

WOU passes MQA Academic Performance Audit with flying colours

In 2010, WOU was audited by a Panel from the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) as part of a nationwide exercise conducted on 58 universities, branch campuses and university colleges. The Academic Performance Audit (APA) Panel evaluated the University's performance standards across nine areas (see table below).

In preparation for the APA, WOU submitted detailed documentation in accordance with a template provided by the MQA. The submission included a Self-Review Portfolio. The submission documents allowed the audit panel a comprehensive insight into WOU's operations prior to their on-site audit visit to the Main Campus in Penang and three Regional Offices (Kuala Lumpur RO, Kota Bharu RO and Johor Bahru RO) to inspect the facilities and systematically interview WOU academics, tutors, operations staff, students, external assessors and examiners.

In addition to these face-to-face interviews, the Audit Panel also examined the University's extensive reports and working documents, WOU's online learning environment *WawasanLearn* and the University's digital library resources. At the completion of the site visit, an oral exit report was provided by the Panel Head (Prof Dr Abdul

Razak Hamdan) as part of the exit meeting with WOU's senior management. The exit report was most encouraging and the University awaited the written report with great excitement.

The Final Evaluation Report, which was received recently, provided the Wawasan learning community with great satisfaction and pride as it included:

- 27 commendations and 12 affirmations across all 9 areas evaluated.
- There were only 2 recommendations for improvement.

Of the two recommendations received, one related to putting in place 'a formal appeal mechanism'. This was, in fact, complied with when the WOU Senate approved the Appeal Mechanism Paper at its meeting held on 26 March 2010. The other recommendation is related to the provision of non-academic counselling services to our students. Given the diversity of WOU's student body with respect to age, marital status, work and home environment, the enormous

range of counselling expertise that is needed (compared to 18-23 year old students living in a campus environment) provides a particular challenge. The University is nevertheless continuing to look for possible solutions.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng was elated with the outcome. "The report provides a strong endorsement of WOU's quality assurance system and processes which have been put in place to ensure that our students enjoy a high quality learning experience and the quality of our graduates matches those coming out of other outstanding institutions in the country."

"The hard work put in by our founding fathers and current staff has been amply rewarded. We will, of course, continue to bring on further refinements to our quality processes and strive to bring our staff quality culture to even higher levels," he emphasised.

cont. page 2

AREAS OF EVALUATION	Number		RECOMMENDATION
	COMMENDATION	AFFIRMATION	
	1	2	0
Area 1 Vision, Mission, Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes	5	2	0
Area 2 Curriculum Design and Delivery	4	0	2
Area 3 Assessment of Students	3	0	0
Area 4 Student Selection and Support Services	4	2	0
Area 5 Academic Staff	4	2	0
Area 6 Educational Resources	1	2	0
Area 7 Programme Monitoring and Review	4	1	0
Area 8 Leadership, Governance and Administration	1	1	2
Area 9 Continual programme Quality improvement			12
Total	27		



Vice Chancellor's voice
Pg 2



In the limelight
Pg 2 - 3



In the know
Pg 4 - 9



In the schools
Pg 10 - 12



Highlights

"WOU is commended for:

- Granting a very high degree of autonomy to the Schools in designing programme curriculum.
- Having a clearly defined process to develop, evaluate and review its programme curriculum with active involvement of the various stakeholders.
- Continually evaluating and reviewing its programmes especially the content and delivery method.
- Having a highly qualified group of programme coordinators.
- Taking various initiatives in developing ODL materials and supporting innovations in teaching and learning methodologies including the use of a user-friendly learning management system and in integrating print, CD, Internet, videoconferencing and face-to-face components for teaching and learning processes.
- Linking the assessment with course learning outcome, and formulating a rigorous assessment system comparable to international best practices.
- Having extensive linkages with renowned academics.
- Having a well developed library with adequate references and electronic resources, backed by professional staff. The ICT and other support services and facilities are up-to-date and staffed by qualified personnel to provide assistance in usage of the latest technology.
- Having policies that create a conducive environment to generate innovation and creativity.
- Formalising collaboration with external sectors through the signing of MoUs and MoAs, followed by the development of relevant programmes.
- Establishing the Quality Assurance Unit and giving it a prominent role within the WOU system."

The outcome of the nationwide Academic Performance Audit conducted in 2010 was a source of pride and satisfaction for the WOU learning community. The Panel Report for WOU included 27 commendations, 12 affirmations and only two recommendations across all nine areas evaluated. It provides strong recognition of our University's quality assurance (QA) system and processes that have been put in place to ensure that the quality of our graduates matches those coming out of other outstanding institutions in the country.

One area that should see further enhancement in the near future is in the academic support services where the arrival of the newly appointed Assistant Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Mohan Menon, an ODL practitioner of international repute, should bring about improvements in the quality of the course materials and the digital library resources. Under Prof Menon's leadership, the University's engagement with the Open Education Resources movement is also expected to be intensified.

Another area that is being targeted for continuous quality enhancement is staff competency in the theory and practice of ODL, where a comprehensive seven module training programme leading to certification is being introduced. All WOU's academic staff are required to complete this programme as part of their competency development.

The initial suite of 11 programmes offered by the School of Science & Technology and the School of Business & Administration are being put through the full accreditation exercise in anticipation of the first graduates by the end of the January 2011 semester. Accreditation by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency signifies the achievement of prescribed quality standards. The very positive outcomes of the APA audit and the successful accreditation of the CeMBA programme last year provides a basis for approaching the programme accreditation exercise with quiet confidence.

In the coming July 2011 semester, seven new programmes (see page 3) will be launched. The launch of the MBA in Construction Management, together with the Bachelor of Technology in Construction Management last semester, will provide construction industry workers new opportunities to upgrade their knowledge and skills, without having to leave their current employment. These additional programmes extend the University's total programme offerings to 40, adding further substance to WOU's mission to expand opportunities in higher education for all Malaysians.

Let me end by wishing all WOU students 'happy learning' and best wishes in the coming examinations.



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Ishan Abeywardena
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Boey Hein Lee

New programmes provide more choices for WOU students

WOU is set to introduce seven new programmes – five Bachelor of Technology (Hons) and two Master of Business Administration (MBA) offerings – for the coming July 2011 semester, all from the School of Science and Technology (SST).

BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY (HONS) IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

JPT/BPP(U)/(MQA/PA0092)12/15

This programme equips IT professionals with software engineering skills and trains software engineers to design and develop complex and efficient software. Students employ the latest technologies and programming languages, develop theoretical understanding and in-depth practical experience of designing, constructing and modifying a wide range of software systems.

The students will acquire sound knowledge and expertise in software development skills in order to place them successfully in computing industries. Graduates can choose careers as software engineering programmers/analysts, software engineers, project managers, software developers, database administrators, system administrators, and IT consultants.



BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY (HONS) IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

JPT/BPP(U)/(MQA/PA0056)12/15

More and more organisations are switching to customised Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions which can be tailored around their existing processes rather than going through a re-engineering process which results in large costs and a longer implementation time. There is a large market for employees with expertise in software development, business analysis and software quality assurance who understand the processes which take place within an organisation.

Graduates will be able to apply the knowledge and principles of software development in ERP development. They can join sales and marketing, technical support, etc in organisations offering ready-made ERP solutions to industries. Another option is to join software development houses which tailor ERP solutions, and these are organisations which mostly target SMEs – they can find work as ERP application developers, web ERP developers, ERP reports experts, database architects, business analysts, QA engineers, and R&D engineers.

BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY (HONS) IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS

JPT/BPP(U)/(MQA/PA0200)02/16

This programme aims to provide the students with a solid foundation of

telecommunications technology theory and practice as well as an in-depth appreciation of key specialisations in communications such as wireless communications, mobile Internet communications and optical communications.

Graduates can venture into many industries and commerce such as telecommunications, sales and marketing, consumer telecommunications, security equipments, computing, and information communications and media. They can work with telecommunication service companies or in the manufacturing of telecommunication system products as engineers, technical marketing executives, sales engineers, equipment testing engineers, technical executives, telecommunications technicians, and quality control supervisors.



BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY (HONS) IN DATABASE MANAGEMENT

JPT/BPP(U)/(MQA/PA0201)02/16

This programme aims to equip learners with a very deep technical knowledge of how to design, maintain and deploy large scale enterprise level databases. The programme concentrates on Microsoft SQL Server database technology which is one of the most commonly used and trusted database technologies in the market.

Graduates can find employment as database administrators, database designers and database architects, or join the industry and contribute in projects which require data-driven software application development.

BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY (HONS) IN NETWORKS AND DATA COMMUNICATION

JPT/BPP(U)/(MQA/PA0234)02/16

This programme aims to equip students with the necessary skills and techniques specific to the networking industry to enable them to function more efficiently in their job roles. Graduates can join the industry locally and internationally as networking specialists who can contribute in large scale projects. They can help with the designing, deploying, managing, supporting and optimising of the networks of business organisations, academic institutions, factories, hospitals and even governments to ensure the smooth running of day-to-day critical operations.



MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

JPT/BPP(U)/(MQA/PA0054)12/15

The programme will benefit specialist professionals working in the construction industry, especially engineers, quantity surveyors, architects, project managers, planners, or contractors looking for advancement to higher management positions. They will acquire competencies required to manage the whole business of the construction environment.

Graduates may enter a broad range of careers in construction and related business, services and public utilities. For technical specialists such as engineers working in design, site supervision, and maintenance, this MBA prepares them to upgrade their knowledge and skills required for more senior level positions such as site managers, project managers and general managers. Graduates with industrial experience may also build their own consultancy companies.

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

JPT/BPP(U)/(MQA/PA0055)02/16

This programme is designed for those working in the manufacturing environment, such as production and process engineers, quality control engineers, facility engineers, health and safety executives, IT specialists, or marketing executives. The degree will help them progress in their chosen career path.

This MBA equips learners to handle a diverse range of management responsibilities; in finance, quality and reliability, operations, human resource and the design and management of the supply chain. Graduates may enter a broad range of careers in manufacturing, services and public utilities. For engineers working in process engineering, quality control, and maintenance, this programme prepares them to upgrade their knowledge and skills required for more senior-level positions such as departmental managers or plant managers. Graduates who already have the industrial experience may build their own consultancy companies.

Sharing ODL expertise



WOU builds relationships with reputable international providers of higher education to forge strong networks and to promote the sharing of teaching innovations and ideas. The University recently welcomed a 70-strong delegation from the Sjakhyakirti University Palembang (Unisti) in Indonesia on 24 November 2010.

The group of Unisti's Master of Public Administration (MPA) students, led by Deputy Rector Prof Dr Ir Faizal Daud, and academic staff from the university's Faculty of Administrative Studies were in Malaysia for a four-day study tour of government agencies and universities.

On hand to greet the Indonesian delegation were then WOU School of Business and Administration (SBA) Deputy Dean Dr Teoh Ai Ping, SBA Senior Lecturer Prakash Arumugam, Head of Marketing and Communications Lillie See, and Corporate Communications Manager Lim Yao-han.

The postgraduate students, mostly Indonesian government officials, were impressed by WOU's unique mode of delivery as an open distance learning institution. Prof Faizal also expressed keen interest in future collaboration between Unisti and WOU in the MPA programme.

WOU's growing reputation attracts interest



WOU hosted a delegation of about 60 faculty members from Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMCOU) in December 2010, in an effort to foster closer relationships and distance learning.

HCMCOU Vice Rector Prof Dr Nguyen Thuan led the delegation, comprising of academics, instructional designers and support staff, on a half-day visit to the main campus, where they were briefed about WOU by Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng.

The visitors were then introduced to WOU's learning support facilities and services for students including: e-library, plagiarism detection software 'Turnitin', learning management system, online assignment submission, and video-conferencing by WOU's School of Science and Technology Senior Lecturer Ishan Abeywardena, then School of Business and Administration (SBA) Deputy Dean Dr Teoh Ai Ping, SBA Senior Lecturer Prakash Arumugam and Senior Infrastructure Support Analyst Khor Kok Yeow.



NEW Assistant Vice Chancellor for WOU

Prof Dr Mohandas Balakrishna Menon from Kerala, India joins WOU as the new Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support) in April 2011.

Prof Menon, 61, was previously the Deputy Director and Chief of the Education Planning and Management Division, UNESCO-UNRWA Department of Education at Amman, Jordan.

He undertook various duties and functions under the overall authority of the Assistant Director-General, UNESCO and the direct supervision of the Director of Education of United Nations Relief Fund and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. He was involved in advising and assisting the Director of Education and the divisional chiefs in formulating policies related to education in accordance with the rules of the Ministries of Education of the Arab Host Governments and the Palestine Authority.

Prof Menon was team leader and education specialist at the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for seven years from 2001 to 2008; and prior to that Director of the School of Education at the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi from 1992 to 2001. He was also Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Institute of Open Schooling, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi, India.

He holds a PhD in Education, with specialisation in Educational Technology and Instructional Design, and a Master of Education from Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India. He obtained his Bachelor of Education from the University of Mysore, Master of Science in Botany from the University of Calicut, and Bachelor of Science (Botany, Zoology and Chemistry) from the University of Kerala, India.

He was conferred the Honorary Doctor of Letters by the Open University of Sri Lanka in November 2008 for his work in education in the Commonwealth that has spanned 30 years.



Vietnam Foundation leaders visit WOU



A three-member delegation from the Vietnam Foundation led by its chairman Dr Kien Pham visited WOU on 13-14 January 2011 to explore bilateral and multilateral partnerships with WOU and the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU). Currently WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng is the President of the AAOU.

Prof Wong, Deputy Vice Chancellors Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye (Academic) and Dr Seah Soo Aun (Operations), Honorary Director of WOU's Institute for Research and Innovation (IRI) Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Dr Gajaraj Dhanarajan and the heads of a few departments attended the briefing sessions.

The Vietnam Foundation presentation provided an opportunity for WOU staff from the Schools, Educational Technology and Publishing Unit, and Learning and Library Services to learn about the activities of the Vietnam Foundation, especially in relation to the Open Textbook initiative and the Enterprise Rhaptos software platform.



Freshies attend Orientation Day

JAN INTAKE 2011

Over 900 students embarked on a new journey to realise their dreams at WOU for the January 2011 semester. Freshies converged at the main campus, regional offices (RO) and learning centres nationwide during the Orientation Day organised by the various ROs on January 16th, and by the Kota Bharu Regional Office (KBRO) on January 15th.

KOTA BHARU RO

At KBRO, 15 out of the total 28 new students who had enrolled for the January 2011 semester turned up for orientation. KBRO Director Azly Yong Abdullah welcomed the students; while the oath-taking was led by Commonwealth Executive MBA student Ong Khang Woon.

IPOH RO

Meanwhile in Ipoh, 57 out of the total 92 new students attended Orientation Day at the Regional Office; WOU's School of Science and Technology Dean Prof Dr Tham Choy Yoong gave a briefing on the ODL model, and Ipoh RO Director Ching Huey Ling presented the University rules and regulations.

WOU student Kishin Sham Mahtani, 35, was excited and nervous about going back to school after 15 years. Having spent his childhood and most of his life in West Africa and the UK, he returned to Malaysia in November 2009 and chanced upon a WOU newspaper advertisement on the Bachelor of Business (Hons) degree in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management.

Microsoft applications trainer Tan Poow Suan, 45, hopes to apply the knowledge she gains from WOU to her job at the Penang Skills Development Centre.



Expanding WOU's network WOU signs MoU with JCI Malaysia



JCI Malaysia will offer the use of its existing facilities for WOU to promote its educational programmes to JCI members nationwide.

level qualifications for self-enrichment and professional advancement," he said.

The MoU was signed by WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun and JCI Malaysia national president Joseph Chieng Jin Ek in a ceremony on 8 January 2011, witnessed by WOU's Head of Marketing and Communications Lillie See and JCI Malaysia past national president Ong Seng Huat.

Dr Seah also noted that the collaboration between WOU and JCI Malaysia is "especially poignant since our founding Chancellor Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu founded the Penang Junior Chamber (now known as JCI Penang) in 1955 and was elected its first president."

To reach out to more working adults and professionals, WOU signed an MoU with Junior Chamber International (JCI) Malaysia that offers its members, their families and friends the opportunity to study for a university-level qualification under a direct and open entry system. JCI Malaysia will also become a member of WOU's Valued Partner Programme (VPP), and have access to the many benefits provided by this programme.

In his speech, Dr Seah highlighted that the MoU will serve to spearhead collaborative efforts between JCI Malaysia and WOU towards realising the University's objective of becoming the preferred institution of higher learning among the working adults in Malaysia. "We have also forged partnerships and collaborations with other like-minded institutions and organisations to promote the pursuit of University-



Mastering English – the gateway to knowledge



that parents can then decide to send their children to a particular school if they want their kids to learn these subjects in English, Malay or in their mother tongues."

Dato' O K Lee, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers Northern Branch chairman

"Many university graduates who come for interviews have a bad command of the English language. The Internet is a powerful source of information for science and technology, and Malaysia does not have the resources to translate these into Malay."

The debate over the use of English to teach Science and Maths in Malaysian schools has been a hot topic. Recently, WOU, Penang Gerakan and Parent Action Group for Education Malaysia (PAGE) held a public forum on *A Discourse on Malaysian Education Policies: Science and Maths in English as an Option* at the main campus where 'movers and shakers' from industry and academia shared their views.

Datin Rohana Weiler, Vice President, Asia Pacific Human Resources in Agilent Technologies

"The workforce that emerges from the Malaysian education policy should be able to undertake research and development and build the future growth of companies in Malaysia. A good command of English has helped our workforce stand level with developed nations in its capability to do R&D and present technical papers at global conferences.

"As technology changes very fast, tech companies often have to give new recruits additional on-the-job training, we shouldn't have to give them English lessons as well."

Prof Dr Malachi Edwin Vethamani, Former Dean of WOU's School of Education, Languages and Communications

"Using English to teach Science and Maths will give greater access to knowledge since English is the language of knowledge. Although countries like Korea, Japan and Germany do not have English as their first language, the key factor is accessibility to knowledge. There is a strong industry of excellent translation in Korea, Japan and Germany."



Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim, PAGE chairperson

"The decision to teach in English or BM should ultimately be left to the individual schools, so



Background

In 2009, the Education Minister announced the reversal of the policy of teaching of Science and Maths in English – introduced by then Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed in 2003 – which is to become effective after 2012, when schools will revert to the teaching and learning of Science and Maths in Bahasa Malaysia and the mother tongues.

WOU coaches Convent Green Lane to success!

Athena Enterprise, Convent Green Lane's student-run company, grabbed third placing in the inaugural Asia Pacific Region Junior Achievement (JA) Company of the Year Competition held in Hong Kong in January 2011.

The competition, to develop business and entrepreneurship skills in secondary school students, drew 65 students from 13 student companies in 10 nations. The CGL team, representing Malaysia and mentored by WOU, created and sold fridge magnets, greeting cards, hand-woven boxes and homemade batik bags.

WOU provided CGL with a committed and business-savvy advisory panel comprising Poh Leong Tat (Marketing), Teoh Soo Ling

(Communications), Tan Chia Yun (Finance) and Shangetha Silvamony (SBA), and headed by School of Business and Administration (SBA) Lecturer Deehbanjli Lakshmayya.

WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun applauded the students for showing "what initiative, drive, proper planning and able leadership combined with excellent teamwork, can accomplish".

For the competition in Hong Kong, the team submitted their company report, delivered a four-minute presentation, showcased their products, and were interviewed by the judges on the company's performance, business plans and how to apply the lessons learned to new business situations.



ACADEMIC-INDUSTRY Linkage

About 50 members of the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) attended a talk organised by MEF in collaboration with WOU at the main campus on 25 November 2010 to better understand the job market situation in the country.

According to JobStreet.com Regional Sales Manager Kay Sock Phoh, March seems to be the peak season for companies to hire workers, possibly because people are ready to leave once they get their bonus and after Chinese New Year.

"There was an explosion of jobs in March 2010, with 29,846 job postings," she pointed out, adding that the lowest point of confidence was January 2009 because the US sub-prime crisis had intensified with global repercussions.

Kay observed that the Internet 'captured' 73.26% of job vacancies for Malaysia while the balance was by printed media, as extracted from figures for *Star*, *NST* and *Sin Chew Daily* since these media are considered the main players in terms of job advertisements. Statistics revealed that from January 2008, Internet job listings overtook the print media due to lower advertising rates, wider coverage, and employers' preference for Internet-savvy workers.

The top four industries that advertise in Malaysia are manufacturing, construction, ICT and accounting, finance and banking sectors. "Manufacturing, construction and ICT were contributing to 40% of total advertisements posted every year for vacancies in Malaysia from 2008 to Oct 2010," she highlighted.

The top three industries by job postings for the northern region are: manufacturing/production; human resources management/consulting; and computer/information technology (software).

WOU explores JOB ISSUES with MEF

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF)

MEF is the central organisation of private sector employers in Malaysia which provides a forum for consultation and discussion among members on matters of common interest, and seeks the adoption of sound principles and practices of human resource and industrial relations through research, training and other activities.

Money talk\$!



WOU and the Penang Chinese Chamber of Commerce (PCCC) joined forces for a seminar on *Business Success Through Change* at the main campus on 6 January 2011.

WOU's School of Business and Administration (SBA) Senior Lecturer Dr Ch'ng Huck Khoon presented a paper titled *How to select winning stocks in Bursa Malaysia*, a useful tip for the start of the year! He predicted a strong demand for local stocks due to the anticipated general election and the increasing in-flow of foreign funds into Malaysia. He explained that global economic environmental changes, such as the US sub-prime financial crisis and the financial instability in Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, were also factors to consider when investing in stocks.

According to Dr Ch'ng, a successful investor must desire to accumulate wealth and financial knowledge, and not be emotionally attached to any particular stock. The investor must plan his finances wisely by studying annual reports and the performance of the company. "The winner of the game is the one who is always able to adapt to changes," he declared.

In his talk on *E-Business: Taking Your Business Online*, School of Science and Technology Senior Lecturer Ishan Abeywardena said one must know how to structure businesses in the e-business format since most business applications are now undertaken online. He proposed that businesses know "what customers are looking for when they go online" as e-commerce transactions are a highly competitive business. "Customers look for quality products and so access information available online to make comparisons," said Ishan.

Among the benefits of taking a business online are "reduced costs, increased productivity and access to a wider market". He encouraged entrepreneurs to make full use of the open source technology freely available, adding, "Do not be slaves to service providers, instead have full control over the website that you own by writing your own content because only you know your customer best."



“The winner of the game is the one who is always able to adapt to changes.”



WOU library named after Tun Lim

At a simple, brief ceremony, a plaque bearing the new name of the library - Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Digital Library - was jointly unveiled by Tun Lim's son Chien Cheng, Wawasan Education Foundation Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap, Gerakan National President Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng.

In his speech, Dato' Seri Stephen observed that Tun Lim was an avid reader who liked to "find out all he could about topics and issues that interested him". He said Tun Lim never lost his hunger for reading even after retirement and that "he learnt to become a savvy net user". "For Tun Lim, there was always something new to read and digest every day to sharpen his acute intellect," adding that it was therefore appropriate to rename the library in his honour.



Tun Lim remembered through memorial tribute

Over 300 people attended the half-day memorial event, *The Life and Legacy of the late Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu: A Tribute by Malaysians*. The speakers included Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, former Penang Development Corporation General Manager Dato' Seri Chet Singh, Prof Wong and Lim Chien Cheng. They reflected and offered insights into the private and public life of Tun Lim.

A photo exhibition was also held outside the library, chronicling the various stages of Tun Lim's life. Tun Lim's quotes were also featured next to photos of him in the thick of Gerakan activities, and in discussions in planning the industrial development of Penang (which included the construction of Komtar and the Penang Bridge).

Among the collection were photos of Tun Lim with all the six Prime Ministers of Malaysia, from Tunku Abdul Rahman to Dato' Seri Najib Tun Razak - many of them taken while they were holding other Cabinet or government posts.



WOU's main campus welcomes JBRO students

Nineteen students from the Johor Bahru Regional Office (JBRO) Students Club accompanied by Tutor, Low Hock Heng, visited the WOU main campus during a three-day trip to Penang from 7-9 January 2011.

This was the first visit of the JBRO Students Club to the main campus, where they were met by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, deans and course coordinators from the Schools and given a tour.

On the second day, the JBRO Students Club had a dialogue session with the Penang Students Association (PSA) headed by president Chan Lee Chin, where both groups shared ideas, concerns and the challenges they faced.

JBRO Students Club president Alfred Rajan explained that the club aims to make more trips to the main campus in the future and especially appreciated the opportunity to chat with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng and Registrar Yeong Sik Kheong. Student Wong Poh Song said they had long wanted to visit Penang, adding, "Now it makes me feel even more proud to say that I'm studying at WOU!"

To round off the visit, the students toured some well-known attractions including the Penang Botanic Gardens, Penang Hill, Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion and the Kek Lok Si Temple.

Transforming education in Malaysia



Prof Dr Saran Kaur Gill



From left to right - Assoc Prof Dr Ganakumaran Subramaniam, Prof Edwin, and Prof Dr Siow Heng Lok.

Numerous different perspectives on how education transformation should set off and why it is necessary were presented at a national conference on *Transforming Education: New Ways Forward* held at WOU's KL campus from 2-3 December 2010.

The conference was jointly organised by WOU's Centre for Professional Development and Continuing Education (PACE) and its School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC). Deputy Minister of Higher Education Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah delivered the opening address and officially opened the conference.

The keynote address on *Transforming Education: Strengthening Human Capital for the New Economic Model* was presented by Dato' Dr Mahani Zainal Abidin, Director of the

Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS). In her speech, she addressed the issue of producing the necessary human capital as one of the fundamentals for Malaysia's New Economic Model.

Seven plenary papers were also presented by distinguished speakers, among them WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor for Strategy, Planning and Continuing Education, U K Menon, who spoke on the role of the private education sector in the Economic Transformation Programme and then SELC Dean Prof Dr Malachi Edwin Vethamani who expounded on *Transforming Teacher Education: Laying Firm Foundations*.

The well-attended conference discussed several issues which were of interest to policy makers and education providers, especially

since education is one of the 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) of the Economic Transformation Programme.



Deputy Higher Education Minister Dato Saifuddin Abdullah (seated, 2nd from left) with the panel

Enhancing ODL competencies

WOU's ODL Core Competency training for academic and Educational Technology and Publishing Unit (ETP) staff began in March and will run throughout the year. The specially designed training modules - which cover ODL Overview, Designing Materials, Integration of Media, ODL Instructional Design, ODL Tutoring, Learner Support and Quality Assurance - are intended to build on the University's high institutional standards with regards to teaching, as well as to enhance competencies relating to the latest developments in ODL.

Training is lead by a team of local and international experts including: Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, Prof David Murphy, Prof Abtar Kaur and WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng. Class sizes have been kept small to allow participants to get the most out of each session.



Microsoft Technology Associate certification at WOU

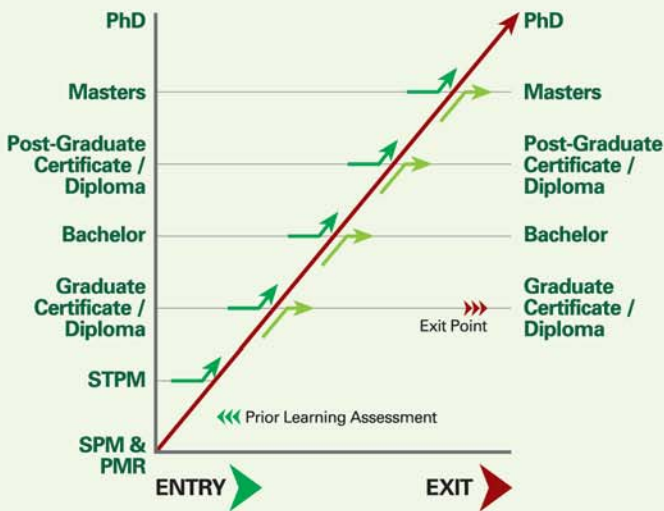
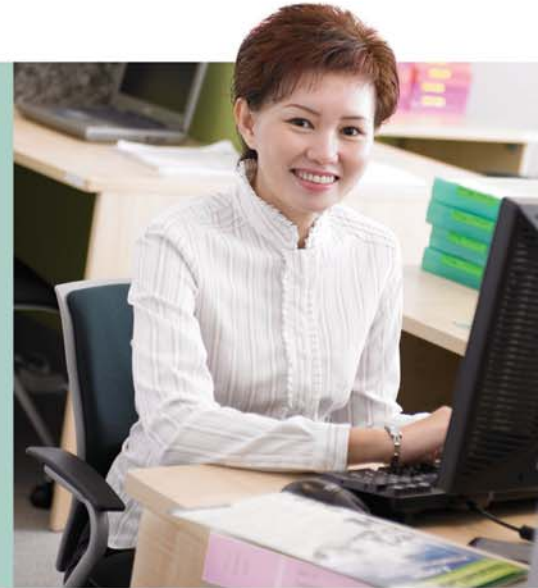
As the job market for technology related skills becomes increasingly competitive, more and more employers are seeking to employ graduates who have skills that can be immediately transferred to the workplace. Therefore, industry certifications - such as Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) certification - have become global benchmarks for IT professionals and employers.

WOU has partnered with Microsoft to offer a range of MTA certifications at all ROs, becoming one of the few ODIL institutions worldwide to do so.

For more information and study guides, visit www.microsoft.com/learning/en/us/certification/mta.aspx

Currently, WOU offers MTA certification in:

- Software Development Fundamentals (Visual Basic)
- Software Development Fundamentals (C#)
- Windows Development Fundamentals
- Web Development Fundamentals (Visual Basic)
- Web Development Fundamentals (C#)
- Database Administration Fundamentals
- Windows Server Administration
- Networking Fundamentals
- Security Fundamentals



Multi-Entry and Exit points available at WOU.

Establishing frameworks

In January 2011, Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) chaired a stakeholders workshop organised by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). The purpose of the workshop was to establish the guidelines for Graduate Certificate (GC) and Graduate Diploma (GD) qualifications. Both qualifications are at the sub-degree level and were initiated by WOU.

The GC and GD programmes were developed to provide additional exit points along the ladder of academic pursuit, allowing adult learners the flexibility of progressively raising their levels of personal and professional achievement.

For more information visit www.wou.edu.my for a full range of GCs and GDs offered.

Bringing out the best!

The Second WOU Tutor Convention

Tutors attending the Second Tutor Convention at the WOU main campus from 27-28 November 2010 were called on to reflect on their tutoring skills and what type of tutors they were - whether they were an 'explainer', 'involver' or 'enabler'.

Speaking on *Bringing Out The Best in Tutors* on the first day of the convention themed *Cultivating Successful Adult Learners*, then WOU School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC) Dean Prof Dr Malachi Edwin Vethamani said the University will come out with best tutoring practices for the tutors.



He said the 'enabler' would be the most effective as this tutor knows how to talk to students in order to facilitate the learning process. The students self-study, but at the same time the tutor draws them back to tutorials, and acts as a guide.

Prof Edwin said the 'explainer' knows the subject matter but has limited knowledge of tutoring methodology, and lectures to students. "This tutor dominates the whole tutorial, and the students just absorb." As for the 'involver', this tutor resorts to mainly tutor's explanations, but does provide activities to draw the students into the learning process.

When highlighting the tutoring principles, Prof Edwin said tutors should have knowledge of the subject and be able to translate that knowledge into appropriate tutoring skills. "Problem-solving exercise is good as students remember better when they themselves are doing it, and they can then go and apply them."

He urged the tutors to think about how they can improve themselves to become more



effective. "Part of professional training is not the accumulation of degrees but looking out for training opportunities for professional development."

WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye presented certificates at the closing to the 30 tutors hailing from the regional offices in Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Ipoh and Kota Bharu.



An evening of musical splendour

Wawasan Open University (WOU) hosted an outdoor concert by the Penang Philharmonic (PPO) on the grounds of WOU's main campus on 26 February 2011. The free concert drew a crowd of over 1,000 guests who gathered under the stars for an evening of musical entertainment.

More than 100 musicians and singers from the PPO as well as PPO's Junior Orchestra and Wind Orchestra serenaded the audience with selections from *West Side Story*, *The King and I*, *The Sound of Music*, *Titanic* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, among others. The orchestras and chorus were conducted by PPO Music Director Woon Wen Kin and Chorus Master Martin Rutherford.

Earlier, Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng congratulated the PPO and their partners for organising the public event. He encouraged musicians living in Penang to share their musical gifts and launched the new name of the orchestra, previously known as the Penang State Symphony Orchestra and Chorus.

The concert lasted for more than two hours and ended with a spectacular fireworks display accompanied in perfect harmony by the popular Chinese piece *The Good News from Beijing*.

Among distinguished guests present were PPO chairperson Datin Seri Irene Yeap, representatives from the State Government, members of the Consular Corp, local dignitaries and WOU senior management officials.



UPCOMING EVENTS

25th AAOU Annual Conference

Date : 28-30 September 2011
Venue : Penang, Malaysia

WOU will host the 25th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) themed *Transforming Asia through Open Distance Learning (ODL)*, which will focus on the role of ODL in transforming the life of Asian communities.

STUDENT INFO

WOU Study Grant

Application is now open and new students are invited to apply for this financial subsidy on their first semester tuition fees by 19 June 2011.

Student Orientation Day

Date : 17 July 2011 (Sunday)
Venue: WOU main campus and Regional Offices/
Learning Centres nationwide

* The KBRO Orientation Day will be on 16 July 2011 (Saturday)

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For more details, visit 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

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

Ipo Regional Office
Wisma Gerakan, 80 Persiaran Greenhill, 30450 Ipo, 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)

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: 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
Email: ro_ke@wou.edu.my