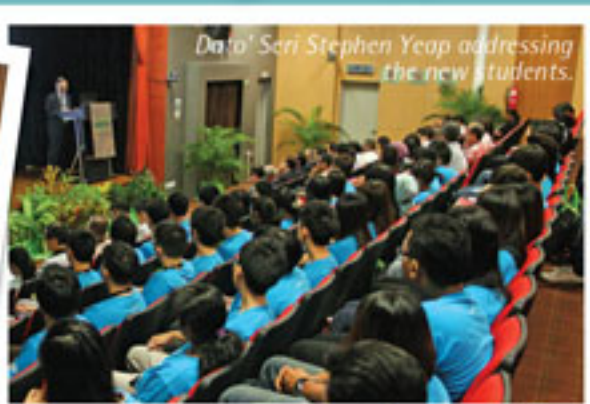


WOU's campus-by-the-sea

Full-time degrees offered at Penang campus



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In a day of excitement and activities, Wawasan Open University held its inaugural Orientation Day at the main campus on 17 September 2013 for the pioneer batch of 55 full-time degree programme students.

The majority are pursuing their Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management and the remaining 10 their Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting studies at WOU. The University has entered a new phase with its offering of programmes via the conventional, face-to-face mode, in addition to its established open distance learning (ODL) mode of delivery.

The students, mostly fresh school-leavers and diploma holders, are all recipients of the WOU Inaugural Intake Bursary Award that offers 30% off on total tuition fees or discounts of up to RM10,000 for their three years of study at WOU (*The Inaugural Intake Bursary Award is financed by the Wawasan Education Foundation, which also gives out Study Grant and other scholarships for both ODL and full-time students*).

In his welcoming speech, Wawasan Education Foundation (WEF) Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap said, "Up till now, this University was mainly responsible for upgrading the knowledge and skills of older students and adults who were already in the workforce, but now it is grooming, equipping and retaining young talents like you."

He added, "I believe the full-time programmes offered at this main campus will provide greater opportunities for the school-leavers to study right here in the state of Penang. We find that often students who go on to study at institutions of higher learning in other states in Malaysia, will choose to stay and work there following their studies, depriving Penang of many skilled manpower. In providing an avenue for a university education, WOU gives more opportunity to school-leavers, and will assist to retain our talents and re-establish Penang to be an education hub once again."

WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye in his address,

advised the students to get to know their course mates and Academic Advisors, to form study groups, and to acquaint themselves with the Internet-based learning environment of the University.

"Be receptive to new ideas and knowledge. Be open to new thoughts and insights. Take part in academic discussions. Participate actively in co-curricular activities which will provide you the opportunities to acquire personal and leadership skills. All of these, at the end of the day, will make you a better student, a better person, and above all, a better citizen," he stated.

Speaking at the press conference later, Prof Ho explained that WOU is starting off its full-time studies in Management and Accounting as the programmes are popular among ODL adult learners. He said students can complete their degree programme in three years, or less for those who enter with a recognised college diploma and hence enjoy some credit exemptions.

cont. page 2

I am pleased to welcome our first batch of full-time students who are currently pursuing their first semester of study at the main seaside campus in Penang. To all the freshmen who are now on board with us, I hope you will feel a special pride being part of the vibrant learning community of WOU. I am confident that with your full commitment to studies and mastering of the necessary soft skills, WOU will continue to produce employable graduates who are well-rounded, well-grounded, and having the right attitude to perform and excel in life and careers.

The University is committed to human resource development as evidenced by the frequency and number of in-service capacity building workshops conducted for all segments of its workforce every year. I cannot help but stress how important several of the recently conducted training workshops are for they serve specifically to either enhance the teaching capabilities of our academics or management skills of supporting staff, in addition to improving overall teamwork and productivity of the whole workforce. Our academics should realise that the challenges they face in teaching adult learners in an ODL environment can in many ways be different from those they would be dealing with in teaching young secondary school leavers in a face-to-face classroom environment. We have to get our act right from the very start.

I applaud the School of Foundation and Liberal Studies for going the extra mile by conducting the IELTS Preparatory Course. Beside participants from outside the University, I know that staff and students of WOU who took part have also benefited from this course. I support such academic initiatives by the Schools and academics.

The University, through its Schools, is poised to engage in academic collaborations in areas of mutual interest and benefit with local and international universities. With our inaugural intake of full-time students in September this year, we are now in a position to participate in student exchange programmes with other universities. The topic of inter-institutional exchange programmes, whether at the student or academic staff level, is often discussed during visits of foreign universities to WOU. This exactly happened when a group of distinguished scholars from Sun Yat-sen University visited WOU recently. I look forward to formalising some of the proposed academic collaborations between the two institutions in the near future.

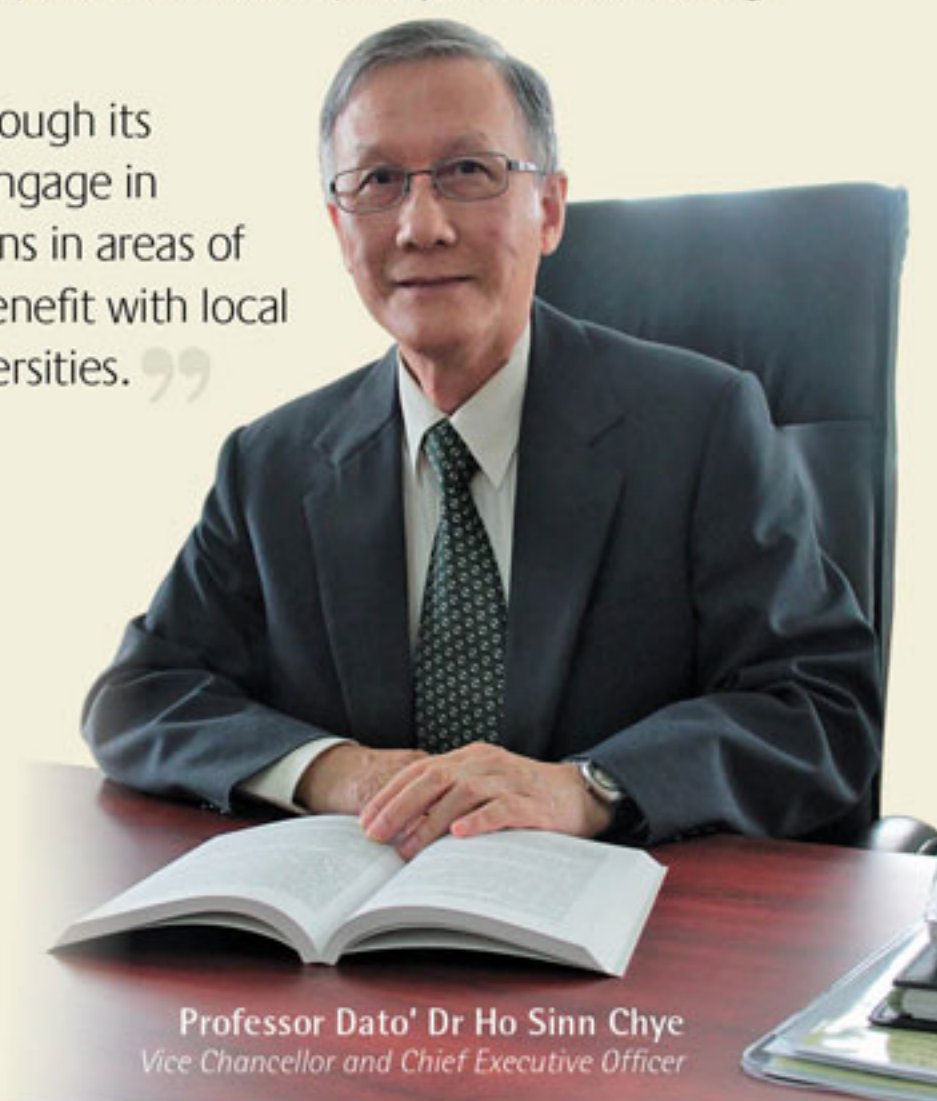
Ever mindful that the University is operating within a larger community living beyond its campus walls, WOU will continue to engage with other members of the larger community to offer our expertise, time and other forms of assistance as part of our corporate social responsibility. I thank the WOU team of advisors for working alongside the Young Enterprise group from SMK Convent Pulau Tikus this year. I hope that the good business sense and ethics that the students have acquired through their participation in this event will come in useful in one way or another for them in future.

At WOU, besides the normal work commitment we also nurture a family spirit among staff and students through social gatherings and activities which include joint celebrations of multi-ethnic cultural and religious festivities. One such event was the recent holding of the Hari Raya Aidilfitri luncheon. I thank the organising committee for coming up with a unique programme this year which brought much fun and cheer to all of us who were present.

The 22nd of September 2013 marked the 7th anniversary of the establishment of WOU. On looking back, I feel a sense of pride that our University has progressed rather well over such a short time span, more so since WOU was built based on a foundation of philanthropy and social inclusiveness. From an initial offering of 11 undergraduate degree programmes in 2007, we are now offering 44 ODL programmes of various disciplines and level of study plus our latest offering of 2 full-time on-campus undergraduate degree programmes. Indeed student enrolment has grown over the years. No less than 12,500 students have since taken advantage of the ODL education that WOU provides. Together with our inaugural batch of 55 on-campus students we have a combined total of 4,435 active students taking 147 courses in this semester.

The road ahead remains challenging. We have to stay focused. We still have a long way to go, but I know that many of us are here for the marathon, not sprint. To all colleagues, I thank you wholeheartedly for your sacrifices and contributions and look forward to your continuing support in the future. To all our students, I wish you all the best in your present undertaking.

“The University, through its Schools, is poised to engage in academic collaborations in areas of mutual interest and benefit with local and international universities.”



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

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New full-time degree programmes in the pipeline

cont. from cover page

WOU plans to introduce five new degree programmes for the three intakes next year pending approval from the Ministry of Education.

The new programmes are:

Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Banking and Finance;

Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Marketing;

Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Logistics and Supply Chain Management;

Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Computer Systems and Networks;

Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology.

There are three intakes a year for full-time students, in September, February and May. The enrolment of the February 2014 intake of the on-campus programmes begins on 9 November 2013.



Prof Ho presents the Star Student Ambassador award to Yip Kah Wei for introducing three others to study at WOU.

WawasanLink spoke to a few pioneer students pursuing full-time studies - either Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management or Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting - at the main campus in Penang.

Kang Kong Sing, 25

Kang Kong Sing from Melaka has a Diploma in Business Administration (2009) from New Era College, Selangor. He was a quarry site supervisor, undertaking projects in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan, before moving to Penang in mid-2010. He worked as a supplier and then sales designer in a kitchen appliance store until August 2013, when he decided to study at WOU.

"I chose WOU because of the affordable cost, and moreover I'm staying with my best friend at Jalan Kelawei, and so the campus is nearby," he said.

"I am interested in Management. I want to learn about managing people and how to start my own business. I aim to study the market after I graduate, and see what is in demand then."

The third of four children, a passion for business seems to be in his blood. His father runs a coffee powder business while his mother owns an antique collection shop in Melaka.



Sherwin Ong Yee Khee, 20

Using her STPM results from SMK Bukit Mertajam, she enrolled in Management at WOU. The campus is not too far from her grandmother's house at Taman Free School, where she would stay on weekdays.

The oldest of three kids - she has a 14-year-old sister and 5-year-old brother, her mother works as a seamstress in Bukit Mertajam.

"I wanted to study Management and WOU was the only private university in Penang offering that, and moreover the fees are lower compared to others. I like to learn about human resources, communications, and how to interact with people," she said.

Sherwin is thankful for the WOU Inaugural Intake Bursary Award, adding that "it helps people like me who want to study". She added, "I've heard about WOU's good reputation, that it is a quality open university serving working professionals. I also liked WOU because of its locality."

Ardy Zulkarnain Shamas, 22

Ardy possesses a Diploma in Physiotherapy from Allianze University College of Medical Sciences (2009-2012), Bertam in Kepala Batas, and a SPM certificate from Penang Free School.

He had been working as a retail management trainee at a pharmacy for eight months before he decided to take up Management at WOU. "I chose WOU as it's very affordable, compared to other universities. I've seen the facilities here and they are top-notch."

Ardy is determined to follow in his father's footsteps in human resources (HR). "My father is a HR Manager in a factory in Seberang Perai. I hope to become a HR officer in a business organisation too. I believe the courses will help me to become more professional, especially in the way I deal with people," said Ardy.



Gobeeshankar Krishnan, 22

Introduced to WOU by his best friend from his Form Six days in Penang Free School, Gobeeshankar decided to take up Accounting.

He has two elder sisters who are graduates. "I chose WOU mainly because of the course fees, environment and facilities, and the University's good reputation."

"My parents also motivated me to study for a degree at WOU," said Gobeeshankar, whose father is a retired postman and his mum a homemaker.

"Ever since primary school, I've loved mathematics, especially calculus! I definitely prefer numbers more than words. My ambition is to become a successful accountant in the corporate sector."

"The university gives me a comfortable feeling, like being at home. The people are friendly," said Gobeeshankar, who hails from Hilir Sungai Pinang.



Shalaneeswary Muniandy, 21

Shalaneeswary, from Minden Heights, is the Penang Free School classmate who persuaded Gobeeshankar to enrol in WOU. Both had studied Foundation in Management at UNITAR after obtaining their STPM results.

"I actually came to WOU main campus to enquire about doing Accounting via ODL, before I found out about the full-time study. The fees are affordable, and I like the sea-front environment."

"My cousin finished her Education degree at WOU and is a teacher now. She encouraged me to check out WOU when I was searching around for a place to do my degree. I registered for accounting because I like numbers. I wanted banking and finance, but it's not offered full-time yet. I'd like to work in the banking sector."

The second of five children, she is motivated to excel and help out her single mum. "I would like to be the first in my family with a degree, to become successful and be an example for my three younger sisters."

"One of the reasons I took up full-time studies at WOU is the award as other universities do not offer such a generous rebate. When I graduate, I hope to help my elder brother support our family."

Successful completion of IELTS Preparatory Course at WOU



WOU staff with their certificates.



Jasmine (right) conducting the course.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Preparatory Course offered at Wawasan Open University ended on a high note with the presentation of certificates to 14 students. IELTS is accepted by over 6,000 academic institutions in more than 130 countries worldwide, and is often taken for higher education and immigration purposes.

Tan Ching Wei from Registry, and Dimper Kour from Quality Assurance and External Relations Directorate.

At the ceremony, three students - WOU Lecturer Chong Fook Suan's daughter, Quan Ling, 17, from SMK Heng Ee; Abirami Kasi, a teacher of special children, who is pursuing her Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology at WOU; and Dimper Kour - shared how the course had personally benefited them.

The 36-hour course was conducted over nine weeks by Jasmine Emmanuel, Senior Lecturer at WOU's School of Foundation and Liberal Studies. She explained that the course was an enriching experience for both the students and her. "All in all, we provided the students with different opportunities to share their ideas, reflect on their learning and engage in extended communication both inside and outside the classroom."



Chong Quan Ling sharing during the class.



Dimper Kour - a recipient of MyBrain15 grant.

MyBrain15 payment award benefits WOU students

Nine students from Wawasan Open University have received grants under the MyBrain15 scheme to pursue their postgraduate study at the University. The grants were awarded to five students pursuing their Commonwealth Executive MBA degree at WOU, including Kang Eng Hooi, Zarinah Bacha, Masitah Shahabudin, Dimper Kour Gerchan Singh and Ong Kin Hoong. Another grant recipient Chu Wai Lune is studying for his MBA in Construction Management, while Irene Cheng Chiew Ping, Lee Chin How and Xavier Sinathamby are taking MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management at WOU.

The MyMaster subsidy entitles the students to a RM10,000 grant to subsidise their tuition fees at WOU. WOU is one of the private universities

allowed to receive funds for the MyBrain15 scheme.

MyBrain15 is a programme established in December 2010 under the 10th Malaysia Plan (2011-2015) for financing postgraduate studies. Its target is to achieve 60,000 Malaysian PhD holders by the year 2023. The ultimate goal is to develop a first world talent base and drive Malaysia towards becoming a high income nation.

Under MyBrain, the Ministry of Education will provide financial assistance for all Malaysian citizens to pursue postgraduate study at Master's or PhD level under three schemes, MyMaster, MyPhd and MyPhD Industry, valued at RM10,000, RM24,000 and R50,000 respectively. The MyMaster is to motivate graduates to pursue their studies at a higher level, especially in areas beneficial to the development of the country, and to be a 'feeder' to the MyPhD programme.

The sponsored fields of study are Science and Technology, Social Sciences and Arts. Students offered places in public and selected private universities in these disciplines are entitled to the financing, except for those pursuing educational programmes. However educational courses majoring in Science and Technology, pre-school, special education, linguistics, co-curriculum, Arts, Social Science, Psychology as well as guidance and counselling are allowed MyBrain15 subsidy.

MyBrain15

Applications for MyBrain15 are open throughout the year until 2015.

MyMaster and MyPhD applications must be made online via the MyBrain15 website. Visit the MyBrain15 website at <https://payloan.mohe.gov.my/MyBrain15/index2.php> for further details.



Sunny explains about leadership.

Transformational Leader develops a motivating culture

Twenty-six WOU staff from the main campus and its Regional Centres and Support Centres attended a training workshop on *Transformational Leadership* on 15 – 16 August 2013, to enhance job performance and help the University be more productive and successful.

The in-house training at the main campus was conducted by certified trainer Sunny Savinderjit from DIYA Training and Development Consultancy, Penang. He explained that transformational leaders must have a clear vision that they can articulate to the followers, and help them to experience the same passion and motivation to fulfil goals.

"Good leaders are made, not born. Leaders must be equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools of transformational leadership to develop themselves, their people and organisation," said Sunny.

"Change doesn't really happen at an organisation. It happens with people and in order to lead change, you have to know how to lead people," he added.

Sunny then described the 10 characteristics of the transformational leaders – Proactive; Energy & Enthusiasm; Visionary & Passionate; Courage; High Expectations; Accountable; Positive Attitude; Lead by Example; Teacher; Strong Communicator.

"As a transformational leader, you are visible and stand up to be counted rather than hide behind your troop. You must also make continued efforts to motivate and rally your followers, constantly doing the rounds, listening, soothing and enthusing," he stated.

Khoo Chiew Keen, Assistant Manager of Educational Technology and Publishing said, "The



Group discussion.



Group assignment.

use of real-life scenarios made the training more effective. We can apply what we have learnt to our day-to-day activities. It would be good if this sort of training is also provided for the top management so that we will be able to work together effectively as a company."

Jasmine Emmanuel, Senior Lecturer from the School of Foundation and Liberal Studies shared, "The training reinforced Mahatma Gandhi's saying 'Be the change you wish to see in the world'. Leaders at all levels of management need to walk the talk, inspire and motivate as well as provide charismatic leadership while being willing to accept ideas and differences in opinion."

Growing Personally to Grow Professionally

Wawasan Open University held an in-house training workshop focusing on personal and professional growth at the main campus on 20-21 August 2013, attended by 24 staff, including eight from the Regional/Regional Support Centres.

The workshop on *Taking Ownership Passionately* organised by the Human Resources Department was conducted by certified corporate trainers John Kennedy Paulose and Premanand Kusalavan from Global Dynamics, Kuala Lumpur.

"As a worker in WOU, you are also a parent, spouse, etc. You need to balance it all up and take responsibility over all your actions," stated John, adding that taking ownership passionately requires that they look inward to understand why they failed, what the principles of success are, and how they can manage their emotions in order to control the choices they make.

He said personal growth allows people to take ownership of their roles at work, and that employees may leave if they find they are not growing in an organisation.

John mentioned the need to have the right mental attitude by doing what's right with integrity. "Stop blaming everyone else for your shortcomings. We want you to take ownership of your own actions and the choices you make."

He then elaborated on the eight success principles – Be Purpose Driven; Be Persistent; Be Different; Be Present; Be a Learner; Be an Enricher; Be Value Driven; Be Grateful.

"We need to have a purpose in life. Do you ask yourself what am I going to be three years from now, financially, emotionally, and physically? What drove people like Nick Vujicic, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, is their persistence. They tried and failed many times, and learnt from their failure, using it as the foundation to grow and be successful," said John.

He continued, "You need to be different, otherwise how do I differentiate you in a sea of people in the organisation? What is something unique about you people will pick out?" Elaborating on living in the present, he said, "Don't hold on to



John Kennedy conducts the training.



Staff at the workshop.

your past regrets, mistakes, that keep you from moving forward, or dream about striking 3D, but live in the present and embrace life."

New Dean of SFLS

Dr Nagarajan Subramaniam assumed the position of Dean for the School of Foundation and Liberal Studies (SFLS) on 1 August 2013, having served as Acting Dean since March 2011.

In congratulating Dr Nagarajan, WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye remarked, "Even while he was serving as the Acting Dean, Dr Naga has led the School well and contributed productively to the development of the School with close cooperation of his colleagues. We are confident that he will continue the good work."

Dr Nagarajan first joined WOU as a senior lecturer attached to the School on 14 September 2009. Before that, he was serving as a freelance editor, independent researcher and consultant.

He holds a PhD (Human Development) from the Institute of Postgraduate Studies, Universiti Malaya (2005), a MA (Communications Policy Studies) from City University, London (1994), a MA (Political Science) from Madurai Kamaraj University, India (1989), a Postgraduate Diploma (Journalism) from Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication and Management, Bombay (1982) and a BSc from University of Madras, India (1979).

He began his career as a journalist with *The Star* in 1984, undertaking reporting and editing duties for 12 years with the English daily before moving on to become a sub-editor with *Malaysian Business* (1996-2000). He was also a freelance journalist with *New Straits Times* for three years, and subsequently editor for two publications produced by local consumer associations. From 2007 to 2008, he worked as research director at the Educational, Welfare & Research Foundation Malaysia (EWRF).



Dr Nagarajan

New Deputy Dean for School of Science and Technology

Ishan Abeywardena



Ishan Sudeera Abeywardena was appointed Deputy Dean of the School of Science and Technology (SST), effective from 8 July 2013. His expertise in software development, web development, and e-commerce puts him in good stead to undertake his new role at the School.

Ishan joined the University as a Senior Lecturer of SST on 24 August 2009. While at WOU, he served on executive secondment at the Commonwealth of Learning, Canada in 2012, when he worked on developing the OERScout, a text mining algorithm to effectively search the web for information on Open Educational Resources (OER). He also served as Secretary to the Board of Advisors of OER Asia, and as webmaster for the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) website.

He is currently pursuing his PhD in Computer Science, specialising in text mining algorithms, at Universiti Malaya.

Before joining WOU in 2009, Ishan worked for over a year as operations director

with a new generation web solution provider based in Berkshire, UK where he was responsible for the management of all internal and external operations. From 2007 to 2008 as IT manager in the parent company, he managed all software, hardware, networking, and security strategy and implementation.

He obtained an MSc in Engineering Management (2008) and his first MSc in Wireless Enterprise Business Systems (2007) from Brunel University, UK. He studied Applied Simulation in Robotics at postgraduate level at Dortmund University, Germany and holds a BSc in Computer Science from University of Bangalore, India (2005).

Ishan is a professional member of the British Computer Society (MBCS), a member of Institution of Engineering and Technology (MIET) and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), and a Microsoft Technology Advocate (MTA).



Geoffrey Kee

KLRC welcomes its new head

Wawasan Open University welcomed Geoffrey Kee Kok Yew as the new head of the Kuala Lumpur Regional Centre (KLRC) on 10 August 2013.

Kee has 14 years of experience in the financial sector, and was the Regional Manager at AEON Credit Service (M) Berhad prior to joining WOU. He was also a part-time lecturer at Universiti Tun Abdul Razak, Kuala Lumpur, where he lectured on banking and finance, and accounting.

He has held several positions of responsibility since starting out as management trainee with Pacific Bank Berhad in 1999. These included regional manager in an insurance company, branch manager with CIMB Banking Group, customer relationship manager and later mortgage sales manager with Standard Chartered Bank (M) Bhd.

He obtained his MBA from the University of Strathclyde Business School, UK, majoring in strategic management, with his final-year thesis focusing on *Strategic Change and Management in Banking Industry, Malaysia*.

He also holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Finance from Murdoch University, Western Australia; a Diploma in Commerce (Accounting) from Southern College, Malaysia; and a Higher Diploma in Accounting (UK External) from London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, UK.

Kee is a member of Institute of Bankers Malaysia (IBBM) and an associate member of Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA).



IPRC director Ching Huey Ling happy with the recognition.



Ng Ai Chen from Klang Regional Support Centre



Rina Julian receives the 'Best throughput performance' award for PGRC.



WOU's Ipoh Regional Centre shines!

For the July 2013 intake, the Ipoh Regional Centre (IPRC) came up tops, receiving three awards - for 'Best new enrolment performance', 'Best re-enrolment performance', and 'Highest growth in total enrolment'. On hand to receive the awards was IPRC director Ching Huey Ling.

Other winners included the Klang Regional Support Centre for 'Best invoiced revenue performance', while the Penang Regional Centre (PGRC) was honoured for 'Best throughput performance'.

Director of Marketing & Communications/ Regional Operations KH Chong, in

presiding over the presentation, said the awards were based on the targets set and the actual achievement.

Earlier in his remarks, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun applauded the RCs, RSCs and all the departments in the University for their achievement in the three key areas. "We came close to hitting the invoiced revenue for ODL for July. We may achieve student numbers but what is most important is the cascading revenue. Our total student enrolment numbers surpassed our KPI, while the new student enrolment for July was the highest in the history of WOU, hitting the KPI in that category."

New awards for RCs and RSCs

Wawasan Open University has initiated the award of certificates to recognise Regional Centres (RCs) and Regional Support Centres (RSCs) for the successful recruitment of students, since the July 2013 intake.

This is the first time WOU is giving such recognition to the RCs and RSCs, which were evaluated on the enrolment of new and continuing students, collection of invoiced revenue, growth in total student enrolment and student-to-staff throughput ratio.

WOU explores collaboration with Sun Yat-sen University

Wawasan Open University hosted a visit by a delegation of scholars from the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China to the main campus on 6 August 2013.

The seven-member delegation, led by its Vice President Prof Chen Chunseng, comprised of Prof Tan Chee Beng and Associate Prof Dr Duan Ying from the Department of Anthropology; Prof Liang Qingyin, Director of the Institute for the South China Sea; Prof Liu Zhiwei from the Department of History and also Deputy Dean, Institute for the South China Sea; and Prof Huang Daren, the immediate former Vice Chancellor, who was accompanied by his wife, Wang Qing.

On hand to welcome them were Wawasan Education Foundation Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap, Chairman of WOU's Board of Governors Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun, Registrar Yeong Sik Kheong

and Dean of the School of Education, Languages and Communications, Prof Santhiram Raman.

Prof Ho presented a briefing on WOU, sharing about its open distance learning (ODL) mode of delivery to adult learners as well as its newly introduced *WOU On Campus* full-time programmes.

The Q&A session drew many queries from the scholars who were interested about the intimate workings of WOU. They asked about tuition fee costs and collection, headcount of full-time academics, active student enrolment per semester, student distribution for the different programmes, graduation criteria, and so on.

Dato' Seri Stephen remarked that WOU is going into face-to-face after six years of focus on ODL. "Our ODL support is only in Malaysia. But when

we operate like a conventional university, we will welcome foreigners."

To a delegate's suggestion for an exchange programme with WOU similar to the one they currently have with Taiwan University and Hong Kong University, Prof Dhanarajan said, "This is something we should encourage as we begin to develop face-to-face programmes. We can look into student exchanges for one semester or a few weeks, to enrich the learning experience." He said another area of collaboration is the offering of a Bachelor of Education programme in the Chinese language at WOU to meet local demand.



Dr Duan Ying poses a question. At left is Prof Chen.

Sun Yat-sen University, originally known as Guangdong University, was founded in 1924 by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The University is one of China's leading universities with over 83,000 students studying on four campuses in Guangzhou and Zhuhai.



The WOU team with the scholars.

OERScout - A smarter approach to Open Educational Resources search



Ishan presents his talk on OERScout.

Speaking on *OERScout Technology Framework: A Novel Approach to Open Educational Resources Search*, Ishan Abeywardena, Deputy Dean of WOU's School of Science and Technology, explained that OERScout is an algorithm that can read the content of text-based materials in any repository from top to bottom instead of just scanning the metadata, allowing for more effective searches.

He said OERScout "learns what the materials are all about, and then makes recommendations. The more it reads, the more it understands the whole essence of that material, even if it is a 500-page document". He noted that Google may spurt out a list of resources fast but "the problem is with the usefulness of the resources to what the academics require".

To explain how OERScout works, Ishan used the analogy of a child who has a basic understanding of English grammar, learning how to read. "It all starts with a 'bag of words' which that child accumulates over time as he reads. As the child reads more resources in a particular area, the more knowledge the child gains. OERScout makes a connection as it reads the materials so that it can recommend the most desirable materials for your search while omitting other materials that are not relevant," he stated.

He shared that the more OERScout reads, the more capable it will be at removing 'noise' words

such as 'introduction' from its bag of words. This will result in more focused 'keywords' being identified. He also highlighted that materials without a Creative Commons licence will have zero desirability so as to protect users against liability issues.

During Q&A, he replied that OERScout is not yet possible for multilingual texts where using the child analogy again, he said the child would need to read books in that language before making intelligent recommendations on the resources. There are plans to extend OERScout to Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Indonesia and Vietnamese language resources, and perhaps later to Portuguese, French, and Spanish.

Ishan mentioned that OERScout is not yet publicly available since it would need a lot of server power to produce a proper working system. "I hope the Commonwealth of Learning, IDRC or UNESCO takes it up and makes it available to the public."

The technical seminar was attended by some 35 academics and academic support staff from WOU and DISTED College.



Academics at the workshop.



Prof Phalachandra conducts the training.

WOU focuses on quality in student assessment

Wawasan Open University organised an in-house workshop on *Learner Assessment and Preparation of Good Question papers* for 13 academics to improve on question papers for the University's Level-100 courses.

Learner assessment is one of the most critical areas of an educational organisation and the workshop aimed to give academics a better understanding of how a proper test has to be prepared, and how each question can be structured, while making sure that each student understands what is being asked without any ambiguity.

All participants had to prepare draft Question Papers for the courses they coordinate and obtain feedback from key resource persons – Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support) Prof Mohandas Menon and Prof Phalachandra Bhandigadi of the School of Education, Communications and Languages (SELC) – and other participants of the workshop.

Prof Menon explained that the workshops are meant "to enhance the effectiveness and quality of WOU's student assessment system. The first is for improving the validity and reliability of semester-end examination while the second one planned in October will be for improving the learning and assessment potential of the TMAs."

He added, "TMAs are one of the main learning and assessment tool in an ODL system. Credibility of any education system is based on not only how well the learner is able to learn but also how effectively his/her learning is being assessed. The credibility of an institution depends on both".

Prof Menon said the lecturers were trained to manage an effective classroom environment using available physical and human resources for active learning of the students. The available ODL multimedia learning resources can be used by lecturers to create innovative approaches such as blended learning and flipped classroom.

Workshop objectives included:

- Improving theoretical understanding among academics on various aspects of learner assessment including: the concept and role of norm referenced and criterion referenced assessment in educational evaluation;
- The purpose of Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) and semester-end examination in the learning and assessment process;
- The use of Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive domain in the construction of good questions.

Capacity Building for On-Campus Programmes

In preparation for the commencement of full-time courses, Wawasan Open University organised a workshop to orient all the lecturers involved to teach more effectively.

The workshop titled *Curriculum Transaction in a F2F Learning Environment* held at the main campus on 6 and 9 September 2013, was attended by some 14 lecturers. The training was conducted by Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support) Prof Mohandas Menon, Dean of the School of Education, Languages and Communications Prof Santhiram Raman, and Prof Phalachandra Bhandigadi.

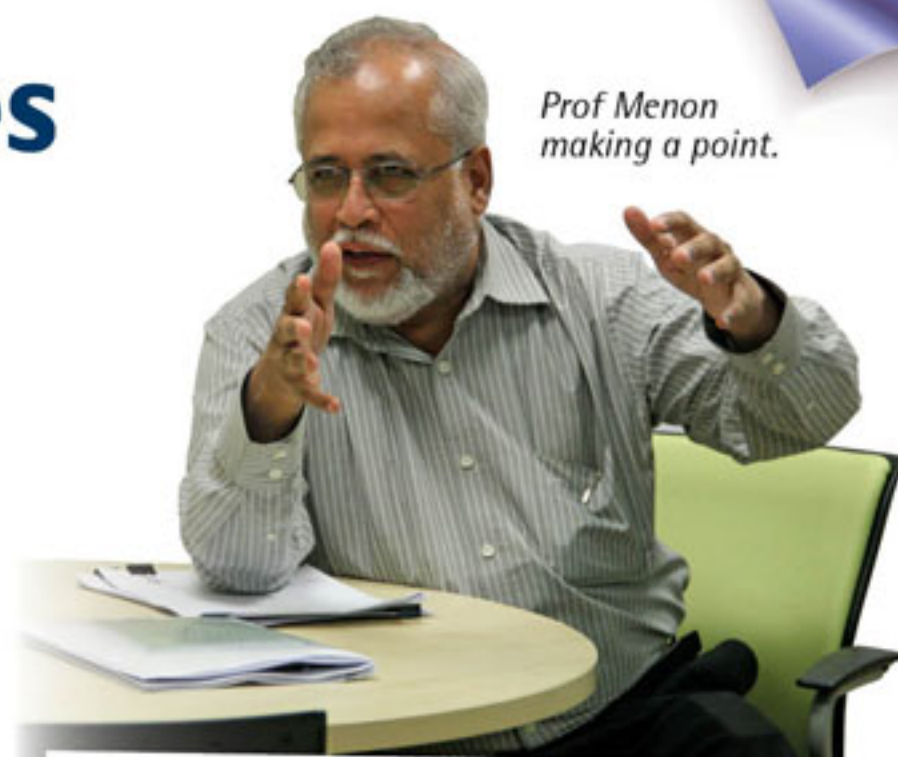
The training was divided into sessions on Planning and Time Management; Integrating Learning Methods and Materials for F2F teaching; Designing Curriculum Transaction; Alternative Instructional Techniques; and Classroom Management.

The workshop guided the lecturers on how to effectively make their teaching interactive with active participation of all students. They learnt strategies and techniques to create interactivity in groups of different sizes and to create learning-feedback loops in every class. The participants developed a unit plan with detailed content, delivery strategy and assessment technique that they will likely adopt for their lessons.

"The training benefited the participants in different degrees. The concepts that appealed most to them were flipped classroom, blended learning, buzz sessions, brainstorming and classroom management," he stated.

"We want our classrooms to be managed in a manner that allows all students to mingle and actively learn. Only an interactive and vibrant classroom can achieve that. We are orienting our lecturers to be able to create such a learning environment," added Prof Menon.

In line with its capacity building framework for on-campus teaching, WOU will provide regular training and continuing support to its lecturers. A core expert group in WOU will be available to guide them in teaching the campus programmes. There will be more workshops organised during 2013 and 2014 focusing on specific areas of orientation, particularly classroom management and integrating technology in the classroom.



Prof Menon making a point.



Prof Santhiram shares his expertise.

Supporting youth enterprise

WOU and SMK Convent Pulau Tikus
at the Young Enterprise (YE) Programme Sales Fair



KH Chong (left) and Deebanji of WOU (2nd from right, standing) pose with the team.



Tissue case, bookmarks and other products on sale.



The team promoting their products to potential customers.

With support and guidance from Wawasan Open University, SMK Convent Pulau Tikus managed to achieve a sales of approximately RM2,000 at the Young Enterprise (YE) Programme Sales Fair in 1st Avenue, Penang from 6-7 July 2013.

WOU was the corporate sponsor for the school which had set up the company, Progressio Enterprise, for their participation in the YE project this year. At the weekend sales fair, Progressio Enterprise sold six products – rings (RM2.50); bookmarks (RM3); tissue cases (RM5/RM6); mirrors (RM6); head bands (RM8); and pencil holders (RM18/RM20). Their best selling item was the head band which sold out before

the end of the second day, and they decided to take orders from customers who still wanted them.

The YE participants from the School were generally happy with their effort and the total sales garnered. The sales fair enabled the schoolgirls to learn how to work as a team and the marketing basics like competition, pricing, approaching customers, closing a sale and managing a product inventory.

Among the other corporate sponsors were Universiti Sains Malaysia, Osram Opto Semiconductors, Agilent Technologies, Intel,

Motorola, and Flextronics. Top executives from the sponsor companies, the headmasters from the participating schools, as well as representatives from the State Education Department were feted with hi-tea and a tour of the 18 stalls.

WOU Regional Operations and Marketing & Communications Director Chong Kong Hoong represented the University at the event. Also present was Dato' Tang Hong Yin, the YE Programme Administrator for the Northern Region.



Prof Phalachandra

As part of its commitment to effectively deliver education to students, Wawasan Open University has started to use WiZiQ for its tutorials. The use of this cost-effective technology is being pioneered by the School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC) and the School of Science and Technology.

Prof Phalachandra Bhandigadi explained that WiZiQ allows tutors to incorporate audio and video materials along with slides, documents in conducting classes and interacting with students. "WOU is employing WiZiQ as an alternative to face-to-face tutorials wherever there are fewer than 5 students in two or more centres," he said. "Students do not have to come to the study

Using WiZiQ to deliver student tutorials

centres. They can attend tutorial classes from their workplace or residence, thus avoiding the hassle of travelling for tutorial classes," he clarified.

He also explained that students who miss tutorial classes in WiZiQ can view the recorded classes at a more convenient time. "The questions asked by students could be consolidated, as it's recorded, and used to bring changes to the content of tutorial classes for future batches and in improving the course materials."



Following her tutorial online.

About WiZiQ

WiZiQ is an online teaching and learning platform, which provides a free virtual classroom environment for teachers to interact online and teach students in real time.

Currently, six tutors and one course coordinator from the SELC are conducting tutorials for seven courses via WiZiQ – among them are *Society and Language for Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in English Studies*; *Introduction to Pedagogy for Bachelor of Education (Hons) in Primary Education*; *Foundation in Education for Post-Graduate Diploma in Education*; and *ICT in Education for Master of Education*.



Bringing Aidilfitri joy to **WOU**

Joy and fellowship was evident at the Aidilfitri Open House lunch gathering organised by the Muslim staff of Wawasan Open University at the main campus on 19 August 2013.

Guests were greeted at the entrance to 'The Hall' with beautifully-wrapped miniature blueberry and strawberry-flavoured 'cupcakes' with motifs of birds and bumble bees.

The emcees, Sharizal Inche Mohamed of Human Resources and Emelia Nur Rizal Nikman of Marketing, welcomed the guests before turning the mike over to Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye.

Prof Ho took the opportunity to extend his Hari Raya greetings to all Muslim colleagues and commended the WOU tradition of hosting such gatherings that exemplify a culture of mutual respect and a spirit of camaraderie.

In a slight variance of past Hari Raya gatherings, a six-member dance troupe was brought in to entertain the crowd. Once everyone had filled their stomachs, they were treated to a finale dance performance. The troupe went around the tables to persuade the staff to join in – among the brave ones were Jasmine Emmanuel (SFLS), Dr Teoh Ping Chow (SST), Dr Tung Lai Cheng (SBA), and Prof Ho.

Among those who graced the lunch event were WOU Board of Governors Chairman Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) Dr Seah Soo Aun, and Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic Support) Prof Mohandas Menon.



A selection of food.



Being entertained by the dance troupe.



Miniature cup cakes for guests.



Food for thought

Twenty-year-old Lim Ching Fung, a former student of Heng Ee High School in Penang, aspires to become a manager in the food industry and believes that studying at WOU is the ticket to his success.

Lim was the first to enrol for the full-time Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management studies at WOU, being greatly interested in the ins and outs of business administration. "I want to learn how to successfully manage a business," he explained.

He had been working as a waiter in a café for six months, and this spurred his interest to become a Manager in the food and beverage sector. Moreover Lim, the eldest of two boys, often helps out his parents who run a hawker stall selling porridge at a food court along Perak Lane.

He also credits one of his teachers from Heng Ee for counselling him on his future. "My teacher introduced me to WOU. After my results, we went around to look at a few institutions. I found WOU to be best suited to my expectations and needs," he said.

Lim is hopeful that the guidance of the 'excellent' lecturers and support services provided by WOU, plus his own determination to excel, will lead him to graduate with a high CGPA.

Like Yeoh, he was elated to discover that he was a recipient of the Inaugural Intake Bursary Award, and aims to work hard and focus full-time on his studies.



Lim Ching Fung

Opening the doors to Chartered Accountancy

Yeoh Jing Yeh, 21, registered for the full-time Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting programme in the inaugural September intake, during the *WOU On Campus Open Day* on 20 July 2013.

Although born in Johor, Yeoh grew up in Penang, and completed his Form Six studies at Methodist Boys School. His long-cherished ambition is to become a chartered accountant, preferably in the government sector. A resourceful yet quiet individual, Yeoh had been partly supporting himself in his studies over the last few years to ease the financial burden on his mother, a full-time homemaker.

The youngest of four kids, he even worked from June in a money transfer company until his lectures started at WOU. While in Form Five and Form Six, he held a few jobs in bookstores and

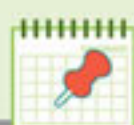
convenience stores. He was therefore happy to learn about the Inaugural Intake Bursary Award given by WOU.

Yeoh had already made up his mind to study at WOU even before knowing about this award, as "WOU has a good reputation". He said, "One of the factors that impressed me was that the lecturers had a good knowledge of the subject matter. I also like the learning environment by the sea. My cousin who studied via open distance learning at WOU told me about the nice facilities here, and how caring and friendly the tutors are."

Once he graduates, he aspires to take the ACCA qualifications and achieve his ambition to become a Chartered Accountant, especially since WOU's Accounting degree is recognised by professional accounting bodies.



Yeoh Jing Yeh



UPCOMING EVENTS

STUDENT INFO

WOU Convocation Ceremony

About 350 students will be graduating at the 4th convocation ceremony. The ceremony will see the award of the first Graduate Diplomas and Graduate Certificates.

Date : 7 & 8 December 2013 (Sat & Sun)

Venue : WOU main campus

Financial Aid for ODL study

New undergraduate degree students for the January 2014 intake can apply for the WOU Study Grant before 15 December 2013.

All new students who register for studies by 8 December 2013 stand to enjoy rebates of up to RM400 on their tuition fees.

Commencement of Enrolment for Feb 2014 semester

Enrolment for full-time degree programmes at the main campus in Penang for the February 2014 intake shall commence on 9 November 2013.

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In the minds of
our readers

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For more details, visit wou.edu.my

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

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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
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17 & 19 Jalan Jaya 2, Taman Jaya, 81300 Skudai, Johor.
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