology prepared you for this role?

"Psychology is life, life is psychology. Exploring the field of psychology has taught me how to be a better quality person, or simply a human being.

It helped me better understand myself by practicing the concepts I learned such as mindfulness, resilience, compassion and so on. After all, these are the values that keep you surviving in life - not only grades or certificates. When the mindset is right, you can further into any field or profession.

Psychology simply trains you to be a better quality person by understanding yourself better. When you understand

yourself better, you can understand others better as well.

People always ask me why study psychology, especially because psychology is still developing in Malaysia, but I think that addressing mental health related issues is what is needed in the future."

What was your experience in Sunway like?

"My experience in Sunway was very positive because of the supportive lecturers and staff who go beyond education. The meaningful connections I made with them had a huge impact on my life. I would really like to credit my supervisor Dr. Michelle Lee not only for guiding me academically, but also for the little life nuggets she gave me."

What advice would you give current Sunway students?

"I would say if you have the mindset of lifelong learning, you could succeed anywhere you go. Apply your values and experiences in life. Learn from your mistakes. Don't limit yourself to one thing - go out and explore!

Education is not only about grades and certificates, the real exam is how you apply your values to your job. A successful life could be something within, so invest your life with values, inspire with growth, connect with languages of the heart, and cherish with contribution."

Getting To Know You



Meet Dr Say Yee-How

From the Department of Biological Sciences



Since I have been newly inducted to the SMLS family in early December 2021, I have been invited to pen a few words for the SMiLeS newsletter and I am more than glad to share a bit about myself and my career journey here. As a start, let me first share something on my education background. I have been fortunate enough to receive education from the East and the West – I graduated with a BSc in biomedical science from Universiti Putra Malaysia in 2003 and received a full scholarship to do my PhD in cell and molecular biology at University of Leeds, UK under the supervision of Prof. Nigel Hooper. At Leeds, I had the chance to work with a neuronal protein known as the prion protein, which in its infectious form has been linked with neurodegeneration (or brain-wasting diseases) known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, or more commonly, ‘mad cow’ disease.

Upon graduating from Leeds in 2007 and after a postdoctoral stint on cancer research at the University of Massachusetts Medical School USA, I returned home and was eager to serve Malaysia. My academic career journey hence began at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) in 2008, at Setapak, before shifting to Kampar, Perak in 2010. There, I had the opportunity to embark on research work in the fields that I am passionate about, namely nutrigenetics, neurodegeneration and neoplasm (which I call the three 'N's). As a foodie myself, I have a deep fascination for how our eating behaviours are controlled by our body - particularly by the brain and hormones, and how obesity can be prevented - for health and cosmetic reasons. Given that I had undergraduate research exposure in hypertension genetics, I was (and still am) particularly interested on how genes play direct roles in obesity - like influencing our fat accumulation, and indirect roles like appetite control and food preference. Hence, I established research on nutrigenetics, the study on how we respond to our food or diet based on our genetic makeup. One of the more recent pinnacles of this research was the work on how our eating behaviour is influenced by the variation in the dopamine receptor gene (DRD2), which received an award at a scientific conference at Seoul, South Korea (SICEM 2019).



Above: At the Seoul International Congress on Endocrinology and Metabolism (SICEM) in 2009, where I was presented with the Award for Best Oral Presentation.

In the meantime, my research passion in neurodegeneration (or brain-wasting diseases) has not faded since my PhD. I continued my research on the prion protein, particularly on the unorthodox role it has in neoplasm (or cancer). I also expanded my research interest into Parkinson's disease, a brain-wasting disease which is far more common than 'mad cow' disease. I was particularly interested in a family of neuronal proteins known as the Synucleins, which coincidentally has roles in different types of cancers.

Time flew by fast. After more than a decade in academia, I left UTAR in 2019 and made the personal choice to have a career break, before moving on to a new environment. During the break, I pursued my ambition of doing *runcations* (running vacations), where I travelled to every state in Malaysia and around Southeast Asia, and participated in 18 full marathons (42.195 km distance), 13 half marathons (21.1 km distance) and 19 other race distances.



Above left: Some of the races that I participated in from August-September 2019, across Malaysia and Southeast Asia.

Above right: The Balik Pulau Marathon on 20 Oct 2019 was where I achieved my sub-4 hour personal best time in a full marathon (42.195 km distance).

Although I found my career break to be highly-rewarding in training both my physical and mental resilience, I have no intention to do so again in the future. After a research stint at my previous collaborator's lab at the National University of Singapore, I decided to return back to Malaysia to restart my academic career ("Home is where the heart is"), and was very fortunate to be given the opportunity to join Sunway University. I am eager and enthusiastic to get some projects going on the environmental, psychological and genetic determinants of eating behaviour and obesity in this pandemic climate, and I look forward to establishing collaborations with my new colleagues from both my own and other cross-disciplines.

“
*I am passionate about ...
 nutrigenetics,
 neurodegeneration and
 neoplasm
 (which I call the three 'N's).*
 ”



How Well Do You Know Our Programmes

Bachelor of Science (Hons) Psychology

What is BSc (Hons) Psychology about?

Our BSc (Hons) Psychology programme will allow you to gain an in-depth understanding of how we learn, think, feel and adapt to our social environment. The programme covers both normal and abnormal behaviour, and deals with the biological, social and individual factors that affect human psychology. The programme also includes supervised fieldwork, during which you will have the opportunity to apply your newly acquired knowledge and understanding in a real-world setting.

Through the practical application of all you have learned, you will acquire the skills and attributes necessary to evaluate and understand the many different facets of human behaviour. You will also consider the complex ethical issues that arise throughout your studies, so that upon graduation, you will be able to use all you have learned for the betterment of human welfare.

Our programme allows graduates to be awarded certificates from:



Where Do Psychology Graduates Go?

A degree in Psychology is the gateway to a variety of exciting career prospects, from a forensic scientist to helping businesses understand their customers and even helping sports men and women to perform at their highest potential. A degree in psychology also opens up career prospects in advertising, public relations, administration, retail services, marketing, journalism, and even the legal profession.



Common Misconceptions About Studying Psychology



Psychology graduates are unemployable

Not so! You can carve out a career in a many fields graduating with a Psychology Degree - from research, marketing, human resource, public relations, probation officers in the judiciary, psychiatric technicians for hospitals, or even political strategists.



Psychology Isn't a Real Science

Psychology is relatively younger among the grand scheme of sciences, but it is a real science. Psychology research heavily relies on scientific methods to study human and even animal behavior, to ensure that variables are controlled and operationally defined.



Psychology Is Just Common Sense

When reading psychological research, we tend to have an "Of course!" type of response. But what seems like common sense isn't always the case. Psychology isn't just about knowing facts, but rather taking presumptions about human behavior and testing them scientifically to produce quality research.

Sunway Signs Collaborative Agreement with Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine



The two presidents – Dr Ungku Ahmad Ameen of MSGM, and Prof Sibrandes Poppema of Sunway University, showing the signed copies of the collaborative agreement. They're flanked by Prof Tan Maw Pin of Universiti Malaya, and Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam of School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University. Looking on at the back are Dato' Dr Asmayani Khalib, Deputy Director-General of Ministry of Health Malaysia and Prof Dr Elizabeth Lee, CEO of Sunway Education Group.

In early December 2021, Sunway University signed a collaborative agreement with the Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine (MSGM). This agreement was signed by Professor Sibrand Poppema, President of Sunway University and Dr Ungku Ahmad Ameen, President of MSGM, and supported by witnesses, Professor Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam, Dean of the School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University and Professor Tan Maw Pin of Universiti Malaya. This event was graced by Deputy Director General of Health, Dato' Dr Asmayani Khalib and Professor Elizabeth Lee, CEO of Sunway Education Group.

This collaborative agreement is a testament to Sunway University and MSGM's commitment to improve healthcare for the elderly. This collaboration has resulted in the Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for the Elderly (PGDPCE) programme offered by the Department of Medical Sciences at School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for Elderly (PGDPCE) is a one-year pioneer program for medical doctors in order to upskill them in providing care of older adults. Training of doctors to undertake the medical management of older adults who have multiple illnesses concurrently is crucial to help older adults maintain and lead an independently functional life for as long as possible. This group of trained doctors are much needed in Malaysia as our nation is ageing rapidly.

The need to have such training of primary care doctors in Malaysia was recognised more than 20 years ago. A lot can be done to manage older adults' medical problems to keep older adults as independently functional for as long as possible. For this, doctors well-trained to manage the increasing number of elderly people in the country are needed. The number of geriatricians in Malaysia is not sufficient to manage the rising number of older adults. As such, the training of doctors, particularly the front-liners working in primary care settings to address health issues of the elderly was mooted. This led to the collaboration between the Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine (MSGM) and the Department of Medical Sciences at School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University to develop the PGDPCE programme, which is offered by Sunway University.

The PGDPCE programme aims to provide graduates with advanced knowledge and skills in Geriatric Medicine to deal with the increase in global aging population as well as the increased complexity in the field of medicine towards developing medical practitioners who are competent and skilled with a caring and holistic approach in managing older patients. Graduates of the programme would contribute to the healthcare needs of older individuals as well as supporting the healthcare delivery system in providing better care for older individuals who have multiple medical illnesses. The programme had its inaugural cohort graduate at the end of 2020 and is fully accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) since 26 October 2021 (MQA/FA 10099). For a story on the first cohort of graduates, see: [Inaugural Cohort of Graduates for the Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for the Elderly | Sunway University](#)



President of Sunway University, Prof Sibrandes Poppema giving his speech during the event.

Professor Sibrandes Poppema, President of Sunway University, commented, “The Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for Elderly is, given the increasing number of elderlies, a very timely addition to the spectrum of healthcare in Malaysia. The choice to focus on upskilling medical practitioners through a largely online 1-year programme makes this a very effective option. I believe that the programme will serve as an example for many countries worldwide.”

Dr Ungku Ahmad Ameen, President of Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine was upbeat about this collaboration. He stated, "This collaborative agreement is a good platform to share knowledge on the complexities of dealing with the elderly in primary care settings. Thank you to the Department of Medical Sciences, School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University for creating this platform for the doctors who are interested with the care of the older persons." MSGM is a registered non-profit professional society of geriatricians, other doctors and health care professionals whose mission is to address the issue of the healthcare needs of older population in Malaysia. The Society, founded on 13 July 2012, provides continuing medical education to doctors, nurses and other allied healthcare professionals as well as to the public. It is also involved in policy-making on the needs and care of older adults in Malaysia. With regards to the PGDPCE programme, MSGM contributed heavily to the programme design, as well as the teaching and supervision of trainees during their clinical attachments at hospitals.



Members of the MSGM executive committee with Head of Medical Sciences, Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin and Dean of Medical and Life Sciences, Prof Dr Abhi Veerakumarasivam. (L-R: Dr Cheah Wee Kooi, Dr Ungku Ahmad Ameen, Dr Teh Hoon Lang, Prof Chia, Prof Tan Maw Pin, and Prof Abhi).

Professor Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin, Head of the Department of Medical Sciences, School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University remarked that this collaborative agreement is a very significant indicator of advancement for geriatric medicine in Malaysia. "It also illustrates the close and successful collaboration between the Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine (MSGM), a professional society and a university. It has been a long journey but we are now very happy to announce we have received full accreditation from the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). Equally, we proud and happy to announce that Sunway University is offering two scholarships to Malaysian doctors working with the Ministry of Health and a further two scholarships for international students!", she added.

We at the School of Medical and Life Sciences are very proud of this achievement and we wish this collaboration the best of success.

First Steps Programme: A Glimpse into the Sunway International Students' Experience

The First Steps Programme is a fun 5-day virtual programme for international students to build friendships, learn about Malaysian culture, and get useful tips on how to adjust academically before they even arrive at Malaysia!

It guides international students to take their first step into a rewarding academic journey, even if that journey involves online classes and strict lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Luckily, we were able to gain insights from international students Emily Islam, Yasasmie Liyanaarachchi, and Zaynab Aliraja who shared stories about their time at the First Steps programme and their experiences as an international Sunway student amidst a global pandemic.



Emily Islam

Emily Islam is a cheerful first year Bachelor's in Psychology student from Malawi. She was drawn to Sunway because of the welcoming atmosphere and looks forward to trying all the different dishes Malaysia has to offer!

Emily didn't know what to expect when she first joined Sunway but the First Steps programme helped her make friends and opened up exciting opportunities "My closest friends right now are some of the people I met from the First Steps programme. One of the coordinators even reached out to me and asked me to run for elections to be an International Student Relations director at the Student Council because of how I spoke at the programme. I got the job and now we have this connection that started from the very beginning."

She advises new international students to "Have a bit of home wherever you are and don't be afraid to come out of your comfort zone. You are in a different country so you will have to put yourself out there. You have to challenge your expectations and try new things."



Yasasmie Liyanaarachchi

Yasasmie Liyanaarachchi is an outgoing first year Bachelor's in Psychology student from Sri Lanka. She joined Sunway because of its well-structured

programs and immediately felt at home amidst supportive staff and a lively environment.

Her excitement to learn in Sunway was fostered by the First Steps programme which helped ease her anxieties and find people that she could reach out to "I highly recommend that any international student, especially those who haven't been to Malaysia, should join First Steps. It makes you feel so relaxed because you know certain things before you come and you have somebody to contact. The coordinators were really friendly and even after coming to Malaysia, they actually took us to Sunway pyramid and showed us around which was pretty nice."

When the campus reopens, she looks forward to meeting new people and Yum Cha!



Zaynab Aliraja

Zaynab Aliraja is an outgoing Masters in Life Sciences student from Mauritius. She joined Sunway in 2016 to study Bachelors in Medical Biotechnology and was compelled to stay because of the bustling environment and the close connections that she made.

She joined the First Steps programme out of curiosity and had an enjoyable time with newly made friends "I had so much fun the whole week. The thing that I miss about doing assignments on campus due to COVID-19 is meeting new juniors and talking to them. I was able to meet a lot of people in the First Steps programme and have a really great time."

She looks forward to window shopping and exploring different parts of Malaysia. Her advice for new international students is simply to "Enjoy every moment in Sunway!"

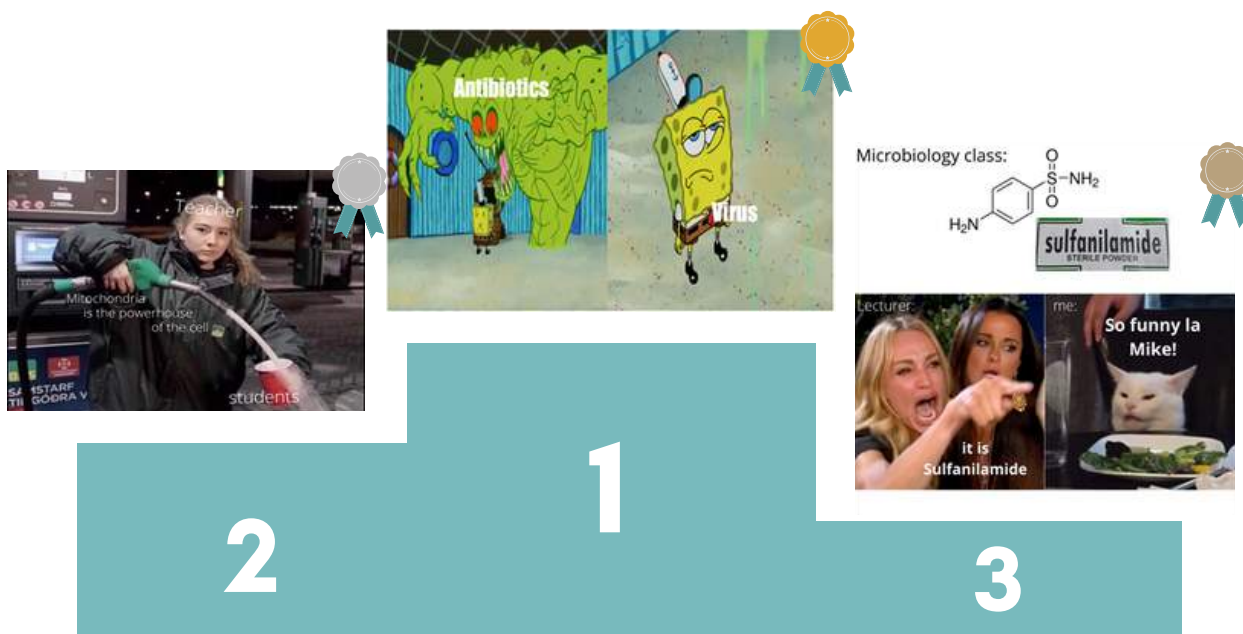
Sunway Biological Society

Meme Competition

The Sunway Biological Society (SBioS) hosted an online meme competition from the 27th of August til the 16th of September 2021 with the aim of instilling an interest in science among Sunway College and University students.

Participants in this competition could showcase their creativity and sense of humour by designing at least 3 memes revolving around the Sciences which were then voted on by the Department of Biological Sciences staff and students. The winner, first runner-up, and second runner-up were awarded an SBioS drawstring pouch and cash prizes of RM 50, RM 30, and RM 20 respectively.

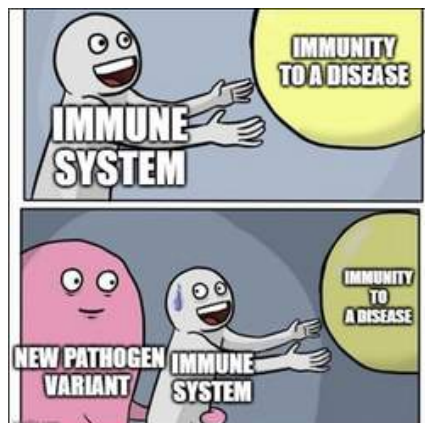
The Winning Memes



As all good memes are meant to be shared, the SBioS executive committee also selected 5 more memes that they enjoyed. The winning memes and SBioS's favorite picks were announced and advertised on the SBioS instagram page ([announcement links](#)).

The SBioS committee was delighted to receive positive feedback by the participants which marked the successful end of a fun and light-hearted competition!

Some of SBioS Executive Committee's Favorite Picks!! ❤️



7th Asian Cognitive Behavior Therapy Conference – 5-7 July 2021

The 7th Asian Cognitive Behavior Therapy Conference was hosted by Sunway University on 5th to 7th July 2021, particularly by Professor Dr Alvin Ng Lai Oon and his team from School of Medical and Life Sciences. This international conference was jointly organised with the Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology (MSCP) that formed the bulk of the organizing and scientific committee, and supported by the Asian Cognitive Behavioral Therapies Association (ACBTA), as well as the World Confederation of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies (WCCBT).



- MS Teams Live Event – Sunway University
- Organised by Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology (MSCP)
- 7,472 registered participants
- 80 countries
- Conference Attendance per day:
 - Day 1: 6,879
 - Day 2: 5,237
 - Day 3: 4,079
- 38 Invited Speakers
- 23 Oral Presentations
- 109 Poster Presentations



Main speakers (L-R): Prof Keith Dobson (University of Calgary), Dr Debbie Joffe Ellis (Columbia University), Dr Judith S. Beck (Beck Institute), Dr Allen R. Miller (Beck Institute), Prof Freedom Leung (Chinese University of Hong Kong) and Prof Lata K. McGinn (Yeshiva University)

The conference garnered 7,472 registered participants from 80 countries. It has participation from top international speakers on the topic of cognitive and behavioural therapies, namely the keynote speaker Professor Keith Dobson of University of Calgary, who is the President of the WCCBT; Professor Freedom Leung from Chinese University of Hong Kong, and a board member of the ACBTA; as well as Professor Lata McGinn, from Yeshiva University, who is also the Secretary of WCCBT. Big names from the world of CBT include Dr Debbie Joffe Ellis, who is the wife of the late Dr Albert Ellis, founder of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy; Dr Judith S. Beck, who is the daughter of the late Dr Aaron T. Beck, who is known as the Father of Cognitive Therapy; and Dr Steven Hayes, founder of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

The opening of the conference saw Sunway University President, Professor Sibrandes Poppema welcome the delegates and officiated the start of the proceedings. Also welcoming the delegates were President of the ACBTA, Professor Firdaus Mukhtar and the President of MSCP, Dr Lynne Yong Ee Lin.

The conference was moderated by Professor Ng throughout the three days, with technical support from his team comprising Dr Ooi Pei Boon, Dr Woo Pei Jun, Ms Elaine Yong and Mr Ch'ng Eng Zhi all from SMLS, and backed up by the ever-helpful Wong Jian Xiang of Sunway Education Group's IT Services.



Clockwise from top left: Prof Alvin Ng, Prof Firdaus Mukhtar of ACBTA, Prof Sibrandes Poppema of Sunway University and Dr Lynne Yong of MSCP.

The conference garnered many positive reviews, mainly regarding it being free-of-charge and having top international speakers, and the quality of presenters, as well as very relevant topics that the participants greatly benefited from. Overall, the organizing committee consider the conference was a huge success, with shared positive sentiments about harmonious teamwork and strong personal initiatives that complemented efforts in coordinating and executing the event. The team was very satisfied with the overall outcomes and is proud to be part of history, as the largest ever conference on CBT in Asia if not the world.

The organizing committee would like to thank Sunway University for providing the MS Teams platform for free, and to the sponsors – Naluri and MSCP - of the four conference awards: Best Oral Paper, Best Poster, Best Research and Young Professional Award.

The conference book can be accessed here:
Publications | MSCP



Sunway Psychology Forum

On 7th September, 2021 the Department of Psychology at Sunway University collaborated with Sunway Career Services to host their 5th annual Psychology Forum.

The forum provides a platform for students to learn from experts in different areas of Psychology about career pathways that can be explored within this field. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's forum was conducted online via zoom which garnered a large number of students from Psychology and Business schools.



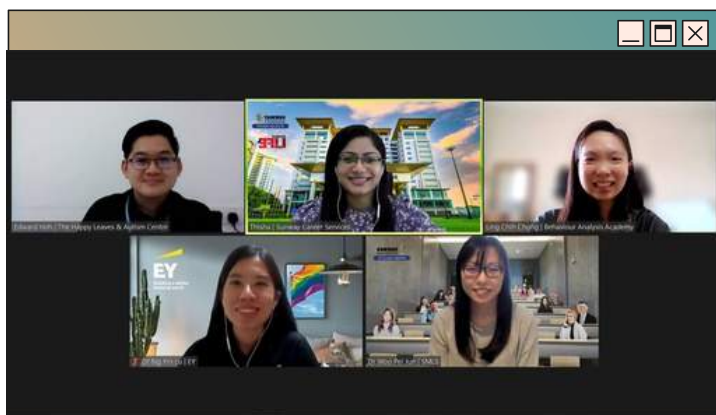
Senior Lecturer and Internship Coordinator at the Department of Psychology, Dr. Woo Pei Jun moderated the event with the assistance of Ms. Thisalini Valliatham at Student Life, Sunway Career Services. Dr. Woo kickstarted the event by introducing the guest speakers and inviting them to explain what they do in their respective fields.

Participants listened attentively as Mr. Edward Hoh - Clinical Psychologist at Happy Leaves Autism and Special Needs Centre, Ms. Chong Ling Chih - Clinical Director and Founder of Behavior Analysis Academy (BAA), and Dr. Ng Yin Lu - Manager of People Advisory Services at EY spoke about their tasks and responsibilities. The speakers also gave fun anecdotes about the not-so-glamorous parts of their job which gave participants a realistic view of their daily lives.

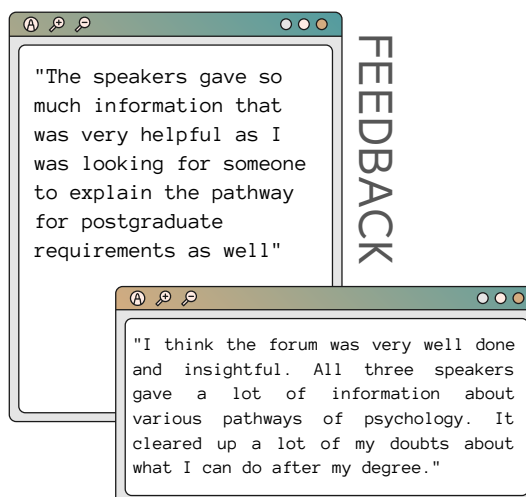
Experts Ms. Chong Ling Chih, Mr. Edward Hoh, and Dr. Ng Yin Lu share their experiences and advice at The Sunway Psychology Forum, 2021 organized by Sunway Career Services

To provide interested students a guide on how to follow their career paths, the speakers talked about their own academic and work experiences. They unanimously agreed that students need critical thinking skills, grit, open-mindedness, creativity, and a hunger for learning to be able to excel in any field.

The forum ended with a Q&A session and questions rolled in with such vigor that the speakers didn't have time to address them all. The speakers briefly answered a range of questions from Masters degree programs to tips on how to promote mental health in any work environment. Overall, the event was highly successful and students raved about the insight the forum provided them.

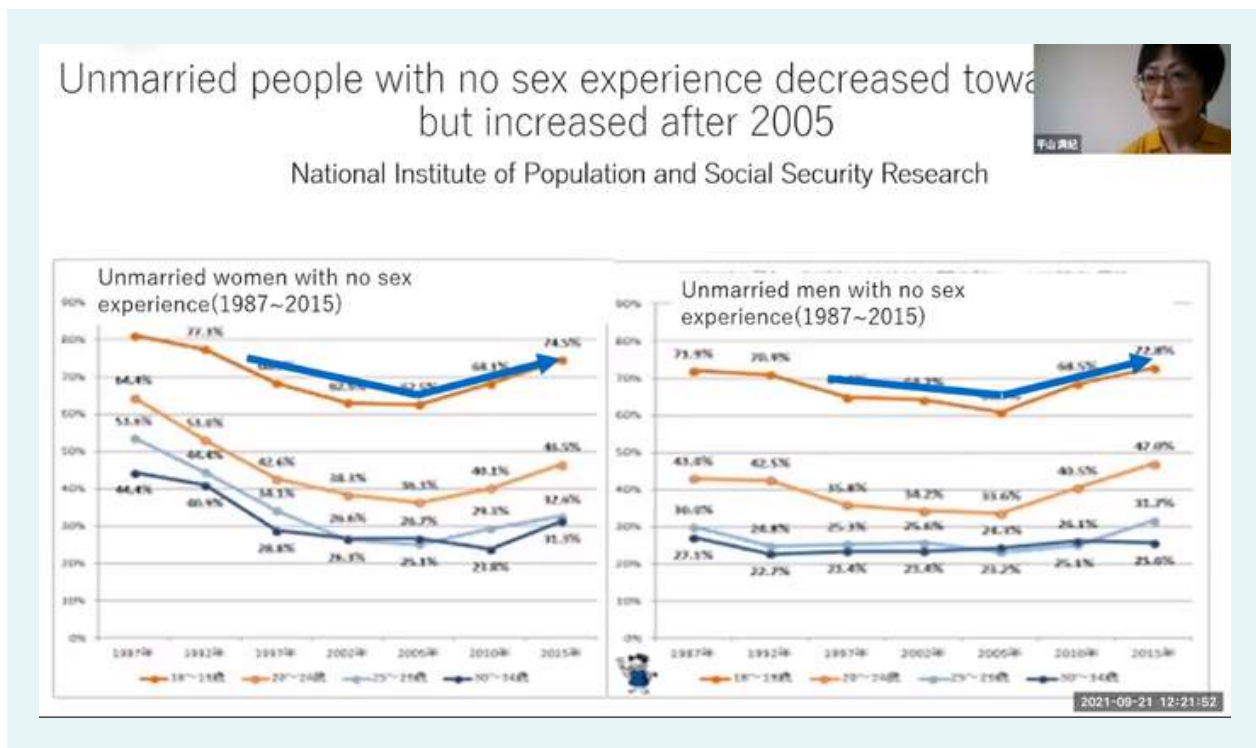


From clockwise: Mr. Edward Hoh, Ms. Thisalini Valliatham, Ms. Chong Ling Chih, Dr. Ng Yin Lu, and Dr. Woo Pei Jun at The Sunway Psychology Forum, 2021



FEEDBACK

Webinar: Sexual Relationships in the Modern Era



On 21 September, as part of a joint webinar event by the Department of Psychology, the School of Medical and Life Sciences, and the Sunway Psychology Club, Professor Maki Hirayama from the Meiji University, Japan, gave a talk on 'Sexual Relationships in the Modern Era'.

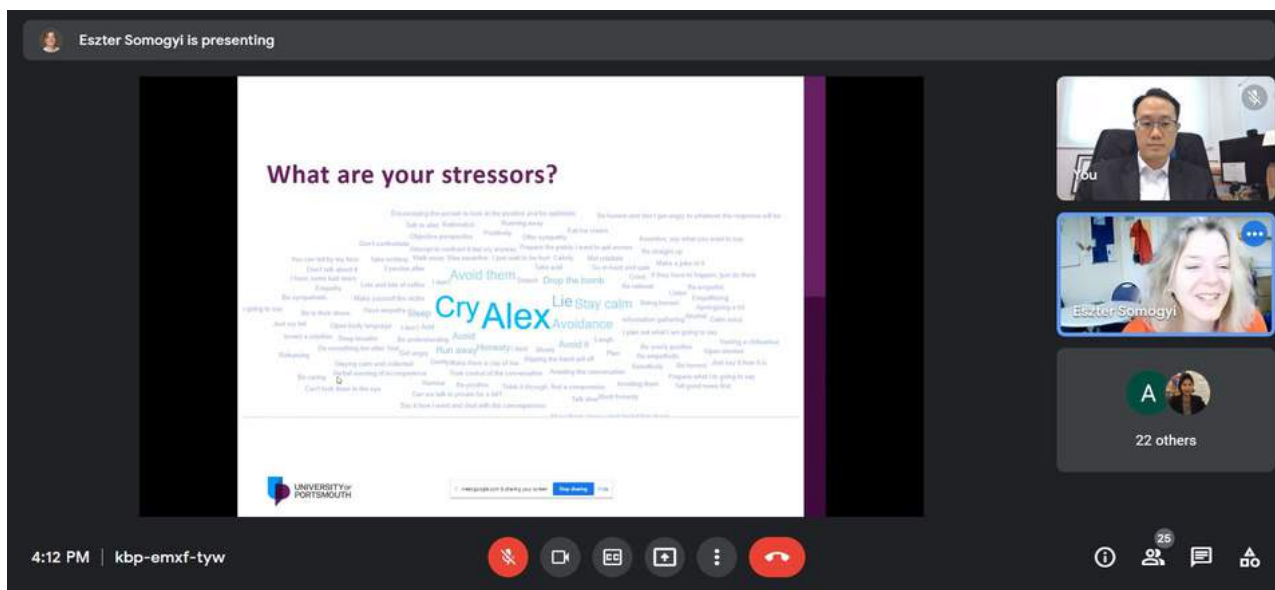
Professor Hirayama spoke primarily about the difficulties faced by many in the 21st century, especially among the Japanese. Taking everyone through slides upon slides of copious population statistics, Professor Maki demonstrated a downward trend in sexual interest in Japan over the past few decades, leading to lower reproductive rates. She further discussed possible factors that may have contributed to this, including the impact of pornography, new gender norms, and the COVID-19 pandemic on sexuality.

The Q&A was engaging and lively, with many interesting questions posed to Professor Maki from the audience, who had been stimulated to think more deeply about sexuality.



Professor Maki Hirayama is a sociologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Social Psychology, School of Arts and Letters, at the Meiji University in Tokyo, Japan.

Webinar: How Stress Affects the Body and What We Can Do About It



On 17 November, as part of a collaborative initiative between GradsMate Malaysia and the Department of Psychology to have international academics in psychology come speak to staff and students on their expertise, Dr Eszter Somogyi from the University of Portsmouth (UK) gave a talk on the effects of stress on the body and what we can do to manage it.

Dr Somogyi began her talk with an introduction on what stress is, and how it can be both useful and detrimental to our health. She proceeded to explain how psychological stress affects various physiological process in our body in ways that could bring dysfunction if allowed to persist for too long. Dr Somogyi then shared some basic strategies to manage stress, namely the cognitive behavioural therapeutic techniques that are usually employed by mental health professionals such as clinical psychologists, counsellors and psychiatrists. How we perceive the stressful situation and respond to it, she explains, determines our experience of stress. Helpful cognitive appraisals can be practiced in order to better manage stress in a way that facilitates progress in problem solving, rather than remaining helpless. Her engaging talk concluded with an equally engaging Q&A session.

Dr Eszter Somogyi is a lecturer in the Department of Psychology and Associate Head for Global Engagement and Partnerships at the University of Portsmouth, UK

WhatSUP with Psychology? Three Psychology Forums and Book Launches from February-March 2022



WhatSUP with Psychology '22 Ψ

REGISTRATION



Conversations about Emotions, Relationships, and Growing Up

In collaboration with the Department of Psychology for Psychology Month 2022, Sunway University Press (SUP) will be organising three virtual forums centred around the subthemes of emotions, relationships, and growing up. These sessions comprise a series of open discussions between panellists with the aim of promoting psychology to the general community and are targeted at the general public. Each forum will culminate with the introduction of a book published by SUP related to that subtheme.

Each session will be moderated by Prof Alvin Ng, and will feature distinguished panellists such as A/Prof Lin Mei Hua, Dr Grace Yap, and Dr Woo Pei Jun, along with external speakers including Dr Debbie Joffe Ellis (Columbia University), Prof Cecilia Essau (University of Roehampton), and Dr Eugene Tee (HELP University) among others.

10 FEBRUARY | The Science of Feelings

A panel discussing the technicalities – the hows and the whys – of emotions, along with the role and impact it has on the human condition.

Featuring *The Science of Feelings: What Psychological Research Tells Us About Our Emotions* by Dr Eugene Tee

23 FEBRUARY | Mending Hearts

An open discussion on the human experience of the trials and tribulations that come with a variety of relationships.

Featuring *Mending Hearts: Healing from Separation and Loss, a Collection of True Stories* Eds. Dr Grace Yap and Mengzhen Lim

03 MARCH | Lifespan Psychology

An exploration of the psychology and interactions of humans from birth through childhood to adulthood.

Featuring *Growing Up Human* by Sybella Ng and Ju Li Siew

A Warm Welcome:

Dr Ravinder Kaur Joins the Department of Biological Sciences



The Department of Biological Sciences is welcoming a new member, Dr Ravinder Kaur, who will be joining the ranks of its academic staff. Beginning in January 2022, as a lecturer Dr Kaur will be teaching modules in Biostatistics and Biodiversity.

In her academic journey prior to Sunway, Dr Kaur earned a bachelor's degree in Conservation Biology and a master's degree in Animal Behaviour at University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), after which she obtained her PhD at the University of Malaya (UM) in 2020.

Dr Kaur's research interests include ornithology (the scientific study of birds), ecology, biodiversity, wildfire conservation, and strategies for protecting endangered bird species, in particular species of hornbills. When asked what drives her work, Dr Kaur attributed it all to her enduring "love of birds". Her conservation activities include building artificial nest boxes (which can be made from various materials such as wood and plastic) for endangered hornbills.

A passionate conservationist, Dr Kaur is the founder of Explore Gaia Enterprise, a social enterprise dedicated to wildlife conservation in Malaysia, especially the conservation of hornbills. Through her work with Gaia, she seeks to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of wildlife in the region. In the future, Dr Kaur is looking to branch out Gaia's conservation scope to other animals as well.

For four years, Dr Kaur was part of the Hornbill Conservation team in the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS). In her other work, Dr Kaur is also an active member of the Helmeted Hornbill Working Group, a collaboration dedicated to saving the eponymous Helmeted Hornbill from the brink of extinction. In addition, she is a council member for MareCet, an NGO that runs research on marine mammals and works towards their conservation.



Above: The rare and elusive Helmeted hornbill (courtesy of SANJITPAAL SINGH/JITSPICS.COM©).

Dr Kaur's efforts have been widely recognised, getting her shortlisted for the "Entrepreneurs for Good" Social Enterprise Awards that were held by the British Council Malaysia. In 2020, she was presented with the Terrestrial Conservation Leadership Award from the Marsh Christian Trust for her significant contributions to hornbill research and her local-level conservation projects.



Left: Dr Kaur doing what she loves best -- looking for hornbills (courtesy of SANJITPAAL SINGH/JITSPICS.COM©).



Right: Dr Kaur and her collaborator Helson Hassan searching for hornbills during a river survey (courtesy of SANJITPAAL SINGH/JITSPICS.COM©).



Above: Dr Kaur giving a talk about her hornbill research and conservation (courtesy of SANJITPAAL SINGH/JITSPICS.COM©).

When asked how she was feeling upon arriving at the Department of Biological Sciences, she said, "I'm excited to work with the many researchers here, and am looking forward to the avenues and partnerships ahead!"

Welcome to the Sunway family, Dr. Ravinder Kaur!

Once a Sunwayian, Always A Sunwayian: Dr Alia Azalea Returns to the Department of Psychology



In November, the Department of Psychology warmly received a new senior lecturer, Dr Alia Azalea, into its academic staff. Dr Alia is a lecturer specialising in the area of Industrial/Organisational (I/O) Psychology. As an I/O psychologist, her research interests include job attitudes, counterproductive work behaviours (CWB), organisational justice, job design and crafting, as well as personality studies, in particular psychopathic personality.

Dr Alia had previously been part of the Department of Psychology from 2009 to 2013, before moving to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) as an assistant professor. The Department of Psychology is happy to have her back as part of the academic team. Welcome back to the SMLS family, Dr Alia!

Parent Participants Needed! **Researchers from Department of Psychology Developing An App for Parents to Track Child's Milestones**



Developmental Screening App

We are looking for parents to try out a new mobile app!

Join us if:

- You are a Malaysian
- You are a Malay/Indian/Orang Asli (Indigenous People)
- You have a baby of 0- to 23-month-old
- You can understand basic English
- You want to monitor your baby's development

All you need to do is

1. Download an app,
2. Use it for a week,
3. Answer some simple questions!

Participants will get RM20 and a set of baby garment (self-collect) as token of appreciation.

To join, click the link below or scan the QR code:
<https://forms.gle/277CU9VNazvmAaWi9>

In collaboration with:



UTS



Thank you for reading!

Stay tuned for our next issue!

*where we cover exciting new achievements in **2022** and
some captivating unreleased stories from **2021!***



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