

The 23rd Annual Meeting of the AAOU General Body



WOU to host 2011 AAOU Conference

A delegation from WOU led by Acting Vice Chancellor Prof Wong Tat Meng (a former Secretary-General of the Asian Association of Open Universities or AAOU) attended the 23rd AAOU Annual Conference 2009 from 2-6 November 2009 at the IRIB International Convention Centre (IICC), Tehran, Iran. The WOU team was hosted by the Payame Noor University (PNU) (Prof Wong took over as WOU Vice Chancellor on 6 December 2009).

The conference themed "Evaluation of Open and Distance Learning Systems" evaluated the socio-economic performance of Open and Distance Learning (ODL); the academic performance of ODL; the impact of modern technologies on ODL systems; organisational and staff development in ODL; and cooperation among ODL systems. The aim of the conference was to identify some of the most common problems facing ODL providers and propose relevant solutions.

The other purpose of the WOU delegation's visit was to lobby for the honour of hosting the 2011 Meetings of the AAOU Executive Board, AAOU General Board and the 25th AAOU Annual Conference in Penang. The bid was successful given the support from our rivals who elected to withdraw

their bids. Even then Prof Wong needed to convince the Executive Board that WOU has what it takes to run a successful conference.

Prof Wong's bidding presentation to the AAOU delegates highlighted WOU's modern facilities as well as Penang's colourful sights, varied accommodation, good transport facilities and friendly people. He explained how WOU's Main Campus was a unique conference location with its seafront panorama; the audience definitely perked up when he pointed out that "Throw a stone from our campus and you'll hit water!" WOU was successfully appointed the host of the 2011 AAOU Conference.

As Chairman of an AAOU Task Force on the 'Young Innovators Award', Prof Wong presented WOU's recommendations to the AAOU Executive Board which were adopted. He also served as a member of the Adjudication Panel for the AAOU Best Paper Award and chaired a parallel session on the second day.

Accompanying Prof Wong were Johor Bahru Regional Office Director Ng Peng Long, School of Science and Technology Lecturer Rajasegaran Ramasamy and Corporate Communications Assistant Manager Lim Yao-han. Rajasegaran presented a paper entitled "Level of Participation in the Learning Management System compared to the Performance in Assessments: A Case Study of WUC 114/05 University Mathematics A course".



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I wish to begin by expressing my thanks and appreciation to the Council of Wawasan Open University and its Chairman Tun Dato' Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik as well as the Board of WEF and its Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap for their trust and confidence in appointing me to succeed Tan Sri Gajaraj Dhanarajan as the Vice Chancellor and CEO of the University.

I am deeply honoured and greatly humbled by the position that I am stepping into. It will be a huge challenge but I am confident that with the support of the various stakeholders we will be able to deliver on our founding mission to widen access to quality higher education and to deliver a quality learning experience to our students at an affordable cost. In so doing, we will also work towards turning Wawasan Open University into a great institution for lifelong learning using the ODL approach and ensuring that we become the preferred partner for delivering the education and training needs of the country's working adults and their employers.

I wish to record my gratitude and thanks to Tan Sri Raj for all the mentoring and support he has provided me over the years as well as his leadership and contributions towards the University. Over the past three years, he has put in place a governance structure, an organisational structure and a quality assurance mechanism for our academic and operational processes that reflects international best practices. Tan Sri Raj, from all of us a very big THANK YOU to you. We are so glad that you will continue to be part of the WOU learning community.

I wish to assure our staff, tutors and students that the basic foundations upon which WOU is built will continue under my leadership as I fully subscribe to the University's founding Vision, Mission and Values. Likewise, the plan to achieve self financing within the time frame shown in the University's strategic plan submitted to MOHE will continue to remain an important financial objective. In line with this and in order for the University to remain sustainable and continue to provide quality service to the students we have no choice but to raise tuition fees effective from July 2010. Despite the increase, our fees will still be among the lowest charged by private higher education providers in the country.

The year 2010 will see WOU extending its learning opportunities to communities located in the state of Sarawak through the opening of the Kuching Regional Office (KCRO). The opening of the KCRO was a response to earlier requests from enthusiastic students from Sarawak who were keen enough to fly to Penang or Kuala Lumpur to attend tutorial classes. This will no longer be an issue as through the KCRO, WOU will be reaching out to them.

I am also pleased to share that WOU will begin to deliver our course materials in CD-ROM format instead of the bulky print-outs. This phased migration to the CD-based course materials will be completed in four to five years and represents an intermediate stage of the University's migration to a web-based e-learning environment. Besides reducing the University's carbon footprint, the interactive CD-based materials will make the learning process a more enjoyable and enriching experience.

Finally, I wish all members of the WOU Learning Community as well as our Corporate Partners and friends a 'Happy and Prosperous 2010!'



Kuching Regional Office swings into action!

After months of hard work and extensive renovations, WOU's seventh regional office opened to the public. The Kuching Regional Office (KCRO) located in the city's prime business district is WOU's first East Malaysian RO and will play a key role in promoting WOU's ODL programmes to Sarawakians and Sabahans, beginning from the January 2010 semester.

The newly-renovated double-storey office at Westin Avenue, Jalan Tun Jugah has all the characteristics of the Peninsular Malaysian ROs, and is fully equipped with student support and resource facilities – library, counselling area, meeting and seminar rooms, and video-conferencing equipment – decked out in the familiar WOU green.

The KCRO is run by director Jimmy Chai and his team, comprising of marketing and admission executives Mohamad Azaharani Seruji and Mary Liliansa Chin, and marketing and admission officer Chan Shu Harn. The team is poised to offer educational opportunities to over 500,000 working adults in Kuching looking to obtain a degree for self-improvement and career development.

First-time visitors to the KCRO are advised to look out for the Bank Rakyat, Simpang Tiga branch as landmark.



(1a, b) Azhar conducts a motivational seminar at the Sarawak State Library for about 60 government servants
(2) KCRO student counselling session in progress



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The art of developing multiple literacies

Going green: WOU's paperless classrooms

WOU students will soon be accessing their course materials on CDs from January 2010 when the University introduces CD-based study materials for selected undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

"We are taking baby steps in our ongoing efforts to go green by minimising the use of paper. This greatly eliminates the need to print thousands of textbooks, which greatly reduces our environmental impact," said Prof Wong Tat Meng, WOU's Vice Chancellor.

Besides the obvious environmental advantages, the move to a paperless learning environment also spells greater convenience for students. With a semester's worth of material on a single CD, students are no longer burdened with heavy textbooks each time they attend tutorials or visit the library, added Prof Wong.

Unlike printed textbooks, a multimedia-based presentation is easier for students to navigate around modules or between sections in different units. This multimedia platform creates a learner-centred environment for the student, which in turn results in increased attention and retention for the learner.

The distribution of CD-based course materials in the University will be carried out in stages and WOU hopes to eventually phase out paper textbooks completely. "To start with, we are implementing this approach with nine of our courses across WOU's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Plans are already in place to extend this to all our twelve undergraduate and two postgraduate programmes," Prof Wong explained.

The nine courses are Learning Skills for University Studies, Communication Skills for the Workplace, Basic Computing and the Internet, Programming Fundamentals with Java, Microeconomics, Principles and Practice of Management, Management in Organisations, Management Information Systems, and Operations Management.

These courses are also the first nine courses to be offered by WOU's newest regional centre in Kuching. Kuching students will be the inaugural batch to experience a completely paper-free learning environment with all course materials distributed in the form of CDs.



WOU's Kuala Lumpur Regional Office (KLRO) hosted the 2nd MELTA National Literacies Day on 10 October 2009 to explore different genres of literacy. The event, held in conjunction with World Literacy Day, was organised by WOU in partnership with the Malaysia English Language Teaching Association (MELTA).

Three workshops conducted by WOU academics to promote and develop various literacies attracted a crowd of teachers, lecturers, parents, schoolchildren, postgraduate students and working adults.

The first workshop facilitated by WOU's School of Education, Languages and Communications dean Assoc Prof Dr Malachi Edwin Vethamani on 'See Wall to Wall: E-Literacies in the Digital Age', where participants learnt about the use of computer-mediated applications communications.

He shared his views on social media and its relevance for effective communication in the 21st century. Since most of the participants were preparing to be teachers, it was useful for them to be introduced to new communication resources and a variety of Internet search engines.

SELC lecturer Leong Han Ming summarised the research findings and recommendations of the National Reading Panel in the US on effective literacy instruction at his workshop on 'Literacy in Special Education'. He covered three key features of effective literacy programmes for low-progress readers – phonics or word attack skills, sight words recognition, and guided student reading – especially relevant for teachers working with students having difficulties reading in English.

Meanwhile WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor U K Menon delivered a workshop on political literacy and how to critically evaluate political decisions in his workshop on 'Political Literacy – Creating Good Citizens'. He emphasised the importance of understanding the fundamental liberties which are guaranteed under the Federal Constitution in order to empower the community. Menon encouraged the participants to critically examine the Constitution, and to create awareness of the Constitution among their communities.

A total of nine workshops were held during the one-day event, which also included workshops from USM, UKM and MELTA representatives who covered topics such as promoting emotional intelligence (EQ) among teachers, teaching pronunciation and public speaking.





Singing to make dreams come true

Musical lovers were treated to a delightful evening as the Dolci Voci choral group serenaded the audience with their rendition of classics and all-time favourites at a charity concert at WOU's main campus in October. The charity performance, in aid of the Seri Cahaya Orphanage building fund, was organised by Soroptimist International Penang in collaboration with WOU as host, and Penang Passion as the official publicist.

The concert drew considerable support from over 300 people, and spotted among the audience were Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap and Datin Seri Irene Yeap, Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan and Puan Sri Sue Dhanarajan, Prof Wong Tat Meng and Dr Annie Wong, and even former Malaysian badminton champion, Dato' Eddy Choong.

In the two-hour show, the 16-strong vocalists displayed their versatility by performing a wide repertoire that included *Fly me to the Moon*, *Guantanamera*, *Georgia on my Mind*, and *Colours of the Wind*. The evening's first performance was a solo number – *Nobody's*

Child – by nine-year old Gabriel Lucas K de Leon, who currently holds the record as Malaysia's youngest drummer to have passed the Trinity Guildhall Rock School Grade 8 drum examination!

The choir ended their medley of songs with an upbeat performance of *Top of the World* with a rousing applause from the audience. Puan Sri Sue, the concert's organising chairperson, paid tribute to Kali and Linda, the founders of Seri Cahaya for their unwavering devotion and commitment in providing shelter and care for the neglected children under their care.

The Seri Cahaya Orphanage – an oasis of hope

Founded in 1999, Seri Cahaya currently has 70 children, 15 single mothers and seven elderly ladies living in overcrowded conditions in a rented single-storey wooden house in Batu Maung.

Out of concern for their plight, Soroptimist International Penang redeemed the mortgage taken out by Kali when she bought land for the construction of a new building for the residents of Seri Cahaya.

Soroptimist International Penang is the Penang chapter of an international service organisation for business and professional women. The Soroptimists are committed to the advocacy of human rights and equality for women and children through their countless community service projects.

Proceeds from the sale of tickets and donations collected that night were channelled to the Seri Cahaya building fund. Towards the end of the evening, it was announced that more than RM100,000 had been successfully raised.



'The very hungry' caterpillar visits WOU



It takes a very brave man to face 70 pre-schoolers and keep them all entertained and engrossed in a book! This was the challenge gallantly taken up by WOU's previous Vice Chancellor, Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, when he turned storyteller for the *Read for the Record* event held at WOU's main campus on 8 October 2009.

Prof Dhanarajan's expressive reading of Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* kept his young charges glued to the floor and the kids peppered him with questions and remarks throughout the session. On behalf of The Learning Garden, he presented five stacks of books to a representative from the Penang

Education Consultative Council (PECC) to be handed over to the Valdor Estate Tamil Kindergarten.

The *Read for the Record* event was organised by early children education centre, The Learning Garden, the sole licensee of the FasTracKids programme in Penang. FasTracKids International was officially approved as a participating organisation in Jumpstart's fourth annual *Read for the Record* campaign.

Jumpstart, an American non-profit early education organisation focused on intervening early in the lives of at-risk children, organised the global campaign in collaboration with the Pearson Foundation.

The campaign aimed to gather over one million participating children and adults from all over the world to break a world record of reading the same book on the same day. This effort was to generate public awareness about the early education gap that exists between the different income levels in society.



Budget 2010

under the spotlight



The 2010 Budget was formulated to ensure that the fruits of development are enjoyed by all Malaysians, and also to shift the nation towards a high-income economy, according to Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Wira Chor Chee Heung who delivered the first keynote speech at the 2010 Malaysian Budget Dialogue held at WOU on 31 October 2009.

Datuk Wira Chor said that the Budget reflects the 1Malaysia theme as policies of the federal and state governments cannot be divisive in nature as this will cause a major split among Malaysians. On the positive side, he noted that the Malaysian economy is forecast to grow by 2% – 3% next year, asserting that "we need prudent spending without jeopardising the government machinery, economic growth or the well-being of the rakyat".

The Dialogue was organised by the Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute (SERI) and Federation on Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) northern branch, and supported by the State Economic Planning Unit. The welcoming speech was presented by SERI chairman Dato' Dr Sharom Ahmat while the second keynote address was delivered by Penang Second Deputy Chief Minister Prof Dr P Ramasamy.

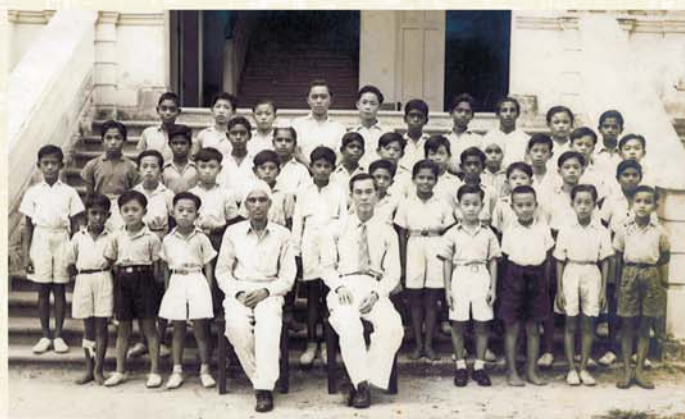
USM's Prof Suresh Narayanan chaired the panel session, while the speakers were Ahmad Saifuddin Morat, consultant economist and Energy Saving consultant; Tony Pua, MP for Petaling Jaya Utara; Dr Chan Huan Chiang, SERI senior research fellow; and Dato' O K Lee, FMM northern branch chairman.

About 150 people attended the talk, including SERI executive director and MP for Bukit Bendera Liew Chin Tong, SERI director Dato' Dr Toh Kin Woon, and State Financial Officer Datuk Farizan Darus. The half-day dialogue was officially closed by Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.





Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan



Primary school days – Tan Sri is in the first row on the extreme left.



Tan Sri, Puan Sri and baby Sumi.

A passion for education

Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan holds B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees from the University of Madras, a D.I.C. and an M.Sc. from the Imperial College of the University of London and a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Aston in Birmingham, U.K.

He is widely acknowledged as one of the world's leading advocates and experts on open and distance learning and has been involved in distance education and open learning for over 30 years. Tan Sri Gajaraj has participated in establishing a number of distance education systems in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Nigeria, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, South Pacific, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia between 1982 and 2004.

In mid-1989 he was invited by the government of Hong Kong to help establish the Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong (now the Open University of Hong Kong) where he was first appointed as the Associate Director (Academic) and subsequently promoted to Director from 1991 – 1995. In 1992, the Institute honoured Tan Sri Gajaraj by conferring on him the title of Professor, and then Professor Emeritus in 1995.

After his period as CEO of the Open Learning Institute Hong Kong, Tan Sri Gajaraj was invited to be the second President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) based in Vancouver, Canada. The COL is an intergovernmental agency of the Commonwealth, with a mandate to support, enhance and promote open learning in the 54 member states of the Commonwealth.

He retired as President of COL in 1995 and played a key role in establishing Wawasan Open University, becoming WOU's first Vice Chancellor in 2005.



Tan Sri with WOU's Chairman of Council at WOU's first Council meeting in 2005.



a new chapter begins

Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan's passion for education stretches far back to his childhood days. Growing up on a rubber estate outside Ipoh, Tan Sri Gajaraj would walk nearly 2km to the nearest bus stop to board a rattling public bus that would take him to school; a daily commute of at least three hours! After leaving school he studied at the University of Madras, and it was in India that he became a keen equestrian representing the University in polo. It is a little known fact that Tan Sri Gajaraj was also a competitive boxer - you read it in WawasanLink first!

While teaching in Kampar, Tan Sri first met the love of his life, Puan Sri Sue in the local library (could it be any other way?). Love blossomed among the books and evolved into a long-distance relationship when Tan Sri departed for the UK to pursue his Masters and PhD - the beginning of a life-long passion for distance learning! The happy couple eventually tied the knot on 18 January 1970 and as they say in fairy tales, 'they lived happily ever after'.



Tan Sri golfing in the UK.



Deep in concentration.

The extended WOU family should not be too sad though, as Tan Sri Gajaraj will still be found at WOU's Main Campus in a spanking new office on the 11th floor. From this lofty position he will take up multiple positions as the Honorary Director of WOU's Institute of Research & Innovation (IRI), the Head of WOU's Centre for Teaching & Learning, a member of the University Council and adviser to WOU and DistEd College.



In action on the polo grounds!



An initial meeting of the WEF to establish what would become WOU.



With African VCs.



Birthday celebrations with OUHK colleagues.



Members of the International Advisory Board (IAB) with Tan Sri and WOU Chairman of Council, Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik.



At the groundbreaking ceremony at WOU's main campus with Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu.



Tan Sri with Dato' Seri Chia Kwang Chye and WEF Chairman, Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap Leong Huat.



An early Council meeting before the establishment of WOU.



The Open Day organised by the Penang Regional Office at the WOU main campus on 8 November recorded 56 new students registering for the January 2010 semester.

Prof Chee Kim Loy (SBA) and Prof Mogana Dhamotharan (SFLS), and SST Acting Dean Prof Tham Choy Yoong provided counselling on the programmes under their respective Schools. Also present to motivate the team were Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support) Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye and Regional Operations director Chong Kong Hoong.

Six student ambassadors - Shalini Manasamy, Eswarya Ramu, Teoh Soo Ing, Carolyn Chew, Queenie Tan and Annie Yew - helped to welcome and usher visitors to the counselling and registration stations. These students are currently pursuing various degree programmes under SBA.



The Ipoh Regional Office held its Open Day on 1 November and converted the Library into an additional counselling area.

Regional Operations Director Chong Kong Hoong came to lend his support along with a number of senior students. 12 new students were registered despite the afternoon downpour!



The recently-renovated Kuala Lumpur Regional Office sported a new and bright environment as it greeted visitors to its Open Day on 25 October. It was also tutorial day for Degree, Masters and Headstart programmes ensuring the RO was bustling with sound and activity.



The Bandar Utama Regional Office came alive to the sounds of KLRO's 'unofficial' DJ Kelvin Khoo providing a great atmosphere for the Open Day held on 1 November.



Heavy rain on the East Coast didn't deter determined Kelantanese from turning out in force at the Kota Bharu Regional Office's Open Day. About 80 people visited the RO and were also treated to laksa and kuih.



Open Day

successes across Malaysia



Sprucing up your CV

It's no secret that first impressions last; and just as you would dress up to impress a date, your curriculum vitae (CV) should also have a positive impact on your potential employer. Here are some tips to avoid having your CV tossed into the circular filing cabinet aka the waste-paper basket!

Keep it short

Your CV isn't meant to serve as a laundry list of all your accomplishments since your nursery days. Unless you are an academic, keep it to a maximum of two pages. Present your qualifications and work experience in reverse chronological order as employers are most interested in your more recent achievements.

Make it relevant

Don't assume that one CV will fit all – always tailor your CV to each job application by highlighting your relevant skills and experience. This demonstrates to potential employers that you have an understanding of the job role/scope and have the necessary aptitude and/or experience to do the job.

Make it easy on the eyes

Choose a professional-looking font that is easy to read – a font size of 10-12 points is acceptable. Make sure your CV is printed on white paper (no fancy colours!) and organised into logical sections including, work experience, education, community work, referees, etc. Use headers/subheaders and bullet points for easy reading. Check your grammar and ensure that there are no spelling mistakes; it only takes a minute to run a spell check!

Discuss your transferable skills (soft skills)

Even though you may not have the required skills or experience, it is good to list out your soft skills such as team work, leadership qualities, problem-solving abilities, planning, etc and back these up with real-life examples (don't just talk the talk – demonstrate that you can actually walk the talk).

Cover your bases!

Use your cover letter to condense the strengths and experiences you have outlined in your CV – think of it as your 3-minute sales pitch!

Keep it fresh

Finally, remember to update your CV regularly – you never know when you might have to use it.



Radio ga-ga



From 16 November to 12 December 2009, WOU's radio contests on the Red FM and Suria FM stations got listeners calling in for a chance to win Sony MP3 walkmans.

Throughout the contest duration, all listeners had to do was tune in to the stations every Monday to Friday from 5-7 pm to catch a clue from the DJs. They then had to visit the WOU website to find the hidden tongue twister or 'teka-teki' of the day and SMS the stations.

The campaign was strategically timed to coincide with 'rush hour' to raise WOU's profile among working adults who would tune in while on their commute home. It also encouraged participants to get acquainted with the WOU website and WOU's wide range of programmes while they were browsing for clues.



Familiar Faces, New Appointments

Some familiar faces recently took up their new appointments at WOU.

Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, formerly the Dean of the School of Science and Technology (SST), as Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support). Prof Ho will provide strategic leadership on the way educational products and services are delivered to students and directly oversee the operations of the Educational Technology and Publishing as well as the Learning and Library Services Units.

Dr Andy Liew as Manager, Quality Assurance Unit effective 1 October 2009. Dr Liew will work with and provide support to the Vice Chancellor in the development and implementation of the University's Quality Assurance system and processes.



Prof Ho



Dr Andy Liew

WOU welcomes a New Dean

Professor Tham Choy Yoong took up his new post as Acting Dean of the School of Science and Technology on 1 November 2009. Prior to joining WOU, he served as an Associate Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Science at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman for over five years.

Prof Tham, 60, holds a PhD in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from the University of Wales Swansea (2000), and a Master of Science with Distinction from Brunel University, London (1997). He obtained the degree-equivalent professional exam in electrical / electronic engineering from the UK Engineering Council in 1975, and a BEng (Hons) in mechanical engineering from Universiti Malaya in 1973.

He worked in various industries for 10 years, including the TNB power station in Gelugor, a chemical process plant, and an electrical parts manufacturing company. He founded a consulting engineers' firm with a partner in 1983, establishing offices in Ipoh and Penang.

After 15 years in consultancy he left for the UK where he worked as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Cambridge from 2000 to 2003, and part-time as a Senior Research Assistant at the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, University of Wales Swansea from 1999 to 2000.

Prof Tham is a registered professional engineer in mechanical and electrical engineering with the Board of Engineers Malaysia and also a Chartered Engineer with the UK Engineering Council.



Stepping Stone to a Degree

WOU's New Graduate Diploma in Business Accounting



Wawasan Open University will be introducing the Graduate Diploma in Business Accounting starting from the January 2010 semester, after receiving approval from the Ministry of Higher Education on 17 August 2009.

The Graduate Diploma is a sub-degree level award to enable Malaysian citizens to move progressively up their level of personal and professional achievements. Students can expect to be exposed to contemporary accounting issues and learn how these can be applied to their actual work settings. This Graduate Diploma will also prepare the students for higher-level tertiary education in accountancy, as the Diploma shares identical entry requirements and includes courses from the School's Bachelor of Business in Accounting (Hons) degree programme.

The Diploma was developed following detailed discussions with the Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), as well as selected practising accountants in Penang to fine-tune the curriculum and make it relevant to the needs of the Malaysian business environment.

The Graduate Diploma in Business Accounting will provide students with the basic theory and practical knowledge of various facets of business, with an emphasis on accounting. It will prepare students to perform job functions as accounting technicians/junior accounts executives in business organisations. This 70-credit hour course can be completed in a minimum of three years – six semesters or 108 weeks – or stretched over as much as time as the student prefers.

CeMBA's First Residential School



WOU held its inaugural *Residential School and Project Workshop (RSPW)* for postgraduate students at the main campus from 3 – 4 October 2009. The RSPW is a component in the compulsory 6-credit project course to be undertaken by postgraduate students in the final year of their programme. Over 50 CeMBA students from all over Malaysia attended the two-day workshop which was graced by WOU Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan.

In his welcoming speech, WOU's Acting Vice Chancellor Prof Wong Tat Meng congratulated the students for reaching an advanced stage of their postgraduate programme. Prof Wong explained that RSPWs are the norm for graduate schools and aim to provide students with relevant, world-class learning experiences. "Students develop skills of independent research and decision-making that would be valuable in their work," he elaborated.



The RSPW kicked off with keynote addresses from two eminent captains of industry, Dato' Tan Bian Ee and Tan Sri Mustafa Mansur.

Dato' Tan was the Chief Operating Officer of Avago Technologies and Worldwide Sales and Global Operations prior to his retirement in February 2009. Speaking on *Corporate Strategy in Turbulent Times: Strategic Intent and Leadership Issues*, Dato' Tan drew on his personal experiences of leadership positions at Avago, Agilent, Hewlett-Packard and Fairchild Semiconductor. In his presentation on leadership development, he observed that "bold business leaders cultivate an exciting and innovative environment that demands ownership, supports risk-taking and delivers results".

Meanwhile Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) president Tan Sri Datuk Mustafa Mansur discussed the impact of the

economic crisis on employment in the manufacturing sector. He pointed out that a lot of industries are not willing to pay attractive salaries, hence the decision to bring in foreign workers into the country.

Throughout the two-day programme, students had ample opportunity to interact with the speakers and senior academic staff from the University as well as peers from different industries.

The students attended five workshop sessions that covered specific areas of conducting research such as developing research ideas and topics, developing a research project proposal, constructing research questions and objectives, writing a research project report, and the library research process.



for the
Love of Books!

New WOU course on **Asian Literature**

WOU's latest course offering - Selections of Asian Literature - for the January 2010 semester has a broad appeal ranging from those curious about literature to professional practitioners. It will be especially beneficial to teachers who have little or no literature background but who are required to teach English literature in schools.

This course is designed to help learners gain a deeper appreciation of literature through selected Asian literary texts, with an emphasis on Malaysian writers. Learners will be exposed to different writing genres including poetry, short stories, novels and drama as they discover how writers use various styles to present their ideas to readers.

Students have the flexibility of enrolling for Selections of Asian Literature as a stand-alone course. The course is also being presented for the first time as an elective subject from the Humanities cluster for Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies students.

The Liberal Studies degree programme has been carefully designed to mould decisive leaders who are able to think outside the box and problem-solve. The programme also aims to empower learners to be effective communicators in their workplace and in other social spaces. Students choose elective courses from two clusters, Social Sciences and Humanities, in addition to compulsory core courses in general education.

One Step at A Time



Muhammad Shaznil Abdul Thoher

The burning desire to enhance his knowledge and his job marketability drove Muhammad Shaznil Abdul Thoher of Kampung Kepayang, Perak to make the pursuit of higher education his goal and mission. Most people think twice about returning to higher education and confronting all the obstacles in its way, but for Shaznil, "it's about overcoming the challenges one step at a time, because nothing is impossible if I really put my mind to it".

The 26-year-old technician is currently in the first semester of his Bachelor of Technology in Electronics (Hons) programme at Wawasan Open University. He enrolled through the Ipoh Regional Office to join over 5,000 students who have registered for various courses since the University opened its doors in January 2007.

Although studying can be mentally and physically taxing, the sense of fulfilment that comes with it can be exhilarating. "Whenever I need help, I access WawasanLearn and study online. I also use mind maps and abbreviated words to help me remember the important points."

Shaznil who possesses a Diploma in Telecommunications is determined to attain a degree because he finds that the environment has become increasingly competitive, and a tertiary qualification is "one way of staying competitive to face the challenges ahead". He has therefore decided on a programme related to his career and his field of interest.

He once mistakenly thought that he would not have time to study because of work commitments but he finds that the open distance learning approach at WOU is flexible and manageable, perfect for busy adult learners like him!

Flying high with WOU study grant

Career development motivated 25-year-old Thipa Murugayah, a Malaysian Airlines employee to pursue an accounting degree programme at Wawasan Open University. Thipa was not content to 'remain stagnant' in her current position as an accounts officer and aims to soar higher in her career with MAS.

She is currently studying for a Bachelor of Business in Accounting after enrolling at the Penang Regional Office for the July 2009 intake. Thipa,

the second of five siblings, resides in Seberang Jaya with her parents and she credits her family and friends for being supportive and encouraging, adding, "My colleagues motivated and 'forced' me to enrol as they had my best interests at heart and wanted me to rise up the professional ranks."

She admits it would have been difficult to sign up for her degree programme if not for the WOU Study Grant which she received. She quipped that she was financially unable to enrol due to her family commitments and was thankful for the grant that enabled her to pursue her dream.

Thipa has been working with Malaysian Airlines for over four years and holds an Advanced Diploma in Computer Studies. "Presently I am in an accounting environment and the degree would help to upgrade my status to a managerial level," she stated. She selected WOU as she believed the open distance learning (ODL) approach was conducive and convenient, adding that a major advantage was the relatively affordable fees compared to other colleges.

As to how she manages to divide her time between her studies and other commitments, she said that it was not a problem as she practises good time management and spends three hours a day studying and doing her assignments. "My determination and discipline help me overcome obstacles and succeed in whatever endeavours I embark on," she declared.



Thipa Murugayah



UPCOMING EVENTS

Student Info

Registration Deadline

The deadline for new students to register for courses at WOU and for continuing students to re-enrol will be 10 January 2010 (Sunday), a week before the semester commences.

Student Orientation Day for January 2010 intake

Date : 17 January 2010 (Sunday)

Venue: WOU Main Campus and Regional Offices / Learning Centres nationwide

* The KBRO Orientation day will be on 16 January 2010 (Saturday)

Graduate Diploma in Business Accounting

This sub-degree programme will be offered by the School of Business and Administration (SBA) from January 2010 to equip graduates to perform tasks as junior accounting executives or accounting technicians in business enterprises, and as a stepping stone for higher-level academic qualifications.

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

Call Toll-free Careline 1-300-888-968 (WOU)

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Wawasan Open University (700364-W)
54 Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 Penang, Malaysia.
Tel: 04-218 0333 | Fax: 04-226 9323
Email: 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

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

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
Email: ro_kl@wou.edu.my
(Library Services available Tuesday to Sunday, 10.00am-7.00pm)

Bandar Utama Regional Support Office
L2-6 & 7, Wisma BU8, 11, Lebuhr Bandar Utama, Bandar Utama, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 03-7629 7223 / 03-7629 7123
Fax: 03-7629 7023
Email: rso_bu@wou.edu.my

Johor Bahru Regional Office
17 & 19 Jalan Jaya 2, Taman Jaya, 81300 Skudai, Johor.
Tel: 07-556 4323 / 556 6323 | Fax: 07-554 9323
Email: ro_jb@wou.edu.my

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
* Open Monday-Saturday from 10.00am-7.00pm

Kuching Regional Office
14 Westin Avenue, Jalan Tun Jugah, 93350 Kuching, Sarawak.
Tel: 082-578 923 | Fax: 082-576 923
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