

B L A Z E

THE SUNWAY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2015 | KDN Permit No: PP 14672/10/2012 (030937)



SUBS's Law Lecturer
Professor Michael Furnston

The Largest Graduation Group

Scholarships Galore!

At Home On Campus

BLAZE

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PROUD MOMENT: The graduates with their hard-earned qualifications.

Glorious graduation for 840 students

The Sunway Resort Hotel and Spa saw a whole hoard of students and their proud parents, as a total of 840 Sunway University students were honoured at the 2015 graduation ceremony. The annual ceremony – which saw a substantial increase in the number of graduates, up from 760 students compared to last year – saw the conferment of 310 diplomas, 523 degrees (of which 72 graduates received first class honours), and seven Masters Degrees (of which five graduates achieved distinction). In order to accommodate the large number of graduates, the ceremony was held over two sessions. The morning session was dedicated to Sunway University Business School (SUBS), and saw graduates from the Centre for Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Management; the Department of Accounting, Banking and Finance; the Department of Economics and Management; the Department of Law and the Department of Marketing, receiving their diploma and degree scrolls.

During the morning session, Sunway University Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Razman M. Hashim gave some practical advice to the graduates. “The idea of leadership, too, has been transformed – from hierarchy, we now practice shared responsibility; from command and control, to mentoring and managing with emotional intelligence. Fortunately, I have great faith that you will be able to navigate these capricious times, as you have been prepared by the Sunway University Business School – not just to be part of the change, but to lead it.”

The session concluded with a speech by 20-year-old valedictorian Della Averina, who graduated with the BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance. On behalf of her fellow graduates, she thanked their families

“You are graduating into a business world where traditional structures in organisations are being broken down more quickly than any other time in history.”

and everyone at Sunway University – especially the lecturers and friends – for their support. “This is the beginning of a new journey – a journey full of uncertainties. Yet as I have learnt from my three years at Sunway, never lose heart! Let’s keep on believing. Have courage; persevere; always keep the right attitude. Pursue our dreams, no matter what life throws at us – and never ever stop learning,” she concluded.

The afternoon session saw graduates from the Department of Art and Design; the Department of Performance and Media; the Department of Communication and Liberal Arts; the Department of Computing and Information Systems; and the Department of Psychology. Lancaster University Chancellor and British Labour politician The Right Honourable Alan Milburn was present to confer University of Lancaster scrolls to students graduating from the Communication, Computing, Psychology, Business, Hospitality and Tourism disciplines for the honours

degree programmes by Sunway University that are validated by Lancaster University.

The afternoon ceremony also witnessed the conferment of Sunway University’s first ever honorary doctorate, which was presented by Sunway University’s Chancellor Tan Sri Dr. Jeffrey Cheah to the founder of Institute Teknologi Mara (now known as UITM) Tan Sri Dato’ Seri Utama Arshad Ayub. Tan Sri Arshad – was awarded the Doctor of Education *honoris causa* for his contributions to the development of and access to Malaysian higher education. In his introductory speech, Sunway University Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Dato’ (Dr.) R. V. Navaratnam praised Tan Sri Arshad for being such a trailblazer. “For all your rich achievements, Sunway University is indeed very proud, to award you our First Honorary Doctorate – the Doctor of Education! May your inspiring life be a shining example for all young Malaysians, and – especially – our Sunway Graduates. I am sure they all admire you, and will follow your brilliant example as a great Malaysian!”

In his acceptance speech, Tan Sri Arshad praised Tan Sri Jeffrey for his passion in education. “There is a Chinese proverb that goes, ‘Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.’ This is one proverb which I whole-heartedly believe in, which best describes the passion that many education leaders need, to transform our nation’s education policy and system.” He lauded the efforts of the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF) in providing scholarships to less-fortunate-but-deserving students to further their studies, citing it as an incredible engine that creates a virtuous cycle immensely crucial to social economic and educational improvement for generations to come. **BLAZE**

The man who knows how to seal a deal

When it comes to contract law, this man literally wrote the book. **BLAZE** has a chat with SUBS Law Professor Michael Philip Furmston

The science fiction author Robert A. Heinlein – whose most famous works include *Stranger In A Strange Land* and *Starship Troopers* – has been quoted thus: “The universe never did make sense; I suspect it was built on government contract.” It is a mischievous string of words that resonate very well for many, and is bound to raise a chuckle or two. That is because even though it cannot be proven, there is this sense that it is very likely to be proven true. What is also likely to be true is that if Michael Philip Furmston had been in charge of writing that contract, the universe might actually be a better run and more magical place.

The reason is very easy to see. According to *The Times* (Oct 16, 2007), Professor Furmston was ranked as one of the “Ten Great Law Teachers”. “An internationally revered authority on contract and commercial law, and an extraordinarily effective teacher. Admired by former tutees who include judges, academics and senior lawyers across the world.” Not surprising, given that he is the author of the leading textbook *Cheshire, Fifoot & Furmston on Contract* (16th edition, 2012), as well as the editor of the *Construction Law Reports* since 1985.

“Well, I studied using a book which I now write,” the 82-year-old grandfather said with a knowing grin. “Some of the chapters have not been changed very much. In the course of editing the book by myself for 40 years, I took away a chapter, and divided another one into two chapters. If you imagine someone who learned a subject 50 years ago, then went to Mars and then came back, he wouldn’t be lost without a clue; the basic structure would have remained. The language changes, too.”

One thing that doesn’t seem to change is the perpetual naughty twinkle in his eyes, which would not look out of place on a man who was even a quarter his age. The years don’t seem to be a hindrance for Professor Furmston, though, as his list of published work extends to over 200 books (18 of them his very own works), and literally hundreds of articles, chapters and other contributions. As for his teaching credentials, he has taught at Oxford (as a Fellow of Lincoln College) and at Bristol (as Dean of the Faculty of Law, and holding the post of Pro Vice Chancellor as well, to boot), in addition to being the Founding Dean and

Emeritus Professor at Singapore Management University’s (SMU) School of Law.

Family Guy

It might seem daunting to be in the presence of a living legend of contract law, but Professor Furmston – who is now with the Sunway University Business School’s (SUBS) Department of Law – is very easy to talk to. And one of the easiest topics to talk about is one that he gets asked about all the time: his family. “Yes, I am the proud father of 10 children,” he said with a hearty laugh. “Most of the time when I tell people that, after a pause, it’s usually followed by the question of how many wives I have! I only have the one wife, and they are all our children together. I have 10 children, and 12 grandchildren now.”

Professor Furmston is clearly very proud of his family, even though he admits that his devotion to his work has been raised as an issue for them. “My wife told me that the worst thing she could do is marry a lawyer,” he joked – and the fact that he made several similar self-deprecating statements throughout the whole interview point to an easy relationship that is meaningful for everyone involved.

It came as a bit of a surprise, then, when he shared with the fact that she was one of his students. “Well, I saw this pretty girl sitting in the library and asked her out for coffee!” Obviously, his skills of negotiation came in very handy indeed! “I hope that she lives to be a hundred. As long as my wife is around to take care of Tim, all will be right in the world – and, well, his nine siblings are rather fond of him,” he said, adding that Tim – his youngest child – is autistic. Professor Furmston also pointed out that his wife chooses his ties

for him. Judging from the one that he wore for the interview session – a strikingly shiny black tie with deep-hued fuchsia paisley patterns – Mrs. Furmston certainly has impeccable taste.

From West to East, from Then to Now

Professor Furmston’s tenure in Sunway University is fresh off his last position at SMU. “I first went to Singapore in 1987 because I asked to,” he said, referring to how he ended up in this side of the world. “I’ve come to a stage in life that people often ask me to do things. A friend who was teaching in NUS suggested that I apply there – and, subsequently, I was invited to start the law school at SMU in 2007.”

The legal legend has also been travelling to Asia often enough, as he has been an external examiner travelling around the



world. "I try not to stop working. I would prefer to continue working," said the Cardiff native, whose favourite sport – appropriately enough – is rugby. When asked about what he finds different here, he said with a chuckle, "It's hotter here! KL, in some ways, is very different from Singapore. I also find that most locals here say that my English difficult to understand! But the most important factor: food is better here!"

One of the key differences for him is in the evolution of women's education. "The year when I started studying, there were 240 law students – and out of those 240 people, there were 12 girls and 228 boys. I could honestly say that I remember each of the girls. Now, there are more girls than boys in law school now. More female graduates now, but not enough male graduates to go around!" He capped off this anecdote with the fact that two-thirds of divorces in England are now being driven by women.

Professor Furmston pointed out a few other differences between the two nations. "For Malaysian law, they inherited a Contract Act from India – but that Act was never applied to Singapore. The result of this is that Singapore has a common law system, exactly like England. There are also many cultural differences that may be small, but point to major differences of outlook. For example, in England, it's normal to live together before a couple get married. That certainly is not the case here in Malaysia – for a vast majority, at any rate."

He said that around 50 years ago, the law of contract for Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Singapore were the same as those in England. "Appeals were handled by the House of Lords, and the pronouncements were accepted across the board. As time went on, the system of Judicial Committee Appeals was abolished, and the final deci-

sion was left to each of the countries, which all wanted to decide for themselves. That made sense as, at any given time, the answers may be different. The important point is my subject – the Law of Contract – is still most like English Law; it is easier to change the law if you don't have the statutes. This is why I'm still in this business. Although the constant state of evolution is quite slow."

"I studied using a book which I now write. Some of the chapters have not been changed very much. If someone learned a subject 50 years ago, then went to Mars and then came back, he wouldn't be lost without a clue."

Another change is in the areas of law that, in a sense, didn't "exist" as part of the syllabus before. "If you compare the course that I did with what students do today, contract law would be at the stable end of the spectrum, though some have changed. People have been studying contract law for 2,000 years, even from the days of Rome. When I was a student, there were no courses on family law – but now, every law school in England teaches it."

Professor Furmston said that the system that was applied for most of his life was where the governing body of the profession listed the core law subjects that everybody had to take if they wanted to have a law degree. "In most cases, what they did in practice would be likely to be different from what they studied. For example, my youngest daughter is a lawyer, and she learned about certain areas while on the job. The most important things that law schools do is to teach people how to think. If you taught them how to think well enough, they can work the stuff out of the books."

LEGENDARY LAWYER: Professor Furmston is recognised the world over as one of the top authorities on the subject of contract law.

Legal eagle whose mind is still sharp

For a man who is half a decade short of four score and seven years, Professor Furmston can still hold his own when it comes to traversing the Byzantine legal mazes that legal contracts often become – both from the preparation side, as well as from the execution side. Indeed, he is well-known for being the go-to authority on whether a contract can be considered valid – a fundamental and extremely important issue.

“It’s a basic question: is a contract actually legal? Certain kinds of contracts – for example, a contract to kill somebody – cannot even be considered at all. That rules out a whole list of things.” He also gave several examples off the cuff – a fantastic feat of memory that is likely admired by all his students. “Suppose you have a petrol station, and get the petrol from a particular supplier. You prepare a contract between the owner and the petrol company – an agreement about getting the oil supply, and getting discounts. If there is a restriction that states that the contract is for 5 years, it would be acceptable. But if there is a restriction that states that the contract is for 20 years, then the case could be made that the contract is not legal, and thus invalid.”

Another example given was one where two young ladies who bought a house, and they lived together in it. “Each put up half the price of the house – but one of them pretended not to have a job and no income, in order to get benefits of the state. They made a fake contract that assigned ownership to the other owner. After some years, she got caught and repented – but by that time, she had fallen out with the mate, who claimed that – thanks to the ‘new’ contract – it’s her house.” Professor Furmston said that the argument of whether that second contract was legal or not was technically quite complicated – and that it took nine judges and three levels of court to preside over it. “The majority in the House of Lords decided that the young woman could recover her share, provided that she could prove that she contributed to the ‘first’ contract when they bought the house together.”

Amazingly, Professor Furmston’s cases even involve contracts that deal with a realm that is important to many people around the world: football. “Back in 1960, English football teams had the retain and transfer system, where footballers were basically signed on by clubs on yearly contracts,” he recalled. “Under the terms, they could not go to another club; people were transferred, and that was a substantial restriction on the player. The player could not leave without the consent of the club – so it was held to be illegal, as it imposed a restraint on the player.” Although he did not take part in the original case, Professor Furmston made an analytical comment about it – and the system had been running for 50 years without anyone challenging it.



“The important point is my subject – the Law of Contract – is still most like English Law; it is easier to change the law if you don’t have the statutes. This is why I’m still in this business.”

“At that time, the maximum payment then was a meagre £20 (RM128) a week. The player took the case to court – and the decision of that case overturned the system.”

A new chapter

Professor Furmston’s work at SUBS is a bit different from he had been doing before. “The students here do business degrees, so

the focus is not the same, and their needs aren’t the same. Nonetheless, they would have to have done some law. In fact, it’s often more difficult for them, as most would not have had any previous exposure to law at all.” He feels, though, that teaching is still worth it. “I’m still enjoying what I do. That’s most important. I’m still scribbling away. I write on most days, so I am able to get more writing here. I have published a brand new book *Privity of Contracts*, and a new edition of a book called – surprise, surprise! – the *Law of Contract*,” he said with a laugh. “It is being written for practitioners. I have a select team who contribute chapters, and I write some chapters too, of course.” The professor explained that he is also preparing a new edition of *Formation of Contract*. “The first edition was from 2010. I am co-editing with an Australian colleague.” He added that he still likes to use pen and paper as opposed to computers. “I very much like writing with a pen. When I was writing the 150 volumes of law reports, I had an editor – Helen – who could read most of what I wrote. My handwriting is not good,” he said with a grin.

If there was one piece of advice that he has for students thinking of taking up law, it is for them to really think it through. “Few know what’s involved. The other day, I met a father and son – and over tea, the father asked, ‘What do you think he should do?’ I replied that he should let the son decide if he’d like to be a doctor or a lawyer. The father was surprised – and it was clear that he was expecting me to give him the answer that he was hoping for. I was persuaded to study law – by my family and my teachers. And I now know that they really had no idea what it entailed. Thankfully, it worked out for me. There are some books which tell you what studying law would be like. People should do subjects that they enjoy.” **BLAZE**

The Dip End: A Case Study

In *Ruxley Electronics and Construction Ltd. versus Forsyth* (1996), Mr. Forsyth was a rich man with a large house in Kent. He wanted to have a swimming pool. He made two contracts: one with Ruxley for the construction of the pool, and the other with a related company for the erection of the building in which the pool would be housed (open-air swimming is not often attractive in England).

The price of the pool was £17,397.40 (RM111,210). One of the terms of the contract was that the pool would be 7ft 6ins at the deep end. The pool was built. In due course, it was discovered that it was only 6ft 9ins at the deep end, and 6ft at the natural diving spot. This was undoubtedly a breach of contract, and the case was about the result. We were for Ruxley.

The evidence was that the pool was perfectly safe for swimming and diving, and that it would cost £21,560 to make it the contract depth. The trial judge awarded Mr. Forsyth £2,500 for what was called loss of amenity (basically, disappointment at not getting exactly what he hoped for). We did not appeal against this, but argue that he could not recover the cost of rebuilding the pool. The Court of Appeal by a majority held for Mr. Forsyth. We persuaded the House of Lords to allow the appeal. The central point of the case is that in the circumstances, £21,560 was not a sensible measure of Mr. Forsyth’s loss since incurring the cost of rebuilding the pool would not have been reasonable.

Paper on mental health a win for Dr. OWLvin!

Associate Professor Dr. Alvin Ng Lai Oon of the Department of Psychology at Sunway University's Faculty of Science and Technology has always been one of the most interesting and amazing figures on the Sunway University campus. Not only is he on the **BLAZE** steering committee, he regularly appears on LiteFM, was featured as the cover story of the September 2014 issue, and draws cute cartoon owls to boot (for which he can also be known as Dr. OWLvin!).

Well, he has made the university proud once more, when a paper that he co-authored with his Teaching Assistant Itianne Lee – who is a Sunway University Alumni (see page 22) – won the Gold Medal for the Best Paper 2015 (Professional Category) at the International Conference on Applied Psychology (ICAP 2015) in Colombo, Sri Lanka held from Aug 28-30!

Dr. Ng presented his paper – entitled *Mental Health Literacy in Malaysia: Current Impressions and Implications for Further Action Research* – on Aug 29, the second day of the conference. The paper dealt with how urban English-speaking Malaysians are shifting in their perceptions on mental illness, with regards to what they are, the causes, and treatments and prevention.

He was presented with his award by Sri Lanka's Cabinet Minister of Urban Development, Water Supply and Drainage, The Honourable Abdul Rauff Hiba-thul Hakeem. Colombo Institute of Research and Psychology Founder and Academic Director Dr. Darshan Perera was also on hand to witness the awards ceremony.

There were also two other papers by Dr. Ng that were presented at the conference, both of which were well received. The first one – based on the theme of mindfulness-based interventions – was presented Sunway University BSc (Hons) Psychology graduate Anushiya Chathuri Vanajan. The other was a poster-based presentation by

recent BSc (Hons) Psychology graduate Ting Pei Lim, as part of her final year project in collaboration with Sunway Medical Centre Consultant Psychiatrist Dr. Phang Cheng Kar.

"I started out teaching part-time to earn a living when I was finishing off my doctoral thesis," said Dr. Ng, who has been with Sunway University for two years, and has a total of sixteen years in the industry with fourteen years of teaching experience. "This was by invitation from a friend to help teach Introduction to Psychology. I never thought of ever going into the teaching line – but I ended up loving it, as I realised I had a knack for engaging with students and helping them learn psychology in ways that makes it relevant to them."

At Sunway University, he currently teaches Learning Disabilities, Behaviour Modification and part of Introduction to Psychology II. "I truly enjoy sharing my knowledge and skills, and it is rewarding when I see audiences appreciate their realisations. I have also made many friends through teaching," he said.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Ng spends a lot of time giving talks and workshops to professionals, NGOs and the public, giving talks at schools, commercial entities and at the *Star Health Fair* last year. He believes that his out-office ventures help him



SOLID MENTALITY: Dr. Ng receiving the medal from Minister Abdul Rauff, as Dr. Perera looks on.

as a lecturer in many ways – mainly, for networking and making new friends. "One can never make too many friends! It helps me as a lecturer, mainly because I collect more stories of experiences that I can share with students, and vice versa – to tell the community what psychology is, so that my students' future can be better given more appreciation for the discipline can be found in the society."

With regards to mental disorders in Malaysia, Dr. Ng said, "We need deeper understanding of mental disorders from the indigenous psychology point of view – which is how we, as a nation, think of what mental disorders are to us – rather than applying what Western Psychology say are mental disorders. While there are many disorders in Malaysia, they tend to be treated with the 'Western' understanding rather than an approach that is more localised. More research in this area of indigenous psychology is warranted, because the management of mental disorders needs to involve local cultural values, attitudes and behavioural schemas."

Dr. Ng also presented a keynote talk at the 8th International Congress and 13th National Congress of Clinical Psychology at Granada, Spain from Nov 19-22. It was a fruitful conference that also managed to enhance his appreciation of Spanish culture – particularly the food... **BLAZE**

WINNING TEAM: Itianne and Dr. Ng pose with the result of their efforts.



Sunway University – building a better ASEAN

Southeast Asian Studies, an area which was previously overshadowed by focus on China, is gaining strong influence in the global economy, prompting heightened interest amongst the international business communities. Studies on Southeast Asia are expected to provide a greater understanding of the region, and to enhance better business and social relations.

Established in early 2014 to act as a catalyst in promoting Southeast Asia studies, and to act as an attractive hub for studies on the region to help develop and upgrade academic standards of teaching and research in the Sunway Education institutions and in the region, the Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia (JCI) organised a conference themed *Southeast Asia Explores Sustainable Development: Coping with Socio-Economic Difficulties, Big Power Rivalry, and Climate Change* on Oct 27 at Harvard University.

Co-sponsored by Harvard University's Asia Center, the conference was officiated by Sunway Group founder, Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Founding Trustee, and Sunway University Chancellor Tan Sri Dr. Jeffrey Cheah, AO, showcasing world leading academics such as Columbia University Earth Institute director Professor Jeffrey Sachs; Harvard Kennedy School Ash Centre Senior Fellow and former Indonesian Minister of Finance of Indonesia Muhamad Chatib Basri; Sunway University Pro Chancellor and Research Professor Tan Sri Dr. Lin See Yan; and Professor Arthur Kleinman.

Also celebrated at the event was the milestone collaboration between Harvard Medical School and Sunway Medical Centre and Sunway University. In this unique arrangement, the two medical institutions will work together to promote specialised medical education to emerging leaders in Medical and Healthcare in Malaysia, Southeast Asia, Australasia and other countries in Asia.

There has been many significant achievements from the JCI. In view of this, **BLAZE** spoke to JCI President Professor Woo Wing Thye, and Harvard Kennedy School Harvard University Department Economics Professor of Political Economy, Emeritus, Professor Dwight H. Perkins. Professor Woo shared about JCI's role at Sunway University and the institute's future plan in further strengthening the university, while Professor Perkins talked about his recent visit to Malaysia through JCI.

JCI being a public policy think-tank for Southeast Asia has organised many public lectures, forums and events such as the SEA Symposium which was held earlier this year in collaboration with the University of Oxford's Project Southeast Asia. How were the topics selected? How have these forums been effective in reaching the mission of JCI?

Professor Woo: The topics were chosen after the JCI team had identified the most important problems that each ASEAN member faced. We found that all ASEAN members suffered significant deficiencies in in "good governance", "social inclusiveness and mobility", "economic dynamism" and "environmental protection" and so our events have focused on these issues. Judging from the size of the audience registration for these events, it is clear that these problems are important concerns of the Malaysian public. The good response of the audience, and the existence of a large core group of attendees suggest that JCI has been effective in getting people to think analytically about these issues.

To ensure that we get the best speakers for each topic, we have collaborated actively with different organizations to design the program of each event. For example, in our event on how to improve the functioning of the Malaysian parliament, we had speakers from Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat, in addition to the presentation by a renowned lawyer not affiliated to either coalition. For the event on social inclusiveness in public policy, we partnered with the Group of 25.



MEETING OF INTELLECTUALS: (from left) Tan Sri Lin, Professor Perkins and former Minister Muhamad Chatib at the conference.

What are in the pipeline and how do you see Sunway University and JCI in 10 years time?

Professor Woo: JCI is committed to helping Sunway University become a world-class university. The first step for JCI is to work closely with the business school to formulate plans to build niches of excellence in teaching and research within the business program. In 10 years time, Sunway University will match any university in Malaysia in the quality of its academic programs. The general analytical ability of JCI will match any public policy think tank located in Southeast Asia, and the research of JCI on economic and political issues within ASEAN will match those of any public policy think tank in the world.

What attracted you to pursue studies on Southeast Asia and to lend your support to the JCI and Sunway University?

Professor Perkins: My interest in Southeast Asia really began when I was an undergraduate at Cornell University in the 1950s. I was Cornell's one and only undergraduate major in what was then called Far Eastern Studies – and the courses on East Asia at Cornell often had a large component dealing with Southeast Asia. I took several economics and mathematics courses at Cornell as well.

My original involvement with Sunway probably came about because I had been involved both in running several research institutes at Harvard and had played a small role in the early stages of what later became the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, and a larger role in building the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program in Vietnam. I have heard very positive things about Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah and his efforts to build Sunway University. The board of the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation that stood behind these efforts also included two highly respected friends whom I knew would only be involved if the effort were not both promising and of high quality. My subsequent involvement with Sunway University and JCI reflects the fact that I saw for myself how much was being accomplished under the leadership and commitment of Tan Sri Cheah.

On this most recent trip I had two main objectives. One was to do research under the auspices of JCI with Rajah Rasiah of the University of Malaya and Prof Woo. Our research topic focuses on trying to explain the nature of the current Malaysian economic growth slowdown and its implications for Malaysia's economic future. The second objective was to respond to a request from Sunway University to help the leaders of the university think about how to build a first class economics department within Sunway University. The building of an economics department question involved meeting with faculty members and senior administrators both within Sunway University and at other universities with experience in this realm in Malaysia. Sunway University had clearly made a great deal of progress since my first trip and it was clear to me that it was a good time to think seriously about building an economics department possibly in collaboration with both the Business School and JCI. **BLAZE**



TOP ACHIEVERS: The recipients of the Sunway Sports and Music Scholarships pose with the guests of honour.

JCF awards record RM45m in scholarships

The Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF) – Malaysia’s largest education-focused social enterprise – made history with a disbursement of scholarships worth RM45 million to more than 3,000 students. The amount surpasses last year’s RM33 million, bringing the total amount of scholarships awarded to date to more than RM210 million for more than 23,000 students.

Minister of Higher Education Malaysia Yang Berhormat Dato’ Seri Idris Jusoh was the guest of honour at the *JCF Scholarships and Awards Ceremony 2015* held at the Jeffrey Cheah Hall, Sunway Campus. Now in its 15th year, the *JCF Scholarships and Awards Ceremony* is held annually to recognise the academic achievements and outstanding extra-curricular accomplishments of students at Sunway University and Sunway College.

Also present were Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Dato’ Sri Idris Jala; Sunway Group founder, Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Founding Trustee, and Sunway University Chancellor Tan Sri Dr. Jeffrey Cheah, AO; JCF Trustees Yang Amat Mulia Tunku Zain Al-‘Abidin ibni Tuanku Muhriz, Tan Sri Dr. Lin See-Yan, Tan Sri Datuk Seri Razman M. Hashim, Tan Sri Dato’ Dr. R. V. Navaratnam, and Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar; Sunway University Vice Chancellor Professor Graeme Wilkinson; Monash University Malaysia Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Helen Bartlett; and Sunway Education Group Senior Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Lee.

The scholarships were awarded to students based on their academic merits, and also to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The JCF Scholarships Award Committee is chaired by former University of Malaya Vice-Chancellor Tan Sri Dr. Ghauth Jasmon. Dato’ Seri Idris said, “Today’s

“Today’s event reflects the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation’s unflagging commitment towards its three governing principles: ‘Giving to Society’, ‘Quality Education’ and ‘a Vision in Perpetuity’”

event also exemplifies the foundation’s dedication to work closely with the government. This Public Private Partnership is beneficial to all, and I am glad to note that the foundation’s vision is very much aligned with the aims of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 for Higher Education, which was launched in April this year.”

Tan Sri Jeffrey said that the foundation aspires to reach out to more students each year to enable them to have a chance at quality education. He remarked that he was delighted to see that the recipients come from different ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds. “I must stress that it is not only about numbers, but the meaning and significance of the scholarship that matters. After all, the benefits of quality education can never be quantified in absolute terms, it is the enormity and greatness of the impact it has on an individual’s life,” he said. “With us here today are some 530 of more than 3,000 scholarship recipients this year. Your

success in attaining the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation scholarships is proof that Malaysia has an abundance of talented and bright young minds with the potential to drive our country’s progress even further.”

The ceremony witnessed the presentation of merit-based scholarship categories: *Sunway University Postgraduate Degree Scholarship*; *Sunway University Masters Degree by Research Scholarship*; *The Chancellors’ Scholarship*; *Sunway Excellence Scholarship*; *Jeffrey Cheah Special Entrance Scholarship*; *Jeffrey Cheah Continuing Scholarship*; the *Jeffrey Cheah Entrance Scholarship*; and the *Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award*. Seven recipients also received the *Jeffrey Cheah Travel Grants for Southeast Asia Studies* at Harvard University. The recipients of the grants will travel to Harvard University to learn, collaborate, present lectures and conduct research utilising the University’s library and museum collections and its faculties’ expertise. Four students received the *Sunway Sports/ECA Achievers’ Award*, while forty students received scholarships in the *Sunway Music Talent Scholarship* and *Sunway Sports Scholarship* categories to fund their studies at Sunway in honour of their talent and sporting achievements respectively.

The need-based scholarship categories were: the *Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Community Scholarship*; *Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Scholarship*; *Sunway Education Group-Elena Cooke Education Fund*; *Nanyang Tertiary Education Fund*; *Sin Chew Daily Education Fund*; *Sun-MAPCU Scholarship Scheme*; *Biasiswa Sunway-Berita Harian*; and *The Star Education Fund*. The JCF is synonymous with providing and sustaining quality education for present and future generations of students. It is Tan Sri Jeffrey’s firm belief that a good education opens doors that lead to a better life. **BLAZE**



FRUITFUL VISIT: The Adelaide students pose with Vijayganesh (front row left), Andrews (front row second left), Professor de Zwart (back row right) and Professor Symes (middle row right).

SUBS host legal eagle visitors from Down Under

The Adelaide Law School recently organised a study tour to Singapore and Malaysia, which introduced their students to the practical issues and commercial and intellectual property laws fuelling the massive growth in the two countries, which are Australia's near-neighbours. The study tour is part of a three-credit law elective course.

The study tour was based on the expectation of ASEAN nations to outstrip China in terms of contribution to world economic growth, and that many major international businesses are now assessing how to best position themselves to take advantage of this growing market.

To prepare Adelaide Law School students for what expect in the near future, they were introduced to areas of history, laws and institutions which will underpin this growth, to learn about relevant government policies, infrastructure and laws, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between Singapore, Malaysia and Australia. The visits included lectures from academics, business and government, cultural tours, site visits, universities and historic



CULTURAL EXCHANGE: The students from Australia found the lectures and forums extremely beneficial for their assignments.

sites. The focus of the study tour was also specifically consider the role of law in fostering economic development.

Accompanied by Adelaide Law School Deputy Dean and Director of Post Graduates Associate Professor Christopher Symes and Lecturer Professor Melissa de Zwart, the students visited the Department of Law at Sunway University Business School (SUBS) and two other Malaysian law schools. At Sunway, they attended lectures conducted by Department of Law Head Paul Linus Andrews, and SUBS Law Lecturers P. Vijayganesh and Professor Michael

Philip Furnston on the areas of the *Malaysian Legal System, Corporate Criminal Liability and Good Faith in Contract* respectively.

The students also attended a forum discussion on *Corporate Governance* by SUBS Law Department Senior Lecturer Associate Professor Dr. Cheah You Sum and Professor Symes. Professor de Zwart also gave a talk on the area of Whistleblowing as part of Jeffrey Cheah Distinguished Speakers Series (see page 11).

The visit opened up new possibilities of future student exchange programmes, as well as bilateral research collaborations between the SUBS and Adelaide Law School. The feedback from the staff and students were very encouraging, and they were grateful to Sunway University and the Department of Law for the hospitality and well-organised planning. The students found the lectures and forums extremely beneficial for their assignment write ups, and it is likely that Adelaide Law School will want to collaborate again with SUBS in the near future. **BLAZE**

The Purpose and Perils of Whistleblowing

Since 2005, the Jeffrey Cheah Distinguished Speaker Series (JCDS) has sought to give the community and the public an opportunity to listen to outstanding experts speak on a variety of issues, providing a platform for intellectual discourse and lifelong learning.

The middle of the year has seen Rensis Likert Collegiate Professor of Business Administration and University of Michigan Human Resource Executive Programme Director Professor Dave O. Ulrich, who is also world No 1 HR expert speaking on *Winning In The New Economy* on Aug 5. Lancaster University Chancellor and British Labour politician The Right Honourable Alan Milburn presented a public lecture on the last day of the Global Access to Post-Secondary Education (GAPS) Conference (see story on pages 12-13) entitled *Bridging the Great Divide: How Social Mobility Can Be A Reality* on Oct 8, whilst Sunway University Business School (SUBS) Department of Law Lecturer Professor Michael Philip Furstman – who is a world authority on the subject of contract law featured on this issue's cover story – spoke on *The Construction And Rectification Of Contracts* on Oct 28.

Another public lecture that was presented certainly was timely in its topicality. On Sept 23, Professor Melissa de Zwart from the University of Adelaide Law School spoke about *Whistleblowing, Surveillance and the Media*. Dealing with the spectrum of issues in relation to the subject matter – including the definition of a whistleblower, a brief outline as to what it entailed, the perceived benefits of whistleblowing, obstacles and difficulties, and whistleblowing and the media – the topical subject drew a crowd of 500 people.

Citing Near and Miceli, Professor de Zwart defined a whistleblower fundamentally as an organisational or institutional

“A whistleblower is an organisational or institutional insider who reveals wrongdoing within or by that organisation or institution to someone else, with the intention or effect that action should then be taken to address it.”

insider who reveals wrongdoing within or by that organisation or institution to someone else, with the intention or effect that action should then be taken to address it. She then discussed it in the context of two well-known cases from the United States – namely, Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning – which showed how whistleblowers could end up being persecuted and prosecuted. Professor de Zwart also spoke about various laws affecting Whistleblowing in Australia.

There were also statutes that were discussed, such as the Australian Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 and the Corporations Act 2001. In relation to the Public Interest Disclosure Act, Professor de Zwart said that she was encouraged that companies would choose to improve their internal whistleblowing system – including

informing employees of the existence of the system – thereby ensuring communication/feedback to whistleblowers using an external independently-managed disclosure framework, like an external single contact point. She said that the situation was further boosted by the Australian Securities Exchange Corporate Governance Principles, which directly refer to whistleblowers, and added that the fact that there were “off the shelf” whistleblower protection programmes should be applauded.

There was also a discussion on the current Australian framework for being a whistleblower, in relation to the Corporations Act 2001. In summary, it says the whistleblower must be a current officer of the company, must make disclosure to the company's auditor [or the member of the company's audit team] director, secretary or senior manager of the company – i.e. a person authorised by the company to receive whistleblower disclosures or ASIC. The whistleblower must give his/her name, and there must be reasonable grounds to suspect that the information that is being disclosed indicates that the company officer may have breached the Act; the disclosure must be made in good faith; and that the disclosure must be honest and genuine, and motivated by wanting to disclose misconduct.

Professor de Zwart also highlighted the negative aspects of the issue, by examining the whistleblower against the backdrop to the new National Security Legislation pursuant to the National Security Legislation Amendment Act (No 1) 2014, which tended to see whistleblowers as a growing security threat. Finally, Professor de Zwart examined the reality of organisational doxing (or the Internet-based practice of researching and broadcasting personally-identifiable information about an individual), and the dangers involved in terms of indiscriminate dumping of data. It was a fascinating and well laid out lecture that touched on many areas of the law relating to a noble and important practice. **BLAZE**

ALERTING THE AUTHORITIES: Professor de Zwart (left) gets a memento from Sunway Education Group and Sunway University Senior Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Lee.





RINGING THE CONFERENCE IN: Tan Sri Navaratnam striking the gong to officially launch the conference. With him are (from left) Dr. Lee, Dr. Elizabeth Lee, Professor Wilkinson, Tupan-Wenno, Dr. Atherton and Professor Crosling.

Sunway University hosts first GAPS Conference in Asia

Sunway University chalked up another first when it played host to the three-day *Global Access to Post-Secondary Education (GAPS) Conference* from Oct 5-8. Held for the first time in Asia after its inaugural event in Montreal, Canada in 2013, the conference – which addressed the role of access to post-secondary education in Asia and the South Pacific – was themed *Meeting the Global Challenge*.

GAPS – an initiative under the European Access Network – aims to boost access to higher education worldwide for those from all social backgrounds, through exchange of knowledge and practice across countries, and to advocate solutions to policymakers and senior leaders across all sectors.

The conference – which attracted 250 participants from around the world including policymakers, academics, and representatives from government

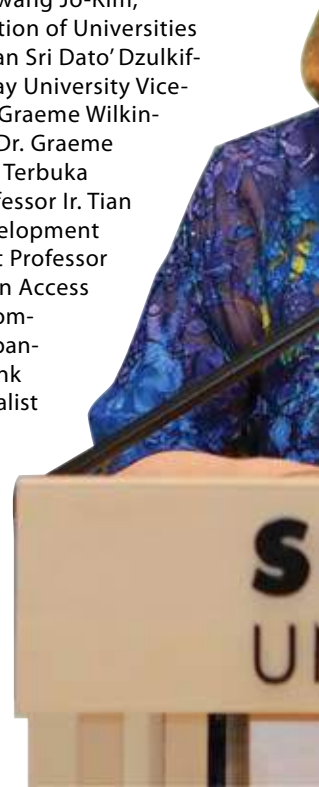


offices as well as non-governmental organisations – was officiated by Sunway University Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) R. V. Navaratnam. In attendance were Deputy Minister of Higher Education Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching; Sunway Group Healthcare and Education Division Chief Executive Officer Dr. Lee Weng Keng; Sunway Education Group and Sunway University Senior Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Lee; GAPS Conference 2015 Local Organising Group Chair Professor Glenda Crosling; and Lancaster University Chancellor and British Labour politician The Right Honourable Alan Milburn.

Keynote speakers included UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for

Education Director Gwang Jo-Kim; International Association of Universities President Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkipli Abdul Razak; Sunway University Vice-Chancellor Professor Graeme Wilkinson; GAPS Chairman Dr. Graeme Atherton; Universitas Terbuka Indonesia Rector Professor Ir. Tian Belawati; Islamic Development Bank Chief Economist Professor Savas Alpay; European Access Network Executive Committee Chair Mary Tupan-Wenno; and World Bank Lead Education Specialist Michael F. Crawford.

In her speech, Datuk Mary said Malaysia understands the importance of higher education in the nation's





HISTORIC MOMENT FOR EDUCATION: (from left) Tupan-Wenno, Professor Wilkinson, Datuk Mary Yap, Dr. Elizabeth Lee, Dr. Atherton and Professor Crosling pose for the record.

progress, both economically and socially. "As our country moves towards developed country status by 2020, we are definitely in need of people with abilities to solve problems; we need people who are critical and analytical in their thinking, and who are able to communicate across cultures and nations – and these attributes can be developed through post-secondary education."

She added that attracting international students and becoming a regional education hub were further evidence of Malaysia's dedication to educational development, and that Sunway University has played a sound role in this, with the GAPS Conference being another example of the institution's progressive outlook.



Professor Crosling said that Malaysia was an ideal location for the GAPS conference, due to its close proximity and easy access for participants from the surrounding developing countries. She added that its location in the South East Asian region was suitable, as the region saw the need to widen participation in post-secondary education as a nation-building reality.

In his welcome address, Tan Sri Navaratnam – who is also a member of the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF) Board of Trustees – said, "It is indeed a privilege to have so many global education thought-leaders and stakeholders here today, to articulate and build a strategic pathway, to enable greater access to post-secondary education. This opportunity is timely and meaningful – not only for Sunway University and the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation, but for Malaysia as well – as we move together in our aim: towards becoming a regional education hub and, indeed, a Developed Nation by 2020."

He added that this global platform allows Sunway University, as a leading educational institution in Malaysia, to participate in one of the most important global challenges of our times. "For the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation, access to post-secondary quality education, is at the very heart of what we strive to promote."

THE PERFECT SPOT: Professor Crosling (left) said that Malaysia was an ideal location for the GAPS conference.

(right) Professor Wilkinson

The JCF disburses scholarships annually and to date has awarded more than RM210 million in scholarships and bursaries to over 23,000 students. Under the JCF Community Scholarships programme, a total of 144 students from disadvantaged backgrounds have been able to pursue further studies for a better and brighter future. This year, another 20 students will receive the Community Scholarship which covers full tuition fee, accommodation, living allowances and books. **BLAZE**



Continuing their academic odyssey in the USA

The American Degree Transfer Program (ADTP) students – Fong Hui Chi and Abigail Lim Shu Yee – from the Sunway University Centre for American Education (CAE), have managed to make their way to the home of the brave and the land of the free.

The ADTP was developed specifically to allow students to study for the first part of their American degree at Sunway University, and was designed in consultation with American universities to ensure that the students could transfer seamlessly to America to complete their studies. Just like other undergraduate degree programmes in the USA, the Sunway University ADTP provides a mixture of specific subjects and general education, ensuring that students are well prepared for the upper level degree courses for their studies in the USA. Alongside their academic studies, students are encouraged to take part in a range of extracurricular activities, including community services, field trips and sporting events.

“The reason I chose ADTP was because I wanted to have the independence to choose courses and the freedom to plan my graduation track,” said Hui Chi, the 21-year-old native of Puchong. “I am a curious child, with a wide range of interest in different fields, and I wanted to have the chance to try them all while I can. Unlike other programmes, the ADTP allowed me to do just that.” Having completed her ADTP at Sunway University in March 2014, Hui Chi transferred to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities for a degree in supply chain and operations management in fall of 2014.

Abigail, who is a 19-year-old Kuala Lumpur lass, had a rather different reason for undergoing the ADTP. “Firstly, I’m blessed with parents who love me unconditionally. I’m the third child among four siblings. Both of my elder sisters did the American Degree Programme as well – whereas my younger brother is still in high school. I was already familiar with the programme, and I chose to do it at Sunway University because its location is convenient for me to commute from home.”

The engineering student, who cites Haruki Murakami as her favourite author, knew that she wanted to further her studies in America, and that the best option for this path was the ADTP. “This option is more economical as I’ll be able to get an exposure of the American educational system. Moreover, the flexibility of taking courses that aren’t related to my major is really an aspect that draws me to ADTP and American universities in general.” Abigail has since gone off to continue her studies at Cornell University, New York.



WORTH THE EFFORT: Hui Chi made friends from all over the world.

For both of them, undertaking the ADTP has been a positive experience. “I made friends with people from all over the world, such as China, Korea, Zimbabwe, and Sri Lanka,” Hui Chi explained. “I missed arguing (discussing) with these friends over the simplest things that are different in our cultures, while celebrating the similarities that we could find! I loved the fact that the lecturers highly encouraged us to participate in class discussions. In my opinion, the best way to polish an individual’s public speaking skills is to speak up in class.”

Abigail said that maintaining a good CGPA throughout the course was a challenge. “The subjects offered are both interesting and stimulating at the same time. Another aspect that’s challenging is subject enrollment; it’s important to pick the right subjects, because the credits of some of these subjects may not be transferrable in certain American universities! Overall, though, I think the programme’s structure is well-balanced. The marking scheme of 60% coursework and 40% final exam is really advantageous – in this way, students are encouraged to maintain a consistent performance throughout the semester, and we aren’t graded solely on one exam. Instead, we are graded holistically.”

Both young ladies are also not just bookworms, but active in extra-curricular activities as well. Abigail was the Head of the Community Department of the Sunway Student Volunteers (SSV), as well as a member of the CAE Student Committee. Meanwhile, Hui Chi – whose love of all things Korean is especially strong when it comes



to its TV and food culture – is currently the President of the Malaysian Student Association at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. It comes as no surprise, then to note that both are recipients of the Tan Sri Dr. Jeffrey Cheah Entrance Scholarship.

For Hui Chi, the biggest take away from ADTP was being independent and being prepared. “My peers in University of Minnesota are at a different level, and I am still lacking, but I am already on the way. The ADTP experience was a great push to get me started on my journey. As described, if I am not prepared, I would be a mouse chasing after a cheetah, and I can imagine that being very difficult. I am responsible for my own graduation plan, my own schedules, and my own performances. ADTP students receive much freedom – but we also receive a similar amount of responsibilities.

“I would recommend the ADTP to others who are keen to study in America, as it’s economical and it provides students with a platform to excel academically,” Abigail added. “Also, time management is an important skill that every student has to master. We need to have a balance between our studies and personal life.” **BLAZE**

CHALLENGING PROGRAMME: Abigail found the course both interesting and stimulating.



Living it large on the campus grounds

For many, life in college and university is an important milestone, in terms of knowledge, experience, social development, and exposure – and it may also be the first time that they are away from their families while striving to earn their qualifications. It is certainly an important time in the lives of the students at Sunway University, who feel that their time at their alma mater shapes them in many ways.

Sunway University has always been about providing quality education - and it doesn't just stop at the classrooms, but applies to all aspects of campus life as well. **BLAZE** spoke to four students – Lim An Qi, Wak Mayna a/p Akop, Ashten Avinash Anthony and Lim Heng Young – who are not only learning at the university but living on campus at the Sun U Apartment and Sun-U Residence as well.

"Life in campus is great!" said Wak Mayna, who is in Semester 1 of the Diploma in Events Management. "I have been living for two months and a half. The security team is friendly, and there is a convenience shop just near my hostel – which allows me to get some stuff if I am too lazy to walk further than my hostel," the 18-year-old native of Chenderiang, Perak – the youngest of the interviewees – said with a laugh.

Muar native Ashten, 21, agrees. "I stayed at Sun-U Residence when I started my BSc (Hons) in Actuarial Science course in March 2014. In terms of security, it is very tight and strict – which makes living there quite safe," he said, adding that the diligent guards make sure that non-residents are not allowed to enter the premises.

"I have been living on campus at the Sun-U Apartment since I started studying here about a year-and-a-half ago," said 21-year-old An Qi, who is in her final year of the ACCA. "Campus life is really comfortable, and allows me to focus on my studies well. I usually study at the library after class, and go back to hostel in the late evening, as the Sunway Campus is pretty safe. The library also offers good facilities, and is open for long hours - which allows students to study well." The native of Penang added that she also enjoys swimming in the pool during the weekends.

Heng Young – who is also from Penang and in his final year of the ACCA – echoed An Qi's sentiments. "I feel comfortable living on campus. I can go to classes conveniently by



RESOURCE CENTRE:
Wak Mayna at the library.

walking. Moreover, I can go to library after classes to study," said the 21-year-old student, adding that the library's viewing zone allows him to watch some films.

The four students are not only in agreement about the positive aspects of life on campus – they are also, all of them, hard-working students under scholarships. Wak Mayna is funded by the Jeffery Cheah Foundation Community Scholarship, while Ashten by the Sunway Excellence Scholarship for Actuarial Studies. Meanwhile, both An Qi and Heng Young are under the Sin Chew Education Fund Scholarship. They all agreed that the convenience of living on campus is conducive to their studies.

"Living on campus definitely improves my learning experience – especially when you have a bunch of friends staying with you," said Ashten. "It becomes more exciting and fun. Honestly, living independently on campus makes it less pressurising and

stressful – it makes learning easier. Staying on campus gives you much more time to study compared to staying with family or elsewhere. There's no extra obligations like chores to take up some of your time."

An Qi agreed, "After all, the distance between the campus and hostel is just a 3-minute walk! This gives us more time and flexibility to do things we like." Wak Mayna concurred, "It is very convenient – you do not have to wake up very early, plus everything you need is within walking distance!"

Overall, the students are happy with where they are staying. "I would strongly recommend students to live on campus, as it can improve the learning experience," said Heng Young. "Moreover, they will have the opportunity to interact with housemates, and build up strong relationships with them."

"Staying on campus is carefree and exciting!" said Ashten. "Staying on campus is living independently without the unnecessary worries. Almost everything is close by and convenient – library, classes, labs – all are within walking distance. The only thing you have to worry is about being able to connect to the WiFi everyday – but the positives do eclipse the negatives."

"I would strongly recommend students to stay on campus, as it is secure, comfortable and near to everything. Building up a relationship with your friends – and learning to interact with your roommates and housemates – is really memorable," An Qi said in conclusion. **BLAZE**



CAMPUS LIFE (from left): Wak Mayna, Heng Young, An Qi, and Ashten are enjoying their stint at Sunway.



Bonds beyond borders

Learning Malaysian history at Muzium Negara. Gaining insight on governance and politics from Speaker and Member of the Selangor State Assembly Yang Berhormat Hannah Yeoh Tseow Suan. Teaching English to primary school children in a small town. What do these things have in common? These are all activities that students from Lancaster University got involved with, as part of the *Sunway Cultural Exchange 2015!*

This has been an annual programme since 2011 – and in these five years, we’ve had the pleasure of hosting 216 Lancaster students on the Sunway campus. They’ve had the unique opportunity to experience Malaysia not as regular tourists, but as insiders into the community. And due to this exposure to the surrounding community, strong bonds have formed in a few very interesting ways.

For one, Lancaster students are now directly contributing to the lives of young children in a small town near Kuala Selangor. In 2014, we partnered with an NGO called The Reading Bus Club, to deliver an English Camp to 200 primary school children in Ijok. The

mission of the NGO is to build community libraries to encourage the use of English among children in rural communities, and the children were taught grammar, vocabulary, reading and story-telling.

The 2014 cohort of participants were so moved by the experience that they formed an official club on the Lancaster campus to raise funds for The Reading Bus Club Malaysia! Over the course of the year, they baked cupcakes, and sold them on campus, raising funds a little at a time. As a result, the funds collected were used to buy 252 books, which were donated to the Ijok library during this year’s English camp!

Additionally, bonds were strongly developed between the participants and their Sunway counterparts. As part of the programme, the visiting students are matched with Sunway students, who serve as their buddies throughout the three-week stay. The buddies organise activities, bring participants to experience local delicacies (which may not have been included in official events), serve as their confidantes, and

are basically just good friends to them. They have all gotten to know each other so well that they are already planning a reunion!

Finally, we also experienced a very exciting “side effect” from those who served as Sunway buddies. Because their role was to be the local guides to Malaysia, many reported that they gained a new appreciation for Malaysian culture. In order to respond to questions on their country, they had to learn about it themselves! At the end of the programme, Sunway Cultural Exchange Ambassador Regina Lee said, “Thank you for making me appreciate the beauty of my country, the people, the colours and the cultures.”

This is a point of pride for the organising team, because cross-cultural interactions are meant to provide a new perspective, and to broaden the minds of participants. With all these bonds formed within and beyond borders, we are excited for what will come in 2016. Here’s looking to stronger bonds, more eye-opening experiences and an even more enthusiastic bunch! **BLAZE**

Getting to know the alumni members

The Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) organised an “Up Close and Personal with FST Alumni” event on Oct 8, which was attended by over ninety attendees. Among the guests of honour were Sunway University Business School (SUBS) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Dean Professor Pua Eng Chong; FST Associate Dean (Research) and Professor of Clinical Psychology Professor Nigel V. Marsh; Associate Dean and Department of Computer Science and Networked Systems Head Associate Professor Dr. Lau Sian Lun; and Sunway University Director of University Services Siti Fariza Mohd. Dahlan.

Among the alumni members, five were featured as part of a panel sessions. They were Way Chooi Yee, who did the BSc (Hons) Psychology (2010), and who is now a Senior Executive for Mindshare; Jagadesan Chandra Mohan, who did a Diploma in Information Technology (2005) and a BSc (Hons), and who is now an entrepreneur with an MSc-Status company; Ng Jian Wei, who did the BSc (Hons) Information Systems, 2015, and is now a Junior Consultant for ProTechnology; Hasan Al-Rawi, who did both the BSc (Hons) Information Technology (2011) an MSc in Computer Science (2013), and who is now an IT Project Manager for



TAKING CENTRESTAGE (from left): Jian Wei, Jagadesan, Chooi Yee, Yi Aun, and Hasan were the alumni members during one of the panel sessions.

Hilti Corporation; and Kuan Yi Aun, who did the BSc (Hons) Computer Science (2014), and who is now a Software Developer for HT Consulting.

The alumni – ranging from newly-graduated members to more seasoned and experienced professional – all shared their experience, encouragement and know-how with the students over the

course of three speeches, and gave valuable advice during the panel session. The students asked a variety of relevant queries, ranging from general questions – such as “If you could go back in time and change your university life, what would you do differently?” – to technical questions – such as “How widespread is the adoption of open source applications and tools in the Industry?”. **BLAZE**



An annual event organised by the Sunway Alumni Office as an informal prelude to the official graduation ceremony, the Homecoming High Tea 2015 was held on Oct 8, the day before graduation. Attendees took the opportunity to catch up with friends and lecturers, and enjoyed the fun photo booth and thumbprint art. Mingling with the students were Sunway Education Group and Sunway University Senior Executive Director Dr Elizabeth Lee; Sunway University Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Pua Eng Chong; and Sunway Education Group Director of Student Services Lee Siok Ping.

CEO alumni share their secrets

Three distinguished members of the Sunway University alumni – PT Inovisi Infracom Tbk Commissioner and Global Capital Ltd Corporate Advisor Dato’ Adrian Ooi; CPA Australia Malaysia Divisional Council President and BDO Malaysia Audit Partner Alex Ooi Thiam Poh; and Revenue Valley Group CEO and Founder George Ang – shared their knowledge to the next generation at a *CEO Forum* held on Sept 23. The trio were part of the pioneer batches when Sunway College first opened, and now hold prominent positions within their own industries.



The CEOs talked about their experiences.

Dato’ Adrian is active in both the giant on the Indonesian Stock Exchange, and in the famous investment firm that holds an investment portfolio of approximately US\$2 billion (RM8.62 billion). Alex has more than 25 years of assurance and financial advisory experience, whilst George’s firm is the holding company that owns some of the popular casual dining restaurants in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, such as The Manhattan Fish Market and Tony Roma’s.

During the forum, they shared the stories of their journey and challenges, as well as giving advice to the participants as potential employers. They answered a few questions from the audience whilst on stage, but stayed on after to continue sharing their wisdom. **BLAZE**

School of Rock

The image of academia as an endless parade of books and papers does not always hold true – particularly when studying the arts, and more so for performance art. And just like any other branch of academia, it is better if the lecturers possess not only the technical knowledge, but skills and practical experience to boot, in order to better show their students what their lessons are all about. On that score, students at Sunway University's Department of Performance and Media have nothing to fear, as they are in the capable and talented hands of Mohd Azmyl Md Yusof (who goes by the stage name Azmyl Yunor), and Dr. Adil Johan (who performs under his own name), both lecturers at the Faculty of Arts.

"I've been lecturing since July 2013," said Azmyl, who was born in Kuala Lumpur, but has lived in Bandar Baru Bangi since 1989. "It helps me understand and empathise with generations of youths whom I might not encounter outside of academia or the classroom. It keeps you in the moment, and gives you first-hand awareness of what's happening on the cultural and social landscapes. Being a performer, I also apply some of my public speaking and soft skills to good use to keep my students interested and awake."

Adil concurs. "As a lecturer in performing arts and music, it is important to stay in touch with the 'real world' of performance," said the 32-year-old, Penang native who hails from Georgetown. "Having the opportunity to produce content is important in order to teach others how to do so."

A further look into the biography of the two reveals a pair of very talented men. A multi-instrumentalist – he plays guitar (both acoustic and electric), piano, keyboards, harmonica, banjo, mandolin, harmonium, lap

steel guitar, drums, bass, and tambourine! – Azmyl is listed as an Indie English- and Malay-language singer-songwriter, a writer, a journalist, and even a film maker by training. "You could categorise my work as Folk/Folk Rock – although I think part of the fun is also trying to avoid being pigeonholed into a particular genre. I consider myself a country music buff too! But some of my other musical projects under other stage- or band-names also include punk, noise, and experimental music genres."

Meanwhile, Adil is known as a singer/songwriter – and though he admits to dabbling with keyboards and guitar, he is known more as a saxophonist, which he has been playing for almost two decades. "I write most of my own songs by singing while accompanying myself on the guitar. However, when it comes to performing live, I leave the guitar playing to my bandmates."

A lecturer since July 2013, Azmyl was attracted to the Department of Performance & Media's Diploma in Performing Arts programme because it gave him the opportunity to share his experience and knowledge about the industry with students. "In shaping my curriculum, I was also able to delve deeper into creative discussions amongst my peers who also teach here. Not everyone can teach, even if they are some big industry bigwig figure. I discovered that my skills as a storyteller, plus my eagerness to learn, were important components of being an effective educator. Teaching keeps you young at heart and mind. It gives you hope. That's why I teach."

"I disagree with the saying, 'Those who can't, teach!' My maxim is, 'Those who can, teach!'"

Adil – who will be teaching subjects on Malaysian Music, World Music and Composition & Arrangement for Contemporary Music when the new music programme starts – said, "As a lecturer you never stop learning, and you will always have eager minds (students) with whom to share and create new knowledge. The landscape of performing arts is in constant flux – and a career in the performing arts can easily converge with science and technology or more 'conventional' disciplines! In fact, interdisciplinary is a prerequisite for any successful career or intellectual pursuit. I would advise people interested in making perform-



SAX APPEAL: Adil has been playing the saxophone for almost two decades.

ing arts as a discipline of study and or future career to keep an open mind!" Though both have their own projects, Azmyl and Adil actually collaborate together for the ensemble known as Azmyl Yunor & Orkes Padu. "It's a collaboration between my bandmate and producer Raje – my former colleague here at Sunway for 5 years – and our gang of musician friends that we know and enjoy performing with," Azmyl explained. "There's a total of 10 members – although not all of them generally appear onstage at the same time, since they are also active in their own music or band projects." The group has performed more than five times this year alone.

Adil – who has his own band called the Adil Johan Quartet (AJQ) since 2009, and who is also involved with another collaborative project called Nadir – said, "When I joined the Department of Performance & Media in January 2015, I became acquainted with Azmyl and Raje. We quickly became good friends, and I was invited to join Orkes Padu to play for live performances." He added that towards the last few months of the *Was Was* album's production, he was invited by them to listen to the recorded tracks. "I was immediately impressed. It was my very good fortune that Raje suggested to Azmyl that I record some saxophone parts for the album." Adil feels that recording with Raje – who he says is an organised, efficient and musically-sensitive producer who tends to be brutally honest – was an invaluable experience. "If he doesn't like what you have played, and knows you can do better, he will tell you! Sometimes, I feel we need more of that in our conservative society. I think students need to get used to honest feedback, too. I am not like that, though! I consider myself to be quite diplomatic in how I handle social situations." Sounds like the students are in good hands... **BLAZE**

Sunway University will be launching the BA (Hons) Contemporary Music (Audio Technology) in March 2016. Please visit sunway.edu.my for more information.

ROCK GURU: Azmyl feels that it is important to stay in touch with the "real world".





MINDFUL GATHERING
(clockwise from left): Tan Sri Lee (left) receiving a souvenir from Dr. Elizabeth; counselling sessions from generalised anxiety disorder; his uncle has severe depression; his aunt has obsessive compulsive disorder; and his grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. All of that, however, did not stop Dr. Phang from staying positive.



The healthy way of getting mental

Sunway University and the Sunway Education Group's Student Services Department – in collaboration with the Sunway Medical Centre – recently organised conference on mental health, themed *Getting Mental: Wellbeing Beyond Self*.

Following a welcome address by Sunway University and Sunway Education Group Senior Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Lee, the conference kicked off with a speech by Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF) Trustee Tan Sri Datuk Seri Lee Lam Thye. Tan Sri Lee emphasised the importance of engaging the community and the government for a collective effort in promoting good mental health, and applauded the organisers of the conference. "I firmly believe that conferences like this are essential platforms in creating awareness of mental wellbeing, and for destigmatising mental health sufferers."

Sunway Medical Centre Consultant Psychiatrist Dr. Phang Cheng Kar then delivered a hilariously entertaining keynote address, which the audience found both interesting and enjoyable. "Health is a complete state of physical, mental and social wellbeing - and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Mental health is the ability to think, feel, and act in positive, healthy and happy ways, as mental health is still widely associated with negative words such as 'psycho', 'mad' and 'crazy';" he said, adding that mental health also refers to one's happiness.

Dr. Phang – who prefers to be called a mental health consultant rather than a psychiatrist – went on to share his family's history of mental disorder. It was quite shocking; he shared that his mother suffers from generalised anxiety disorder; his uncle has severe depression; his aunt has obsessive compulsive disorder; and his grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. All of that, however, did not stop Dr. Phang from staying positive.

"About 50% of our mental health is determined genetically and biologically – which we can't control. 10% of it is determined by the environment, such as natural disasters. But we have 40% control on our mental health – which we should focus on. That being said, we should learn to recondition the way we think as our mental health states affect people around us." He added that any of us may not be fully responsible for tragedies such as suicides, but that we can be "responsible" for effective prevention.

Other experts in psychology from various organisa-

tions speaking at the conference included Dr. Karen Morgan; Valerie Jaques, Low Mi Yen, Rebecca Wong, Dr. Anasuya Jegathevi Jegathesan, Dr. Hariyati Shahrina Abdul Majid, Dr. Yeo Pei Li and Sunway University Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) Department of Psychology Associate Professor Dr. Alvin Ng Lai Oon. They covered a wide range of topics on mental health, including social awareness; being mindful of the present; empowerment; and suicide prevention.

Second Year BSc (Hons) Psychology student Joey Tan Heng Xuan – who was master of ceremonies for the conference – said, "We are here to create the awareness about mental health. Being mentally ill is nothing wrong." In addition to better understanding on mental health, one of the biggest take-aways from the conference was learning the motivation to be positive, and all the participants and contributors left the conference in good spirits. **BLAZE**



BANDAGING THE PSYCHE: Dr. Hariyati's workshop was about "Psychological First Aid".

Like father, like daughter: The ADTP spans a generation

Riad Asmat
Alumnus from ADTP, Group 5

Alya Riad
Alumna from ADTP (2015)

The term “alma mater”, in these times, refers to an allegorical phrase to describe a university, college or school which an individual has attended. Made up of two root words in Latin – *alma* (“nourishing/kind”), and *mater* (“mother”) – the usage of the term in the modern era stems from the University of Bologna, which is said to be the oldest university in the Western world in continuous operation. Founded in 1088, the motto of the university is motto *Alma Mater Studiorum* (“Nurturing Mother of Studies”).

And although it is usually mother who understandably gets the credit for the development of children, the role of fathers is hardly less important. In the case of Alya Riad, Sunway University and the Centre for American Education (CAE) can be actually said to be her alma pater – because her father Riad Asmat went through the same programme that she did. **BLAZE** got a hold of the Naza Corp Director of Strategy and his actuarial science offspring, and they kindly shared their story with us.



Her story

Hello! My name is Alya Riad, and I am 19. I come from an average family of five, where I am the eldest of three kids. Although we are originally from Petaling Jaya, my family actually moved to England in 2012, where we spent two-years-plus before coming back to Malaysia. It was an extraordinary family experience, and I went to the City of Norwich School in Norwich. At the school, I managed to win a *Certificate of Excellent Conscientious Attitude for English*, the *Form Tutor Award*, and a *Progress Award for Business!*

Just like many people, I love attending gigs, baking, blogging. I also play the piano. Reading is another go-to hobby, and I was hooked on *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. It's a gripping story about how an autistic teen goes about his abnormal daily life. The different layers of the main character are depicted so well by Haddon's impeccable writing – so I experienced an emotional rollercoaster. My favourite author, though, is Stephen Chbosky.

What made me choose to do the ADTP at Sunway University? It was familiar to my



The Purdue University gateway.

dad, so I had confidence in him sending me to Sunway, haha! After studying in England, I knew that I wanted to go to America for university. My dad took that into account, and led me to Sunway, as he had already experienced the twinning programme back in the day.

I love the ADTP programme. I love all the different people that I've had the pleasure of becoming friends with. It's not just us Malaysians in this environment – we've got people from all corners of the world as well. The most challenging thing was getting used to the coursework weightage, as I've always been educated in a system where final exams are most important. I must say, it's a fairly well thought out programme. Students are inclined to put in effort throughout the entire

semester (from coursework to quizzes) – and by the end, they would already know how to go about their final exams, instead of only working hard when final exams come up (which is very daunting).

For me, the best thing that I took away from the ADTP was the friends. I know that the friends I made in ADTP will be the friends I choose to be

my bridesmaids/godparents of my future children, because we've been through so much together – from assignments to personal issues – in the last year and a half. Other than the academic life, I was Head of Marketing in the Centre for American Education (CAE) Student Committee.

I am pursuing an undergraduate degree in Actuarial Science, under Purdue University's College of Science, which is in West Lafayette, Indiana. I love math, and I love business – so, why not put the two together and strive to come out with a commendable degree? After finishing the programme, I will hopefully go on to do my Master's. If not, a job in America or England would have to be my post-graduation goal. **BLAZE**

His story

I'm Riad, a local boy who was born and bred in Petaling Jaya. I went through the Government School system right up till Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) – yes, it was called SPM then; I am not sure what it is now, ha ha! Upon finishing school and getting my results, my parents and I looked at the options: between local institutions, and – possibly – foreign-linked ones.

The final decision we made was for me to go to Sunway College, which had then only established the Twinning Programme to the US with Western Michigan University (WMU). I was part of one of the earliest groupings (Group 5); we were pioneers of sorts, but we always thought of ourselves as guinea pigs too, as we were prepared to head to Kalamazoo. (Yes, there really is a Kalamazoo.)

Education in Malaysia at the New Town Campus was good and qualitative, preparing us for what was to come. We were guided by a Resident Director of sorts from WMU, who assured us of the correct guidance and advice throughout our programme here. No queries went unanswered, and – more importantly – genuine advice was always given; this was not only on academic issues, but also on expectations of life over there. Bear in mind that, at that time, we were naïve kids, averaging an age of 18 years – so yes, I was most appreciative of the set-up that was done for us all.

There was not that we much did to be active

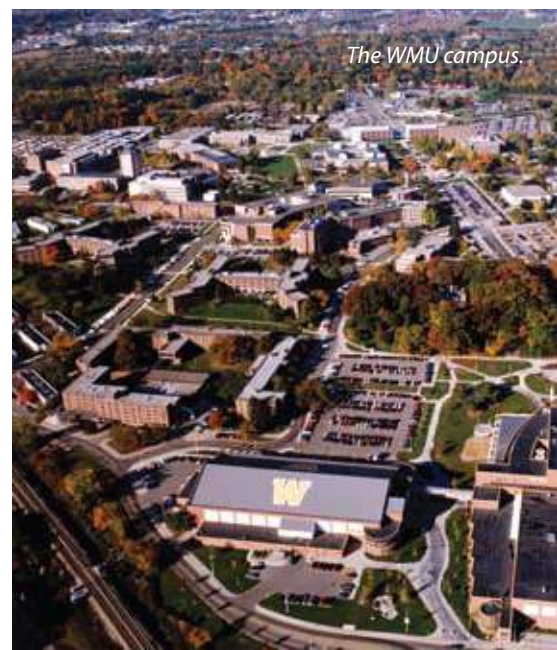
students at Sunway back then – remember, pioneers! For us, it was really studying and trying to get ourselves out there at the soonest. All factors – including the economics of it all, i.e. costs and timeliness – were priorities. The College then didn't offer much in terms of extra curricular activities – but we students enjoyed the experience in our own ways. For example, we parked at the side streets, and stayed in line to get the most limited car passes to park in that little campus site. Yes, we had to pay for it too – if we were lucky to get one!

In summary, it was – for me – a brilliant experience, and I would wish for it to happen for anyone that gets such an opportunity. Also, I recommend that you join a fraternity, if you can. Mine was Sigma Lambda Beta – and we played in the WMU rugby team and the Kalamazoo Rugby Football Team. Our meeting base was at the Up N Under Pub!

When choosing Sunway for Alya, I will admit that a bit of my alumnus spirit kicked in there! Her experience at Sunway now is probably different, honestly. I am very glad that she has pulled through with help from her (older and wiser) friends, with her future likely chosen to be in Purdue next year. As for my time at Sunway College, the camaraderie of us all coming from Malaysia heading to the same place was a nice experience to go through. We had each other's backs, and all that. Most of us went our own ways when we were there – but we still ended up as friends for life. We meet often enough to

rekindle our memories – and I think we're quite proud of what we've achieved since the days of the College in New Town.

If there was one word I would use to describe Sunway College, it would be "port". A place to learn and experience - a future "port" of sorts for anyone wanting to achieve something. Especially with the huge campus now! What would I say to this generation of students? No clichés - because you are students, and studying comes as a qualifying factor. Well, someone's paying for it, right? So, you have to do it, regardless! Ha ha ha! But more importantly, embrace the opportunity to learn, and live it! It is the total experience that counts, and it will make one a better person in life. Simple. **BLAZE**



The WMU campus.

Helping others to behave better

Itianne Lee
BSc (Hons) Psychology

I enrolled in Sunway University's BSc (Hons) Psychology in 2011 – and for me, it was a time of exploration and discovery at both personal and intellectual levels. I managed to maintain the *Tan Sri Dato' Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah Continuing 75% Scholarship* for three consecutive years! It was challenging but very rewarding, and I had a great time making many lifelong memories.

After graduating, I worked as a Teaching Assistant – and working at Sunway University was an absolute pleasure, with the experience giving me a taste of academic life. Although the teaching hours are fixed at definite times, one is given a certain amount of flexibility and freedom. This is something to cherish, though this “freedom” comes with responsibility, commitment and self-discipline. I also had the opportunity to interact with different students. While different students have different learning styles, it was incredibly rewarding to see subtle but progressive changes in them.

The Psychology Department gave me far more support and encouragement than I could ever imagine. I was given a chance to co-author a research paper – and it won Gold Medal for *Best Paper Presentation (Professional Category)* at the *International Conference on Applied Psychology 2015!* The paper was presented by Associate Professor Dr. Alvin Ng Lai Oon (see page 7) from the Department of Psychology, with whom I co-authored it with.

This success further motivated me to pursue my postgraduate studies – so I chose the MSc in Applied Behaviour Analysis at Bangor University, because of its highly reputable Psychology Department. Furthermore, I was given an International Scholarship and a Postgraduate Achievement Scholarship! This course is also approved by the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board, which would enable me to work in many parts of the world. It will be very gratifying if I can help individuals suffering from behavioural problems to live a more productive life. I hope to be able to contribute towards knowledge in this field as a scientist-practitioner. Perhaps, most appealingly, I could one day use the principles of behaviour modification to improve the quality of life. **BLAZE**

Success embeded at his CORE

Aloysius Ang Yu Chien
BSc (Hons) Information Technology

I am a co-founder of COREEDGE, an innovation developer agency which exists to bring ideas to life and business into future. As a graduate from both Sunway University and Sunway College – with a BSc (Hons) Information Technology – I have a passion in tech innovation, and enjoy educating people about tech. Apart from being a geek, I love to hunt for the best food in town, and to meet new people.

At a young age, I developed a growing interest in computers and technology, and was fascinated by how machines are able to improve the way people live, work and play. I was firm about my career path to be a computer engineer – that is, until my education at Sunway exposed me to the world of entrepreneurship. With the help of the

lecturers, I was able to piece both technology and business together. The university also did play its part in providing me with a platform to shine – and by the Grace of God, I won a *Silver Medal for Innovation* (for the Smartphone Based Auxiliary System for Drivers) at the *Malaysia Technology Expo 2014*, and got third place in the *IDEAs Business Startup Competition!*

Upon graduation, I worked as a software developer in ApptivityLab before co-founding COREEDGE, for which I am the project lead. With a team of awesome individuals, we set out to build amazing websites and mobile applications. I have experience working with prominent companies – such as Astro and iMoney – as well as other SMEs and start-ups. One of



my greatest accomplishments so far was partnering with an Australian start-up to build an app which was then featured in the Apple App Store as “Best New App” and “Best Fashion App”.

I am constantly on the move, wanting to change the world through ideas, codes and products. Have Faith! **BLAZE**



The EPICally impactful girl

Sherlyn Yong Geok San
Bsc (Hons) Psychology

EPIC Homes is a place where radical dreamers, courageous trailblazers and selfless team players lend their hand to provide safe and sustainable housing for the underprivileged communities, starting with the Orang Asli. It is a platform where Extraordinary People Impacting Community (EPIC). At EPIC, we aim to see a world where

servicing others is a lifestyle. To quote Helen Keller, who inspires me, "The most beautiful things in life cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart."

My passion has always been to serve others especially the indigenous people and refugees. I believe that through servicing these communities, I not only receive satisfaction when I see them feeling happy, but I also get to help those who are

in need. Studying psychology in Sunway has taught me to understand others who are less fortunate. When I completed my studies, I started my internship in EPIC Homes – and currently, I am working full time in EPIC Homes as the current leader of community development. As part of my duties, I lead volunteers to visit the Orang Asli village, understand their culture, and consult the Orang Asli regarding building homes.

My work in EPIC Homes has been an adventurous roller coaster ride, because EPIC taught me three important lessons in life. First is the importance of serving others who are underprivileged. This is what EPIC Homes's vision and mission clearly shows. Second is the fundamental rule in EPIC – to understand others through relationship building and by listening first. I remember Johnson Oei, my boss, always teaching me to love others unconditionally. Finally, the job is not all about the benefits and income that we get. One must always think of the experience, and always learn to be nice to all – even to the cleaning lady.

My strongest impression of EPIC is the learning culture. I feel this is a good way to encourage the contribution of opinions and ideas – which leads us to great teamwork. To end with another quote from the source of my inspiration, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." **BLAZE**

The time-savvy business graduate

Joshua Yee
Bsc (Hons) Business Management

Joshua Yee is a caffeine dependent life-form. I want to live in a world where cars can fly, Windows Operating System was never invented – Mac, the best OS ever! – and iPhones are cheaper. I was born into a Chinese family in the heart of Kuala Lumpur. I spend most of my free time reading, playing football, and drinking coffee whenever I can. I also sing and play the electric guitar for my church.

After completing the Australian Matriculation in Sunway, I stayed on in Sunway University to pursue my degree in Business Management. Today, I possess the BSc (Hon) in Business Management, and I am proud to be a Sunway Alumni. My study life at Sunway University has shaped me to become more focused, and a stronger individual. Having also been very active in my local church while juggling my assignments and exams, I learned the ability to manage my time wisely, as well as maintaining the standard of my work.

Upon graduation, I spent a brief period in Naga DDB – a high-profile advertising agency – before deciding to take my career into a different direction. Today, I am a Project Analyst in Leaderonomics, currently involved in the Campus Division.

Since joining Leaderonomics, I have led programmes for university students, and co-developed business simulations that enhance student learning in a more experiential and meaningful way. I feel passionate when I see young people realise their true potential, leading them to take realistic steps to pursue their dreams.

My message to Students

Do not be influenced by what people say and think about you! Peer pressure is real – but we can kick it in the butt! Remember: what you study does not necessarily determine where you end up in the future. So do everything in moderation, and remember to have a balanced life! **BLAZE**



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