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# BLAZE

THE SUNWAY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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

Knowing, Doing and Being

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Balancing Work and Play

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Innovative and Brilliant

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I Met President Obama





Blaze is published quarterly. The name was selected as it signifies Sunway University's achievements in recent years. Sunway University is a "trailblazer" in education excellence pursued with flaming passion in the hearts of its employees and students.

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*Nurturing the Seeds of Wisdom*

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## Knowing, Doing and Being

“Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” said Samuel Hungsoo Kim, President of Asia Leadership Trek, Centre for Asia Leadership Initiatives (CALI) quoting John F. Kennedy.

Throughout the Asia Leadership Conference, followed by a 5-day Camp at Sunway University, Samuel emphasised that one must envisage a country’s needs in order to rise as a change-maker of the nation, and be a good leader.

Themed, “Leadership and Innovation in the 21st Century”, the event featured eight other CALI fellows Andi Sparringa, April Bang, Faustino John Lim, John Lee, Lance Li, Lauren Swersky, Rajan Patel, and Shazia Khan in addition to Samuel; and four teaching assistants Daniel Kim, Jiro Yoshino, Leslie Dong and Peter Taeyun Kwon, who are graduates from the Harvard University and other top world universities.

The event aimed at transforming young Malaysians into strategic global leaders to help change the country and the world through programmes developed by CALI fellows based on Harvard teaching and learning frameworks.

Distinguished speakers at the conference included Dato’ Seri Idris Jala, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department and

Chief Executive Officer of Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) and Tony Pua, Member of Parliament of Petaling Jaya Utara and Director of Invest Penang.

Notable speakers at the camp were Yang Amat Mulia Tunku Zain Al-‘Abidin ibni Tuanku Muhriz, Founding President of Institute of Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), Professor Dato’ Woo Wing Thye, President of Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia (JCI) and Dr Thum Pingtjin, Founder and Coordinator of Project Southeast Asia, Oxford University.

The event concluded with a closing ceremony dinner where Tan Sri Dato’ Dr Lin See Yan, President of Harvard Club of Malaysia and Tan Sri Dato’ Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah, Founder and Chairman of Sunway Group shared their years of practical experience as business leaders.

In particular, Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah spoke about his legacy of turning a waste land into today’s integrated resort city of Bandar Sunway. His famous line: “I aspire to inspire before I expire” reflects his social contributions to education. His support towards the Asia Leadership Conference and Camp aims to forge better relationship ties between Sunway and Harvard for the benefit of Malaysians.

One of the Trekkers, Rajan Patel shared his stories of challenging his conventional family’s dream of him being a doctor. Instead, he chose the path of an entrepreneur where he led the design and development of an innovative portable infant incubator. The incubator has since impacted and saved the lives of over 100,000 babies in several developing countries.

Patel’s story was one of many comprising personal lives, business experience and professional exposure of the Trekkers. Their stories were testimonies hinged on the Harvard model of leadership “Knowing, Doing and Being”. Leadership is attainable through learning with heart, mind and soul; achievable through knowing the expertise and tools, doing what is known or getting things done and being the cause of good leaders to influence and motivate others.

Dr Elizabeth Lee, Senior Executive Director of Sunway Education Group was especially pleased with the success of the project and revealed that collaboration with CALI will continue with the plan of the Winter Trek on 8 till 13 January 2015.

**blaze**

# Balancing Work and Play

“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy!” This is what they say. However, as the **blaze** team discovers, talking to Dr Alvin Ng can be real fun ....

It is hard to miss the notice on Associate Professor Dr Alvin Ng Lai Oon's office door at the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), Lower Ground Floor of the North East Building at Sunway University.

Seated behind the office desk is no 'dull Jack', but a cheery young man who knows how to balance between work and play. The notice, with a comedian-like picture of him, adorned with a red ball on his nose, suggests that Dr Ng is 'fun, playful and full of zest.'

In fact, this describes him very well, especially in the way this clinical psychologist views life and things surrounding him.

“In life, we need to play more!” he enthused. “Play is something that we should all enjoy doing. Even in my lectures, I play with my students.

When you throw a little fun into the lectures, students will find it hard to miss class. Suddenly, the students wake up! They are able to concentrate and you know you have engaged with their minds, that's it!”

At 39, Dr Ng is not ashamed to tell people that he is playful most of the time. “Sadly, when you are playful, they say you are childish; but play is what helps to keep oneself in the game. In a competition, where you either win or lose, play is when you generate a lot of positive energy that keeps you going,” he continued. “Adults play by carrying out a good interactive conversation, crack a joke or even acting out in a comedy.”

Elaborating further, Dr Ng added: “Play extends one's curiosity. When you play, you get stimulated. Fresh energy is generated and you get a good feeling about things. Play creates a situation where people are free to be curious, stimulated and exploratory,” he elaborates. “The red nose that you see on my picture is about play. The sad thing is that, as we grow older, things get more serious, and most of us forget about play. In fact, play has been proven to be a very valuable living skill for adults too.”

Borrowing a term used by prolific author and psychologist, Jerome Bruner, who has written several books on education, Dr Ng says that he uses play as his “teaching scaffolding”. Rather than rote learning, he believes in putting the structure around his students which allows them to further explore and develop their own potential.

This methodology has been adopted in his years of teaching. “Our job as academicians is all about empowering our students,” he said.





## Academic work

An old boy of Kajang High School, Dr Ng completed his first degree at University of Western Australia, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in psychology. He then spent another year at Murdoch University, where he earned another degree – his Bachelor of Psychology – before pursuing his Masters. Because of the quality of his research and excellence in his coursework, he managed to convert his Masters to a Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology.

Dr. Ng has been teaching since 2001. His first full-time job was to teach clinical psychology at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, carrying out his own research and supervising other Master's students in Clinical Psychology.

In 2013, he joined Sunway University, where he now teaches Abnormal Psychology. "This is a subject that focuses on the abnormal behaviours exhibited in different types of mental disorders," he said, attributing the cause of abnormal behaviours such as a shooting spree to the lack of play during childhood. "Studies on criminals with abnormal behaviours have shown a high correlation between the lack of play and anti-social behaviours. As a result, these people become psychopaths; they abuse others because of a strong dislike for people."

His other subjects are Learning Disabilities and Behaviour Modification. "In our education system, we follow strictly to a curriculum; however, a minority of our population have difficulties to cope because they have a certain learning disability," he said. "This affects their self-esteem and social skills. If not addressed at an early age, the child may become a school dropout and contribute to social problems."

"Among those with specific learning disabilities include the well-known scientist and genius, Albert Einstein who is renowned for his  $E=MC^2$  formula. He was lucky to have developed the way he did. At present, he would be chucked into a special education class and diagnosed with dyslexia or something because he was slow at school."

## Social Responsibility

To benefit more people with his knowledge, these days, Dr Ng also spends many of his weekends giving talks and workshops to professionals, NGOs and the public on topics related to his field. As part of his social responsibility, he has given talks to schools, commercial entities, parent groups and more recently at The Star Health Fair. He has also appeared on radio and TV talking about mental well-being.

"My talks these days generally focus on positive psychology and how people can use it to counter the daily negativity that affects them. Positive psychology is about focusing on the positive things in life. Every day, we have 60,000 to 80,000 thoughts, where 70 to 80 percent of these thoughts are negative," said Dr Ng.

He continued, "This explains why newspapers sell well when there is something negative, because our minds are naturally attracted to anything negative. Natural negativity tends to look for things that are negative."

"Part of how you can tap into positive psychology is the use of mindfulness or awareness of the present and the environment around you. For the more religious people in our midst, this is about being 'still' in the presence of a greater Being. It is about being mindful and more sensitive or familiar with the surrounding. Too often, we are living either in the past or the future," he elaborated.

"Although this is a simple way to manage stress levels, very few people have learnt to live in the present moment. It is useful to stop everything you do, take a minute to close your eyes and internalise the feeling of being present HERE and NOW. Once you can be more sensitive, you can then look for positivity in the present and acknowledge them," said Dr Ng.

Modern society, he added, has become so used to being on the go all the time. "This raises our stress to unhelpful levels. We have to be better able to detect stress, which, when left to grow can lead to many illnesses," he said. "A collaborative research carried out with Universiti Putra Malaysia previously used the Mindfulness-

Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) technique to study the stress level of medical students to see how efforts could be made to better manage their stress level. When these students learnt to reduce their stress level, they felt more empowered."

## A Matter of Perspectives

In life, Dr Ng said, we need to have a functional level of stress which differs from one person to another. "But, it is important to manage it so that it does not kill us or turn us into dysfunctional persons."

Stress, Dr Ng added, can be managed using different methods. Besides the MBSR technique, he suggested the use of positive psychology. "The whole idea is about adopting skillful perspectives in life," he said.

"If your hand represents a problem, you can either place it right in front of your face where the problem becomes too overwhelming; or you can look at it from a distance, and it looks small. While you will still have the problem, now you also get to see the problem in the context of the bigger picture. You can then decide on the best option or solution. That way, you feel less overwhelmed. This is positive thinking!"

On his white board, he has penned down his famous words on how to manage stress:

*"There is no end  
There is only change  
When one thinks there's an end  
That's where the problem begins."*

He puts it succinctly, "In other words, there is no full stop but only the continuing dots in life. When you think there is a full stop, that's when the problem starts."

Dr Ng ended the interview with one key message that he wants to leave with everyone: Focusing daily on positive things helps one to have a more wholesome perspective to life, thus improving one's physical and mental wellbeing.

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The winning Sunway University's team

Beaming with smiles, Sunway University's Faculty of Science and Technology took home 3 Gold and 2 Silver awards during the 25th International Invention, Innovation and Technology Exhibition (ITEX 2014). This is part of the university's aim to expose students and lecturers to real-world experience, which is invaluable in today's fast-paced information and technology industry.

### Gold Awards



#### Building and Construction

Lecturers Yeong Lee Seng, Dr Chia Wai Chong and Dr Ch'ng Sue Inn from the Department of Computer Science and Networked Systems, and BSc (Hons) Computer Science student, Tsai Yao Cherng bagged the Gold award with their project *QR Code Car Park*.

This innovation allows users to reserve a parking bay as well as make payments through their smartphones.



# Innovative and Brilliant



## Telecommunications

The team comprising Dr Yau Kok Lim, Ling Mee Hong and Dharmidran Anantharsekaran from the Department of Computer Science and Networked Systems, Syed Aqeel Raza, currently pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy in Computing at Sunway University, Dr. Hafizal Mohamad, Dr. Nordin Ramli and Dr. Wahidah Hashim, also won a Gold for their invention titled, *The Cognitive Radio Technology with Networking and Security Enhancements applied to Wireless Surveillance Systems*.

It uses cognitive radio technology with enhanced networking mechanisms to mitigate the effects of denial of service attacks in a multi-hop wireless network. The invention which allows a wireless device to switch its operating parameters, such as the operating channels, dynamically in an intelligent manner in order to evade jammed channels caused by malicious users, has been shown to improve security and network performances, and is imperative to establish a wireless surveillance system with enhanced security.



## I.C.T and Multimedia

Project *Real-Time Smart Street Lighting System (RSSLS)* also bagged a Gold. It is a proposed system for optimisation

of energy efficiency, management and monitoring of streetlights. According to Associate Professor Dr Yap Kian Meng of Department of Computer Science and Networked Systems, the proposal is aimed at automating the street light system to auto switch on/off and dim the streetlights on demand.

“Each streetlight is to be connected to a micro-controller with light and motion sensors to automate the process, and communicate with a remote server wirelessly to update the status of light in real-time for monitoring purposes,” he said. “The interface in remote server will also indicate any malfunctions.”

The team included students Shareef Ali Aseel of BSc (Hons) Information Technology, Tee Tiam Hee of MSc in Computer Science (by Research) and Eu Kok Seng of Doctor of Philosophy in Computing.

## Silver Awards



## I.C.T and Multimedia

The *Autonomous Self Sustained and Self Organized Broadcasting Overlay System* is a project that reuses all existing IT resources without any super powerful new computing infrastructure. The project eliminates and reduces the intensity of current problems faced by large LCD media broadcasting software and systems, where it is difficult to guarantee media files are sent to all broadcasting points. For many existing commercial systems, manual uploading costs time and money. This process is slow with server based systems at a high cost in terms of investment, operation and administration.

This system was developed by Associate Professor Dr Lim Tong Ming and Angela Lee Siew Hoong of the Department of Information Systems, Chin Teck Min from the Department of Computer Science and Networked Systems together with Vicky Lim Min How, a graduate of MSc in Computer Science (by Research).



## Special Care and Child Care

Dr Ch'ng Sue Inn, Yeong Lee Seng, Dr Chia Wai Chong from the Department of Computer Science and Networked Systems, together with student Fadil Mohamudally who is pursuing his MSc in Computer Science (by Research) bagged a Silver award with their *Stereo-Vision Guidance System*. This project uses computer vision techniques to create an obstacle detection system. The system, targeted to help the visually impaired with better mobility, uses two head-mounted cameras to obtain stereoscopic vision from the environment, transmitted to a smartphone for detecting and tracking objects.

## blaze



## Venturing Beyond the Coconut Shell

As the Malay proverbial saying goes, a frog which lives under a coconut shell thinks that is the entire world and can only learn everything there is under the shell.

Eight students from Sunway University's Department of Art and Design (DAD), who participated in an exciting 10-day study adventure to Taiwan, found the trip to be truly beneficial.

Augustine Wong, Head of DAD, believes that the exposure gives students a broader perspective into the world of design beyond the classroom. "Our objective is to provide them with an insight into the creative design industry across Taiwan," he told **blaze**. "This is in preparation for their graduation soon."

The students, who were mainly from the Interior Design programme, were required to conduct preliminary research on places they were to visit.

Their first stop was Taipei, to visit the Young Designers' Exhibition (YODEX), one of the region's biggest events representing the entire design sector, featuring innovative designs by young design talents from various design sectors of industrial design, architecture design, media and communication design, interior design, visual communication design and much more. There, the Sunway University

students were exposed to a wide range of ideas and concepts in the design industry today.

### More Exposure

At the Songshan Cultural and Creative Park, the students had the chance to discover interdisciplinary development trends in today's creative industries.

The park is the "Creative Hub of Taipei", which seeks to nurture creative talents and energy through various artistic, cultural and creative events.

During the trip, the students also visited four universities across Taiwan – China University of Technology (CUTE), in Taipei and Hsinchu; Feng Chia University in Taichung; Shu-Te University in Kaohsiung and Kun Shan University in Tainan.

They were scheduled by the universities to attend lectures and workshops. They were also given a chance to participate in critique and sharing sessions with the students and academics of the universities.

### Memorable Trip

For final year student, Lau Hui Ci of Diploma in Interior Design, the trip was a truly valuable learning experience, in particular, the visit to the universities.

"We have seen how classes are conducted in Taiwan," he said. "We also learnt to communicate and share ideas with young people of our age group. We could actually feel how effectively the lecturers there communicate with their students," he said.

Lau continued "The study tour provided ample opportunities for all of us to learn, feel and experience new ideas and concepts. We gained a deeper understanding about the different design industries. This helped to provide us insights to choosing our own majors in the coming academic year."

Field trips are part of Sunway University's design programmes, providing students educational experiences away from their conventional study environment to aid in their development of design solutions.

"While staying ahead of the competition in the design industry is important, such trips also provide students the opportunity to learn about its history and evolution to what it is today," said Wong.

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## I Met President Obama

Spellbound by Barack Obama, Sunway University's final year BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance student, Tan Li Jean recalled that the brief session with the US President changed her view of the world.

The townhall meeting was organised by the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) during Obama's visit to Malaysia recently.

The US President demonstrated to Malaysian youths that "no barrier is unbreakable, no dreams are unachievable and nothing is impossible."

A living example of challenging the impossible, Obama, just like any ordinary person from a middle class background, is now the first African-American President of the US.

Li Jean, 21, who hails from Subang Jaya, said the session with Obama had reinforced her respect towards Obama's humble leadership.

"Obama was truly a down-to-earth person and has strong stance on certain matters," she quipped. "He also shared

his views on various topics ranging from education, democracy, human rights, security alliances to trade agreements."

The former girl of SMK USJ 4 said that she was particularly excited when Obama touched on how social media and the Internet helps youths today to stay connected. It is also an alternative medium for citizens to access independent information.

"The world has gotten smaller and no country is going to succeed if part of its population is put on the sidelines because they are discriminated against. Malaysia won't succeed if non-Muslims don't have opportunity. Myanmar won't succeed if the Muslim population is oppressed. No society is going to succeed if half your population -- meaning women -- aren't getting the same education and employment opportunities as men," said Obama.

Addressing the young people, Obama added: "The key point for all of you, especially as young people, is you should embrace your culture. You should be proud of who you are and your background."



Li Jean was particularly inspired by Obama's parting words: "I am who I want – who I say I want to be. Malaysia Boleh – Yes We Can!" These words have since become her inspiration and motivation. Li Jean hopes to be an adventurer and a social entrepreneur.

"I want to have fun exploring the world, share my experiences, and take on projects that could make a difference in my community," she said. "My plans after graduating from Sunway are to further personalise my education and learning, improving progressively along the way."

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# Try A Little Kindness

Author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan once wrote these famous words: 'You have never really lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you'.

A team of seven students from the Centre of American Education (CAE) at Sunway University have demonstrated that they were willing to do charity in places where the need was greatest. No amount of inconvenience could hold them back, as they embarked on a self-funded trip to India with the mission to help the underprivileged community in Belukurichi.

Having raised a total of RM17,000, CAE Student Committee President, Vicknesh Prasad, along with his team members collected used clothes and purchased school uniforms, school bags, stationery, books, furniture such as tables and chairs, and confectionery that were donated to the community.

During the four-day trip, fellow team members, Jessica Liew, Sharveen Raaj Rajaindran, Purvindren Subramaniam, Nur Ellysa Hassan and Hemawathy Balarama, also visited four schools, a home for disabled children, an orphanage and an old folks home at the small village located on the Southern state of Tamil Nadu, India.

"Belukurichi was picked because my relative, Jayashini Vasanthan lives there, and she could provide local assistance to our team by arranging local accommodation and transport, and coordinating with the schools and homes for visits and donation," Vicknesh said.



Nur Ellysa Hassan (in red shirt) and Hemawathy Balarama, Vicknesh Prasad and Jessica Liew with the children at a secondary school in Belukurichi.

## Beyond Just Fundraising

The idea was first mooted when the students decided that they were not going to just collect donations and sending it over to the community. "Instead, we wanted to visit the people, and be personally involved with the recipients, especially the children themselves," explained Vicknesh.

At the schools, the students spent time playing games with the children. "The infrastructure of the schools is very basic and in bad condition. We wanted to focus on improving the schools' facilities to encourage a conducive study environment for the children with the donation of school-related items," said Jayashini.

The team observed that some of the students go to school barefooted. "They cannot afford to buy new uniforms so they usually wear old or bigger sized ones which they can wear for a long time," Jayashini added.

"We could see their poverty. Yet, the occupants were friendly and happy to meet us," observed Jessica. "They were grateful even though we were contributing only a little. It was a humbling experience, indeed! This served as a reminder of how blessed our lives are."

The visit to Belukurichi was more than an attempt to show a little kindness. It has been an eye-opening and humbling experience for the students, motivating them to help other disadvantaged communities.



The JCharity Team with teachers and organizers (India) and the children at the school



Jayashini Vasanthan (right) with Jessica Liew, Shanmugapriya and Nur Ellysa Hassan handing out goody bags and confectionery to the children at the primary school



The CAE Student Committee is made up of student representatives from the American Degree Transfer Programme at Sunway University. The committee members organise and coordinate various activities for the students to enhance greater understanding and cooperation between students in line with the educational aim of the programme.

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Vicknesh Prasad(left), Nur Ellysa Hassan (right in red shirt) and Jessica Liew with the children at Belukurichi secondary school



A mock cheque presentation was held recently to commemorate the trip and to announce the next charity event. The JCharity Team handed over the mock cheque to Shri Sakthi (right), representative from Tamil Nadu



# Recipe for Success

Sunway University's team headed by Patrick Siau, Teaching Fellow and Head Chef together with Soon Pau Voon, Teaching Fellow came out tops in this year's Food & Hotel Asia (FHA) Culinary Challenge (FCC) in Singapore.

Highest achievement to date, the team comprised of students and one Teaching Fellow of Sunway University's Culinary Arts programme from the Centre for Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Management (CTHCM) took home 3 golds, 3 silvers and 1 bronze.

## Gold Awards

20-year-old student Evelyn Chung Hui Jin who partnered Low Wai Mun to win the gold in the Class 11, Two to Tango attributed her achievement to, "Support and guidance from my chefs and the great teamwork with my partner".

In this Apprentice Team Competition, the chefs were required to prepare an appetizer and one hot main course of fish or seafood for four people within an hour.

In the same category, Allen Lim Fuye, 20, from Sibu, Sarawak and 19-year-old Lai Weng Choon's preparation of cod fish with orange-ginger emulsion sauce had them walking away with the silver. "The competition was tough, I had to work hard for the good results", said Lim while for Lai, the most important learning

experience is to "Be patient and never give up". Evelyn Chung Hui Jin, Low Wai Mun, Allen Lim Fuye and Lai Weng Choon are currently pursuing their Diploma in Culinary Arts at Sunway University.

Meanwhile, Queeny Cheong Peg Gie, 24, currently her second year of BSc (Hons) Culinary Management, took home the gold in Class 13, Neptune's Catch with her preparation of pan fried cod fish with herbs crumble, pumpkin puree, scallop mousseline, prawn tortellini, orange-ginger emulsion, deep-fried kailan, glazed shallot, tomato confit, mushroom foam and sauteed vegetables.

"Even though the presentation of the overall dish is important but the TASTE is the most significant key to score and win a medal", said Cheong. The Class 13, Neptune's Catch is a Professional Category where the chef is required to prepare a main course of fish or seafood, western style within an hour for four people.

## More Awards

In the same category Allison Chin Li Jing, in her second year of the Diploma in Culinary Arts took home the silver. "The experience was very tiring but it was worth it!" said Chin who hails from Miri, Sarawak. She plans to continue with an

undergraduate degree after finishing her diploma.

In the Class 14, East Meets West Cuisine category which is also a Professional Category, Teaching Fellow Chong Wei Tzeh took home the bronze.

The judging criteria for all categories include mise-en-place and cleanliness, correct professional preparation and service, presentation, innovation and taste. The challenge was one of the region's most prestigious international culinary competitions dedicated to the promotion of culinary excellence and the ultimate arena for budding culinary talents from around the world to display their skills and be accredited by a panel of internationally acclaimed judges.

Patrick said "CTHCM students are encouraged to take their classroom learning out into the real working environment. Participation in competitions further help students gain better understanding of working independently or in a team, further preparing them for real-work situations."

**blaze**



From left: Low Wai Mun, Evelyn Chung Hui Jin, Lai Weng Choon, Chong Wei Tzeh, Allison Chin Li Jing, Allen Lim Fuye and Queeny Cheong Peg Gie





## Employability in the Bigger Picture

The Career Fair 2014 on April 16 at Sunway University attracted 40 employers and over 700 students. The fair was one of the highlights that kicked the month-long career events, themed “Your Search Begins Here - Get Hired 2014” up a notch.

According to Lee Siok Ping, Director of Student Services Department, since 2011, the university has invited top multinational corporations (MNCs) such as Shell, IBM, Unilever, Nestle, Hilti, KPMG and Maybank for its Career Fair every year.

“Over 60% of employers mentioned that our students have the right kind of attitude and skills that will match their organisation,” she said. “This is a very good reason why 95% of participated employers would return to Sunway for Career Fair.”

During the event this year, Lee said that over 50 on-the-spot interviews were held to fill various internships and graduate placements. “This is very encouraging, judging from the response from both employers and students,” she said.

The bigger picture is that Sunway’s education portfolio has gone beyond just the paper mill. Since the early 80s, it has always emphasised on graduates’ employability. “This is the reason why

we started the Career Month,” Lee said. “Throughout April, we organise forums and talks on careers. This culminates in a Career Fair.”

The month-long career activities focused on equipping Sunway students to be competitive for employment when they graduate. “The employers are here to provide opportunities for our graduates to be exposed to various professions and job prospects,” she added.

Among the public talks included career opportunities with the major multinational corporations in the country; a talk on Professionalism & Work Etiquette, where students were taught some of the basic etiquette at the workplace; and forums for students to interact with the Chief Executive Officers of companies and learn about the banking and finance industry.

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# My Lancaster University Journey

By: Angelo Estella

My journey to Lancaster University was one of those defining moments that I will always remember in my life.

The Cultural Exchange Programme 2014 was a three-week exchange programme brilliantly organised by Lancaster University. The stay made such an impact on me and I was able to pick up and sharpen new talents and skills.

It was a full-on cultural exchange experience. I was truly captivated by the Lancaster Campus. The moment we arrived, it felt like home already.

Farm Day was the first activity I took part in and I learnt the importance of farming industry to the British economy.

Next, we had the Community Day. I learnt what safeguarding is about and why it is important to the children whom I was working with.

We were also invited to participate in a netball and football match, part of the College Cup involving all six colleges on campus. I had lots of fun! Besides that, we participated in the quiz where our knowledge on British culture was tested.

On the Business Day and Academia Day, we attended many lectures and workshops. I learnt to manage my time well in order to fit in all the different activities organised by Lancaster University.

Through Business workshops, I acquired insights about business sustainability and entrepreneurship, which gave me information of starting and running a business in the UK.

The workshops on problem solving and analytical skills allowed me the skills of approaching situations with tact and professionalism. There were occasions when a conflict arose and I was able to apply what I learnt to solve the issue. This has helped enhanced my interpersonal skills.

Thereafter, I attended a workshop on improving my presentation skills. I feel that I am much more confident in delivering a speech now. It has definitely made me more outspoken.

I even had a chance to perform on stage on the Cultural Talent Night with my friend. It was definitely a beautiful experience worth remembering.

I have picked up so many things from this trip – not only the chocolates and souvenirs, but memories, experience, and skills.

I wish to thank the Lancaster University Student Union and staff of Lancaster University for all the hard work and efforts they have put into this wonderful 3-week programme. Not to forget the Student Services Department at Sunway University for making the trip a reality. I strongly recommend all my fellow students to take at least a month off their calendars to participate in this exchange programme.

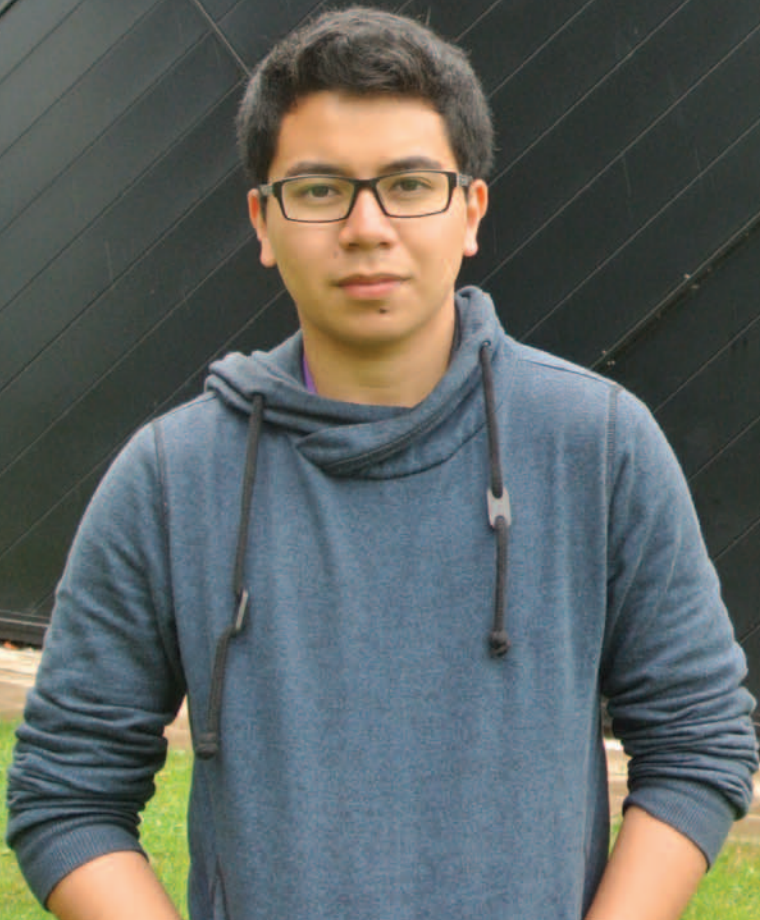
(Angelo is currently in his first year of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Communication at Sunway University).

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LANCASTER  
UNIVERSITY







## Where Good Employees Matter

One of the biggest assets that Malaysian employees possess is their ability to communicate in more than one language.

This, according to Vincent Wong of PentagonPlus Sdn Bhd, is one of the reasons why Malaysian employees are well-sought after by leading organisations.

Other reasons include the relatively low employment cost in ringgit, rich workplace diversity, mobility to travel, technology savviness and a growing young and skilled population.

“This is why in many companies, Gen Y makes up more than 40 percent of the total workforce,” he said. “They are the movers and shakers, and are highly talented, have big dreams and plenty of energy. With a big potential to be future industry leaders and country managers, I am confident that they will be able to take on the world.”

Many of Malaysia’s top talents take on regional roles, which include relocating to

better salary paying countries like Singapore, China and the United Arab Emirates, in particular, the city of Dubai.

Career options for Gen Y are also much wider now, which makes it very exciting compared to conventional careers in accounting, engineering, legal, banking and medicine. There are also plenty of other options, ranging from performing arts, multimedia, software engineering, online business, wealth management and health consultancy. Many more ambitious young talents have also ventured into their private businesses.

Vincent was the first Malaysian employee hired in 2006 to help set up Robert Walters Malaysia office, an international specialist professional recruitment consultancy. The local office became profitable within six months and Vincent was a recipient for Robert Walter’s 2007 Global Top Achiever, which offered him a trip to South Africa.

### Soft Spot for Sunway

Interacting actively with Sunway students, Vincent has been both a mentor to them and a recruiter for the past 15 years. He observes that this generation of internet savvy graduates are well-equipped with knowledge, possess big ambitions and a huge appetite to enjoy life. “Employers have high regards for graduates from Sunway,” he said. “This is why Sunway graduates have high employability.”

Incidentally, Vincent and his wife Lily were both Sunway students and college sweethearts; hence, their fond memories and soft spot for Sunway.

Vincent enrolled for the University of Waikato Twinning Programme in 1992, after completing his STPM at Sekolah Tinggi Kluang, Johor. That’s when he first met Lily who, after finishing her Sunway A-Levels, also enrolled with the same twinning programme in 1993.





Vincent graduated with a Bachelor of Management (Honours) degree in 1995, while Lily completed the same degree, majoring in marketing the following year.

Memories of their younger days bring back the nostalgia. “We dated as students when Sunway College campus was at PJ State,” he smiled. “After seven years of courtship, finally, in December 1998, I proposed to marry her.” As a kampung boy, he vividly recalls his simple but lethal three weapons to impress Lily – his old Suzuki kapchai, a six-string Gibson guitar and his swimming skills. Today, they have 3 sons aged 14, 12 and 8 years old, who enjoy playing futsal regularly.

### **Busy Corporate Life**

Vincent makes effort to spend quality time with his kids, despite a busy work schedule. He has a weekly father-and-son session with each of his sons, since they were three years old. “It’s funny but I have to admit it is true, that time with children is a great but simple way to learn good leadership and

fatherhood principles,” he enthused. “These principles I also apply in corporate life.”

Currently, Vincent is a Director of PentagonPlus Sdn Bhd, a locally incorporated company offering executive search and employer branding services set up in 2009.

“The biggest position I have successfully closed was the post of Senior Human Resource Manager for a bank which earned a handsome fee,” he said. “It’s a great feeling! However, I am always reminded that people are not commodities, which we often measure based on their income, job title and market value. Every person is a unique individual pursuing their own career journey. I like to think of myself as the career consultant pointing them in the right direction.”

Vincent continues to be a life long learner from his first job with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). “My two plus years in HR consulting experience with PwC provided great exposure

which eventually lead me to specialise in recruitment,” he said.

“My vision is to connect with people and point them to living their lives to the fullest. This is where I find fulfillment as a recruiter. I hope this will prepare me to one day become a Career and Life Coach.”

### **Advice to Gen Y**

For this reason, Vincent urged the younger generation to seek out a good coach and mentor who can guide, equip and impart valuable life lessons. “It’s a guaranteed investment to make you better, stronger and wiser in life,” he said.

Hailing from Kluang – the town touted for its best kaya toast bun, coffee and nasi lemak, all available at the famous Kluang Railway Station – Vincent Wong is ever ready, if invited, to speak to Gen Y more about role models, mentors and life coaches.

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## Tarminder Singh



Tarminder Singh a/l Hardev Singh completed his BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance in December 2011. He then joined Teach for Malaysia (TFM).

During his stint with TFM, Tarminder had to overcome many challenges such as working in a team as well as independently, performing tasks with minimal knowledge, and coping with endless 'To-Do' lists as a Finance Associate.

The noble-hearted Tarminder said: "The experience at TFM showed me that at the end of the day, we should use our knowledge and skills to make a difference and as a collective unit, uplift the standards of society as a whole. I believe that my undergraduate days at Sunway University prepared me to face the working world."

A firm-believer of lifelong learning, Tarminder enrolled with Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) in 2013, while holding a full-time job. He is on-track to obtain the CIMA Designation.

In January this year, he joined KPMG in the Business Advisory department. He is currently involved with the implementation of Goods and Services Tax. A strong fan of Mahatma Gandhi, Tarminder quoted the Indian statesman, who once said, 'Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever'."

**blaze**

## Joyce Oo

Sunway has provided Chancellors Scholar, Joyce Oo Pui Yee with a strong foundation that prepared her for the challenges that she faced in both the pursuit of her postgraduate degrees and now in the working world.

Joyce had excelled in her A-levels before continuing her BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance at Sunway University. She graduated in July 2010, with First Class Honours. After Sunway, she pursued her Postgraduate Diploma in Actuarial Science and subsequently her Master of Science in Applied Actuarial Science at the University of Kent, England, with Distinction in both her postgraduate degrees. She also spent a lot of time doing what she loved best -- traveling.

It was during her student days that she learned the importance of having a

balanced lifestyle. "The four exceptional years I had with Sunway has been an important milestone in the course of my education," she said. "This has shaped some of my work ethics as I am working towards becoming a certified actuary."

She was picked to represent Sunway University for a brief visit to Lancaster University. As one of the university's Chancellors Scholars, she said that she had to maintain good academic performance as well as play an integral role in extra-curricular arenas.

Joyce is currently employed as an actuarial analyst with JPWall Consulting Partners. In her spare time, she is pursuing her professional papers with the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

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## Karlisyle Lum

Karlisyle Lum Ern Ai graduated from Sunway University with a BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance in July last year but, as she puts it, “it feels like it was only yesterday that I was burning the midnight oil for the final hours before exams.”

The experience in Sunway has been truly wonderful. “It has helped shape me into the person I am today,” she said. “Not only did I receive a quality education that equipped me with the right tools and knowledge of the business world, I was also able to grow as a person.”

Attributing her personal growth to both friends and lecturers, Karlisyle said that her student days have given her the foundation in life. She became a graduate trainee in L’oreal Malaysia soon after completing her degree.

“The one-year L’oreal’s Young Entrepreneur Programme (YEP), which serves as a fresh graduates’ transition from student life to working adulthood, gave us the opportunity to explore and experience different roles in the company through periodic job rotations,” she said.

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## Jeffred Tham

Jeffred Tham King Why is the Managing Director of Thai Syok Seafood Restaurant, a restaurant serving authentic Thai delicacies.

The Sunway alumnus who completed his Diploma in Hospitality & Tourism Management (Hospitality Specialisation) in August 2007, says his role is to oversee all aspects of the business from guest satisfaction to profit and loss. He also manages over 13 full time employees working with the restaurant.

In 2008, Jeffred joined Wynn Macau as captain of Café Esplanada. He was then promoted to the position of Trainer of Food and Beverage (F&B) in May that year. A year later, he became Training Manager for the F&B Division, with responsibilities of managing and organising training for 1300 team members. Jeffred and his management team created the F&B Academy.

In his spare time, Jeffred enjoys photography and Taekwondo. He is now a second Dan black belt in the martial art and previously served as a president of Sunway University Taekwondo Club.

“When talking about hospitality, we talk about the ‘moment of truth’. We cannot rely merely on academics but must balance it with fieldwork as well,” he opined. “Sunway University really excelled in this area. During my time there, the school provided a real restaurant for students to operate, a 5-star kitchen and experienced lecturers to lead the class. This was a great platform for us to put what we learnt into practice, learning to serve real customers. The patient and professional lecturers not only taught us from books, but also shared their experience with us, equipping us well before stepping into the industry.”

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## Gold Medal

Cognitive Radio Technology with Networking and Security Enhancements applied to Wireless Surveillance Systems

(from left to right)

**Mr Syed Aqeel Raza**  
Doctor of Philosophy (Computing) student  
**Mr Dharmidran Anantharsekaran**  
Teaching Fellow  
**Ms Ling Mee Hong**  
Senior Lecturer  
**Dr Yau Kok Lim**  
Senior Lecturer



## Gold Medal

Real-Time Smart Street Lighting System (RSLS)

(from left to right)

**Mr Eu Kok Seng**  
Doctor of Philosophy (Computing) student  
**Assoc. Prof. Dr Yap Kian Meng**  
Associate Professor  
**Mr Shareef Ali Aseel**  
BSc (Hons) Information Technology student  
**Mr Tee Tiam Hee**  
MSc in Computer Science (by Research) student



# INTERNATIONAL INNOVATORS

Sunway University's Computing teams triumphed at the 25th International Invention, Innovation & Technology Exhibition (ITEX 2014).

3 Gold • 2 Silver



## Gold Medal

QR Code Car Park

(from left to right)

**Mr Yeong Lee Seng**  
Lecturer  
**Mr Tsai Yao Cherng**  
BSc (Hons) in Computer Science student  
**Dr Chia Wai Chong**  
Senior Lecturer  
**Dr Ch'ng Sue Inn**  
Lecturer



## Silver Medal

Autonomous Self Sustained and Self Organised Broadcasting Overlay System

(from left to right)

**Assoc. Prof. Dr Lim Tong Ming**  
Head - Centre for Innovation and Industry Linkages  
**Mr Vicky Lim Min How**  
MSc in Computer Science (by Research) graduate  
**Ms Angela Lee Siew Hoong**  
Lecturer  
**Mr Chin Teck Min**  
Lecturer



## Silver Medal

Stereo-Vision Guidance System

(from left to right)

**Dr Ch'ng Sue Inn**  
Lecturer  
**Dr Chia Wai Chong**  
Senior Lecturer  
**Mr Yeong Lee Seng**  
Lecturer  
**Mr. Fadil Mohamudally**  
MSc in Computer Science (by Research) student

ITEX, Asia's top ranked invention exhibition, is an annual platform that connects local and international inventors and their innovations to a global community of business investors.

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