

WawasanLink

Linking Students, Partners And Communities



the people's university

PP 14958/11/2012 (031535) ISSN 1985-1286

Introducing



Majestic Homestead building

Idyllic view from the main campus



Pool of talented academics



Industry-relevant programmes



Good collections at the library



WOU Digital Library

WOU in September On Campus

Contents

Vice Chancellor's voice 2

in the limelight

WOU welcomes New Governors to the Board 3

WOU staff complete ODL Core Competency course
New trends in higher education 4

Strengthening academic links
WOU collaboration with TAR University College 5

in the schools

WOU Seminar Series kicks off
Exploring the benefits of MOOCs
WOU welcomes a 'new' Professor 6

Pioneering research in mobile learning
WOU, USM, Motorola & CREST
join forces to transform mobile learning

Tribute to a friend and colleague 7

in the know

WOU holds Young Enterprise IT Workshop
WOU hosts 2nd Capacity Building Workshop for E-Learning course 8

Strengthening research ties with STOU 9

Gaining recognition for APEL
A time to celebrate and thank all teachers and academics 10

Realistic fire drill at WOU stops traffic
WOU supports Relay for Life Penang 2013 11

Insights into business and public administration
Developing industry-relevant skills 12

Since opening its doors to students in January 2007, Wawasan Open University (WOU) has established a reputation as a quality ODL university; over 12,000 working professionals have seized the learning opportunities made available to them by WOU. WOU now intends to extend its existing suite of MQA accredited programmes and excellent learning support services to students in the 17-24 year old age group. The programmes have been specially designed and packaged to meet the needs of younger post-secondary school leavers and diploma holders who wish to pursue tertiary education on a full-time basis in Penang at an affordable cost. Beginning in September 2013, students will be able to pursue full-time courses at WOU's main campus in Penang.

According to WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, "The decision to expand and offer on-campus full-time studies is based on several reasons. There is continuous demand for affordable tertiary education and growth is

especially high in the 17-24 year old age group. Tapping into this market segment will enable WOU to establish a second income stream and move towards financial independence."

"The move is also aimed at elevating Penang as the next economic growth hub outside of the Klang Valley and Johor. We all know that growth hubs require high quality accredited institutions of learning to sustain the growth momentum. We also want to attract highly qualified academic talent to work in WOU, especially those who prefer to conduct face-to-face teaching," he remarked.

The University is targeting to roll out two full-time on-campus degree programmes - Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting and Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management. Students can complete their study in three years (or less than three years for diploma holders who qualify for credits exemption).

"These two business degree programmes which are offered by the School of Business and Administration (SBA) are very

popular among ODL students. Graduates who have completed these courses have found them to be relevant. We will of course ensure that the same high standard of delivery and teaching will be extended to our on-campus degree programmes as well," highlighted Prof Ho.

"All students will have 24/7 access to rich digital library resources and learning support services. In line with WOU's social inclusiveness policy, we have kept the tuition fees comparatively low. We also offer study grants and scholarships as well as attractive fee rebates to students who qualify," he added.

More programmes focusing on other areas of study have already been identified for on-campus delivery in the following years, including, banking and finance; marketing; logistics and supply chain management; as well as other science based courses as well. All WOU programmes are accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and approved by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

cont. page 2

2 Vice Chancellor's VOICE

I welcome all new students who have joined WOU in this July 2013 semester, and wish all returning students another rewarding semester of study with the University.

I also wish to welcome four esteemed new members of the Board of Governors – Tan Sri Dr Michael Yeoh, Tan Sri Dr Mohd Munir Abdul Majid, Prof Emeritus Dato' Dr Wong Tat Meng, and En Rusli Harun. I believe the wisdom and vast experience they bring to the Board will strengthen and steer this University further towards achieving the goals of its mission.

Next, I want to record our deepest condolences to the families of two colleagues, Mr Cheah Kee Sam, Student Counsellor at Kuala Lumpur Regional Centre (KLRC) and Mr K Manoharan, Director of WOU's Penang Regional Centre (PGRC), who passed away recently. We at WOU feel deeply the loss and void with the untimely passing of our two dearly departed colleagues.

The coming months bring excitement and many new challenges as the University embarks on its newly added mission of offering full-time on-campus degree programmes to young post-secondary school leavers and diploma holders. The launching of the *WOU On Campus* programme in September this year is an attempt to bring higher education to a wider segment of society. All the on-campus courses will be conducted solely in the main campus of WOU in Penang.

With regard to staff development and contribution, I congratulate my colleagues from the four academic Schools and Educational Technology and Publishing Unit (ETP) who have successfully completed the in-house Open Distance Learning Core Competency training programme. I trust they will put their newly acquired knowledge and skills to good use to develop quality course materials for our students. I wish to record my appreciation to the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) as well as the academics from WOU and other institutions in Asia for their participation in the second capacity building workshop held recently at WOU.

On behalf of the WOU community, I congratulate Dr Santhiram Raman, Dean of the School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC), on his recent conferment of Professorship. We value his continuing support and valuable contributions in WOU.

WOU has been a staunch supporter of Relay for Life Penang for many years. We will continue to contribute and participate in this worthy life-saving and life-changing event for we feel that raising awareness, increasing outreach and facilitating collaboration are critical to improving the cancer care experience. I thank all members of the WOU contingent for their involvement in the Relay this year.

Moving forward, as we tackle emerging challenges in the months ahead, WOU will continue to develop academic programmes that are industry-relevant and meet special demand of the country's workforce and post-secondary school leavers. There will be intensified efforts to increase student recruitment and retention. New applications of information technology for teaching and learning will be explored to enhance student learning support. At the management level, financial prudence and cost-efficient use of all available resources will continue to be the order of the day.

“The coming months bring excitement and many new challenges as the University embarks on its newly added mission of offering full-time on-campus degree programmes.”

Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye
Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer



cont. from cover page



WOU also offers full-time degree programmes.

On Campus OPEN DAY

Members of the public can view details of the new on-campus programmes at the University's website at wou.edu.my/oncampus.

They are also welcome to attend the WOU Open Days on July 20 & 21, August 24 & 25, and September 7 & 8 to find out more about these programmes.

Enrol today for WOU On Campus.



Editorial Board

Editor Rasidah Mion
Corporate Communications Manager

Copy Editor Rosalind Chua

Members Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye
Vice Chancellor of Wawasan Open University

Dr S Nagarajan
Acting Dean, School of Foundation and Liberal Studies

Ishan Abeywardena
Deputy Dean, School of Science and Technology

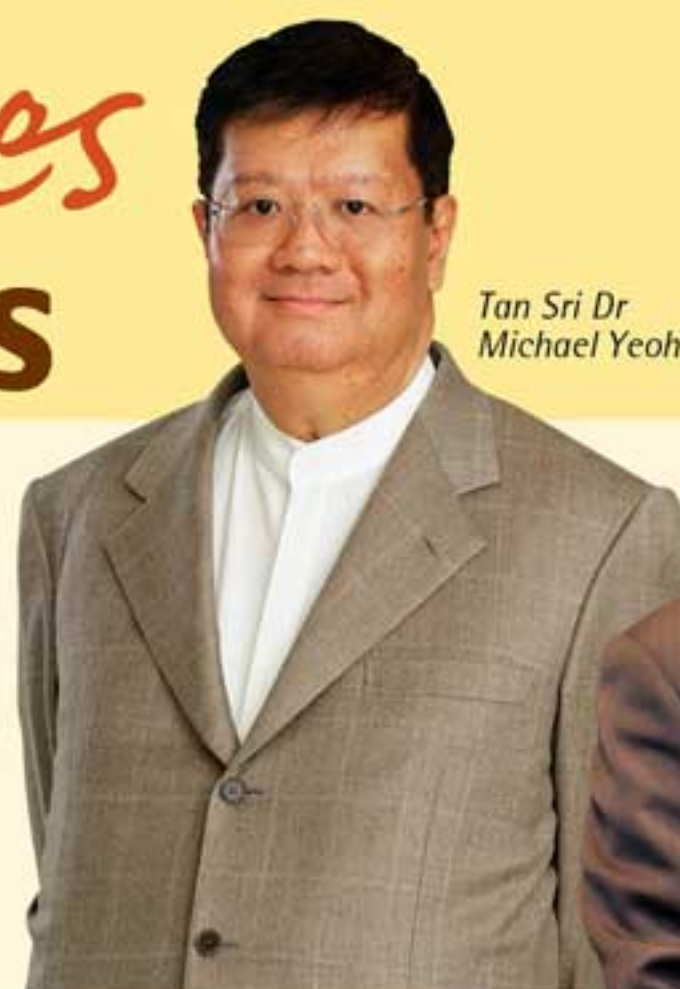
Editorial Team Selva Suppiah, Teoh Soo Ling

Photographers David Lee, Boey Hein Lee

KDN Permit: PP 14958/11/2012 (031535)
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.

WOU *welcomes* New Governors to the Board

Two familiar faces - Tan Sri Dr Michael Yeoh, Chief Executive Officer/Director of the Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI), and Prof Emeritus Dato' Dr Wong Tat Meng - who joined WOU's Board of Governors in December 2012 - discussed their aspirations for the University.



Tan Sri Dr
Michael Yeoh



Prof Emeritus Dato' Dr Wong Tat Meng

How would you use your knowledge and experience to benefit WOU?

Michael Yeoh: I hope to share my experiences from my global travel and international connections to further publicise WOU and make it better known. Also, as a former Council Member of WOU, after an absence of a few years, I hope to learn what progress WOU has made over the past few years and hope to use this to tell employers in industry how WOU can assist in their human capital development. I hope to also be able to share private sector perspective to WOU.

Wong Tat Meng: I have 40 years of service and experience in tertiary education delivered both in the conventional and the ODL mode. I hope to draw on this to contribute to the deliberations of WOU's Governing Board as well as to provide advisory support to the University's management team in their areas of need.

What do you hope to accomplish as a member of the Board of Governors of WOU?

Michael Yeoh: I look forward to working with the Chairman and other Board Members to raise the standard of WOU so that the University is synonymous with educational excellence. Together with the other Board Members, I hope WOU can be a leader in Open Distance Learning and create more industry-relevant programmes.

Wong Tat Meng: I hope to make meaningful and effective contributions to the growth and development of the University as a member of its Governing Board. As a former VC, I am mindful of the fact that I should not give the impression that I am exerting any undue influence in the running of the institution. The current VC and his team should be allowed to run the institution as they see fit. I am confident that they will be able to do a good job.

What do you see are WOU's strengths and weaknesses?

Wong Tat Meng: In terms of strengths, over the past seven years WOU has established itself as a leading ODL institution that delivers cost effective quality tertiary education to the adult working community. The programmes offered by WOU are accredited by the MQA, approved by the Ministry and recognised by the Malaysian government. Not only are our graduates well received by industry, our course materials and learner support services are well received by working adult students; likewise its modular and flexible progression course structure as well as its affordable fee schedules.

ODL systems are designed to achieve sustainability when there is a critical mass of students. In WOU's case, it appears that this 'critical mass' will take some time to achieve. There is thus a need to secure a source of financial support to fund the University's development during the 'interim period'.

What is your vision for the University as a whole?

Michael Yeoh: I would like WOU to be recognised as a global leader in Open Distance Learning and to be accepted as a premier open university in Malaysia and the region. I also hope WOU will be able to contribute meaningfully to the nation in terms of human capital development. We need to stay relevant to the needs of industry and the country. If we are not relevant we won't be able to contribute significantly.

Wong Tat Meng: To be the leading ODL institution in the region and the preferred training partner for the region's private sector.

Tan Sri Dr Mohd
Munir Abdul Majid



En Rusli Harun

Two other new Members of WOU's Board of Governors are Tan Sri Dr Mohd Munir Abdul Majid and En Rusli Harun. Dr Munir is Chairman of Bank Mualamat Malaysia Bhd and Senior Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics. Meanwhile En Rusli is Director in the Department of Higher Education, Malaysian Ministry of Education.

WOU staff complete ODL Core Competency course

Twenty-four staff of Wawasan Open University received their Certificate of Achievement after completing the in-house Open Distance Learning (ODL) Core Competency Training Programme, facilitated by internal and external experts.

During the certificate presentation, WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye noted that, "Training is an important component for developing good ODL course materials in the University. I invite staff to approach the Human Resources Department if they want to undergo any training that will benefit them and WOU."

Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support) Prof Mohandas Menon mentioned that the training programme was initiated in 2011 and was conducted using the seven training modules developed by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) – with project work incorporated for the 2012-13 batches.

Prof Menon noted that in light of ODL advancements with new emerging concepts and technologies, "it was important for us to use this

training in the basic concepts related to ODL, and adapt it to include the new innovations, and new systems and new technologies that were coming into the field." For this purpose, WOU added the project component into the ODL training course for the second batch of participants.

He explained that WOU is currently repackaging the whole training programme to integrate new developments, especially the Open Educational Resources (OER) that the University plans to adopt. "We are at the moment finalising the curriculum framework to five modules and a project."



A few of the academics who completed the ODL training.

Prof Menon congratulates the academic staff.

WOU's ODL Core Competency Training Programme

The ODL Core Competency Training Programme comprises a prescribed set of seven modules including: An Overview of ODL; Designing ODL Materials; ODL Instructional Design; Use and Integration of Media; Learner Support in ODL; ODL Tutoring; and Quality Assurance in ODL.

The entire programme involves about 76 training hours and a project of about 20 hours and is open to staff from the Schools and Educational Technology & Publishing Unit.

New trends in higher education



WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye shared his thoughts on the latest trends and best practices in open distance learning (ODL) during the 17th Malaysian Education Summit in Bandar Sunway, Selangor from 24-25 June 2013.

Prof Ho was one of the panelists for the session on ODL – *Expanding the Classroom* on the second day of the education summit themed "Moving Towards A World-Class Education System".

He shared his observations on discerning trends in higher education in a world that is undergoing rapid globalisation. He drew reference to the iron triangle of higher education and the salient differences between ODL and conventional modes of teaching and learning. He mentioned that literacy in the 21st century holds a different meaning as a result of rapid IT advancement, proliferation of computers and ubiquitous access to the Internet by people of all ages. In fact Web 2.0 offers instructors and learners with rich

opportunities for learning and re-learning. The challenge for instructors is how to stay ahead of their students and engage them constantly in their studies.

Prof Ho stressed that "our education system must focus on grooming students to the extent that they are able to find and validate information, able to synthesise info and leverage on it, able to communicate and collaborate, and also able to solve problems."

"Educators are now talking about a 'flipped' classroom approach to teaching in which

instructions are delivered online outside of class and 'homework' is brought into the classroom instead. The role of the teacher is not to be the 'sage in a box' but rather a 'guide on the side'. Schools as we know them traditionally may soon become a thing of the past," he added.

The Summit organised by Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) was attended by some 200 participants, including representatives from the overseas universities operating in Malaysia and international schools.



From left: Prof Ho; Prof Dr Latifah Abdol Latif, Dean, Faculty of Science & Technology and Director, Open University Malaysia, Shah Alam Learning Centre; Asia Metropolitan University Vice Chancellor Dato' Prof Dr Nik Rahimah Nik Jacob; and Assoc Prof Dr Shukri Sulaiman, Deputy Dean, School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia.



From left: Prof Tham Choy Yoong, Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, Datuk Dr Tan Chik Heok, and Ms Phoong Huey Ling.



Strengthening academic links WOU collaboration with TAR University College

Wawasan Open University (WOU) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tunku Abdul Rahman (TAR) University College to promote academic collaboration between the two institutions.

The MoU paves the way for mutual visits by faculty members to share teaching experience, conduct research, undertake joint supervision of postgraduate students, and other academic activities.

The MoU was inked by Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, the Vice Chancellor of WOU, and Datuk Dr Tan Chik Heok, the President/CEO of TAR University College, during a simple ceremony at TAR University College main campus, Kuala Lumpur on 4 June 2013.

On hand to witness the official signing was WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Tham Choy Yoong and TAR University College Registrar Phoong Huey Ling. Other attendees were WOU Director of Regional Operations for Klang Valley, Adrian Siew, and senior management representatives from TAR University College.



Prof Ho and Datuk Dr Tan.

In a presentation to the faculty members of TAR University College, Prof Ho gave a brief account of WOU's academic programmes and its open and distance learning delivery (ODL) and online learning support system.

"ODL is considered a blessing by those who want to study further while still holding on to their jobs or who might not be able to attend a full-time course for various reasons. Hence staff and alumni of TAR University College who wish to pursue higher degrees or MBA programmes on



Prof Ho conducts programme preview following the MoU signing.

a part-time basis are welcome to do so with WOU. Where applicable, WOU is able to offer course credit exemptions for their Diploma and Advanced Diploma holders," said Prof Ho.

TAR University College was recently elevated to the status of a university; it was previously known as TAR College. Since its inception in 1969, the college has produced over 132,000 graduates, out of which some 20% or about 30,000 diploma holders do not continue with their studies but enter the job market.

This MoU signing is significant for WOU as it opens the door for the University to offer its ODL programmes to a potentially large number of TAR College alumni, who are diploma holders, and to the existing academic staff of TAR University College.

There are now avenues for the WOU Regional Centres to liaise with the five TAR University College branch campuses – in Penang, Johor, Perak, Pahang and Sabah – for roadshows and programme previews.



Prof Ho (centre) with senior staff of WOU and TAR University College.

WOU Seminar Series kicks off

Exploring the benefits of MOOCs



Dr Balaji talks about MOOC.

Over 30 academic and academic support staff members of Wawasan Open University gathered for the inaugural WOU-Seminar Series talk on *MOOC, OER and Mass Higher Education* by Dr Venkataraman Balaji, Director, Technology & Knowledge Management, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada.

According to Dr Balaji, a higher number of OER users are now using social spaces like Facebook for discussion, leading to the further spread of OER. "Developing countries, especially in Asia and Africa, are committing themselves heavily to OER production and publication," he added.

He said the instructor produces the content for MOOC that is further enhanced through discussions by the learners and participants. "MOOC is open where the user does not pay to browse, and massive in that the audience can range from small to very large. It is a media event, where you assemble the material and put into a platform, like a mega conference. The platform has the capacity to attract lots of discussions."

He said MOOC, as discussed in media in North America, is less about learning and more about business, as money is needed to sustain the platform, especially on a larger scale. He mentioned that major MOOC players include Coursera, Udemy and Udacity.



Dr Balaji shared that MOOC is becoming more and more feasible because of cloud computing services that allow users to browse from any device (tablet, smartphones, computer, etc) with the same speed and strength. "A lot of cloud computing is now becoming available to education," he added.

He observed that Learning Analytics, a key component of MOOC, allows student participation and interests to be tracked, and this data can then be sold for marketing purposes. He mentioned that in Coursera, business operators have full access to student behaviour.

Dr Balaji suggested that open universities in the developing world take advantage of MOOCs to reach many more learners at much lower costs.

WOU welcomes a 'new' Professor

Future plans for SELC

"We are introducing a new specialisation in Master of Education, that is, in Educational Administration, in the near future. We also want to start a Diploma in Early Childhood and Care Education programme within the next two years. My immediate task is to get these two programmes running and getting the required accreditation for the School's programmes."

Prof Santhiram Raman
Dean of the School of Education,
Languages and Communications (SELC)



Wawasan Open University (WOU) offers its congratulations to Dr Santhiram Raman, Dean of the School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC) who has been promoted to a full Professor by the University effective from 15 May 2013.

According to Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, Prof Santhiram's promotion was "strongly recommended by all three external academic referees (1 local and 2 international) from reputable universities" and endorsed by WOU's Board of Governors at its recent meeting. Prof Santhiram joined WOU as an Associate Professor from Universiti Brunei Darussalam on August 1 last year and was appointed Dean of SELC in December 2012.

With over 40 years of experience in the field of teaching and education, his past positions include Director of Studies at KDU College

Penang; Associate Professor, Lecturer and Visiting Lecturer at the School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM); and tutor at Open University Malaysia.

He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Education) from the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK, a Master of Education from USM, a BA (Hons) History from Universiti Malaya, and a Certificate of Education from the Malayan Teachers' College, Kuala Lumpur. He began his career as a secondary school teacher in Terengganu.

The second eldest of 10 children in a family from Air Itam, Penang, Prof Santhiram remarked that he and his siblings owe their academic success to their father. "My father constantly ingrained in us the value of a good education, instilling the notion that if we were not well-educated, our future would be bleak."



Pioneering research in mobile learning

WOU, USM, Motorola & CREST join forces to transform mobile learning

Wawasan Open University (WOU) is collaborating with Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Motorola Solutions Malaysia Sdn Bhd to jointly undertake research on the use of mobile technology for staff training in a manufacturing environment.

The project - *Transformation by Applying Innovative and Sustainable Mobile Learning in Manufacturing Process and Machine Maintenance* - is co-supported by a RM82,000 grant from Collaborative Research in Engineering, Science and Technology (CREST), Penang.

The purpose of the research is "to explore mobile learning as a vehicle to disseminate and assess knowledge applications and reuse in the factory floor". The study hopes to demonstrate how mobile technology can be applied in the learning

process to overcome the constraints of learning in a factory environment. This will facilitate the training of production staff, who work on shifts, and the subsequent assessment of the training provided.

This is a pioneer research that aims to establish a workable solution in providing on-demand, real-time Mobile Learning experience using augmented features of mobile devices. This solution can be applied not only to the industry, but also to education, for the benefit of students from conventional and ODL institutions.

The research team comprises principal researcher Prof Low Heng Chin from the School of Mathematics, USM, who is assisted by Dr Teh Sin Yin from the School of Management, USM; co-researcher Dr Teoh Ping Chow, a senior lecturer



from the School of Science and Technology, WOU; and Mr Siew Jit Ping, the PhD student of USM.

Tribute to a friend and colleague

Mr K Manoharan was Director of WOU's Penang Regional Centre when he passed away on 6 June 2013 from lung cancer. He will be missed!



Mano was a decent friend, also very pious and devoted to his temple activities. He was usually full of laughter and fun to be with. He always had a wide smile (except when PGRC enrolment numbers were slow in picking up!!), a very unique swinging gait and a loud voice, with a delightfully impish sense of humour. Besides the humour and laughter, we often quarrelled and argued, over work-related issues. His problem with me was that I was always too serious, and he always took it lightly....with the famous "don't worry madam" phrase of his. However these quarrels were short-lived and we would forget them soon enough, only to start another round of it...and life went on.

I feel a deep sense of loss and will miss the warmth and generosity that he radiated. May his soul rest in peace.

Sovindar Kaur,
Deputy Registrar



An anonymous quote comes to mind each time I think of Mano...

"Some people come into our lives and quickly go, some stay for awhile and leave footprints on our hearts; And we are never, ever the same"

I can recall the precise moment we met. He was first introduced to me on 15 November 2005 by the HR director. In his commanding and loud voice, his first question was, "Where are you from?" How obnoxious, I thought! Certainly not worthy of my friendship. However, it wasn't long before we became great friends and he became a member of my lunch clique. Gradually we opened up to each other's lives, and I found him to be funny, spontaneous and genuine. We respected each other.

He cared for his students a lot and often went the extra mile for them. This extra concern was the cause of many arguments between him and colleagues. In my case, it was over library services and staff issues especially his insistence that I open the library during public holidays so that his students have a place to study. Funny enough though, we will be laughing our heads off the next hour.

I am deeply saddened by Mano's death. I feel it is untimely but then again death waits for no one. I am truly blessed to have known him and worked with him. He will always be remembered in my heart. May he rest in peace!

Kamsiah Mohd Ali,
Director, Learning & Library Services



WOU holds Young Enterprise IT Workshop

by Deehbanjli Lakshmayya

Wawasan Open University (WOU) together with First Solar Malaysia and STEC Technology held an IT Workshop at the main campus as part of the Young Enterprise (YE) Programme's initiative to expose student achievers to the basic technology available to them in today's business environment.



The students attend the IT workshop.



Baskaran shares his expertise with the students.

Instructor Baskaran Bendaiya of First Solar led the students in learning how to create and manage presentations using PowerPoint, build and style documents using Microsoft Word, and identify ways to market their product online using Facebook. The students also got to try out a few hands-on activities in relation to these basic lessons, after which they came up with their own slides and online business pages.

The workshop was co-sponsored by First Solar providing instructors and meal for the participants, while WOU provided the training venue and STEC offered administrative and secretariat support.

An estimated 160 Form 3 and Form 4 students from 15 schools, accompanied by their teachers, attended and benefitted from the workshop. The YE Programme Committee had introduced this workshop last year, during which Penang Seagate hosted the first workshop to expose students to the new judging and online submission as part of their initiative in enhancing the programme features.



Hands-on learning.

The YE Programme Northern Region will be celebrating its 25th anniversary next year, and part of the celebration will encompass the 'evolution' of the programme which includes integrating technological and green aspects of production and business into the structure of the current competition. The committee is planning a memorable celebration for the year ahead and has the support of all 16 corporate sponsors as well as American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) and the Ministry of Education.

WOU hosts 2nd Capacity Building Workshop for E-Learning course

Wawasan Open University hosted a capacity building workshop from 10-14 June 2013 – a follow-up to the first held in January – to finalise the draft of the OER-based E-Learning course to be offered later this year.

The *Institutional Capacity Building Workshop II for OER-based E-Learning* at the main campus was organised by WOU in collaboration with the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi, which is part of the Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver.

Prof Som Naidu from Charles Sturt University, Australia and Dr Sanjaya Mishra, Director of CEMCA, returned as facilitators. The first workshop taught participants how to integrate Open Educational Resources (OER) into their teaching and learning, and how to design 'OER-based E-Learning' for the professional development of teachers.

Their discussions provided input towards developing the curriculum and content of the course, including rough sketches of the lessons. The five modules decided for the course are: Concept and Practices of OER and Their Significance; Selecting and Evaluating OERs; Designing Learning Experiences for OER-based E-Learning; Copyright and Licensing for OER; and Integrating OER in E-learning.

Over the last four months since the first workshop, the participants continued to work in groups to develop the modules. WOU even held one internal workshop, with its academics being mentored by Prof Mohandas Menon, Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support), and Prof Phalachandra Bhandigandi.

This second workshop, again sponsored by CEMCA, looked into fine-tuning the modules and finalising content. Prof Som Naidu is tasked to



Dr Mishra addresses the participants.



The workshop in progress.

edit the course – the final outcome will be an OER-based course that can be used for training purposes by any institution. The course package will also include four case studies capturing experiences of institutions in the creation and integration of OER. This includes the experience of WOU in the use of available OER for developing a course on 'ICT in Education' for its Master of Education programme.

Dr Mishra stated, "Our idea is to develop an online course that any university, school, centre of professional development, teachers can use. We expect this online course to be accessible by end of this year." CEMCA aims to mount this course on its website to allow interested institutions to run it online using the CEMCA platform.



Strengthening research ties with STOU

Since its inception, WOU has maintained a productive academic relationship with Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) of Thailand. Guided by Prof Emeritus Dato' Dr Wong Tat Meng, the former Vice Chancellor of WOU, and Assoc Prof Dr Pranee Sungkatavat, the former Vice Chancellor of STOU, the initial foundations of a strong research relationship were laid down during the 25th Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) Annual Conference held in Penang in 2011.

As an initial step, the STOU contingent of approximately 30 participants who attended this conference was given a special technical lecture on the course delivery at WOU by Ishan Abeywardena, Deputy Dean of the School of Science and Technology. This was followed by a reciprocal visit in June 2012, when Ishan was invited to deliver a special guest lecture to STOU's academic, IT services, e-learning, student support and educational technology staff. The lecture titled *ODL Course Development Tracking Using ICTs* was based on the award-winning research paper "Development of a computer-aided ODL Course Development Tracking System" written by Ishan and Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, the incumbent Vice Chancellor of WOU.

Using the WOU Course Development Tracking System (CDTS) as the model, STOU has since developed its own course development tracking system which is currently being tested for deployment.

Renewing the research ties and exploring collaborative research opportunities, the newly appointed Vice Chancellor of STOU Assoc Prof Dr Chailerd Pichitpornchai (MD, PhD) extended WOU an invitation to share research work again with the STOU community. Dr Chailerd, who is

a technologist in addition to being a neurologist, felt that the 57th World Assembly of the International Council on Education for Teaching (iCET 2013) held in STOU under the theme of *Innovations and Trends in Education* would provide a strong backdrop for a series of technical lectures which would inspire STOU to embrace the latest in technology innovations. As a result, Ishan presented three guest lectures over a period of two days (24 and 27 June 2013). The first two lectures were attended by STOU academic faculty and heads of departments while the third more technical lecture was attended by IT services, e-learning, student support and educational technology staff.

The lectures titled *Crash Course on Open Educational Resources* and *The Current OER Search Dilemma* were based on research published as book chapters and ISI-indexed journal papers by Ishan within the past 18 months. These provided a very technical overview of Open Educational Resources (OER), OER usage case studies and *OERScout*, an intelligent search engine which uses text mining, learning algorithms and faceted search for effectively locating *Desirable* OER. However, the third lecture titled *faboodle Technology Framework for Accessing Moodle through Facebook* which was based on a technical paper presented at the 24th International Council for Distance Education World Conference (ICDE 2011, Bali) was the highlight of the session. This prototype technology which provides a link between a moodle learning management system (LMS) and facebook gave rise to initial discussions regarding a collaborative research project between STOU and WOU to explore further development of *faboodle* and implementation at STOU to be used by its students numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Ishan will be working with STOU in the next few months on this collaborative project. Ishan also presented a technical paper on the *OERScout* prototype which sparked wide interest among the global iCET 2013 conference participation.

Ishan receives a token of thanks from Assoc Prof Dr Vipa Jaroenpuntaruk, Vice President for Information Technology.



Posing with the participants.



Ishan addresses the participants from STOU.



Ishan delivers his lecture on OER at STOU.



Gaining recognition for APEL

WOU is gaining attention for its practice of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Dr Andy Liew Teik Kooi, Director of WOU's Directorate of QA and External Relations, was recently appointed as a panel/moderator for the *Capacity Building Workshop (RCP CB-9)* and *APEL Framework Workshop (RCP P-12)* held at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), Johor from 29 to 31 May 2013.

As one of panelists for the forum on 'Best Practices in APEL', Dr Andy shared his experiences in managing APEL for admission purposes and assessing the formal certificated learning for advanced standing purposes.

The three-day workshop was organised by Advanced Centre For Technical and Vocational Education (ACTIVE), Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, UTHM. The participants came from RCP (see right) partner institutions in Asian countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Indonesia.

The workshop provided a platform for RCP partner institutions to discuss APEL, namely its implementation, strengths and limitations, so that they can embrace the practice of APEL more effectively in their respective cultural environments. It concluded with the finalisation of a feasible APEL framework application for the participating countries.

What is APEL?

APEL is a process of assessment that gives mature students the opportunity to enrol for higher education, as their life and work experiences are evaluated and recognised. WOU is one of the institutions in Malaysia that offer APEL - allowing applicants with related work experience to enrol for higher studies via WOU's unique Open Entry Admission System.

Regional Cooperation Platform for Vocational Teacher Training and Education in Asia

The goal of the Regional Cooperation Platform for Vocational Teacher Training and Education in Asia (RCP) is to establish a forum for professional and scientific exchange in the field of initial and continual vocational teacher education and training in the East and Southeast Asian region.



A time to celebrate

and thank all teachers and academics

For Teacher's Day 2013 the academic staff were invited to a 'professional chit chat' over lunch with invited speaker Lucille Dass - a professional language educator and trainer specialising in language education methodologies, teacher development and communication skills.

Welcoming the academics, Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye noted that, "It has been a tradition for us in the education institution to celebrate Teacher's Day in appreciation of all the hard work that has been put in to make the journey of a student a pleasant one."

Lucille, an educator, a school teacher and a teacher trainer who had taught students from primary to university levels is a person that has seen all the various fields of education.

Dass' talk, themed *Only Connect*, gave the audience great tips on 'How to be a good teacher' as well as 'the connection between teaching and learning'. "In order to teach well, you must be a learner first before you can teach others. For example, you must know where the learner is coming from and know the learner well," explained Dass.

Her advice to all teachers was simple, "The only way to improve is by being sensitive to the students' responses when teaching and to place students at the heart of teaching." She continued, "Teachers are not knowledge givers because knowledge is everywhere, but what they need to do is to help learners to access and retain knowledge that is relevant to them."



Celebrating Teacher's Day at the main campus.



SAFETY FIRST!



Firefighters in action at the main campus during the fire drill.



Staff 'rush' to safety as smoke billows from the building.



Bringing down Faizal from the 'burning' building.

Realistic fire drill at WOU stops traffic

The sight of flames and black smoke billowing from the balcony of the 12-storey Albukhary Building of the Wawasan Open University (WOU) main campus drew the curiosity and attention of passing motorists. There was no cause for panic as this was all part of the Fire Drill that formed the highlight of the two-day WOU Safety and Health Campaign 2013.

The realistic Fire Drill familiarised members of WOU's Emergency Response Team (ERT) and First Aid Team (FAT) with the necessary procedures, and reminded the staff of the safety protocols in emergency situations.

Taking a closer look at safety and security

In his welcoming speech, WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) and Chairman of the University's Safety and Security Committee, Dr Seah Soo Aun, stated that this year's campaign did not just focus on workplace safety but also personal safety and security.

The talks that followed provoked a lot of giggles and laughter as the speakers, especially from the Fire & Rescue Department (Bomba) and Police, shared real-life gaffes with over 80 WOU staff.

Speaking on *Fire Safety and You*, Bagan Jermal Fire and Rescue Department chief Ravi Arunasalam said the first response during a fire or any threats in a building is to break the alarm glass to warn others. He highlighted that the safest place is the staircase as it is protected by the fire door. He said it's best to note the location of the emergency staircase in any building, adding that there should not be any obstacles or sources of fire in the staircase.

He remarked that the two main sources of fire are electric, such as overloading of plugs, and the kitchen. Stressing that "every second is important", he suggested they dial 991 immediately or preferably, the number of the nearest fire station. "In 60 seconds, the fire engine must exit the station upon getting a call. The response time cannot be more than 20 minutes."

Meanwhile north-east district Senior Criminal Investigations officer ASP Ahmad Haizan Abdullah spoke on *Protecting your General Safety*, revealing that motor vehicle thefts, housebreaking, and snatch thefts, comprise 65% of crimes in Penang, and that 60% of crimes in Malaysia and Penang are committed by drug addicts, followed by former prisoners (20%), and opportunists (20%).

He explained that house break-ins are usually carried out by drug addicts and syndicates using foreign construction workers who "know which part of your house is vulnerable".

At the end of the session, WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye handed out prizes to the top three winners of the 'What do I know of WOU's safety and security' contest - Ch'ng Eng Hoo (ITS), Audrey Lisa Yeong (ETP), and Sharizal Inche Mohamed (Human Resources).

WOU supports Relay for Life Penang 2013



Wawasan Open University (WOU) offered support to Relay for Life Penang for the sixth consecutive year, through financial sponsorship and sending a 15-member team to participate in the walkabout at the Youth Park on 15 June 2013.

The WOU team joined thousands of people from all ages and walks of life for the Relay for Life event themed *Fighting Cancer Together*.

The 16-hour Relay symbolises the ongoing fight against cancer, as well as the journey of cancer survivors from diagnosis to successful recovery. The event brings together people from all over Penang to celebrate cancer survivors, remember those who have lost loved ones and to join in the fight against cancer.

WOU, in line with its commitment to corporate social responsibility, was a silver sponsor of the annual event.

Insights into business and public administration

Since enrolling in WOU's Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CeMPA) programme, operations and business development manager Thilai Vishalinni Therishnakumar has found the programme well designed to help learners cope with the challenging work environment.

"As the saying goes 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world' and I plan to do just that. We learn so much in every minute of our lives but only a handful of people actually practise what they learn," she said.

She felt that the CeMPA programme enhanced her ability to see situations from a larger perspective. "Putting aside the social norm of career advancement, I think I have gained so much knowledge and awareness of the business world. It got my thinking machine switched on and I have plenty of ideas that I can put to use in the workplace," added Vishalinni.

"Moreover, the flexibility at WOU allows me to develop my own study schedule. I also get a lot of guidance from other students from different walks of life who share their experiences. It's just priceless."



Developing industry-relevant skills

WOU gave 22-year-old Pierre Loh Bing Xing the opportunity to pursue an undergraduate degree, while continuing to work fulltime. Pierre is currently a Human Resources Officer with Prestige Dynamic Industries Sdn Bhd; he has a Diploma in Hospitality Business Management from DISTED College.

"I took up the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Liberal Studies programme as it is interesting and very different from other normal study programmes. I learn about human civilisations and the unique creativity in every person. This helps me when dealing with people in my job as a human resources officer as I need to be creative and knowledgeable."

Among the courses that he has taken so far are *Human Resource Management*, *Exploring Social Sciences*, *World Civilisations*, and *Psychology of Creativity*.

Loh aspires to become a teacher or lecturer so that he can share what he has learnt at WOU with others. "To me, knowledge is very important in a sense that it will influence what kind of person you will be and what type of life you will have," he added. As for taking up higher education at WOU while working, "Just try it and you will fall in love with ODL. It is meant for working adults!"



UPCOMING EVENTS

STUDENT INFO

Student Orientation Day

For the July 2013 intake, freshmen will become acquainted with the facilities and services, as well as the University's regulations and procedures.

Date : 14 July 2013 (Sun)

Venue : WOU main campus and Regional / Learning Centres nationwide

WOU On Campus Open Day

Date : 24 & 25 August (Sat & Sun)

Time : 10.00am – 4.30pm

Venue : WOU main campus (Penang)

WOU Study Grant / Scholarships / Bursary Awards

For WOU On Campus, the deadline for new students in the September intake to apply for financial assistance – i.e. WOU Study Grant, Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Scholarship, Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Scholarship, and bursary awards – is 17 August 2013.

Get the latest WOU updates from
Facebook and Twitter!

facebook

Follow us:
<http://www.facebook.com/WawasanOpenUniversity>



Follow us:
<http://twitter.com/WawasanOU>

In the minds of
our readers

The University would like to hear from you. Whether it's a view, a comment or even a question, don't hesitate to drop us a mail at mediainfo@wou.edu.my

For more details, visit wou.edu.my

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

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 and Learning Centres
Open Tuesday to Sunday: 10.00am – 7.00pm
Penang Regional Centre
54 Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 Penang, Malaysia.
Tel: 04-218 0133/4 | Fax: 04-228 4500
Email: ro_pg@wou.edu.my

Ipoh Regional Centre
Wisma Gerakan, 80 Persiaran Greenhill, 30450 Ipoh, Perak.
Tel: 05-242 6323 / 243 6323 | Fax: 05-254 9323
Email: ro_ip@wou.edu.my
Kuala Lumpur Regional Centre
Level 3 Menara PGRM, 8 Jalan Pudu Ulu,
56100 Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-9281 7323 / 9283 8323 | Fax: 03-9284 9323
Email: ro_kl@wou.edu.my
(Library Services available Tuesday to Sunday,
10.00am–7.00pm)

Bandar Utama Regional Support Centre
L2-6 & 7, Wisma BU8, 11, Lebuhr Bandar Utama,
Bandar Utama, 47800 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 03-7629 7223 / 7629 7123 | Fax: 03-7629 7023
Email: rso_bu@wou.edu.my
Klang Regional Support Centre
No. 41 (Ground Floor), Jalan Kasuarina 2/KS7,
Bandar Botanic Capital, 41200 Klang, Selangor.
Tel: 03-3325 2353 / 3325 2373 | Fax: 03-3325 2313
Email: rso_klg@wou.edu.my
Subang Regional Support Centre
No. 34-1 Ground Floor, Jalan PJS 8/2, Mentari Plaza,
Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 03-5635 5323 / 5632 5323 | Fax: 03-5635 1323
Email: rso_sbg@wou.edu.my

Johor Bahru Regional Centre
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 Centre
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 Centre
14 Westin Avenue, Jalan Tun Jugah,
93350 Kuching, Sarawak.
Tel: 082-578 923 | Fax: 082-576 923
Email: ro_kc@wou.edu.my