

Steadying the Ship

WOU's economic forum on weathering economic crisis

Malaysia is the third most export dependant economy in Asia and will be severely tested by shrinking global demand in the face of the current economic crisis. Wawasan Open University (WOU) council chairman Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik cautioned against taking comfort in the nation's strong economic fundamentals and warned that the crisis can shake up our export-based economy.

"The government must be fair and transparent in implementing its stimulus package because future economic security and prosperity hinges on the nation's ability to weather this crisis," he said, calling for a participatory and consultative approach to governance.

Tun Dr Lim, who is also Gerakan advisor, was the keynote speaker at a public forum on the global financial crisis in Malaysia titled 'Diverse Perspectives: Rethinking Strategies, Surviving Challenges', held at WOU Kuala Lumpur regional centre on 10 April 2009. The forum was organised by SEDAR Institute, WOU and the Centre of Public Policy Studies (CPPS) and was attended by over 160 participants, including politicians, CEOs, civil society advocates, investment bankers and students.

The first panel discussion was tasked with examining the economic stimulus package, 9th Malaysia Plan and business strategies, and comprised of Genting Bhd executive director Datuk Dr. R Thillainathan, Universiti Sains Malaysia Pro Chancellor Tan Sri Dr Lin See Yan, Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) chief executive officer Datuk Dr. Michael Yeoh, and Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia deputy secretary general Datuk David Chua.

The panelists noted that the stimulus package should have been aimed at protecting jobs rather than creating new ones, which will be challenging at best. They felt Malaysia should forge forward with an emphasis on ethical governance, and embrace the challenges of globalisation instead of moving centrifugally. Gerakan's national vice president and central economic bureau chairman Datuk Mah Siew Keong moderated the discussion.

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Welcome to the Eighth issue of our quarterly newsletter

During World Poetry Day recently hosted at WOU's Main Campus on 21 March, I took the opportunity to read one of my favourite poems, 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost from which I would like to share an extract:

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

This passage resonates with WOU on many different levels; as a new University we are continuously charting out new territory with new courses, programmes and ROs; our students are also choosing the road 'less travelled' by juggling their careers and the demands of ODL. By rising to these challenges we not only learn lessons of resilience and dedication but also a wealth of experience.

One of the 'new roads' that WOU has embarked on, has culminated in the establishment of our latest school – the School of Education, Languages and Communications under the leadership of SELC's new dean, Dr Malachi Edwin Vethamani. SELC has a crucial role to play in raising the standards of Malaysian primary and secondary school education by providing quality tertiary education to future teachers.

In June, WOU's Main Campus will host the *Pan Asia Networking (PAN) All Partners' Conference*. This is the first major, international conference to be held at WOU and I trust that it will be the first of many more to come. To all the delegates, a warm welcome to WOU and Penang!



The second panel discussion, moderated by Gerakan national youth chief Lim Si Pin, comprised of The Malaysian Insider columnist Moh. Hafiz Noor Shams, Consumer Research and Resource Centre (CRRC) chief executive officer Paul Selva Raj and CPPS Advisory Panel member Tricia Yeoh. They wanted Malaysia to examine new ways of governance and doing business, and to refrain from doing things in the same 'old way'. The panel called on everyone to work towards a just, democratic and economically-equitable society that does not exclude anyone. They urged the government to be accountable, transparent and judicious in spending, and advised consumers to not fall into the debt trap.

In closing the forum, Gerakan president Senator Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department for Unity Affairs and Performance Management, suggested participants make a real attempt to change for the better.

SEDAR Institute

The Socio-Economic Development And Research Institute (SEDAR Institute) is an independent research and development institute that conducts research and monitors key socio-economic issues of strategic national importance. Its goal is to be recognised as a thought leadership institute in Malaysia and also at ASEAN level.

Centre for Public Policy Studies

The Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) is an independent and non-partisan public policy institute that aims to foster open-minded dialogue, enlightened leadership and better governance. Through an innovative mix of policy research, strategic communications and targeted outreach, the Centre's mission is to engage and educate the public and policy makers on best practice policies and successful change strategies that can ensure inclusive development for all Malaysians.



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Emily by the sea

After more than two decades, the endearing one-woman play *Emily of Emerald Hill* still drew in the crowds to Wawasan Open University's main theatre in March. Such was the appeal of Malaysia's longest running local play, that even the pounding rain and treacherous Saturday night traffic did little to keep theatre lovers away!

The two-day show at WOU's main campus by the sea played to packed audiences, many of them diehard fans who had seen the play numerous times before.

From the moment the stage lights went on to reveal the living room of 'Emerald Hill', Emily commanded the audience's attention as she recounted her struggles and triumphs, moving seamlessly between the significant moments of her life in a captivating two-hour monologue.

Slipping into the beaded slippers for the 135th time was Pearly Chua who gave yet another mesmerising performance as the indomitable and hard-headed Nyonya Emily Gan.



'Emily of Emerald Hill' was presented by Ombak-Ombak Arts Studio to raise funds for its community projects.

Flowery language speaks to the soul

Poets and cultural performers donning traditional costumes and reading poems in a variety of different languages thrilled the crowd during the World Poetry Day celebration at WOU on 21 March 2009. The event was organised by WOU in collaboration with The Asian Centre, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Over 200 people braved the early morning rain to turn up for the opening. In his welcoming remarks, organising chairman Prof Dato' Dr Ghulam Sarwar Yousof said poetry is deliberately aimed at the heart, changes viewpoints and perceptions, and brings enlightenment to the extent that in ancient times, poets were also philosophers. He hoped the project which highlights the importance of poetry and the written, spoken word will become an annual affair.

WOU Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, in declaring open the event, said poetry is one of the powerful ways to express individual and national experiences. "Poetry is a mirror of human existence and poets are

spokespersons for the expressions of mankind," he remarked, adding that poetry is good for a world filled with hate and marketing gimmicks, and where people of the highest order lie to accumulate power and wealth. He read "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost as the poem resonated with his own life - Prof Dhanarajan started out as a biologist but changed course to become an adult educator over 30 years ago.

National Literature Laureate Professor Muhammad Salleh, Wong Phui Nam, and Marzuki Ali read their own poetry following the opening. Dato' Prof Anwar Fazal, Director of Right Livelihood College, did a simple launch of Khoo Soo Hay's book, "In Ancient Ayuthia: A Selection of Poems from the Past Fifty Years." Later in the evening, Prof Anwar handed out certificates to the readers and closed the event which was held in conjunction with UNESCO's World Poetry Day and in recognition of George Town's listing as a World Heritage Site.





Chess is life, not just a game!



Some 40 members of the under-18 age group of the Penang Chess Squad attended a chess tournament motivational workshop organised by WOU at the main campus on March 6 to boost their confidence.

The players were preparing themselves before they set out to represent the state at the Malaysian Schools Sports Council (MSSM) Chess Tournament in Selangor in mid-March.

The one-hour workshop conducted by Associate Professor Mogana Dhamotharan, Dean of the School of Foundation and Liberal Studies, was highly interactive.

"Everyone is bound to face new and challenging situations where they need to pause and think before making moves—and just like life, they do not just win; winning is nothing if there is no learning in the process," she stressed.

Prof Mogana also tried to open up the minds of the players to the importance of university education – that such a perception should begin from a young age.

Meanwhile Khor Bean Hwa, chess advisor to the Penang Schools Sports Council and head of Penang Free School's technical and vocational department, said, "The players were motivated mentally and emotionally to get them ready to compete to the highest of their ability."

The youngest member of the chess squad was 8-year-old Teh De Zen from Penang Chinese Girls' School.



Write down all the details: What do you want to achieve? When do you want to achieve it by? How will you know when you have a successful outcome?

Imagine yourself having already reached your goal. What can you see? What do you hear? How do you feel? Write down the details and fill your mind with a wonderful sense of accomplishment.

Have confidence in yourself and in your abilities. Know that you can achieve what you set out to do. A belief in yourself is essential to your success in anything you do.

To help you, list all the achievements you have had in the past couple of years. You will soon see that you managed to complete some really worthwhile objectives, and there is no reason why this shouldn't continue!

Know that you will succeed. Use affirmations to convince yourself that you will achieve your goals. Use sentences that begin with "I will..." and repeat them regularly. Put notes on your worktop or wherever if that helps!

Think positively, and don't worry about setbacks in your plans. If you find yourself slipping into a negative frame of mind, imagine yourself writing that negative thought on a piece of paper. Scrunch up the paper into a tight ball and throw it into the trash!

Stay focused on your goal, and don't give up! You know that you will achieve it, even if there are setbacks.

When you do reach your goal, congratulate yourself on your wonderful achievement. The hard work has really paid off!

Set Goals
for Yourself

The Art of Motivation

Maintain Your
Motivation

Keep motivation levels at an all-time positive high. Motivation needs to be our 24/7 companion in order to achieve the success we truly want.

Here are some tips to help you visualise better:

- *Motivation is the fuel that drives the car.*
- *Perseverance is the cruise control that maintains an acceptable level of speed.*
- *Negative setbacks are flat tyres or speeding tickets.*
- *Success is arrival at the desired destination.*

What is the most important element in this picture? **The order we select is very revealing in how we achieve success:**

If motivation is the most important, our emphasis is on staying focused and remaining positive. If perseverance is the most important, our emphasis is on never stopping even if the process is flawed.

If success is the most important, our emphasis is to get there and not allow anything to get in our way. If negative setbacks are given too much emphasis, our success is in danger of derailment by the slightest little negative event – and success will very likely, not be achieved.

We need to learn a lesson from the dog and his bone. Perseverance: "doggedness: persistent determination!"

Making Sense Of University Rankings

Rankings are very much ingrained in our way of life; from the time we wake up in the morning and turn on the radio, we're exposed to chart music that is ranked in terms of CD sales. Your favourite football team is ranked according to their position in the league table and even your instant coffee jar proclaims some sort of pithy tagline – "Malaysia's favourite morning drink!" While rankings may be appropriate to determine the next Premiership winning club, how relevant are they to education and how seriously should we take university rankings?

Malaysians as a rule love to rank things, perhaps it's that little *kiasu* streak in all of us that wants to be #1, but does being #1 mean that we really are the best? When it was recently reported in the local press that one of the nation's leading public universities had slid down the *Times Higher Education (THE)-QS World University Rankings*, this generated a flurry of comments from academics and members of the public. "How could this happen?" "Standards are slipping!" seemed to be the general public sentiment. University rankings have definitely become news over the last decade with the emergence of more public/private universities and colleges competing with each other for student intakes. How should we interpret these rankings and are they as straight-forward as comparing apples with apples?



✓ Advantages of university rankings

- 1) Education is an expensive undertaking and the presence of a ranking system helps students and their families to make informed economic decisions.
- 2) The 'prestige' factor helps top-ranked universities to attract more students. Higher enrolments may provide increased revenues leading to better facilities and higher educational standards.
- 3) High rankings may also provide an impetus for universities to further enhance their teaching/research quality, reducing class sizes and improve infrastructure and facilities to maintain or boost their ranking.

✗ Disadvantages of university rankings

- 1) Rankings do not necessarily reflect quality in education, and many "ranking" exercises benchmark institutions on standards not necessarily related to good teaching or evidence based outcome. Quality is critical in higher education but as pointed out at an OECD* forum recently, "there isn't a universally accepted measurement of quality which recognises outcomes of learning at the level of the University and helps families, employers, governments develop an evidence based understanding of where and how higher education systems are meeting their expectations and where they are not".
- 2) There is little dramatic change for universities at the top of the various rankings. Does this stability imply that these universities consistently offer educational excellence or that they have created a myth of excellence?
- 3) Rankings attempt to rate universities and their faculties but have little to do with students' personal learning experiences. A top 10 university ranking doesn't automatically translate into a top 10 university 'experience' – academics from 'lower' ranked universities may even provide a better learning experience for their students.
- 4) University rankings are influenced by a 'halo' effect, where more successful faculties/schools boost the university's overall ranking. It is possible to have a top ranked university with faculties/schools that do not all perform at the same high level.

For more information about university rankings, visit – <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1857/College-Rankings.html>

* Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
www.oecd.org



PAN All Partners' Conference Asia's ICT researchers to meet at WOU

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has picked WOU as the venue for the *Pan Asia Networking (PAN) All Partners' Conference* which will run from 12 – 14 June 2009. Bringing together over 150 research partners from all over Asia, the conference is a key evaluation activity at the mid-point of PAN's current programming life-cycle.

There will be three power-packed days of capacity building exercises, skills training workshops and networking opportunities encouraging plenty of interaction among participants, who include project leaders, representatives from PAN research networks, global researchers in information and communication technologies, key regional practitioners and researchers, evaluators, donors, and staff from the IDRC.

What is Pan Asia Networking (PAN)?

Pan Asia Networking (PAN) is a programme initiative of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) which helps researchers and communities in the developing world find solutions to their social, economic and environmental problems.

Whereas Asian economies once depended on raw materials for industrial production and commercial exchange, now innovation in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is fuelling trade and commerce in the region.

Asian institutions are recognising the complex issues relating to the information and the implications for people's well-being. Building on IDRC's 25 years of supporting research on information sciences in the developing countries of Asia, the PAN Asia Networking programme initiative has helped institutions to adopt ICTs as a means to address development problems. The programme's activities are based on the premise that ICTs can offer people living in poverty an opportunity for better lives.

The *All Partners' Conference* which will be held at WOU will bring together research partners from all over the Asian region. The conference is a key evaluation activity at the mid-point of PAN's current programming life-cycle.



Go places with 'Friends & Family'

Two Wawasan students escaped the daily grind of work and studies when they won a visit to Jakarta from 18 – 20 March thanks to WOU's Friends and Family Programme. Kuek Sinew and Quek Eng Pian both from Kota Bharu visited Universitas Terbuka (UT) Indonesia with their spouses and stayed at the university guest house.

Kuek, an accounts clerk, is pursuing Bachelor of Technology in Computer Systems and Network while Quek, a medical sales representative, is studying Bachelor of Technology in Computing and Intelligent Systems. They were accompanied by Kota Bharu Regional Office marketing and admission executive Chan Eh Gi.

The two were among WOU's five student ambassadors who introduced the highest number of new students for the July 2008 intake.

The delegation were briefed on UT's history before taken on a tour of the facilities, including the warehouse, multimedia production centre, and the IT unit. They had a dialogue with UT students and the Jakarta regional offices on the problems facing ODLE.



WOU
**friends
& family
programme**

For the July 2009 semester, registered WOU students can encourage their friends and family to sign up for programmes at WOU and win for themselves tuition fee rebates.

The programme offers rewards in the form of points which can be used as rebates for tuition fees only.

- * Each reward point is equivalent to RM2;
- * All reward points earned are valid for two semesters only;
- * Rewards are given based on successful recommendations, in increments of one - the first two successful FF recommendations, in an increment of one entitles the student to 5 points each;
- * The next two successful FF recommendations, in increments of one entitles the student to 20 points each;
- * Any subsequent successful FF recommendations, in increments of one entitles the student to 30 points each.

JBRO Student Club Gathering

Formed early this year, the Johor Bahru Regional Office (JBRO) Student Club held its inaugural social gathering on 22 February attended by over 40 WOU students.

The function held at the JBRO premises was also graced by WOU tutors and staff, including JBRO director Ng Peng Long.

The gathering allowed the students to know their fellow course mates better through such games as guessing movie titles from drawings, an improvised 'Wheel of Fortune' with puzzles related to WOU, and a dance contest. The function ended on a high note with, what else – but food!



WOU supports fight against cancer

Some 3,000 people – 270 teams and over 120 individuals – took part in the fifth edition of Penang Relay for Life which was held at the Youth Park on 14 March 2009.

The WOU team, led by Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof Wong Tat Meng, comprised of over 30 staff and friends. They included School of Science and Technology dean Dato' Prof Dr Ho Sinn Chye, Penang Regional Office director K. Manoharan, Corporate Communications director Agnes James, Senior Assistant Registrar Dr Andy Liew and Head of Finance Chua Saw Nee.

The event was organised by the National Cancer Society of Malaysia Penang branch with the support of Penang Hospice Society and Penang Island Municipal Council. WOU was one of the three main sponsors.

The relay kicked off with the lighting of the torch of hope to symbolise the ongoing fight against cancer and the beacon of hope for everyone.

NCSM Penang branch chairman Datuk William Ng Jit Chye said over RM190,000 in corporate collections was received this year. "There are 4.4 million cancer survivors worldwide. According to the Penang Cancer Registry, the common cancers are breast, lung and colon cancer," he added.

Meanwhile Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, when launching the event, applauded the cancer survivors for their courage. "I am a survivor, not of cancer, but of other challenges," he quipped. He told the crowd to "complete the journey you've set. Don't lose hope, don't lose heart, and always believe in life." He quoted statistics indicating that 1 in 7 persons in Malaysia get cancer compared to 1 in 3 in developed nations.

A number of Penang-based schools, educational institutions, hospitals, hotels, the corporate sector and non-governmental organisations participated in the event.





Synergy with Symbiosis



Building bridges with leading local and international providers of higher education continues to be a priority for WOU, to ensure that the University keeps its finger on the pulse of educational innovations and developments.

On 29 January 2009, WOU, led by Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India's *Symbiosis Centre for Distance Learning (SCDL)* in Pune, India. The MoU will promote academic collaboration in the areas of course material and curricula development, research activities, staff exchanges, joint academic programmes and credit transfers.

Swati Mujumdar, director of SCDL told reporters from the Indian press that the tie-up was primarily aimed at enabling WOU to leverage on Symbiosis' expertise in the use of technology for enhanced ODL delivery. "We look forward to passing on our knowledge in techno-aided delivery of ODL," she said.

Professor Dhanarajan explained that "As WOU is a very young organisation, we have a lot to learn from the wider experience of organisations like SCDL. Building a common academic culture and mutual trust between the two organisations will be our foremost concern and technology will enable this."

According to SCDL's founder Dr S B Mujumdar, the MoU differed from typical educational tie-ups as it does not focus on the usual faculty-student exchange exercises but is concerned with developing quality academic content.

SCDL which was established in 2001 as an ODL institution has five faculties – Management, IT, Education, Humanities, Legal Studies – that offer a total of 15 programmes. The centre's current enrolment is over 200,000 students from India and 42 countries across the globe! For more information on SCDL, visit www.scdl.net.



WOU Careline talk to us!



The call centre also doubles up as a contact point for WOU's existing students and will offer assistance where needed.

Call WOU CARELINE
1-300-888-WOU(968)

Mon – Fri (8:30am – 7:00pm)
Sat – Sun (10:00am – 7:00pm)

Wawasan Open University launched its call centre operations – WOU Careline – on 1 April 2009 as part of its continuing efforts to provide an enhanced, helpful customer experience.

The public can expect to be served more effectively by a dedicated team of customer service consultants at the centre, which integrates telephone and Internet technology to provide quick and effective solutions to better respond to callers' needs.

Director of Marketing, Usha Veeriah, explained, "The call centre will be the starting point for potential students. All one needs to know, from enquiries on courses to enrolment procedures, will be handled during students' interaction with consultants at the call centre."

"We also look at benefits to the caller. Counselling will be conducted over the phone, saving a significant amount of the caller's time. When they call the toll-free Careline number from anywhere in the country, only local call charges apply," she added.

Usha said that although most companies outsource their call centre operations, the University decided to operate its own centre to ensure a high standard of customer care, which emphasises WOU's ethos as a caring education provider.

Safeguarding Penang's built heritage

Adam Wilkinson, Director of the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust (EWH) was recently in Penang to give a public lecture on 'Managing a World Heritage Site: Lessons from Edinburgh' held at WOU's main campus on 11 April.

According to Wilkinson, if George Town is to fully reap the benefits of its UNESCO World Heritage Site listing, heritage conservation efforts must engage stakeholders early on and bring intrinsic value to the lives of the people. Owners, conservationists, architects, planners, and the local authorities must be clear on the guidelines and ensure that traditional

communities are not forced out of the city - if George Town loses its vibrant community, it runs the risk of turning into an open-air museum.

During the question and answer session, Wilkinson said that heritage must create a mental map for the people to the particular place, if they are to have a sense of belonging and feel they are losing something of value if it is gone.

Drawing from his own experiences in Edinburgh, Wilkinson pointed out that, "Previously planning was more reactive, now we (EWH) provide the best management tools for planners to be proactive so that when developers come to them, the planners know

the limitations. It's about early engagement," adding that this also helped planners to battle pressure from politicians and conservationists.

Social value goes hand in hand with heritage conservation to put meaning into buildings and keep them 'living', "We devalue a place if people are resistant and move out. We should keep the place important for the local community," said Wilkinson.

Some 200 guests - including planners from the local authority, developers, architects, and representatives from various non-governmental organisations - attended the talk jointly organised by Khazanah Nasional Bhd and the British Council.

Edinburgh World Heritage Site

Edinburgh was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1995 and has some 4,500 historic buildings and 24,000 residents within its listed 4 km sq site.

EWH is an independent organisation charged with preserving the World Heritage Site, supported by an annual grant from the city of Edinburgh and Scottish government via Historic Scotland.

Planning for EMERGENCIES

Some 30 staff attended a safety briefing at the main campus on 9 April to learn how to handle any emergencies that may crop up during office and non-office hours. The staff are members of WOU's Emergency Response Team (ERT) and First Aid Team (FAT), who are expected to take charge in the event of an emergency to help out the over 150 staff housed at the Chancellery and Albukhary Building.

The two-and-a-half hour briefing was conducted by a team from the General Services and Administration Department (GSA) - director Andrew Joseph, manager Teh Cheang Ghee, chief building warden Sandana Dass and audiovisual supervisor Raja Halim Ali Akbar.

The briefing covered the purpose, organisational chart and duty schedules of the ERT and FAT, and the six types of emergencies to prepare for: riots; huge fires; small fires; injury and illness; lift entrapment; and finally emergency situations including tremors, bomb threats, suspected explosive objects, main power failure, gas leaks and biochemical attacks.

There was a hands-on demonstration of the university's in-house firefighting system, such

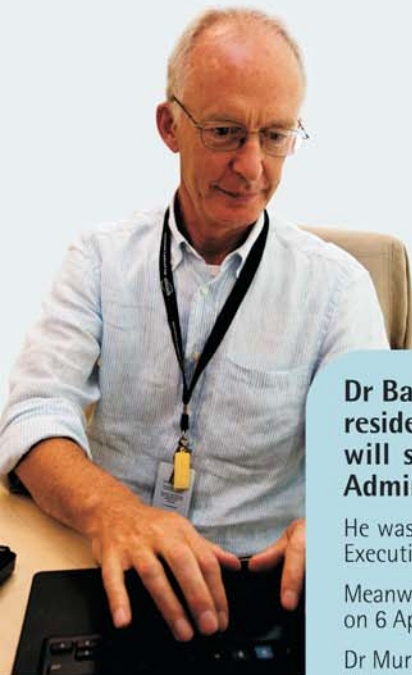
as fire extinguishers, hose reels, sprinkler systems and fire hydrants. The session concluded with a detailed outlining of the emergency escape plans, routes and assembly areas.

The staff were reminded that during an emergency situation, it is critical to leave material things behind as life always has a higher value. We should not merely expect the unexpected, but take its possibility seriously. All WOU staff are therefore called to extend their support to the ERT and FAT members, both in the prevention and in the occurrence of emergencies.





WOU welcomes visiting academics!



Dr Murphy

Dr Barry Tan Kheng Cheok, 53, an Australian and Malaysian permanent resident is the first to take up a visiting academic position at WOU. He will serve as Visiting Senior Fellow at the School of Business and Administration from 1 March to 31 December 2009.

He was previously managing director of International Research Support Services, and Chief Executive Officer of IOI.

Meanwhile Australian Dr David George Murphy, 58, joined Educational Technology and Publishing on 6 April as visiting professor and will be at WOU until 10 July 2009.

Dr Murphy was Professor at Monash University, and Associate Professor and Professor at Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) from 2001 – 2005, during which time he was acting director of the Centre for Research in Distance and Adult Learning. He holds a PhD in Distance Education from Deakin University, Australia as well as a Master of Educational Studies (MEdSt), BSc (Hons) in Mathematics and Diploma in Education from the University of Tasmania.



Dr Barry

New Dean ENTERS the WOU Academic Fraternity



A distinguished scholar with a wealth of English teaching experience, Dr. Malachi Edwin Vethamani is the dean of WOU's newly-established School of Education, Languages and Communication (SELC).

Dr Malachi holds a BA (Hons) in English Literature and MEd in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) from University of Malaya, and a PhD in Literature in English from University of Nottingham, England. He was also a Fulbright

(2000) and a Chevening Award (1993-1996) scholar.

Prior to joining WOU, he was Associate Professor at the Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia; he joined the university in 1986. He was an English Language teacher at the MARA Junior Science College, Kota Bharu for eight years.

His thoughts on teaching English have appeared as articles in books and his latest work was a co-edited volume on *'Teaching English in Malaysia'* (2007). He has also published short stories, poems and lent his expertise to The Sunday Star from

1992-1994, where he wrote a fortnightly column on teaching literature called, *'Language and Literature'*.

Dr Malachi, 54, is actively involved in the training of English and English Literature teachers; he is founding member and current Vice President of the Asian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (Asia TEFL). He has been associated with the Malaysian English Language Teaching Association (MELTA) since 1989; served as president for seven years and is presently its advisor.

Blessed with two sons, he resides in Seremban. During his free moments, he's an avid reader and subscribes to Francis Bacon's view that "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man."

On the standard of English in Malaysia, he says, "There must be greater political will in the implementation of educational policies related to English language teaching and the use of the English language as a medium of instruction." Expressing concern that teachers fail to be good role models for students in the speaking of English, he adds, "We need to be unwavering in our efforts to raise the standard of English."

He not only keeps himself busy with academic affairs and writing articles related to his field of expertise, but also has his own blog where he shares his reflections on various educational matters.



It's NEVER TOO LATE to get your degree



Sixty-year-old Leslie See Kaw Him is a man on a mission as he studies for the Bachelor's degree that has eluded him so far. See, a China-born Malaysian, currently resides in Johor Bahru with his wife of 33 years, a retired secondary school teacher.

He always felt the odd man out as his immediate family members including his wife, three daughters and son all possess a Bachelor's degree. "They inspire me to strive for excellence and join them with a mortar-board and a scroll!"

After completing Form 5, See worked for a year as a temporary teacher before entering the Technical Teachers Training College. Through external classes, he obtained his HSC and LCCI qualifications and accumulated Diplomas related to engineering.

At the age of 45, after 24 years of educating secondary school kids, he opted out from the teaching profession. He is currently a manager in an oil-and-gas construction manpower supply company.

See is in the fourth semester of his Bachelor of Business in Business Information System programme at WOU. A former college mate motivated him to sign up and he has not looked back since. "I pulled myself up to pursue a dream I thought was long lost and impossible to regain." He is happy at WOU as he does not have to leave his family or job and is able to study according to his own timetable.

"After a day's work and time with my wife, I download study materials till late at night. I wake up about 6.00am on weekdays, and also use my weekends to study and work on my assignments." He owes his good academic results at WOU to perseverance, a well spread-out schedule, and to "maturity that comes with age."

His advice to other working adults: "Life is a learning process. Every day we learn something new. If we do not keep a step ahead, we are actually a step behind others."

Medical doctor eyes an MBA at WOU



Not one to sit on her laurels, medical officer Dr Chin Lee Geat is embarking on an academic journey so very different from her previous field of expertise. She is the perfect example of how lifelong learning can add an extra dimension to every sphere of our life and work.

"An MBA will give me a greater understanding of how an organisation works and make me a better doctor because it is all interrelated," she said.

Dr Chin, aged 32, is currently attached to BP Healthcare group after serving in the public sector for four years. Her job function extends beyond medical consultation and diagnostic procedures to supervising the outlet's operations and providing medical training to the staff. She believes an MBA will equip her with managerial skills to handle the non-medical challenges of her work.

She finds it easy to arrange her studies around her own schedule due to the flexibility afforded by Open Distance Learning at WOU as she pursues her second year of CeMBA.

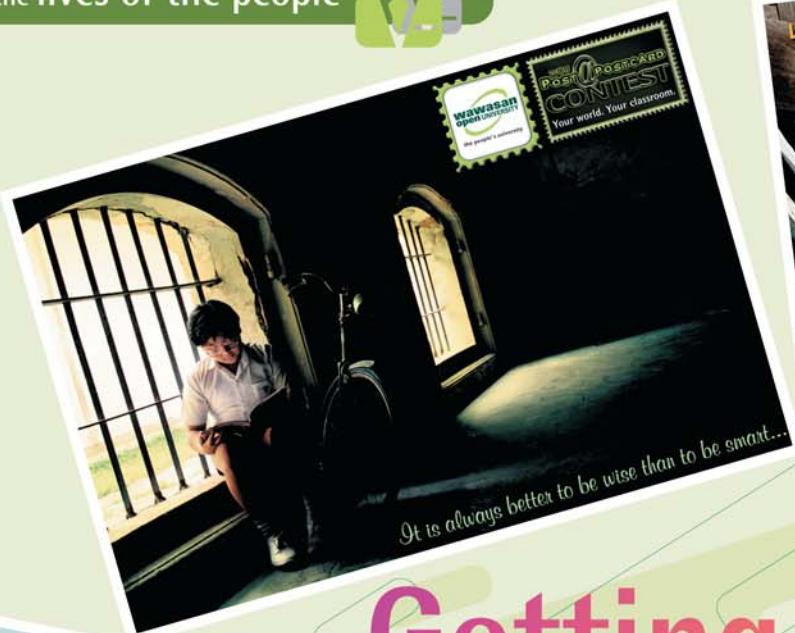
Married for four years with a two-year-old son in tow, she has the support of her husband as she studies at WOU. She always sets deadlines to complete her job-related tasks and sets realistic goals for her studies at the beginning of each semester. Her sisters often help her out by babysitting their nephew whenever she has to attend tutorials at WOU or is busy with her studies or exams.

"My secret is self-discipline and practising wise time management to balance my studies, career, family and leisure. And I must also enjoy what I do!" quipped Dr Chin.

in the lives of the people

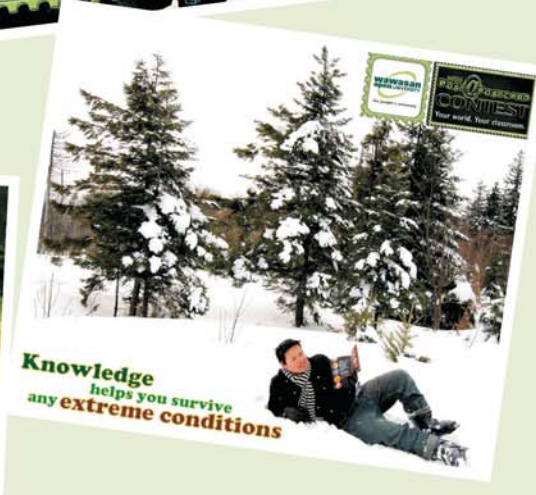


Lifelong Learning is for continuous improvement in life...



Getting creative!

With the overwhelming response to WOU's 'Post @ Postcard' contest, we've decided to give WawasanLink readers a 'sneak' peek at some of the outstanding entries we've received!



in the regional offices



UPCOMING EVENTS

Student Orientation Day

WOU Main Campus & ROs | 19 July 2009 (Sunday)
The 'mysteries' of student life at WOU will be explained in detail to freshmen!

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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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

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*Open Monday-Saturday from 10.00am-7.00pm

Call WOU CARELINE
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