



## Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu re-appointed Chancellor

### CONTENTS



Vice Chancellor's voice  
Pg 2



In the limelight  
Pg 2 - 3



In the know  
Pg 4 - 10



In the schools  
Pg 11



In the lives of the people  
Pg 12

Wawasan Open University (WOU)'s founding Chancellor Tun Dato' Seri Utama Dr Lim Chong Eu has accepted re-appointment for another three-year term commencing 5 May 2010.

The entire WOU learning community welcomes this wonderful news as Tun Lim is a truly distinguished gentleman of immense intellect and great wisdom besides being a great statesman. He has also left a significant imprint and influence over the growth of higher learning in Malaysia.

As Chief Minister of Penang from 1969-1990, Tun Lim has contributed tremendously towards the socio-economic development of the state and the nation. For his immense service and contributions to society he received numerous awards and honours, among which are the order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver from Emperor Akihito of Japan, the Darjah Utama Pangkuan Negeri (DUPN) from TYT Governor of Penang and the Seri Makhota Malaysia (SSM) from the Yang Di Pertuan Agong which carries the title 'Tun'. In addition, Tun Lim has been conferred Honorary Doctorates by Universiti Sains Malaysia as well as his alma mater Edinburgh University.

Chairman of WOU Council, Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik, remarked that Tun Lim has honoured WOU by accepting this re-appointment. He said, "As the driver of the modernisation and industrialisation of Penang when he became the Chief Minister in 1969, he has attracted huge foreign direct investment and created thousands of jobs." He added that WOU was set up in Penang to "complement Tun Lim's efforts by providing flexible, affordable and accessible opportunities for the country's workforce to improve their knowledge and skills through distance learning to move up the value chain.

As the Chancellor, we look forward to him for guidance towards achieving this goal."

Wawasan Education Foundation (WEF) Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap described Tun Lim as "a far-sighted visionary and one of Penang's greatest treasures". He stated, "Tun Lim's passion propelled this State to great heights at a time of crisis and struggle. He belonged to a rare breed of politicians with a formidable intellect and a great sense of selflessness. For me personally, he has been a kind mentor and a good friend, and I am truly confident WOU will continue to flourish under his wise counsel."

WOU founding Vice Chancellor (2005-2009) Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan declared, "The WEF exercised its right with insight and wisdom in re-appointing Tun Lim as the Chancellor of WOU for a second term. Very few leaders in our country bring the stature and respect to the office as Tun Lim does."

Meanwhile WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng welcomed the re-appointment stating that "Tun Lim Chong Eu's continuous quest for knowledge and his visionary ideas will inspire the whole Wawasan Open University to greater heights as a Centre of Excellence for Open Distance Learning and the Preferred Partner for all adult learners and their employers seeking to enhance productivity in the workplace."

Wawasan Open University is rapidly gaining a high reputation as a university offering quality tertiary education to working adults through open distance learning. The re-appointment of Tun Lim as Chancellor adds significantly to this development.

# Vice Chancellor's VOICE

June is a busy month for WOU students as they burn the midnight oil to prepare for the semester's final examinations. This June is of particular importance to the pioneering batch of our Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CeMBA) students because the successful completion of their project course will see them fulfilling the requirements for graduation. The graduation of the first batch of graduates is a very important milestone for any University. For us at WOU, it signals the coming of age of our institution. Wawasan Open University is here to stay!

In preparation for this, the CeMBA programme is currently undergoing a full accreditation exercise by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. Having submitted all the relevant documents, we welcome the visit of the MQA Accreditation Panel Members scheduled for 14-15 June and look forward to a fruitful and productive two days of exchange with academic peers. Based on the very complimentary oral report from members of the earlier Academic Performance Audit on WOU's QA system and practice, we have good reasons to look forward to a similarly positive outcome in this programme accreditation exercise.

In a related event, our University will be partnering with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the developer and 'owner' of the programmes, to host meetings of the CeMBA/CeMPA Academic Board and Executive Board in our main campus from 9-12 August 2010. These meetings are expected to be attended by more than 20 Vice Chancellors and Deans from partner institutions in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands. The meetings are expected to review and further strengthen and enhance the quality of the two programmes.

The July semester will see the launch of two new programmes (B Ed Primary Ed and PG Dip Ed) by the newly established School of Education, Languages and Communications. Other new degree programmes include the BA (Hons) in Psychology by SFLS and BB (Hons) in Corporate Administration and BB (Hons) in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management by the SBA. All these new programmes will enable WOU to provide a wider spectrum of programme offerings to address the diverse needs of the country's adult workforce.

In addition, the University will also be making available to all its academics, tutors and students the free use of 'Turnitin', an anti-plagiarism software, as part of an initiative to promote the development of a culture of academic integrity and the respect of intellectual property rights amongst its learning community. This will be accompanied by a campaign to educate the WOU learning community against plagiarism. Hopefully, the success of this initiative will soon allow us to proudly claim that 'WOU students do not engage in plagiarism!'

Let me conclude by extending to all students my best personal wishes in the coming examinations. We look forward to welcoming you back in the July semester. May I also extend a very warm welcome to all new students and congratulate you on making the right decision to ensure a bright future for you and your family.



## AACE- Global Learn Asia Pacific 2010

By Ishan Abeywardena and Deebanjli Lakshmayya

The *Global Learn Asia Pacific* conference and workshops held on 17 - 20 May 2010 at Parkroyal Hotel and Holiday Inn Penang were organised by the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE) to further the advancement and innovation in learning and technology. Open University Malaysia (OUM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Wawasan Open University (WOU) jointly served as the local hosts. The objective of the event was to bring together educators, researchers, consultants, policy-makers, entrepreneurs as well as those involved in training and academic resource development to exchange and share information and ideas on learning and technology.

As the information superhighway reaches new heights and breaches boundaries, there is a need to involve all resources made available to the educational community by the IT world to further the advancement and innovation in learning and technology. The four-day event attended by over 500 participants from 48 countries, saw international academicians and IT experts presenting their research findings, ideas and products used to facilitate learning through technology. There was a great interest among the participants in mobile learning, sustainability in education, open educational resources (OERs), cloud computing and blended learning.

Among the keynote speakers were Prof James Taylor from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia who spoke about *Sustainable Higher Education Learning Futures*, Prof Asha Kanwar, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada who shared her experience and expertise on *Towards Sustainable OERs: A Perspective from the Global South*, Prof Cathleen Norris, University of North Texas, and Prof Elliot Soloway, University of Michigan, USA sharing their views on *Educating the Mobile Generation: It is Inevitable that Cellphone Computers will be Used in Education* and Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Anuar Ali of OUM who spoke about *Teaching Learning Framework through the Power of Innovation*. Among the invited speakers were Prof Paul Kim of Stanford University, USA and Prof Jan Herrington of Murdoch University, Australia who shed some new light on how mobile technology can be used to facilitate independent learning and Andrew Mitchell, representing Google, who introduced the latest cloud computing concepts using Google apps.

WOU played an active role in the successful organisation of the entire event as Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng served on the organising committee. Ishan Abeywardena of the School of Science and Technology (SST) and Deebanjli Lakshmayya of the School of Business and Administration (SBA) also contributed as members of the secretariat committee while Prof Tham Choy Yoong, Dean of the SST, attended the conference and represented WOU. Brian Goh Jin Yong, Zamakhshari Gany Abbasgany, Tang Chong Ling and Khor Kok Yeow of ITS were also present to provide technical support to the participants.

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# Old is GOLD!

## NEM takes centre stage

### WOU forum on the first stage of the New Economic Model

The recent announcement of the New Economic Model (NEM) by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak led to a number of reactions. The NEM unveiled by the PM – the first stage of a two-stage approach – is a result of deliberations between the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC) and the business community and cabinet members.

Recognising the need for a platform to discuss issues pertaining to the NEM, the Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS), along with SEDAR Institute and Wawasan Open University (WOU) organised a forum on the 'First Stage of the NEM' on 13 April 2010 held at the KL Campus.

In his welcoming remarks CPPS chairman, Tan Sri Dr Ramon Navaratnam, said that it was timely to hold a seminar on the NEM and that the government and Prime Minister deserved credit for conceptualising the first stage of the NEM as a shift from the New Economic Policy (NEP). Senator Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, explained the importance of the NEM in this period of Malaysia's history for its balanced approach towards achieving high incomes, sustainability and inclusiveness.

The three themes spearheading the NEM – high income, sustainability and inclusiveness – were echoed continuously throughout the forum which was divided into a two-

panel session. The first session entitled 'Enhancing Economic Competitiveness and High Income Economy', was moderated by Dato' Dr Michael Yeoh, CEO of Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI). The panel comprised Dato' Nicholas Zefferys, President of American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce; Dato' Dr R Thillainathan, Past President of Malaysia Economic Association; Aimi Aizal Nasharuddin, President, Co-Founder and Group Exco of Skali; and Teoh Kok Lin, Founder, Chief Investment Officer of Singular Asset Management Sdn Bhd.

The second panel discussion focused on 'Developing Creativity and Innovation, Rethinking Human Capital Development' with the Director of CPPS, Ng Yeen Seen, moderating the session and U K Menon, Deputy Vice Chancellor of WOU; Prof Norma Mansor, Secretary to the NEAC; Tunku Alizakri Raja Muhammad Alias, Deputy Director Strategic Management Department of Bank Negara Malaysia; and Dato' Dr Denison Jayasooria, Member of National IT Council and Principal Research Fellow of KITA (Institute of Ethnic Studies) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia as the panelists.

The lively session attended by over 120 participants came to an end after concluding remarks by Dato' Mah Siew Keong, Chairman of SEDAR Institute.

## WOU reaching out to the community

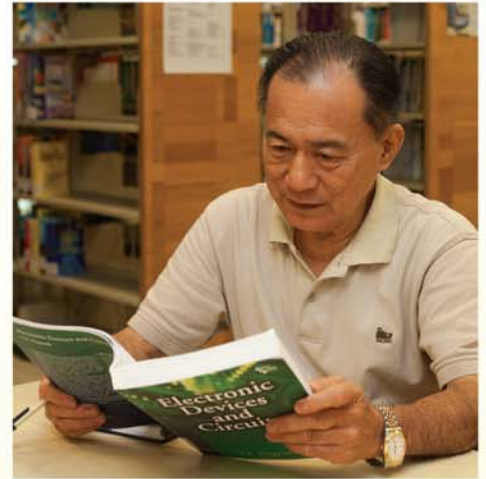
For the physically challenged, attending university can be a major logistics headache and a serious barrier to obtaining tertiary qualifications. Imagine the daily battle faced by a wheelchair-bound student who has to navigate a sprawling campus to reach his or her lectures. Try visiting a library and imagine the frustration of not being able to reach a book on a higher shelf. Simple acts that we take for granted can be major issues for physically challenged students.

In line with WOU's emphasis on social inclusivity, 'the people's university' is also offering a special 50% discount on tuition fees for physically challenged Malaysians or *Orang Kurang Upaya* (OKU). WOU's ODL concept removes many of the hassles for the

physically challenged, who can study at their own pace at a location of their choice.

Students who need to travel to the main campus or any of WOU's Regional Offices for the occasional seminar or gathering can do so with peace of mind. All of WOU's premises are wheelchair and disabled-friendly, with designated special parking bays, ramps, modified washrooms and Braille-reader lifts. Most importantly of all, WOU staff are on hand to ensure that each student gets the most out of their WOU learning experience no matter their personal circumstances.

Applications are now open for students to register for WOU programmes for the coming July 2010 semester.



**60 Years** WOU offers Lifelong Learner Discounts to senior citizens

Wawasan Open University (WOU) is offering a 50% Lifelong Learner Discount on tuition fees for students aged 60 years and above in line with the national thrust of providing quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning.

As a socially inclusive educational institution, WOU believes that lifelong learning is a fundamental right and every person no matter their age can pursue their dreams and aspirations, or simply pursue knowledge. Starting from the July 2010 semester all existing and newly enrolled senior students will enjoy the Lifelong Learner Discount for any WOU programmes.

Student Goh Kok Liang, 64, who is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronics degree at WOU welcomed the news. Goh is part of the University's pioneer batch of students who enrolled during the inaugural January 2007 intake. "I can still recall the joy of receiving a personal testimonial from the WOU Vice Chancellor a couple of years ago as a token of recognition for successfully completing my first semester," he said.

The retired secondary school teacher had been looking to pursue a degree in Electronics and decided on WOU after scanning through the courses offered by a few other institutions of higher learning.

"After I retired, I was keen to take up electronics as this particular field had long interested me. I am grateful to WOU for giving me a second chance to fulfil my dreams," declared Goh.

He lauded the Lifelong Learner Discount being offered by the University, believing that this incentive would help to create a better educated society. He remarked, "More senior citizens should now come forward and register for courses which further develop and enrich them, especially courses like management and liberal arts. WOU's ODL programmes are flexible and user-friendly as we can learn at our own pace!"

# Joining forces

WOU and DISTED College participate at Star Education Fair

For the very first time, both WOU and DISTED College participated at the Star Education Fair 2010 together under the Wawasan Education Foundation (WEF) banner – WEF is the charitable body responsible for the establishment of both WOU and DISTED.

WOU and DISTED made their presence felt at the event with four booths each, strategically situated near the entrance of the Penang International Sports Arena (PISA). Over 90 exhibitors took part in this fair held from 6 - 7 March 2010.

WOU was out in force with staff from the marketing department, academic units and the Penang Regional Office along with two student ambassadors on duty over the weekend. Also there to offer support were Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support) Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, SFLS dean Prof Dr Mogana Dhamotharan, SST dean Prof Dr Tham Choy Yoong and SBA deputy dean Dr Teoh Ai Ping.

As part of an ongoing branding exercise, the University sponsored 1,000 notepads, 50 WOU Factor t-shirts and 10 WOU thumb drives as prizes for the *Spin N Win* contest open to visitors of the fair.



# Bright minds

## Mind mapping for better memory and interaction

WOU's Penang Student Association (PSA) in collaboration with the Penang Regional Office organised a one-day workshop on Buzan Mind Mapping (Tertiary Level) at the main campus on 7 March 2010, led by Dr Janice Toh Guat Guan, a Buzan licensed instructor.

The workshop aimed to help participants discover their brain functions and encourage creativity, reflective thinking and independent thinking. The participants also learned how mind mapping could be used to sharpen their learning, memory and thinking skills.

An active "mind mapper" herself, Dr Janice is living proof that mind mapping is not a fad and she shared how she used mind mapping techniques during her PhD viva. "I was able to map the information in my head and just retrieve what I needed when questions were posed by the panel of interviewers," she said confidently.

Mind mapping is a creativity and productivity enhancing skill relevant to today's workplace where employees are supposed to think "outside the box." "With a little practice, you will be able

to see the wonders of mind mapping in your life and unleash the infinite potentials within your brain," said Dr Janice, who is also a WOU tutor.

Among the workshop participants was PSA president Chan Lee Chin, who found the session extremely beneficial as it "opens up the mind and helps to simplify complicated things or to communicate difficult concepts in a manner easy for people to understand. It breaks down details into specific key words or characters in one mind map."

Chan said mind mapping helps her to capture and convey the key points of information, adding that this comes in handy when dealing with kids at home, or with suppliers and vendors in her line of work.



# WOU offers more new Degree, Graduate Diploma and Certificate Programmes

WOU is introducing two innovative new programmes at the sub-degree level from the July 2010 semester, to provide quicker upward mobility for working adults. The Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate programmes are specially developed to provide additional exit points along the ladder of academic pursuit, enabling more adult learners the flexible opportunity of progressively raising their levels of personal and professional achievements. From the July 2010 semester, three new degree programmes will also be available.



## POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION

The Post-Graduate Diploma in Education programme is designed to meet the needs of an increasing number of graduates from various disciplines who have entered into the teaching profession without any formal qualifications in education. This planned 33-credit programme will provide both paedagogical content and skills for graduates from various disciplines to upgrade the quality of their teaching.



## BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (HONS) IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

With this programme, in-service primary school teachers and those interested in teaching young children have the opportunity for professional upgrading without having to leave their workplace, families or geographical location. Teachers with a Diploma in Education and a Certificate of Education will receive credit transfers.

Graduates from this programme can seek appointments as Graduate Teachers in primary schools or undertake postgraduate studies to advance their career in the field of education.



## BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONS) IN PSYCHOLOGY

This new programme is designed to provide students with an introduction to psychology with an emphasis on the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and cultural aspects of human development. Graduates will have the necessary skills to communicate and counsel effectively with different levels of people in different settings; demonstrate logical reasoning, critical thinking and analytical skills.

Psychology graduates can choose from a wide range of career options such as social workers, career counsellors, motivators, researchers and trainers.



## GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

WOU students will learn basic supply chain management and be able to apply rudimentary knowledge of law, human resource and other related business disciplines to their day-to-day working environment. It will also equip them with the skills to participate as team members in the design and strategic implementation of more effective supply chain operations.

This Graduate Diploma programme is suitable for students interested in working in logistics, procurement, transportation companies and warehousing related industries.



## GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT

Students will acquire basic knowledge in broad areas of business disciplines as well as skills and competencies in operational level logistics and supply chain management. At the end of the programme, students will be able to apply basic knowledge of the principles of management, human resource and logistic business related disciplines to the day-to-day operations of their business organisations.

Upon graduation, students will be suitable for positions in manufacturing and service companies, multinational distribution centres, trading companies, courier service companies, forwarder/shipping/airline companies, logistics service providers, port authorities, armed forces and transportation agencies.

### Planning Your Studies

The Graduate Certificate programme is a 37-credit hour course that can be completed in three semesters or 1.5 years.

Students can complete the 70-credit hour Graduate Diploma course in three years - six semesters or 108 weeks - or stretch their studies as long as they want.

For Degree programmes, students need to study for at least five years before they can be awarded a degree.

The self-paced learning at WOU allows students to plan and develop their own study schedule to suit their personal and work commitments.



# STOU visit WOU

## Visit by Thai university provides a platform for exchange



Wawasan Open University hosted a delegation of staff members from the International Affairs office of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU). The eight-member team from Thailand, led by STOU's Head of International Affairs, Sukanya Phromphon, were on a two-day study tour to institutions of higher learning in Malaysia.

WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng welcomed the delegation and chaired an informal discussion, also attended by members of WOU's Corporate Communications team.

After the brief exchange of ideas, Corporate Communications manager Lim Yao-han gave a PowerPoint presentation on WOU's strategic endeavours in forging international, corporate and community relations. It was an eye-opener for all as the interactive session served as a platform for both parties to share their experiences and contributions in providing open distance education.

STOU learned about WOU's efforts in reaching out to the public through unique marketing approaches including the online *Post-a-Postcard* contest, the WOU Learning Carnival, *WOU Revolution!* and the Red FM and Suria FM radio contests.

Meanwhile the STOU delegates shared information about their prison inmates programme and staff exchange initiatives

through the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), a voluntary association of government and non-government representatives of the university sector in the Asia Pacific region.

The half-day visit to the main campus culminated with a tour of the campus followed by lunch attended by Prof Wong, former Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support) Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, School of Foundation and Liberal Studies dean Prof Mogana Dhamotharan and representatives from Corporate Communications.

STOU president Assoc Prof Dr Pranee Sungkatavat extended an invitation for WOU to visit STOU which was delivered by Sukanya, the head of the Thai delegation.



# Achieving customer service excellence

Twenty-three frontline employees of Wawasan Open University attended the inaugural hands-on customer service workshop. The workshop was organised to encourage them to think outside the box, enhance their communication skills, and to improve their customer understanding to provide the best help possible.



The two-day workshop on 'Prospecting Customers Through Excellent Customer Service' was organised by WOU's Human Resources Department, and this was followed with similar sessions conducted in the Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru regional offices.

In opening the first workshop in Penang, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun commented that staff training and development are important for a growing organisation like WOU which will continue to focus on training and development over the next few years.

"Customer service excellence is part of the University's branding. Branding is not just about marketing and advertisements but about providing a holistic experience to our customers," he clarified. He also encouraged staff to demonstrate more empathy with customers and to see things from the customers' perspective as "this will allow them to manage customers better".

The trainer Catherine Lourdes elaborated on six modules during the workshop – introduction to customer service; prospecting sales successfully; building rapport with the customer; understanding the importance of closing your sales; service breakdowns and recovery; and "working as a team".

She spoke on developing a customer-centric mindset and to focus on serving the customers. She pointed out that to prospect sales successfully, one has to build a customer profile and use this data to influence or draw their interest to a product.

On the topic of building rapport with the customer, Lourdes mentioned the importance of establishing trust and of simple gestures like handshakes, using names, sincerity and friendliness, affirmation and creating small talk to establish common ground.

She explained that staff should be able to recognise an opportunity, create a perfect offering, develop customer loyalty, identify buying signals with closing questions, and use the "closing strategy" of repeating things for the purpose of closing sales.

The workshop was attended by 14 RO staff from Ipoh, Johor Bahru, Kota Bharu, Kuching and Penang, including PGRO director K Manoharan and assistant manager Teh Kim Kow, while the rest of the participants were from General Services and Administration, and Marketing.



## ICTs in higher education shifts focus to learners

The phenomenal growth of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is transforming institutions of higher education and has shifted the focus from the teacher to the learner. Speaking on *ICTs in Higher Education: Who Stands to Gain?* at the main campus on 18 May, Prof Asha Kanwar, Vice President of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), remarked that 21st century learners are young and comprise of more women.

She said everyone involved – the government, institutions of higher learning, teachers and learners – stand to gain from ICT growth but "the real beneficiaries are the learners". The emphasis of government and institutional efforts are on the learner and their learning styles, while teachers prepare study materials in multi-media formats and provide learner support services.

She commented that the 'new learner' in the early 1980s looked for new education, training and skills for personal and career advancement, while the digital natives of the 21st century are technology-savvy. She foresees the emergence of a still newer learner, the 'ultimate learner', who is groomed right from pre-school days through the school years and higher education to be a lifelong learner equipped to handle ICTs and is motivated to learn in all circumstances. On the question to what extent the 'ultimate learner' is achieved in Third World countries, she said that it is just an abstract notion now but will eventually become a reality. "In South Asia and Africa, mobile phone technology is fast spreading and learning will take place through the technology that people have access to," she clarified.

Earlier in her talk, Prof Kanwar said that analysts estimate that by 2020, 40% of the global workforce will be knowledge workers with tertiary qualifications. The World Bank finds that for countries to achieve sustainable economic development, the Age Participation Rates (APRs) of 18 – 50 years old in higher education must be 40-50%, but APRs are less than 15% of this age group in much of Asia.

She felt that building more brick and mortar institutions to cope with the rising demand will not work for most countries, and that open and distance learning emerges as a viable option as countries struggle to improve access, enhance the quality and cut the costs of higher education.

# Student disciplinary regulations under the spotlight

About 28 representatives from private higher educational institutions attended the one-day programme on *Implementation of Student Disciplinary Procedures in Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEIs)*, organised by WOU's Centre for Professional Development and Continuing Education (PACE) at the Berjaya Times Square Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

Many of the participants from Sarawak, Malacca, Penang, Kedah, Kuala Lumpur and Selangor were in charge of managing student affairs at their respective educational institutions.

WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Continuing Education) U K Menon presented an overview of the legal requirements on student discipline and procedures, and a practical guide on drafting student disciplinary rules. He also spoke on the importance of student counselling, and how counselling can help tackle student indiscipline.

Meanwhile Paul Linus Andrews, Head of the Law Department, School of Business, Sunway University College looked into the general legal principles surrounding student discipline and disciplinary procedures. He highlighted the key features of natural justice and procedural fairness – the right to a fair hearing; the rule against bias; the principle of legitimate expectation; and the right to appeal.

Andrews described the right to a fair hearing and the rule against bias as the "twin pillars that support natural justice".

Menon and Andrews then conducted a joint session on internal disciplinary proceedings, the requirements under the Private Higher Educational Act 1996 including the recent June 2009 amendments, and the student's right to appeal. The amendments to the student disciplinary procedures in private colleges and universities have made it necessary for institutions to review their internal policies and

procedures to ensure compliance with the law.

A lively Q&A session followed the talks with participants raising questions related to student disciplinary regulations and how these are applied at learning institutions.



## CREATING a positive corporate image

PACE also held a one-day event on *Crisis Communication and Public Relations on the importance of projecting a good corporate image and handling crises effectively*.

Dr Sankaran Ramanathan, a member of the academic team that established Malaysia's first media and communications programme at Universiti Teknologi MARA, spoke on *The Changing Nature of Public Relations and Crisis Communication*. He spoke on the handling of pressures to businesses and resources, citing examples of how agencies dealt with the volcanic ash in Iceland and the related airline travel chaos, and also the H1N1 outbreak and the precautions taken by the relevant authorities in Malaysia.

Aisha Rashid, an accredited PR practitioner, in her presentation on *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*, stressed on the benefits of CSR to business, and the need for companies to show concern to the employees, community, and environment. "By not engaging in CSR, companies are not only under-managing their effect on society and the environment, but they are under-managing their own economic advantage," she quipped.

Senior editor of *The Star*, T Selva, in his talk on *Media Relations*, shared the dos and don'ts for better media relations and that a good media relationship is earned through mutual respect, objective approach and frankness. Among the guidelines for working with the press are: to talk from the viewpoint of public interest and not that of the organisation; if you do not want some statement quoted, don't make it; don't argue or lose your cool with a reporter; and tell the truth, even if it hurts.

Finally, Prof Dato' Mohd Hamdan Adnan, Institute of Public Relations Malaysia president, shared his thoughts on *Effective Government Relations: Dealing with authorities successfully*. He touched on legislative procedures, central agencies, public sector and the New Economic Model, and called for a better understanding of the Federal Constitution.

WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor U K Menon chaired the forum on *Public Relations in Changing Times* with the four speakers as panelists. The issues raised included the role of media reporting, future of the print media, the impact of social

networking tools and public communication with government departments/agencies.



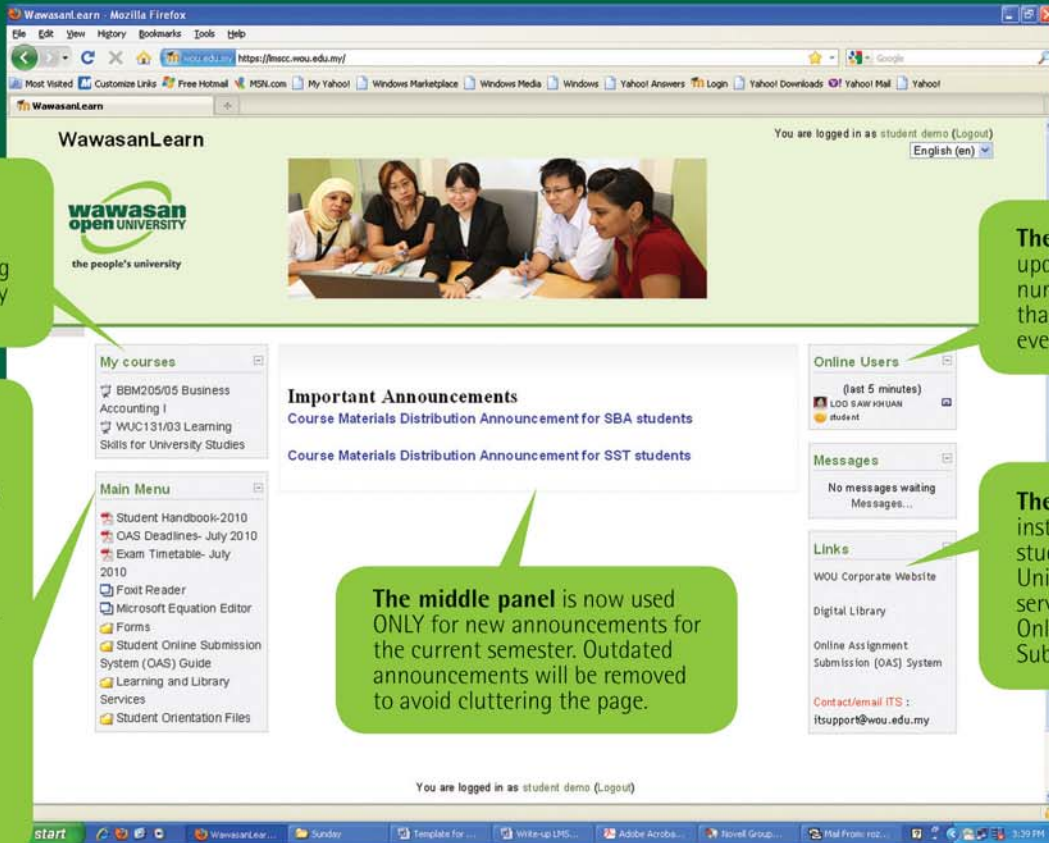
PACE is WOU's bridge to the community and conducts training programmes for the private higher education sector in a wide range of areas, such as establishment of institutions, advertising regulations and so on.



# WawasanLearn Updates

WawasanLearn, WOU's learner management system that allows students to manage their studies and interact with tutors will be given a fresh "coat of paint" this coming July semester and the new interface is meant to further enhance students' learning experience. The new design is clean, simple and easy on the eyes while retaining the three-pane features (for the courses).

A number of changes have been made to the main page for WawasanLearn which is now segmented into fewer categories so that items can be viewed clearly. To make navigating around the site easier, the number of scrolls on the main page has been reduced.



The top left panel displays personalised information about each student including the list of courses they are enrolled in.

The main menu box displays information and updates from WOU's departments. This box also contains all the resources that students need such as Foxit Reader and Microsoft Equation Editor. These resources can be displayed as a web page or linked to any single file in PDF or PowerPoint format.

The right panel updates the number of user(s) that log in online every five minutes.

The links panel instantly connects students to the University's online services including Online Assignment Submission System.

The middle panel is now used ONLY for new announcements for the current semester. Outdated announcements will be removed to avoid cluttering the page.

WOU is set to introduce its latest development in courseware – the e-Textbook. More than just an electronic version of the printed textbook, the e-Textbooks by Pearson Publishing includes features that will enhance the student's learning experience, making it easier for the student to read, share and navigate through the pages. The incorporation of multimedia content provides a new dimension of learning for the student.

Some of the key features of the e-Textbooks are:

- Note-taking and multi-colour highlighting of text
- Synching and sharing of notes with coursemates

## e-Textbooks for WOU students

- Exporting of notes to Microsoft Word
- Simultaneous searches through multiple e-books
- Various display styles and layouts
- Playback of multimedia – audio and video files

By July 2010, WOU will release e-Textbook versions for 7 courses – University Maths B, Financial Management and Analysis, Sales and Distribution Management, Strategic Human Resource Management, Visual Programming, Microprocessor, and The Arts for Children in Language Learning.



## WOU confers Professorship

The WOU Council recently approved the conferment of the University's highest academic rank of 'Professor' on Assoc Prof Dr Malachi Edwin Vethamani, Dean of the School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC), effective 16 April 2010.

Prof Edwin, a leading expert in the field of teaching English and Literature in English, joined WOU last year after 23 years at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) where he rose to become an

Associate Professor at the Faculty of Educational Studies. He holds a PhD in Literature in English from University of Nottingham, UK, and was a Chevening Award (1993-96) and Fulbright (2000) scholar.

He is the current Vice President of the Asian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (Asia TEFL); he was also president of the Malaysian English Language Teaching Association (MELTA) for seven years before being appointed its advisor.



WOU's Staff Recreational Club (SRC) organised a month-long charity drive in conjunction with the Chinese New Year celebrations to raise funds for the Shan Children's Home in Tanjung Tokong. On 13 March 2010, SRC members handed over RM1,500 in cash and essential items during their visit.

Shan Children's Home is currently home to 22 children aged between 9 - 14 years, and it hopes to accommodate up to 40 children once its financial condition improves. The Home,

which officially opened on 14 December 2008, looks after orphans and neglected children of all backgrounds and is run by a team of dedicated full-time staff, assisted by volunteers, under the management of executive administrator Dr S Poornachandran.

SRC president Dr Andy Liew led a five-member team to the Home and presented stationery, clothing and food items, as well as treat the children to a fast food lunch. According to Dr Andy, "This is part of SRC's community services project and a simple gesture from the University

to give back to society."

In 2009, the SRC visited some 200 folks at the Silver Jubilee Home for the Aged. He said that the SRC chose the Children's Home this time around as "the newly-established home urgently requires public support to sustain their daily activities". The Home solely depends on donations from well-wishers to cater to the physical, emotional and educational needs of the children.

## Stepping Up Innovation For Economic Growth

Malaysia has the capacity to unleash its innovation potential to enhance its competitiveness and productivity in the global economy. "Innovation is key to Malaysia's long-term prosperity," said World Bank economist for Malaysia, Philip Schellekens during his presentation of World Bank's April 2010 Malaysia Economic Monitor themed *Growth Through Innovation*.

The talk was part of a public lecture series organised by Khazanah Nasional Bhd and the Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute (SERI) at the WOU main campus on 20 April 2010.

Schellekens clarified that innovation potential can be unleashed by improving the capabilities for innovation, the driving force of innovation, and the amplifiers of innovation. He noted that "in Malaysia, 40% who want to innovate cite lack of finances as a major obstacle to innovation activity". In reviewing Malaysia's innovation performance, he said despite product sophistication, surveys suggest limited local innovation efforts with domestic value-add remaining low. The challenge is therefore to move the nation's source of competitiveness from low-cost to high-economy.

Meanwhile SERI senior fellow Dr Lim Mah-Hui in his talk *Nowhere to Hide: The Great Financial Crisis - Causes and Challenges Ahead*, said that from 1970 to 2007, there were 124 banking crises, an average

3.4 per year, and a big financial crisis every 10 years. He urged Asia to re-look its export growth model by looking at China and other regional competitors; to re-look at capital controls as it undermines monetary policies and destabilises the real economy; and to look at alternatives to the US dollar as an international currency.

The session ended with the launch of Dr Lim's book *Nowhere to Hide* by Khazanah Board member Tan Sri Andrew Sheng, Bukit Bendera MP Liew Chin Tong, SERI chairman Dato' Dr Sharom Ahmat, and the author. About 200 people attended the lecture, including Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap and WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng.



# WOU helps Malaysian schools prepare for new English texts



A brand new set of literary texts will be introduced into the English Literature component for the KBSM English language syllabus affecting Forms 1 and 4, beginning this year. To help English teachers familiarise themselves with the new texts, a workshop was jointly organised by WOU's School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC) and the Penang English Language Learning and Teaching Association (PELLTA).

The one-day workshop held at WOU's main campus on 10 April 2010 attracted close to 70 school teachers and private educators from the northern region.

In his welcome speech, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng stressed on the role of WOU as a strong advocate of lifelong learning. "This workshop is part of WOU's contribution towards the professional development of the teaching community," he added.

Dean of SELC, Prof Dr Malachi Edwin Vethamani, a renowned expert in the teaching of the English Language and literature, conducted the workshop which was only open to PELLTA members.

He urged the teachers to play their roles in encouraging students to develop a lifelong reading habit and not just for the purpose of passing examinations only.

The session began with the reading of two poems, after which the participants were introduced to the different teaching activities they could

carry out in the classroom. Feedback from the participants was positive. Zarina Hashim, a teacher from SMK Mak Mandin in Butterworth found the workshop to be an eye-opener as it gave her more creative teaching ideas.

Steven Grumach, a retired civil servant and former journalist from Bukit Mertajam, felt he achieved a better understanding about the teaching of literature, thanks to the workshop. Grumach who is now a private tutor said, "I'll

use the strategies I learnt to help my students relate better to the literary texts."

SELC, with the collaboration of WOU's Centre for Professional Development and Continuing Education (PACE) based in Kuala Lumpur, regularly conducts training workshops and seminars in specialised areas of English teaching.



**Not allowing his extreme, often difficult, working conditions to stand in his path towards earning a quality university degree, Ralpheal Louis Ubok is determined to rise further in his studies while holding down a tough job – all thanks to WOU.**

The 28-year-old has been working as an operation instrumentation technician with Sarawak Shell Bhd for three years now. Far removed from a cushy office environment, he works at an oil platform in the South China Sea about 200km offshore from Bintulu.

Ralpheal admitted he was elated when WOU opened up a regional office in Kuching last October. "This is a dream come true for Sarawakians to achieve their goals and ambitions." He enrolled for the Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronics programme,

and is proud to be among the inaugural batch of students from East Malaysia.

According to Ralpheal, WOU offers "the best mode of studies compared to other open universities". He added, "WOU has provided me with the chance to continue my studies in the field that I love, Electronics. I am studying again, and I can actually put into practice what I learn even before graduation!"

On how he manages to work and study, Ralpheal explained that the offshore rig where he works has Internet connections and telephone services on board, allowing him to surf WOU's learning management system (LMS) and student portal at any time he wishes. After his 6am-6pm working shift and dinner, he spends a few hours reading his course materials and textbooks, doing



**"Working at a tough job – yet determined to study"**

research and assignments, and browsing the LMS.

During his two weeks off every month when he is onshore, Ralpheal concentrates more on his studies, family and friends. He proudly quipped that "choosing to study with WOU was really the best choice that I've made!"

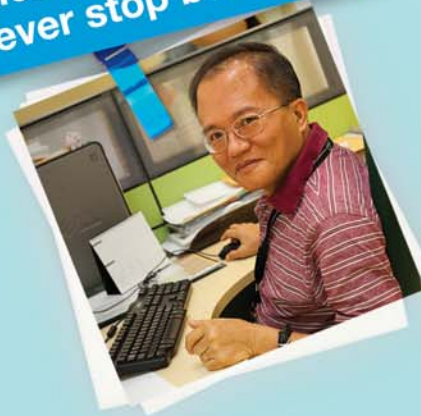
**"Don't stop believing, hold on to that feeling," is tutor Fan Kok Keong's advice to all working adults who want to enhance their skills and knowledge. His quote is from the popular TV musical series Glee and he wants more students to embrace this thinking.**

Having taught students, teachers and working adults – and considering his role as an educator to be his "true calling" – Fan knows that when students sign up to study at WOU they believe that they can achieve their dreams. However with deadlines, work commitments, personal commitments and family demands, the initial confidence starts to wane. He tells adult learners "to hold on to that feeling – the feeling that they can succeed" even during stressful moments.

He added, "I would like to see all my students graduate from WOU with a degree, equipped with the relevant skills and the confidence to succeed at the workplace." Fan has conducted tutorials on *Communication Skills for the*

## Glee Fan

**"Advice from a lifelong educator – never stop believing!"**



Workplace for undergraduate students at WOU since 2007.

He became adjunct course coordinator in 2009 and was also a co-writer for the first edition of *Learning Skills for University Studies* after retiring as lecturer from Maktab Perguruan Persekutuan Pulau Pinang in 2006.

"I can relate to what WOU students are going through as I didn't get a place in university on my first attempt after leaving secondary school. Several years later, I became a student at Universiti Malaya where I obtained a Certificate in TESL, and later a degree in TESL at UPM and subsequently a post-graduate degree at Reading University, UK on a British Council scholarship. See, we shouldn't stop believing," stressed Fan.

Despite the demands of his work, he still finds time to read, listen to music, play the guitar and is currently teaching himself to play the piano. Fan is definitely a firm believer of lifelong learning and for him, learning never stops!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### WOU Convocation Ceremony

23 October (Saturday) | WOU main campus  
The convocation ceremony will see the award of Master's to the first batch of graduating CeMBA students from WOU.

### Student Info

#### Student Orientation

For the July 2010 intake, the student orientation will be held as follows to acquaint students with

the University and its mode of studies:  
18 July (Sunday) | WOU main campus /  
Regional Offices nationwide

*\*For KBRO, the Orientation Day will be on 17 July 2010 (Sat)*

### Enrolment for Jan 2011 semester

The enrolment of courses for the Jan 2011 semester starts on 28 Sept 2010 at all the Regional Offices, and a day earlier at the Kota Bharu Regional Office.

### Get the latest WOU updates from Facebook and Twitter!

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 twitter

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<http://twitter.com/wou2u>

## In the minds of our readers

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

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

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

**Main Campus**  
**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](mailto:enquiry@wou.edu.my)

**WOU Regional Offices and Learning Centres**  
Open Tuesday to Sunday: 10.00am – 7.00pm

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

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

**Kuala Lumpur Regional Office**  
Level 3 Menara PGRM, 8 Jalan Pudu Ulu, 56100 Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.  
Tel: 03-9281 7323 / 9283 8323 | Fax: 03-9284 9323  
Email: [ro\\_kl@wou.edu.my](mailto:ro_kl@wou.edu.my)  
(Library Services available Tuesday to Sunday, 10.00am-7.00pm)

**Petaling Jaya 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: [ro\\_bu@wou.edu.my](mailto:ro_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](mailto: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](mailto: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  
Email: [ro\\_kc@wou.edu.my](mailto:ro_kc@wou.edu.my)