

From RO to Campus WOU's KL Campus becomes A Reality

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Just over nineteen months after the KL Regional Office was officially launched, it has been re-designated as WOU's KL Campus. Plans for the establishment of WOU's second campus – mainly to reach out to more students in the Klang Valley – had actually been in the proverbial pipeline since 2007.

WOU's KL Campus will incorporate the new School of Education, Languages and Communication, a Centre for Continuing Professional Development as well as the office of the new Deputy Vice Chancellor for Strategy

Planning and Continuing Education (SPACE) – Unni Kumaran Menon. The Centre will focus on providing working adults with a range of short-term professional development courses conceived with current industry and commercial input.

'In this digital age with internet connectivity, WOU has the means to locate our new centres and faculties away from our Main Campus in Penang,' explained Vice Chancellor, Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan. 'The timing of the new Centre is right, given the current economic uncertainties. Now is the time for workers to invest in themselves and actively pursue lifelong learning.'

STOP THE PRESS!

WOU offering new diplomas & degree programme

WOU plans to offer six new Graduate Diplomas and one new Degree programme in the near future, including:

- Graduate Diploma in Supply Chain Management;
- Graduate Diploma in Business Accounting;
- Graduate Diploma in Sales & Marketing;
- Graduate Diploma in Corporate Governance;
- Graduate Diploma in Database Management;
- Graduate Diploma in Electronics;
- Bachelor of Business in Company Secretaryship.

More details to follow soon!



Welcome to the Seventh issue of our quarterly newsletter

The new year is traditionally a time for reflection and also a time to look ahead to new challenges! 2009 promises to be a very interesting period for all of us. Rather than dwelling on the gloomy economic environment, let us take the time to consider our blessings and remember the positives. The next time we grumble about having to budget and forgo the latest handphone or gadget, remember that over three billion people exist on less than USD3 a day – in our terms, that is the price of a plate of nasi kandar!

With this in mind, WOU is humbled to be involved with World Vision's latest campaign that aims to sponsor 3,000 poor children around the world (see page 8). As a socially aware and caring organisation, we need to play a role in helping to break the vicious cycle of poverty.

Closer to home, I'm very proud to announce the establishment of our KL Campus, which will be home to the new School of Education, Languages and Communication, a Centre for Continuing Professional Development as well as the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (SPACE). Despite the economic slowdown, WOU remains 100% committed to bringing the most relevant and innovative educational programmes and courses to working Malaysians. The best way to weather the economic storm is to invest in education. It's simple, it's effective and it guarantees long-term results!

To new students joining the WOU family, I bid you a very warm welcome. Congratulations on taking the crucial first step towards self-improvement. Do remember that you are a part of a community that wishes to see you excel in your endeavours. We are here to help you. To our returning students embarking on yet another semester, your determination is equally admirable. Here's to a happy and productive 2009!



WOU's new Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy Planning and Continuing Education), Unni Kumaran Menon, describes himself as "a 'KL boy' who witnessed first-hand the transforming power of education." His classmates and friends in the 1950s and 1960s were from the poorest of families in the Imbi Road – Pudu Road areas; thanks to education they rose to become masters in their professions, government and in education.

Menon firmly believes that there is no greater levelling agent and no greater inoculation against poverty, social exclusion and backwardness than education; and no greater vocation than teaching.

He started his academic career at ITM (Institut Teknologi Mara) as Coordinator of Law, at an exciting time when ITM was still primarily focused on providing access to higher

education to Bumiputras from rural areas. He played an instrumental role in obtaining international recognition from universities in common law countries for ITM's law programme.

After ITM, Menon joined the University of Melbourne where he was a lecturer and Associate Director of the Asian Law Centre (ALC). During his stay in Australia, he also taught in a number of other universities in Australia and the US. He was appointed Honorary Visiting Scholar at the ALC for five years after formally leaving the University.

Prior to joining WOU, Menon spent 15 years in private education at Stamford College where he was appointed the Director of Studies in 1993. He played a key role in transforming the company from a family run organisation into a modern tertiary educational institution. In the early years of his tenure at Stamford, he forged partnerships with local and international universities to deliver undergraduate and postgraduate courses, long before the liberalisation that introduced 3+0 courses to private colleges in Malaysia.

Outside work, Menon is actively involved with the Rotary Club and other voluntary organisations that seek to improve the conditions of rural schools. He lives with his wife and daughter in PJ, sharing his house with two dogs and a *musang* in the rafters.

New MENon in Town



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On your bikes!



WOU supports Mount Miriam Charity cum Awareness Cyclethon

An entourage of 54 cyclists led by Tanjung Bungah State Assemblyman, Teh Yee Cheu, made a 'pit-stop' at WOU's main campus on 15 November 2008 to spread information on cancer awareness.

The exuberant cyclists in bright yellow t-shirts were making an 18km journey from Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital to the Esplanade as part of the hospital's charity and awareness cyclethon themed "We Care. We Ride".

WOU's Director of Corporate Communications, Agnes James, welcomed the cyclists and received cancer awareness brochures from Teh.

Teh, an ardent cyclist (often spotted cycling around Penang!), praised the hospital's efforts to raise funds through this environmentally-friendly mode of transport. The hospital aims to raise RM100,000 for the purchase of a new Image Guided Radiotherapy machine.



Prem Joshua "WOUs" the crowd!

Over RM70,000 was raised for the Penang Hospice Home during Prem Joshua's concert at WOU on 3 December 2008.

Prem Joshua, originally from Germany, is a talented multi-instrumentalist and composer who creates his own unique blend of Eastern and Western music, which combines meditative classical Indian tunes with contemporary Western music.

The event was organised by the National Cancer Society of Malaysia, Penang Branch, together with the Temple of Fine Arts and attended by over 600 people on two highly successful nights.



In a fitting start to the new year, over 80 people attended

WOU's Prom Night organised by the WOU Penang Student Association (PSA) at the Berjaya Georgetown Hotel.

In keeping with the evening's theme - 'Starry Starry Night' - several WOU 'stars' shone brightly, including Esther Tham who was crowned Prom Queen. The Prom King title was sportingly shared between John Ong and Edwin Delfin, who came all the way from Kuala Lumpur!

'Starry Starry' start to a brand new year



Challenges in the Teaching & Learning of English

On 9 January 2009, Dr Wong Lian Aik gave a one-hour talk on *English Language Teaching on the Move – A Singapore Experience* at WOU. Dr Wong is no stranger to the teaching of the English Language as he has been the director of the Centre for English Language Communication (CELC), National University of Singapore, since July 1994.

Dr Wong said outside attractions and priorities tend to compete for the limited time of students. As such, English Language Teaching professionals are constantly challenged to find innovative ways to sustain their students' interest and to motivate them to study beyond their contact hours with the teacher.

The director added that English teachers need to update and equip themselves with knowledge and new skills to stay relevant, competitive and efficient in a fast-evolving global, IT-savvy and corporate environment.

The talk was attended by some 20 staff, notably Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof Wong Tat Meng, School of Foundation and Liberal Studies Dean Assoc Prof Mogana Dhamotharan, and School of Science and Technology Dean Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye.



Snap and Win!



Put your creativity to the test with WOU's innovative, new contest for a chance to win fantastic prizes including:

- a Macbook Air
- a Macbook White
- an iPod Touch
- iPod Shuffles



Simply snap a picture of yourself or your friends studying in an interesting environment of your choice (the more extreme the better!), caption your picture, insert a unique WOU 'stamp' and mail it to us.

A special prize of a Digital SLR Canon camera awaits the most hardworking contestant who sends out his or her snapshot to the most number of friends, family and acquaintances.

WOU's competition themed *Your World, Your Classroom* will run until 15 April 2009 and is open to all (except WOU employees...sorry!). Simply log on to contest.wou.edu.my to participate.



Keeping it green

WOU hosts Forum on the Future of Penang Botanic Gardens



The issue of current and future development projects planned for the Penang Botanic Gardens is currently a hot topic in Penang. The Botanic Gardens is SE Asia's oldest formal gardens and a favourite recreational spot for many Penangites and tourists.

Over 100 people, including stakeholders, representatives from various non-governmental organisations, and concerned citizens attended a half-day forum held at WOU on 13 December 2008 to discuss the proposed developments.

The event was organised by Friends of the Penang Botanic Gardens Society (FOPBGS) in collaboration with Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) Penang, Penang Heritage Trust (PHT), and the Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute (SERI).

The speakers included SERI chief executive officer and member of the Penang Botanic Gardens Management Committee Dato' Dr Leong Yueh Kwong, director of Rimba Ilmu of Universiti Malaya Prof Dr Wong Khoo Meng, founding member of FOPBGS Dr Liew Kon Wui, and Penang Botanic Gardens director

Norwahida Hassan who presented the development plans for the garden.

The State Government, NGOs, social activists and members of the public expressed concern over the seemingly ad-hoc development projects planned for the Gardens. The forum therefore offered insights into the development proposals and provided an avenue for people to voice their concerns. The input received should help to bring about more sustainable and suitable development that enhances the Gardens with minimal environmental impact.

The panel discussion that followed was chaired by PHT Council member, Ahmad Chik, and comprised MNS Penang chairman K. Kanda Kumar and FOPBGS president Dato' Tengku Idaura Tengku Ibrahim who deliberated on the issues of development.

Three resolutions were eventually tabled: the Gardens authorities will reconsider proceeding with current development plans; the commissioning of the formulation of a master plan; and public feedback to be sought so that proper development projects are implemented for the benefit of the State, the Gardens, and the people of Penang.

WOU holds L4C workshop

Over 40 senior academics from institutions of higher learning and a few from the corporate sector attended a one-and-a-half day Learning4Content (L4C) workshop organised by WOU and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in late February. The L4C Workshop was in support of WikiEducator's L4C initiative and aimed at building

capacity in Malaysia in the area of Open Education Resources (OERs).

WikiEducator creates online communities whose members develop educational content collaboratively. This collaboration leads to the advancement of free content and OERs. The L4C workshop offered training to educators, teachers and trainers who shared the vision for free educational resources to create and publish

free content, and to produce a global collaborative education environment.

The workshop was conducted by Associate Professor Dr. Sanjay Jasola (who until recently was attached to WOU's School of Science and Technology as course coordinator for computer science and IT). Participants gained insights and skills in using WikiEducator and other wiki technologies to publish their content.





It's good to give!

Wawasan Open University spread some festive cheer to the residents of Silver Jubilee Home for the Aged and the folks of Relau Rumah Charis in conjunction with the Chinese New Year. The residents were the inaugural recipients of the University's first charity project to assist the needy, organised by its Staff Recreation Club.

The senior citizens were all smiles when a group of WOU staff led by Senior Assistant Registrar Dr Andy Liew Teik Kooi visited them on 21 January 2009, to hand out milk, rice, noodles

and sugar, and non-edibles like soap powder, bleaching powder and dishwashing liquid.

Dr Liew, who is also the Club chairman, said the drive had received donations worth over RM2,000. "The project aimed to encourage staff to share their blessings with one another, especially during the festive season, and to lighten the burden of the welfare homes," he added.

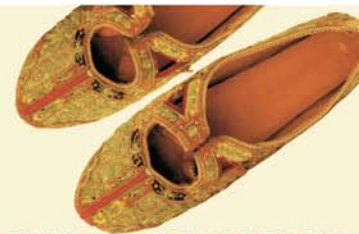
WOU hopes to run more similar projects in future to support organisations which care for the needy and less fortunate.

Emerald Hill comes to WOU



Theatre lovers are in for a real treat as the acclaimed production, *Emily of Emerald Hill*, will be staged at WOU in late March. Reprising her starring role as Emily, the manipulative and domineering Nyonya matriarch, is the gifted Pearly Chua who is simply synonymous with this spell-binding piece of theatre.

Emily of Emerald Hill has become Malaysia's longest running local play entertaining audiences across Malaysia, Singapore and Canada since it first opened in 1984. Welcome back to Penang, Nyonya Besar!



Ombak-Ombak Arts Studio presents Emily of Emerald Hill at Wawasan Open University on Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 March 2009 to raise funds for Ombak's community projects. Tickets are available from the Penang Heritage Trust (04-264 2631), East-West Learning Centre in Farlim (04-835 1600) and Tropical Spice Garden (04-881 1797) priced RM30 and RM50. For more information, please contact Ho Sheau Fung (012-514 5933).

Poetry for Penang



UNESCO's World Poetry Day is an annual global affair that has taken place every 21 March over the last decade, to promote the reading, writing, publishing and teaching of poetry throughout the world.

With Penang now on the global radar as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is only fitting that the island also seizes the opportunity to promote its cultural and literary side. WOU will be presenting a packed weekend full of poetry readings, discussions and cultural presentations by leading local and international poets.



Bank on WOU

WOU forges partnership with NUBE

WOU recently forged a smart partnership alliance with another industry giant through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE) at Menara PGRM, Kuala Lumpur on 2 December 2008.

Under the agreement, WOU will provide affordable educational opportunities to those working in the banking industry, conduct advanced-level training programmes and offer appropriate tertiary education for NUBE staff, members, friends and families. The agreement also allows for NUBE's participation in WOU's Valued Partner Programme (VPP) where group discounts and study grants will be offered.

The MoU will also facilitate the establishment of exchange programmes with captains of the banking industry through co-operative discussions and forums facilitated by NUBE. WOU will also invite NUBE's banking industry leaders to present special talks and previews to WOU students.

Another area of cooperation is for WOU to use NUBE's main office and four branches – in Penang, Ipoh, Malacca and Kelantan – for joint activities to promote the University's educational programmes.

The formal agreement between WOU and NUBE was signed by Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan and NUBE President S. Sivabalan, witnessed by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun and NUBE General Secretary J. Solomon.

"With this agreement in place, we can now customise a more current, comprehensive, and market driven curriculum that addresses both the conventional and the rapidly evolving needs of the banking industry," remarked Tan Sri Dhanarajan in his speech.

The NUBE is a national union representing workers in the banking and financial institutions in Peninsular Malaysia, with 28,000 members nationwide.

Stacking the odds in your favour

An evening with Feng Shui Master Lee Cheng Hoe

With the prophets of doom predicting a miserable 2009 for the world economy, what better time for WOU to host a talk on 'Practical Aspects of Feng Shui for 2009' by Master Lee Cheng Hoe! This much anticipated event organised by the WOU Staff Recreation Club, was packed with WOU students and staff.

According to Master Lee, five factors determine a person's life - destiny, luck, feng shui, goodwill, and education, in order of importance. While luck may fluctuate over time, a person's destiny is pre-determined.

Here are some tips to enhance WawasanLink readers' 'wealth luck':

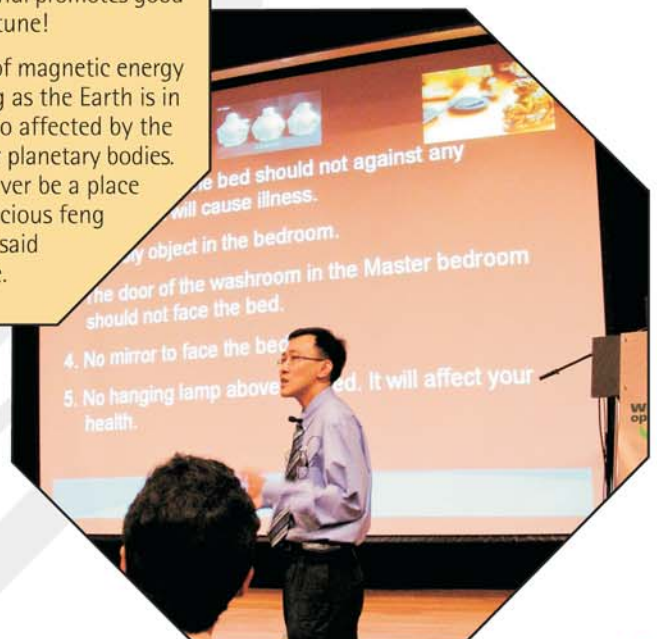
- The head of your bed should never be placed under a window, as it may cause illnesses to occur.
- The master bedroom's bathroom door should never face the bed.
- Avoid placing mirrors where they face your bed.
- Avoid hanging lamps directly over your bed as these may have an adverse effect on your health.

What is feng shui?

Feng shui relates to the optimal placement of buildings, objects and space for good energy. Good feng shui promotes good health and fortune!

Feng shui involves the flow of magnetic energy or 'qi' which keeps changing as the Earth is in constant motion, and is also affected by the gravitational forces of other planetary bodies.

"Therefore, there will never be a place that will enjoy auspicious feng shui forever," said Master Lee.





WOU Vision!

WOU & World Vision join forces to beat poverty

Although we live in testing times, with the effects of the global credit crunch gloomily hanging over us, we should remember that no matter how bad we think we have it, the World Bank estimates over 100 million people globally are being pushed deeper into poverty.

With this in mind WOU teamed up with World Vision Malaysia (WVM) to host their 3,000 Children in 3 months Campaign Roadshow in Penang at the Main Campus on 7 February 2009. WVM are committed to implementing long-term, sustainable projects to benefit the children and their families, and to break the vicious cycle of poverty.

Malaysian celebrities—including Lee Sinje, Deborah Priya Henry, and radio announcers Roshan Narayan (MixFM) and Royce Tan (MYFM)—were out in force at WOU to lend their support and influence to the campaign. All four celebs are themselves committed World Vision Child Sponsors, and they shared their touching experiences with the audience; their message was simple – small contributions can bring about big changes!



World Vision

changing the lives of millions of children worldwide

Sponsoring a child through World Vision is so much more fulfilling and rewarding than merely signing a cheque or cash – donors are actively encouraged to build relationships with the boys or girls they sponsor. World Vision provides kits with pictures and profiles of the sponsored children, while donors are

continuously updated on their progress and can even write or visit the community.

It's a sobering thought that only RM50 a month can make a huge difference to a child's life. Log on to www.worldvision.com.my for more details.



'On the road' at Knowles



A WOU team led by Marketing Manager Poh Leong Tat held a roadshow at Knowles Electronics (M) Sdn Bhd to promote the University's courses to 1,500 workers in conjunction with Knowles Quality Week in November 2008.

The three-member team spent over five hours manning the WOU booth talking to enthusiastic Knowles staff who dropped by to check out the learning opportunities available for working adults keen on moving up the career ladder.

WOU's School of Foundation and Liberal Studies Dean Dr. Mogana Dhamathoran was also on

hand to present a well-attended talk on 'Quality for Life', which outlined how the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (Hons) programme could add value to Knowles employees' lives.

She cited examples of established US business personalities who believed that liberal arts studies were crucial for their success. Dr Mogana impressed on Knowles employees that the WOU's liberal arts programme will enhance their capability in the workplace, and called on them to consider the option of taking various liberal studies courses to enhance their career opportunities.



Battle of the brains

WOU team joins the Young Enterprise Programme as advisors

Seven WOU staff will be lending their expertise to 25 secondary students of Convent Green Lane, Penang for the Young Enterprise (YE) Programme. YE is an established community education programme that enables Form four students to become entrepreneurs, by creating and managing their own companies. This extracurricular activity enables the students to understand how business works, through hands-on creation, development, and management of their own companies.

YE is also a part of WOU's Training and Development Programme that provides an avenue for talented and developing executives/lecturers of the University to be exposed and trained in areas of leadership and management.

WOU hosted a one-day Advisors Workshop at the Main Campus on 18 February to prepare corporate sponsors for their roles and responsibilities as advisors. This is WOU's first ever involvement in the YE programme and the University made a contribution of RM5,000.



Poh Leong Tat (Marketing Manager), Lim Yao Han (Corporate Communications Assistant Manager), Sharizal Inche Mohamed (Human Resources Assistant Manager), Tan Chia Yun (Financial Analyst), Dr Saravanan Murugeson and Deehbanjli Lakshmayya (School of Business and Administration), and Grace Lau (Educational Technology and Publishing Director) have gamely taken up the challenge of transforming their young charges into successful businesswomen. WOU's participation aims to nurture corporate responsibility and enterprise in Malaysian youth, to enable them to eventually reach their highest potential in the corporate world.





Coping With Grief And Loss

Dealing with the loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult trials we will ever face in our lives; it is also one of the most 'unspoken' challenges and one that we would prefer to sweep under our emotional carpets. Palliative Care Physician, Dr Lalitha Jeyasingam, gave a half-day seminar on *Dealing with Grief and Loss*, organised by the School of Foundation and Liberal Studies at the main campus on 8 November 2008; and had this to share:

How do you cope with grief?

TIME: You will need time alone, and time with others whom you trust – people who will listen when you need to talk.

REST-RELAXATION-EXERCISE-NOURISHMENT-DIVERSION: You may need extra 'lifts' and little treats such as long hot baths, afternoon naps, a holiday, a 'cause' to work for, or to help others. Grief is emotionally exhausting and you need to replenish your energy by taking care of yourself and loving yourself.

SECURITY: Try to get back into a routine. Allow yourself to be close to those you trust. Allow yourself to take things at your own pace and do not feel guilty about it.

HOPE: You may find it easier to connect with those who have also experienced a similar loss. Joining a self-help group may be beneficial for some people and may give hope that sometime in the future your grief will also become less raw and painful.

CARING: Try to allow yourself to accept expressions of caring from others. These may be uneasy and awkward but remember that your friends, family and colleagues are trying to help and support you.

GOALS: Life may feel meaningless at times, yet setting small goals like going for a movie with a friend can help you through a bad patch. Live one day at a time. You may even discover that you don't enjoy movies anymore! Give it time, this is normal. As time passes, give yourself longer range goals to give structure and guidance to your life.

SMALL PLEASURES: Don't underestimate the small pleasures in life. Go for a long walk and enjoy the sunset. Buy your favourite ice cream. These are all small steps towards regaining your pleasure in life itself.

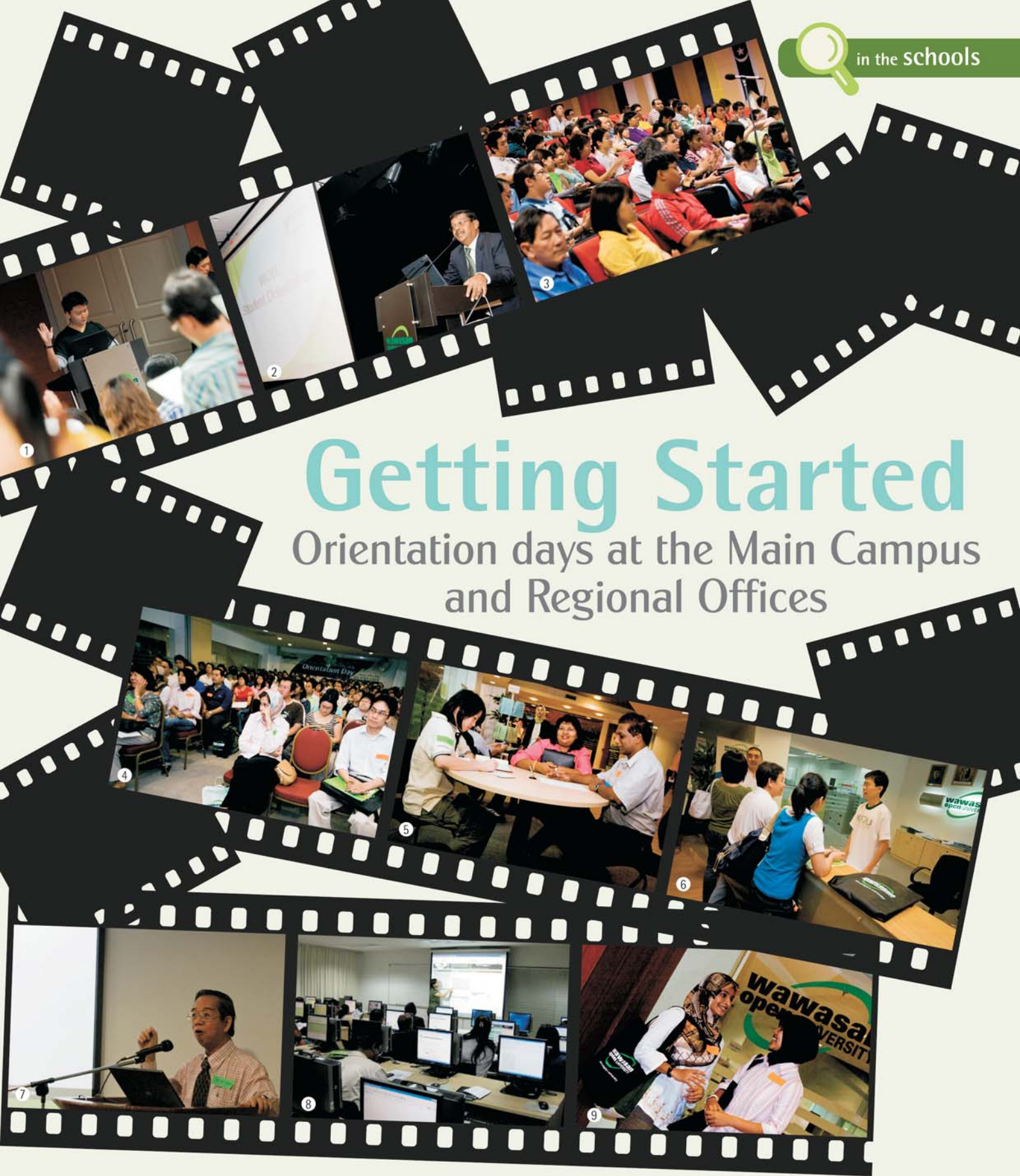
PERMISSION TO BACKSLIDE: Sometimes you feel good, okay for a while—and then suddenly you go back to the feelings of extreme sadness again. These swings characterise grief, and they occur because you are human and you cannot take in all the pain at once. So you need to give yourself permission to take it in a little at a time.



How can you help a person facing grief:

- By 'being there' for them
- Adopting a non-judgemental attitude
- Encouraging the grieving person to talk about the loss
- Giving the grieving person permission to express feelings
- LISTENING





Getting Started

Orientation days at the Main Campus and Regional Offices

Over 700 WOU students flooded the Main Campus, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru and Kota Bharu Regional Offices for the January orientation session.

It was all go from the start as students bustled about making new friends, picking up their learning materials and getting a feel of WOU's IT facilities. All the new freshmen were welcomed with a pre-recorded speech by Vice

Chancellor, Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan.

At the end of the day there were plenty of tired but happy students all with goodie bags full of WOU t-shirts, pens, bookmarks and orientation CDs, ready to start their WOU journey!

1. Taking the oath at the Main Campus.
2. K.Manoharan, Director of the Penang RO, welcoming the students.
3. WOU freshmen are all ears.

4. Orientation gets underway in KL.
5. Course registration in progress.
6. WOU freebies for new students!
7. Professor Ng Wai Kong, Director of Educational Technology, introduces WawasanLearn.
8. Familiarisation with WOU's online learning resources.
9. Meeting new friends for the first time.



Shooting for the stars

Two WOU students put on a sterling performance at the 14th Asean University Games held in Kuala Lumpur from 11 - 21 December 2008.



^ National shooters: Muslifah (left) and Shahera (right).

WOU students Muslifah Zulkifli and Shahera Rahim Raja, who are also national shooters bagged a total of two gold and four silver medals at the prestigious meet. Shahera won two gold medals, for the women's 50m rifle prone and 50m three position team events, as well as delivering three silvers - for the 10m air rifle individual and team event, and the individual 50m three position - to bring her personal medal tally to five.

Muslifah focused on the 10m air rifle category earning a silver medal and an individual fourth placing. Both women were excited and proud to be part of the Malaysian contingent for the Games.

"This is our first time taking part as WOU students in the Asean-Uni Games. We hope we've done the university and nation proud by winning medals and coming out in the top three for the air rifle event," said Muslifah.

Muslifah and Shahera have just finished their first semester of a Bachelor of Business in Management (Hons) programme and find that WOU's flexible study mode fits in well with their rigorous training regime. Their routine comprises spending 10 hours a day as part of their stint at the National Sports Centre in Bukit Jalil.

Both agree that WOU's flexible study mode allows them to pursue their dream of higher education without interference with their shooting. "We travel a lot for local and international tournaments. It's kind of easy to separate our studies at WOU and our training. As long as we have a laptop, we can follow and keep up with our studies and assignments," explained Shahera.

Muslifah has been involved in the national shooting squad for three years, and her association with shooting extends to seven years, while Shahera has participated in national shooting events for the last two years.

Congratulations to both! You've made the WOU community and Malaysia proud!



UPCOMING EVENTS

World Poetry Day

WOU Main Campus | 21 March 2009 (Saturday)

Emily of Emerald Hill

WOU Main Campus | 28 & 29 March 2009 (Saturday & Sunday)

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

For more details, visit wou.edu.my

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