

# TOP CLASS

the edupreneurs

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## School for green warriors

Greencity International College grooms students to keep Mother Earth safe



**06-07 | COVER FEATURE**  
**Nurturing green warriors**

Greencity International College is preparing students to help keep Mother Earth safe

## LEARNING TO CARE FOR NATURE



**WITH** erratic weather patterns, devastating floods and annual dry spells that lead to water rationing, environmental concerns have become major issues in Malaysia.

According to scientists, widespread droughts, unexpected deluges that inundate vast areas of land, storms and even hazy conditions are all the result of global warming. We are slowly but surely destroying our planet — which also happens to be our only home.

It has never been more urgent than now that we learn how to care for Mother Earth.

To our credit, we have made some progress. We have taken steps to ensure that what we do — from building our homes to managing our wastes — have as little negative impact on the environment as possible.

Academia has a major role to play in this drive for a greener Earth. Courses on green technology have become mainstream, even here in Malaysia. At the Greencity International College, students learn everything from conserving energy to managing waste.

Career opportunities for these graduates are many. One sector that is seeing increasing demand for professionals with extensive capabilities in green technology is the building and construction industry.

For instance, the role of an architect or civil engineer today is more than just planning, designing and overseeing the construction of a building. They must now take environmental concerns into considerations when taking on a new project.

Similarly, professionals with extensive knowledge of green issues are shaping the way we do business.

As the head of Greencity International College's School of Green Science and Engineering Ng Chuck Chuan points out, businesses and industries have adopted green initiatives in their practices. At the same time, environmental sustainability in contemporary business processes has become significantly important.

These are factors that will drive "green" education. As the college in the forefront of this new educational pursuit, Greencity is poised to play a major role in moulding young Malaysians into green warriors.

That, ultimately, is what Mother Earth needs.

**YEOH GUAN JIN**  
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Maybank puts 107 through their paces to spot talents in GO Ahead Challenge

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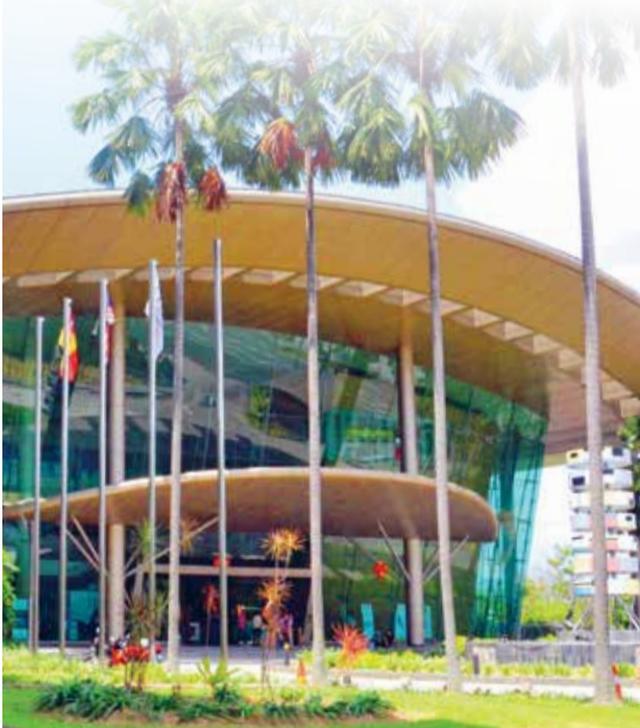
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## FEATURE

# Unravelling TALENTS with Maybank GO Ahead Challenge



The finalists of the Malaysian National Level who won their place in the Global Finals

PHOTO BY SAIFUL HIZAM

More than 100 students from 18 countries competed at the Maybank GO Ahead Challenge (MGAC) 2016 for a place in the Global Finals

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

**T**he recent Malaysian Level of the Maybank GO Ahead Challenge (MGAC) 2016 held at Menara Maybank Kuala Lumpur saw 107 participants from 18 countries take part in a competition to spot all-rounded talents that can adapt in a rapidly changing environment.

Maybank group chief human capital officer Nora Abdul Manaf said the MGAC will expose participants to real-life pressures and expectations of working in a high performing organisation.

"In order for Maybank to achieve its Maybank 2020 vision, we strive to be a change capable organisation that is agile, nimble, resilient and adaptive to the fast changing environment to continue creating value for our stakeholders," she said.

"And as the only Asean bank that has a strong presence in all 10 countries in the region, we require all-rounded talents that are local experts where we operate, yet equipped with strong global literacy acumen to successfully compete at the international level," she said, adding that MGAC was designed to unravel talent that could be aligned to Maybank's vision.

Out of the 107 participants from Tibet, Russia, Tajikistan, Japan and the Asean countries, 24 won a place in the Global Finals on Aug 14.

They were joined by the other finalists from the 11 national level competitions held in countries where Maybank has a presence - namely Hong Kong, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, Laos, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar.

## Uncharted territories

Psychology student Teng Ke Ying of Penang said prior to joining the competition, she did not have any financial background.

"Despite that, it did not stop me from delving into uncharted territories. At the same time, it has encouraged me to unleash my competitive spirit while working together with people of different

personalities and work styles," she said, adding that her motto in life is to be brave and take life one step at a time.

Jessica Sudjana, one of the finalists from MGAC National Level in Maybank Indonesia, said the competition went beyond what she had expected.

"I have learnt so much about world issues and what I am capable of doing when under pressure. I am grateful to be allowed this opportunity to develop my knowledge and skills, which I can harness in the future," she said.

Those who secured a place in the Global Finals will stand a chance to join Maybank's highly-coveted Global Maybank Apprentice Programme (GMAP), where they can build a career in the banking and finance industry.

## Regional student competition

MGAC is the first competition in the region that challenges students in both financial and non-financial disciplines.

"We need talents who are brave, bold and ethical, who dare to be disruptive in a constructive, solution-oriented, responsible and professional manner to grow themselves individually as well as for the organisation.

"The different levels of MGAC enable the bank to spot those who consistently display the traits that reflect our high performing culture and who are ready to achieve our vision in the future," Nora said.

The competition involves a series of obstacles that test the participants' business acumen, problem-solving skills, as well as emotional and cultural intelligence. They are exposed to real-life pressures and expectations of regional and global organisations.

Spanning over five months, the road to the Global Finals involves the Campus and National levels. Twenty-three Campus levels involving 1,369 participants were held in 10 countries, with winners competing in one of the 11 National Levels.

## Increasingly competitive

The Malaysian Level participants represented just 0.005% of the total applications received from top talents studying in the country (over 25,700). Overall, this year's MGAC, into its fifth year now, received over 37,000 applications, a 50% increase from the 2015 Challenge. In contrast, the inaugural event in 2012 garnered a mere 1,000 applications.

The over 100 nationalities who applied are a testament to the international appeal the competition possesses amongst fresh graduates and university students worldwide.

At the Campus level, participants were tested on comprehension and resolving ethical issues in decision making. Outstanding performers were then selected to move on to the National Levels.

Living up to this year's MGAC National Level hashtag, #UnfearTheNew, participants at the National level were challenged to hone the new capabilities they discovered at the Campus level.

During the one-day National Level competition, participants endured a total of 18 hours of activities that tested their analytical skills in interpreting data and information, resilience in handling and recovering quickly from crises, and learning agility to succeed in an ever changing environment.

The principal case study pushed participants to understand issues beyond finance and business. It involved an understanding of macroeconomics as well as social and ethical issues on a local and global level in decision making.

National Level winners will compete in the Global Finals for a total cash prize of US\$71,000, the largest cash prize for any student competition in Asia. The Global Champion (individual winner) will win US\$1,000 and a coveted two-week internship experience at any of the Maybank offices operating around the world.

The Global Finalists will also earn a chance to join the highly-coveted Global Maybank Apprentice Programme (GMAP) for a kick-start in the banking and finance industry. ■

## FEATURE

# Producing employable GRADUATES

Industry leaders want independent, problem-solving workers

| Text by KEVIN WONG |  
ecwong@hckmedia.com

**T**he jobseeker may sometimes find it difficult to get the right job, but it is no less a challenge for employers who are looking for workers.

Industry leaders say it is no longer easy to find the right candidate for the job mainly because many Malaysian graduates lack various skills and competencies that they need.

That alone underlines the importance of a good education.

To prepare for the workplace, Malaysian students must be suitably equipped with the right skills which only a well-rounded and holistic education can provide.

During an exclusive Education New Zealand (ENZ) roundtable discussion ahead of its annual education fair, industry leaders outlined how employers today are looking beyond academic achievements when hiring new employees.

They also emphasised the importance of equipping students with skills for project management and problem-solving to remain relevant in today's workplace.

Recruitment firm Randstad Malaysia director Ryan Carroll said that Malaysian employers were now looking for talented individuals who possessed various skills and competencies.

"One of the key things that employers today are looking for is how someone can help the organisation ensure productivity gains. They want candidates who have the right skills in project management, are competent in the digital and social media space, and are confident communicators. All these can be acquired through internships, part-time work or even working on charity projects. Another skill set that is highly sought after is the ability to articulate one's project management skills.

"The working environment these days is getting segregated to lot of small sharp bursts and that is how employers generally find productivity gains — by measuring employees in shorter projects. Through this, employers can keep track of their employees and create a better learning curve than working on long-term projects," he said.

New Zealand's High Commissioner to Malaysia Dr John Subritzky said that the New Zealand education system and institutions were committed to developing holistic educational experiences that were relevant to the workplace.

"Helping students do well academically while at the same time developing their thinking skills and obtaining real workplace experiences are crucial for them to stand out when applying for jobs.

"New Zealand recognises the importance of an all-rounded education to employability, which is why our education system focuses on helping students to make the transition from the academic life into the working world," he said.

"Institutions in New Zealand are commit-

ted to producing employable graduates who can contribute to the economic growth and social well-being of their respective countries. All the universities, for example, offer internship opportunities and programmes of support to help students increase their employability skills and realise their career opportunities," Subritzky said.

Richard Tan, alumnus of Victoria University of Wellington and managing director and co-founder of lelong.com.my, said through ho-

listic education, students would learn how to apply knowledge based on real-life situations.

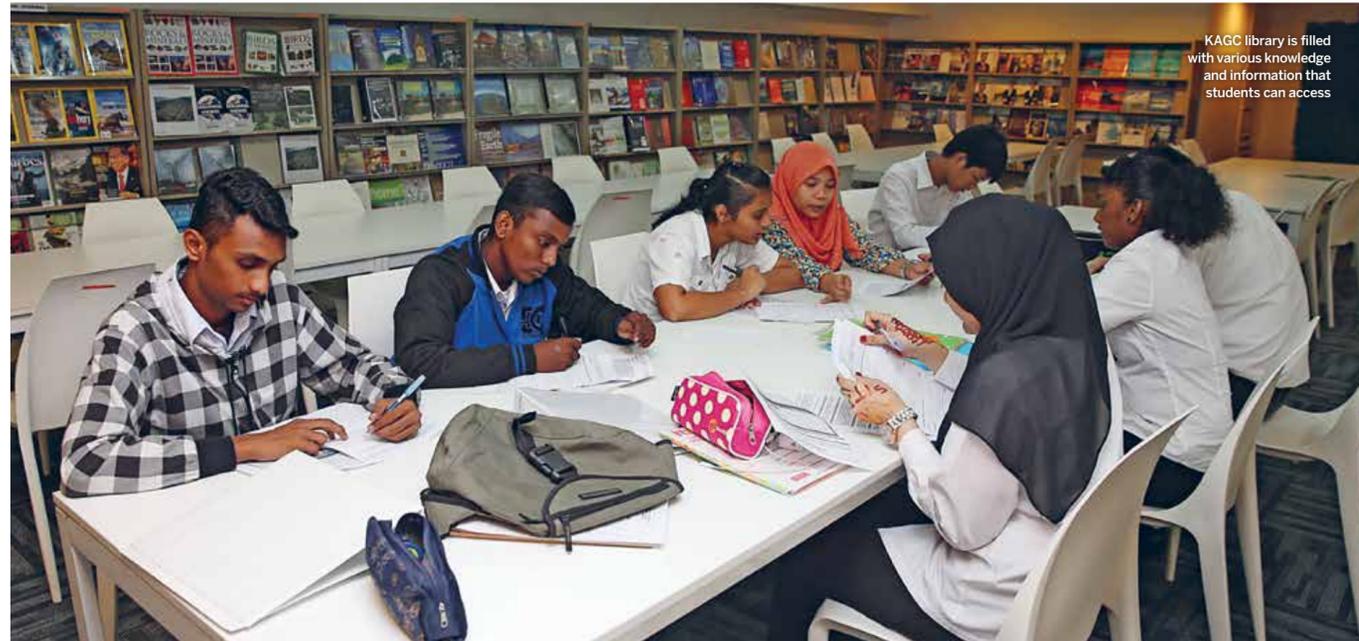
"How knowledge is taught and delivered is important, as well as the examination process, whether the students are tested on what they know based on academics or applying the knowledge based on real-life experiences.

"In his experience of being a student of Victoria University of Wellington, Tan shared that even though he was a Pure Science student, he was given the flexibility to explore other things during his time at university.

"I also worked various part-time jobs and this has helped me pick up soft skills such as communicating effectively with peers and dealing with different types of personalities, which has helped me in my career," he said. ■

## 28X5

## FEATURE



KAGC library is filled with various knowledge and information that students can access



The exhibition booth at the lobby of the Greencity International College



The library in the Greencity International College

The Greencity International College building

# Green science for a GREENER future

Green technology promises vast career opportunities in a world where environmental causes have become mainstream. One Malaysian college leads the way in offering such 'green' courses

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

In an era when environmental issues have become a global concern, green living and sustainability are getting a lot of focus in academia.

In fact, there are institutions of higher learning that now offer courses in environmental and green science. One such institution in Malaysia is the Greencity International College (KAGC).

The KAGC, established in 2011, has evolved to become a renowned boutique college that offers students a comprehensive range of subjects on green living, such as green technology, waste management and environmental history, as well as an understanding of the fast expanding green movement for a better world for all.

The KAGC School of Green Science offers students the opportunity to enrol in two of its diploma-level programmes in Green Building and Green Technology Management.

The head of the college's School of Green Science and Engineering programme Ng Chuck Chuan, who is also a lecturer there, says Malaysians still lack an awareness of environmental matters although "green" education has already gained public attention globally over the past few decades.

He says that through the courses offered at the college, students will gain an understanding of the importance of studying green sciences. "We aim to produce world-class green professionals in line with our motto: Be Green, Save the Earth," Ng tells Top Class.

## Staying green

Under the Diploma in Green Building programme, the objective is to create professionals who are competent in transforming and managing building designs and construction with due considerations given for greening needs.

"Apart from the enormous quantities of construction materials that have been extracted from the earth and transported to building sites, our concrete dwellings are also excessively consuming our limited non-renewable fossil fuels," Ng says.

"The amount of energy required to cool down or heat up our buildings or to power our appliances and other gadgets is reaching an alarmingly high level. There is also the problem of greenhouse gases. About 40% of these gases are released from construction sites. Hence the need for more green building professionals," he adds.

Students of the Diploma in Green Building programme will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the high market demand for architects and engineers who can offer the "green" perspective.

The programme emphasises on the delivery of green buildings as well as a life cycle agenda that includes strategic planning or needs analysis, design review and post-occupancy evaluation.

Ng explains that students taking the course are expected to master the fundamentals of building design that take into consideration the needs of the ecology, architecture and community, health, building environment and sustainability in its resources and operations.

The objective of the KAGC's Diploma in Green Technology Management programme is to produce professionals who are adept at reshaping and managing business in line with green considerations.

"Many international alliances have launched green initiatives in business and industry practices. At the same time, environmental sustainability in contemporary business processes has become significantly important.

"Simple green initiative practices such as using video conference instead of travelling for a business trip can help to reduce energy consumption by more than 50%, and sending emails instead of using the postal mail can reduce greenhouse gases up to 98%," Ng points out.

"There needs to be competency in managing green technology as business practices are a vital component of business branding, and such branding attracts financing and enhances an organization's competitiveness," he adds.

## Greening for the future

Under the diploma programme, students are introduced to the existing methods of incorporating environmental considerations into business planning, organisation, leadership, control, as well as strategic management and improvements within organisations with a special focus on identifying and managing trade-offs between environmental technology and contemporary practices.

Ng explains that Green Technology Management is designed to equip students with knowledge of the issue of development on the environment and to understand the functions of science and technology as well as the responsibilities of various forces globally.

At the same time, both course modules cover a wide range of comprehensive topics that include critical thinking, time management, professional management and introduction to business and management.

"KAGC believes in providing a holistic education and that every student who graduates from our college will be able to adapt to the working environment with the right sets of soft and hard skills," Ng says.

Upon completing the Diploma in Green Building programme, graduates will be equipped with strong fundamentals in the discipline of Green Building with the capability to apply theoretical and practical knowledge on green technology and green building.

Graduates of the Diploma in Green Technology Management course will be able to understand how to evaluate critically current and advanced research in environmental sustainability.

Ng says Malaysians who are keen to enrol for the Green Science programme in preparation for a career in green technology must meet the minimum requirement of the equivalent of three credits, inclusive of Math, in the SPM, O



**We believe in providing a holistic education and that every student who graduates from our college will be able to adapt to the working environment with the right sets of soft and hard skills**

— Ng Chuck Chuan, head of The KAGC School of Green Science and Engineering programme

Level or UEC examinations, or a certificate in any related field or other equivalent levels.

The duration for both the Diploma in Green Building and Diploma in Green Technology Management courses is two and a half years. There are three intakes a year — in January, April and August.

The courses are approved and accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and the Higher Education Ministry.

The ministry also recognises the need to have more graduates in green technology given that there is a growing need for such expertise in the public and private sectors as well as for non-governmental organisation, Ng says.

## The growing green industry

Since the programme was launched in 2013, KAGC has seen seven students graduate from the Diploma in Green Building programme and another four from the Diploma in Green Technology Management course. "There will be a few more in our upcoming graduation ceremony," Ng says.

"Our graduates have successfully landed jobs in their chosen field of study. Some have been hired as full-time employees after their internship programme. At the same time, we provide assistance for students who are starting their internship by looking for suitable organisations where they can serve," he adds.

There are many career options for those who have the right qualifications in green living and sustainability. The list of careers for graduates of the Diploma in Green Building programme include energy efficient builder, eco-urban planner, eco-artist, sustainability systems developer, environmental systems developer, environmental and renewable consultant, and solar or wind energy engineer.

Those who have the Green Technology Management diploma can see themselves as environmental research assistants, green sales representatives, green community building assistants, junior consultants for environmental management, and environmental campaign and event managers.

## Why go green?

There are many reasons to be a green advocate. For a start, Ng says, it is beneficial to people as well as the environment. "Through such advocacy, people will learn how to minimise the degradation of the environment and how to keep greenhouse gas emissions to the minimum," he says.

"Additionally, green living is safe and it promotes health and physical well-being. It also improves the environment for all. We will learn how to conserve energy, protect our natural resources and eventually promote the use of renewable energy," he adds.

Promoting the green industry will lead to more jobs. As of today, more than 300,000 jobs in the green technology sector are already available globally. Ng says green technology should also be made one of the key drivers to accelerate national economic growth.

Ultimately, going green will promote sustainability. Having more experts in green technology will help to conserve the environment for future generations. That, incidentally, should be the objective of a good education. ■

## CAMPUS LIFE



FTMS Malaysia Cyberjaya campus new library is filled with books and information needed for students



FTMS Information Resource Centre is equipped with the information for both students and lecturers



Students can enjoy their workouts at FTMS indoor gym and other recreational activities on campus



The main entrance of the new FTMS Malaysia Cyberjaya campus

# Reaching new heights in CYBERJAYA

FTMS College Malaysia's move to a sprawling new campus in Cyberjaya heralds a period of exponential growth for the soon-to-be accredited University College

| Text by KEVIN WONG | [ecwong@hckmedia.com](mailto:ecwong@hckmedia.com)

In order to accommodate its growing student population, Financial Training and Management Services (FTMS) College Malaysia, which is set to gain University College status by the end of this year, has moved to its new campus set in a lush green landscape in Cyberjaya, Selangor.

The architecture of the new campus has been designed to create a strikingly ultra-modern impression. There is an imposing atrium at the main concourse that commands attention and lifts the spirits, preparing all who enter to be creative, positive, and inspiring during their time at FTMS.

## Cyberjaya as an education hub

FTMS decided to move to Cyberjaya to provide its staff and students a more centralised and conducive learning experience.

The campus is well equipped with amenities such as centres for internal and external college activities, 18 classrooms capable of accommodating 80 to 200 students, laboratories with state-of-the-art computer facilities,

an information resource centre and a range of sports facilities.

The new campus boasts a bigger space for the library so that it has more room for books, reference and reading materials and computer facilities.

There are currently some 23,000 students studying in Cyberjaya, giving it a very student-friendly environment. The town is easily accessible and with appropriate services and suitable ambiance for students to concentrate on their studies.

Accessibility to and from the FTMS Cyberjaya campus is provided by a network of highways providing access to Kuala Lumpur city centre. At the same time, staff and students are able to get to campus by taking an express train (ERL) from KL Sentral to Putrajaya Sentral Station,

and thereafter hopping onto a feeder bus to get to the new campus.

Cyberjaya's Dedicated Transportation System (DTS) is also a convenient choice for knowledge workers and students commuting to and from Cyberjaya.

Additionally, a Park-and-Ride facility further encourages commuters to park their vehicles at designated car parking lots for free, and to use buses to get around Cyberjaya.

The decision to move its campus to Cyberjaya is also determined by growth and commercial concerns. The college, which was established in 1986, plans to take advantage of the international-centric communities based here to offer relevant courses to expatriates in the areas of IT, Accounting and Finance, International Business and International Relations and Diplomacy.

FTMS has envisaged Cyberjaya as a location that will enable it to develop and grow exponentially rather than just organically.

Simultaneously, Cyberjaya is known to the world as the Silicon Valley of Malaysia and it offers ready recognition that will set FTMS on the right path to its next phase of growth.

FTMS College Malaysia chief executive officer and principal Dr Sajjal Divakaran says that Cyberjaya offers the greatest potential,

in terms of infrastructure, to extensively develop its online materials and use the campus as the engine to propel its efforts to be the next best provider of online education in this part of the world.

## Campus living and facilities

Currently, the campus houses about 3,000 local and international students who are enrolled into degree and post-graduate programmes in Software Engineering, Computer Networks, Business Information Systems, Accounting and Finance and International Management and, at the Master level, Computer Systems Engineering, MBA and Information Management.

The 134,000 sq ft campus enables FTMS to offer students with better co-curricular, recreational and sport facilities. An indoor gymnasium is located within the campus for students and staff. Other indoor activities such as table tennis, chess and carom are also provided for students at their leisure time.

In terms of the students' accommodation, FTMS has made arrangements with a developer to provide affordable but modern, better equipped and centralized living facilities. On top of that, the rental also covers transport costs to the campus and back to the hostels.

## FTMS to the future and beyond

FTMS is on track to gain University College status at the end of this year. But it will not end here. Three years from now, the college hopes to begin the process of another upgrade under a new five-year plan to achieve full-fledged University status. To achieve the goal of becoming a full teaching university, at least 20% of its staff, resources and budget must be dedicated to research and development.

It plans to see the transition from University College to University status as a seamless and a natural progression.

FTMS has an ongoing plan of improvement that will see it introduce more relevant and market-oriented programmes and also enhance the quality of its delivery through internationally accepted curriculum and better qualified and dedicated academics.

In order to achieve University status, FTMS is looking to increase the intake of international students through international recognition and market demands for graduates, as well as by developing research, development and consultancy capabilities and capacities through smart partnerships with industry and local research communities.

At the same time, efforts to invest in more staff with professional doctoral degrees (either on full-time, part-time or contract of service arrangements) and engage with business communities and professional bodies through internships, organisational collaborations, professional and social networking and win-win partnerships would see out FTMS' plans to be a full-fledged research university. ■

## EVENTS

# New experience for BUDDING actress

Students stage their own rendition of The Bard's much-loved play

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

One cannot get more versatile than playing opposite genders in the same act, and Kimberly Fhong Pey Yee pulls it off with finesse.

It is all the more exceptional given that this is the first time she is playing both man and woman in one play.

Fhong was both Alex and Alexis in the Taylor's University American Degree Transfer (ADP) production and interpretation of William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.

She and her college mates not only acted in the play but they also oversaw the entire production, sale of tickets, sponsorship drive, marketing and graphics design.

Fhong says that initially, she found it hard to play the role of a man but soon managed to slip into character for the different roles quite easily.

"What kept me going was the drive to always try new things and not let fear overcome me. I experimented with various ways to play both characters and it was fun," she says. "Through that, I have learnt to never be afraid of trying new things. At the end of the day, what matters most is the ex-

perience you gain and things you have learnt."

Playing Alexis' love interest Damien was Joel Wong Jun Xian. Wong says the experience has taught him something new about himself.

"The process of familiarising myself with the character and having to learn to manage my studies properly didn't really keep me from enjoying the learning experience. The end result is worth everything," he says.

Theatre lecturer Pat Chan Lai Ngo says the students took two months to prepare for the production and it was an eye opener for the 12 of them.

"They were able to learn soft skills such as being responsible, leadership, teamwork, time management and ownership. Each of them is also talented in his own right and as a theatre practitioner, my role in this production is to bring out their strengths and provide them a platform to own their strengths — which is something that Taylor's University encourages everyone to achieve," she says.

The production, set in the 1970s, grossed ticket sales of RM4,000. The money will be donated to the Bodhi Homecare Cheras, a shelter home for abandoned children, the elderly and animals. ■

The cast of "Psyche-delic", enacted by 12 theatre students from the Taylor's American Degree Transfer Program (ADP) of their own rendition of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night for his 400th anniversary



## University gets new CULTURAL corner

Promoting Omani culture and enhancing ties with Malaysian students

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com



Datuk Dr Parmjit Singh (left) exchanging documents with Dr Khamis Saleh Al Bulushi at the launching of the Omani Corner, witnessed by Riyadh Maki (second from left) and Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh

Asia-Pacific University of Technology and Innovation (APU) has just launched Malaysia's first Omani Corner at its new campus in Technology Park Malaysia, Bukit Jalil in Kuala Lumpur.

The corner serves as a resource centre where students can learn about and get exposure to an international study environment. At the same time, it will act as a resource centre for cultural decorations, books and iconic items that represent the Omani culture.

It also aims to promote the collaboration between the Cultural Attaché and Malaysian universities to enhance cultural, economic and people-to-people ties between Oman and other varsities in the country.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, who graced the launch of the Omani Corner recently, said the corner would expose students to an international environment.

"Our students can learn more about international culture," he said.

Dr Khamis Al Bulushi, who is the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman cultural attaché, expressed how touched he was by the Omani students' effort to preserve their culture and its practices even when studying abroad.

"Oman and Malaysia have a rich relation which dates back to the 18th Century. Now, with this initiative, the Omani Corner will continue the vision and mission we have set since the foundation of the Oman Cultural Attaché Office of Oman Embassy," he said.

APIIT Education Group chief executive officer Datuk Dr Parmjit Singh said cultural events like this created a platform for integration among different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

Also present was Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Malaysia acting ambassador Riyadh Maki.

The ceremony provided the chance for cultural exchange and learning for the students who were present. Among the performances on the day were several Malaysian dances by the Malaysian Tourism Ministry and Omani recitals by the university's Omani students. ■

**BULETIN BOARD**

# Quality and affordability the DECIDER

Several factors, such as affordable fees, recognition and strategic location, have been cited as reasons for enrolling at SEGi

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

**F**or every undergraduate, the right courses and recognition for their qualifications are the main factors they consider when picking a university for further studies.

However, these are not the only considerations today. Students also look for other qualities such as ease of access, affordability and even how lectures are conducted when they pick an institution of higher learning as a first step towards pursuing their career objectives.

These and other qualities have made SEGi University College (SEGi) a prime choice for those who want to pursue undergraduate or post-graduate courses. In fact, the university is known for having produced a high number of graduates every year.

One such graduate is Yong Chong Yit who recently graduated with a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) from SEGi University College Subang, Selangor.

"I chose SEGi because its tuition fees were affordable," he says of his decision to enrol at the varsity. "More importantly, we have the option to obtain undergraduate and post-graduate qualifications from the United Kingdom. My MBA is from the University of Sunderland," he says.

Prior to studying for his MBA, Yong was in the SEGi Bachelors of Arts (Hons) Business and Management programme, which is affiliated with the University of Sunderland.

Another factor that attracted Yong to SEGi is the recognition it has gained as a choice varsity. "It is one of the top private higher education institutions in Ma-

laysia. It has even been awarded six stars under the Higher Education Ministry's MyQuest evaluation," he points out.

Once he enrolled, Yong also found the lecturers to be professional and that their teaching methods were relevant given that they used real-life scenarios in their lectures. This teaching methods was used extensively in his MBA programme, he adds.

Convenience was another pull factor. He points out that the SEGi campuses are strategically located in the Klang Valley — a factor he took into consideration when he was looking for a university to enrol in.

Yong says that while the undergraduate and post-graduate courses were different, they shared some similarities.

He says the undergraduate courses were "general" in nature and mostly based on theory. On the other hand, the post-graduate classes were highly specialised and more advanced. The Masters programmes, he adds, enabled students to relate to real-world working experience.

On the other hand, the latest business news and cases studies were used in both undergraduate and post-graduate courses. That was the similarity between the two, he says.

Yong says that during the MBA course, he had the opportunity to meet people from various industries and professions and as a result, he learned a lot from their experience and perspectives.

"I enjoyed the classes as there was good interaction between the students and lecturers. The benefits are invaluable. Through the courses I got a good grasp of different management theories and techniques. It helped me to get out of my comfort zone. I have learnt how to apply the knowledge and to continuously improve myself in my approaches and practices in the work environment," he says.

With quality assured and affordable tuition fees to obtain recognised and international qualifications through flexible class schedules, working adults like Yong would be able to enrol for weekend classes to pursue their higher education. ■

Yong Chong Yit credits SEGi for the many benefits he has gained while pursuing his MBA

PHOTO BY MUHAMMAD HAZIM

# DIPLOMA for real estate agents

UCSI College and Hartamas Academy unveil professional qualification

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

**T**he path to becoming a registered real estate agent has gotten smoother as UCSI College and Hartamas Academy are now offering an Executive Diploma in Real Estate (EDRE) programme.

UCSI College chief executive officer and associate professor Dr Mabel Tan said that its collaboration with Hartamas Academy, the training and development arm of Hartamas Real Estate Group, addressed the current market needs.

"EDRE will produce academically qualified real estate agents with industry-relevant knowledge and experience, which will raise the overall standards with regards to quality and service in the real estate industry. Both UCSI and Hartamas Academy have worked tirelessly to make EDRE a game-changing qualification," she added.

PHOTO BY SAIFUL HIZAM



Hartamas Real Estate Sdn Bhd founder and managing director Eric Lim presenting a plaque to UCSI College CEO and president, Associate Prof Dr Mabel Tan to commemorate the EDRE programme

The diploma programme will be conducted by leading academics from UCSI College, with the collaboration with seasoned real estate negotiators from Hartamas — an award-winning real estate firm.

Its part-time mode of delivery — spanning two years and five months — is tailor-made for working professionals, making it ideal for aspiring realtors, current real estate negotiators or property professionals who seek to become registered real estate agents.

The EDRE has been recognised and approved by The Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents Malaysia and the Malaysian Qualification Agency.

Interested candidates can fund their studies by exercising the study option in their EPF (Account II) withdrawal scheme.

EDRE graduates will be able to enjoy full exemptions from Part 1 and Part 2 of BOVAEA's Estate Agents Written Examination and can also apply to be probationary estate agents, a fast-track way to their dream career. ■

## CAREERS UNUSUAL

It was written in the stars that Amelia Tan and her partners in Teach for Malaysia (TFM), Andrew Yong and Karthik Karunanithy, would collaborate on a project. At least, that was the running joke among Tan, Yong and Karthik - a teacher, programmer and fundraiser respectively.

Yet, that turned out to be quite true when Tan's TFM experience sparked an idea.

During her visits to schools, she noticed that there were many passionate teachers who wanted to do more for their students but they lacked the resources needed. At times, they chose to fork out their own money to run their projects.

Tan also realised that there were donors out there, willing to give for the sake of education but most were wary, saying that they did not always see the impact of their donation.

This was when Yong, a programmer and problem solver by nature, suggested building a crowdfunding platform where teachers can come on board to tell their stories and raise funds for their projects.

The trio's collective experience working in TFM inspired their collaboration on 100% Project, a crowdfunding platform for education.

## 100% for students

The idea is simple. The crowdfunding platform allows donors to directly support projects. Its concept is similar to other crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter or Indiegogo, but 100% Project raises funds exclusively for schoolteachers in local public schools.

When a project is successfully funded and executed, donors will be updated on how their contributions were used.

Tan says the platform's aim was to remove barriers for teachers in their quest to provide the best education for their students. She adds that the team has a strict process in upholding transparency and accountability of the project owners. Funds are disbursed to the school's Parent Teacher Association and never to an individual.

"We hope to elevate the teaching profession by telling the stories of bold and passionate teachers in our country and in the process, build a community of education advocates to collectively move education

# Raising FUNDS for deserving students

Co-founders of local crowdfunding platform 100% Project want to provide equal opportunity in education

| Text by ANGIE TAN | [angietan@hckmedia.com](mailto:angietan@hckmedia.com)

forward in Malaysia. We believe that anyone can play a role in education and we hope that our platform will be able to bring everyone together," Tan says.

## Top priority

Projects that catch the attention of the team are those that help make learning conducive, such as a comfortable learning environment. Methods of teaching that are innovative also get thumbs up as engagement with students is essential for learning, as well as learning through exploration, such as field trips.

"In our vetting process, we ensure that the teachers can explain and justify why their pro-

jects are the appropriate solutions for problems they feel need to be solved. Projects that have an impact and of the greatest need usually get priority and preference but what is impactful and high-need vary from school to school," Tan states.

Although all the funds collected go to the project, donors also have the option to top up an additional 15% for 100% Project.

Tan says the response has been encouraging, with many donors opting to donate the extra to help fund the platform.

"We are glad that people see value in what we do. We also work with corporations and organisations on their CSR projects by advising them on



Fabian wanted to bring a little bit of the world to his students at SMK Luar Bandar Miri, Sarawak. With no access to the Internet, he is hoping to connect his students internationally through taekwondo. A first degree black belt holder himself, this teacher needed extra funds to buy new gears and tools to train his ever-growing class.

the type of projects to undertake. We help connect them to relevant schools to ensure that resources are effectively channelled to schools that need them the most."

To be featured on Project 100%, teachers can submit their projects online to be vetted by the team. Each project is carefully selected before they appear on the platform. The team will also contact and consult the teachers to ensure that the projects have a positive effect and the funds requested are reasonable.

The team stays in close contact with project owners to get progress updates. At the end of it, the teachers are required to hand in their expenditure reports and photographs of the completed projects.

As of June this year, eight months since 100% Project was launched, the crowdfunding platform has raised RM345,177 for 27 schools with 12,467 students.

## A space for all

Today, 100% Project is not the only education crowdfunding platform in the country but Tan does not view the other sites as competitors. "Education is a large and multifaceted field which requires many people with different abilities playing different roles."

However, she notes that 100% Project is different because it only works with public schools. "We have a specific focus on empowering teachers to provide the best learning experience with a strong emphasis on transparency and accountability."

"The other thing is that our team is made up of people who have worked as teachers in high-

needs schools (under TFM) and as professional fundraisers. Our understanding of the education system and the relationships we've built within help us navigate it better," she shares.

Though there are many great initiatives by the government to move education forward, Tan states that the team believes education is a collective responsibility.

"We believe that everyone of us can play a role in education and if we feel the urgency to transform education we need to work with the government to amplify its impact."

"We think that the current state of education has an inequity issue that needs to be addressed, especially in public schools in the rural areas, where the students may not have the best learning conditions and experiences," she says.

This is evident in the projects that have been featured on 100% Project so far. Some of these schools are in rural areas and lacking in basic necessities such as desks and chairs.

Tan adds that here is an unflattering sentiment of teachers in Malaysia that does not do the profession justice. "People tend to focus on a few bad apples, disregarding the thousands of hardworking and passionate teachers who have dedicated their lives to teaching our future generation."

The team is determined to change this perception and highlight the wonderful work done by teachers in school. To Tan, Yong and Karthik, these teachers should be celebrated for their inspiring work and the public can help by spreading awareness of these positive acts.

"We believe that the community plays a crucial role in education and that teachers should



In seeking to provide a more conducive learning environment for the students (most of the desks and chairs in the classrooms have not been replaced in 20 years!), Team Assunta turned to 100% Project for help. The result? 20 classrooms have since been equipped with new desks and chairs.



Azzat wanted to build a proper science lab for his students at Sekolah Agama Tun Sakaran, Semporna. The students had only been learning in a general classroom without having the chance even to conduct a scientific experiment. This project was successfully funded in March.

always have the support of their community to provide the best for their students."

Check out [www.100percentproject.org](http://www.100percentproject.org) if you are a teacher in need of funding or if you want to make a difference in the lives of young students as a donor today. ■

Tapping into their experience with Teach For Malaysia movement, Karthik Karunanithy, Amelia Tan and Andrew Yong, continue to influence the education system through 100% Project



100%  
PROJECT

PHOTOS COURTESY OF 100% PROJECT



Fabian's students going through the paces in a taekwondo class

## CAREERS UNUSUAL

# Under the MICROSCOPE

Beyond working in the lab, there's more to a scientist than meets the eye

| Text by **ANGIE TAN** | [angietan@hckmedia.com](mailto:angietan@hckmedia.com)

**P**rof Dr Cheong Sok Ching is a Malaysian scientist who has dedicated her career to the study of oral cancer. An adjunct professor at Universiti Malaya and associate member of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, Dr Cheong is currently Group Leader at Cancer Research Malaysia.

She has received numerous accolades for her work in this field and her team has been able to make significant contributions in the understanding of oral cancer.

Cheong's journey into oral cancer research began when she returned home after doing her PhD in London in 2001.

The Cancer Research Initiatives Foundation (CARIF, now known as Cancer Research Malaysia), which was established by Prof Teo Soo-Hwang, had just been set up and she was recruited to join them.

"I was hired by Prof Teo to establish the oral cancer research programme and I have continued to build our capacity in this area for more than 14 years now," she says.

The 42-year-old doctor adds that oral cancer was an area that Cancer Research Malaysia wanted to pursue as Asians seemed to be most susceptible to it.

Dr Cheong had studied biochemistry and molecular biology at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in Bangi. She tells *Top Class* that in her final year and onwards to her PhD, she chose to focus on cancer research.

"I did most of my research in UKM with Prof Sheila Nathan and was also fortunate to receive two international fellowships (Commonwealth and Unesco-MCBN) to spend 14 months (of my PhD research programme) in Prof Dorothy Bennett's laboratory in St Georges Hospital Medical School in London," she continues. (Prof Bennet is a noted international authority on cell biology and was Head of the Cell Biology and Genetics Research Centre from 2014 to 2016).

Here Cheong shares her career as a research scientist with *Top Class*.

## Have you always been interested in this field and how did you get involved in oral cancer research?

I developed an interest in research in the third year of my undergraduate studies and this is to the credit of my lecturers in UKM who were forward thinking and doing exciting research themselves. We were in the era of genetic engineering and this field opened up so many possibilities. Using this technology, we can improve yield in crops, understand how infectious agents cause disease, why cells become cancerous... as a result, this enabled us to think of better ways to increase productivity and more importantly find better ways of treating diseases.

## What is a typical day at work like for you?

A typical day can vary from being in the office and lab discussing projects with other scientists, and writing up research findings or grant applications. It could also mean having a string of meetings with our collaborators on joint projects or with post-graduate students, discussing their latest findings or their thesis. In addition, some of my time is also invested in working with stakeholders to discuss and address science issues of national importance. I feel that all scientists should take responsibility in improving the ecosystem that we work in and I try to do my part through my affiliation with the Young Scientist Network of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia.

## What drives you daily?

New knowledge and the opportunity to test our hypothesis are the main factors that motivate me. Being a cancer researcher I



Professor Dr Cheong Sok Ching says to be a research scientist, one needs to have the ability to connect the dots and be inherently curious

know and understand some of the challenges that we face with treating cancer patients and this gives me a sense of urgency to do what we can right now.

## What do you find most rewarding about your job?

One of the perks of this job is that I get to work with highly motivated and like-minded individuals. These individuals are constantly challenging themselves and most importantly, work as a team to help one another achieve their potential.

## Is this profession in high demand?

Scientists are always in high demand both locally and internationally. However, much of it is dependent on funding cycles. As is the case for all professions, certain skill sets are in demand more than others, and currently those involved in bioinformatics and analysis of big data are among those in high demand.

## From an academic's viewpoint, what should a student be aware of if he is interested in pursuing a career in research?

When we are looking to hire a scientist, we look for individuals who are inherently curious, driven by information and have the ability to connect the dots. Tenacity and the ability to work in a team are also important. To take the first step into a career in science, you need a degree in the sciences. Following that, training through MSc and PhD programmes is necessary if you intend to continue to build your career in this direction.

## Are there any common misconceptions about being a scientist?

The biggest misconception is that lab work is the only thing scientists do. On the contrary, working in the lab makes up only a fraction of what we do. The reality is that scientists spend a lot of time studying the subject area, planning experiments, and analysing and interpreting the data. Much of this is done

outside the lab. A very important aspect of a scientist's job is also to communicate research findings. This is typically done through presentations and scientific writing, which is often not featured as part of a scientist's job.

## What are some of the challenges present?

We need more talent in science so that we can do more as a nation. Once we have a critical mass of talented researchers, I think we will be able to harness the creativity and technical ability of these individuals that will enable us to be more competitive in putting Malaysia on the map for technological advancements and innovations.

## Can you share your proudest moment?

I have many of these moments because I think it is important to take stock of the progress you have made to stay motivated and to keep your sanity. Most of these are on discoveries that we have made or research reagents that we have generated, which have benefited the local and international community. For example, we have established many oral cancer cell lines - these are cancer cells from patients that we grow in the laboratory. We are among the few labs in the world to have successfully established these cell lines. This is pivotal in helping us understand how cancer develops and serve as a means for us to test cancer drugs before they can be further developed for the treatment of cancer. We have been fortunate to be recognised for our research efforts and for that I am grateful. I hope that we will continue to get the support from the public and private agencies.

## Can you share any career advice with young scientists out there?

The first thing is to have an interest and passion in this area. The second is to have a trial run - intern in a research laboratory to see if this is really what you would like to do and if it is, give it everything you have to get a head start in this career that you have chosen. ■