

## Boost for the nation's labour



The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) has inked an agreement with Wawasan Open University (WOU) to accelerate the development of skilled labour in Malaysia's manufacturing and services industry.

As the officially recognised voice of the industry, FMM currently represents over 2,200 manufacturing and industrial services companies of varying sizes across Malaysia. The umbrella body for industries was formed in 1968.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between WOU and FMM facilitates the pursuit of educational programmes for working adults at WOU to gain a basic degree.

Graduates of FMM diploma programmes will be eligible for credit transfer and to progress onto degree programmes at the university.

WOU will also work to customise its study curriculum to address the needs of the industry and workers through a series of discussions with the leaders of the manufacturing industries. The aim is to provide retraining for mid-level personnel and to implement market-driven courses for continuous development.

FMM President Tan Sri Yong Poh Kon said the agreement meant that both industry and academia may now mutually tap on teaching resources to provide graduates with a blend of both theoretical and practical applications in the real world.

"Many a time, line managers have lamented the lack of industry knowledge among newly-employed graduates," he said.

"Therefore, this MoU provides the platform for FMM and Wawasan Open University to work together to develop course curriculum that are industry-oriented and relevant through series of discussions between the academics and leaders of industries."

WOU Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan hailed the MoU as "the beginning of a strong and long lasting arrangement."

"This partnership is an important milestone for us at Wawasan Open University as we continue to grow and reach out to the working citizens of our country," he stressed.

Also present were FMM Vice President Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuan and WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof Wong Tat Meng.

The agreement spells out four general areas of cooperation and collaboration between WOU and FMM.

Firstly, WOU will conduct advanced-level training and provide appropriate educational opportunities for FMM members' workforce. FMM, through

its Institute, conducts certificate-level courses, diplomas, and corporate training programmes.

WOU will link FMM's educational programmes to relevant WOU undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to promote the upward mobility of staff among FMM members. Workers in the manufacturing and services industry can therefore upgrade their skills, enhancing the human capital and human resource development in Malaysia.

The MoU secondly allows a credit transfer arrangement to be developed between FMM and WOU. Suitably qualified diploma graduates from the FMM Institute can progress to undergraduate programmes offered by WOU.

The MoU will also enable the university to establish exchange programmes with FMM members, namely the captains of industries.

In addition, FMM's captains of industries can be invited to give special talks and previews to WOU's students, while the university's course leaders can do the same for students of the FMM Institute.

Lastly, under the collaboration, FMM will offer the use of existing facilities at FMM's head office, seven branch offices and three representative offices in Malaysia, for mutually agreed WOU undergraduate programmes for the working community.

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Welcome to the  
fourth issue of our quarterly  
newsletter

**The very nature of the Open Distance Learning (ODL) concept, as espoused by WOU, brings about virtues that are not only beneficial to individual students but also to the community.**

By its very principle, the objective of making education affordable and accessible to the people has an inevitable "flow-over" effect that ushers significant returns for society as a whole.

By providing opportunities for knowledge and qualification to working adults, WOU has effectively supported the nation by helping to improve the human resources of the country.

In that very vein, it is highly appropriate to note that over the past few months WOU has been actively involved in various aspects of nation-building.

We have, for instance, undertaken to become an active contributor to industrial development with two landmark memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA).

Such initiatives are bound to help our industries have a stronger pool of talents with skills and expertise that are pertinent and updated to current scenarios.

We have also seen our university making its societal contribution by participating in a cancer awareness campaign where many of our staffs enthusiastically came out to help generate sensitivity towards this serious illness in society.

In its very first cultural showing, our state-of-the-art auditorium in the new Bangunan Albukhary was aptly used to host a charity concert that raised funds for the blind and visually impaired.

The event moreover heralded the university's aspiration to develop and foster artistic excellence in our community, and to be one of the platforms for creative expression in Malaysia.

It is only fortuitous then at this juncture that we should look forward to the start of our newest Master's programme, offering specialisation in Public Administration. The Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CeMPA) begins in July to offer specialisation in a field that is highly relevant to service towards the public.

Indeed, it is in the spirit of public service that WOU was conceived and founded. The torch is in our hands as we continue to forge ahead to contribute our resources to help in the development of various aspects of our people and our nation.

Tan Sri Emeritus Professor  
Gajaraj Dhanarajan  
Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer



in the know

## WHITE HOUSE TREMORS AT HOMESTEAD

**The pulsating drama of the American presidential race came echoing into the quiet chambers of Wawasan Open University when a leading commentator on US politics visited the main campus in Penang.**

Prof Burdett A. "Bird" Loomis, a renowned professor of political science from the University of Kansas, drew Malaysians from diverse backgrounds to hear him elucidate the dynamics of the American elections.

The buzz of whether the US will have its first woman or African-American as president seemed to infect the many folks who came to hear the talk entitled *Race to the White House 2008: Candidates and Issues*.

Loomis has authored and edited about a dozen books on politics, including acclaimed titles like *Choosing a President*, *Republic on Trial* and *Esteemed Colleagues: Civility and Deliberation in the United States Senate*.

The event was the first free public lecture to be held at the auditorium of the new WOU campus. It was jointly organised by WOU and the Embassy of the United States.

In the entertaining and highly informative hour, Loomis reviewed the prospects and positions of the main candidates in the presidential race while giving an insight into the complexities of leadership in the world's most powerful nation.

Loomis was posed with a barrage of questions in a discussion session moderated by Dato' Dr Sharom Ahmat. Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Wong Tat Meng later presented tokens of appreciation to both Loomis and Sharom.



## Editorial Board

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# Developing management accountancy with CIMA

**The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), the world's leading membership body for professional qualification in management accountancy, has undertaken collaborative steps to develop and promote the field with WOU in Malaysia.**

Under the MoU signed between the two organisations, CIMA students and members who enter WOU programmes are to be given advanced standing credits appropriate to their level of attainment.

CIMA undertook to award advanced standing credits to graduates of WOU's Bachelor of Business in Accounting (Hons). The graduates will be exempted from five subjects when pursuing the CIMA Certificate in Business Accounting.

The exemptions are valid upon graduation of the first batch of WOU's Bachelor of Business in Accounting (Hons) students, scheduled in for 2011. CIMA will then evaluate the number of further exemptions to be granted to WOU's Bachelor of Business in

Accounting (Hons) degree holders.

WOU has the option to register as a 'CIMA Learning Partner', with the ability to offer the CIMA Professional Qualification as a programme for WOU students.



The MoU between WOU and CIMA also facilitates collaborative efforts to develop and promote management accountancy in Malaysia. It sees the agreement of CIMA and WOU to provide each other with technical advice and assistance on all areas of joint collaboration.

With the signing of the MoU between the two organisations, CIMA 1st is now also open to WOU students from any discipline who

are considering a career in management accountancy.

CIMA 1st is an initial pathway for students of local universities and colleges leading to the CIMA programme. Students who join CIMA 1st stand to gain a number of benefits, such as free access to learning resources at the CIMA Malaysia office, bi-monthly newsletters containing news about CIMA, preferential rates at training courses and membership to the CIMA Malaysia Toastmasters Club.

The agreement was inked by CIMA Director of Education Robert Jelly on behalf of the global accounting body, and WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof Wong Tat Meng on behalf of the people's university.

The signing was witnessed by Datuk Chet Singh, Deputy Chairman of the WOU Council. Also present were Dato' O K Lee, the CIMA Council Member for Area 16, who is also the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) Northern Branch Chairman; amongst other attendees that included representatives of educational institutions and other corporations in Penang.

## Asian e visitors

**Wawasan Open University recently played host to a high-level delegation from the Asia e University (AeU) who visited the main campus.**

Both sides held preliminary discussions about possibly exchanging resources, both academic and administrative.

AeU President and CEO Prof Dato Dr Ansary Ahmed and deputy president Prof Dr Hairudin Harun led their contingent. WOU Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Wong Tat Meng were on hand with the deans to welcome the guests.

Based in Kuala Lumpur, AeU is a dual-mode multinational university instituted under the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).

The ACD was initiated in Thailand in 2000 to provide the continent's nations with their own collective forum to discuss Asia-wide cooperation.



## WOU and OUM: Partners in Education

**The country's two leading Open Distance Learning institutions – Wawasan Open University (WOU) and Open University Malaysia (OUM) – are joining forces to provide a holistic and comprehensive learning experience to their students.**

Several key players from both institutions met up at the WOU main campus in Penang recently for a frank discussion on collaborative approaches and common interests.

The WOU team was headed by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Wong Tat Meng, while the five-member OUM delegation that drove down from Kuala Lumpur was headed by Senior Vice President Prof Dr Mansor Fadzil.

This is the first meeting since the two universities signed a Memorandum of Agreement in October last year. The meeting touched on various issues ranging from the development of course materials, course delivery, learner support, implementation of credit transfer arrangements, library

resources, and staff training.

During the discussion, Prof Wong said that the alliance between the two universities would send a strong message to other institutions in the country, and could eventually pave a path for other universities to emulate



in order to improve the delivery of education to all Malaysians.

"I hope that this is the beginning of many visits whereby we can map our way forward and explore different avenues to ensure that our students are provided the best education possible," he said.

Dr Mansor agreed, "I certainly will look forward to further collaborations in the future to enhance our prime objective, which is to train and educate Malaysians without fear or favour."

in the heart of society



## A Bus for the Blind

The new state-of-the-art auditorium of WOU's main campus flashed its grand vision as a centre for culture and the arts when its hall resounded with the voices of a serene a capella choir in the first-ever concert to be held here.

Meaningfully enough, the performance by singing group Dolci Voci was part of a charity drive to raise funds to help the St Nicholas' Home, a centre for the visually impaired.

Themed 'A Bus for the Blind', the concert raised RM104,000, enabling the home to purchase two new vans to replace its old ones.

The group serenaded the crowd with famous hits such as *Top of the World*, *We've Only Just Begun*, *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*,

*The Way You Look Tonight* and *When I Fall in Love*. There was also a solo performance by group member Marlene Fox who sang *Big Spender* and the iconic *My Heart Will Go On*.

"The majority of the funds came from sponsors and philanthropists," said the home's executive director Ooi Chee Khoon.

Ooi said one of the Home's vans was already 22 years old and no longer safe on the road while a second one went for major repairs recently. The International Women's Association (IWA) and the Ministry of Finance were significant contributors, each chipping in RM25,000.

The concert was mooted by Matthew Teather, a full-time volunteer at the home, during Christmas.



in the limelight

## WOU supports battle against cancer



The heavens appeared to pour their grief on the world as rain fell on hundreds of people who gathered at the Youth Park in Penang to commemorate the global battle against cancer.

But the spirits of those who attended the *Penang Relay for Life* could hardly be dampened as they determinedly participated in the dramatic event on 8 March.

The occasion was the second consecutive time that WOU has stepped forward as the gold sponsor for the annual event. WOU's RM10,000 donation clearly demonstrated the university's concern and support for the battle against the medical affliction.

A bubbly WOU team walked the relay route with other sponsors, carrying a banner that declared, "Because knowledge saves lives."

What made the occasion particularly memorable was the unified spirit among the corporate sectors, educational institutions, hospitals and other organisations, in raising awareness about the issue.

The key message for the evening was that prevention and early treatment are integral to saving lives, and that sufferers are not alone in their struggle.

Initiated in 2005, the *Penang Relay for Life* was organised by the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (Penang Branch) with the support of Penang Hospice Society and Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPP).

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Wong Tat Meng was at hand to cheer the WOU team led by Corporate Communications Director Agnes James and Penang Regional Office Director K. Manoharan.

# ONLINE SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

**Assessment is an integral part of the instructional process in any institutional system. In the open and distance learning system, this can be conducted in several forms.**

These include:

- Self-assessment exercises within each unit of self-learning material
- Continuous assessment through Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- Term-End Examinations
- Practicals, projects, etc

Self-assessment exercises given in each unit are like milestones. Although these exercises do not carry any weight in the examination, they help learners check on their progress. They enable students to revise learning points and motivate them to keep going.

On the other hand, continuous assessment in the form of Tutor-Marked Assignments has a special significance since these are used for internal assessment. TMAs help in providing a two-way communication between tutors and learners, and this communication helps to break the feeling of isolation which is very common among ODL (Open Distance Learning) students.

Term-End Examinations are organised at the end of the course and they carry more weight than the continuous assessment.

In most open and distance learning institutions, various types of assessment are carried out. On completion of their assignments, the conventional method is for students to manually submit their written work to the tutors. After assessing the assignments, the tutors then return the marked TMAs with the grades and comments to the students either personally or by post.

The considerable time gap in providing feedback to the students' TMAs, to some extent, defeats the pedagogical purpose of formative evaluation. In open and distance education, such a shortcoming can substantially be overcome by the use of ICT i.e. allowing students the option of submitting their assignments online.

Electronic submission of assignments is not new in many universities. Electronic submission of assignments started in the 1990s in the UK Open University and then in the Central Queensland University in Australia in 1994. The Open University of Hong Kong, UNISA, Arab Open University, Open Universities Australia and Open University Malaysia are some of the online institutions that are currently using online assignment submission for their learners. Online submission is also practised in many conventional universities.

The following websites provide significant and meaningful information on these practices:

[http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/con\\_ed/de/courses/styles/all/helpfiles/assignments.php](http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/con_ed/de/courses/styles/all/helpfiles/assignments.php)

[http://webfuse.cqu.edu.au/Courses/aut2001/85321/Assessment/Online\\_Submission\\_How/](http://webfuse.cqu.edu.au/Courses/aut2001/85321/Assessment/Online_Submission_How/)

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/coursework/docsUser/adminHelp/ch15.html>

<http://www.open.ac.uk/assessment/pages/tma-submission-methods.php>



## What research says

A number of research studies are available in the area of online assignment assessment. Here is a brief overview of the research findings.

Studies (Price and Petre 1997, Jamieson and Jones 1997, Summons et al 1997, Chi-Sang et al 1999, Vanessa 2004, Oostrom and Locke 2006, Stuart 2006, Bridge and Appleyard 2007) indicate that online submission of assignments saves a lot of time. It allows the turnaround time to decrease from two weeks to between 5 and 7 days.

Students are positive about the convenience of submitting assignments online (Bancroft et al 2003) as they can do it from home and later retrieve their marked assignments through the web.

Carswell et al (1999) adds that students receive the evaluated assignment on time, which provides teaching and sustains motivation. Jones and McCormack (1997) and Bridge and Appleyard (2007) report that many students found financial benefits in using online submission.

A survey conducted (Tsang, 2004) finds that the majority of the students want the online submission to be a voluntary activity. Very few students feel it should be made compulsory. When asked whether online assignment marking would decrease the quality of feedback, the majority responded with a "no".

Studies also indicate that online assignment submission reduces the inconsistency of marking among different markers and integrates well with online mark reporting (Mason and Woit 1999 and Vanessa 2004). It increases

the transparency of the marking process by allowing students to view the progress of their assignment (Price and Petre 1997), hence increasing accountability. It has also been found that there are fewer problems associated with the illegibility of handwritten comments by the tutor/marker.

Another major finding of submitting online assignments is that it can detect plagiarism and has the potential to prevent it (English and Siviter 2000 and Young 2001). This is done by designing individual-specific assignment items that allow students to collaborate without fear of plagiarism.

Although this is not a comprehensive review, it reveals that electronic submission of online assignments has the following advantages:

- saves time
- is convenient in submission
- retrieves marked assignments while at home
- financial benefit
- reduces inconsistency of marking
- detects plagiarism

Many universities have adopted the web-based system of assignment submission, but they have not completely replaced the traditional system of submission. The research findings cited above and information from the various websites provided above should improve our understanding on the nature of online submission of assignments.

- Dr. Madhu Parhar

## School of Business and Administration undertakes contract research



### **Two faculty members of the School of Business and Administration recently completed a contract project for a Japanese agency, to help ferment understanding of the Malaysian labour situation.**

The project, conducted by Prof Cheah Kooi Guan and Au Yong Hui Nee, involving an extensive collection of data and thorough research, represented an academic contribution from WOU to society.

The project, undertaken between October 2007 and February 2008, was sponsored by Japan's *Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare*, and was commissioned by the Overseas Vocational Training Association (OVTA) of Japan.

The information generated is to be used by Japanese corporations operating business activities overseas as well as those that plan to expand operations to Malaysia.

The objective of the project was to collect, analyse and classify a wide range of up-to-date information on the labour market in Malaysia, as well as on the vocational capability development, employment and labour conditions in our country.

The four reports that culminated covered laws relating to employment and labour in Malaysia, the employment and labour situation, vocational capability development policies, and current implementation and vocational capability standards and vocational capability evaluation systems.

"Since universities are established and sustained with different forms of support from society at large, academic contribution to the community actually constitutes an integral function of any university," Cheah said.

"While the pursuit of academic knowledge and the sharing of highly specialised findings among the relatively small group of researchers and academicians are essential, universities should also share their wealth of knowledge, skills and technologies with the society at large."

"Academics can contribute to society in many ways. Examples are writing of books, contributing articles to journals and magazines, commenting on current issues in newspapers and other media, and giving talks to schools and voluntary organisations."

University-industry collaboration represents another major area of academic contribution to society.

Finally, research into issues affecting specific segments of the community and suggestions of solutions to those issues would also bring about direct benefits to the society.

At the same time, such community participation by academicians would also be beneficial to the university.

Application of the faculty's expertise in applied real life situations helps to enhance the skills and competencies of the faculty members concerned. Real-world applications and real-life situations can be incorporated into the university's teaching-learning process, thereby benefiting the students.

Prof Cheah suggested a change in the academic climate. He proposes that real-life application and contribution to society be academically acceptable and be rewarded in the same manner as teaching and research. It would be a good idea if the appraisal of faculty members include assessing individuals in terms of their contribution to society through their applied work.

# Allowing civil servants to dream higher...

**A window of opportunity is opening for professionals in the public sector, as well as for students seeking careers in civil service or non-governmental and non-profit organisations. A special Master's programme uniquely geared towards public administration will be launched in July.**

The Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CeMPA) promises to equip graduates with a top-notch qualification and specialised knowledge of the workings of the complex and highly critical field.

The programme is offered at Wawasan Open University in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the education arm of the Commonwealth of Nations.

"CeMPA is an interdisciplinary programme that equips graduates with skills and knowledge in a broad range of topics and disciplines relevant to the public sector," says Prof Madhulika Kaushik, Director of the Centre for Graduate Studies.

"It draws from diverse fields such as economics, management, political science, finance and accounting, policy process and policy analysis, research methods, statistics, ethics and public management."

The programme has core courses that include managing information systems, managing in organisations and managing human resources.

Designed by experts from international universities, the course also inculcates in students interpersonal skills, self-reliance, resilience and clarity about public service values and principles.



Students are exposed to the economic environment of business, public systems management, contemporary administrative systems, and development planning and administration.

CeMPA is the second postgraduate programme to be offered by the School of Business and Administration and coordinated by the Centre for Graduate Studies, on the heels of the Commonwealth Executive MBA (CeMBA) that commenced in January.

Students are required to take three of six elective courses: ethics and governance in public systems, accounting and finance, marketing management, project management, disaster management, and electronic commerce.

With CeMPA, employees in the civil sector can look forward to self-improvement as well as better job or career prospects. They can become more effective while assuming heavier responsibilities as they move up the professional ladder.

"CeMPA helps students learn about the management principles of international agencies, federal, national, regional and local government, the uniformed services, NGOs, voluntary organisations, and social enterprises," declares Madhulika.

"It will be useful to those involved in delivering policy, leading modernisation projects, and supporting innovation."

Through the Open Distance Learning (ODL) mode, WOU has allowed CeMPA to be flexible and accessible to working adults as they can study at their own pace while maintaining full-time employment.

The programme offers an avenue to enhance knowledge of the principles, strategies, developments, changes and other updates concerning the civil services and the administration of the government - at local, state and federal levels.

Students can build up their professional value through CeMPA and expand their professional horizon, even outside the public sector, since they would have much sought-after expertise and experience.

At WOU, students are supported by the university's interactive online learning system, telephone counselling and face-to-face tutorials, even as they are linked online to tutors and peers.

An intensive weekend residential session will also be held every semester to give students the opportunity to interact with public sector experts and academic leaders.

Video-conferencing sessions with these experts are part of the learning process.

A final semester project course or case study analysis will help students broaden and strengthen their academic perspectives while applying theoretical concepts to their professional undertakings.

Students are free to choose the number of courses they want to take each semester. They can even take a semester off and resume their studies later as their personal circumstances permit.

Apart from those possessing a Bachelor's degree with Honours, adults above 35 years with a minimum STPM or equivalent qualification can also apply if they have at least two years relevant working experience.

*in the regional offices*

# Frees come a-calling



**The serenity enveloping the main campus of Wawasan Open University was pleasantly disrupted as sounds of bubbly chatter and laughter permeated the April air.**

On their first visit to the university, students and teachers from Penang Free School were clearly mesmerised by the sight of the majestic Homestead mansion and the quiet tranquility of waves gently lapping at the shore.

WOU Corporate Communications Assistant Manager, Lim Yao-han, was on hand to welcome and brief the entourage comprising forty members and two teacher advisors of the school's History Club and Archives Board.

The group was taken on a tour around the university, which included visits to the university's library and lecture theatres, before being led to Homestead where they marvelled at the intricate furnishings that adorn the age-old mansion.

Kayshantheny Maran, 19, member of the school's Archives Board, remarked, "I am glad that the university chose to preserve this beautiful historical structure amidst the construction of its new campus. Each time I pass along this road, I am always fascinated by the mansion but never thought that I would ever set foot here!"

ODL, in the eyes of a 5th former, seems exciting. "The learning method looks interesting. Given the opportunity, I would consider taking up a programme through this mode especially to upgrade myself in future," explained Lee Siu Ming, President of the Historical Society. "I like the architecture at the Homestead and the idea of studying near the beach makes the university special in its own way," he added.

No visit is ever complete without the must-have photo session and so the group gathered at the Yeap Chor Ee statue before bidding their goodbyes.

## *Opening boundaries with video conferencing*

**The use of technology in open distance learning has truly catapulted the concept of knowledge sharing and interaction among students and tutors at all WOU centres across the country.**

In particular, the state-of-the-art video conferencing facility has allowed individuals to break the barrier of physical distance to enable synchronous discussion and sharing to take place between centres.

The video conferencing can be done point-to-point among regional offices and headquarters, as well as multi-point to include any or all centres.

It is currently being actively used by students of the Commonwealth Executive MBA (CeMBA) programme.

The high-definition system is able to operate at 30 frames per second from 128kb to 2Mb capacity.

The technology also includes the potential to reach people at their homes during the conferencing.

So in the future, students who cannot attend conferences at the regional offices may still be part of the session from wherever they are as long as they have internet connectivity.

Another advantage is that the system has cross-platform connectivity. It can therefore link with other technology platforms that are used in other countries. This makes the system truly global multi-point.

In effect, what the video conferencing has achieved is to connect all relevant students and teachers to be one community. It has made learning at WOU a truly collaborative and interactive process, transcending limitations of distance and space.





## Marketing Drive at the **Kuala Lumpur** Regional Office heats up...

Over a span of five weeks from mid-March to mid-April, the Kuala Lumpur Regional Office (KLRO) held a series of roadshows to rope in students for the forthcoming fourth semester that begins in July 2008.

This was a part of WOU's overall campaign nationwide to promote its educational courses and register students for its 11 undergraduate and two postgraduate programmes. The latest offering for the July intake is the Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CeMPA) – which allows public sector employees or those in related fields to climb up the professional ladder.

KLRO Director Meilina Puteh was pleased with the response received to date, "Our roadshows were held at shopping malls, a hotel, a convention centre and a factory... We secured more than 200 leads and prospects."

"I am optimistic about our promotions since adults find WOU's mode of teaching through Open Distance Learning (ODL) rather convenient and comfortable, and the fees affordable."



Postgraduate Education Fair, Mid Valley Megamall (4-6 April)

## AGM for Student Club at JBRO

The student club at JBRO recently held its AGM on 15 March 2008. Since its inception in August 2007, the club has more than 100 students registered as members. The AGM was called to form a new committee and to plan for more activities that will benefit all its members. The student club also aims to initiate social activities that will involve students, tutors and RO staff in creating comradeship for all.

The AGM lasted for two hours. After a new committee was elected with seven office bearers, discussions were held with all members to get feedback on possible activities to be organised soon. After much deliberation, it was generally agreed upon that a field trip to WOU's headquarters will be made after the exam in June. The student club also proposed a "family day" involving students, tutors, RO staff and their family members, to be held immediately after the July intake.

The meeting adjourned with a new team who, with renewed spirit and direction, aims to create a platform for even greater interaction and engagement.



in the lives of students

# Edmund Au

With a training regime as long as twelve hours a day spent perfecting his swing, time is a commodity that national golfer Edmund Au treasures, for it is something he cannot afford to waste.

"On weekdays, my hours at the golf course stretch from 7am up to 7 in the evening. There is practically no time for me to go to college for a degree," said Edmund, who at 22, made his debut at the Maybank Malaysian Open tournament in March this year.

While most young adults his age are occupied with college or getting a taste of the working world, Edmund's life revolves around golf and travelling the globe playing tournaments that often sees him away from home for months in a row.

The former student of Sekolah Menengah Sultan Abdul Samad in Petaling Jaya had deferred his college education to concentrate full time on his amateur golf career.

Not to be left behind, Edmund soon found himself signing up for the Bachelor of Business in Management programme and began his first semester of study in January 2008.



"The programme's flexibility appeals to me and it fits what I'm looking for. It does not require me to attend lectures or tutorials, which is compulsory in colleges before you are allowed to sit for examinations," remarked Edmund.

The avid golfer with a string of accolades to his name, including a Sukma gold medal and the Pahang Amateur Open 2007 champion trophy, can now look forward to graduating with a degree in business while pursuing his sporting passion for the country.

# A second chance; a second youth.



After 38 long years of waiting, opportunity knocked. At his doorstep - youth in the form of education.

Being enrolled at WOU's Kota Bharu Regional Office as a management student was the best thing that could have happened to Saudara Kam (as he prefers to be called).

Upon completion of his School Certificate at Sultan Ismail College Kota Bharu (the premier secondary school in Kelantan) in 1969, he had to look for a job as entry to sixth form and other avenues for higher education were limited then. Those days, Kelantanese students had to go either to Penang or Kuala Lumpur for their sixth form or college.

After working in various jobs and positions for 33 years, he finally retired as operations manager in 2002. All this while, due to work and family commitments, he could not continue his education and achieve his childhood dream of becoming a graduate.

When he saw a WOU banner by chance in Kota Bharu in December 2007, he quickly jumped at the chance and came to the Kota Bharu Regional Office at Wisma Gerakan, Jalan Temenggong, enquired, and became the first student in the state to register for a WOU degree programme. How delighted he was when told that he would receive a scholarship for the first semester!

Kam is elated and excited to be studying again and looks forward to graduating in five years' time. He wants to prove to his children and grandchildren that with determination and perseverance, nothing is impossible!

He feels refreshed and is thrilled to be with fellow students whose ages range from 20 to 40 and this, according to him, "makes me feel young again!"

In appreciation of Wawasan Open University for bringing the programme to Kelantan, Kam has gone on a personal "crusade" to promote WOU's programmes amongst friends and family members.

# First student for CeMPA

**Meet Muhammad Jamadil Zainol from Kedah, who is making history as Wawasan Open University's first CeMPA student.**

Jamadil, 27, an instructor at the Outward Bound School of Malaysia in Lumut, had always wanted to pursue postgraduate study while working. Being young and single, the instructor decided that the present moment is the best opportunity to put his spare time to effective use.

Thus, when he made initial enquiries at WOU, the friendly staff at the Ipoh Regional Office pointed him towards the right direction of CeMPA.

The computer science graduate from Universiti Putra Malaysia hopes to eventually progress to a more enriching and rewarding career in future.

"The competition in the job market is getting stiffer, especially now that more fresh graduates are entering the arena. I hope to gain an edge over my peers with this postgraduate qualification in future," he said.

Delighted to learn that he is the first to sign up for CeMPA, Jamadil is encouraging his colleagues at the Outward Bound School to sign up as students of WOU.

"We should never stop learning, and I am glad that the university exists to help working people like me advance to another level of qualification.



That is why I am spreading news about WOU's programmes among my colleagues, family and friends," he added.

The university looks forward to welcome Jamadil as he embarks on an exciting journey of learning come this July.

## Don't keep a good man down



**At 58 years of age and a successful Managing Director of a large agricultural chemicals firm, Harry Ho Chee Wan (photo, second from left) is still not satisfied.**

1971 - He received news of his admission to universities in the U.S. and the U.K. Great opportunities for a bright future – but life threw him lemons.

"I had applied to do my degree overseas. I was glad that they accepted my applications, but I didn't have the money to finance my education abroad, let alone live there for a few years," Harry reminisced.

So Harry made lemonade, beginning his career with a Diploma from Kolej Pertanian Malaysia, specialising in agriculture. He hit it off with Shell Gas as a Technical Executive, working with the group for two years.

1974 saw him switching to a non-technical role in Bayer (M) Sdn Bhd. 26 years of hard work and he held in his hands a wealth of experience, and the role of Marketing Manager in a pharmaceutical giant.

In May 2001, he became Managing Director of Agricultural Chemicals (M) Sdn Bhd, a long and fruitful climb from the foothills of his career. There was, however, a nagging itch that needed scratching.

He still craved a degree. Wawasan Open University (WOU) offered him a Master's.

In January 2008, he began his first semester towards WOU's Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration.

"Easy? I have my commitments, work and family. It's worth it though; my wife and two sons are very, very supportive. In fact, they gently nudged me into taking this programme, and now that I'm in, I'm glad I'm in. It is time taken away from family and TV programmes but it's definitely worth the time and effort."

"Having been in management for so many years, this is a good refresher programme for me. With the CeMBA, I get to revisit technology – old and new, and revise management techniques. Whatever I learn is highly applicable to my work. When I first started out, they hadn't even coined the term e-commerce. Now, it has been incorporated into our company's business model."

"The things that I pick up from this programme are useful in many, many ways. Even the most fundamental element of management – communication – can be improved. Imagine how efficient management will become when you can put a name and face to new business models, practices or theories that you want implemented or fine-tuned."

"Business aside, what I really get out of this is satisfaction," he said in conclusion.

# Managing Exam Anxiety

**"Exam anxiety" attacks practically every student no matter how well-prepared they are for exams. Between the most prepared student and one who is not-quite-well-prepared, the difference lies in the degree of anxiety.**

A good analogy is to compare exam anxiety to "stage fright" which everyone is bound to experience. It is how you control this anxiety, subdue it, or let it proliferate, that makes the difference. There are students who succumb to anxiety well before they even see the exam paper.

Do not ever let exam anxiety control you and prevent you from realising your inner potential to excel. Start planting the seeds of confidence early and it will reduce any unnecessary exam anxiety.

Here are a few tips that you may wish to consider to reduce your exam anxiety. These so-called prescriptions are to be practised consistently throughout your term of studies and not a mantra to be recited a few days prior to your exam period.

- **What shall we do before an exam?**  
Do task focusing and study / revise consistently. Think about what and how to prepare. Do not engage in emotion focusing, in self-blaming and wishful thinking.
- **Some positive thoughts to inculcate**  
Realise that the exam is important (but not overwhelmingly so). Realise that the exam will be on what you have learned and within the stipulated syllabus. Tell yourself that you are in control, and that you will be able to resolve the questions.
- **Focus on the right thing**  
Focus on being prepared – and not on reducing anxiety.
- **What not to do during an exam**  
Don't make snap judgments. Review the paper (anxiety is not welcomed at the beginning of your exam). Don't think about your exam preparation or resort to self-blame. Don't think about studying the wrong things, or forgetting the facts. Don't think that you will perform badly.
- **What to think instead**  
Feeling challenged is a good thing. Feel that you can handle the challenge in your own stride.
- **OVERALL**  
Regard exams as important – but not overly so. Regard exams as challenging but you are in full control. Be confident that you can handle whatever questions that will be raised. Do task focusing (pick main ideas in questions, make sure you understand questions, strategise, and answer the questions with a clear mind unclouded by fear).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Student Info

#### Registration Deadline for New Students

The last day for new students to register for courses for the forthcoming July intake will be 13 July 2008 (Sunday), which is a week before the semester starts.

#### Re-enrolment and Deadline for Adding Courses

For students continuing their studies at WOU, the last day to add courses is one week after the commencement of semester, that is, 27 July 2008.

#### Early Bird Fees

Students qualify for discounted tuition fees if they enrol for courses not later than 15 June 2008.

#### CeMPA

The Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CeMPA) postgraduate programme will be offered from July to provide advancement opportunities to public sector employees and other workers in related fields.

#### Student Orientation Day

This activity aims to prepare students by highlighting the facilities and services available at the regional offices and learning centres. They are also informed about the university's regulations and procedures.

For the July 2008 intake, student orientation for both the Bachelor's and Master's programmes will be as follows:

Date : 20 July 2008 (Sunday)  
Venue : Learning Centres nationwide

\*for KBRO, Orientation Day will be on 17 July 2008 (Thursday)

#### Final Examinations

The final examinations for the July semester will be held over two weeks from 1 December (Monday) to 14 December (Sunday) 2008.

In the minds of  
our readers

We would like to hear from you. Whether it's a view, a comment or even a question, don't hesitate to drop us a mail at [mediainfo@wou.edu.my](mailto:mediainfo@wou.edu.my)

For more details, visit [wou.edu.my](http://wou.edu.my)

#### Main Campus

Wawasan Open University (700364-W)  
54 Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 Penang, Malaysia.  
Tel: 04-227 3323 | Fax: 04-226 9323 | Email: [enquiry@wou.edu.my](mailto:enquiry@wou.edu.my)

Regional Offices and Learning Centres  
Open Tuesday to Sunday: 10.00am - 7.00pm

**Penang Regional Office**  
No. 7 China Street Ghaut, 10300 Penang.  
Tel: 04-263 3323 / 262 5359 | Fax: 04-262 3669  
Email: [ro\\_pg@wou.edu.my](mailto:ro_pg@wou.edu.my)

#### Ipoh Regional Office

Wisma Gerakan, 80 Persiaran Greenhill, 30450 Ipoh, Perak.  
Tel: 05-242 6323 / 243 6323 | Fax: 05-254 9323  
Email: [ro\\_ip@wou.edu.my](mailto:ro_ip@wou.edu.my)

#### Kuala Lumpur Regional Office

Level 3 Menara PGRM, 8 Jalan Pudu Ulu, 56100 Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.  
Tel: 03-9281 7323 / 9283 8323 | Fax: 03-9284 9323  
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(Library Services available Tuesday to Friday, 10.00am-10.00pm)

#### Johor Bahru Regional Office

17 & 19 Jalan Jaya 2, Taman Jaya, 81300 Skudal, Johor.  
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#### Kota Bharu Regional Office

3956 Tingkat Bawah, Wisma Gerakan, Jalan Temenggong, 15000 Kota Bharu, Kelantan.  
Tel: 09-748 7323 | Fax: 09-748 9323  
Email: [ro\\_kb@wou.edu.my](mailto:ro_kb@wou.edu.my)  
\*Open Monday-Saturday from 10.00am-7.00pm