

## 2022 SMiLeS Yearbook



News Compilation of the School of Medical and Life Sciences

#### - INSIDE THIS ISSUE -

Announcements Academic Activities Research Activities Messages Special Events Getting to Know You Achievements Engagements Alumni Stories

## Editorial

### Advisor/Chief Editor

Prof Alvin Ng Lai Oon

#### **Sub-Editors**

Wong Jin Wei Fakhrul Zaim Kelsey Savage

#### **SMART Fellows**

Dr Jane Gew (DBS)
Dr Ravinder Kaur (DBS)

Dr Chook Jack Bee (DMS)
Dr Daniel Cheng Maong Hui (DMS)

Nitiakalyani Balasubramaniam (DNUR)

Jacqueline Gun Chin Hun (DPSY)

Prof Alexandre Schaefer (AHWRC)

Dr Wu Yuan Seng (CVVR)

Dr Annie Lee See Mun (RCCM) Dr Alan Tan Sang Loon (RCCM)

#### 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

## Graduates receive scrolls in person at 2022 Convocation sessions after two years of virtual ceremonies



Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam and A/Prof Dr Kavita Reginald pose with graduates of Biological Sciences after their convocation ceremony at the Sunway Lagoon

February 15th, 2022 saw our School of Medical and Life Sciences students graduate in person after two years of virtual convocation ceremonies due to the COVID-10 pandemic. It was held at the Sunway Lagoon Amphitheatre at 1.00pm to 4.00pm. It was very hot, but it was worth it, seeing many happy faces in the graduates and their family members. Academics rejoiced, too in seeing their former students receive their scrolls. Some graduates who attended the previous convocation that was held online in 2021 even returned to receive their scrolls in person.

**FULL STORY ON PAGE 16** 



### Welcome to the **SMiLeS** 2022 Yearbook!

It has been quite a task to get newsletter issues completed within our due dates given so many things going on at the school since the beginning of the year. Nevertheless, we managed to turn the failures around into a fat yearbook of our activities and achievements for 2022! So, big thanks to subeditors senior administrative executive, Fakhrul Zaim, my (now former) interns Wong Jin Wei and Kelsey Savage, as well as our SMART Fellows, Heads and the rest of our members at SMLS for their contributions.

It has been very encouraging to get so many stories about our accomplishments, new staff, events and more! In this yearbook, we report new line-ups in our School organisational chart and annual strategies from our School Management. We feel it is important to communicate our goals for the School so that the rest of us can work together towards new heights.



Covering a whole year's worth of events and achievements have been very challenging. It took a lot of coordination between administrators and academics. None of us are trained editors, journalists or photographers. So, to put together this Yearbook when it is not typically part of any academic department or research centre's key performance indicator, is quite an achievement in itself. So, kudos to all of us.

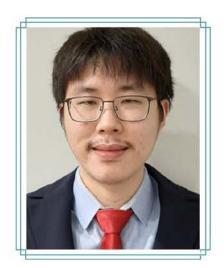
This issue is organised into five chunks, an introductory general one, with sections covering stories from each quarter of the year. We hope you enjoy the stories and that they have captured pretty much all the important news. Apologies if we missed any - we'll definitely improve in the future.

Why is it that I 'punish' myself (and a few of our SMLS members) to come out with this initiative? Well, I believe that our stories need to be told. We do a lot of good. Celebrating goodness brings happiness. Our Yearbook records these achievements to be continually celebrated in times to come. So, please share the joy with as many people as possible.

I hope that the SMiLeS 2022 Yearbook gets shared far and wide so that our stories are made known globally. We have many things to celebrate at SMLS and this Yearbook aims to promote them. Thank you!

Prof Alvin Ng Lai Oon Chief Editor, SMiLeS 2022 Yearbook

# Sub-Editors' Profiles



Wong Jin Wei

#### Jin Wei's Greetings

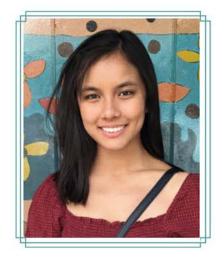
I'm Jin Wei, an intern at the Office of the Associate Dean (International). One of the great joys of being a sub-editor is getting to read and edit the entries about all the talented staff and promising students in the SMLS. I hope that you, dear reader, will share this joyous journey with us sub-editors.

#### Hello everyone!

I'm Zaim from the SMLS administrative team. I am honoured to be given the opportunity to contribute as the subeditor for this edition of **SMiLeS Yearbook**. Special thanks to Prof. Alvin for his guidance. I hope you find some joys in these pages!



Fakhrul Zaim



Kelsey Anne Savage

#### **Kelsey's Greetings**

I'm Kelsey, the one who started this newsletter when I was Prof Alvin's intern in 2021. Thank you for still having me as a small and early part of this issue. It has been an honour to serve SMLS even after graduating.

Page

# SMiLeS Yearbook 2022

Cover Page	1
Editor's Note	2
Sub-Editors Profiles	3
Messages from Senior Management	5
From the Dean's Desk	9
Associate Dean Reports	10
Cover Story	16
Announcements	18
Happenings	
January to March 2022	28
April to June 2022	76
July to September 2022	100
October to December 2022	130
A Note of Gratitude	170

**Items** 

# A Message from The CEO



Congratulations to the School of Medical and Life Sciences for this wonderful 2022 Yearbook! It is heartening to see achievements and activities commemorated in an in-house publication that can be shared widely with others.

Kudos to the School's leadership for facilitating so many marvelous activities that showcase our staff and students at the top of their game. With these stories chronicled in such a delightful yearbook, I am sure we can look back at them with pride and joy. I am especially pleased with the kinds of community engagements reported. I believe higher education institutions must always be relevant to the community. Education is nothing if it does not benefit the society.

I hope that these stories inspire and encourage continued excellence and progress among staff and students of SMLS, as well as the other entities of Sunway Education Group. I look forward to reading even more exciting stories from the school.

Again, I celebrate the efforts by the School and its yearbook editorial board in producing this collection of gratifying stories that made up a great 2022!

#### Professor Dato' Elizabeth Lee Fuh Yen

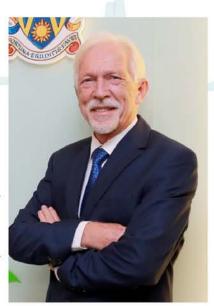
Chief Executive Officer, Sunway Education Group

# A Message from The President

Dear SMLS Sunwayans,

The past year was the first year that we, staff and students, were able to meet again face to face and it has been such a pleasure. It was also a year of big changes for the School. Early in the year, Prof Abhi became the Provost and later in the year, Prof Affendi joined us from UKM to become the new dean.

The still very young School of Medical and Life Sciences continues its upward trajectory and will soon add a number of new strategic programmes, notably in Postgraduate Medicine and in Undergraduate Medicine.



To enable this, we will collaborate with Sunway Medical Centre and with University Kebangsaan Malaysia. Prof Elil Renganathan joined us from WHO to set up a Master's in Public Health which will incorporate aspects of Global Health and Planetary Health. Prof Long Chiau Ming came from University Darussalam Brunei to set up a Master's in the field of Pharmacy and a Sunway Pharmacy Centre of Excellence. This will enable Sunway University to strengthen our collaboration with Pharmacy giants Astra Zeneca and Roche.

All members of the School will have the opportunity to contribute to the various programmes and yes, the School will set high goals, Olympic goals indeed as our founder Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah has recently announced at the Sunway Leadership Conference for all of the Sunway Group family.

Further growth of the number of students will be essential and I applaud the enthusiastic participation of many staff during the open days to recruit students for the university as well as for the college. We are one big Sunway education group family. Soon, there will be more staff joining the School to strengthen various areas of teaching and research and to enable the growth that is being planned.

I have no doubt that the School and Sunway University as a whole will soar to great heights, that individual staff members will achieve the goals they set for their careers and that students will be well prepared in knowledge, skills, values and mindset to enter employment.

A final word of appreciation to all, staff and students, not just for the academic achievements but also the societal outreach through volunteer work, charity and knowledge sharing with the society at large. Thank you!

### **Professor Sibrandes Poppema**

President and Vice Chancellor, Sunway University

# A Message from The Provost



Thank you and congratulations, Alvin and team for making this newsletter a reality. The 2022 SMiLeS Yearbook is a testament of the amazing talent and drive for excellence that permeates through the School. It is also a celebration of the tenacity of the human spirit. As we emerge stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic, the amazing achievements and stories captured provide a great source of motivation and inspiration.

The stories contained in this Yearbook highlight the value of team leadership as well as the efforts of individuals that coalesce together to champion a collective vision that mirrors our Foundation Chancellor of Sunway University, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah's aspirations for the school: To become a leading provider of healthcare and life sciences education with a dedicated pursuit of research and service excellence.

"Gratitude is a quality similar to electricity; it must be produced and discharged and used up in order to exist at all." – William Faulkner

Reading the Yearbook fills me with so much gratitude – for all the amazing support that all of you gave through my Deanship. A very special thanks to the Sunway Education Group CEO, Prof. Dato' Dr. Elizabeth Lee and the President of Sunway University, Prof. Dr. Sibrandes Poppema for your leadership and steadfast support and guidance. I also want to extend my sincere gratitude to Ms Ng Beng Lean, Group Registrar, Ms Wong Lei Lei, Director of Marketing & Customer Experience, Ms Lee Siok Ping, Director of Student LIFE, Ms Lim Shui Chin, Director of International Office and Special Projects, and everyone across the Sunway Education Group for providing us with your amazing and continuous support to the School's growth and sustainability.

Thank you as well as to all the Associate Deans - Dr Jactty, Prof Reuben, Dr Mei Hua and Prof Alvin for all your tireless efforts to shape the School's culture and trajectory. Thank you to the HODs, Prof Kathy, Prof Chia, Dr Kavita, Dr Pei Jun, programme leaders as well as the academic and laboratory staff for your fantastic dedication to our students' personal and professional growth. Thank you to the Research Centres for complementing the various school's efforts to drive research productivity and impact. Thank you to the School Manager, Wan and the awesome administration team that provide us such stability and sparkle!

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# A Message from The Provost

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Thank you to all our external stakeholders – Industry partners, Government agencies, NGO partners, members of the public who have engaged, collaborated, and contributed to our efforts. We hope to continue to incorporate the quadruple helix engagement into our research, knowledge exchange, teaching and larger social responsibility for future-proofing societies. It is your collaboration that ensures that we create the relevant impact that matters and produce purposeful graduates who are highly employable.

Thank you, dear students and alumni. Thank you for choosing Sunway and thank you for being great ambassadors of our institution. It never ceases to amaze me when I hear and witness all your wonderful ideas, talent and efforts come to fruition.

I am certain that with the highly accomplished and energised, Prof. Dr. Raja Affendi Raja Ali as Dean, the school will continue to flourish and realise the vision of our Foundation Chancellor. As we archive these past achievements, I am confident that the School will have more to celebrate in 2023.

### Professor Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam

Provost, Sunway University

# From the Desk

Dearest all,

Such a great pleasure joining Sunway family, in particular meeting and get to know all the lovely new friends at SMLS. To date, I'm getting to know each of everyone at SMLS very well either meeting face to face, via email or through the researcher profiles book.

Indeed, all of you have many strengths and there are many opportunities out there for all of us to grab for the betterment of our School and university.



The era that we are living at present is full of volatility, uncertainties, chaotic and ambiguity (VUCA). We should embrace it and transform this VUCA to another VUCA; Visionary, Understanding, Clarity and Agility. We should also have an entrepreneurship and growth mindset, exploring new things, chasing our dreams and act despite of many unknown fears to achieve competitive advantage and sustainability. We all know that the biggest amount of "lessons & learnings" comes from mistakes rather than practice or theory.

There are many aspects that all of us can work together to achieve high quality publications while impacting our society, empowering learning, and teaching, improving visibility, marketability and enhancing internationalisation, talent management as well as financial sustainability. Anything that we do, we should think not only return of investment but also return of values. Above all, we must ensure all of us are enjoying working on it and our mental states are at the highest index of happiness!

There are few ways for all of us to succeed for the year 2023 and beyond.

Firstly, we must believe in ourselves and dream big (remember, idea and dream without action is nothing) as well as to inspire a profound growth and change and acquire an elite mindset. Secondly, we need to be discipline, persistent, resilient, and self-confident in whatever we plan to do. Thirdly, we must be willing to test our limits and do not afraid of making mistakes and failures. We must learn from it. Lastly, do not forget to inspire and motivate others to follow our journey with the same direction and to arrive at the right destination.

Let us work and grow together and I believe we will either succeed or learn new things in the future endeavours for the coming years.

### Professor Raja Affendi Raja Ali

Dean, School of Medical and Life Sciences



2022 has shown to be a great year as welcome all students back to campus – it has been too long and we have missed you! For a teacher, nothing beats having face-to-face interactions with students and we thank you for your patience as we introduce more activities to make up for the lost face-to-face time.

As part of the school's efforts to provide our students an educational experience of the highest quality, we have developed a 3-year Education Strategy for the school. To ensure this, we will continually assess the student's satisfaction level by obtaining feedback through various channels, including Students' Barometer, Student Evaluation of Subject and Teaching. While it's still early days, students generally have expressed their happiness at returning to school for more interactive classes. On our part, we have tried our best to conduct skill refresher activities and events, such as lab bootcamps and Breakup Exhibition, and organise social activities, such as the Nurses' Day, SMiLeS Talent Fiesta competition. During our University Open Days, our lecturers have also improved the diversity of fun hands-on activities for parents and students. In fact, some of our seniors have become our ambassadors by bringing pre-U students to visit our facilities and labs.

As part of our Education Strategy, we aim to ensure our programmes continue to meet Malaysian Quality Agency standards by ensuring our programme reviews are completed on time and ensure our programmes obtain relevant professional body accreditation. Many thanks to all the programme leaders for ensuring this has been successful so far! Moving forward, we are working hard to develop programmes that will help grow our school. Some exciting programmes to expect in the coming years include a Bachelors in Nursing, a Post Basic in Renal Nursing, a Master of Counselling and a Master of Applied Behaviour Analysis.

Finally, last and certainly not least, we are striving to improve the teaching quality of our academics in the school to enhance our students' learning experience. Apart from holding teaching workshops and getting our lecturers to attend education conferences, our lecturers are also undergoing online pedagogical training so that they are up to speed with the latest in teaching methods.

The year has flown by quickly, but they have been fulfilling and rewarding. I have really enjoyed meeting students on campus again and I am looking forward to the coming fun-filled year!

### **Assoc Prof Dr Jactty Chew**

Associate Dean (Education)

Research & Postgraduate Studies

Dear SMLS colleagues,

Whether you are an academic staff, or a postgraduate student, I believe 2022 was a whirlwind year for most of us. It was not easy emerging out of lockdown - we had to learn how to interact with one another and work together again. Despite the adjustments, I'd like to think we had a fulfilling year overall! At the start of the year, we developed our first school strategy for various aspects, including research and postgraduate studies. We had 3 main goals (now expanded to 7): 1) increase quality and quantity of research outputs; 2) increase quantity of external research funding and external collaborations; and 3) improve quality of PGs, PG experience & PG supervision experience.



Regarding the Goal No. 1, we initially set a realistic target of achieving 234 publications. By the end of November, we already obtained 203 and based a survey we sent out to our staff, there should be no problems achieving or even exceeding this target. Give yourselves a pat on the back! In terms of building research capacity, I focused on honing the research skills of early career researchers and postgraduate students by conducting a workshop for the Department of Nursing staff and sharing videos on scientific writing. I must admit that I should have conducted more of these sessions and I apologise for not being able to do so.

In terms of Goal No. 2, SMLS raked in the highest amount of funding (~RM4 million) for 2022 in the University. Many thanks to all the hard work by our colleagues to create persuasive proposals! Based on these figures, I believe we are well on our way of achieving our initial target of RM6.1 million over a 24-month period. Also, many thanks to all our researchers for cultivating research collaborations with our external partners such as AstraZeneca, UKM, University of Groningen, MYWASHH, University of Cambridge, among many others. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our staff for trying to secure adjuncts for our school! We deeply value the contribution of our 23 adjuncts to help improve the research culture of our school, and we look forward to having more adjuncts in the coming months. Just so you know, our target is 30 across the quadruple helix!

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Research & Postgraduate Studies

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In terms of Goal No.3, I think we did fairly well given the circumstances created by the pandemic – it has certainly not been easy being a postgraduate student. Despite the obstacles, a group of passionate and dedicated postgraduate students spearheaded the organisation of Sunway's 1st ever Postgraduate Symposium with the guidance of several academic staff. It was a resounding success, and I am glad we now have an annual platform for PG students to hone their research presentation skills. Kudos to all who participated – you are ALL winners in my eyes. In addition, we conducted the first ever PG supervision training session for academic staff and saw an increase in the number of PG applications this year compared to the previous year. We still have much to do to foster a more vibrant and inclusive postgraduate research culture, but I believe we laid a good foundation this year.

Overall, I believe 2022 has been an enriching year for us all, especially in terms of research. There will always be ups and downs in the life of a researcher, but what matters is that we learn from others and learn from our mistakes - I have made a few and seek your forgiveness. As I step down, I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues for their support over the last two years as the Associate Dean for Research and Postgraduate Studies. This is not 'goodbye', but a 'till we meet again'. Wishing you an impactful and fulfilling 2023 and keep on SMILING!

### **Prof Gopalasamy Reuben Clements**

Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)

International

# International Visibility for Recognition, Reputation and Ranking

Part of internationalisation is to increase international student numbers, and having various student and staff mobility opportunities, both which contribute to the whole global experience of the university. However, strategising for internationalisation of the School is not easy under the COVID-19 pandemic with many mobility exercises being stalled or at best, moved online. International student numbers have also suffered due to borders being closed.



For 2022, I focused on a three-pronged approach to promoting our international visibility: Storytelling, International Student Experience and Personal Branding, while also working on strengthening ties with existing partners and forming new ones for various opportunities such as academic mobility, articulation agreements, research collaborations, events.

For story-telling and personal branding, we have a team of School Media and Activities Resource Team (SMART) Fellows to help collate news of events, achievements and relatable trivia to be featured in a number of institutional publication and social media, including this SMiLeS Yearbook. We also have a few other platforms that feature our stories: Discipline-Specific Newsletter that covers Biological Sciences, Medical Sciences and Psychology; Blaze Magazine, Sunway University e-Bulletin, SMLS LinkedIn page, SMLS Twitter, and the Sunway Alumni Newsletter.

Overall, we managed to organise two International Students' Mixers, numerous talks by international speakers (beyond the 14 targetted for the year), and garnering 2,940+ followers on LinkedIn at the point of publication. We had connected with 17 universities globally and will explore student mobility together in the form of study abroad semesters, articulations, summer / winter schools and joint research. We hope with these partnerships, we can have a more international flavour to our School, making it a world class one, being aligned with the overall Sunway University strategy to be a world class university. Moreover, as the pandemic eases and travelling becomes less restrictive, we can look forward to better mobility for both staff and students.

There is still much to be done and for 2023, we will work towards aligning with the new internationalisation strategy of the university.

### **Prof Alvin Ng Lai Oon**

Associate Dean (International)

Employability & Engagement



It's the cusp of 2022 & 2023. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone in the school for their contribution to helping students gain and articulate their career skills and to usher in 2023 with an emphasis on our employability and engagement strategic goals.

The focus on top employability skills employers seeks and addressing the development of career-readiness skills in the context of academic programmes and co-curricular experiences becomes pivotal. The School of Medical and Life Sciences focuses on 5 strategic goals for employability and engagement.

#### They are:

- Strategic Goal 1: Enhance the Employability of Graduates
- Strategic Goal 2: Improve Programme Level Strategic Planning for Employability
- Strategic Goal 3: Strengthened Industry/Community Partnerships & Alliances
- Strategic Goal 4: Enhance Alumni Relations
- Strategic Goal 5: Enhance and Highlight Employability Strength

Strategic goals 1 and 2 are highly intertwined. Employability is one of the most important factors for students going to university. To maintain a competitive edge, employability helps universities attract and retain high-quality students. Employability can be described as attributes of a person to gain and maintain employment. It can be determined by individual capabilities and the job market.

However, employability goes beyond the graduate's potential to obtain and function in his/her job. It is more than just a set of personal capabilities or availability of jobs in the market. It's also an interplay between one's capacity to be self-reliant to navigate in the job market utilizing individual capabilities to adapt to a changing process and to be continually enhanced to be relevant.

Hence, graduate employability thus encompasses not only domain knowledge but transferable skills such as soft skills, and other personal attributes that are highly valued. Hence, when designing our curriculum, we must take into consideration the social, institutional, and economic environment while building students' capabilities to give them a competitive edge.

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Engaging and collaborating with industries, alumni, and the community can create work experience, internships, and placement opportunities for students in the workplace to enhance students' technical skill-based capacities and their graduate attributes. This helps graduates manage the transition from study to work. Industry and alumni mentors can help students understand and learn about the realities of a workplace and the intended profession both formally through mentoring programmes and informally through sharing sessions. These partners are important for the continuous quality improvement of our programmes to bridge the skills gap. This collaborative effort can help us as an institution to provide relevant education to our students.

The strategies above help us structure our graduate attributes (knowledge, skills, and values), either at the programme or institutional level. Graduate attributes are important to equip graduates for continuous personal development, life-long learning and to be relevant in society. Identifying graduate attributes facilitates the opportunities for students to develop skills and qualities associated with these attributes.

Ultimately, we need mechanisms to highlight these employability strengths not only to potential employers but most importantly to our students. With a clear graduate outcome in mind, our students can reflect on their own development needs and engage with the appropriate opportunities, steering their pathways.

The list of strategic goals is of course not exhaustive, but these are our focus for now. I welcome any ideas from you on how we can forward our employability and engagement initiatives. Please feel free to share your suggestions with me at mhlin@sunway.edu.my.

Wishing you a Happy New Year. Let's make 2023 our best year yet!

#### Assoc Prof Dr Lin Mei-Hua

Associate Dean (Employability & Engagement)

# CoverStory

## **GRADUATION 2022**



SMLS Valedictorian, Sandra Chin Yue Xin giving her valedictory speech as captured on the stage screen

Graduates in attendance were from the Diploma in Nursing, BSc (Hons) Biomedicine, BSc (Hons) Biology with Psychology, BSc (Hons) Medical Biotechnology, BSc (Hons) Psychology, MSc in Life Sciences, MSc in Psychology as well as PhD in Biology. In total, there were 260 graduates, where diplomates and undergraduates made up the majority with 8 MSc graduates and 3 PhD graduates. Psychology graduate, Sandra Chin Yue Xin was picked as the SMLS Valedictorian of the Ceremony.

Recipients of the Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award were Ch'ng Yu Min (Biomedicine), Lee Zhong Ming (Blology with Psychology), Eireen Tang Chui Lyn, (Medical Biotechnology), Kelsey Anne Savage (Psychology), Tam Jo Yi (Nursing), Shweta Gangasa Walvekar (MSc Life Sciences) and Aaron Leong (MSc Psychology).

The Sunway University Convocation took place over four days from 15 February to 18 February 2022. The School of Medical and Life Sciences was allocated the afternoon session on the first day at the Sunway Lagoon Amphitheatre. The ceremony began with the two academic processions, with the first made up of members of the Academic Senate of the university, and the second comprising members of the Sunway Academic Leaders Group and the Sunway University Board of Directors that includes the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Graeme Wilkinson, Academic Dean of Lancaster University, Professor Andrew Abbott, the Sunway University President, Professor Sibrandes Poppema, CEO of Sunway Education Group, Professor Elizabeth Lee, and our Founder and Chancellor, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah, AO, who is also the Sunway Group Chairman. Tan Sri Cheah personally handed the degree scrolls while Professor Abbott handed out the degree scrolls that were validated by Lancaster University.



Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award winner for Psychology, Kelsey Anne Savage with her graduation bouquet

# CoverStory

## **GRADUATION 2022**



The second graduation ceremony for the year was on 5 July 2022. For the SMLS session, the degree conferment was carried out by our President, Professor Sibrandes Poppema (left). This time the valedictorian was also another psychology graduate and current PhD candidate, Jasmine Tang Yi Xin, making it a record fourth psychology graduate in a row to be valedictorian at the SMLS sessions since 2021, where we had Raenuga Indran and Marisha Barth Ubrani.



Sandra Chin Yue Xin, Valedictorian for the February SMLS graduation session



Jasmine Tang Yi Xin, Valedictorian for the July SMLS graduation session

This second session had a total of 129 graduands from SMLS. Recipients of the Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award this time were Lim Siow Yin (Post Basic Cert in Intensive Care Nursing), Siew Kit Kim (Biomedicine), Chua Jie Yun (Biology with Psychology), Veronica Soosai (Medical Biotech), Aileen Tan Sze Yan (Psychology), and Dr Gayatri Shukla (PGDip in Primary Care for the Elderly). We wish all graduates the best in their future undertakings.

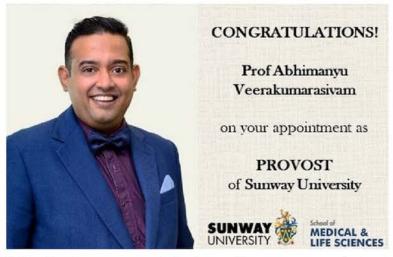
You may access the Convocation books here:

- February session: <a href="http://sclarchive.sunway.edu.my/4247/1/Sunway%20University\_convobook\_Feb2022.pdf">http://sclarchive.sunway.edu.my/4247/1/Sunway%20University\_convobook\_Feb2022.pdf</a>
- July session: <a href="http://sclarchive.sunway.edu.my/4355/1/Sunway%20University">http://sclarchive.sunway.edu.my/4355/1/Sunway%20University</a> convobook July%202022.pdf

# Change of \_\_\_\_\_ SMLS Leadership

## Dean of the SMLS Appointed as Provost

Professor Abhi Veerakumarasivam was made the new Provost of Sunway University, on 1 April 2022, replacing former Provost, Professor Peter Heard. Prof Abhi's rise in the ranks of academia has been nothing short of meteoric. Starting as a Professor of Genetics at Sunway, he quickly became the Head of Department of Biological Sciences, which was then at the School of Science and Technology (SST), in 2019. Prof Abhi became Dean when the School of Medical



and Life Sciences evolved from SST in 2021. He is an award-winning science communicator, international advisor on scientific policy and a visionary leader. We believe Prof Abhi is the right man for the job and we celebrate his promotion. SMLS wishes him all the best in leading the university to new heights!

## New Dean of SMLS: Prof. Raja Affendi Raja Ali



The school is delighted to welcome Professor Dr Raja Affendi Raja Ali as Dean of the School of Medical and Life Sciences effective 18 October 2022.

Prof. Raja Affendi served as Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the National University of Malaysia. He obtained his Bachelor of Medicine and his Master of Medical Sciences in Gastroenterology, as well as the Higher Diploma in Clinical Teaching from the National University of Ireland Galway (NUI). He was conferred a Doctor of Medicine degree from NUI for his research on the link between inflammatory bowel disease and colorectal cancer. In addition to his academic qualifications, Prof. Raja Affendi is a fellow of the RCP Edinburgh, (FRCP) and the American Gastroenterological Association (AGAF). He is an active researcher in the field of Inflammatory Bowel Disease and gut Microbiomics.

Welcome aboard, Prof. Affendi! We look forward to supporting your leadership and the continued growth of our school.

**SMiLeS** 

# 

## **New Associate Professors of SMLS**

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS AT THE SCHOOL OF MEDICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES



A/P Dr Chew Jactty

A/P Dr Kavita Reginald

A/P Dr Ronald Teow

A/P Dr Yow Yoon Yen

The beginning of 2022 saw four talented academics being promoted to Associate Professor. These are Dr Chew Jactty, Dr Kavita Reginald and Dr Yow Yoong Yen from the Department of Biological Sciences, and Dr Ronald Teow Sin Yeang from the Department of Medical Sciences. They have all demonstrated efficient academic leadership and research prowess that led them to being promoted. Dr Chew's expertise is in bacteria; Dr Kavita's is in the area of allergy and immunology; Dr Yow's research area is in algae biotechnology; and Dr Teow is known for cancer research. We wish all four a big congratulations on their well-deserved promotions.

# Senior Lecturer: Dr Wu Shin Ling from the Department of Psychology



Congratulations to Dr Wu Shin Ling, of the Department of Psychology, who was recently promoted to Senior Lecturer! Dr Wu received her PhD from Universiti Putra Malaysia, specialising in the psychology of child development. Her research focuses on well-being and mental health, specifically on suicidal ideation among adolescents and young adults. She was awarded a Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia in November 2020 for her study entitled, "Investigating the underlying mechanism that affects parental discipline and adolescents' mental health in Malaysia", that is due to be completed in April 2023.

# Staff \_\_\_\_\_ Promotions

## Senior Administrative Executive: Noor Intan Fazliana Mohamad Fu'ad

Congratulations to Noor Intan Fazliana Mohamad Fu'ad on her recent promotion to Senior Administrative Executive at the School of Medical and Life Sciences. Intan's portfolio involves taking care of the Department of Nursing's daily operations and administrative matters. She ensures that the nursing programmes run well. This includes coordinating many things such as enrolments, class timetables, examination-related matters, teaching and learning resources, keeping up to date on events and announcements, as well as graduations, and more. Intan is a key administrator at the Department of Nursing and we're very lucky to have her. She has been with Sunway University since July 2018.



# Congratulations to all promoted staff! Always remember:



With great power comes great responsibility :

- Stan Lee -

SMiLeS 20

# New Line Up of ADs and HoDs

## **Associate Deans**



Assoc Prof Dr **Chew Jactty** 

Education



Prof Dr **Reuben Clements** 

Research and **Postgraduate Studies** 



Assoc Prof Dr Lin Mei-Hua

**Employability and** Engagement



Prof Dr Alvin Ng Lai Oon

International

## **Heads of Departments**



**Assoc Prof Dr Kavita Reginald** 

**Biological** Sciences



**Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin** 

Medical Sciences



**Prof Dr** Khatijah Lim Abdullah

Nursing



Dr Woo Pei Jun

**Psychology** 

Congratulations to all appointees!

## Department of Biological Sciences

#### Dr Amar Daud Iskandar Abdullah



Dr Amar joined in January 2022 as a Senior Lecturer. He is also the Programme Leader for the BSc (Hons) in Biology with Psychology program. He is a neuroscientist by training.

Read more about him here: https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/dr-amar-daud-iskandar-abdullah

Dr Lau joined in March 2022 as a Lecturer. Her areas of expertise are in Molecular Oncology and Molecular Pathology, particularly in Colorectal Cancer. She teaches Pathology for Year 2 of the BSc (Hons) Biomedicine Program.

Read more about her here:

https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/dr-lau-tze-pheng



Dr Lau Tze Pheng

#### Dr Ser Hooi Leng



Dr Ser joined in March 2022 as a Lecturer. Her area of interests include microbiome and human health as well as bioactive compounds derived from microbes. She teachers Virology and Parasitology, as well as Current Topics in Biomedical Science

Read more about her here:

https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/dr-ser-hooi-leng

## Department of Medical Sciences

Dr Daniel Cheng Maong Hui

Dr Cheng graduated from the Volgograd State Medical University in 2010 with a Medical degree, and was part of the first batch of graduates of the Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for the Elderly in 2020.

Read more about him here: https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/dr-danielcheng-maong-hui



Prof. Dr Elil Renganathan



Professor Elil joined in September 2022. He is a senior international expert with extensive leadership experience and expertise in public health, global health, evaluation and organizational learning, strategic planning and governance, collaborating with governments, UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions.

Read more about him here: https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/prof-drelil-renganathan

Prof Long is a pharmacist by training with prior working experience at three public hospitals in Malaysia. He was formerly with UiTM, University of Tasmania and Universiti Brunei Darussalam. He is keen to explore interdisciplinary research across the field of medical, biological and data sciences.

Dr Long hasn't got a profile yet on our website as he's very new.



## Department of Nursing

Ms Ho joined in April 2022 as a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Nursing. She is an Oncology Specialist Nurse with 22 years of experience in Nursing as well as in training healthcare personnel. She is currently pursuing a Master degree in counselling, which she believes would nurture her intellectually in service delivery towards effective healthcare education and holistic mental health of clients.

Read more about her here: https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/ho-sweet-lee



### Wong Lee Sia



Ms Wong joined in April 2022 as a Lecturer at the Department of Nursing. Her areas of research interests are renal nursing, wound care management and critical thinking among nursing students. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Education.

Read more about her here: https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/wong-lee-sia

In 2010, Ms Saidah graduated with Diploma in Nursing from UniKL Royal College of Medicine, Perak. She was a nurse at Sime Darby Hospital, Subang Jaya for 6 years, before joining Sime Darby College, Setia Alam, KPMC Puchong, and Beacon Hospital, Petaling Jaya. She joined Sunway University in July 2022. Ms Saidah completed her Post Basic Perioperative in Nursing in 2013 and her Bachelor of Nursing in 2020.

Nor Saidah Binti Ismail



## Department of Nursing

Ms Sivananthini is a Clinical Instructor with over 19 years of varied teaching, supervisory and leadership experience. Previously, she served as clinical coordinator cum clinical instructor. She graduated with a Diploma in Nursing from Pantai Institute of Health Sciences, Malaysia in 2003. She furthered her studies in BSc in Nursing Science, Post Basic In ICU and is currently studying for a Masters degree in Nursing.



## Department of Psychology

### Dr John Jamir Benzon Aruta



Dr Aruta has a masters degree in Guidance and Counseling from the Philippine Normal University, and a PhD in Counseling Psychology from the De La Salle University Manila. His areas of interest are: Environmental and Cultural Psychology, Culture and Mental Health, Mental Health During the COVID-19 Crisis, Cross-cultural Psychology. Read more about him here:

https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/dr-john-jamir-benzon-r-aruta

## Administration

Mr Zaim joined in February 2022 as a Senior Administrative Executive at the School of Medical and Life Sciences. He primarily provides administrative supports for the Master in Public Health programme. Apart from that, he is responsible in the areas of internationalisation, student employability and engagement, as well as providing secretarial support to the Dean and other school administrative matters.

Fakhrul Zaim



## Ageing Health and Well-being Research Centre

Prof Alexandre Schaefer

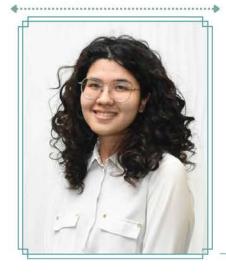
Professor Schaefer joined in January 2022 as a Professor of Psychology and also the Head of the Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre. He is particularly interested in how socioeconomic factors affect mental health and the process of ageing, with a particular focus on populations from developing countries

#### Read more about him here:

https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/professor-alexandre-schaefer



#### Dr Aleya Aziz Marzuki



Dr Aleya joined in February 2022 as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre. She is a cognitive scientist whose current research focuses on the brain and ageing. A feature story on her can be found on page 65

#### Read more about her here:

https://university.sunway.edu.my/profiles/smls/dr-aleya-aziz-marzuki

Dr Chan joined in April 2022 as a Research Fellow at the Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre. His work at focuses on investigating how lifestyle choices can optimally promote healthy-ageing, using multi-dimensional approach, which includes behavioural, cognitive and neuroscience methodology.

#### Read more about him here:

https://university.sunway.edu.my/research/ageing-research-centre-CARE

### Dr Chan Jee Kei



# Welcome Back Nurul & Natalina



The school would like to welcome back our staff from their maternity leave



## **Nurul Huda**

Baby girl - Adellia Nur Isabelle

## Natalina

Baby boy - Javien Nolan





# HAPPENINGS:

# January to March





## New Intake of Students for Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for the Elderly



Doctors from various parts of the nation form the new batch of students in the PGDPCE programme

On 6 January 2022, eleven medical doctors joined in on the Orientation Programme for students in the Postgraduate Diploma for the Elderly Programme under the Department of Medical Sciences, School of Medical and Life Sciences. This is the third batch of doctors enrolled for this programme that is gaining in popularity among physicians nationwide, as word of this course spreads within the medical world. There has been much call for better training on geriatric medicine in Malaysia, and this course aims to provide such a training.

Sunway University provides scholarships for two local students, as well as two international students per year to complete this programme. This programme hopes to address health issues of a rapidly ageing population, and Sunway is committed to contributing to healthy ageing.

Head of the Department of Medical Sciences, and programme leader, Prof Datin Chia Yook Chin, expressed her joy and pride on the success of the programme that has just recently seen its first batch graduate. "I am happy that this programme took off and produced medical practitioners who are more adept at dealing with geriatric issues. I'm very grateful to all the instructors who took time off their very demanding schedules to contribute to upskilling medical officers!", she added.

Prof Chia asserted that the programme focuses on empowering more medical practitioners to have a caring, systemic and holistic approach in managing the health of their older patients, especially now during the COVID-10 pandemic.

## DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS 2022

## **Zoo Negara (National Zoo)**

On 12 and 13 February 2022, a group of Psychology students - Chin Lin Wei, Clarisse Lim Qian Hui, Lisay Sia, Rissa Wong Li Nin and Yau Yu Hong - conducted a two-day community service work at Zoo Negara under the Zoo Negara KeeperKu Programme. The programme offers students the opportunity to volunteer in the zoo by working with the animals besides assisting in the wildlife education, enrichment, photography, public relations, and horticulture departments. Besides wanting to reduce the burden of zookeepers, the students desired to experience first-hand in understanding the daily challenges faced by both the animals and zookeepers.



They mentioned, "The 'happiness' of the animals in the zoo has often been overlooked by the public who only focuses on performance and entertainment of the animals." With the supervision of Mr. Fikri, the students had a meaningful yet enjoyable time assisting the zookeepers in maintaining the zoo by ensuring the general needs of the animals were met. They had the experience of working at different sub-environments at the zoo, such as the aquarium, the reptile house and the bird house, where they cleaned cages, prepared food, fed the animals, showered them, and took the animals for walks.



Clarisse feeding Abraham the giant tortoise.

Being fond lovers of the exotic species, they purposefully learned of the animals' names and facts about their respective species. They even managed to pet and hold the tortoises, iguanas and snakes, each time growing their love for the reptiles and diminishing fear of these exotic animals upon getting to know the species' nature more. Students found the experience of being in close proximity with the beautiful reptiles, penguins, fishes and birds to be exciting and fulfilling. They were also grateful for the zookeepers who patiently taught them how to prepare food for the animals and clean their living spaces. By reading the description of each species displayed at the zoo, knowledge and appreciation of them grew. The experience came with a multitude of important lessons. The students learned that what was seen may not necessarily be true given the disparity of experience between being a visitor who merely saw how well the animals were living in their enclosures and being a volunteer who saw the demand of more manpower in order to run the zoo.

(continued next page)



Clarisse and Lin Wei with snakes named Nuri and Toy

In addition, students realized that it would not have been possible to undertake the job of a zookeeper without having a strong passion for it after seeing how repetitive the tasks of a zookeeper along with being underpaid. Because of the recent two years of Movement Control Order (MCO), the zoo had struggled to pay them for months. The community service work at the zoo saw the skill and character development of the students. Not only were they able to hone their communication skills, hands-on skills and leadership skills from interacting with people of different cultures and lifestyles, the project evoked a spirit of unity and team work amongst the students during the group tasks assigned by the zoo. Students quoted, "cooperation means to get things done in the most efficient way, such as lending help when one member is running out of energy".

Most importantly, they saw an increased sense of self-efficacy, morality, interpersonal connection and belongingness within themselves. A new-found interest and passion for the community, as well as a greater sense of civic responsibility were birthed from the community service work.

Although they were exhausted by the end of the project, they were satisfied to be able to accomplish most of the tasks needed to help the zookeepers care for the animals. Dr. Alia Azalea, the subject lecturer, commented. "It was clear that students not only worked hard to complete the community service hours, but they also had fun in the learning process which I believe was relatively important". For the students, the visit to Zoo Negara was a call to the public to perceive maintaining the ecosystem as important, whether they are on land or under water, in order to achieve sustainable living on Earth.

## Kembara Farm

Another group of Psychology students, - Chan Wen Shin, Fong Li Jin, Ho Zi Ying, Lim Jia Ying and Teoh Yii Xing - conducted a three-day community service work at Kembara Farm situated in Shah Alam on 12, 13 and 15 February 2022. Founded by Mr. William Cheah in August 2020, the farm was established to allow members of the community grow organic, chemical-free and pesticide-free vegetables to donate to orphans, the elderly, and B40 families. With the supervision of Mr. Steve Tan, the students watered, seeded, fertilized, and pruned vegetable plants.







According to the Agrofood Statistics 2019, Malaysia has seen a challenge in food system capacity and food security to provide sufficient and affordable resources to all citizens. United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] 2020 also found that many families struggled financially during the pandemic, resulting in lower fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income households and changes in eating choices, leading to increasing concern about food and nutrition insecurity. Upon learning that Malaysia ranked in 58th in the 2021 Global Hunger Index and observing the financial difficulties as well as disruptions in agriculture contribution routes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the group of students planned to sow into curbing the issues by helping to relieve and aid those in need where food supply and nutrition is concerned through their community service work at Kembara Farm.

In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goal 2 of Zero Hunger, they planted nutritious and safe vegetables at the farm to be donated to those in need such as the B40 families, the elderly and orphanages, as a contribution to prevent hunger and malnutrition in society. Moreover, the foods provided were organic, pesticide-free and nutritious, ideal to a healthy diet and key to improved nutrition. Being an advocate of sustainable agriculture, Kembara Farm exposed the students to good water management practice when farming. Students were able to water and fertilise all the plants as needed, ensure that the plants were in good health by cutting off withered leaves, and weed the invasive species of plants growing in the pots. Together as a group, they seeded multiple types of plants to be donated to the community in need in the future. They also labelled the plants and organised the shed for the convenience of the community.

What is an experience without learning and benefiting from it? Not only did the students learn that, to most people, nutritious food are not always accessible, they also learned about the technical aspect of farming and how much hard work is needed to maintain it. Through the provision of healthy, preservative-free foods, the needy had benefited from the access to more nutritious and safer foods and vegetables at Kembara Farm. Simultaneously, sustainable food production systems were guaranteed, ecosystems were maintained, and sustainable agriculture practice was promoted.

Dr Alia Azalea, their subject lecturer, commented, "It was great to see our students being unafraid to get dirty working with mud and dirt under the sun for several hours at a time. It is definitely a great exposure to students to be more aware about others' needs in their community. Mr. Steve, their supervisor, added, "The students were not only hard working, but also good at what they did." To conclude their experience at Kembara Farm, the students remarked, "It is not just about food, but nutritious, affordable and accessible food that all of us need. Nutritious food means healthier and hopefully happier people."



SMiLeS 32



# Generating Opportunities for Learning Disables (GOLD)

A 6-day community service work was carried out at Generating Opportunities for Learning Disables (GOLD) situated in Bandar Sunway by a group of Psychology students - Ashley Loh Sze Min, Chang Bao Jie, Pearl Tan Mei Lin, Shri Dhurga A/P G. Kumar and Siobhan Nisha Julianose. Founded in 2000 by Ms Juairiah binti Johari, GOLD is a non-profit social enterprise that provides free supported employment and rehabilitative vocational training to people with learning disabilities (LD) and have graduated from secondary school. Their vocational training is based on a specialised learning syllabus that teaches people with LD to cook food, adopt social etiquette and do chores. Additionally, GOLD teaches their members to make use of these skills to earn wages by selling handmade items, such as notebooks, ceramics and cookies. Throughout the 6 days at GOLD, students cleaned the center, baked cookies with the GOLD members, sold the cookies online and at Sunway University campus, and collected donations.

Out of the group's resonance with the vision carried by GOLD, they aimed to increase the awareness and understanding toward LD and people with LD. According to United Nations (2020), people with disabilities have been discriminated against due to a lack of awareness about disabilities, creating disparities in job opportunities, resulting in financial and emotional difficulties. As nearly half of the global workface is at risk of losing their livelihoods due to the pandemic, members of GOLD were not excluded from the despairing situation. Moreover, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all operations at GOLD had to be shifted to home-based settings, proven to be more difficult than before, considering that some members lacked the proper equipment to continue baking at home. Nonetheless, they managed to persevere through the pandemic despite facing slight issue with matters of outreach and output.

Out of empathy and kindness, the students decided to help GOLD move closer to their vision by initiating work and social opportunities for people with LD, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 of decent work and economic growth. From this community service project, they hoped to empower, encourage, and empathize with the learning disabled at GOLD, by allowing them to guide and by attentively learning about their production of Kindness Cookies. They also aimed to create a better understanding and awareness of GOLD and people with LD. As such, the students managed to share about GOLD and their endeavours to their peers at campus during the cookies sale and promotion.



Preparing cookies to be baked



Clearing and reorganising the store room

The first week saw the proactive initiation of plans by the students as they focused on clearing the common and storage area of GOLD to create a more conducive working environment. In the following weeks, they collected pre-orders for cookies before they start baking them with the GOLD members, opened a booth at the boulevard of Sunway University campus, and sold the delicious cookies. They definitely did not miss out on interacting with the GOLD members to learn more about them – their likes, dislikes, strengths and challenges.

Surprisingly, they managed to sell much more than they expected compared with their initial aim of selling only 20 cookie jars. The students were able to achieve most of their weekly goals set prior to the project, and had contributed to GOLD in many ways - from cleaning, production, and to sales. The high demand for GOLD's cookies, even beyond the selling period, indicated growth in GOLD's market presence and an increase in potential customers, offering a means to provide economic empowerment and support vocational training for those with learning disabilities.







Organising documents at GOLD office



Sticking labels on Kindness Cookies



Redecorating GOLD's notice board



The Kindness Cookies booth got support from Psychology lecturers

All hyped at the booth

The students were also not void of benefiting from the experience themselves. In unison, each student felt that it was one of the most meaningful learning experiences they had and saw it as an opportunity to challenge themselves. Besides, the project has seen growth and development in the students, especially in terms of skill and character. For example, Ashley's hard work and proactiveness could be seen through her helping out in various tasks, including offering her apartment as a temporary storage for the booth materials and staying longer to help in shaping the cookie dough, and socializing with the GOLD members who were seen being alone; Bao Jie's strong efforts could be seen through her conducting extra community service hours, promoting the cookies sale, collecting donations at Sunway College cafeteria, bringing the booth decorations and materials, and figuring a strategic way to set up the booth; and Dhurga's efforts in stepping out of her comfort zone were clear in how she capitalized on the opportunity to socialize with the GOLD members and plucked up the courage to promote the cookies at Sunway College foyer, resulting in a sharp increase of purchase by the students.

On the other hand, Pearl's initiatives to assist in transporting the cookie jars, arranging the information of the notice board at GOLD, and initiating a conversation with several GOLD members, clearly showed her passion to provide work opportunities to the learning disabled; and Siobhan's significant assistance and contribution to the group, especially in reducing the workload of the other group members, could be seen as she engaged in conversing and befriending with some of the GOLD members, and involved in the clean-up, cookie dough rolling, and cookies sale.

Dr Alia Azalea, their subject lecturer, commended their work. "The project was well-planned and it was clear that they were passionate about it, thus they worked hard to complete the community service hours. It was also obvious that they challenge themselves and had fun doing it." Ms. Juairiah, the founder of GOLD, added. "Their hard work and helpfulness throughout their community service was admirable." With unanimous feedback, the students urged. "It is important to be aware that people with learning disabilities are often misunderstood by people around them as they communicate differently from an average person. However, with sufficient opportunities and effective avenues for them to express their skills and abilities, they can be productive individuals as well."

# **Department of Biological Sciences Community Service Projects**

While the Department of Psychology typically had visits as part of their Community Service Projects, the Department of Biological Sciences had campaigns with talks and sales of items that were educational for the public. This were led by Dr Jane Gew, who was the Subject Leader and sustainability activist extraordinaire. Here are some of the posters of her students' activities as part of their assignment. Issues covered in their campaigns include reproductive health, period poverty, food waste recycling,

# **Reproductive Health:** I AM IN CONTROL

The module targets awareness & understanding amongst the youth regardless of age and gender about the social issues awareness.

Outline of this module:

- (a) Sex and gender
- (b) Sexual harrasment
- (c) What is rape
- (d) Pornography, cyber chat
- (e) Abortion, sexual diseases
- (f) Safe relationship
- (g) Know your rights & responsiblities

We can all make a change MU4 2432 Community Service





Dr Jane Gew signing the Student-Led Community Project Sustainability Pledge







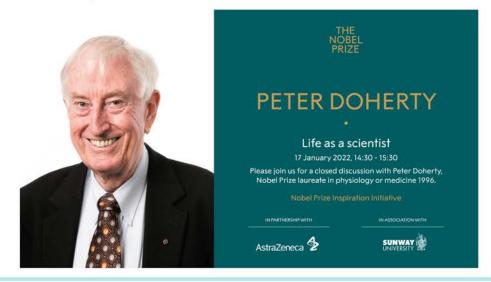
#### Nobel Laureate Dr Peter Doherty: A full day interactive event



On 17 January 2022, Sunway University hosted a public webinar interview with Nobel Laureate, Dr Peter Doherty. This very rare event was organised in partnership with Astra Zeneca, by virtue of a partnership between SMLS Biological Sciences. Sunway University President, Professor Poppema and Astra Zeneca Country President for Malaysia, Dr Sanjeev Panchal both gave opening remarks before Dr Adam Smith, Chief Scientific Officer of the Nobel Prize Outreach took over to moderate the event.

The recording of this webinar can be viewed here: <a href="https://webcast.virtualevents.uk/20220117-peterdoherty">https://webcast.virtualevents.uk/20220117-peterdoherty</a>

Earlier the same day, Dr Doherty met online with a select group of undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Department of Biological Sciences to talk about research and careers in science. We are truly grateful to Dr Peter Doherty and the Nobel Prize Inspiration Initiative for this great opportunity to have a conversation with a Nobel Laureate. Dr Doherty is such a humble man with great wisdom. We had a wonderful time with him!



#### Department of Biological Sciences Lab Boot Camps



As the COVID19 pandemic lifts and Malaysia inches closer towards pre-pandemic normalcy, many are eager to put any memory of the months spent in lockdown behind them. For our students, the lockdown meant nearly two years of online lessons including virtual practical sessions and simulated laboratory results.

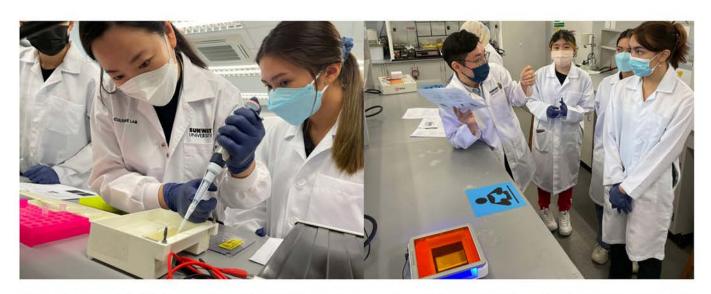
While many of our students excelled, passing and even graduating with flying colours during this period, staff at the School of Medical and Life Sciences recognized that while virtual practical sessions certainly did 'tick the boxes' in terms of helping students achieve the objectives of the course, the students missed out on training that is simply indispensable for graduates of the biosciences.

How can one load cells flawlessly into a haemocytometer? What are the 'first' and 'second' stops when it comes to pipetting? What do you mean you could burn yourself in a microbiology lab?

It was with this need in mind that academics and laboratory staff organised the Lab Boot Camps for the bioscience students, putting together modules that covered key skills within the biological sciences – pipetting, cell counting, dissection, immunofluorescence, polymerase chain reaction, microbiology and bioinformatics.

Students of all semesters and recent graduates could sign up for any combination of these 3-hour modules in the laboratory boot camps organized at the beginning of the January and April 2022 semesters. Students of the first or second semester could sign up for more advanced modules worry-free, knowing that they would be guided closely by our staff or postgraduate students, and most importantly that there would be no laboratory report to submit at the end of the day!

#### **Scenes from the Lab Boot Camp**







The laboratory boot camps attracted more than 100 applicants over both runs in 2022, and involved 17 staff members and 9 postgraduate students. Over both runs, the boot camp received nothing but glowing feedback from the participants:

"Please don't ever stop this series because i truly feel like i learnt more and was more hands on compared to class practicals. I also was more confident during the sessions i attended probably cause i know its okay if we mess up since we can try again!!"

"Thank you for all your hardwork and effort put into making this lab booth camp happen. It's a good way to refresh our lab skills and make friends while having fun."





"Please do lab boot camp every semester!!"



As time passes and the students affected by the lockdown period graduate, the purpose of the lab boot camps may evolve. However, as long as there is a need for and our students find it helpful, we at the School of Medical and Life Sciences will be ever ready to boot camp!

# Research Activities

#### Mike Meredith's Biostats Bootcamp 7 – 18 March 2022

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less" – Marie Curie.

And that's how we feel about biostatistics in Sunway University! And who better to teach us than Mike Meredith and Ngumbang Juat from the Biodiversity Conservation Society of Sarawak (BCSS), trainers who have since 2009, ran 45 Boot Camps in 12 countries. In fact, 734 people from 37 countries have attended a Boot Camp at least once, many coming more than once. In addition, they have ran 36 short workshops on specialist aspects of wildlife data analysis, six of them facilitated by international experts. Mike Meredith is also the author of wiqid, a R software package that provides simple and fast functions for maximum likelihood and Bayesian estimates.

Hence, the Department of Biological Sciences was delighted to host the bootcamp here in Sunway University from the 7th to 18th March 2022. Both Mike and Ngumbang were also joined by Win Sim and Wee Liang, assistant trainers or better known as the boot camp elves. The 10 days workshop was attended by 18 participants; our Sunway students as well as those from University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Monash University, University Malaysia Sabah, University of Nottingham and two organisations; Nature Based Solutions and Gaia, both of which are involved in wildlife research and conservation work in Malaysia.



Mike Meredith in action during his biostatistics workshop



There was also a 'Boot Camp' workshop on wildlife study design and data analysis, within the week that Mike was running the biostatistics workshop. The Provost and SMLS Dean, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam graced this event to give out certificates of completion for participants.

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The participants of the boot camp learnt the basics in descriptive statistics; mean, mode and median. They were then taught about the two different inferential statistics out there; Bayesian and Frequentist approaches. Then, they were exposed to more complicated mathematical models such as hierarchical models in R software. They also learnt how to plan their sampling methods and how to analyse data for occupancy studies and spatially explicit mark recapture studies.



Mike Meredith and Ngumbang Juat with the participants of the biostatistics bootcamp

On the final day, each student was asked to propose a topic to discuss and this also meant the golden opportunity for students to share their study designs for their future studies, to help improve it before sampling work commences. We look forward to hosting the next one again in Sunway University, next year!

While Mike was at Sunway, he also gave a talk on "What's New in the Data Analysis Tool Box for Biologists?". He gave a very good overview about how Bayesian statistics should be considered for developing statistical packages in the ever evolving world of statistics. Our Associate Dean for Research and Postgraduate Studies, Professor Gopalasamy Reuben Clements facilitated the Q&A session that took place online as well as in person, after the talk.



For more information about Biodiversity Conservation Society of Sarawak (BCSS), visit: http://bcss.org.my/index.htm

# Research Activities

#### Dr Chen Jit Ern's research team monitors the health of Sunway South Quay Lake

Dr Chen Jit Ern from the Department of Biological Sciences has been tasked with monitoring the status of the Sunway South Quay lake, especially with regards to the state of the lake beneath its surface. Over the next two years, his team will keep an eye on changes in the lake in conjunction with carrying out tests on how water quality can be improved. Dr Chen's team consists of a research assistant, Nur Amiera Fatin Azman and Hong Zi Mian, an intern from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia) who is completing her degree in genetics.

The Sunway South Quay lake is a key component of Bandar Sunway's goal of being a Sustainable City, functioning both as a source of drinking water as well as a mechanism to control flooding in the area. As such, the health of the lake is a key concern for Sunway Group. Being an ex-mining lake, the SSQ lake is relatively deep, with a large portion of the lake being more than 30 metres deep. This means that the surface of the lake could be in a very different state compared to the bottom of the lake.



Manager of Facility Management at Sunway Property and Facility Management (SPFM), Mr Razali Dahot, with intern, Hong Zi Mian and RA, Nur Amiera who is shown using the water quality sensor for pH, oxygen, temperature and salinity of the water sample.





Dr Chen Jit Ern with his research assistant, Nur Amiera collecting water samples from the Sunway South Quay lake.

The SSQ lake is a scenic lake that is surrounded by a public park that has landscaped gardens and boardwalks where people go to for walks and runs. As such it is very important to keep the lake clean and healthy as it also provides for the flora and fauna of the area.

SSQ is largely a residential area that also has commercial as well as institutional components that are all part of Bandar Sunway.



### Psychology researchers collaborate with Toy Eight on AI early childhood development assessment tool



Standing: Dr Beh Ching Yew and Karen Lau; Seated: Dr Wo Su Woan, Dr Woo Pei Jun, Masaki Ishibashi (CEO of Toy Eight), and Shun Matsuzaka (Founder and CCO of Toy Eight)

Psychology researchers from the Department of Psychology at School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University collaborated with Japanese artificial intelligence (AI) edutech company Toy Box Creation and Technology (Toy Eight) to develop a digital development assessment tool for parents.

Head of Psychology at Sunway University, Dr Woo Pei Jun and psychology lecturer, Dr Wo Su Woan partnered with Toy Eight to produce a phone app for parents to conduct psychological assessments for early childhood development of adaptive behaviour skills such as language skills, cognitive skills and motor skills.

The app employs an AI system that is able to recognise development strengths and suggest personalised learning content to facilitate emerging talents in pre-school children. It is also able to identify any developmental concerns and suggest areas for further professional assessment to decide if any early intervention is needed. The impact of this collaboration addresses the gaps in accessibility and affordability of developmental assessments in Southeast Asia as professionals who typically conduct these assessments are few and usually too costly for most parents.

This partnership was facilitated by Sunway iLabs (iLabs Foundry) for the Greater Kuala Lumpur (GKL) Live Lab, a platform for foreign companies to test novel solutions for current global problems together with local companies and academic researchers. This initiative was built on InvestKL's Business Ecosystem Collaboration (BEC) programme.

(continued next page)



### Psychology researchers collaborate with Toy Eight (continued from previous page)

Dr Woo expressed that she is very thrilled with the collaboration, especially when it is one that could help parents and teachers, as well as the larger community in Malaysia. "I'm all for promoting applied psychology in various fields. In my area of developmental psychology, I am passionate about improving access to psychological assessments for pre-school children to identify critical needs for their socio-cognitive development so that early intervention can be provided where necessary. We are very happy to work with Toy Eight founder, Shun Matsuzaka and his very capable team".

Karen Lau, Head of Sunway iLabs Foundry echoed Dr Woo, in that this project is a meaningful one as it makes developmental assessment affordable and accessible whilst rapidly improving the understanding of child developmental levels in different communities and areas. She added, "This was one of the most exciting projects for 2021! Working with a team consisting of business expertise, psychologists, educators and tech experts to co-create an Al-driven education technology that aims to address socio-educational issues in Southeast Asia is very momentous to us".

Dr Wo, who's also the Programme Leader for the Master of Science in Psychology degree programme at the Department of Psychology, commented, "This project is very eye-opening for me. Getting to work with the Japanese Al designers if very fascinating, especially seeing how they translate our scientific findings into applied technology for the relevant communities to use. Moreover, seeing former Nintendo designers at work was very exciting!" She also shared that the dynamism and efficient work ethics of Toy Eight led to very quick developments of the app and the overall research progress.

This Sunway University – Toy Eight collaborative project is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.



https://www.toyeight.com/



#### The Kitchen Waste Management: Motivators, Barriers, and Habit-Formation



L-R: Dr Eliza Berezina, Dr Grace Yap and Dr Wu Shin Ling

"What do psychologists have to do in a kitchen waste management research? They study the factors that are involved in behaviour change towards efficient kitchen waste management.

"A change of habit is remarkable in the eyes of a psychologist", says Dr Grace Yap of the Department of Psychology at the School of Medical and Life Sciences. She adds, "We are definitely eager to explore any motivating factors that empower a person to willingly change ageold habits. We want to know what are the driving forces to change from traditional dumping practice to eco-friendly and sustainable kitchen waste management, despite the latter is generally considered to be more inconvenient and involves more steps."

Dr Yap, together with Senior Lecturers at the Department of Psychology, Dr Eliza Berezina and Dr Wu Shin Ling are involved in the Kitchen Waste Management Project that began in July 2021. The project is led by the Sunway Materials Smart Science and Engineering Cluster (SMS2E) to better address SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. This research cluster includes chefs, bioscientists, engineers, social scientists, and economists. The Psychology team had been interviewing culinary arts teaching chefs, students and specialised cleaners on their views on the new systems introduced for kitchen waste management. They were interested to know the concerns and reservations the interviewees might have.

Preliminary findings revealed that our respondents were generally familiar with the waste management concept. However, some viewed these tasks as menial but an obligation at work, and see no benefit in practicing them at home. Some respondents also expressed worries about the composting process and therefore are deterred from its practice at home. These results suggest the need to improve on education about the importance and benefits of kitchen waste management.

(Continued next page)

# Research Activities

#### The Kitchen Waste Management (continued)

Finding about these barriers were presented to the project coordinators as feedback on developing ways to address issues of resistance, and to develop a more complete waste management system by the end of project.

Methods of waste management significantly impact our immediate environment, as well as the types of resources – human and material – in improving their efficiency and efficacy. It is crucial to develop strategies to have communities adopt environmentally-friendly kitchen waste management practices for better long-term consequences on our daily resource management, and ultimately our planetary health.



Given that commercial kitchens generate wastes in bulk, this project focuses on improving waste management among chefs and kitchen workers. The team continues to work on generating behavioural strategies to encourage future chefs to adopt these green practices.

Eventually, it is hoped that such initiatives can be extended to the general public where efficient and sustainable kitchen waste management can be made a habit in every household. Planetary health and sustainable development is everyone's responsibility – we can contribute by managing waste in the kitchen.



### Research Assistants under Dr Jane Gew win WWF Malaysia Eco Champion Award 2022!



Congratulations to our research assistants Chia Dane and Lein Li Lin under Dr Jane Gew's supervision at the Department of Biological Sciences! They are one of the winners of the WWF Malaysia Eco Champion Award 2022! Dane and Li Lin were awarded a RM5000 seed grant for a community entitled "Food project segregation and management" which is aligned to this year's theme on "Pathways toward Net Zero Emissions".

This project aims to take Malaysia one step closer to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12, target 12.4, which calls for a half reduction in per capita global food waste, through segregating, measuring, and composting household food waste. View their video here: <a href="https://lnkd.in/gsRa5-PD">https://lnkd.in/gsRa5-PD</a>.

This project is a part of the waste management project initiated by Sunway Materials Smart Science and Engineering Cluster. The Eco Champion Awards by WWF Malaysia aims to celebrate inspiring future sustainability leaders for their outstanding commitment to conserving the natural environment. The winners are awarded a seed grant to make an impact in their communities and beyond. The School would also like to thank WWF-Malaysia and Sunway University for their support in this project initiative.



Dane and Li Lin weight food waste as part of their project

### First Batch of Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for the Elderly (PGDPCE) Graduates!



Head of Medical Sciences, Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin being surrounded by her first batch of graduating doctors who successfully completed the PGDPCE at the end of 2020.

The end of 2020 saw the inaugural cohort of 12 medical doctors complete their training in the Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for the Elderly (PGDPCE) programme, under the Department of Medical Sciences at the School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University. These were medical officers and general practitioners from throughout Malaysia. They began their training in January 2020. Due to the extended Movement Control Order lockdown in Malaysia, their graduation ceremony was delayed until December 2021. These doctors were:



SUNWAY WIVERSITY Graduation Ceremony 2021

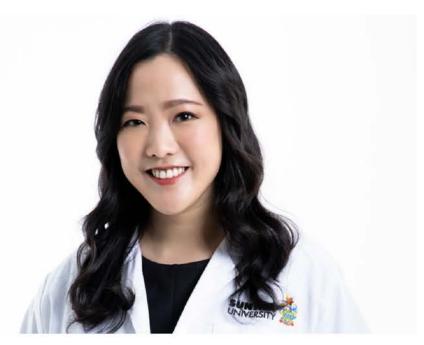
Dr Nagammai receiving her scholastic award from Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dr Lin See Yan, Pro-Chancellor of Sunway University

(Full story on Page 72)

Dr Cheng Maong Hui, Dr Chung Wai Mun, Dr Gan Jia Ching, Dr Ho Willee, Dr Khoo Vi Vien, Dr Nabeela Saadah binti Shafwan Badrie, Dr Nagammai A/P Thiagarajan, Dr Lawrence Ng, Dr Nor Faizah binti Ghazali, Dr Ooi Q-Lun, Dr Tan Wan Chuan, and Dr Wong Ping Foo. Of the graduates, Dr Nagammai Thiagarajan was awarded the Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award during the graduation. She went on to develop ground-breaking initiatives to address falls in the elderly by developing a falls clinic, for which she also won the Falls Champion Award by the Malaysian Falls Prevention Network (MYFALLS). Congratulations to all graduates of the PGDPCE Programme!



### Felicia Chung wins the L'Oreal-UNESCO for Women in Science Award 2021!



Associate Professor Dr Felicia Chung Fei Lei

Associate Professor Dr Felicia Chung Fei Lei of the Department of Medical Sciences was selected as one of the three winners of the L'Oréal'-UNESCO for Women in Sciences Award 2021.

#### As remarked by the letter to her:

"This award is L'Oréal's annual philanthropy program that aims to shine a spotlight and honor remarkable women whose research contributes to the advancement of society through science."

The L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science was first awarded in 2006 to recognize and promote the works and contributions of women scientists in Malaysia, in partnership with, UNESCO, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - a specialised agency of the United Nations aimed at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture. Being the first recipient from Sunway University, Dr Felicia hopes that this win will encourage all the outstanding female scientists at Sunway University to try for this award in the coming years.

We acknowledge Dr Chung's win as a testament to her research impact and leadership, especially in the area of cancer research. Congratulations, Dr Felicia Chung on your wonderful achievement. May you continue to be a trailblazer in the quest to fight cancers!

### Psychology academics win Outstanding University-Industry Collaboration Award



Dr Woo Pei Jun and Dr Wo Su Woan with their award certificates

Head of Psychology at School of Medical and Life Sciences, Dr Woo Pei Jun and lecturer, Dr Wo Su Woan received the 2021 Outstanding Achievement in University-Industry Collaboration Award on 21 January 2022. They were two of the seven recipients of the award given by Sunway iLabs to acknowledge efforts to work with the industry towards public benefits. They were acknowledged for their research work with Toy Eight (see Pages 44-45)

Dr Woo and Dr Wo were two out of seven recipients of this award, that was presented at a celebratory luncheon at Sunway FutureX, graced by Sunway Education Group CEO, Professor Elizabeth Lee, Sunway University President, Professor Sibrandes Poppema, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research Engagement & Impact), Professor Mahendhiran Sanggaran Nair, Chief Innovation Officer of Sunway Group and Director of Sunway iLabs, Matthijs Van Leeuwen, and Director of iLabs Foundry, Karen Lau.



Winners of the 2021 Outstanding Achievement in University-Industry Collaboration Award posing together with (L-R) Karen Lau, Matt van Leeuwen, Prof Sibrandes Poppema, Prof Elizabeth Lee, Prof Mahendhiran Nair.

Winners are (L-R): Assoc Prof Dr Derek Ong, Dr Woo Pei Jun, Assoc Prof Dr Sim Tze Ying, Assoc Prof Dr Catherine Lee, Dr Nicholas Ong and Prof Mohammad Khalid.

#### Recipients of Rewarding Research Output Fund 2022 at Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research



From left Dr Noraini, Dr Lim, Prof Poh and Dr Wu

Congratulations to Prof. Poh Chit Laa, Dr Wu Yuan Seng, Dr Noraini Abd Aziz and Dr Lim Hui Xuan who were awarded with the Rewarding Research Output (RRO) Fund for the year 2022. We are delighted to thank the significant contributions of the CVVR team in research output over the last two years under the leadership of Prof. Poh Chit Laa. Thank you to the Research and Enterprise office and the School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University (SMLS) for their continuous support. Below are the amounts of RROs the team received:

- 1. Prof. Poh Chit Laa MYR 12,900
- 2. Dr. Lim Hui Xuan MYR 11,200
- 3. Dr. Wu Yuan Seng MYR 7,800
- 4. Dr. Noraini Abdul Aziz MYR 6,300

#### Professor Poh Chit Laa appointed as jury to select best papers for Journal of Bioscience and Bioengineering



Professor Poh Chit Laa, Head of Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research (CVVR) was recently invited by the Journal of Bioscience and Bioengineering (JBB) to select the 2022 Excellent paper award of the Society for Biotechnology, Japan. Two papers out of a list of 27 papers were recommended by readers of JBB for voting by editorial board members for Bioscience and Bioengineering published by Elsevier.

Prof Poh Chit Laa

### Dr Wu Yuan Seng hits the ground running with publications, an internal grant, and two interns!



Dr Wu Yuan Seng in action, supervising during a lab boot camp.

Dr Wu Yuan Seng who recently joined the Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research in September 2021 did not waste any time in settling in. In the first quarter of 2022 alone, he has secured seven SCOPUS publications as a co-author, an internal grant from Sunway University and two pharmacy interns from MAHSA University.

Dr Wu published six papers and one book chapter in Q1/Q1 Scopus-indexed journals from January to March 2022. Below are his publications that are accessible and free for download:

- S. Fuloria, J.Mehta, A.Chandel, M.Sekar, N.N.I Mat Rani, M. Yasmin Begum, V. Subramaniyan, K. Chidambaram, L. Thangavelu, R. Nordin, Y.S.Wu, K.V. Sathasivam, P.T.Lum, D.Unnikrishnan Meenakshi, V.Kumarasamy, A.K.Azad and N.K. Fuloria. A Comprehensive Review on the Therapeutic Potential of Curcuma longa Linn. in Relation to its Major Active Constituent Curcumin. Frontiers in Pharmacology (Scopus Q1; Impact factor: 5.810) https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2022.820806
- S. Jha, R. Malviya, S. Fuloria, S. Sundram, V. Subramaniyan, M. Sekar, P.K. Sharma, S. Chakravarthi, Y.S.Wu, N. Mishra, D. Unnikrishnan Meenakshi, V. Bhalla, S. Djearamane and N.K. Fuloria. Characterization of Microwave-Controlled Polyacrylamide Graft Copolymer of Tamarind Seed Polysaccharide. *Polymers*, 14(5):1037 (Scopus Q1; Impact factor: 4.329) https://doi.org/10.3390/polym14051037
- J.W. Ee, R. Mac Guad, V. Subramaniyan, N.K. Fuloria, S. Fuloria, K.W.Choy, A. Velaga and **Y.S.Wu**\*. Deciphering Synsepalum Dulcificum as an Arising Phytotherapy Agent: Background, Phytochemical and Pharmacological Properties with Associated Molecular Mechanisms. *Sains Malaysiana*, *51(1)*:199-208 (Scopus Q2; Impact factor: 1.009) https://www.ukm.my/jsm/pdf\_files/SM-PDF-51-1-2022/16.pdf
- N.N.Nasir, M.Sekar, S.Fuloria, S.H.Gan, N.N.I. Mat Rani, S.Ravi, M. Yasmin Begum, K.Chidambaram, K.V. Sathasivam, S.Jeyabalan, A. Dhiravidamani, L. Thangavelu, P.T. Lum, V.Subramaniyan, Y.S.Wu, A.K.Azad and N.K.Fuloria. Kirenol: A Potential Natural Lead Molecule for a New Drug Design, Development, and Therapy for Inflammation. *Molecules*, 27(3):734 (Scopus Q2; Impact factor: 4.412) https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules27030734
- F.S.Khattulanuar, M.Sekar, S.Fuloria, S.H.Gan, N.N.I.Mat Rani, S.Ravi, K.Chidambaram, M. Yasmin Begum, A.K.Azad, Srikanth Jeyabalan, Arulmozhi Dhiravidamani, Lakshmi Thangavelu, Pei Teng Lum, Vetriselvan Subramaniyan, Y.S.Wu, K.V. Sathasivam and N.K.Fuloria. Tilianin: A Potential Natural Lead Molecule for New Drug Design and Development for the Treatment of Cardiovascular Disorders. *Molecules*, 27(3):673 (Scopus Q2; Impact factor: 4.412) <a href="https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules27030673">https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules27030673</a>
- N.A.Mohd Zaid, M.Sekar, S.Reddy Bonam, S.H.Gan, P.T.Lum, M. Yasmin Begum, N.N.I.Mat Rani, J.Vaijanathappa, Y.S.Wu, V.Subramaniyan, N.K.Fuloria, S.Fuloria. Promising Natural Products in New Drug Design, Development, and Therapy for Skin Disorders: An Overview of Scientific Evidence and Understanding Their Mechanism of Action. *Drug Design, Development and Therapy, 16*:23-66 (Scopus Q1; Impact factor: 4.162) <a href="https://doi.org/10.2147/DDDT.S326332">https://doi.org/10.2147/DDDT.S326332</a>
- S.Fuloria, V.Subramaniyan, M.Sekar, Y.S.Wu, S.Chakravarthi, R.Nordin, P.K.Sharma, D.Unnikrishnan Meenakshi, A.Mendiratta & N.K.Fuloria (2022). Introduction to Microbiome. In: Gupta, G., Oliver, B.G., Dua, K., Singh, A., MacLoughlin, R. (eds) *Microbiome in Inflammatory Lung Diseases*. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-8957-4\_2

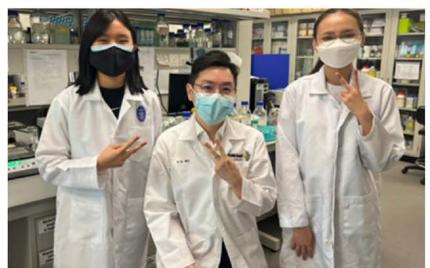
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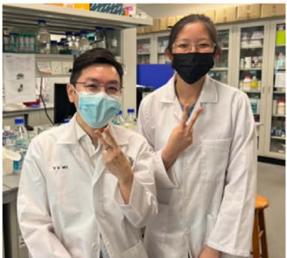


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Dr Wu was also awarded the Internal Research Grant Scheme 2022 (IRGS 2022) from Sunway University, for his work on an antiviral project to elucidate the potential of selected natural compounds against dengue virus serotypes using in vitro infectivity and in silico analyses. The mechanism of action of the natural compounds will be determined using in vitro assays, while in silico analysis will provide supporting data and contrasting with the in vitro results. This grant allowed Dr Wu to recruit his research assistant Ms Lim Xin Yi, a Bioinformatics degree holder from Multimedia University. She has experience in using molecular docking to predict binding of natural compounds on the Ebola virus.

Dr Wu was also awarded the Internal Research Grant Scheme 2022 (IRGS 2022) from Sunway University, for his work on an antiviral project to elucidate the potential of selected natural compounds against dengue virus serotypes using in vitro infectivity and in silico analyses. The mechanism of action of the natural compounds will be determined using in vitro assays, while in silico analysis will provide supporting data and contrasting with the in vitro results. This grant allowed Dr Wu to recruit his research assistant Ms Lim Xin Yi, a Bioinformatics degree holder from Multimedia University. She has experience in using molecular docking to predict binding of natural compounds on the Ebola virus.





From left: Chan Zelynn, Dr Wu and Tan Qi Wei

Dr Wu and Xin Yi

Pharmacy students, Ms Chan Zelynn and Ms Tan Qi Wei from MAHSA University applied to have their internship under Dr Wu, as he is known for his research work in anticancer and antiviral areas. Both students started their four-month internship in March 2022. Zelynn is tasked with an anticancer project using natural products, while Qi Wei was allocated an anti-dengue virus project using natural products, all of which intend to discover novel and effective therapeutics for potential clinical translations. We welcome Zelynn and Qi Wei and hope that they enjoy their internship while learning new knowledge and laboratory skills under the tutelage of Dr Wu.

Lastly, Dr Wu was also invited by Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) to be a member of the jury to evaluate innovative products created by primary, secondary, pre-university, and university students as part of a competition entitled "Creations de UiTM: International Mega Innovation Carnival 2022", held from 24 March to 8 April 2022. The theme for the competition was "For Human Empowering Neoteric Knowledge", with the objective of making innovation as a major catalyst for a better humanity.

We congratulate Dr Wu Yuan Seng on his great start since joining CVVR.

#### Professor Edward Tiekink ranks No. 2 among Top Chemistry Scientists in Malaysia



Prof Edward Tiekink

Head of the Research Centre for Crystalline Materials, Professor Edward R. T. Tiekink is ranked no.2 in Top Chemistry Scientists in Malaysia, according to a recent post in Research.com [see: https://research.com/scientists-rankings/chemistry/my]. The latest ranking in Research.com contains h-indices, publications and citations values collected on 6 December 2021. Prof. Tiekink has a h-index of 77, with 25199 citations from 1401 publications. This is another recognition following his listing in Stanford University's 2021 published a list on the top 2% of the most-cited scientists in various disciplines from around the world.

Professor Tiekink was listed under the subject category for inorganic and nuclear chemistry under the sub-field of organic chemistry [https://qs-gen.com/sunway-university-researchers-listed-in-top-2-in-the-world/]. His research focuses on Stereochemistry, Crystallography, Crystal structure, Molecule and Supramolecular chemistry. He interconnects Denticity, Ligand and Medicinal chemistry in the investigation of issues within Stereochemistry. His Crystallography research includes elements of Pyridine, Tin and Hydrogen bond. His most cited work to date is as follows:

- Metallotherapeutic Drugs and Metal-Based Diagnostic Agents: The Use of Metals in Medicine, Editor(s): M. Gielen, Edward R.T. Tiekink (2005). 10.1002/0470864052 (444 citations)
- Edward R.T. Tiekink, Structural chemistry of organotin carboxylates: a review of the crystallographic literature, Applied Organometallic Chemistry (1991) Vol.5, Issue 1 pg: 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1002/aoc.590050102 (399 citations)
- Edward R.T. Tiekink, Gold derivatives for the treatment of cancer, Critical Reviews in Oncology/Hematology (2002) Vol.42, Pg: 225-248. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1040-8428(01)00216-5 (236 citations)

### DBS postgraduate - Yong Shin Jie's publication on Long COVID-19 gains global attention

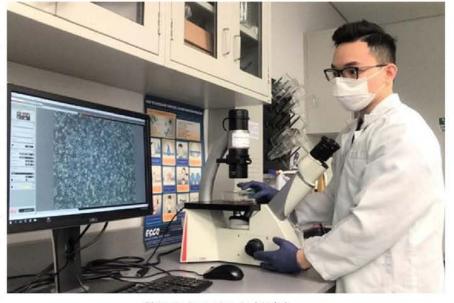


During his undergraduate days in the Department of Biological Sciences (DBS), Yong Shin Jie expressed his passion for scientific writing to his lecturers. Indeed, Shin Jie published his first-ever paper in the Jjournal, Frontiers in Neuroscience when he was a Year 3 undergraduate! Since then, he has never looked back and already has six Scopus-indexed publications to his name! A seventh paper is expected to come out as a pre-print.

Shin Jie noted, "During my final undergraduate year, my lecturers, Dr Audrey Lim and Dr Jactty Chew offered me a literature review project. This project took one year from initiation to publication. During that year, I had ample training in dissecting and synthesizing hundreds of scientific papers and presenting them in a coherent

write-up. Fast forward two years now, I've authored five more review papers and built a separate career as an independent science writer. This is my hope: to be financially stable doing what I enjoy, that is, science writing."

Shin Jie's most recent paper in 2021 entitled, "Long COVID or post-COVID-19 syndrome: putative pathophysiology, risk factors, and treatments" published in Infectious Diseases, Volume 53 (Issue addressed the information gaps on the possible pathophysiology, risk factors, and treatments in long COVID. To date, his paper has been cited 525 times by international researchers around the world – this is a testimony to how highly influential his paper is researchers working COVID-19. In total, he has 826 citations of all his publications combined, with a h-index of 6.



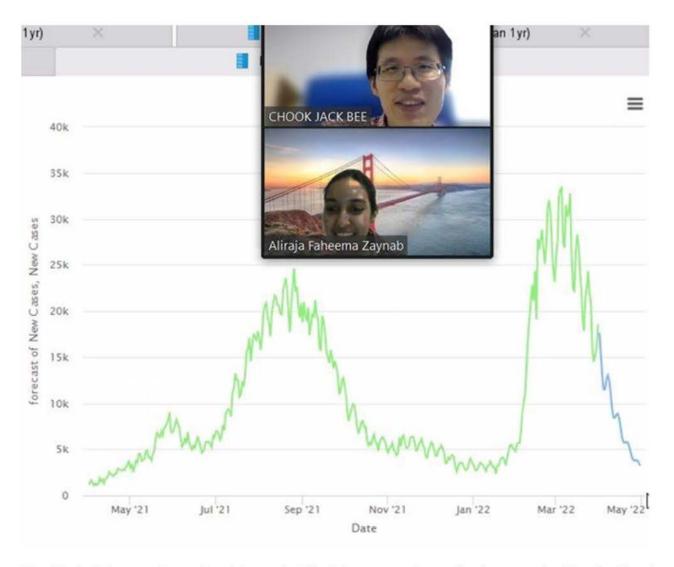
Shin Jie in action in his lab

If you would like to follow Shin Jie's scientific writing, please check out his popular science website here: (https://shinjieyong.medium.com/). His Google Scholar Profile -: (https://scholar.google.com/citations? user=0g318kcAAAAJ&hl=en).

We at SMLS are proud to have postgraduate students such as Yong Shin Jie with such passion for research and we wish him all the very best in his scientific writing career.



#### Mathematical Model of COVID-19 Infection Trend Developed by MSc Life Sciences Student



Ms Aliraja Faheema Zaynab, a Master in Life Sciences student who is supervised by Dr Chook Jack Bee, managed to work out a mathematical model to predict the COVID-19 trend in Malaysia. She and Dr Chook took almost one year's worth of COVID-19 confirmed cases to formulate the model for this prediction. The error rate was calculated to be less than 10%. They predict that COVID-19 cases in Malaysia would drop to below 5,000 cases near the end of May 2022. We look forward to this prediction coming true.

Dr Chook's specialties include mathematical modelling of infectious diseases, and molecular software development. One of publications that he and his team published on the spread of COVID-19 in 2021 was in PLosONE - JKL, Bradley DA, Chook JB, Lai KH,Ang WT, Teo KL, et al. (2021) Multivariate visualization of the global COVID-19 pandemic: A comparison of 161 countries. PLoS ONE, 16(5): e0252273



#### Psychology students win best presentations at the 2022 Lancaster University Undergraduate Research Conference!





#### The Department of Psychology does it again!

TWO of their students won awards at the recently concluded Lancaster University 2022 Undergraduate Research Conference, with Chelsy Wee winning the Overall Winner for Best Research Presentation, and Aileen Tan Sze Yan winning the Advocates Choice category! Both students are supervised by Senior Teaching Fellow, Ms Elaine Yong, FHEA.

Chelsy, whose presentation was on "The relationship between sibling relationship quality, gender, and subjective well-being across three stages of adulthood", commented that she was very grateful to be awarded the best presentation title, as it gave her the validation and confidence to continue pursuing her research endeavours. "This award is undeniably the product of Sunway University, as the staff and the programme have provided me with the knowledge and experiences needed to produce a presentation of this calibre. More specifically, I owe this award to my supervisor Ms Elaine Yong, whose guidance has helped me improve my research and presentation skills to an unthinkable degree", she added.

Aileen's research topic was "The effect of childhood parenting practices on emerging adult well-being and family functioning". She admitted that she does not consider herself a research-type' person and was initially unsure about participating in a research conference, as she did not think she had the ability to succinctly present her research to a mass audience. "Despite my hesitance, I figured I had nothing to lose in giving it a try. The conference turned out to be a valuable learning experience. I was exposed to fascinating topics in the current field of research and learned to present my work succinctly through written and verbal presentations. Receiving the award for best presentation was completely unexpected and it was humbling having my work recognised as a result of taking the initiative to try. I especially attribute this honour to my supervisor, Ms Elaine Yong, who has supported and encouraged my work and ideas throughout this research process." said Aileen.

When asked about her students winning the conference awards, Ms Yong replied, "It has been a pleasure to supervise both Chelsy and Aileen in their respective research topic. They were both motivated students with a huge research potential. I am happy to have supported them in their research journey." An elated Head of Department, Dr Woo Pei Jun remarked, "I am very proud of our students who took up the courage to participate in the conference. We had a very good number of submissions from the psychology department and I am delighted to hear that two of our psychology students had won the best research presentation award and advocates choice! A big congratulations to the winners and all students who participated. I am sure this

(Continued next page)



experience will widen their perspectives in the field and practice their science communication to a wider audience. A special congratulations to Ms Elaine Yong who has supervised Chelsy and Aileen's research work and presentation."

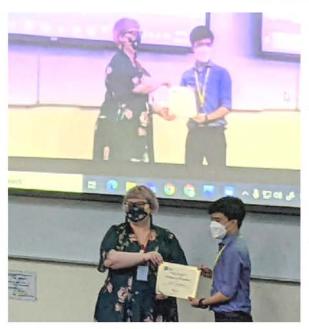
Joash Loh, a second-year psychology student represented the university and introduced Sunway University campus at the conference. "I had a great time preparing and sharing about Sunway Campus at the Lancaster 2022 UG Research Conference! Thought the moments leading up to the presentation was a bit nerve-wrecking, once the presentation started, it was just a joy to get to share about Sunway University", said Joash.

Overall, Sunway University was well represented, with 12 students presenting their research, with 8 being from Psychology. More information can be found here:

https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/2022ugconference/presentations/

Last year, Psychology student, Samuel Ling Deren won the Best Research Presentation Award at the 2021 Lancaster University Undergraduate Research Conference. Congratulations to both students, Ms Elaine Yong, and the Department of Psychology! We hope to have more Sunway students participate in this conference next year.

### BPSY Student Bryan Tee wins Best Poster at MAPSA 2022!



Bryan Tee receiving his certificate from Dr Jessica Price of University of Nottingham Malaysia.

Department of Psychology's final year BSc (Hons) Psychology student, Bryan Tee Qi Xuan won the best poster award at the recent 2022 Malaysian Psychology Students Assembly (MAPSA) Conference.

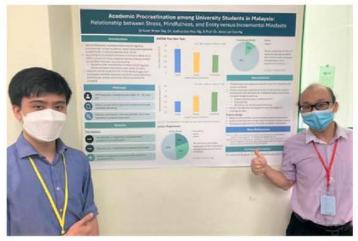
The conference was held at the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus on 26 March 2022. MAPSA is an annual conference series that provides a platform for undergraduate and postgraduate psychology students to present their research, as well as to learn from their peers and researchers in the field.

This year's MAPSA theme was on the real-world approach to psychology. Bryan, whose poster on his final year project entitled, "Academic Procrastination among University Students in Malaysia: Relationship between Stress, Mindfulness, and Entity versus Incremental Mindsets", was one of the three best posters of the conference, out of 23 posters presented.

He was supervised by Prof Alvin Ng Lai Oon, and guided by his former tutor, Dr Joshua Ng Joo Hou. Bryan commented that he found the conference to be very insightful in that he was able to learn a lot from the psychology research and topics presented. "I am happy and yet surprised at the validation given by the MAPSA panel towards my study. At the same time, I am very grateful to both of my supervisors, Prof Alvin Ng and Dr Joshua Ng. I extremely appreciate both of their efforts and guidance and would like to thank them once again from the bottom of my heart. All in all, it was indeed a great honour to achieve such feat!"

(Continued next page)

Dr Joshua, who was a tutor at the Department of Psychology at Sunway University before, commented, "I had nine students who presented at MAPSA 2022. I'm very proud of all of them for persevering with their research and gaining the courage to present their work at the conference. Bryan did well in his poster presentation and I'm very proud of him." Bryan's main supervisor, Prof Alvin remarked that he was very happy to see Bryan's vast improvements in his presentation and science communication skills. "Bryan is a very keen learner and has no qualms in seeking to improve in any way he can. He is also very courageous to test his skills as much as he can. I am truly impressed by his initiatives for personal development." Congratulations, Bryan Tee! We wish you continued success!





Bryan with Dr Joshua Ng at MAPSA 2022

Bryan's certificate

This year's MAPSA conference also saw Sunway University's Head of Psychology, Dr Woo Pei Jun give a plenary talk on her research concerning face processing in a multiracial environment. Dr Woo is a developmental psychologist who also runs the Sunway Baby Lab at the university, where she carries out infant studies.



#### Dr. Woo Pei Jun Sunway University

Face Processing in a Multiracial Environment: Differential Experience in Face Recognition & Face Categorisation



Apart from Dr Woo, psychology lecturer, Dr Lee Ai-Suan was also an invited speaker where she ran a workshop on eye-tracking method. Dr Lee is a cognitive psychologist with an interest in face perception. Having used three eye-tracking systems (Tobii, EyeLink and GazePoint), she is familiar with eye-tracking methodologies in research and has conducted eye-tracking workshops.

## Congratulations to Dr Chee Kwan Foong on passing her PhD Viva!



Dr Chee Kwan Foong in her graduation gown at Lancaster Univeristy

Psychology lecturer, Dr Chee Kwan Foong, was recently awarded a PhD from the Division of Health Research, Faculty of Health and Medicine, Lancaster University. Her doctoral study concerns the physical and social environments typical of residential care settings for older people in Malaysia. Dr Chee found that cultural barriers, including language and religious differences, significantly undermine the well-being of residents in Malaysian aged care homes. Given this, she was able to outline revised government guidelines for the aged care sector towards overcoming these barriers, while also including the provisions of mental health counselling support for residents. When asked about her reasons for her topic of study, Dr Chee explained, "Being a Buddhist, and identifying with the minority Chinese community in Malaysia, I am of the view that older people are valuable to society

and should be supported accordingly." This sentiment motivated the three main aims of her research. First, using the most appropriate methods, to gather sound data concerning the experiences of older residents in Malaysian care homes. Second, to understand the factors responsible or the poor quality of these experiences. Third, to come up with a series of key recommendations for the delivery of residential care for older residents, imagining that these could be presented as policy recommendations for adoption by the Malaysian Government. Dr Chee was one of a few Sunway University staff funded by the Lancaster University-Sunway University PhD Scholarship Scheme. She was supervised by Professor Christine Milligan, Professor Siobhan Reilly and Dr Caroline Swarbrick at Lancaster.\*new rephrased sentence pending\*

Dr Chee with one of her supervisors, Dr Caroline Swarbrick, Senior Lecturer in Ageing from the Centre of Health Research at the Faculty of Health and Medicine, Lancaster University.



#### Department of Psychology publishes Mending Hearts book



Editors, Dr Grace Yap and Dr Lim Meng Zhen with the Mending Hearts book You may purchase the book on this link:

https://www.gerakbudaya.com/sunway-university-press/Mending-Hearts-Healing-from-Separation-and-Loss

Kudos to Dr Grace Yap and Dr Lim Meng Zhen for completing their two-year project of compiling various stories and photos of items from the first two Break Up Exhibitions organised by the Department of Psychology together with Sunway Psychology Club. The resulting product is Mending Hearts: Healing from Separation and Loss, a Collection of True Stories, published by Sunway University Press. It contains a collection of 143 true stories and photos from students and members of the general public of many ages and backgrounds. Dr Grace has this to say about the contents of the book:

"You can love them, forgive them, want good things for them...but still move on without them." wrote Mandy Hale. People desire relationships, throughout a person's life they seek to form trusted bonds with one whom they will share the rest of their lives with. In this journey they will experience obstacles where if surpassed would lead to bonds stronger than others, while those who fail experience the pain of breakups. With this problem, people begin to ask themselves, "what is a breakup?", "why did it happen?", and especially "how do I overcome this pain".

Through the book Mending Hearts, we collected stories that show the feelings of grief, sorrow and despair felt after a breakup, and realize no matter how much pain people endure, they have grown from these experiences and eventually moved on. This book presents itself in a way like no other as it presents relatable stories from actual people who have gone through these pains and overcome them. At the end of reading, we hope to bring everyone through a rollercoaster of emotions as they experience the same pain and sorrows as those in the stories, but also experience the same joy and happiness of overcoming their grievances in the end. Give thanks to the past and move on with the wisdom and strength gained.



### **Psychology Month**

The month of February saw the Department of Psychology organise its first ever Psychology Month. This event was a month-long celebration of psychology as a discipline. It involved info graphics and videos about selected topics in psychology on Sunway University and SMLS social media; video interviews with prominent psychologists around the world, public talks by psychology experts, as well as a series of three public forums co-organised with Sunway University Press (SUP) called WhatSUP with Psychology '22, that culminated in the introduction of

a book after each forum. These forums were all hosted by Professor Alvin Ng who was the main curator of Psychology Month. The first forum on "The Science of Feelings" held on 10 February, was based on a book of the same name authored by one of the panel speakers, Assoc Professor Dr Eugene Tee of HELP University. He was joined by Dr Debbie Joffe Ellis of Columbia University, USA and our very own Assoc Professor



Happy emotions at the the Science of Feelings forum

Dr Lin Mei-Hua, from the Department of Psychology. The three panelists complemented each other well, with Dr Tee elaborating the scientific bases of emotions, and Dr Joffe Ellis speaking from a more practice-based approach to understanding and managing emotions, while Dr Lin, who is also the Associate Dean for Employability and Engagement spoke from on emotionality at the workplace. Dr Joffe Ellis particularly expounded the principles of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy that was developed by her late husband Dr Albert Ellis, where unhealthy emotions can be made healthier by modifying irrational beliefs into rational and more effective ones that also facilitate problem-solving. The forum ended with Dr Tee giving a short reading of selected excerpts from his book.

The second forum was Mending Hearts, which is also the title of a book that was published by SUP, and edited by Dr Grace Yap and Mr Lim Meng Zhen from the Department of Psychology,



Great chemistry among all panelists during the Mending Hearts forum, that was also graced by the CEO of Sunway Education Group, Professor Elizabeth Lee

(Continued next page)



#### **Psychology Month (continued)**

who were also panelists in the forum. They were joined by Dr Catherine Butler, a clinical psychologist from the University of Exeter, UK, and a professional relationship counsellor, Ms Azah Yusof. The forum discussed issues regarding relationship dynamics, breakups and grief, with the focus on normalising grief from separations and how to move on in life. Although the topic was a serious one that many could relate to, the sharing by all panelists often drew laughter. Nevertheless, the panelists were very open and generous with their down-to-earth and on-point wisdom for the audience. The forum that was held on 23 February concluded with both book editors giving a short speech each as part of the launch of Mending Hearts: Healing from Separation and Loss - A Collection of True Stories (see Page 59 for full story).



Laughter galore at the Lifespan Psychology forum when panelists, Prof Cecilia Essau, Dr Woo Pei Jun and book authors, Siew Ju Li and Sybella Ng share very relatable points that tickle the funny bone.

The third and final forum brought together seasoned researchers in developmental psychology to talk about handling issues throughout the lifespan, with a focus on resilience-building from childhood towards personal independence. It was based on the book authored by two of the panelists, Siew Ju Li and Sybella Ng called, "Growing Up Human" - a book that looks into the science of growing up based on Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development stages. They were joined by world renown Professor Cecilia Essau of Roehampton University, UK and our Head of Psychology at SMLS, Dr Woo Pei Jun. All panelists had much to say about facilitating the development of children based on their respective experiences and expertise. This forum that was held on 3 March ended with speeches from the two authors as part of the launch of their book.

All three forums had our Vice Chancellor, Professor Graeme Wilkinson give opening remarks. The organising team is very grateful to him for his generous support. In total, the forums attracted 700 registered viewers, with more watching on Facebook Live. The Department of Psychology is very thankful to Sunway University Press, led by Ms Carol Wong for hosting these forums. The books mentioned above can be found here: <a href="https://press.sunway.edu.my/catalogue">https://press.sunway.edu.my/catalogue</a>

A main objective of Psychology Month was to educate the public about what psychology is all about and how it can be applied to daily life. So apart from the forums described above, Prof Alvin Ng with help from his intern, Mr Wong Jin Wei developed infographics on various topics in psychology to be posted on social media. These are seen in full on the School of Medical and Life Sciences Linkedin. Also included for public education were videos of prominent psychologists commenting on psychology and its common misconceptions. (Continued next page)

# Special Events

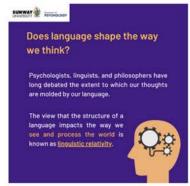
#### **Psychology Month (continued)**

Prof Alvin Ng also curated a series of public talks by psychology experts to show examples of how psychology is applied to understanding and solving daily problems and specific disorders. Dr Nimisha Kumar from SGT University, India spoke on cognitive behavioural approaches to anger management while Dr Shishir Palsapure from Morphic Minds, India, spoke on managing procrastination using the rational emotive behaviour approach. Dr Palsapure gave his talk a second time focusing on handling procrastination in children and adolescents due to popular demand. Dr Rachel Handley from University of Exeter, UK spoke on applying cognitive therapy on postraumatic stress disorder, and Dr Satwant Singh from Wordsworth Health Centre presented on clinical methods in addressing hoarding disorder. There was also a talk on the psychology of climate change by Professor David N. Sattler of Western Washington University.









Some examples of the infographics that were shared online during Psychology Month. These can still be viewed on the School of Medical and Liffe Sciences LinkedIn Page



Prof Alvin Ng interviewed Prof Emeritus Philip Zimbardo of Stanford University, a legend in psychology on the common misconceptions about psychology

Within the university, a staff webinar on Employee Assistance Program by Sunway Medical Centre clinical psychologist, Mr Yap Chee Khong was co-organised with the SEG Human Resources Department. Overall, the Psychology Month was a success. Highlights include video interviews with legendary and eminent psychologists such as Philip Zimbardo (left), Elizabeth Loftus and Michael Eysenck. Much about psychology was shared to the public and within the university.

# Special Events Open Days

Sunway University's Open Day on the weekend of 26-27 March 2022 saw the Departments of Biological Science, Nursing and Psychology open their labs to the public, as well as had staff attending to visitors at the academic counselling stations on campus to promote their respective programmes.

Our dedicated nursing lecturers and students brought visitors to their very well-equipped and spacious skill lab on Level 10 of the Sunway University building to get a feel of the actual clinical setting. The nursing lecturers showed visitors the trolley layouts for some procedure with the mannequin. Many parents were very pleased to see the teaching and environment, the setting of the skills lab and the scenery for the entire of the Sunway University. The parents were excited to see the learning environment. Such sentiments were also refected by parents who visited the Biological Sciences and Psychology Labs.





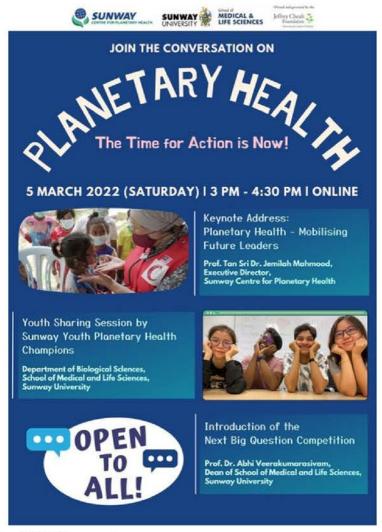




#### Lead Up to Next Big Question 2

SMLS in collaboration with the Marketing Unit of Sunway Education Group organised the Next Big Question 2, a competition for the best idea towards a solution to current problems in this case, Planetary Health Issues. This platform engages our Form 4 and 5 (Years 10 and 11) high school students to immerse themselves in the ideation process of scientific advancement. By framing solutions to their big questions they want to solve, we want to give our participants a voice to share their vision of a better tomorrow. This is the second instalment of the NBQ that was held in 2021.

The lead up to this competition that was held in July 2022, involved an event in March (right) consisting of a Keynote Address by the Executive Director of the Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, Professor Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood, and a sharing session by students from the Department of Biological Sciences who won accolades for their ecological intervention to clean up Sungai Kuyuh in 2021. This concluded with a briefing by SMLS Dean, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam on how the NBQ competition would run.



You may watch the NBQ2 forum here:

https://www.facebook.com/SunwayBioSociety/videos/sunway-universitys-2nd-next-big-question-forum-on-the-23rd-april-2022/690924148690765/

### **Getting To Know You**

#### Meet Dr Aleya Aziz Marzuki

Postdoctoral Research Fellow

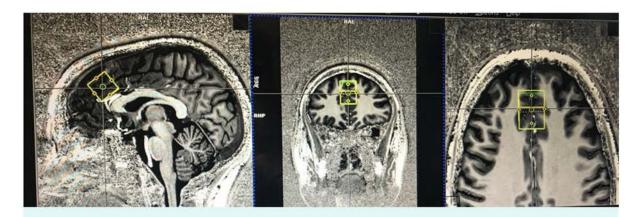
Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre



First, I want to thank the dedicated editors of the *SMiLeS* newsletter for inviting me to share a bit about myself in this section.

I started my academic journey off as a disillusioned MPhil in Psychology student at the University of Cambridge who was unable to secure any funding to start her PhD. Fortunately, my supervisor at the time was able to acquire funds to hire me as a research assistant. Becoming an RA within the university not only meant a monthly salary, but also that the tuition fees for my PhD were waived. Looking back, I am truly grateful for this opportunity and acknowledge the unfortunate truth that academia is highly inaccessible to a large proportion of society. I am very privileged to have had an encouraging supervisor and a very supportive family, and I hope that with time and effort these barriers to STEM and academia can be dismantled for everyone, especially those most disadvantaged.

My PhD focused on obsessive-compulsive disorder, a topic I am very passionate about as the disorder is both incredibly debilitating and often misunderstood. Specifically, my main project sought to understand how teenagers with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) learn and make decisions. My research assistant work similarly involved using functional magnetic resonance imaging to understand how brain functional networks in people with OCD alter when their symptoms are provoked.



In her previous research work, Dr Aleya used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to better understand the brain functional networks in people with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

There were many times in the first year of my PhD when I contemplated jumping ship. I am not someone who is naturally mathematically inclined nor computer literate. In fact, I waddled through my undergraduate degree somehow knowing zero keyboard shortcuts. Imagine my shock and horror when I found out I was expected to conduct computational work for my PhD and RA projects.



Dr Aleya proudly brandishing her doctoral thesis completed at the University of Cambridge.

Through forcing myself to learn R and Matlab (and uninstalling SPSS as it was so easy to turn to it to analyse my data\*), several months of Googling, and the great support of friends far more adept at programming than I could ever hope to be, something clicked. At long last I was able to do an assortment of really cool things including computational modelling, basic machine learning, and intricate data visualisation. Computational modelling of my data led to fascinating findings about latent mechanisms underlying decision-making in OCD.

(\*No shade to anyone who uses SPSS! I still find the software very practical and user friendly. I just personally needed to use R because the analysis I had to do could not be done in SPSS.)

The 3.5 years I spent at Cambridge were a mixed bag. On the one hand, the imposter syndrome was intense. Being surrounded by superiors and peers who appear far more accomplished than you takes a toll. Plus, the months leading up to my thesis submission were the most stressed and burnt out I'd ever been, although nothing a bit of counselling couldn't fix (this is your sign to get therapy if you need it!!).

The friends and colleagues I'd met in Cambridge kept me afloat. The highlights of my time there were the brunches, long walks, theatre trips, and dinner parties I had with close friends. It also helps that Cambridge is absolutely stunning and an absolute treat to roam around in, whether on foot, bike, or boat.





Left: With friends at a Cambridge formal. Right: Enjoying a long walk in out in Cambridgeshire.

After completing my PhD, I came back home to Malaysia to settle down and get to job hunting. I started off working as a full-time lecturer in another university. The teaching hours were intense but I appreciated the opportunity to gain hands-on lecturing experience and interact with keen psychology students. However, after awhile I began to miss research and science, and kept an eye out for opportunities to contribute to ongoing projects in Malaysia. This is when I stumbled upon the advertisement for Post-Doctoral Research Fellow within the Healthy Ageing and Wellbeing Research cluster (AHWRC) at Sunway Unversity.

Currently, as a post-doc Research Fellow at SMLS, Sunway I am mainly working on a compelling project looking at brain structural and electrophysiological correlates of healthy ageing, and how these functions can be improved following physical and cognitive interventions. The team is amazing and the facilities within Sunway University are incredible, and I can't wait to see what exciting research findings come about from this endeavour.





Left: Attending to an ever-growing forest of house plants. Right: Snuggling up to her cat with a book.

When not snooping around in people's brains, I can be found obsessively attending to an ever-growing forest of house plants, playing badminton, and snuggling my cats.

Aleya Aziz Marzuki, PhD
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre

### Alumni Story

#### Dr Nagammai Thiagarajan wins Falls Champions Award in December 2021

Dr Nagammai Thiagarajan, a graduate of the Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for the Elders (PGDPCE) programme, was recently awarded with the Falls Champions Award by the Malaysian Falls Prevention Network (MYFALLS). The award ceremony was held on 4 December 2021 at Le Meridien Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. This award was in recognition for her fervent leadership in the development of better geriatric services in the country.

Dr Nagammai is a Family Medicine Specialist based at Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Lumpur (KKKL) in Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur. She completed the PGDPCE) programme in December 2020 as part of the inaugural batch of students. The PDGPCE programme is offered by the Department of Medical Sciences at School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University, and is the first of its kind program in Malaysia. Dr Nagammai was also awarded the Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award during her graduation in July 2021. Dr Nagammai is currently pursuing her subspecialty in geriatrics under the Ministry of Health.



Dr Nagammai with her award at the MYFALLS event



As the family physician in-charge of the outpatient clinics, Dr Nagammai saw the need for better older person care due to the large proportion of senior citizens visiting her clinic. Hence, her interest in elderly care and her pursuance of postgraduate training in elderly care.

Dr Nagammai formed a senior citizen's group, popularly known as the 'WarMas Group' (Warga Emas) in February 2020. The community now has 36 members, and the multidisciplinary team above holds bimonthly activities such as Zumba, health talks, cooking classes, outdoor and group activities, and mental health counselling, among many others. As a result of Dr Nagammai's interest in falls and completing the PGDPCE programme,

she inaugurated the Fall Prevention Clinic in Primary Care as an initial step in a complex service for the aged population. The service began in February 2021, with a multidisciplinary team consisting of medical officers, nurses, medical assistants, pharmacists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, a dietician and a counsellor. The objective of the clinic is to prevent falls among the elderly, reducing risks of injury. This includes identifying risk factors of falls and conducting holistic assessments. Interventions involve reviewing medication, physical therapy and occupational therapy; as well as to increase patients' and caregivers' awareness on fall risks.

## Alumni Story

#### Full-fledged Nurse: Jyotilakshmi Divya Nandiini Mahesan

Jyotilakshmi Divya Nandiini Mahesan recently graduated from the Diploma in Nursing programme after completing it in October 2021. She is currently a Registered Nurse at Sunway Medical Centre in Bandar Sunway. Jyoti was part of the July 2018 intake cohort of nursing students at the Department of Nursing, School of Medical and Life Sciences.

At the point of writing, Jyoti is attached to the operating theatre, as part of her in-house training being a new nurse. Her current job scope includes assessing, observing, speaking to patients, as well as administering patient medications and implementing their nursing care plans.

Hailing from Puchong, Selangor, Jyoti had always wanted to work in the healthcare industry and to help people. It was her father, Mahesan Selladurai who recommended that she pursue nursing after completing her Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian High School certificate). I've always wanted to be in the healthcare industry and to help people, my father recommended I apply for nursing upon completion of my Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)



Jyoti on the day of her graduation

Jyoti felt at that time that she had the skill set to do well in it. Indeed, she did. When asked what was most memorable for her, Jyoti replied, "Definitely the student postings! The exposure and learning I got as I worked alongside my clinical instructors, my lecturers and other nurses was the best experience! I got to see most of the theory I studied being implemented in real life. It wasn't easy trying to connect them because are not as straight-forward but it takes time and confidence, as well as self-trust to know what I was doing."

(Continued next page)

## Alumni —— Story



Jyoti in full gear before providing assistance in the operating theatre

"I also got to meet so many patients who inspired me. Hearing their backstories and befriending them as I worked in the allocated wards for the week were also memorable moments for me. You get to learn so much in all kinds of ways and I believe that's the best form of teaching as you go through this journey", ,she remarked.

Jyoti also added that the diploma programme prepared her well in terms of having a basic guide to be a good and efficient nurse. She expressed gratitude towards her lecturers and clinical instructors. Jyoti has this to advise current nursing students, "Nursing isn't easy. Patience, determination and rest are very important. Never neglect other parts of yourself and your life as you study. The best reward upon graduating is knowing that you did all of it by yourself amidst your struggles and you get to help people who need you."

We wish Jyotilakshmi Mahesan the best in her career as a nurse!



Jyoti and her course mates when they were in training during her professional diploma programme.

## Birthday Celebrations Jan, Feb & Mar

At SMLS, we now have monthly birthday celebrations for staff whose birthdays fall within each month. Thanks to our cheerful Syazwani Asmawi and her team, we have fun lunch time gatherings once a month to celebrate birthdays of SMLS staff. Here are photos from the first three months of the year. Try identifying those behind the masks! (the February one is especially difficult). Nevertheless, we look forward to more parties!





## HAPPENINGS:

April to June

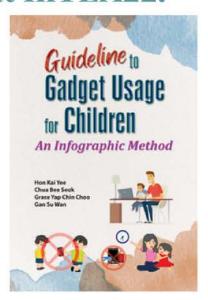


# Achieve — ments

## Dr Grace Yap and team win Silver Award for Invention/Innovation at InTEX22!

Dr Grace Yap Chin Choo from the Department of Psychology and her team published a guideline under a Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS)-RACER grant entitled, "Guideline to Gadget Usage for Children: An Infographic Method" published by UMS Press. This guideline won the Silver Award for The Invention/Innovation in the Innovation on Technology Expo (InTEX22), organized by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), on 15-16 June 2022.

The publication is the first module in Malaysia published by academics to help parents and teachers to reduce screen time among children. It was a collaboration between Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Sunway University, and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). This evidence-based guideline consists of four modules, covering information from demographics of research participants to the tips to reduce excessive gadget usage in children.











A/P Dr Chua Bee Seok







Dr Gan Su Wan

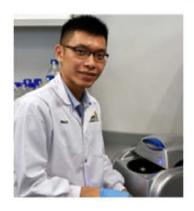
The FRGS-RACER is a grant for early researchers given out by the Ministry of Higher Education. Principal Investigator, Dr Hon Kai Yee of the Faculty of Psychology and Education, UMS secured MYR 44,350 for this project. Other members of the team include Associate Professor Dr Chua Bee Seok of the Faculty of Psychology and Education, UMS and Assistant Professor Dr Gan Su Wan of the Department of Psychology and Counselling, UTAR.

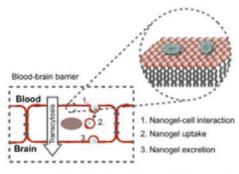
The book can be purchased here:

https://umspress.com.my/e-book/e-book-gadget-usage-for-children-an-infographic-method



# Recipient of Internal Research Grant 2022 collaborates with University Medical Center Groningen (UMCG)





https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nano.2021.102377

Dr Ronald Teow: Nanomedicine on brain cancer

Associate Professor Dr Ronald Teow from Department of Medical Sciences (DMS) is conducting research into ways of enabling nanoparticles-based drugs to penetrate the brain. Brain tumours are difficult to treat because drugs cannot easily penetrate the brain. This research project aims to change the form the nanoparticles such as the shape and size to create an effective drug to kill the brain cancer cells.

Dr Ronald is collaborating with Professor Dr Inge Zuhorn who leads the research group 'Drug Delivery across Cellular Barriers' at the Department of Biomedical Engineering, University Medical Center Groningen, Netherlands. We wish him the best of success in his project.

#### Promotion of Postgraduate Research Projects During Open Day

During the Sunway Education Open Day, SMLS had a whole section at the Graduate Centre to promote the works of our postgraduate students, who were themselves on hand to explain their research to interested parties.



Dr Chen Jit Ern, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam and Assoc Prof Dr Kavita Reginald with MSc Life Sciences students, Nicole Lai Jean Yean (White) and Michelle Felicia Lee Li Yun (Black)



MSc Psychology student, Wong Pui Ying, showing her phone app that is part of her study that is explained by her poster.

# Research Activities

#### Seaweed Expert Assoc Prof Dr Yow Yoon Yen Invited to Speak at International Conference

Associate Professor Dr Yow Yoon Yen from the Department of Biological Sciences was an invited speaker at the 2022 Wando International Seaweed Symposium (WISS) on 5-7 May, Wando, Jeonnam, Korea, with the theme "Healthier Future with Algae". An algae biotechnologist, her research focuses on the discovery and development of new compounds from algae as nutraceutical candidates in the prevention of neurodegenerative diseases. She is also working on the beneficial effects of algae in cosmeceuticals and its anti-microbial and anti-cancer properties. Dr Yow is interested in the study of molecular phylogenetics and genetic diversity of algae, and invasive Pomacea apple snails.



#### **Seed Bomb Workshops for School Teachers led by Dr Jane Gew**



Sunway Material Smart Science and Engineering (SMS2E) Research Cluster conducted a 4-days seed bomb workshops for 120 schoolteachers on Teachers' Day from 31 May to 3 June 2022. The workshops were conducted by Dr Jane Gew, her research assistants and student ambassadors from the School of Medical and Life Sciences: Lein Li Lin, Chia Dane, Chin Sean Young, Asuwini Jeevanantham, Ren Wen Lew, Brian Tee, Caleb Eng, Goh Pei En, Sharis Lo Wan Ting, Ng Hui Wen, and Reem Michael Tesfagin. We learn better when we teach, don't we?



## New Postgraduate Students at Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research (CVVR)

Dr. Wu Yuan Seng and Dr. Lim Hui Xuan from the Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research (CVVR) successfully recruited two Master in Life Science candidates in April 2022 semester. Ms. Saraswathi A/P Nagandran will work on a research project of Dr. Wu to evaluate the potential antiviral peptides against dengue virus serotypes that have been predicted using molecular docking. Specifically, the therapeutic efficacy of the antiviral peptides and the associated mechanism as well as the highly responsive dengue virus serotype will be identified. While Mr. Voon Guan Zhong is the Master candidate of Dr. Lim to work on a dengue project by developing tetravalent peptide-based dengue vaccine in nanoparticles and examining its protective effect against dengue virus serotypes.

#### Virtual Talks and Hands-on Workshop in MicroRNAs Expression Analysis and Quantitation Using NanoString nCounter Platform



The Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research (CVVR), School of Medical and Life Science successfully organised virtual talks and a hands-on workshop in conjunction with "Analysis and Quantitation of MicroRNAs by NanoString nCounter Platform in Dengue-infected Plasma and Cancer Cell Lines" in collaboration with the Genomax Technologies Sdn Bhd on 22-23 June 2022.

Participants enjoyed the interactive and informative talks related to miRNA expression in both communicable (dengue) and non-communicable (cancer) diseases given by the speakers. The talks were well-planned to align with our university's support and comply with the Sustainable Development Goal No. 3 set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 and other government policies. Regarding the hands-on workshop, the feedback from the participants is positive. Most importantly, they learned a lot and gained useful information on miRNA expression analysis in both dengue patient samples and cancer cell lines using the high-throughput NanoString nCounter platform.

# Industry Engagement Car World Acti

# The Malaysian Society for World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health (MyWASSH) officially launched!



 Honorary advisor to MyWASSH, Professor Sibrandes Poppema gave an introduction to the priorities and commitments of Sunway University, highlighting the university's strengths in research, and the contributions the different schools of Sunway University can make towards the reduction of salt intake amongst Malaysians.

2. Prof. Poppema and Prof. Abhimanyu, president and provost of Sunway University respectively, discussing future opportunities with Dr Feisul Idzwan Mustapha, Deputy Director (Non-communicable diseases) at the Ministry of Health, Malaysia; Dr Rabindra Romauld Abeyasinghe (WHO Representative and Head of the WHO Country Office to Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore) and Prof Dr Suzana binti Shahar (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia).

3. Dr Feisul Idzwan Mustapha speaking to members of MyWASSH, from left: Dr. Beh Hooi Chin (University of Malaya Medical Centre), Dr. Ian Choong (Family Medicine Specialist Klinik Kesihatan Putrajaya Presint 18), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hazreen bin Abdul Majid (University of Malaya Medical Centre), and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Felicia Chung (Sunway University).

Many of us have become accustomed to drinking sweetened drinks, or to thinking that food cooked without copious amounts of salt is "tasteless". There is a good reason for that – the average Malaysian consumes more salt and sugar than the limits recommended by the World Health Organization, and this could have harmful effects on one's health. Clearly, our tastebuds have become accustomed to very strong flavors.

However, consuming excessive amounts of salt and sugar can have severe impacts on one's health. With this in mind, the Malaysian Society for World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health (MyWASSH) was founded by Prof. Dr Chia Yook Chin. The society brings together clinicians, nutritionists, research scientists and educators with a keen interest in promoting salt and sugar reduction strategies by engaging with the public, policy makers, and the food industry.

On 12 May 2022, the society was officially launched in conjunction with the Ministry of Health's Salt Reduction Strategy in the presence of the Deputy Minister of Health, Dato Dr Haji Noor Azmi bin Ghazali, and the Deputy Director (Non-communicable diseases) of the Ministry of Health, Malaysia, Dr Feisul Mustapha.

The society organizes public education events and webinars for healthcare professionals and promotes salt reduction through cooking demonstrations and social media content. The society is ever-growing!

Find out more by visiting their website: <a href="https://university.sunway.edu.my/research/mywassh">https://university.sunway.edu.my/research/mywassh</a>

## Community—— Engagement

#### **School Health Visit by Student Nurses**

On 13 April 2022, five nursing students from Sunway University's Diploma in Nursing Group 2019/04 and Ms Mouckammal Kittappa, the clinical instructor in-charge of the nursing students in Klinik Kesihatan Port Klang, had the opportunity to join the School Health Team to Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kampung Jawa, Klang for a school health visit.

This school provides education to more than 1000 students including non-disabled and disabled students. This school health visit focuses mainly on Form 3 students which are 400 students.

The nursing students were able to take turns to assist and perform procedures such as performing visual acuity test and giving anti-tetanus toxoid vaccine through intramuscular injection under the supervision of their clinical instructor and the School Health Team. Other than performing these procedures, the nursing students also helped in documentation and ensured that the Form 3 students were in a proper queue to see the doctors for their checkup.

Overall, the nursing students and the clinical instructor in-charge had a great time and experience in this school health visit.





The five nursing students with their clinical instructor, Ms Mouckammal (in purple), and the School Health Team

# Alumni — Story

#### Visiting Psychology Alumna Active in Senior Citizens Club



TanMi with Assoc Prof Dr Lin Mei-Hua, Elaine Yong and Dr Alia Azalea at the Department of Psychology

Psychology alumna Mdm TamMi Teow dropped by the Sunway University campus on 12th April 2022. TamMi enrolled in the BSc (Hons) Psychology in 2008 and successfully graduated in 2012. Her final year research project was supervised by Dr. Woo Pei Jun. Presently, TamMi holds a franchisee in Mental Arithmetic and IMaths from UCMAS (affiliated with UCIC International with branches in 85 countries). TamMi holds their Premier Teacher certificate and Invigilator certification. She usually teaches during the weekends.

At the tender age of 67, TamMi also serves as a committee member of the SCCSJ (Senior Citizen Club Subang Jaya); and helps in PAWE (Persatuan Activities Warga Emas). She assists with translation work and writing of the society's activities. Due to her psychological background, TamMi would also be approached by members to discuss/manage mental health or family issues. In the pipeline are plans for her to offer English classes to the said elderly members. In closing, she wishes all her juniors, "Play hard but study even harder as your future depends on these few critical years. Don't disappoint your parents who sponsored you to Sunway. You have got a chance unlike me who only now, is able to sponsor myself!"

#### Nursing graduate gets job in Bristol

Nursing alumna from Zimbabwe, Caroline Kudzayi Kahiya is now a registered nurse band 5 at Southmead Hospital Bristol, UK, a healthcare facility with over 8,000 staff delivering healthcare across Southmead Hospital Bristol, Cossham Hospital, Bristol Centre for Enablement and within the local community of Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Caroline started working at the hospital in March 2021 upon completing the Nursing Board Examination in Malaysia. Her parents were very happy that she scored a distinction in the exam. "I love my working place as it gives me the opportunity to experience what I had learned in Malaysia as a student nurse. Studying in Sunway University and having placement at Sunway Medical Centre fully equipped me to work here as I had access to advanced medical supplies just like it is in the United Kingdom." she remarked. We wish her all the best in her career.



#### Special === Events

#### Autism Awareness Month by the Department of Psychology

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a diverse group of conditions that developed in early childhood and about one in 68 children has ASD (WHO, 2021). ASD is a lifelong developmental condition which affects different people in different ways. With the increased awareness of early diagnosis and intervention among the parents over the years, some autism children who are academically competent are now continuing their studies in higher education. However, these students have additional learning disabilities that are poorly understood by academicians as well as their peers. For example, autistic students face challenges persuading academic staff to make reasonable adjustments to coursework and usual teaching practices. They may also have problem making friends as well as doing group assignment with their peers as they may have difficulties understanding social cues and managing their personal anxieties.

In conjunction with World Autism Awareness Month 2022 in April, the Department of Psychology, Sunway Psychology Club and Student LIFE at Sunway University, held four events to support autism students and increase awareness at the university. The first event was an online forum called "A dialogue of Autism: Early or Late?" which was held on 12 April 2022 from 1.00pm to 2.30pm, with speakers consisting of Dr Daniel Leong, a person with lived experience as an individual with autism; Dr Tan Gek Ling, a paediatrician and Ms Intan Miranti who is mother to comic writer and illustrator, Andi Miranti who is autistic. Moderating the session was Prof Alvin Ng Lai Oon of the Department of Psychology.

The main take home points from the forum were: When it comes to diagnosing autism, it is never too early or too late. In fact, a diagnosis help to identify your child's strengths, limitations and potentials for growth. The panel discussed the process of assessments and the importance of early diagnosis and intervention, disclosure of ASD in education and work settings and how we can plan the future of individuals living autism according to family values and the child's needs.



The poster and the screen shot of the forum. There were many questions from the audience that were very well answered by the panelists

The next event was a half-day workshop called "Supporting Peers with Autism & Teh Tarik Session that was held on the morning of 21 April, with Ms Eng Qian Jun and Mr Charles Yip as speakers and Dr Wo Su Woan as the moderator. Ms Eng addressed the role of the Counselling and Student Welfare Unit in helping students with autism, as well as other learning or developmental disabilities. The also touched on the concepts of disability and inclusion, as well as barriers to accessibility and support. She conducted empathy exercises to help academics and students understand how autistic students can be helped within and outside the classroom. Lastly, a *teh tarik* session with Mr Charles covered discussions on how student welfare can make practical adjustments for students who need additional support.

(Continued next page)

## Special Events

## Autism Awareness Month by the Department of Psychology (continued)



Towards the end of April, there were two more virtual events. One was a webinar by renown autism intervention researher, Dr Elizabeth Laugeson from Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Behavior at University of California, Los Angeles on 28 April at 9.00am. Dr Laugeson's talkl was on "The Science of Social Success for Neurodivergent Adults: Lessons from the UCLA PEERS Clinic". She shared the aspects of autism that can make everyday life challenging, such as reading social cues, understanding perspectives of others, making friends at the higher education institution. Dr Laugeson also spoke about the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) that she codeveloped that provides evidence-based social skills treatment to help young adults with autism.



The final event for the Autism Awareness Month was the Autism Month Research Forum called "Demystifying Autism: What does the research say?" Speakers included Prof Peter Mitchell of University of Bradford, Assoc Prof Elizabeth Sheppard of University of Nottingham, Assoc Prof Marieke De Vries of University of Nottingham Malaysia and Dr Kartini Ilias of University Teknology MARA. This forum was moderated by Prof Alvin Ng. The forum started with discussing the common misconceptions of autism. The panel then shared the latest research on autism.

# Special — Events

#### **Learning Disability Experience Exhibition**

The Learning Disabilities Experience Exhibition 2022 was held at the Gallery at Sunway University on 31 May 2022, from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. It was put together by final year students enrolled in the PSY3034 Learning Disabilities subject under the supervision of their lecturer, Dr Wo Su Woan.

While many people have heard about Dyslexia, Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), intellectual disabilities, and other special needs, there are very few who truly understand what it is like to face challenges experienced by these individuals and their families. This event was designed to give better insights into the lives of people with learning and developmental disabilities through the following themes: Point of View of individuals with dyslexia, dyscalculia, assistive technology in helping student with Dyslexia, higher education and friendship in ADHD, employment issues, sex and dating among Autistic adults, aging and end of life issue. The event hoped to act as a catalyst on campus to encourage people from different backgrounds to think about their roles in building a more inclusive society for people with learning and developmental disabilities.

In addition to the physical exhibition, there were online sessions which took place on the 1 and 2 June 2022, with presentations on Dysgraphia, Aging and End-of-life Issues, as well as Assessment, Diagnosis and Early Interventions of Autism in Malaysia. Overall, the event received positive feedback from students and faculty members. They learned more about the lives of people with disabilities through the information disseminated and activities (e.g., VR stimulation, sensory box) carried out by various groups. Participants were also willing to pass on the knowledge gained at the event to people around them and wished to have more of such opportunities in the future.



A talk on ADHD given by a student to visitors of the exhibition



Dr Woo Pei Jun and Dr Wo Su Woan with students at the
ADHD booth



Thomas Goh explaining about ADHD to Dr Jactty Chew, Prof Reuben Clements and Dr Kavita Reginald



Dr Woo Pei Jun with students at the Dyslexia booth



Dr John Aruta and Dr Wu Shin Ling posing with students in charge of the booth explaining about autism

# Special Events

## Kindness Cookies Sale in support of people with learning disability!



Serendipity supporters: A/Prof Dr Jactty Chew, A/Prof Dr Annie Lee, Dr Woo Pei Jun, A/Prof Dr Yow Yoon Yen and Dr Chee Kwan Foong

The Serendipity event, held by Sunway Psychology Club (SPC) in collaboration with Peer Counselling Volunteers (PCV), on 17-19th May 2022, was carried out to spread positivity and gratitude to the public through three main activities: Kindness Cookie Sale, Gratitude Tree and Donation for Generating Opportunities for Learning Disables (GOLD). GOLD is a non-profit social enterprise that provides free supported employment and rehabilitative vocation training for learning disabilities (LD) school leavers.

The highlight of the cookie sale was the cookie positivity note prepared for each customer to spread positivity and express our gratitude towards them for buying the cookies. Meanwhile, the Gratitude Tree was unique in reminding the public to express what they are thankful for on the gratitude leaf notes. A total of 138 cookie jars and 75 cookie packets were sold, and a total of RM 2,223 were raised from the event.

The event received positive feedback from the customers about the cookies. Some of the customers even expressed support to the event by helping the individuals from GOLD throughout the event while buying cookies. Moreover, many passersby were attracted by the delightful booth decorations, and several students were even amazed by the Gratitude Tree activity. Customers left the event with the cookie positivity notes, feeling happy and grateful.

Prof Alvin Ng: - a very happy customer





#### **International Nurses' Day Celebration**



International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every May 12, as the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. Known as the 'Lady with the Lamp', and she is considered as the founder of modern nursing. Event today, she stands as an example of the importance of the profession. The event was established in 1974 by the International Council of the Nurses (ICN), to highlight the important roles of nurses to fulfil in health care setting. Nightingale became an important figure in nursing in the 1850s during the Crimean war.

"Nurses: A Voice to Lead - Invest in Nursing and Respect Rights to Secure Global Health" is the International Nurses' Day theme for 2022. On this day, we celebrate the hard work and contributions of our nurses by discovering some of their daily challenges and what can be done to help them.

Sunway University's Departmet of Nursing successfully conducted a Nurses Day Celebration virtually on 11 June 2022. The event was blessed with the presence of the Provost, professors, lecturers, staff, and also nursing student.

The celebration was opened by CEO of Sunway Education Group, Prof Dato' Elizabeth Lee who gave a welcome address with the title 'From Pandemic to Endemic: How Nursing Can Start to Make the Transition'. Her message was very heartfelt and meaningful, and we are glad to have such a wonderful speech from the Prof Dato' Lee.

The event's highlight was when Sunway Group Chairman and Sunway University Chancellor, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah, *AO gave* his honourable speech with the title of 'Invest in Nursing and respect rights to secure global health'. The Department of Nursing gives special thanks to Tan Sri for his such an inspiring speech.

We also had a speech given by President of Sunway University, Prof Sibrandes Poppema, on 'The shortage of nurses in Sunway group'. The shortage of nurses is a national issue as many of nurses are migrating to foreign countries to work as they get better pay and recognition from their superiors there. Prof Poppema hopes that the nursing graduates of Sunway University will contribute to addressing this very serious issue.

The Nurse's Day Event was blessed with the presence of our beloved Matron Anny Mary a/p S. Joseph @ Soosai, who is the Deputy Director of Nursing Malaysia. She is one of the pillars for nurses in Malaysia. Her speech was titled, 'The shortage of nurses in Malaysia and its impact to healthcare'. The speech was very informative and empowering for us nurses to continue our service and training for the betterment of healthcare in Malaysia.

(Continued next page)

# Special Events

#### **International Nurses' Day Celebration (continued)**





1st: Shirly Tang



2nd: Sawnthary

3rd: Kalivani

The Nurses Day Celebration held a photo contest for the nurses with the title of 'Calling for Vintage Nurses'. The contest aimed to bring back our nurses in the era's of 70s and 80s. The winner for the photo contest was Ms Shirly Tang Kie Yieng, second prize goes for Ms Sawnthary Malluvalasa Simhachalam and the third prize goes to Ms Kalivani Poongawanam.

The celebration included two performances by the nursing students. The first opening dance was by nursing students from Group 202110, and closing dance group was from nursing student Group 202107. The audience enjoyed and were fascinated with the students' performances. They worked hard to deliver wonderful performances.

Nurses Day wishes from Provost and Dean of SMLS, Prof. Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam made the event more meaningful. The event became even more special after the nurses' oath-taking leading up to Nurses Day wishes from Sunway University staff and nursing students.





The event also saw the best students from each semester being acknowledged. Congratulations to all the best students! Their hard work inspires us, and we hope that celebrating them will boost their confidence in their upcoming exams. Our beloved HOD of Nursing, Prof Khatijah Lim Abdullah gave a closing speech. We are very grateful to Prof Khatijah for her guidance in making this event successful. Thank you very much all nursing staff and students who contributed to the success of this event. Also, special thanks to our media team who supported this event through to its success.

Written by: V.Tulasi Dewi Chairperson Nurses Day 2022 Sunway University



## Allergy Education outreach in conjunction with World Allergy Week 2022

In 2022, Sunway University co-hosted the World Allergy Week (5th – 11th June 2022) together with the Malaysian Society of Allergy and Immunology (MSAI). The World Allergy Week is an annual initiative of the World Allergy Organization (WAO), together with its Member Societies, to raise awareness of allergic disease and related disorders and advocate for the provision of training and resources in the diagnosis, management, and prevention of these diseases and asthma, which are rising in prevalence around the world. The focus of the World Allergy Week 2022 was on the connection between asthma and allergic airway diseases, with the theme "Breath Better".



Videos of Breathing Exercises to Improve Lung Health can be found at these links:

- <u>https://youtu.be/XQznZGNjUkg</u> (English)
- <u>https://youtu.be/YInkdm\_Jj24</u> (Bahasa Malaysia)
- <u>https://youtu.be/rDzYMPVrmHM</u> (Mandarin)



Associate Professor Dr Kavita Reginald, who is passionate on allergy research, and is presently the Assistant Secretary of MSAI was the lead organizer of the World Allergy Week: Malaysian Chapter initiative. Some of the key highlights included expert panel discussion, allergy and asthma related talks, infographics and breathing exercise videos made by our very own Sunway University undergraduate students.

As A/Prof Dr Kavita strongly believes that allergy education must start young, she organized and delivered an awareness talk titled "Asthma: Can you manage it". Close to a 150 students from the Sunway International School attended the session, and were very enthusiastic throughout the 1-hour interactive talk.

Apart from public awareness campaigns, A/Prof Dr Kavita also organized an Allergy Education Seminar for medical practitioners on the topic of "Managing Anaphylaxis". Held on 20th May 2022, this webinar was warmly received by almost 70 participants, mainly our student nurses.



A/P Dr Kavita speaking to students from Sunway International School about managing asthma.



#### New Adjunct Senior Practice Fellow at the Department of Psychology



The Department of Psychology appointed an Adjunct Senior Practice Fellow this June - Ms Hetal Doshi, CEO of O-Psych Sdn Bhd! She is an Industrial / Organisational (I/O) Psychologist and a Certified Professional Coach.

Organisational psychologist, Associate Professor Dr Lin Mei-Hua Lin and Prof Alvin Ng had a nice meet up on campus on early August to get to know each other better. Hetal will be helping out in teaching I/O psychology-related classes as well as to supervise interns and collaborate with the department on various research projects.

For more information on what an I/O psychologist does, have a watch of this brief video by Hetal that was recorded for our Psychology Month event earlier this year:

https://youtu.be/hkKsBAbmZyl



Hetal has a Ted Talk video as well: <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/hetal">https://www.ted.com/talks/hetal</a> doshi why mental health strategies in the workplace fail

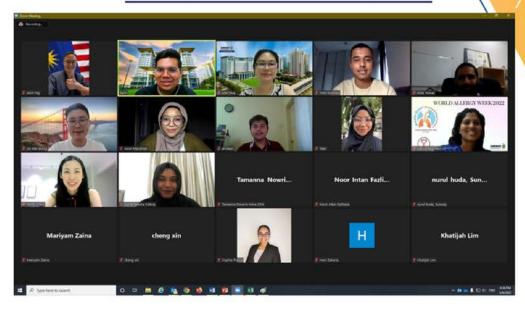
It's great to have you, Hetal. We will surely have mutual benefits from our collaborations. Thank you for joining us!

### Student = \_\_\_\_ Engagement

#### SMLS International Students' Mixer#1



#### PHOTOS DURING EVENT



On 3 June 2022, SMLS organised the first International Students' Mixer (ISM) for the year. This mixer aimed to bring together international students of SMLS to get to know each other and to learn from each other about coping with studies and being away from home. It was held online via Zoom from 5.00pm to 7.00pm with 27 students and 15 staff in attendance. The mixer was hosted by Senior Executive Mohamad Fakhrul Zaim Mohd Zaidi, who was also supported by the Sunway International Students Ambassadors (SISA), giving a brief introduction to how they are a platform for international students to engage in various fun activities and to make new friends.

In his opening speech, Associate Dean International, Prof Alvin Ng highlighted that the ISM hopes to address issues among international students be allowing them to voice out any concerns to be noted down by staff for further action, and to improve their support network. There was a sharing from a Psychology alumnus from Pakistan, Sarosh Khoja who is currently working in Malaysia and married to a Malaysian doctor. He gave tips to current students on how to survive studying at university as international students.

Two other international students also shared their experiences and tips to how best to maximise being foreign students at Sunway and Malaysia. One was a senior student from the Department of Psychology, Kaniz Fatema Kakoly from Bangladesh, and one was a junior student Zahrah Azimana Fazilahmed from the Diploma in Nursing's Group 202107 Intake.

Apart from students, an international lecturer, Dr Ayaz Anwar from Pakistan also shared his experiences being at Sunway as a foreign national. The event ended with a couple of fun games. All in all, participants gave very positive feedback and commented that it was nice to hear about experiences of others normalising their own, as well as to make new friends.

#### Community—— Engagement

#### Dr Grace Yap shares behavioural tips for managing kitchen waste efficiently



On 11 June 2022, Psychology lecturer, Dr Grace Yap Chin Choo co-facilitated a public workshop with Lim Wai Kheong at Kebun Komuniti USJ 12 (Community Farm) on how to recycle kitchen waste into vermicast - a 100% natural and organic fertiliser. This was part of an outreach project under the Sunway Materials Smart Science and Engineering Cluster of which Dr Grace is under. This workshop was jointly organised between Sunway University and Majlis Perbandaran Subang Jaya (Subang Jaya City Council).





Essentially, food waste can be turned into vermicast - worm castings that become 100% natural and organic fertiliser as additions to soil conditioner and as soil supplementation.

### Alumni Story

#### **Arica and Michelle Take On America**



Arica Chun Ying Qi and Michelle Chow Shze Loon are graduates of the BSc (Hons) Psychology Programme at Sunway University

#### Hey there lovely readers,

We're two adventurous Psychology graduates from the School of Medical and Life Sciences, majoring in Psychology. One of the reasons that we took up this field of study is because the human mind is something that really fascinates us and our psychology programme allows us to understand various concepts about the human psyche and develop ideas about improving the current mental health status in the country.

We have just returned from the United States of America, where we did a J-1 Winter Exchange Work & Travel Program which allows you to work for 3 months with 1 month of grace period to travel around the United States. Want to know more? Sit tight as we will be sharing more on our journey that we embarked on!





After a few rounds of interviews alongside many documentation processes, we managed to land a job in this beautiful resort city in South Lake Tahoe, California. Located up nearby the Sierra Nevada mountains, it's considered one of the tourist areas where popular activities include skiing and snowboarding during the winter season. It is a small but peaceful town with just about everything we need.

#### **Bittersweet Closure**



Being in the United States was so different from what we have pictured. There was not a single encounter of racism or discrimination but rather, they treated us like a family to them. We have never felt so welcomed in a foreign country, being able to blend in almost right away. We have made countless friends from all around the world, we exchanged our culture, language, food, lifestyles and many more.

We also travelled from the West Coast and made our way to the Southern parts of the United States, covering San Francisco, Sacramento, Yosemite, Las Vegas, San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, Miami, Orlando and New York.

There are no words to sum up our amazing journey in the States because the word 'amazing' simply does not suffice. We had a good run and we were not ready to leave the States, as we had to leave behind the friends who became a part of us and all the memories we have made. However on the bright side, the times we had will forever remain golden and kept gracefully in our core memory.

America, we promise that we will be back sooner than you think! Farewell for now!

(Continued next page)



## Arica and Michelle Take On America (continued)

We started our job in a famous pizzeria called Base Camp Pizza Company, it's so full of patrons that we managed to serve up to 2000 people or more a day! As the name suggests, people visit us for our amazing pizzas, pastas, salads and cocktails which has been such a local favourites that we have tons of regulars on a daily basis. We were so lucky to be able to enjoy the amazing food in our restaurant and we did not grow sick of the food even after 4 months of working!

We were working in the front house as hostesses where we welcomed guests by managing a waitlist, getting their information and communicating wait times to guests. It may sound like an easy task but it is indeed challenging where it takes some experiences to be skillful at it. We do have other tasks, but our main job is to give out an accurate waiting time, well-organized seating plan to make sure the restaurant flow is in control. Being good at our job not only makes us happy, but it also helps to set the stage for a great dining experience for people around the world. Having great managers and colleagues makes it extra bearable and fun working here!



Arica and Michelle's first workplace -Base Camp Pizza Co.

#### **Our Memories**



(Continued next page)



#### **Arica and Michelle Take On America (continued)**



Michelle and Arica

#### **Q&A Session**

#### 01. Why did you decide to go to the States?

Arica: Admittedly, I was a lost fresh grad not knowing what was the next step in life. I was fearful of being caught up in a field of job that I do not even like. So, I have come to a conclusion to take this time to look for opportunities that allow me to gain external exposure and explore the opposite side of the world.

Michelle: Similarly, I felt confused about my future. I was initially doubtful about joining this programme as it would deviate from the original route that I had planned for myself. Still, I went ahead with it and it turned out to be one of the best times of my life.

#### 02. What is something that you have learned from this experience?

Arica: After having this multicultural exchange experience, I am now more confident that wherever I lay my footsteps in, I will find something that inspires me along the way and allows me to advocate in return for the better. The grass is always greener wherever you choose to water it.

Michelle: Not only have I experienced different cultures in various parts of the country, I also embarked on a journey of self-discovery as independent individuals on the opposite side of the world.

#### 03. What are your plans after this exchange program?

Arica: It made me realize that I am still the old me, who was once fiercely passionate about human personalities, behaviors and social engagement. It painted a clearer picture now that allowed me to take my next big decision, which is to pursue Masters in Clinical Psychology. In a form of exaggeration, I must say this exchange experience changed my life for the better.

Michelle: If there's anything that this programme taught me, it would be the notion that 'learning never stops'. There's so much that this world could offer, and we should never stay stagnant as we continue to grow. I will be continuing my Master's programme in the field of counselling, all while working part-time to finance my studies.

#### 04. What advice do you have for the students/public?

Arica: One message to all students or even anyone out there, is to have courage and take the FIRST step. The meaning of life is simply to just give life, a meaning. Fear may hold back tons of great opportunities, so is regret. I can assure you that there is a whole new world out there waiting for you to explore, the world has so much to offer. One day down the road you will only thank yourself for opening doors for great experiences. The best has yet to come, do not miss out on the NEXT BEST THING.

Michelle: I would highly recommend current university students to sign up for this programme during the semester break. It's not just a great way to earn some cash, it's also a promising journey of self-fulfillment and exploration! Students, live your life to the fullest while you can!

## Birthday Celebrations April, May & June

We didn't miss the chance to celebrate the birthday of staff who were born in April and May. Since the fasting month falls in April this year, the celebration for the April babies was combined together with the May babies. In June, we celebrated the birthday of our June babies. Excitingly, almost half of our admin team members were born in June. Enjoy the photos from the celebrations!



#### APRIL & MAY



JUNE

## Raya Celebration

The parties never end in SMLS! This time we had a very interesting and fun Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration at our school on 20 May 2022. Almost all of our staff joined the event with their *baju kurung* and *baju melayu*. We had so much *ketupat*, *lemang*, *rendang*, and other traditional foods. Enjoy our photos! We believe you may feel the excitement too!



The Raya Cheer!



Our Sunway University President, Professor Sibrandes Poppema joined in the celebration.

(Continued next page)

## Raya Celebrations















## HAPPENINGS:

## July to September





## Elaine Yong wins best oral presenter again at ICEMT Conferences series



Teaching Senior Psychology, Elaine Yong won "Best Oral Presentation" in her session, in the 6th International Conference on Education and Multimedia Technology (ICEMT). held virtually on 13-15 July 2022, hosted in Guangzhou, China. This is her second win in this series of conference. She won the same 2020 when conference was based in Kyoto, Japan, albeit virtually as well. See: https://news.sunway.edu.my/artic les/university/best-presentationawards-deserving-academicsdepartment-psychology

#### Elaine's abstract reads:

Online learning became a norm amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Sudden governmental movement control directives prohibited the gentle easing of students into online learning; and disregarded individual learning preferences. Despite that, it is still vital to understand student preferences to facilitate better adaptation and coping with online or blended learning courses. Therefore, a correlational study was designed to investigate preferences for online learning (POL) based on academic self-efficacy (ASE), academic procrastination (AP), and digital literacy (DL) levels. A total of 272 responses were analysed. Respondents were full-time undergraduates aged between 18 to 26 years (M = 20.8, SD = 1.38). Most were females (n=209, 76.5%) and had prior online learning experience (n = 221, 81.3%). The relationship between variables and group differences such as gender and prior experience were examined. Results showed all three study variables were related to POL in the anticipated direction. However, only DL was a significant predictor of POL. Males perceived higher levels of ASE and DL. Students with prior experience had a significantly higher POL. Findings implied that DL and prior experience were important factors in accepting online learning. Therefore, this study calls for a systematic approach to develop ICT skills and encourage exposure to short online classes before enrolment into tertiary education.



A screenshot of the session in which Elaine was present in. She's at the top right corder of the screen.



#### The Winners of the Teaching Appreciation Awards 2022



Department of Psychology academics, Dr Woo Pei Jun, Dr Eliza Berezina and Ms Elaine Yong, as well as teaching staff of the Department of Nursing, Ms Ho Sweet Lee, Ms Chee Gek Neo and M. Sawnthary Malluvalasa Simhachalam were awarded the Sunway University Teaching Appreciation Award of 2022



#### MSc Life Sciences student, Nyiew Ke Ying appointed as Postgraduate Student Representative 2022/2023!

Congratulations to Nyiew Ke Ying who was recently appointed as the Postgraduate Student Representative for the whole Sunway University. She is an MSc Life Sciences student. Her appointment is effective from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

The role of a PG Student Representative is to raise matters and adding value to the university's postgraduate programmes and overall student experience.

Should you have any concerns or matters to bring up pertaining to your welfare during your time at university, please do feel free to reach out at pg\_rep@imail.sunway.edu.my.

## Achieve ments

#### Assoc Prof Ronald Teow now Top 2% Scientist according to Stanford University



Associate Professor Dr Ronald Teow Sin-Yeang is now the latest addition to the list of Top 2% Scientist in the world as reported by Stanford University in September 2022.

His work in cancer research is getting more known and widely cited in the academic world. We congratulate Dr Ronald and wish him the best in his pursuits. We are very proud of his efforts and outputs.

#### Biomedicine Student in 9th Best ESL Debate Team in the World!!

Congratulations to our BSc (Hons) Biomedicine student, Shireen Ali from the Department of Biological Sciences, and her teammate, Wesley Pu, an A-Levels student from Sunway College on their amazing achievement being the top debate team in Malaysia!

Together, they are also 9th among English as a Second Language (ESL) teams in the world, and 40th overall including all categories listed under the 2022 World Universities Debating Championship that was held virtually in late July 2022 and hosted by the University of Belgrade.

During the competition that's considered the "World Cup of Debating", they had notable victories over Imperial College London, Stanford University, University of St. Andrews, and University of Western Australia.

Shireen Ali is ranked top 1% among ESL debaters in the world. Both are from the Sunway Debate Club (SUNDEC).



## Achieve — ments

# BSc (Hons) Nursing Programme gets provisional accreditation!



Members of SMLS, Sunway University's Academic Standards and Quality Office as well as the MQA Panel of Assessors

On 25 July 2022, SMLS received a visit from the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) accreditation panel members to evaluate the new Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing Programme. The panel was satisfied with all measures and agreed to award the undergraduate nursing programme with the first step towards full accreditation, which is the Provisional Accreditation.

SMLS would like to record our deep appreciation and thanks to Puan Niny Suhaila binti Mat Zin, Puan Nik Hazlini Nik Zainal Abidin and Puan Gowry A/P Narayanan from Malaysia Nursing Board, as well as Dr Zamzaliza Abdul Mulud from UiTM Puncak Alam for being part of the accreditation panel. We also congratulate Professor Khatijah Lim Abdullah and her team for their hard work in obtaining this provisional accreditation.

This degree programme meets the demand for nursing and healthcare-related education for nurses to stay current with the latest developments, skills, and new technologies required for their fields. Although many colleges and universities in Malaysia already offer nursing degree programmes, there is still a lack of nurses who are degree holders. The bulk of nurses in the country are diploma holders. Currently, there are approximately 193,000 nurses in Malaysia, with between 10 to 20 percent holding degrees and a small minority with Masters or PhDs.

This new programme was presented in the Partners and Programme Approval Committee PPAC in early 2019, and was delayed due to the pandemic. Submission to the MQA and Malaysian Nursing Board was made towards the end of 2021. Given this Provisional Accreditation, the planned start of the programme is in Q3 2023.

## Achieve ments

### Post Basic Certificate in Intensive Care Nursing graduates its first cohort!





The Post Basic Certificate in Intensive Care Nursing (PBCICN) is the first post-basic nursing course in the Department of Nursing. Ten passionate nurses from Sunway Medical Centre were fully sponsored to undergo this course. The programme started on 3 March 2021 as soon as Provisional Accreditation was given by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA).

Due to pandemic lockdowns, classes were held online. It was a challenge ensuring student-centered clinical learning that goes beyond knowledge. Approval for clinical rotation was withheld due to the pandemic which had forced hospitals to close all training facilities to the students, including the Intensive Care Units. This resulted in all nurses on the programme to return to their sponsors while awaiting approval of clinical placements.

After more than six months wait, the clinical rotation was finally approved as the pandemic eased. All clinical rotations were completed in March 2022. This initially 6-months programme took one year to complete! This first cohort of nurses graduated with their PBCICN on 5 July 2022. They were very relieved to finally complete their training after months of frustrations and disappointments due to disruptions to their training progress resulting from pandemic restrictions. Their patience and perseverance won out eventually and they are now better qualified in managing nursing tasks in intensive care units. We congratulate this inaugural cohort and wish them all the best in their work and careers.





# Achieve — ments

### Biology with Psychology Alumna Wins Chevening Scholarship!



Charina Pria Sivayogam was one of the 39 recipients (out of 748 applicants) of the prestigious UK Chevening scholarship in mid-August 2022. She will pursue a Conservation and International Wildlife Trade course at the University of Kent. Charina wants to explore innovative ways to counter wildlife crime. To date, Charina has been involved in a total of 10 counter poaching operations that resulted in the arrest of 19 poachers - this has allowed tigers and other wildlife to persist in the landscape. She has also been engaged by government agencies to help train anti-poaching rangers and establish systems.

During her undergraduate studies made a bold decision to defer one semester to volunteer at a Raleigh expedition in Imbak Canyon in Sabah. This was a watershed moment as she knew she wanted to pursue a career in biodiversity conservation. In her final year as an undergraduate in the Department of Biological Sciences, Charina subsequently did her final year project and internship at the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre - this allowed her a chance to not only develop skills in research, but also to learn how to work with people from different walks of life.

After graduating in 2018, our NGO Rimba offered Charina a chance to work as a Research Analyst in the Harimau Selamanya project. She initially found the going tough – having to sacrifice many weekends in a remote part of Terengganu making sense of patrol data gathered by rangers from an area four times the size of Penang Island. Not only did Charina have to lug heavy bag packs for many days through leech-infested jungles to collect data, but she also had to spend long hours in the office to develop metrics that could monitor tiger population trends and improve the science of predicting poaching behaviour. To gain the respect from a team made up entirely of male rangers wasn't easy. But Charina did it, with hard work and perseverance.

In a recent conversation with Charina, she remarked "Monitoring tigers and catching poachers was an entirely different ball game that no degree could prepare me for, but at Sunway University, our degree programmes and lecturers provide ample opportunities and support for undergrads to explore their interests, whatever they may be."

Congratulations Charina, you have certainly moved on up and we are all so really proud of you!

# Achieve — ments

#### Psychology student publishes two journal articles with the Khazanah Research Institute



KHAZANAH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Rise of the Digital Economies: A Malaysia-China Comparison

Yeung Yeu-Mynn, third-year undergraduate Psychology student from the Department of Psychology, completed prestigious a months internship at the Khazanah Research Institute (KRI) in March this year as a policy research intern. Her focus research included governance, privacy protection, digital rights, digital skills education, and healthcare digitalisation. During her internship, she co-authored two journal articles with her research supervisor, Dr Rachel Gong, the Deputy Director of Research at KRI.

One of the articles, "Digital Economy Plans: Comparing Malaysia and China" compared China and Malaysia's digital economy ambitions. Another article, "China's Quest to be a Global Digital Economy Leader published with The World Financial Review", highlighted China's approach in strengthening its global economic position via data, cloud computing and the industrial internet.

Evidently, Yeu-Mynn's knowledge broadened in the realms of Malaysian data policies but the most valuable lesson learnt stems from within Yeu-Mynn herself. "Having no prior experience in economics and policy making, policy research seemed far-fetched. Nonetheless, I gave it a shot and the rest was history", she said. "Inevitably, it was intimidating, however, with the encouragement from everyone, it has allowed me to soldier on and even created history in my books", she added. "It was truly an honour to have learned the ins and outs of policy making and be guided by the bests of the best. This experience has been nothing short of humbling". Yeu-Mynn also recalls one of her most memorable moments was presenting, "Rise of the Digital Economies: A Malaysia-China Comparison", 30-minute presentation to her KRI colleagues, including the esteemed Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop, former Minister of Finance (2004 to 2009), and Professor Jomo Kwame Sundaram, a prominent Malaysian economist.



Yeu-Mynn and her office tag

Her presentation was well received. "Other memorable moments include the makan-makan (fellowship over food) sessions, transcribing Chinese documents (I cannot read Mandarin), and having my own intern email and office tag!", she added.

Presently, Yeu-Mynn is undertaking the Roots and Shoots Malaysia Award (RASMA), an award under Dr Jane Goodall's Foundation. She is also the President of TEDxSunwayUniversity, a mentor at Closing The Gap, a 'Grow with Google' scholar, and a BRATs Young Journalist for The Star Media Group Berhad. Yeu-Mynn's experiences will only continue to grow from here! Keep making us proud, Yeu-Mynn!

Her two articles can be accessed here:

- https://worldfinancialreview.com/chinas-quest-to-be-a-global-digital-economy-leader/
   https://www.krinstitute.org/Views-@-Digital Economy Plans-; Comparing Malaysia and China.aspx



## Joint Symposium to Celebrate 15 Years of Lancaster-Sunway Partnership









On 14 July 2022, the Sunway University Ageing, Health and Well-Being Research Centre (AHWRC) and Lancaster University Centre for Ageing Research (C4AR) had a Joint Symposium to celebrate 15 years of the Lancaster-Sunway partnership. This event was held virtually on MS Teams.

This joint symposium was led by Professor Carol Holland on the Lancaster University side and Professor Alexandre Schaefer representing Sunway University. Prof Holland is the Director of C4AR, while Prof Schaefer is the Head of AHWRC.

During the symposium Prof Holland share on opportunities for research and training links using the Global Advancement Fund, while Professor Emmanuel Tsekleves explained how the role of ageing research fits within the Future Cities Research Institute (FCRI) of which he is the lead on the Lancaster University side. FCRI is a joint-research institute between Sunway University and Lancaster University, of which Prof Tsekleves is a Co-Director.

The symposium also saw research presentations from Postdoctoral Research Fellows of the AHWRC, Dr Aleya Marzuki and Dr Chan Jee Kei, who presented on "Understanding the predictors of cognitive ageing in the local community of the Kuala Lumpur", as well as PhD student, Zacchary Yap Jie whose research is on forest therapy among senior citizens.

Lancaster university was represented by Zsuzsannah Balogh who presented "Effects of physical activity interventions on mental health in bereavement in older adults", Joe Pearson who presented "The Effects of Criminal Victimisation on Quality of Life in Older Adults"

There was a virtual breakout room that allowed interested parties to mingle and explore potential research collaborations.

After a short break, research presentations resumed with PhD students from Sunway, Samira Vafa presenting on "The Effects of an Ecologically Valid Cognitive Stimulation Intervention (CSI) on Cognitive Ageing" and Arjun Thanaraju sharing his study on "The relationship between socioeconomic condition and brain structure in a sample of older adults". Dr Aleya Marzuki also presented again, this time on "Neurocognitive Correlates of Healthy Ageing: A computational neuroscience approach".

Researchers from Lancaster who presented were Nikolette Dravecz who shared "Insulin/IGF-like Signalling and Brain Ageing in Fruit Flies" and Juliane Bjerkan who presented on "Blood oxygenation and neuronal dynamics in the ageing brain".

All in all, the symposium was a success in pulling together scholars in the area of ageing from both universities, with much mutual learning from each other.

## 

## Harvard Professors Discuss Research with SMLS Members

On 15 July 2022, SMLS had a meeting with scholars from Harvard University, Professor Mercedes Becerra and Professor Salmaan Keshavjee who were on a visit to Sunway University to jointly deliver a Jeffrey Cheah Distinguished Speakers Series lecture on their work towards zero tuberculosis globally.



The SMLS team with Prof Keshavjee and Prof Becerra (4th and 3rd from right, respectively)

Professor Keshavjee is Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine in the Field of Medical Anthropology, while Professor Becerra is Jeffrey Cheah Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine, both from Harvard Medical School's Blavatnik Institute of Global Health and Social Medicine.

This meeting had senior members of SMLS sharing their respective research areas to Professors Keshavjee and Becerra who were very much interested in studies within this region and the kinds of collaborations we have. A round of research introductions quickly turned into fervent discussions on global biomedical research updates and encouraging prospects for future collaborations.

All in all, it was a very satisfying and inspiring meeting. We thank Profs Becerra and Keshavjee for their time, keen interest, and also for their very eye-opening lecture they gave on how tuberculosis is still a global threat and that simple screening methods could be very efficient ways of reducing its numbers.

Poster of the Jeffrey Cheah Distinguished Speakers Series featuring Profs Keshavjee and Becerra



## Academic Activities

### 1st Sunway University Postgraduate Research Symposium

What began as an idea among postgraduate students in SMLS to have a simple event to showcase research by PG students within SMLS became a university wide student-led event for all postgraduate students to come together and share their respective studies, with a chance of winning awards! Led by Sunway University Postgraduate Student Representative, Nyiew Ke Ying, as the Chairperson, the 1st Sunway University Postgraduate Research Symposium was held on 23 and 24 September 2022. The theme of the conference was "Shaping the Post-Pandemic Future".



Symposium chair, Nyiew Ke Ying (centre, in black) with staff and students supporting the Talent Fiesta, including Sunway Education Group CEO Prof Dato' Dr Elizabeth Lee and Sunway University Provost, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam.

It started in the afternoon of the 23rd with a Talent Fiesta where students performed various skills on stage and top performers were awarded with prizes. These were: Pynam Ryan (1st place), Jynn Kok E-Lynn (2nd place) and Cheong Kar Fung (3rd place).

The more formal part of the conference began later that evening with an opening ceremony with a Welcome Speech from Sunway University Provost, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam, and a heartfelt Keynote Speech by Prof Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood (*right*), Executive Director of Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, on "Planetary Health: Who's Research Agenda is it?". There were also oral and poster presentations, as well as a very exciting 3-Minute Thesis Competition where presenters summarised their research work down to a 3-minute presentation in the most creative way they could.



Prof Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood



Jynn Kok Pynam Ryan Cheong Kar Fung

(Continued next page)

## Academic Activities

### 1st Sunway University Postgraduate Research Symposium (continued)



All in all, the symposium brought the postgraduate community at Sunway University together to share and learn about each other's research. The symposium has provided invaluable exposure and networking opportunities for the postgraduate students at Sunway University.

Symposium chairperson, Ke Ying was initially apprehensive about leading the symposium but she was glad she took up the challenge. "Of course, this event wouldn't be possible without the support and guidance from our amazing team of advisors, Prof Gopalasamy Reuben Clements, Dr Jactty Chew, Dr Hooi Leng Ser (who patiently endured my endless bombardment of questions), and Dr Su Woan Wo, PhD. I'm also grateful for Prof Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam for that encouragement to open up the symposium to all of the postgraduate students at Sunway University." she added.

At SMLS, we laud Ke Ying and her team's awesome organising of this historical event as part of the development of postgraduate experience at Sunway University. We also congratulate all the prize winners of the symposium (see next page).



Symposium chairperson, Nyiew Ke Ying giving her closing speech

## Academic Activities Posteredu

### 1st Sunway University Postgraduate Research Symposium Award Winners



#### **Best Oral Presentation Winners**

Yong Joon Yee Alyssa Ding Yen Lyn Nunudzai Mrewa Yusra I. M. Dadou Ng Jia Yi (Honourable Mention)

#### 3-Minute Thesis Winners

Yong Shin Jie (Winner) Kawtar Bahanni (1st Runner Up) Jaclyn Hui Jie Teng (2nd Runner Up) Terence Kok Ju Wei (Consolation) K. Kuldeep Singh (Consolation)



#### **Best Poster Presentation**

Kalidasan Balasubramanian (Winner) Melinda U Cheah Pei (1st Runner Up) Ngu Ee Ling (2nd Runner Up) Shobana Gabriel (Consolation) Shobna A/P L.Thuraisingam (Consolation)



#### **Rising Star Award**

Yong Shin Jie (MSc Level)

Kalidasan Balasubramaniam (PhD Level)





## Biodiversity field trip: Looking for snails with Prof Reuben and Dr Ravinder

On 14 September 2022, students taking the biodiversity subject in Sunway University (Department of Biological Sciences got a chance to look for snails in Gua Damai at Batu Caves with their lecturers Prof Gopalasamy Reuben Clements and Dr Ravinder Kaur. Lot's of smiles!





Prof Reuben Clements (2nd from left), and Dr Ravinder (1st from right) together with their students at the foot of the climb up to Gua Damai at Batu Caves.

Left: Photo of a beautiful snail by Aaliya Anwar

## Industry Engagement The Parenter Toy Eight

## Psychology Collaborator: Toy Eight Developmental Screening App Launch!



On 10 August 2022, Dr. Woo Pei Jun, Head of the Department of Psychology, and Dr. Wo Su Woan in collaboration with University Malaya and Toy Eight, an Al-backed edutech startup from Japan, launched their developmental screening app that they have helped design at the Toy Eight Playground, located at the Gardens Mall, Kuala Lumpur.

The developmental digital screening application is the first in the country and is made available through a smartphone device designed to assess children's development in five domain areas – gross motor, fine motor, speech and language, cognitive development, and social/adaptive behaviour. The team hopes that the project will make developmental screening accessible and affordable to many families with children aged 3- 5 years old.



Director of Sunway iLabs Foundry - Karen Lau with Dr Woo Pei Jun and Dr Wo Su Woan

Dr Woo Pei Jun and Dr Wo Su Woan with the ToyEight team

## Industry = Engagement

### Sunway Psychology collaborates with Fisher Price on Play Lab Pop-Up event



Official launch of the Fisher-Price Play Lab Pop-up in Malaysia.

"We are excited to let kids be kids and become our tiny toy testers at the Fisher-Price™ Play Lab roadshows! Both parents and kids can experience and learn how Fisher-Price™ toys aid with Early Childhood Development through play," said Murat Ariksoy, General Manager of Mattel South Asia. "Fisher-Price™ aims to create the best play experience for kids to learn, grow, and connect with the world around them.

"Play is so much more than an activity to pass the time. It is a wonderful vehicle for hands-on learning and even more so, an incredible opportunity for parents to bond with their children," said Dr Woo Pei Jun, Head of Department of Psychology of Sunway University. "While guided play has its place, it is equally important for parents to allow their children the autonomy to lead play sessions too."

In mid-August, Dr Woo Pei Jun, Head of Psychology Department together with her students collaborated with Fisher-Price, one of the leading toy makers in the industry with their launched of the Play Lab Pop-up event at Sunway Pyramid. Dr Woo was invited as one of the speakers to talk about the importance of play in children development while students were hired as toy test moderator to play with children, show them features of the toys and to get feedback on Fisher Price toys for product improvements.



Dr Woo Pei Jun





Psychology students, Tang Jia Huey and May Chang with visitors to the event

(Continued next page)

## Industry Engagement

## Sunway Psychology collaborates with Fisher Price on Play Lab popup event (continued)



Psychology student Max Ooi with a young visitor

Max Ooi Ee Fei: "My time as a toy test moderator have showed me the importance of quality play time between the child and the parents as not only is it a bonding experience but also an impactful opportunity for the children to explore their playful nature."

Tang Jia Huey: "Through this event, I learnt the way to communicate or interact with child. Playing with child is fun but really exhausting at the same time. Through the interview section with parents, I realize that there are lots of parents who use mobile devices as an 'alternative toy' to babysit their child. It is a huge concern which tied with numerous development problems. Mobile devices can NEVER replace toy. It is important to provide toys that is educational, fun and safe to stimulate the development of children in terms of cognitive, social skills and problem-solving skills."

The Fisher-Price™ Play Lab experiential roadshow was officially launch in Malaysia at the Orange Concourse, LG2, Sunway Pyramid from 8th - 14th August 2022. Parents and kids were invited to enjoy a behind-the-scenes look (and feel!) of what happens at the Fisher-Price™ Play Lab. Kids aged 0-5 years old were tested by our very own Sunway psychology students, hired as toy test moderators by Fisher Price. Our students had a great experience testing the little toy testers for the day.

Comments by some of the students:

May Chang Bao Jie: "One of the perks of being a toy test moderator was having the opportunity to observe and understand the various developmental milestones that were reached or yet to be reached among the newborns, infants and toddlers."



Dr Woo Pei Jun flanked by her students at the Play Lab. (L-R: Jia Huey, Zi Xuan, Max and May

### Community—— Engagement

### Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre (AHWRC)

It has been an extremely busy year for AHWRC, as the team has recruited the AGEWELL cohort, a database of senior citizens from various socioeconomic and ethnic groups across the Klang Valley. The team has spent the year recording a diverse amount of scientific data from every participant in the cohort: Brain MRIs, EEG data, neuropsychological performance, mental health data, biological samples and socioeconomic data.

The AGEWELL cohort is now a facility that will allow Sunway University researchers to monitor the mental health of local ageing citizens, as well as provide a tool for ageing researchers from Sunway University and its partners. This effort was in part funded by a grant from the Long-Term Research Grant Scheme (LRGS) of the ministry of higher education



Dr Chen Jee Kei and Dr Aleya Marzuki with a volunteer participant for an EEG study that involves cognitive training



Dr Aleya Marzuki in action giving a talk on cognitive training for senior citizens



Prof Alex Schaefer and his PhD student, Arjun Thanaraju at a community function at the Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas (PAWE; Senior citizens club) Lembah Pantai



The AHWRC team (from centre): Prof Alex Schaefer, Arjun Thanaraju, Dr Aleya Marzuki, Samira Vafa and Dr Chan Jee Kei (foreground) at D'Happy Club, a senior citizens club where they gave a health talk as well as to recruit research participants

### Community—— Engagement

### Allergy Study Week: Joint Project between Sunway University and National University of Singapore

The Allergy Study week was held in Sunway University from the 26th of September – 7th October 2022, and was a joint research collaboration between the research teams of Associate Professor Dr Kavita Reginald from Sunway University and her collaborators of the National University of Singapore. In the two weeks of the community-based screening and sample collection, the team was able to collect data from over 1000 participants. This study also received the support of more than 30 student helpers, majority of whom were from the School of Medical and Life Sciences. Data collected from this sample collection will be instrumental in supporting several ongoing postgraduate research projects



Collecting buccal skin cells for DNA analysis



Assessment of skin hydration and pH



The Sunway and NUS team members

## Student —————————Engagement

### Diploma in Nursing Batch G202207 Welcoming Party



The G202207 Welcoming Party organised by Sunway Future Nurses Club (SFNC) was held on 20 August 2022 for the 24 student nurses from G202207 batch. Eleven SFNC Committee Members led the event, and distributed SFNC T-shirts and breakfast.

The event began with the Ice-Breaking session: 2 Truths & 1 Lie after the self-introduction session of each Committee Members. The student nurses got to know each other after the session.

The student nurses were then separated into 5 groups for games. A few exciting games like Quick Draw, Guess the Word Above You, Bottle Flipping, Guess the Song, and Musical Chair were enjoyed by them. We happily welcome G202207 to the programme and wish them the best in their training!







## Student Activities

### Sunway Future Nurses Club (SFNC) Badminton Fellowship



On 13 February and 24 September 2022, the Sunway Future Nurses Club (SFNC) held the SFNC Badminton Fellowships to build relationships and better bonding among student nurses. It also aimed to encourage open communication and increase collaboration between the students. The events were held at Lavana Sports Centre from 3.00pm to 5.00pm. The students were paired up at the event and changed partners after each round of games. Everyone enjoyed themselves and look forward to having this fellowship again.







SMiLeS 120



## Sunway Psychology students reflect on visit to Lancaster University



Over the August 2022 semester break, over 100 students from Sunway University visited Lancaster University for an international exchange programme entitled Global Summer School. We were among the group, with all the students coming from all different courses and backgrounds, but with the same goal – to learn, experience, and immerse ourselves in the UK, and to become better global citizens.

Stepping foot on to the Lancaster University campus, we were greeted with sights of beautiful faculties and schools, rabbits and ducks that roamed freely, the warm student community and pleasant weather. We settled in quickly, ready to begin our 3-week programme.

The overall aim of this programme focused on a variety of meaningful topics, including leadership, sustainability, cross-cultural competence, UK's political and economic history. For these, we attended lectures and workshops, as well as participated in local industry engagements and interactive activities to delve further into these topics.

A few of our personal favourites included the cultural competence workshop, which encouraged us to be more curious, understanding, and flexible when it comes to interacting with different cultures. From these lessons, we were taught that we should not just be open to crossing borders–rather, we should expand our own personal borders to develop, and subsequently achieve a global mindset.

Additionally, the Industry Engagement and Career Workshop, which allowed us to explore the home of the Morecambe Football Club, along with its business model, culture and dynamic of this Lancashire business. Stories shared by representatives of Morecambe F.C., showed us how important it was to fully understand local culture for a business to survive as culture transcends in the lives of people, influencing individuals' eating habits, values and customs.

(Continued next page)



### Sunway Psychology students reflect on visit to Lancaster University (continued)

As Psychology students, a main highlight for the three of us was receiving a tour of the Lancaster University Baby Lab, a world-class research facility targeted at studying babies. It was interesting and intriguing to see the equipment provided at the lab, from their eye-trackers, their baby sized EEG's, to their lounge area which is catered for children to play and get accommodated to the environment.

From our conversations with our tour guide, a Psychology Masters student, we were able to gain firsthand insight of running a real research study. We listened to the struggles they faced when running studies with babies, from things like finding willing parents, to the babies getting easily distracted during studies; seeing the real-world struggles of running baby studies made the things we learnt in class more real and relevant.

Other than lectures and workshops, we were also given the opportunity to participate in social night activities and planned trips to different cities. We were given the chance to interact directly with the vibrant students at Lancaster Uni, which gave us a firsthand picture of what the UK was all about. Some socials we really enjoyed were open mic night, lacrosse, baking night social, pottery classes, among many more. Joining these socials allowed us to simultaneously develop skills and learn something while bonding with old and new friends. As for city visits, the three of us visited some really beautiful cities - Manchester, Edinburgh, Lake District, London, and of course Lancaster town – all of which had their own special moments and memories.

Overall, we are incredibly grateful to have been part of this programme. This experience was not only about stepping out of our comfort zones, it was also about encountering new people, indulging in the bizarre experiences and foreign cultures to help us better understand ourselves. Remarkably, it is not limited to just experiencing what Lancaster University has to offer, it is about learning new things, and integrating them into the Malaysian context, bringing them back to Sunway University. With that being said, this cultural exchange programme was truly an enriching experience of a life time–one we will cherish for years to come.





Joash Loh, Kayla Ooi and Jynn Kok

## 

### Love of My Life Campaign: Break Up Exhibition 3.0 - Museum of </3

The third instalment of the very successful Break-Up Exhibition - Museum of Broken Hearts was held on 12-15 September 2022. This time it was a collaboration between the Department of Psychology, Sunway University Press, Sunway Peer Counselling Volunteers (PCV) and Sunway Psychology Club, under the larger umbrella of the Love of My Life Campaign, which included four Mind Matters public talks and online infographics on relationships.

Break-Up Exhibition 3.0 follows from the success of the previous two that were held in 2018 and 2019 respectively (see link: <a href="https://news.sunway.edu.my/articles/university/break-exhibition-20-mending-hearts-shared-stories">https://news.sunway.edu.my/articles/university/break-exhibition-20-mending-hearts-shared-stories</a>)

As with the previous events, this third edition had exhibitions of items that represent separations in various forms such as relationship breakups and deaths. Visitors also got to sign a pledge board to show commitment to have conversations that normalise breakups as well as to encourage individuals going through separation to seek help when necessary. There were interactive activities such as the But Honestly card game that allows players to reflect and share their relationship experiences, as well as an emotional dump booth. The four-day event ended with a closing ceremony and a lucky draw. Mending Hearts, the book that contains stories from the previous two exhibition was also on sale at a discounted prize during the event, together with other books by Sunway University Press.



The Emotion Dump booth



Visitors playing the card game called But Honestly



Chong Wah Tien, Sales and Marketing Manager of Sunway University Press manning their booth

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### Love of My Life Campaign: Break Up Exhibition 3.0 *(continued)*

In conjunction with the exhibition, there was also "Mind Matters" - free public talks by mental health professionals on various topics regarding relationships on all four days of the event. The speakers were: Dr Joel Low, from The Mind Psychological Services who spoke on "I'll Be Right Beside You: When Listening Is All You Have", Associate Professor Dr Anasuya Jegathesan from University of Cyberjaya who spoke on "Toxic Relationships: The Presence and Absence of Individuals", Mr Kenny Lim of Befrienders Kuala Lumpur, who spoke on "Listening to Emotions" and our very own Dr Grace Yap, who spoked on "It Takes Two to Tango: Compatibility and Package".



Dr Anasuya Jegathesan in action



Our volunteer with a basket of marker pens for you to sign on the pledge wall



One of the items on exhibit that was donated by an anonymous person. This one was accompanied by a short description of what it meant to the donor. There were many items such as this - some on breakups, some on deaths and some on disappearances. More stories can be found in Mending Hearts, the book published by Sunway University Press and edited by Dr Grace Yap and Dr Lim Meng Zhen.



Visitors viewing items symbolising separations



Subang Jaya Assemblywoman YB Michelle Ng dropped by with her PA Loo Yan Jing (centre two). Flanking them are Prof Alvin Ng, Dr Woo Pei Jun, event Chairperson Rachel Lim and Advisor Wiki Chew of Student Life

More information on the BUE3.0 can be found here: <a href="https://university.sunway.edu.my/sunway-in-the-news/LOML-Campaign">https://university.sunway.edu.my/sunway-in-the-news/LOML-Campaign</a>

### Mending Hearts book listed as Top 50 Best Malaysian Titles!



L-R: Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam - Provost of Sunway University,, Chong Wah Tien - Sales & Manager of Sunway University Press, Carol Wong - Head of Sunway University Press , Prof Dato Dr Elizabeth Lee - CEO Sunway Education Group and Hani Hazman Senior Editor of Sunway University Press

During the Break Up Exhibition (BUE) 3.0, it was announced that the book that was a result of the previous two BUEs - Mending Hearts, was listed as one of the 50 Best Malaysian Titles for International Rights 2021/2022 (above). Mending Hearts is a compilation of stories and pictures collected from the BUEs of 2018 and 2019 that was edited by the Department of Psychology's Dr Grace Yap Chin Choo and former teaching assistant, Dr Lim Meng Zhen (right). It is published by Sunway University Press and launched in February this year as part of Psychology Month, as reported under the Jan-Feb Happenings section above. Congratulations to Sunway University Press and the book authors!

You may purchase the book via this link: https://www.gerakbudaya.com/sunway-universitypress/Mending-Hearts-Healing-from-Separation-and-Loss



Dr Lim Meng Zhen and Dr Grace Yap reaching for the stars

### Campus with a Conscience-MyWASSH Collaboration

The Malaysian Society for World Action on Salt, Sugar & Health (MyWASSH) led by Prof Dr Chia Yook Chin of the Department of Medical Sciences, collaborated with Sunway University to hold a public education event on 19 to 23 September 2022 in conjunction with Sunway University's Campus with a Conscience Local Action for Global Goals 2022 week-long festival. It was held to celebrate the 7th anniversary of signing of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which the university is fully committed to.

The goals of the health education event were to raise the awareness of hypertension, the correlation of salt and hypertension, and educate the general public on how to reduce salt intake in their daily lives. This was in line with MyWASSH's aims to promote salt reduction, as well as to provide education on salt intake for better health, consistent with SDG3 - Good Health and Wellbeing.



The health education event comprised of blood pressure screening conducted by nurses at booths set up at the university foyer, as well as health talks conducted on an open platform. Participants who took part in the health check were subjected to a questionnaire on their awareness on hypertension and other non-communicable diseases, as well as a blood pressure screening using standard blood pressure measurement techniques. The event garnered positive feedback from participants, especially among the younger generations. A total of 750 participants took part in the health checks and blood pressure screening over the five days.

Health education talks were conducted voluntarily by medical doctors and dietitians who are members of MyWASSH. They spoke on salt and hypertension, and how to reduce their daily salt intake. Each talk was 30 minutes and addressed the effects of high blood pressure, the diagnosis of hypertension, the management of hypertension and the importance of compliance, as well as the correlation between salt and hypertension.

Dietitians also provided their expertise on identifying salt and hidden salt content in food products by reading food labels. A cooking demonstration (pictured above) on alternatives to salt and how to reduce salt content in cooking was also conducted by a dietician. A hybrid public forum with three lectures and a panel discussion was held on 20 September at the university. All in all, the event was a success considering it was a working day where most adults would be occupied with their work and being unable to attend



Senior Lecturer from the Department of Medical Sciences, Dr Daniel Cheng providing a health check up to a visitor



Trainee nurses from the Department of Nursing were volunteers at the health check booths



### Jactty Chew, Felicia Chung and Kavita Reginald featured in The Petri Dish



L-R: Associate Professor Dr Jactty Chew, Associate Professor Dr Felicia Chung, and Associate Professor Dr Kavita Reginald (Photo credit: The Petri Dish)

The Petri Dish is a publication of the Malaysian Biotechnology Information Centre (MABIC). It is known as the first science newspaper in Malaysia.

In August 2022, senior academics from the Department of Biological Sciences, Associate Professors Dr Jactty Chew, Dr Felicia Chung and Dr Kavita Reginald were featured in an article that celebrates women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). The article describes the pathways each of them took to become who they are now. They shared their inspirations and hopes for the future of women in STEM. The article was written by Dr Mahaletchumy Arujanan, who is also the Editor-in-Chief of The Petri Dish.

#### Read the full article here:

Want to be in STEM? Follow the trail set by these three women | The Petri Dish

Previous members of SMLS who have been featured in The Petri Dish were Dr Jane Gew and Associate Professor Dr Yow Yoon Yen, as well as our former Dean, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam. Their articles can be found here:

#### Dr Jane Gew Lai Ti and Dr Yow Yoon Yen:

Sunway University researchers find microplastics in sea salt | The Petri Dish

#### Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam:

Dean: Attitude triumphs over aptitude in producing 'global' students | The Petri Dish

SMiLeS 127

### Staff Farewell

### **Mary Assunta Retires**

Mary Assunta S. Asirvatham who had been with the School of Medical and Life Sciences since 2018 (when it was still called the School of Health and Medical Sciences), retired mid-August. Mary was truly an integral part of the School, especially for the Department of Nursing. The August birthday party was also a farewell for Mary (see photos below).

We truly miss her charm and warmth that she exudes at work. She had always been a very helpful administrative executive, not just for the Department of Nursing but for everyone else. She took care of the Nursing Skills Labs and occasionally provided tours for visitors. Mary also contributed to festive celebrations with her skills at decorations.

We wish Mary Assunta all the best in her next venture. We thank her being with us at SMLS. She will always be part of the family.







Mary receives a gift from HOD Nursing, Prof Khatijah Lim Abdullah



Mary flanked by School Manager, Wan Noorazila and HOD Medical Sciences, Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin

### Birthday Celebrations

You may have started to notice. There was a colour theme for every birthday celebration that we had! Guess the colour theme for our July, August and September celebrations below. Want to know what are the colour themes for the last 3 birthday celebrations? Stay tune!



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## HAPPENINGS:

# October to December



## Inaugural Cohort for Post Basic Certificate in Perioperative Nursing Completes Training!





The first batch of six nurses enrolled in the Post Basic Certificate in Perioperative Nursing have completed their training in October 2022, after starting in September 2021, and a final stage of three months of clinical placement at Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Klang. Programme leader, Ms Kalivani Poongawanam commented that this opportunity allowed the perioperative nursing trainees to make observations especially with regard to practices in government setting. The full story of this completion can be found here: New Programme: Post Basic Certificate in Perioperative Nursing | Sunway University







SMiLeS 131

### Explore Gaia - Dr Ravinder Kaur and husband wins the Star Golden Hearts Award 2022

"Star Golden Hearts Award is an annual Award by The Star and Yayasan Gamuda that celebrates everyday Malaysians who demonstrate extraordinary commitment to social work and promote units among Malaysians."

and promote unity among Malaysians."

For 2022, there were ten recipients - 3 individual winners and 7 organisation winners. A cash award pool of RM249,000 was given out support the good work of the award winners where individual winners received RM8,000 each and winning organisations received RM15,000 each.

Explore Gaia, which was co-founded by our very own Dr Ravinder Kaur of the Department of Biological Sciences, together with her husband, Sanjitpaal Singh won the organisation award (environment and wilfdlife category. Congratulations to Dr Ravinder on Explore Gaia's win!



#### Providing nesting opportunities for endangered hornbills in Malaysia

PETALING JAYA: In September 2019, a female
helmeted hornbill named Halley went missing after
having chicks in a tree cavity in Kundasang Sahah
Double-click on the picture above to access the full article on
the background to this award win



 $\label{eq:conservation} \mbox{ Dr Ravinder sharing her hornbill conservation efforts in Sabah and some states in Peninsular Malaysia.} - \mbox{ AZLINA ABDULLAH/The Star}$ 



### Memorandum of Understanding Renewal with University of East Anglia



(L-R): Dr Noor Hasliza Che Seman, A/Prof Dr Lin Mei-Hua, Dr Lai Kee Huong, Prof Alvin Ng, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivm, Prof Sian Coker, Prof Kenda Crozier, A/Prof Dr Maria Garraffa, Dr Woo Pei Jun, A/Prof Dr Jactty Chew,

On 3 October 2022, Sunway University had a Memorandum of Understanding renewal exchange with University of East Anglia, particularly between School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of East Anglia. It also included an articulation agreement between the School of Mathematical Sciences, Sunway University for their BSc Actuarial Studies, and the UEA's School of Computing Science - BSc Actuarial Science.

The event was hosted by Sunway University Provost, Prof. Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam who gave a brief presentation about Sunway University, before officiating the MOU Exchange with Prof. Sian Coker, Associate Dean Internationalisation of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences of UEA. Prof. Coker also briefly presented about UEA, Norwich and her Faculty. Her team from the School of Health Sciences to Sunway included Prof. Kenda Crozier - Professor of Midwifery, A/Prof Dr Maria Garraffa, Professor of Speech and Language Therapy and UEA Regional Manager, Carolyn Leong. The School of Mathematical Science was represented by Dr Lai Kee Huong, it's Associate Dean (International).

After a very fruitful discussion on potential collaborative projects with Associate Dean International, Prof Alvin Ng leading on the SMLS side, which was also represented by A/Prof. Dr Lin Mei-Hua (Associate Dean Employability & Engagement), A/Prof. Dr Jactty Chew (Associate Dean Education), Dr Woo Pei Jun (HOD Psychology) and Dr Noor Hasliza Che Seman representing the Head of Nursing.

We are grateful for UEA, and for the Sunway team that worked together to make this happen.

## Psychology student leads TEDxSunway Flagship Conference



TED<sup>x</sup> SunwayUniversity The ever-blossoming BSc (Hons) Psychology student, Yeung Yeu-Mynn chaired TEDx Sunway University's Magnum Opus, their Flagship Conference of 2022 on 29 October 2022. This conference had six speakers from various industries. The objective of this conference was to inspire and empower individual passions to create and innovate their own masterpieces - their Magnum Opus. Yeu-Mynn is also the President of TEDx Sunway University.

Photos of the conference can be found here: TEDxSunwayUniversity 2022 : Magnum Opus | Flickr





## Psychology graduate commended at Global Undergraduate Awards 2022!



Yong Zhin Kyen with his supervisor, A/Prof Dr Lin Mei-Hua on his graduation day

A big congratulations to our very own Psychology student, Yong Zhin Kyen! His final year research project (supervised by Associate Professor Dr Lin Mei-Hua) was selected as a Highly Commended Entrant of the Global Undergraduate Award 2022. The paper was ranked in the top 10% of submissions in the Psychology category.

The Global Undergraduate Awards (often referred to as Junior Nobel Prize) is an academic awards programme which recognizes undergraduate work. Students work are judged by professional academics across the world's top universities and are shared with a global audience.

Highly Commended Entrants are recognised with:

- · A Certificate of Recognition
- Publication of their submission on The Undergraduate Library
- · Access to the UA Alumni Network
- · Opportunity to attend the UA Global Summit

A full list of the Highly Commended winners can be found here: https://undergraduateawards.com/winners/highly-commended-2022

Well done, Zhin Kyen! We are proud of your achievement!

### Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin: A trailblazer in the Medical Sciences

Head of Medical Sciences, Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin, who is also the Founding President of the recently established Malaysian Society for World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health (MyWASSH) has been very active in various academic pursuits that bring impact to academia. It is to no surprise that she garnered two awards this year alone.

In May 2022, Prof Chia received the 2022 World Hypertension League's (WHL) Graham MacGregor Excellence Award in Dietary Salt Reduction at the Population Level. This award was tied with another winner, Prof Mary R. L'Abbe of the University of Toronto, and announced on World Hypertension Day - 17 May 2022.

Graham MacGregor Excellence Award in Dietary Salt Reduction at the Population Level





Dr. Mary R. L'Abbe

Congratulations to Professor Dr Chia Yook Chin for winning the 2022 award for

ISH Honour for Senior Women Researchers

International Society of Hypertension



Prof Chia at the award ceremony of the ISH Awards and Lectures Session in October 2022

Prof Chia is known for her tireless work in the area of salt reduction and hypertension. She is one of the Top 2% Scientist as reported by Stanford University.

MyWASSH was launched in May 2022 in Putrajaya, and Prof Chia has been very instrumental in the promotion of public education that is aligned with the objectives of MyWASSH. She initiated a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between MyWASSH, UK WASSH and Sunway University. She also affliated **MyWASSH** with the World and Hypertension League (WHL) the International Society of Hypertension (ISH).

The latest was a Public Forum on Salt and Hypertension on 20 Sept 2022 in conjunction with Sunway University Campus with a Conscience Festival Week (19-23 Sept 2022). IT also included a blood pressure screening booth throughout the week-long event.

Prof Chia received the International Society of Hypertension (ISH) Honour for Senior Women Researchers together with two other researchers on 15 October 2022 in Kyoto, Japan (below) at the ISH Awards and Lectures Session.

This honour is given to senior women members of the ISH who have given outstanding service to the ISH and /or made exceptionally distinguished contributions to experimental and clinical research in hypertension.

Congratulations to Prof Datin Chia Yook Chin on her global recognitions. We are proud and lucky to have such an inspiring scholar as part of the School!

The next page details the activities of MyWASSH as led by Prof Chia.



## MyWASSH hits the ground running with Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin at the helm

The irrepressible Head of Medical Sciences, Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin, has set up the Malaysian Society for World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health (MyWASSH) to be immediately impactful in the public sphere. Below are some of their notable activities for 2022.

### World Salt Day Campaign: Public Awareness on the concept of Healthy Dietary Intake , 14 - 20 March 2022

In conjunction with the World Salt Awareness week from 14 – 20 March 2022, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Merits Society Malaysia in Perak was invited to a Klinik Kesihatan in the Kinta District for the World Salt Day awareness campaign and help shoot a video for public awareness about salt intake and share information regarding the 21 days health challenge, promoting a healthy diet concept amongst the public. Dr Albert Yong who is a Family Medicine Specialist personally participated hands on in the video shoot to educate the public on salt intake and how to reduce it through cooking.

#### Salt awareness activity in Gunung Ledang Resort, 19 March 2022

In conjunction with a local blood donation activity held on the 19 March 2022 at the Gunung Ledang Resort, MyWASSH member and family physician, Dr Loo Hou Chan organized a Salt Awareness activity to reach out to tourists and patrons of the resort in an attempt to improve public awareness on salt intake. Dr Loo and his team managed to reach out to more than 50 groups of people (2-5 persons each) through flyers on salt and reduction of salt intake. He also managed to share with the resort staff who also helped in distributing flyers to the public. There was also a question and answer session with the tourists who were interested.

Hypertension Awareness Week at University Malaya Medical Centre, 23 March 2022 In conjunction with the Hypertension Awareness week, the University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) conducted three days of Blood Pressure Screening in the University Malaya clinic with the help of MyWASSH member, Dr Beh Hooi Chin, a Family Medicine Specialist from UMMC.

Community Health Screening Event: Let's fight Hypertension & Diabetes, 18 June 2022 A community health screening event was held in collaboration with the Klang Town Council and the Malaysian Society of Hypertension. The screening was conducted by members of MyWASSH. Prof Chia was also involved in hands on screening the participants. Members of MyWASSH, Family Medicine Specialist from University Putra Malaysia, Prof Ching Siew Mooi and Family Physician from UMMC, Dr Lim Hooi Min gave talks on Hypertension and Diabetes, and how to combat the non-communicable diseases.



Hypertension Awareness Week at UMMC

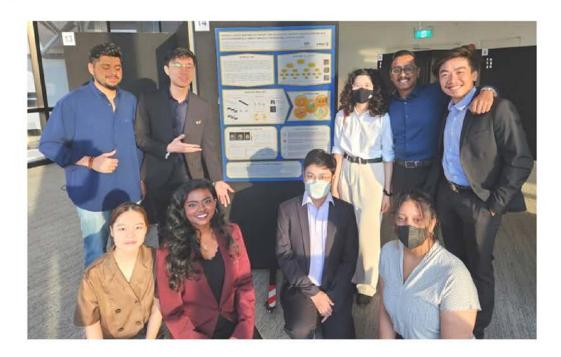
Klang Town Council community health screening

**Kudos to Prof Chia and MyWASSH!!** 

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### Dr Aleya A. Marzuki and team win People's Choice Award at Neuroscience Symposium

Postdoctoral research fellow at the Ageing Health and Wellbeing Research Centre, Dr Aleya Aziz Marzuki and her team in won the People's Choice Award at the Annual Symposium of the Society for Neuroscience (Singapore Chapter) in Singapore, 5-6 December 2022.



The object of their presentation was the AGEWELL project: An ongoing effort in building an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse database of neuroimaging (i.e. structural brain MRIs), electrophysiological, biological, cognitive, and socioeconomic data from older Malaysian adults living in the larger Kuala Lumpur metropolitan area. This unique dataset, focused on mental health and neuroscience, will enable researchers to draw important inferences about healthy ageing in an urban Southeast Asian population. Thanks to the hard work of this team, we have managed so far to enrol 300+ participants and we are recruiting and testing more participants every week.

Congratulations for this award, that results from a large collective effort led by Dr Aleya and supported be her team comprising Dr Chan Jee Kei, Arjun Thanaraju, Samira Vafa, Zacchary Yap Jie, Eugene Lim, Nick Kean Wong, Yip Wei Zern, Jonathan Z. Ong, Annette Arokiaraj, Dexter Shee, Vishaal Nair, Cylee Chan Xiou Wen, Ang Shu Yi, Prof Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin, Prof. Tin Tin Su, Prof. Rozainee Khairudin, Jactty Chew, Lim Wei Ling, Khushi Todi, Thaanushaa Pillay Ravi and many other team members.

This research is funded by the Long-term Research Grant Scheme (LRGS) of the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia, and by Sunway University.

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### **SMLS Dean Conferred MBA**

Dean of SMLS, YM Prof Raja Affendi Raja Ali graduated with a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) from International University of Malaya-Wales (IUMW) on 14 December 2022. He is now even more qualified to lead the School as a Dean.

Taking an MBA while previously being a Dean of Medicine at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysiais no easy feat. This shows the amount of grit our Dean has in pursuing his dreams.

Congratulations, Prof Raja Affendi! May this MBA be a catalyst to new heights in your career and for the School!



### A/Prof Dr Felicia Chung Conferred the L'Oreal-UNESCO for Women in Science Award



Remember A/P Dr Felicia Chung winning the L'Oreal-UNESCO for Women in Science Award earlier in the year? On 30 November 2022, she finally received the award in person at the award ceremony at Parkroyal Collection Hotel. This ceremony was the first since the pandemic eased.

Tomas Hruska, Managing Director of L'Oréal Malaysia who presented the award, said "As a science-based company, L'Oréal believes that there are endless possibilities for girls and women in STEM, and we want to nurture their dream by supporting them as best as we can."



With wish Dr Felicia the heartiest of congratulations on her win and wish her all the best in further encouraging more wonen to purse careers in science.

### Dr Noor Hasliza Che Seman conferred PhD from Asia e University



Lecturer in Nursing, Dr Noor Hasliza Che Seman recently graduated with a PhD in Social and Behavioural Science from Asia e University.

We congratulate Dr Hasliza on her milestone achievement. Studying for a PhD is no easy feat and she accomplished it despite also being the Programme Leader for the Diploma in Nursing programme at the Department of Nursing who tirelessly coordinates all the classes and clinical placements for her students - all within a pandemic when many clinical placements were halted for months.

Her doctoral thesis topic was "Infection Control Management and Compliance Among Nurses in Selected Hospitals in Malaysia" - a truly relevant topic given her role at the Department of Nursing.

### **Long Service Awards 2022**



Congratulations to Jacqueline Gun Chin Hun, Dr Chee Kwan Foong, Assoc Prof Dr Jactty Chew and Pn Norha Saifudin for their Long Service Awards. Here they are posing with Sunway University President, Professor Sibrandes Poppema.

## Medical Biotechnology Student Wins Third Place in "Fuel Asia 2022"!

Soo Teik Yuan, a Year 3 student of the BSc (Hons) Medical Biotechnology programme under the Department of Biological Sciences, SMLS won third place in the "Fuel Asia 2022", a virtual competition hosted by Futurize from 17-25 November 2022.

This 9-day innovation challenge aimed to create new healthcare solutions that tackle non-communicable diseases. Teik Yuan's group, Vision was one of more than 400 participants from all over Asia.





Teik Yuan's team wanted to address the problem of falls in older adults. They highlighted that 36 million incidences of falls are reported among older adults globally, with one of them dying from a fall every 20 minutes. Given that by 2050, the estimated ageing population would reach 2.5 billion, falls in the elderly are a very urgent problem to address. Therefore, Teik Yuan's team proposed an equipment to help people from falling. This product called VISION, a ring that can predict and prevent people from falling; blood glucose, heart rate, and other physiological sensors are used to achieve this. When the ring detects any anomaly in the users, a notification will be sent to users as a rest reminder, or or their families their respective health professionals as a daily evaluation. Teik Yuan suggested that the solution could be a useful for hospitals, elderlycare services, health service centers or medical technology companies as well as individuals/families. Teik Yuan also won a Social Media Prize for being active on social media throughout the whole competition.



### **Kavli Trust Awards MYR3.7 mil to Psychosocial Intervention Study**

CONGRATULATIONS to Prof Alvin Ng Lai Oon from the Department of Psychology, School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University and his team from British, Spanish, and four other Malaysian universities are set to begin a 3-year study that will examine the effects of a school-based programme after being awarded with 3.7 million Malaysian Ringgit (€765,000) of funding by the Kavli Trust Programme for Health Research in December 2022.

#### MYR 3.7 million from Kavli Trust Programme on Health Research Promoting mental health among at-risk adolescents in Malaysia



Co-Investigators (clockwise from top left): Heled Dodd (University of Exeter), Alejandro de la Torre, (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Suzaily Wahab (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), Noor Azimah Muhammad (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), Alvin Ng Lai Oon (Sunway University) Hazreen Abdul Majid (Universiti Malaya), Nik Daliana Nik Farid (Universiti Malaya), Suwaibah Zakaria (Universiti Malaysia Sabah), Ting Chuong Hock (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak), and Julia Lee Ai Cheng (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak)

Professor Cecilia Essau at the University of Roehampton, London, United Kingdom, will lead the project in collaboration with researchers from the University of Exeter, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Sunway University, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Universiti Malaya (UM). Associate Professor Dr Suzaily Wahab at UKM, research lead in Malaysia, will coordinate and oversee the operational management across the study regions.

The aim of this new study is to evaluate a school-based psychosocial intervention among adolescents who are at high risk of developing anxiety and/or depression. From May 2023 to April 2026, the research team will evaluate whether Super Skills for Life – a psychosocial intervention delivered by school staff – is successful in reducing anxiety and depression and at promoting mental health among at-risk adolescents, age 12-14 years, from low-income communities in Malaysia.

The study will be conducted across 20 schools in economically deprived regions in the Malaysian states of Sarawak, Sabah, and Selangor. If proven to have significant impact on adolescent's outcomes and represent good value for money, the study will influence health and education policy and practice and provide a model for promoting mental health in Malaysia and other low- and middle-income countries. The aim of the study will also generate new knowledge that will enhance the understanding of interventions to promote mental health in vulnerable adolescents.

For more information on this project, visit the Kavli Trust Programme page at: <a href="https://kavlifondet.no/en/2022/12/79-million-euro-for-research-into-child-and-adolescent-mental-health-from-kavli-trust/">https://kavlifondet.no/en/2022/12/79-million-euro-for-research-into-child-and-adolescent-mental-health-from-kavli-trust/</a>

### Dr Daniel Cheng wins Best Poster at the Korean Society of Hypertension Conference

Congratulations to Dr Daniel Cheng Maong Hui on winning the Best E-Poster Presentation at the Korean Society of Hypertension Conference that was held in Seoul on 4 to 5 November 2022. This poster presentation was awarded a travel grant of US\$800.

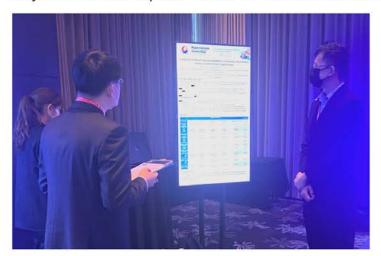
The poster titled "Comparison of Blood Pressure variability in Controlled, Uncontrolled, White Coat and Masked Hypertension" is a result of the "Blood Pressure Variability (BPV) Study" lead by lead by Prof Dr Chia Yook Chin and was presented by Dr Cheng. The study aimed to find out if BPV is greater in those with uncontrolled blood pressure (BP) versus those with controlled BP. There are also groups of individuals who may have white coat hypertension (WCH), where BP is found to be elevated while at the clinic but normal at home, or masked hypertension, where BP is seemingly normal when measured at the clinic but elevated while at home.



Dr Cheng receiving his award at the conference from the President of the KSH, Prof Sang Hyun Ihm.

The study examined the BPV in 4 groups: Controlled, Uncontrolled / Not controlled, White coat and Masked hypertension). Results from a group of 474 patients with hypertension showed that those with uncontrolled hypertension had the greatest BPV. This implies that patients who are uncontrolled will have the highest risk of strokes and other cardiovascular events (i.e., heart attack, heart failure), while those with controlled BP had the lowest BPV. Dr Cheng explained, "The results indicate that it is critical that one must strive for control of BP (BP<140/90mmHg) so that coupled with the lower BPV, the risk of strokes is much lower. However, as strokes can also occur in the light of a controlled BP. So, the next step is to look out for BPV and to try to keep it as low as possible."

"The results of our study reported in our poster should alert all medical doctors as well patients to 'Go for Goal' i.e., a controlled BP of <140/90 mmHg and then 'Go for BPV'. This way we can have hope to reduce the incidence of strokes and heart attacks", he added.



Dr Cheng presenting his poster to evaluators at the KSH conference.

Dr Cheng is a Senior Lecturer under the Department of Medical Sciences. He is an inaugural graduate of the Department's Postgraduate Diploma Primary Care for programme, which provides medical doctors with advanced knowledge and skills in Geriatric Medicine. He now teaches in the programme. Dr Cheng's research interest is in the field of noncommunicable diseases, especially in the areas of hypertension and salt control, as well as primary care problems in the older persons.



### **DBS Education Seminar**

The Department of Biological Sciences, held their Education Seminar on 15 November 2022, to the theme of "Smooth sailing in teaching and learning activities". The panel discussion consisted of six panelists, three from SMLS: Associate Professor Ronald Teow Sin-Yeang, Dr Jane Gew and Dr Ong Seng Kai, and three lecturers from Sunway Foundation Program: Sharenee Philomena Paramasivam, Ts. Preedha Govindasamy and Shivani Ramanathan. Taking some time off from busy teaching schedules, lecturers from both departments have come together to share their teaching experiences and learn how to help students transition into face-to-face learning as we come out of the pandemic. We also had representatives from the Academic Enhancement Division team led by Annyza Tumar who kindly shared with us her idea on how to nurture our next generation with an interesting analogy!



Participants at the Education Seminar

Head of Biological Sciences, A/Prof Dr Kavita Reginald commented, "It was a lovely sharing of experiences, and a start of networking and friendships between faculty of Sunway University and Sunway College. I must thank the Marketing Department for being kind sponsors of this event."

Some interesting points to note from the event:

- Lecturers need to reflect on their lessons.
- Demonstrate and encourage a growth mindset instead of a 'lock and key' mindset.
- Add the element of fun in teaching.
- To encourage independent learning, lecturers need to provide the scaffolding for students



In the thick of the forum with panelists from Sunway University and Sunway College

# Academic Activities

## Psychobabble Series of Talks organised by Department of Psychology

This year had the Department of Psychology organise talks for staff and students by various speakers on a range of topics in psychology. Under the name Psychobabble, there were a total of five talks:

- 22 Jun 2022: Psychology of Gaming by Evelyn Tan, University of York
- 25 Aug 2022: A week in the life of a clinical psychology trainee by Marco Vivolo, University of East Anglia
- 12 Sep 2022: How to choose a legit psychology centre by Professor Alvin Ng Lai Oon, Department of Psychology, Sunway University
- 18 Oct 2022: Cross Cultural Factors in Drivers by Karl Miller, University of Nottingham
- 11 November 2022: Applied Behaviour Analysis: What is it all about? by Tan Hong Chun, Malaysia Association of Behavior Analysis









## **Department of Nursing Grant Writing Course**

The Department of Nursing had a Grant Writing Course that was delivered by Associate Dean Research and Postgraduate Studies, Professor Reuben Clements. This was held on 17 November 2022.



This course was to help staff of the Department of Nursing to be more familiar with research and obtaining grants to carry out research studies. This initiative provides the groundwork for the coming degree programme in Nursing which would include research components. So lecturers and instructors being more familiar with research can better carry out studies that can later inform their teaching of undergraduate and diploma students nursing.

# Research Activities

### **6th National Biomedical Science Gathering**

National Biomedical Science Gathering (NBSG) is an event targeting biomedical science undergraduates and associates from different universities. The most recent gathering was

hosted by Sunway University.



Sunway University Presdent Prof Sibrandes
Poppema opened the event



SMLS Dean Prof Raja Affendi closed the event.



Further details of the event can be found on this link: <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/17syjKOPhJ1N6jMbjKOVSkW9flwBIsPJM/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/17syjKOPhJ1N6jMbjKOVSkW9flwBIsPJM/view</a>

#### Dr Wu Yuan Seng served as Deputy Chair of the Scientific Committee of the 2nd MACR International Scientific Conference 2022

Dr Wu Yuan Seng of the Centre for Virus and Vaccine Research was made the Deputy Chair of the 2nd MACR International Scientific Conference 2022 that was held on 7-8 December 2022. The theme of the conference was Next Generation Cancer Therapeutics - Where are We Heading? This conference invited influential speakers in the fields of clinical oncology, translational medicine and cancer drug discovery. The website of the conference is accessible at <a href="https://2ndmsc.macr-cancer.org/">https://2ndmsc.macr-cancer.org/</a>.





SMiLeS 146

# Student — Activities

### Sunway Future Nurses Club (SFNC) Community Service



The SFNC Community Service 2022, organised by Sunway Future Nurses Club (SFNC), was held on 1 & 2 October 2022 at AgeCare Elderly Home. It was attended by 7 student nurses from different groups and 7 Committee Members of SFNC. The event took 7.5 hours per day. During the first day, the participants managed to clean the elderly home by sweeping and mopping the floor as well as rearranging the things in the cupboard, to make it tidier. On the second day, the participants did chair yoga with the elderly in the morning. The chair yoga was very interesting as it was a new experience for the participants. They understood that the elderly can improve their strengths and flexibility by sitting on a chair. They also had some performances, such as singing 70s-80s songs and dancing with the elderly.

This event was a success as it increased the members' understanding regarding the elderly at the elderly home as well as strengthened the bond between the seniors and the juniors. Everyone was actively involved in the event and they are looking forward to participating in similar events next time.



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## Elaine Yong involves undergraduate students in high school workshops

Social networking platforms offer teenagers opportunities to interact with friends and family, as well as meet new people via the Internet. However, navigating these sites may not be as straightforward for some teenagers. Therefore, Elaine Yong FHEA of the Department of Psychology at the School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University was invited to conduct developmentally appropriate cyberspace communication workshops for lower secondary students. She was assisted by 18 students of BSc. (Hons) Psychology for the 3-day workshops at Sri KDU (Kota Damansara) Secondary School from 7-9 December 2022.



Secondary 1 & 2 workshops emphasized how to improve their online communication skills through netiquette. The workshops began with a brief overview of what and why communication is necessary. Subsequently, students were reminded how the use of various texts, numbers, and emojis may not be understood by others. Later, students worked in small groups to correctly recognize and address the impact of different negative online behaviours such as trolling, flaming, fat shaming, exclusion and hate speech. In closing, Secondary 1 constructed slogans on netiquette while Secondary 2 made personal pledges to adopt netiquette behaviours.

Meanwhile, the workshop for Secondary 3 emphasised the importance of healthy internet boundaries. Similar to Secondary 1 and 2, their workshop started with an overview of communication before leading to into case studies featuring Stranger Danger, Identity Theft, and Sexting; which they attempted to decipher in small groups. The Secondary 3 students' mood became visibly more somber as they began to realise the gravity of seemingly innocuous online behaviours could take an unexpected negative turn. Research statistics and findings were used to highlight the risks and dangers of not taking measures to safeguard personal online information. By the end of the workshop, the Secondary 3 students managed to formulate their own internet boundaries when communicating with teachers, friends, and strangers.



A sweet message from a workshop participant

(Continued next page)

# 

## Elaine Yong's Cyber Communication Workshops (continued)



Elaine Yong (in blue) with some of her student volunteers at Sri KDU Secondary School

We would like to thank these BSc (Hons) Psychology Students for volunteering their time and energy for Elaine Yong's workshops:

#### Year 2

- Shubhani A/P Suppiah,
- Priscylla Ch'ng,
- Ho Ai Lin,
- · Chua Jia Qi,
- Daphne Look,
- Alyssa Rose,
- Fathmath Zuha,
- Chan Zhi Jing
- Angellie Cho.

#### Year 3

- Bernice Ang,
- Siobhan Julianose,
- · Geena Low,
- Kayla Ooi,
- · Lau Xin Min,
- Jynn Kok,
- Tan Jia Xuan,
- Christie Yong
- · May Chang.

# Student —————————Engagement

## SMLS Level Up Completion Briefing for Graduating Students



On 15 November 2022, SMLS had a briefing for graduating students called Level Up. This briefing that used to be called the Completion Briefing was co-organised with Student Life for students who are expected to attend the July 2023 Convocation (i.e., those to complete their studies in December 2022 and March 2023).

The event began with a short speech by SMLS Dean, Prof Dr Raja Affendi Raja Ali, followed by a briefing about the Tracer Study by Assoc. Prof. Dr Lin Mei-Hua, Associate Dean (Employability and Engagement), and then a sharing by Ms Hani Zalehan, Assistant Manager (Education).

Ms Judith Chan from Student Life then gave an explanation about the Career Services unit, after which Mr Marvin Mah from Alumni Relations encouraged the students to stay in touch to enjoy various benefits as alumni of Sunway. There was a recap of Level Up and the event ended with mingling over refreshments.



Prof Raja Affendi starting off the event



Marvin Mah of Student Life talking about Alumni Relations

# Student Engagement

## Orientation Programme for Diploma in Nursing New Intake



The new intake of the Diploma in Nursing Programme - G202210 had their orientation day on 13 October 2022. A total of 33 new student nurses had a brief introduction to the Sunway Future Nurses Club (SFNC). The Committee Members from SFNC, President Elaine, Vice-President Jennifer, Vice-Secretary Le Ci, Treasurer Kai Tin, Head of Public Relations Bryan, Assistant Head of Public Relations Claire, Public Relations Members Xi Ning and Sheh Ray) welcomed G202210 to the club. Head of Public Relations, Bryan gave a presentation to G202210 about the club. and Treasurer Kai Tin briefed about the payment for both SFNC T-shirt and club funds.

G202210 were separated into 6 groups for the Campus Tour, guided by the SFNC Committee Members as well as some student volunteers from G201907, G202004, and G202207. The student nurses were introduced to the common places around the campus. Their Group Coordinator, Ms Harjit Kaur Ujagar Singh, also assigned them a mission, to get to know all staff under Department of Nursing, during their visit to the Skill Lab and the Staff Office. G202210 then attended their seniors' while having sharing session refreshments. Seniors from different groups shared their experiences of studying and doing clinical postings.



# Student = Engagement

### **DBS Industrial Networking (iNET)**

The Department of Biological Sciences (DBS) organised an Industrial Networking event called iNET2022 from 26 to 28 October 2022. iNET2022 contained a series of events that aimed to provide students and alumni with the best insights into the needs of the Malaysian life sciences industry and to showcase the breadth and depth of the medical and life sciences landscape in Malaysia.

iNET2022 kicked off with a panel forum involving six leaders in the biomedical and life science industry on 26 October, discussing the Bioscience Landscape in Malaysia. This was followed by a Meet & Mingle session on 27 October, and an alumni sharing session on 28 October.

The Panel Discussion on the Bioscience Landscape in Malaysia opened with a speech from Sunway Education Group CEO Prof Dato' Dr Elizabeth Lee. It discussed various topics, including:

- How well the market values and incentivizes science graduates in Malaysia;
- What skills do they as employers value in graduates;
- Why females make up the minority of the decision-makers in the industry;
- Insights into the life of a bioentrepreneur; and
- Whether the higher education system properly prepares graduates for a career in the industry

Huge thanks to our panelists Prof Leong Chee-Onn of AGTC Genomics, Lim Su Wen of Oncode Scientific Sdn Bhd, Huan Ung of IBX ProTech, Fabian Cheong Wei Kit of Naluri - Employee Health & Wellness, Rosziana Roslan of Roche Malaysia and Ooi Ghee Chien of Cryocord Sdn Bhd for sharing their valuable insights and experiences! Our students certainly benefited from the collective wisdom of this illustrious and diverse panel.

Many thanks to Sunway University Facilities Department, Branding Department, Sunway Career Services, and the organizing committee Dr Lau Tze Pheng, A/Prof Dr Felicia Chung, Md Fakhrul Zaim, A/Prof Dr Kavita Reginald, A/Prof Dr Lin Mei-Hua Lin, A/Prof Dr Yow Yoon Yen, and Rose Devaraj for their tireless work!



The forum panel was moderated by HOD Biological Sciences, A/Prof Dr Kavita Reginald

(Continued next page)

# Student ————————Engagement

## SMLS Industrial Networking (iNET) (continued)



Opening Ceremony crowd of the iNET 2022

iNET 2022 Meet and Mingle (iNET Day 2) had a full force were 18 companies and NGOs across the Malaysian biosciences industry participate in meeting with interested students. Our students and visitors had the opportunity to hear directly from people in the field about the different opportunities in the industry and experience the true breadth of the biosciences industry.

Huge thanks to the representatives from Roche Malaysia, Boehringer Ingelheim, Novo Nordisk Malaysia, DMS MedHealth, Novotech Malaysia, Luye Pharma Group, Oncode Scientific Sdn Bhd, Naluri - Employee Health & Wellness, AGTC Genomics, SuperDNA, Xploregaia, ECRI Asia Pacific, DOC2US, Cryocord Sdn Bhd, Innolatex Malaysia, ScienceVision Sdn Bhd, Everlife-Chemopharm Group, and Thermo Fisher Scientific Malaysia for their kind support and participation!









**SMiLeS** 

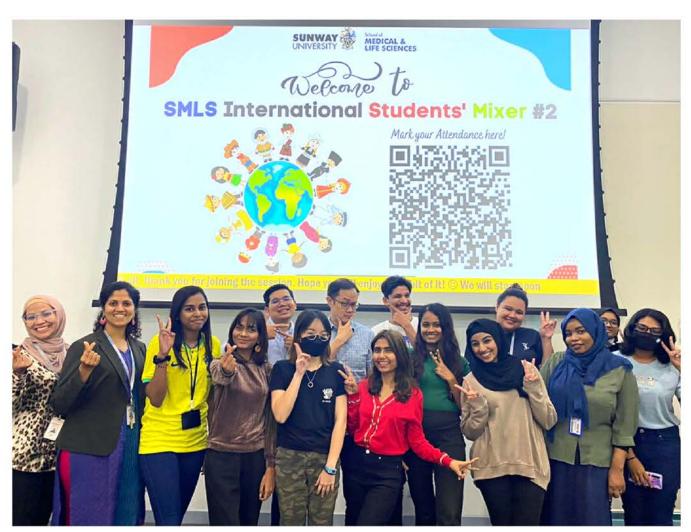
# Student — Engagement

## SMLS International Students' Mixer#2

On 24 November 2022, SMLS organised the second International Students' Mixer for the year. As with the first one, this mixer was supported by the Sunway International Students Ambassadors (SISA).

This time, the mixer was held in person. It was hosted by Senior Executive, Fakhrul Zaim and opened by Associate Dean International, Prof Alvin Ng. There were introductory speeches by the SISA committee proceeded by sharing of experiences by two international students - Sarah Bibi Mungly from Mauritius and Farhan Rehman Shereif from India, both being from the Department of Biological Sciences.

An exciting activity of detective vs murderer mystery guessing game followed, facilitated by President of SISA, Aliyah Anwar. The event ended with further fellowship between staff and students over some refreshments.



The freestyle group photo

# 

## Dr Woo Pei Jun visits Ministry of Higher Education in Maldives

Head of Psychology, Dr Woo Pei Jun had fruitful meeting with Aminath Asra, Director of Scholarship Section, and Aminath Azba, International Relations Officer, Ministry of Higher Education, Maldives to discuss future university collaboration and capacity building in mental health.

This meeting was part of Dr Woo's trip to Maldives from 21-24 November 2022 as a marketing exercise to explore interests in Psychology and higher education recruitment. She joined an education fair in Male and met with the Ministry of Education Maldives. The main purpose of the meeting was to explore the potential of them to sponsor some students to study at Sunway University.

Dr Woo also visited the Maldives National University (MNU) and Villa College for discussions on potential collaborations. While in Male, there was also a meeting with Sunway alumni in Maldives. This meeting is one of the initiatives from Sunway Alumni Relations.



Dr Woo gifted Ms Aminath Azba the Mending Hearts book, a homegrown compilation carried out by the Department of Psychology and published by Sunway University Press



Dr Woo met with Sunway University alumni during her visit to Maldives. This was an initiative of Sunway Alumni Relations



Dr Woo and Justine Phua from Sunway Education Group's International Office at Villa College, one of the biggest private college in Maldives. They met Deputy Principal of Villa International School, Ismail Nasheed and Head, Department of Psychology, Villa College, Aminath Nasheeda



Dr Woo met with Dr Aishath Shanoora, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences, Maldives National University and her team to learn more about their work at Maldives! Here she is gifting them a baby Tshirt from our Sunway Baby Lab! (From Left to Right: Unaisha Saud, Dr Mariyam Neerish, Dr Aishath Shanoora, Dr Woo, Justine Phua and Mariyam Ifshan).

## 

## Biosciences Lab Boot Camp for Foundation in Science and Technology Students



In mid-October, the Department of Biological Sciences welcomed a VERY enthusiastic and excited group of Foundation in Science & Technology students from Sunway College for a Lab Boot Camp. The Foundation students had a taste of degree-level lab sessions from our Cell and Tissue Culture and Medical Entomology modules, learning techniques of cell counting and insect dissection.

Special thanks to Associate Professor Dr Ronald Teow Sin-Yeang Teow, Dr Ong Seng Kai, Norha Saifudin, Zaliha Zulkifli, Dhaniah Mohamad and Halim Latif for making it happen!







SMiLeS 156

## Community—— Engagement

#### Department of Psychology joins Disability Awareness Event

On 18 December 2022, the Department of Psychology, represented by its Head, Dr Woo Pei Jun together with student volunteers in partnership with the Inclusive Outdoor Classroom and Majlis Perbandaran Subang Jaya (Subang Jaya City Council) supported the event, "Break the Stigma on DisABILITY" Runway project. There was a variety of performance by individuals with disabilities, showcasing many different abilities that are to be celebrated.

Dr Woo Pei Jun on stage with one of the performers during the event









SMiLeS 157

# Media — Appearances

#### SMLS gets featured in Sunway Echo Media



In September, Sunway Echo Media, the official newsletter of the Sunway University featured SMLS and its academic departments, namely the Department of Biological Sciences, Department of Nursing and the Department of Psychology. Some of the current students were also featured. The full article under the section called Sunway Scoop can be accessed here:

https://sunwayechomedia.com/2022/09/15/sunway-scoop-school-of-medical-and-life-sciences/

#### DBS academics featured in media articles



Breaking down barriers for women in science

revonmedia.com

A/Prof Dr Kavita Reginald was featured in Revon Media on 16 August 2022. Double-click the picture on the left to access the article.



#### Demystifying and elevating the role of biotechnologists

"I am interested in Medical Biotechnology", a vivacious pre-university student once said to me, her ever sparkling at the thought of pursuing her tertiar.

A/Prof Dr Felicia Chung was featured in Business Today on 16 October 2022. Double-click the picture above to access the article.



#### Bird boxes for hornbills

WHEN two pairs of great hornbills in Batu Rakit, Terengganu lost their vital nesting trees, a team of intrepid conservationists built artificial nests in the...

Dr Ravinder Kaur was featured in The Star on 4 June 2022. Double-click the picture above to access the article.

# 

#### Prof Alvin Ng featured in media articles, TV and radio interviews



Prof Alvin Ng is no stranger to the news media as well as radio and TV interviews on various psychology and mental health topics. This year, he contributed to six news articles, one radio interview and one TV interview. His articles can be accessed here:

- 7 Jan 2022: https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/health/2022/01/07/helping-teenagers-decide-on-their-future
- 26 Feb 022: https://www.businesstoday.com.my/2022/02/26/how-psychology-majors-can-add-value-to-your-workforce/
- 30 Mar 2022: https://mypositiveparenting.org/2022/03/30/essential-life-skills-forchildren/
- 11 Jun 2022: https://www.businesstoday.com.my/2022/06/11/suicide-prevention-simple-efforts-can-save-lives/
- 8 Jul 2022: https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/health/2022/07/08/should-you-get-a-pet-for-your-kids
- 23 Jul 2022: https://www.businesstoday.com.my/2022/07/23/dealing-withdepression-a-behavioural-activation-approach/

BFM89.9



#### Mind Matters: Mental Health Needs of Caregivers

Every mental health issue undeniably has an impact on the individual with the structures. but there i Prof Alvin was interviewed on BFM Radio 89.9, together with Amalina Davis of Thrive Well on the mental health needs of caregivers. Double-click the picture above to access the podcast that was made live on 19 September 2022

**RTM Fresh Brew** 



Prof Alvin was interviewed on RTM's Fresh Brew on the Stanford Duck Syndrome by hosts, Meor and Nabil on 18 December 2022. Double-click the picture above to access the YouTube video recording of the session.

# Special Event

#### **Deepavali Celebrations**





Prof Elil Renganathan, Prof Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood, Helga (Prof Elil's wife) and Prof Raja Affendi

11 November 2022, Professor Renganathan and his wife Helga, hosted a Deepavali celebration for the SMiLeS family.

Staff were all dressed for the occasion in very colourful garbs. The Sunway University Provost, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam, and Executive Director of the Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, Prof Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood dropped by to join in on the festivities

Thank you, Prof Elil and Helga, for your kindness and generosity in hosting this Deepavali celebration! We all had a wonderful time!



The SMLS Administrative Staff all dressed up for Deepavali

## Deepavali Celebration

Did you know that "Deepavali" originates from Sanskrit words deep (lamp) and vali (row)? It literally means "row of lights". The festival is celebrated by lighting earthen lamps. During this celebration, Prof Elil and Helga showed us the symbolic lighting of the lamp ceremony to begin festivities. The light symbolises positive brightness, bringing peace and success while dispelling darkness. Almost all of the staff attended the event in the Indian traditional attires. It was a very colourful affair with sumptuous food! Enjoy the photos!



A colourful family portrait



Natalina Aseervadam and Regina Saminathan with the beautiful kolam they made on the floor



Prof Elil and Helga lighting the lamp

## Deepavali Celebration

The beautiful colours of Deepavali as represented by our lovely administrative staff (top), who were then joined by the rest of the School staff (bottom). Thank you all for dressing up and making this year's Deepavali such a memorable occasion!











## Deepavali Celebration



This colourful Deepavali Kolam was designed by our talented administrative staff from the Department of Biological Sciences -Ms Natalina Aseervadam and Ms Regina Saminathan



# Special Event

## **December Open Day**



A PhD student sharing her experiences studying at Sunway

Our December Sunway Education Open Day fell on 17 and 18 December 2022. As usual, our staff and students were busy entertaining inquiries of the public, especially parents and potential students. It was a very happening weekend with our labs and counselling stations getting continuous stream of curious visitors. Our postgraduate students also present their research posters and met with visitors to share their experiences at Sunway.



MSc Psychology student, Michelle Lauren Ho presented her research poster. With her is Dr Woo Pei Jun, HOD Psychology



The Biological Science labs are always a favourite with visitors during Open Days. There are many stations within these labs for them to participate in various activities.



Our Biological Science and Psychology academics on standby in the staff holding room while waiting to be called to provide consultations to visitors with special interest in either of the two subjects. Here we have A/Prof Dr Felicia Chung, Dr Ser Hooi Leng, A/Prof Dr Kavita Reginald and Dr Eliza Berezina.



## Alumni Story

### BSc (Hons) Medical Biotech Alumna Sarah Mungly, is a book author!

Recent graduate of the BSc (Hons) in Medical Biotechnology programme, Sarah Mungly is almost quietly, an author of three books! Sarah's books have received starred reviews on various apps and are accessible online on a range of platforms.

During her undergraduate days at Sunway University, she published her first series which focused on the journey of the personal growth of a girl. The success and love she got from her first book, pushed her to explore her skills as an author and keep writing. By the end of her final year, she was inspired to write her third book which was based on the life of a girl with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); she thought it would be good if the world could view things from the perspective of a girl dealing with neurodivergence.

Sarah is now also writing her fourth book which she aims to publish in 2023. If you want to know when Sarah's next book will come out, please visit her website at https://linktr.ee/Shinylights where you can access the links to her works.



Sarah's is currently back to SMLS and enrolled in the MSc in Life Sciences programme, focusing on cancer cell biology. Her primary research interest is to identify and target cancerspecific epigenetic patterns in breast cancer. She will mine large, publicly-available epigenome-wide datasets to identify regions of the human genome that are frequently altered in breast cancers. Using epigenetic editing tools, she will aim to reverse these epigenetic marks in in vitro cell line models to determine the impact of these alterations on cancer cell behaviour and chromatin structure. The results of this work will lead to a better understanding of the impacts of chromatin structure on cancer cell development, and the potential identification of novel targets for breast cancer treatment. Her supervisor is Assoc Prof Dr Felicia Chung Fei Lei, whose research is focused on cancer epigenetics, urothelial cancer genetics, and the mechanisms of cancer immune evasion. "As a supervisor, Dr Felicia, is very motivating, friendly and helpful, she inspires the people around her to do better and motivates her students in their works", Sarah commented.



Sarah Mungly in action in the lab

After her Final Year Project, Sarah knew she wanted to continue her career in Molecular Biology but at the same time, she wanted to do research on cancer. After the completion of her degree, she joined the Molecular department of C-lab, a diagnostic lab in her home country, where she was exposed to various molecular techniques and one which she was very much fascinated about, the Next Generation Sequencing. She was highly inspired and encouraged by the Technical head of the lab, Dr Anusha Devi Nawoor, to pursue her dreams and carry further her masters. As she learned more about the different techniques and test, she developed an increasing interest in cancer research. Thus, leading her to pursue her masters in cancer research.

We wish Sarah all the best in her book-writing and postgraduate research.

## Alumni Story

## Psychology Alumna Awarded a PhD in Medical Sciences from University of Groningen!

Former BSc (Hons) in Psychology student, Chathuri Vanajan Anushiya successfully defended her PhD thesis which was entitled "Older workers' work limitations, vitality and retirement preferences: the differential effects of chronic health conditions" on 14 December 2022. She was supervised by Professors Kène Henkens and Ute Bultmann from the Faculty of Medical Sciences / University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) at University of Groningen in the Netherlands. She is currently working at the Interdisciplinary Demographics Netherlands Institute (NIDI) in the Generations and Gender Programme Team, in the areas of epidemiology of work and health.



Anushiya Vanajan during her thesis defense

After Anushiya completed her studies at Sunway University in 2014, she went back to her hometown, Colombo in Sri Lanka and got a job as an Assistant Lecturer at the Colombo Institute of Research and Psychology (CIRP). Her stint in academia prepared her for postgraduate studies at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich where she graduated with a Master of Epidemiology in 2017. Her thesis was entitled, "Can Participant's Characteristics Predict Benefit from a Multimodal Prevention Program for Individuals at Risk of Burnout? Secondary Analysis of a Randomized Control Trial'.

Almost immediately after completing her masters, Anushiya became a doctoral student at the University of Groningen. Anushiya's research focuses on the impact of organizational policies on the healthy ageing of older workers. Her work centers mostly around older workers with chronic health conditions: the specific work-related challenges they may face, how organizations can accommodate these challenges, and these workers' transitions from work to retirement. She is also passionate about translating the knowledge she gains from her research into relevant of policy and practice measures to make a difference in promoting healthy and sustainable working lives for older and younger workers alike.



Anushiya after her conferment ceremony

Anushiya explained, "My doctoral study found that chronic health conditions differ widely in how they affect older workers' health, work and retirement preferences. These effects differ by the type of chronic health condition and whether the chronic health condition was newly diagnosed. The results also show that retirement improves the vitality of older workers, more so for manual workers than non-manual workers. So, taken together, experiencing chronic health conditions in the years before retirement is detrimental to older workers health, work and functioning. Because future cohorts of older workers will work longer, it is important to develop effective strategies to protect and promote the health and work ability of older workers with chronic health conditions."

We at SMLS are very proud of Anushiya and wish her all the best in her career. It is always very heart-warming to see our graduates succeeding in life.

## Birthday Celebrations

The last three birthday celebrations! The School would like to thank our Provost and former Dean, Prof Abhi Veerakumarasivam for sponsoring the cakes for every celebration that we had in the entire year! These monthly events have indeed brought us all together as December family! The celebration was combined with our Christmas party. We also thank our event organiser extraordinaire, the ever-cheerful Syazwani Asmawi (right) for her efforts in making our celebrations fun, lively, colourful and relaxing. These events have been very helpful in destressing from the usual mountains of academic and administrative tasks!





O C T



N O V

## **Christmas Celebration**



The last party of the year was our December Birthday Party that also doubled as a Christmas Party. We all got together for a nice gathering of food, fun and fellowship. Celebrations got under way after a short speech by our Dean, Prof Raja Affendi Raja Ali. Many dressed in Christmas colours - green and red. We even had a Christmas Tree with presents below it, and a beautifully made Christmas Cake, which also doubled as a birthday cake for celebrating those who were born in December.









### **Christmas Celebration**

The Christmas celebration also was a little farewell for Senior Lecturer, Dr Babu Ramanathan who have been at the Department of Biological Sciences for 7 years. He was also the Programe Leader for the Phd in Biological Sciences. Dr Babu's area of expertise is in the development of peptide-based vaccines and antivirals against infectious diseases, particularly the dengue virus, enterovirus 71 (EN71) and the influenza virus. In this day and age, he would easily be a sought after person. We thank him for his contributions and wish him all the best.



HOD Biological Sciences, A/Prof Dr Kavita Reginald giving Dr Babu a farewell gift



And of course, the season of gifting is not complete without actually giving away gifts. The celebration ended with Santarina of the day, A/Prof Dr Felicia Chung giving away the Christmas Exchange presents to those holding Lucky draw numbers! Even Jacqueline Gun's son, Ethan Khoo, got into the draw and received a nice big bag of gifts (*left*).



The Party Zone at our usual venue - Jeffrey Square on Level 11, just around the corner from the School Admin Office



Dean of School, Prof Raja Affendi cutting the Christmas / Birthday Cake



School Manager, Wan Nooraazila receiving her gift from Santarina, A/Prof Dr Felicia Chung

#### A Note of Gratitude:

The School of Medical and Life Sciences
wishes to thank all our supporters and
collaborators who contributed in one way or
another to our successes.

We acknowledge the various Schools, Departments and Centres at Sunway University, as well as all the units and individuals within Sunway Education Group for their support in helping us realise our goals for the year. Not to forget also our higher education, industry and community partners for which we would not have progressed without.

Lastly, to our parent company, Sunway Group and the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation - THANK YOU for giving us life!



# MEDICAL & LIFE SCIENCES

2022 SMiLeS Yearbook