

WOU welcomes Tun Lim Keng Yaik as Chancellor

Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik who tirelessly championed the establishment of Wawasan Open University was appointed as WOU's second Chancellor on 9 May 2011. As early as 1999, Tun Dr Lim had articulated his vision of a private, not-for-profit virtual university, which would be open to all Malaysians regardless of their educational, ethnic or socio-economic background.

Since the establishment of WOU, his unwavering commitment and support as Chairman of the University's Council has seen WOU quickly establishing itself as a leading ODL institution in the region. He is a very popular face among the WOU community and his long relationship with the University provides continuity and a wealth of institutional knowledge.

Tun Dr Lim will be formally installed as WOU's Chancellor during a special ceremony to be held on 29 October 2011. His appointment is a proud occasion for the WOU community and his stature assures the strengthening of links between WOU and the University's various stakeholders.

WOU's Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng shared, "Right from the day I joined this University, Tun Dr Lim has always emphasised quality as a hallmark of the education that WOU must deliver to its stakeholders. I am sure that under his Chancellorship, quality will continue to underpin our University's competitive edge."

Meanwhile Wawasan Education Foundation Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap Leong Huat said, "I am delighted that Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik has accepted the Chancellorship of Wawasan Open University. In taking on this crucial role, he will help build a strong relationship between the University, our community and the international fraternity. With his quick wit and engaging personality, I look forward to his guidance as Chancellor."



Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap announces new WOU Chancellor at a press conference in Penang.

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The doctor turned federal minister

During Tun Dr Lim's illustrious years in public service he was MP for Beruas, Minister of Primary Industries, Minister of Energy, Water and Communications as well as national president of Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia.

The native Perakian attended St Michael's Institution in Ipoh before graduating with a degree in medicine from Queen's University of Belfast in 1964. His easy-going bedside manner made him very popular among his patients and his down-to-earth approach served him well when he eventually entered local politics. His meteoric rise through the party ranks culminated with his election to the position of president of Gerakan in 1980, a position he held until his retirement in 2007.

Tun Dr Lim has been conferred numerous awards and honours in recognition of his distinguished and dedicated service to the community and the nation. The Perak Government bestowed upon him the DPCM (which carries the title 'Dato') in 1981. He was also conferred the SPMP by the Perak Government in 1989, the DGPN by the Penang Government in 1997, the SSAP by the Pahang Government in 2006 and PNBS from the Sarawak Government in 2009.

All these awards carry the title 'Dato Seri'. Tun Dr Lim was conferred the Seri Setia Mahkota Malaysia (SSM) award which carries the title 'Tun' by the DYMM Yang di-Pertuan Agong on 7 June 2008.

His contributions have also been recognised by academia. In 1999 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by his alma mater Queen's University of Belfast, and an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree by the Information and Communications University, South Korea in 2004.

As a minister, Tun Dr Lim was widely respected for his forthright and outspoken opinions; never a man to mince his words he was (and still is) a press favourite with his rapid fire comebacks. A strong believer in finding common ground and bridging differences, he believes that the future of the nation depends on, "Building on our commonalities and not on our differences." True to WOU's own philosophy.



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KDN Permit: PP 14958/11/2011 (026733)
Published by Wawasan Open University
Printed by Thunder Print Sdn Bhd
No 6463, Lorong Ayam Didik 3,
Taman Ria Jaya Light Industrial Park,
08000 Sungai Petani, Kedah.

Vice Chancellor's

voice

The Wawasan learning community joins me in extending our heartiest congratulations to Tun Dato' Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik on his appointment as Chancellor of our University. Tun Dr Lim's appointment is a most welcome development as he was instrumental in envisioning the concept of WOU, ensuring that there would be sufficient funding to bring about the University's birth and nurturing it through its early infancy. We look forward to benefiting from Tun Dr Lim's wise counsel and support for many years to come.

Right from the day I joined WOU, Tun Dr Lim always emphasised 'quality' as a hallmark of the education that WOU must deliver to its stakeholders. I am sure that under his Chancellorship, 'quality' will continue to underpin our University's competitive edge.

We are also very grateful to receive through the Minister in the Prime Minister's department, Gerakan national president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, a cheque for

RM6 million, being the first instalment of a RM30 million grant from the Government of Malaysia. We sincerely thank Prime Minister Dato' Seri Najib Tun Razak for his support. We see the grant as an endorsement of our efforts to bring quality education to the working adults of Malaysia.

Recently I represented the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) at a meeting of the Global Task Force on Quality Assurance (QA) in e-Learning convened by UNESCO in Paris. The initiative to set up and support the work of this group reflects UNESCO's growing concern on the need to ensure the quality of education delivered across borders through the ODL and e-Learning mode.

The same quality issues have also attracted the attention of authorities in the world's fastest rising economic powerhouse - China. In a recent workshop that I helped facilitate at the Beijing Normal University, quality and quality assurance for ODL and online education were also identified as an area of major effort by the Chinese authorities.

Globally, it is clear that the need to ensure quality in the delivery of higher education has become a major concern for many governments. In Malaysia, the past few years have also seen a number of Government initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of education delivered by higher education providers (HEPs) in the country. The establishment of a single agency in charge of quality, the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) in 2008, the Academic Performance Audit (APA) exercise of 2009/10 and the SETARA exercise of 2010 were all aimed at improving the QA systems of HEPs as well as the quality of their educational delivery. All these developments

augur well for the country as we work towards realising our vision to become a quality regional educational hub.

At WOU, encouraged by the excellent results obtained in the APA exercise, we continue to work towards bringing about further improvements. One such recent initiative was the introduction of a comprehensive seven module course on developing ODL competencies among our academic staff. All staff are required to attend the training workshops and successful participants will be awarded appropriate certification. The course content and training workshops are designed and implemented through the University's Institute of Research and Innovation (IRI) led by Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Dr Gajaraj Dhanarajan.

Let me conclude by congratulating all students who have successfully completed their examinations for the January 2011 semester. For some of you, this will be the achievement of a personal milestone as you will have completed all the requirements for the award of a WOU degree and have, indeed, realised your dream! CONGRATULATIONS! We are so proud of you and what you have achieved.

To all new students who are joining us in the July 2011 semester, I warmly welcome you to the WOU learning community. I wish you an interesting and enjoyable learning experience and a fruitful and productive journey with us. To all returning students, a big 'welcome back'. The light at the end of the tunnel will become more visible with each passing semester.

Good luck and best wishes in your studies.



WOU

proud host of the 25th AAOU Conference

Ahead of the 25th AAOU Conference to be held from 28-30 September 2011, WOU Vice Chancellor and President of the AAOU, Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng, shares his thoughts.

Q : The upcoming Conference will mark the organisation's silver jubilee. How has this influenced the selection of the conference themes and sub-themes? Would you like to elaborate on these sub-theme(s) and why these are so important for the future of open distance learning (ODL) in Asia?

WTM : The lives of tens of millions of people across the Asian continent has been enriched over the past quarter of a century as a result of being able to access tertiary education delivered using the ODL mode. These graduates have in turn brought about advancement and positive transformational changes to their families as well as their communities. During the same period, advances in information and communications technology (ICT) have also transformed the way distance education is delivered to learners. ICT has not only enriched the learning environment but has also spawned new ways of collaborative learning in the global networked community.

In order to showcase the impact of such changes the Organising Committee of the Jubilee Edition of the AAOU Annual Conference have selected the theme *Transforming Asia through Open Distance Learning*.

Within this main theme, five sub-themes have been selected to highlight:

- the **culture and social changes** that result from the ODL mediated transformation processes;
- the **quality** of education that can be delivered via open distance learning institutions;

- the benefits that **partnerships and business models** can bring towards enhancing the quality of the learning experience for ODL learners;
- the way **technology** is rapidly transforming and enriching the learning environment for education delivered through ODL and e-Learning;
- the way ODL will evolve with the advent of emerging technologies that not only influence what and where we learn but also how learning will take place in the **future**.

Q : What special programmes have been planned?

WTM : As this is the 25th anniversary, we plan to invite past leaders of the Association (Presidents and Secretary-Generals) to attend the event. They will be accorded special recognition at the conference dinner. There will also be special 25th anniversary souvenirs given to all participants. Special exhibitions featuring displays of Conference Proceedings of the previous 24 conferences of the AAOU as well as photographs capturing previous conference activities will be organised.

Q : What would you like delegates to take away from the Conference?

WTM : For the 25th AAOU Annual Conference, we have lined up an array of regional and international speakers, special panel discussions and workshops besides the regular parallel oral and poster presentations. The social programmes are designed to provide lots of opportunities for social networking. Delegates will also be able to enjoy the sights, smell and taste of the world renowned Penang 'street food' as well as numerous cultural performances.

Delegates should be able to bring away from the Conference new knowledge, a new network of friends, a better appreciation of the Malaysian culture, a thoroughly enjoyable gastronomic experience and the satisfaction of having had a great time!

Q : What are you most looking forward to at the Conference?

WTM : Having attended 17 previous AAOU conferences during the past 18 years, I look forward to meeting up with many old friends and making many more new ones. Over the years, I have been able to watch with interest and admiration the career development of many friends that I meet at AAOU annual conferences. I have also enjoyed the very generous hospitality by previous hosts of the Annual Conference and it is nice to be able to reciprocate when they visit my hometown of Penang.

Q : Is there anything else you would like to highlight?

WTM : I would like to pay tribute to members of the Organising Committee who are working very hard to ensure that the 25th Annual AAOU Conference will be a resounding success and I appeal to all members of the WOU learning community to contribute their time freely when called upon to help out nearer the conference.



Connecting the AAOU family

The 25th AAOU annual conference website goes online

Wawasan Open University (WOU), as secretariat for the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU), launched the 25th AAOU Annual Conference website in March, in preparation for the conference to be hosted by WOU in Penang from 28-30 September 2011.

The main theme of the conference is *Transforming Asia through Open Distance Learning* and the official opening of the conference on 29 September 2011 will be officiated by the Malaysian Minister of Higher Education, Dato' Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

This important regional event is expected to attract 350 to 400 participants including the Chief Executives, Vice Chancellors and academics from many of Asia's leading open universities.

For more information, visit www.aaou.net/aaou2011/

Industry-driven MBAs launched!

WOU's two new programmes welcomed by industry heavyweights

Wawasan Open University's (WOU) latest two MBA offerings received strong industry backing during a launch ceremony held at the main campus. The well-attended event on 19 May 2011 gathered a number of Malaysia's most influential 'movers and shakers' from manufacturing and the construction industry to launch the MBA in Construction Management (MBA-CM) and the MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management (MBA-MPM).

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye presided over the launch of the MBA-CM along with Ivory Properties Group executive director Dato' Seri Nazir Ariff and Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (Rehda) Penang branch chairman Dato' Jerry Chan.

For the second session on the MBA-MPM, Prof Ho was joined by Free Industrial Zone Penang Companies Association (Frepenco) president Horst Rosenmueller and Malaysian-American Electronics Industry (MAEI) chairman Dato' Wong Siew Hai.

Among those who attended the launch were Wawasan Education Foundation (WEF) director Loo Choo Teng, WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun, industry representatives and WOU staff.

"When someone graduates as an engineer, architect or town planner, it does not mean that he can manage a construction project straight away. He has to go through many years of experience and a bit of education before he can really manage a construction project. This MBA programme will shorten this learning curve and I hope my colleagues in the industry will encourage their staff to join this programme."

"The MBA-CM will help to build a more professional company; employees will become more marketable, can demand higher salary and enjoy job elevation. My advice to engineers, planners, quantity surveyors and other construction professionals: Go for it and improve yourself. Take up the programme for better job prospects and to excel in your profession. You can't stay stagnant."

*Dato' Seri Nazir Ariff
Executive Director,
Ivory Properties Group.*



MBA in CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT (MBA-CM)

"The MBA-CM covers topics including procurement management, risk and crisis management, sustainability, environment and corporate governance, that are not normally covered by courses of this nature."

"Other areas include negotiation and dispute resolution, which again are never or seldom covered."

These are good and necessary for those in the development and construction sector, since the property market in Penang in the next 3-5 years is looking good due to foreign direct investments."



*Dato' Jerry Chan
Penang Branch Chairman,
Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association
(Rehda) and Managing Director,
Asos Dunia Bhd.*





MBA in MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT (MBA-MPM)

"This MBA looks at the big picture and prepares graduates for future challenges. It encourages thinking to develop strategies, challenge the status quo and have a paradigm shift. It also improves competencies like finance and costing, optimisation techniques, making sense of numbers, material management, and leadership qualities, notably, what it takes, how to lead, how to grow and develop and motivate talents, handle conflicts, decision-making, and vision-mission strategies."

*Dato' Wong Siew Hai,
Chairman,
Malaysian-American Electronics
Industry (MAEI) and member
of the Board of Governors,
American Malaysian Chamber
of Commerce (AMCHAM).*



"I believe the MBA-MPM will promote competency enhancement in the E&E industry, which is one of the major engines of economic growth of Penang. Frepenca supports the MBA-MPM as it helps (industry professionals) stay ahead in the highly competitive manufacturing environment. The programme is timely to further enhance the capability of the industry as a whole and make Penang the location of choice for investors."

*Horst Rosenmueller
President,
Free Industrial Zone Penang
Companies Association
(Frepenca) and Managing Director,
OSRAM Opto Semiconductors.*



In recognition of WOU's mission to bring quality tertiary education to more working Malaysians, the federal government injected RM30 million (spread over five years) into the Wawasan Education Foundation (WEF).

According to WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng, "We view this funding as an expression of the government's confidence in WOU and its endorsement of the University's role in providing quality higher education to all Malaysians."

Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, a member of WEF Board of Directors, and Prof Wong received the mock cheque of RM6

Extra financial muscle for WOU

WOU receives RM30 million grant

million allocated to the University for 2011 from Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

"As we grow and develop, our need for resources increases. We are hoping that the University will not have to depend on government or any other philanthropy in about 4-5 years. We think we can quite comfortably pay for the running of the University and may even have some surplus to support other charitable causes. That's our wish," Prof Dhanarajan stated.

The simple ceremony held at the Penang Gerakan office on 27 May 2011 was witnessed by State Gerakan chairman Dato' Dr Teng Hock Nan and several other party members.



WOU congratulates new Professor

A senior academic from the School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC) was recently conferred the title of 'Professor' - the highest academic rank of the University - with effect from 1 May 2011.

The conferment upon Associate Prof Dr Rahil Haji Mahyuddin, was in recognition of her contribution to the University and academia in a career spanning over 40 years.

Prof Rahil began her career as a teacher at SMK Sulaiman in Bentong, Pahang. She also lectured at Maktab Perguruan Teknik, Cheras and has held positions as lecturer, Associate Professor, and Professor at the Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) from 1983 till April 2010.

She holds a PhD in Educational Psychology from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, an MSc in Educational Psychology from UPM, a Diploma in Education (Social Science) from Monash University, Australia and a BA (Psychology, Geography) from University of Tasmania, Hobart.

Dr Rahil has co-authored several books on topics related to psychology and learning. As a former Fulbright scholar, she completed a study on the adaptability and academic performance of Malaysian students in US universities.



“For me, Turnitin helps me to write better quality assignments as I cannot simply copy and paste from other people’s work intentionally or unintentionally.”

Joyce Ngo, CeMBA



Using Turnitin

Since the July 2010 semester, WOU has highlighted the use of Turnitin to students in a bid to promote authenticity, the importance of accurate referencing and proper procedures and also to avoid plagiarism.

Turnitin.com is a web-based text matching service system that is able to find and highlight matching or plagiarised text in a written manuscript. It uses data-mining to compile a large database of electronic academic materials which it indexes and stores. Course Coordinators, tutors and students can use this tool to check assignments for plagiarism.

Visit www.wou.edu.my/turnitin.html for more details.



“I refer to lots of sources and I use Turnitin to make sure I am always on the right track before submitting my assignments.”

Loke Chew Nee,
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management



“I find Turnitin to be a good tool for students to enhance their assignments because we would need to submit our original work.”

Azhar Mohd Amin, CeMBA



“I started using Turnitin last year. It helps me to check that the assignments I do are my own work and not reproduced from elsewhere.”

Thipa Murugayah,
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting



Celebrating teachers

The annual Teacher's Day celebrations on May 16, was an occasion for WOU to fete its entire academic faculty and academic support staff with an informal afternoon of sharing and reminiscing at WOU's main campus in Penang.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng took the opportunity to welcome the new staff and congratulate Dr Ghanshyam Kumar Singh from the School of Science and Technology on his promotion to Associate Professor.

Explaining that teaching is about passion and satisfaction, Prof Wong said, "At the end of the day, all that teachers look forward to is the feeling of satisfaction that we have done our best, satisfaction that we have been able to change the lives of at least a few of our fellow human beings."

Reaching out to teachers in the Community

Away from the main campus, the School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC) and the Centre for Professional Development and Continuing Education (PACE) shared ideas and strategies for effective learning with 16 teachers.

The talks by SELC Dean Prof Dr Mogana Dhamotharan and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Continuing Education) U K Menon received positive feedback from the teachers.

How will this Teachers' Day event help you in your job?

The topics discussed encourage me to seek various methods to reach out to my students. It's also like a feel-good session for teachers to pat ourselves on the back for doing our jobs to the best of our abilities.

Prema

It's a refreshment course. It reminds me why I chose to be a teacher so that I don't become a victim of my own 'comfort zone' and rest on my laurels waiting for my retirement day. The point is you cannot eliminate the teacher from the equation no matter how sophisticated your source of material is.

Halizan

Enhancing WOU Academics' Competencies



An overview

Over a period of six months, WOU academics and staff from the Educational Technology and Publishing Unit are taking part in an intensive Open Distance Learning (ODL) Core Competency Training Programme. The programme which runs from April to September 2011 is split into seven activity-based workshops based on training modules developed by the Commonwealth of Learning: an overview of ODL; Designing ODL Materials; ODL Instructional Design; Use and Integration of Media; Leaner Support in ODL; ODL Tutoring; and Quality Assurance in ODL.

Improving the quality of teaching

The first session – an overview of ODL – was moderated by Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan who stated that the training programme aims to meet the expectations of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) for higher learning institutions to constantly improve the quality of teaching of their academic staff.

He highlighted the growing global concern about the shortfall of professionalism and competency in academic institutions of higher learning in Malaysia and elsewhere. "Institutions will be assessed by MQA on what they are doing in improving, building up, enhancing and inducting academics as teachers," he said.

He added, "WOU wants to train its staff to become good at what they are doing and become professional ODL educators with the capacity to look at the needs of the programme, conceptualise it, design and define curriculums around it, transform it into a teaching experience for learners, and assess it".

Developing effective course materials

The next series of workshops were led by Dr David Murphy, a veteran distance learning educator, and covered Designing ODL materials, ODL Instructional Design and Use and Integration of Media.

Dr Murphy looked at applications behind the theories, and got the participants to engage with current distance education research and global experts via Skype.

Staff had to review course materials by asking questions like: Is it readable? Has it been well-written? Does it include activities? Is it engaging? Is it well-structured? Is it interactive? What are the learning objectives? By doing so, the course developer discovers what needs to be improved to produce the most effective instructional design and course materials.

Dr Murphy also gave pointers on integrating copyright-free resources into course materials and producing interactive materials using video and other media.

The aim of the ODL workshops is to make WOU staff more confident and effective as they evolve as academics and course coordinators.

Upon completion of the seven training workshops – organised by WOU's Human Resource Department – the participants will be awarded a certificate.





远程教育质量保证框架及标准高级研讨会



Facilitators and workshop participants at Beijing Workshop



Members of UNESCO's Global Task Force on Quality Assurance in e-Learning

Sharing WOU's QA system on the global stage

Quality assurance (QA) issues in open distance learning (ODL) remain high on the global agenda as technological advances have changed the way that education is delivered. In April, WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng shared the University's QA experience with 30 senior academics and administrators from 20 Chinese universities and government departments.

Prof Wong's presentation - *Wawasan Open University's QA System and Processes in the context of the QA Framework for Higher Education in Malaysia* - was part of a two-day workshop on quality assurance to Chinese educators at the Beijing Normal University.

He was joined by Prof Insung Jung (International Christian University), Prof Chen Li (Beijing Normal University) and Prof Amin Zuhairi (Universitas Terbuka Indonesia).

After Beijing, Prof Wong represented the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) at a UNESCO sponsored Global Task Force (GTF) meeting on *Quality Assurance in e-Learning* held in Paris on 16 June 2011.

Other regional organisations represented at the meeting were the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU), African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) and the Institute for Quality in Distance Higher Education in Latin America

and the Caribbean (CALED). The GTF was tasked with preparing a comprehensive report covering various components of Quality Assurance in e-Learning as well as recommendations to the major stakeholders concerning the integration of e-Learning into their QA systems, for submission to UNESCO by 2012.

While in Paris, Prof Wong also participated in the European seminar organised by the EADTU on the theme 'QA in e-Learning', where he presented - *QA in e-Learning within the QA Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in Asian Countries: Contributions of AAOU* - to over 30 participants from 15 European nations.

A man ahead of his time Rabindranath Tagore

Visitors poured into the main campus to catch Dr Saranindranath Tagore, the grand-nephew of Asia's first Nobel laureate speak on *Rabindranath Tagore and the Cosmopolitan Vision*. The talk on 14 May 2011 was organised by Think City Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Bhd, and WOU to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Tagore's birth.

Dr Tagore described his uncle as "a man very ahead of his time" and one of the pioneering figures of the idea of universal humanity. He believed that a cosmopolitan education system

which exposes school children to other cultures and traditions "helps generate an attitude of unity as harmony. Education must be overlaid with a lifelong openness to the other cultures of the world."

"Rabindranath Tagore's hope is in the human to human relationship across cultures, which is the fount of cosmopolitan vision. Without that, we can't have world peace," Dr Tagore said.

Rabindranath Tagore lived from May 7, 1861 till Aug 7, 1941. He was Asia's first recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. He travelled to Penang in 1927 and visited the Hu Yeah Seah educational institution and Chung Ling High School, calling on the Chinese community to examine their roots.

He was an avid reader of European classics and Indian literature, and was a friend of Albert Einstein.



WOU strengthens cooperation with FMM



Wawasan Open University (WOU) added a new dimension to its ongoing collaboration with the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) during the visit of four representatives to the main campus on 3 May 2011.

In his introductory address, WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun made reference to the earlier MoU signed between WOU and FMM in March 2008 to accelerate the development of skilled labour in the manufacturing and services industry.

He reiterated that the WOU-FMM partnership must be taken to the next level in three major areas of collaboration – the provision of advanced-level training and educational opportunities to FMM members' staff and their families; FMM participation in WOU's Valued Partner Programme; and the use of FMM facilities to run WOU undergraduate programmes.

This was followed by informal discussions to explore collaborative efforts between the FMM Institute and WOU. Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye suggested that WOU's Centre for Professional Development and Continuing Education (PACE) could work with the FMM Institute to run short-term professional courses for workers.

Other possible areas of collaboration include providing advance standing recognition for courses offered by FMM, and the adoption of WOU's Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma pathways as part of FMM offerings to their members. A WOU programme preview will be held in conjunction with this partnership at the FMM Penang branch premise soon.

Dr Seah also shared that WOU is a registered e-learning provider, and so employers can pay for workers to undertake programmes or short courses at WOU, and then claim these costs under the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF). Students who register for WOU programmes through FMM branches are also entitled to financial incentives; he added that "it is a win-win partnership for both organisations".



FMM Institute

The FMM Institute is an approved training provider for the manufacturing industry, offering continuous professional development for workers through certificate, diploma and higher-level programmes.

Boosting WOU and JCI links



The positive ties between Junior Chamber International (JCI) Malaysia and WOU were further strengthened during a recent networking luncheon at the main campus and WOU's participation at JCI Malaysia's 2011 Area Peninsular Convention in Kuala Lumpur.

In Penang, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun explained the benefits of the Strategic Academic Partners (SAP) programme and how JCI chapters play a key role in introducing and recruiting their members into WOU's academic programmes, while enjoying the benefits accorded to them as a Valued Partner. The networking session also allowed WOU and JCI representatives to explore other ideas for possible collaboration.

At the JCI Malaysia's 2011 Area Peninsular Convention, Dr Seah reiterated WOU's intention to build bridges with individual JCI chapters for a win-win partnership.

In his presentation to the delegates, he gave an overview of the University's SAP programme and explained how the different JCI chapters could obtain financial incentives for student referrals by working closely with the nearest Regional Offices (RO).

WOU's presence at the JCI Convention signalled a positive step forward for both organisations and the WOU information counter (run by staff from Kuala Lumpur RO and the Marketing and Communications Department) responded to enquiries from interested JCI delegates.



New Students Speak



Students from around Malaysia share their stories

WawasanLink spoke to new students who recently enrolled in the new MBA programmes at WOU's nationwide Open Days to discover their reasons for doing so.

H'ng Bah Joon

Programme: **MBA in Construction Management (MBA-CM)**
 Age : 45
 Occupation: **Vice president of Treasury Advisory, Global Treasury at OCBC Bank**
 Location : **Petaling Jaya Regional Support Office**

“ (The MBA-CM) may not have a direct impact on what I currently do, but in the course of my work, I meet clients who are property developers. Thus I can understand my clients better and indirectly may be able to help tailor better financial solutions and structures to meet their requirements. On a personal level, this learning opportunity will definitely increase my knowledge of the construction industry and who knows, I may venture into property development in the future! ”

Dickson Cheok Teck Guan

Programme: **MBA in Construction Management (MBA-CM)**
 Age : 49
 Occupation: **Senior contract executive, Muhibbah Engineering, Klang**
 Location : **Petaling Jaya Regional Support Office**

“ It will definitely enhance my project management knowledge and boost my academic qualifications in order to face today's complexities of the construction industry.

“Given the time, I aspire to write a book on *Malaysian Ways of Doing Estimating – A Practical Approach* and as such with an MBA-CM, the book will be more convincing (to readers). ”

Choo Wan Yen

Programme: **MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management (MBA-MPM)**
 Age : 42
 Occupation: **works in the manufacturing industry in Penang's Bayan Lepas FIZ**
 Location : **Penang Regional Office**

“ Although I've built up knowledge and skills after many years on the job, this MBA will further enhance my skills which could lead to a more rewarding career. Especially as my employer targets employees with good qualifications for promotions to managerial and senior positions.

“A higher education qualification in a related field coupled with relevant work experience will boost my career prospects by opening up new opportunities and earning potential, including better benefits and promotion. ”



Jawarha Nehru Sockalingam

Programme: **MBA in Construction Management (MBA-CM)**
 Age : 47
 Occupation: **Senior assistant director, Ministry of Works**
 Location : **Kuala Lumpur Regional Office**

“ Besides the technical know-how, solving construction problems and creating construction methodology in my current job, I decided to enrol for the MBA-CM because I want to enhance my knowledge in other aspects of construction, especially the business side.

“(The MBA) will give me a better understanding of management in the construction industry, which is a very different approach from the way a purely 'technical person' manages in the public sector. Knowing and understanding the public and private sectors' needs can create a better outcome for the PPP (Public Private Projects) which I am involved in. ”



Lee Kwang Hoe

Programme: **MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management (MBA-MPM)**
 Age : 40
 Occupation: **works in the semiconductor industry throughout the Asia-Pacific region**
 Location : **Penang Regional Office**

“ After pondering for a long time over my future, I realised I could not continue with what I'm doing now. Although I have reached a certain stage in my career path, in any job you need knowledge and good qualifications to survive and for advancement. I was impressed with WOU's MBA syllabus.

“WOU is an institution of high standards. I strongly believe that the MBA from WOU will help to enrich my knowledge, management skills, and help me get ahead in my current work organisation and also in any career path that I decide to pursue in the future. ”

TEDxGurneyDrive

The global phenomenon reaches Penang!

The first TEDx event in Penang – TEDxGurneyDrive – was organised by the TEDx team in partnership with WOU at the main campus on 30 April 2011. Invited speakers had 15 minutes to share their ideas with the audience.



To e-Learners, Engagement is the name of the game

“ Web 2.0 allows us to participate, and so social constructivism comes in e.g. Wikipedia, facebook, twitter, Wikis. Web 2.0 offers teachers and learners a great opportunity for e-learning, leading to a new theory of ‘connectivism’ which says that knowledge is out there in the world, everywhere, not in the head of your teacher. A learner who can take advantage of this will be educated faster.

“21st century knowledge workers and graduates should not only have specific knowledge but also soft enabling skills; this is presently lacking in our current education system. 21st century teachers will have to engage the students, get them on the Internet and use social media to enrich the student’s learning experience.”

*Prof Dato’ Dr Ho Sinn Chye,
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), WOU*

Penang Industry – Beyond Manufacturing

Dato’ Boonler shared that Penang can no longer compete globally for low-level manufacturing.

“ You must reinvent your own. Develop IT, not take somebody’s IT and then build.

“However, Malaysia lacks engineers – only 80,000 against the 250,000 needed – in the electrical and electronic sector, with an engineer-population ratio of 1:312 compared to 1:100 for a developed nation. The ratio in the UK is 1:41, in Japan 1.45 and in Germany 1.82.

“For Penang to prosper, low-level manufacturing is no longer an option. To ensure that jobs continue to be created, Penang must re-brand by increasing productivity and wages, promoting people who are good, increase efficiency, and adopting the 3Cs – a clean, crime-free and corruption-free environment.”

*Dato’ Boonler Somchit,
CEO of Penang Skills Development Centre (PSDC),
member of the WOU Council*



TEDx Spreading Ideas

The TEDxGurneyDrive team comprised of 11 student leaders aged 16 to 23 years currently pursuing their education in and around Penang. The event was to provide a platform for the speakers to share insights to inspire collaboration, innovation and creativity in various fields.

For more information on TED and TED Talks, visit www.ted.com

Green living @ WOU

The ‘Green Living @ WOU’ campaign got underway in March to actively encourage WOU staff and students to reuse, recycle and reduce (3Rs) stationery and everyday objects to minimise the University’s carbon footprint.

To make it easier for staff and students to get involved, WOU’s Safety and Security Committee arranged for three large MPPP recycling bins - for plastic, aluminium and paper - to be placed in the Albukhary Building (main campus). So far, so good and 1,805kg of waste paper was collected with the proceeds given to the Eden Handicap Service Centre.

In addition, used computers and computer accessories were gathered for disposal by MPPP, including 4 computer monitors, 1 CPU, 2 printers, 1 laptop, 22 hard disks as well as various PC accessories.

Green winner

‘Green Living @ WOU’ was the winning tagline created by Sim Foong Bee from WOU’s General Services and Administration Department. For her creativity, she won an 1GB iPod shuffle.

The winning theme was selected from a total of 126 proposed themes.





Members Ang Hock Bin (left) and Azirul with artist Daniel Brinsmead (centre) in front of their artworks



Charity auction for Stepping Stone Work Centre

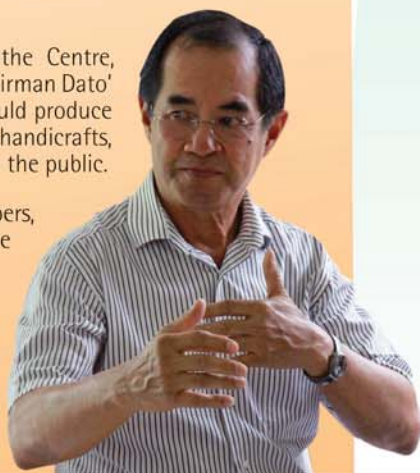
Asia Community Service (ACS), in collaboration with The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)-Malihom Artist in Residence (AiR) Programme of WOU, held a charity art auction at the RBS House in Penang on 17 June 2011 to raise funds for the Stepping Stone Work Centre.

All proceeds from the auction were channelled to Stepping Stone, which is an ACS-supported community living project to provide a workplace and work opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

Speaking during a Press visit to the Centre, Wawasan Education Foundation Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap hoped that it would produce pieces of art together with their handicrafts, and that these could then be sold to the public.

The Centre currently has 22 members, aged 18-40s; most of them have been coming for 11 years since the Centre was set up in Balik Pulau in 2000. They work to produce handicrafts, food, greetings cards and soap for sale.

Wawasan Education Foundation Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap



Charity musical raises RM7,000 for welfare home

Dalat International School, with the support of WOU, presented a charity drama performance that successfully raised RM7,000 in cash for the Bethesda Home for the Elderly.

The original drama, *Spy Blue*, written by Dalat's drama club members under the guidance of teacher and drama director Mark Sasse premiered on 21 May 2011 before a 350-strong audience at the WOU main campus.

Spy Blue tells the life story of Agent Blue, a talented US specialist who ends up in a fateful relationship with his Chinese counterpart, Mayling. The thrilling, entertaining espionage drama kept the audience glued to their seats for over two hours.

Earlier, WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, in his address to the audience, said that the University's support forms part of its corporate framework to be a socially-inclusive institution through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

The positive synergy between the two educational institutions has been a fruitful collaboration since 2009, successfully raising substantial amounts of cash aid for charitable organisations through the performing arts.

The founder of the Bethesda Home, Dr V Thavarajulu, expressed his gratitude to both WOU and Dalat and said that the funds raised would greatly help to cover the Home's expenses.



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.

Penang Relay for Life 2011

Date : 1 October 2011 (Saturday)

Time : 6.00pm

Venue: Penang Youth Park

The National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM) Penang branch and Penang Hospice Society are jointly organising the activity to celebrate cancer survivors, to help people remember loved ones who have died from the disease, and to raise cancer awareness.

WOU will participate as a sponsor and send a team to join in the symbolic walk of solidarity around the relay route.

World Vision Malaysia 30-hour Famine Camp

Date : 6 & 7 August 2011

Venue: WOU main campus

WOU is hosting World Vision Malaysia's 30-Hour Famine Camp in Penang, themed *Hunger for Health*, which aims to increase the awareness on global issues caused by hunger and poverty and to raise funds towards poverty-alleviation programmes.

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For more details, visit wou.edu.my

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