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BLAZE

THE SUNWAY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

KDN Permit No: PP. 14672/10/2012 (030937)



Maintaining linguistic
diversity in
bilingual Malaysia

Collaborative
R & D inked

Students rev it up with
their design

CONTENTS

Blaze is published quarterly. The name was selected as it signifies Sunway University achievements in recent years. Sunway University, is a “trailblazer” in the area of excellence in education pursued with a flaming passion in the hearts of its staff and students.

Vol 8 / Issue 25 / June 2013

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SUNWAY UNIVERSITY



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Team Possibiliser, From left to right, Yeoh Yun Wei, Loo Hsiu Luan and Yoong Chern Nyap during the competition

Best presenter

The Possibiliser team from Sunway University became one of the five finalist teams in the Frost & Sullivan Public Sector Case Challenge Malaysia 2013. Although the team did not win the First or Second placing, Sunway University team member Yeoh Yun Wei was awarded a Best Presenter award in the competition.

Yeoh with his certificate

Yeoh Yun Wei was speechless for a moment, when his name was announced as the Best Presenter during the recent Frost & Sullivan Public Sector Case Challenge Malaysia 2013.

“I was pleasantly surprised and thrilled as I did not expect to get this award,” he said. “Some of the judges asked very challenging questions. We had to defend our answers with facts. It was not as easy as I thought, but overall, it was a great experience.”

He was one among three Best Presenters given this recognition in the competition, which comes along with it a job placement at Frost & Sullivan’s Global Innovation Centre in Iskandar, while all five finalist teams were offered internship opportunities at Frost & Sullivan. The Sunway University team comprised three Bachelor of Science (Hons) Accounting & Finance students.

The challenge was organised by Frost & Sullivan together with Strategic Partners Inovasi Malaysia (AIM) and Mahindra

Satyam Malaysia, an effort to discover and nurture the next generation of leaders in developing and presenting ideas on how a government can foster innovation to promote growth and development.

The challenge attracted numerous teams from various public and private universities. All five teams presented their case to a panel of judges who included CEOs and senior management of companies from various industries, as part of the challenge. blaze



Maintaining linguistic diversity in bilingual Malaysia

Faculty of Arts Dean, Associate Professor Dr Eileen Lee talks about her research, her love for dogs and Shakespeare, and her future hopes for the Faculty of Arts.

The Hainanese dialect spoken by some 140,000 Hainanese in the country is in danger of becoming extinct, according to a research conducted by Associate Professor Dr Eileen Lee, Dean of the Faculty of Arts (FOA).

According to Dr Lee, the Hainanese community is a small minority of 2.6 per cent of the 5.36 million Chinese population in Malaysia in comparison to other Chinese dialect groups such as the Hokkien (37.7 percent) and the Cantonese (19.9 percent). Unlike Cantonese and Hokkien which became the lingua franca of the Chinese communities in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Malacca respectively, Hainanese is not spoken as a major Chinese dialect although there may be a majority of Hainanese living in the area. Dr Lee emphasized that “the presence and maintenance of mother tongues is a vital aspect of linguistic diversity in bilingual societies like Malaysia.”

“Languages that have no written orthography face a higher chance of being endangered,” she said. Thus, Hainanese, being a spoken language, can undergo language loss or extinction when members of the community do not continue to speak the dialect. The hypothesis Dr Lee adopted throughout her Hainanese project is “the Hainanese Chicken Rice will survive but not the language.” Another contributing factor to the language shift/loss phenomenon is exogamy as a large number of Hainanese marry non-Hainanese therefore the ‘language’ is not passed on in the family.

“Likewise, with the Malacca Portuguese Eurasian community, Papia Kristang is no longer being transmitted as a mother tongue as English is often the main language of communication in the home and friendship domains.” With Hainanese, an added threat comes from Mandarin being a strong unifying language amongst the Chinese. Dr Lee is not a Hainanese but in her interactions with the community, she noticed and admires the strong sense of bonding or ‘suukee nang’ amongst the Hainanese people. Accordingly, she is confident that “if the suukee nang feeling is still very strong amongst the younger generation, we may see efforts to revitalize the language, as initiated by the Hainanese youth of the Malacca Hainanese Association.” Dr Lee, who is a sociolinguist, will be presenting her paper entitled “Language maintenance and cultural viability in the Hainanese community” at the 6th International Conference on Languages and Linguistics in Athens, in July.

Countering the Decline of Languages

Dr Lee’s PhD was on the language shift of Papia Kristang, the Malacca Portuguese creole spoken by the Kristang community at the Portuguese Settlement, Malacca. Elaborating on the maintenance of minority languages, Dr Lee shared that “the most natural way is intergenerational transmission of the language whereby the language is spoken across the generations in the family. Another means include revitalisation of the language by the communities.” Local revitalisation efforts include the Bidayuh and Iban community websites, books written in Bidayuh and Iban and, Bidayuh and Iban classes for the children. In the UK, Welsh, Irish and Scots Gaelic are being revitalised in schools while in the US, efforts have long been underway to revitalize the use of the Native American languages among the younger Native Americans.

Faculty of Arts: Possible Future Directions

The Dean also shared her thoughts on the future directions of the Faculty of Arts. In 2010 when she first joined as Head of School, her main tasks were to establish the School of Creative Arts and Communication with the existing departments, the Department of Art & Design (DAD) and Department of Performance & Media (DPM) and to set up a third department, the Department of Communication to offer the BA Hons Communication degree. By August 2011, the Communication degree successfully recruited its first cohort of 13 students; to date, the Department has over 100 students. Plans are underway for an MA in Communication as a pathway for the first cohort who will be graduating in October 2014.

Looking forward, Dr Lee emphasised that the Faculty of Arts should be in the direction of Social Sciences. In her opinion, “the DAD and DPM should be consolidated to form the Department of Creative Arts to offer degrees in film studies, music, fashion design, graphics, visual communication, interior architecture design and the like...”

For the Department of Communication and Liberal Arts (DCLA), Dr Lee pointed out that “Sunway University can be the first private university to offer a BA in Liberal Arts with majors and minors in Communications, Political Science, Sociology, Gender Studies, Social Psychology, Philosophy...” Dr Lee observes that quite a portion of the educated Malaysian society has reached ‘self-actualisation’, the level

of affluence where people have time and the means to appreciate the finer things in life. In view of this, parents may be more open to their children reading for a degree in Liberal Arts which exposes students to self-discovery and critical thinking via philosophy. “Such education will not only complement our very technical and knowledge-based education in schools but would provide a good challenge for our university educators teaching Generation Y,” she elaborated.

Not forgetting the Centre for English Language Studies (CELS), Dr Lee said that CELS can be expanded into the Department of Linguistics, to spearhead degrees in Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Applied Linguistics and Forensic Linguistics or expanded into a Faculty of Education offering degrees in education. If the latter takes place, all the linguistics sub-branches can be parked under Liberal Arts in DCLA. “Last but not least, university academics should be research active, thus I would encourage FOA staff to find opportunities to engage in collaborative research with the Jeffrey Cheah Institute of Southeast Asian Studies when it is established in the future,” Dr Lee stressed. blaze

Dogs can't contain their love when they see you...



“Chace, my two-year-old white Schnauzer sits next to the fridge for 10 hours daily until I return from work then he gets to be with me on the sofa to watch TV....”

Timeless willpower!



“As for eloquence in discussing issues in life, Shakespeare rules!”



Collaborative R & D inked

More research collaboration between Sunway University and its industry partners are being firmed up as the university is aggressively looking at boosting its research capabilities.

According to its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Graeme Wilkinson, for any research and development activities to be meaningful, it must match industrial expectations, besides producing graduates who meet the needs of industries.

Recently, Sunway University inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sunway Shared Services Centre (IT SSC) to collaborate on Information Communication Technology (ICT) related research and development activities.

“This partnership,” he emphasised, “will enable students and researchers from Sunway

University to assist the Sunway IT Shared Services Centre in carrying out research and development on specific technical difficulties and see the implementation of Knowledge Management strategies using latest internet technologies such as Web 2.0 (or Web 3.0 in the future) for better knowledge sharing facilities and foster improved collaborative communications.”

The collaboration will be in the form of knowledge and skills through three vertical segments; applied software and technology research and development, social network knowledge using Web 2.0 technology, and talent development and recruitment.

Although this is an achievement for the Centre of Innovation and Industry Linkages of Sunway University, Professor Graeme assures that it will not stop here. “We will

be looking for other collaborations that will also benefit our students,” he promises. “This serves as a platform to expose students and researchers to real-world problems. They will put their knowledge and skills into practice by formulating solutions towards technical difficulties through research and provide opportunities for researchers to understand and learn the needs of actual organisations.”

ICT related collaboration works such as software developments and knowledge sharing and reuse, using social media platforms and other forms of academic-industry collaborating activities will provide stronger ties between Sunway University and Sunway IT Shared Services Centre. Such collaborations will spur quality innovative ideas, better product development and systematic talent nurturing processes. blaze



South Australia study trip

Diploma in Culinary Arts students from Sunway University gained valuable insights from their recent study trip to Adelaide, South Australia, where they spent 6 days visiting Le Cordon Bleu (Regency Campus) and a number of agro-tourism destinations such as the Barossa Valley, Adelaide Central Market, Maggie Beer's Farm Shop and the Beerenberg Strawberry Farm. Blaze spoke to three of them...

Adelaide left a deep impression on Joanna Foong, who vividly described the city as 'the perfect place for all sorts of holiday activities, regardless big or small'. She shared:

"I thought Adelaide was one of a kind, filled with spacious boulevards and exciting inner city districts, classy architecture and lush gardens. My college mates and I had a taste of the lively energy whirring beneath the city's sophisticated exterior along Rundle Street and Gouger Street's widespread dining strip. We also soaked up the sights, smells and sounds of Adelaide Central Market. There was a huge range of fresh food all under one roof – fruits and vegetables, meat and poultry, seafood, gourmet cheeses, bakery products, sweets, nuts and health food. In fact, I had a peep at some ingredients which I have never seen before, such as quinces, purple carrots, white zucchinis and verjuices."

Together with their lecturers, they also had the opportunity to visit the famous Barossa Valley wine-growing region and Australia's oldest surviving German settlement in the Adelaide Hills.

Fellow coursemate, Anthony Liew noticed how different the culture in Adelaide is, compared to Malaysia, while Lee Kai Sean appreciated the great bonding experience between students and lecturers. "This trip benefited me a lot," said Anthony. "I was able to appreciate the courses available at Le Cordon Bleu, Adelaide, and the difference in terms of taste in cheeses made on a small scale and mass production."

The students also visited the Barossa farmer's market, which was packed with fresh produce from the Barossa farmers themselves. Kai Sean related his experience, "One of the stall holders assured that the goods sold at her stall were handpicked merely hours ago from their farms. Produce and ingredients don't get any fresher than that!"

Kai Sean, who is planning to continue with the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Culinary Management validated by Le Cordon Bleu at Sunway University, said he particularly enjoyed both the Barossa Farmer's Market and Glenelg Beach, calling the trip an 'effective educational travelling experience, as well as an enjoyable one.'

When asked about her opinion about the trip as a whole, Joanna said it was truly an eye-opener. "I managed to experience a different culture through new eyes. I discovered that Australia has diverse cuisines, a blend of European cooking traditions with Asian flavours and products. Not to mention, coffee drinking in Australia has become an essential part of their lifestyle," she observed.

The trip motivated the students to pursue the B.Sc (Hons) Culinary Management. Anthony said, "I believe that to reach the top, both technical and management skills must pair together. The new B.Sc (Hons) Culinary Management does exactly that!". blaze

"Redesigning Relationships
and Communities
for a Sustainable
Future"
AWARDING CEREMONY



Professor Phang Siew Nooi (left) and Associate Professor Tan Teck Hong (right) receiving their Best Paper Award from Dr Ruthaychonnee Sittichai (centre)

Sunway University's Professor Phang Siew Nooi and Associate Professor Dr Tan Teck Hong recently won the Best Paper Award during the inaugural International Conference on Innovation & Sustainability (ICOIS) held in Bandar Sunway recently.

To Professor Phang, a Senior Research Advisor with the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, it is a given fact that research and publications are very much a part of the life of an academic. "There should not even be a second thought on whether to carry out one's research. If you want to make it as an academic, research and publications should very much be a part and parcel of your life. It is important for Sunway University as an institution to move towards that direction. Both staff and the students should develop a research culture in line with the University's plans to build its reputation as a centre of excellence."

It is through academic research that the academician can build his or her own niche in an area of expertise in the quest for recognition," she said. "Many of the major

universities around the world are built on their niche research capabilities. Only then, will they be able to attract good students. It is all part of an ecosystem which has to be sustainable. Quality research earns recognition in the academic world, good lecturers attract good students, and the university's image is being enhanced and this is enough to attract the good researchers. In fact, a quality research does not end with just a paper. There will always be spin-offs."

Research work will also help the university students to work independently. "We do not want students who treat their university lecturers as teachers, like in schools," added Professor Phang. "University students should read more journals instead of lifestyle magazines. They must be able to defend their own research work, and challenge any piece of work by others, and in the process of conducting their own research work, avoid plagiarism."

Phang was commenting on how academics can distinguish themselves from others. "Teaching is not what one does by

regurgitating someone else's work, but being able to talk about one's own research, with authority," she added. "The academic should be able to contribute to the body of knowledge."

Dr Tan concurred: "Doing research is not a touch-and-go decision. It is not how one wakes up in the morning and starts asking, 'What's it that I should research on?' Research is a lifelong process. Your research paper has to reflect years of research work. I have always emphasized that in major universities around the world, academicians have built a certain reputation in their specific area of expertise."

On what motivates him in his research work, Dr Tan said it is a deep interest in a particular topic. "Research is not just another piece of assignment, but there needs to be a deep passion to drive it," he explained. "Unfortunately, the education system in the country has stifled the students' ability to ask relevant questions. It is time to change the culture. In the quest for excellence, students must be able to ask

On building a research niche

The role of academics goes beyond just passing on knowledge one has accumulated over the years. The blaze team spoke to two experts in their own fields at Sunway University to find out their views about their research work....

questions, and challenge what is being taught in class and if there are no satisfactory answers, this is where a new area of research can be initiated.”

Dr Tan said that his contribution towards the paper he co-authored with Professor Phang is based on their many years of research work. “It certainly did not happen overnight,” he quipped. “Our focus was very much at looking at how we could make an impact on society,” he said. “Our findings, if taken seriously, would allow new policies to be designed in order to raise the standard of living in new villages.”

Winning Paper

Dr Tan’s research specialises in Housing Studies and Sustainability in the Built Environment, while Professor Phang is an expert on Local Government and Federal/State Relations. Combining both their expertise, the two Sunway University academics wrote the paper, “Re-positioning urban-based new villages in Malaysia towards sustainable living and a better quality of life”.

The study delves into the history and development of the New Villages (NV) in Malaysia, which were set up in the early 1950s to curb the progress of the Communist Movement in the then Malaya. While their counterparts in semi urban and urban peripheries thrived and became robust, their counterparts in rural areas languished due to the neglect by the Federal Government. “We picked one such New Village for our case study; then researched, explored and examined those issues that were challenging NVs in Malaysia and which may alter their fate in the future,” said Professor Phang. “NVs in Malaysia today are at a cross-road between sustainable growth and fossilisation.”

According to the abstract, the paper “described the living condition and housing environment of the NVs and narrated the political affinity of the NV community based on their voting patterns in the past general elections.”

“Any re-development plans for the NVs should therefore be viewed as a part of the mainstream of national development which

has sustainable living and a better quality of life as one of the objectives,” she said.

The two-day inaugural international conference was attended by 120 participants including corporate captains, diplomats, policymakers, industry players, and educationists, to discuss the new connection between governments, businesses and communities. It was jointly organised by Sunway University, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and Prince Songkla University Pattani Campus, Thailand.

The conference, themed, “Redesigning Relationships for Government, Business and Community”, also featured 75 paper presenters from various universities around the world: Istanbul University, Yanbu University College, Saudi Arabia; Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Corcordia University, Canada and Institute for Strategic Innovation and Services, ESSES Business School, France; as well as Asian universities, which include Sunway University, UUM and Prince of Songkla University. blaze

SONY

Sony (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd

Trailblazing success across
20 years

Although he had chosen accounting as his major, Sunway University alumnus, Cheong Kim Meng says he is slowly moving away from Finance, which after 20 over years, is beginning to lose its glitter to him.

However, the choice he made to pursue his 2+1 twinning programme at the then Sunway College back in the 80s, and the subsequent career path he chose was a right decision. "I never regret anything that I do," he quips. "I had a wonderful time at Sunway and at Curtin, made good friends with whom I still stay connected, and embarked on a fulfilling career that led to where I am now. My studies took me to Australia, so there is no regret with that and my career has also taken me to numerous countries."

Having experienced the different cultures and people, Kim Meng is now on his way to look beyond the horizon, after having built a career in his accounting profession. "Although I am an accountant by profession, but anyone can go into other areas and be good at it, as long as there's passion for the work that you do," he said.

Currently, he is the Division Head of the Corporate Planning Division at Sony (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, where, as an advisor to the Managing Director, most of his time now is spent on communicating new ideas and methodology to the staff, and trying to steer the company away from its comfort zone. He has built his career over 20 years, starting as a Management Trainee with Public Bank in 1991, before eventually being promoted as department head. He then left the banking industry in 1996 to join Philips Malaysia as the Financial Controller of Philips projects. In 2004, he was transferred to take on the position of Financial Controller of Semiconductors Business at Philips Malaysia.

Later, he was seconded to Philips Taiwan for one year as the Business Line Controller for the Semiconductor Business. This one-year stint in Taiwan helped to enlarge his vision. When he returned, he continued to serve as the Financial Controller in the Medical Business of Philips Malaysia before leaving to join Sony Malaysia in 2008, first as its Division Head for Planning & Control before being promoted to his current position in 2011.

Despite his hectic schedule, when he returned to Sunway University recently, he volunteered to serve in the Sunway Mentoring Programme.

"Between work and study, I cannot really make a comparison," he says. "Both have their own uniqueness, pains and successes. Of course while studying, I had a more carefree life, the focus was just to get myself over to Australia and complete my degree. We lived day by day, going to lectures, skipping lectures and enjoying the time in between lectures over at the mamak stall across the road."

Working life is a different setting altogether. "Even in my own working life, the experiences I had in my early years and now are totally different. In the first few years, it was mainly to survive, to do well in the jobs that I handled. The focus was to get promoted or be given bigger responsibilities. Now I am less focused on the job and more focused on developing my staff."

This is why he is returning to Sunway as a mentor. Coming back to Sunway brings memories of his own college days. "I was in the first batch of students with Sunway College (back then) doing the 2+1 twinning degree programme with Curtin. Although the campus was much smaller with fewer students, the rapport with the lecturers was always very close," he says. "We were not only close to our course mates, but also with the students from other partner universities such as Western Michigan University, Leicester University and then later University of Western Australia. The people that I met were the main reason why I had a great experience studying at Sunway."

After spending two years at Sunway, Kim Meng left for Australia to complete his final year and graduated with a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) from Curtin University of Technology in 1990. He is also a member of the CPA of Australia. blaze

Boxes of knowledge

The initiative is simple, but the idea is noble.

Indeed, as Senior Executive Director of Sunway University and Sunway Education Group, Elizabeth Lee describes it, the Dropbox project is 'a very clever one.'

There are always second-hand books around. These books would have otherwise been sent to the recycling centres. Instead, a conduit has to be built so that these books can be delivered to underprivileged children in high need schools, where Teach for Malaysia is involved.

The concept, which gave rise to its name, is basically a book donation drop box placed in selected schools and universities in Malaysia.

The project, which was mooted by the five students from the Accounting and Commerce Society of Sunway University, was picked as one of the top 10 projects by IMalaysia For Youth (IM4U) in line with its My Uni Rocks programme. The Sunway students were awarded RM10,000 to implement the project. With "Dropbox" students would be able to donate their books, whether old or new to the project. The donated books would then be channelled to Teach For Malaysia to improve the literacy rate amongst students in underperforming schools.

"I am pleased that the team that created Dropbox has Teach For Malaysia in mind, this shows just how passionate the students are with education. We should, in fact, be generous in spreading knowledge. We should not deprive the under privileged from getting some education. A literate and learned society is the most valuable asset a country can have" said Lee.

Sam Jia Pei, the project team leader, President of the Accounting and Commerce Society and a B.Sc (Hons) Accounting & Finance student said "To me, it was just a simple idea to solve a problem we had in mind; education inequality. Now that Dropbox has been launched, we hope that this project will be sustainable and is able to make a difference in education inequality in Malaysia. We look forward to gaining support from all students, no matter where they are, in joining our action to make a positive impact towards the society."

Encik Azlan Rudy Malik, Director of Corporate Services, IMalaysia for Youth was present during the launch.

Dropbox will be available in schools in Petaling Jaya and Subang Jaya areas in the next few months. blaze







The attractive exhibition booth design

Students rev it up with their design

Five Department of Art and Design (DAD) students of Sunway University emerged First Runner-Up in a recent nation-wide competition which helped to boost their self-confidence. Blaze has the story...

It wasn't the money but the thrill of participating in the 'Veloster Rev-It-Up Inter-College Challenge' that motivated Sunway University students.

They had to exercise their creativity in designing an exhibition booth for the new Hyundai Veloster, within three days with a budget of RM 10,000. The transparent tent display was exhibited for a week at the foyer of the Sunway University campus in conjunction with the launch of the Hyundai Veloster nationwide.

The team comprising Yvonne Tan Xue Wen, Puvishanan Pushparaja, Shirin Goh Sue Ying (from the Diploma in Graphic and Multimedia Design) and Andy Lau King Ang

and Lee Yang (from the Diploma in Interior Design), won a cash prize of RM30,000 for their efforts. RM20,000 went to the university and RM10,000 was for the team.

A lot of brainstorming was done before the students decided they would bend a long piece of paper into different shapes to see which would best bring their idea to life. Yvonne Tan Xue Wen, team leader said, "Thereafter, we had to think what colours would best complement the car and what designs should be printed on the 'road'. We combined our strengths, and came out with the concept, 'Flipped'," Yvonne added, describing her experience as a 'roller coaster ride'.



Mr Kim Hoo-Keun (right), Head of Asia & Pacific Regional Headquarters, Hyundai with Lau King Ang (left)

"There were times when everything was fun, filled with exciting moments, and we learnt so many new things," she said. "However, as this was the first competition we had participated in, being inexperienced, we found ourselves in many unfamiliar territories, and we had to handle a tough situation. The knowledge we learnt from our university programme has indeed assisted us throughout the competition" added Yvonne.

Their lecturer and mentor, Wincen Foong Hock Kuen guided and motivated the participants throughout the competition. The winners were chosen based on the number of votes on Hyundai Malaysia's Facebook page and a panel of judges. blaze

Blazing talent

Hailing from Subang Jaya, 22-year-old Emmanuel Yong says, if not for the Community Scholarship, he would not have been able to complete his studies.

“I come from a single parent family, and there was no way my mother, who is a housewife, could continue to support me in my Diploma programme,” he says. “If not for the Jeffrey Cheah Community Scholarship, I would have been stranded.”

Currently employed as Technical Engineer at RefineNetworks, which includes implementing solutions from Microsoft and Citrix, Emmanuel says it was Corrine Jacqueline Pereira, an administrative staff at the former Sunway University School of Computer Technology, who urged him to apply for the Jeffrey Cheah Community Scholarship. “She came to know about my financial and family situation, when I was contemplating to drop out of my Diploma programme,” he says. “If not for her encouragement, I would not have been able to complete my education to the full degree level!” Emmanuel graduated with a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Information System in August 2012.

As for the Community Scholarship, Emmanuel has this to say to encourage others to take the courage to apply: “I must say it is a premium scholarship, which provides almost everything that is needed throughout the course of study. My mother was ecstatic when she knew that I had been offered the scholarship. Now, I am excited to be an alumnus of Sunway University!”. blaze

Emmanuel (left) with Elizabeth Lee, on being presented the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Community Scholarship for the BSc (Hons) Information Systems programme in 2010

“I chose to do the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Information System because it has a balance between information technology (IT) and other supporting activities such as knowledge management and business information system. Overall, it provides a comprehensive overview of IT and its roles.”

- Emmanuel Yong

Tutoring refugee kids

Steven Chang Kah Chun is a second year Bachelor of Science (Honours) Accounting and Finance student at Sunway University.

Today, the President of the Sunway Volunteer Society has a totally different perspective of life. He understands that although his academic achievements are important, the development of soft skills is equally relevant, when he enters into the workforce next year.

“I have learnt that life’s not always about how much you learn or earn, but how much you can give and share what you have with others,” he said.

After two years of giving tuition classes every Friday to a group of Myanmar refugee children at a church in Petaling Jaya, he has learnt about Geography, English, Math and Art. There was initially a communication gap between the children and the student volunteers, but perseverance helped them to build bridges.

Like most of the other members of Sunway Volunteer Society, Chang did not have experience in teaching. As time passed, the children had brushed up their language skills, while the student volunteers themselves also demonstrated great improvement in their

teaching ability. This helped in some way for the weekly tuition classes to be effective, and soon, the numbers grew to 60 children, aged between 4 and 16.

There are currently 25 volunteers, who prepare their own lessons and plan everything on a weekly basis. “It requires a lot of time and energy but we are committed to making this activity a success,” added Chang.

But Chang, who is did his internship at KPMG is confident that he and his team of volunteer students will be able to benefit from their time invested into the refugee children.

“The greatest lesson I learnt from this project is that sacrifice needs to be made for a change.”
– Steven Chang

Although he knows that their efforts may not be able to bring a lot of changes to the kids, Chang hopes that this little act of kindness could make a difference in the lives of the young ones. “Not everyone can contribute their precious time but as this project begins to receive attention from other students, more volunteers are willing to chip in their efforts, too,” he said.

Sacrifice

What it takes to be involved in this kind of work is some sacrifice on the part of the volunteers. “The greatest lesson I learnt from this project is that sacrifice needs to be made for a change,” he shared his views. “Every Friday morning when I wake up, I ask myself, why am I doing all this? Waking up early and preparing notes when I have no classes on Friday. It’s tiring. But all these questions never come across my mind when I am at the tuition centre with my team.” He added: “One of the best memories I have is when the kids showed their appreciation by shaking our hands and thanking us for teaching them, leaving many of our eyes welled up with tears. These are kids who do

not have a proper home and they are unable to attend school. It reminds us to be grateful for what we have. I believe that education is one of the things that impact upon a person the most, we hope that the passion we show in teaching and helping the children may benefit them for the rest of their lives.” blaze





Loves the challenge

Hailing from Indonesia, Adrian Limanto completed his degree in Multimedia Systems three years ago from Sunway University. “Thereafter, I continued my studies and enrolled in Master of Science (Computer Science) offered by Sunway University and validated by Lancaster University. While doing my Masters programme, I worked as research assistant and teaching assistant,” he said. “The experience was amazing! I learnt how to apply and share with my students what I had learnt during my university days. At the moment, I have completed my thesis. I am now working in an IT company in Malaysia as a software developer. The knowledge I gathered during my study is essential to support my career.”

Limanto said he appreciated his alma mater, Sunway University, for providing him the best education and preparing him for the challenges of the working world.

“I am ready for more!” he quipped.

Realised dreams

Wo Su Woan has always been passionate about research especially in the area of psycho-social aspects of children with special needs.

“Before my last semester in my psychology degree at Sunway University, my lecturer, Ms Woo Pei Jun hired me for six months as a research assistant for an infant study project at Sunway’s own Department of Psychology. I was helping in recruitment, conducting experiments, doing data entry and performing literature searches. I also built a mobile infant lab with Ms Woo in Ipoh,” Wo said.

About the same time, Wo met Associate Professor Wong Chee Piau in Monash University and Dr Pauline Lai in University of Malaya (UM). They were looking for a PhD student to work on Health related Quality of Life in children with epilepsy.

“After my contract with Sunway University ended, I did not look for a new job. I was concentrating on my research proposal” she said. “However, things did not happen as planned.

A few months later, I applied for the position of class teacher in a learning centre for children with special needs. I did not give up on pursuing my PhD. While working as a full time teacher, I continued to improve my research proposal.”

In November 2011, Wo received a phone call from Dr Lai, “We can start our research with the UM research fund,” Dr Lai said over the phone.

Wo quit her job in February 2012 and started data collection at several government hospitals and a local private hospital. “Finally in September 2012, UM offered me a scholarship where I then registered as a PhD student,” she said. “It actually took me two years to prepare my PhD research. Sometimes I felt like giving up because everything was so uncertain. Fortunately, with the moral support from former lecturers such as Ms Woo Pei Jun, Ms Grace Yap and Ms Elaine Yong from the Department of Psychology, and my own family members, I was encouraged to press on and pursue my dream.”





Mentors and mentees meet for the first time



Inspiring success

Nine successful Sunway alumni recently paired up with their mentees under the Sunway Mentoring Programme as part of their contribution to give back to their alma mater.

They come from diverse backgrounds and have been successful in their own careers, however these nine alumni of Sunway University who returned to serve as mentors must have had at least three years of corporate experience and currently employed at a Senior Executive position or higher.

Under the Sunway Mentoring Programme, which was launched recently, the mentors were paired up with mentees from a variety of programmes including Accounting, Banking & Finance, Marketing, IT, and Psychology.

This six-month mentoring programme was designed to groom top Sunway University students into highly sought-after graduates in the market place.

When the mentors and mentees were introduced to each other on a one-to-one basis, they were able to immediately build a good rapport with each other. “Conversations were really taking off at all the tables,” observed Student Services Director, Lee Siok Ping.

According to Lee, the mentors bring with them a whole lot of experience. “Some, such as Ben Yeo who is Founder and CEO of ITWorks Consulting Sdn. Bhd, had the experience of setting up his own company in the IT and retail fields, while others like Associate Director of HRP Solutions, Nancy Wong came with HR experience, corporate planning and banking backgrounds. Other mentors, for example, Cheong Kim Meng who is now Head of the Corporate Planning Division of Sony (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, also had experience in international companies and were thus able to help mentor international students,” she elaborated.

The other mentors included Chew Shee Ghee (Senior Quantitative Strategy Analyst with AmBank), Lim Pei Ling (Assistant Manager of Sales Support at Sunway Marketing Sdn Bhd), Rodney Toh (Founder of Kim & Kerrie Sdn Bhd), Chan Jinn Yep (Regional Brand Manager of Jotun), Lee Ming Hao (Manager, Corporate Advisory and Structuring Department of MIDF Amanah Investment Bank Berhad) and Tham Kok Che (Area Sales Manager at Altas Copco Tools handling the Singapore & Malaysia markets).

“Ultimately it is hoped that the Sunway Mentoring Programme can produce and equip its students for the work place with core competencies such as professionalism, work ethics, people skills and commendable work ethics,” she said.

Tham, on the other hand, said “How I wish I had such a programme back in the days when I was a student as it would have sped up my learning and adaptation to the working environment. blaze



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