

Recognition for two global women leaders



Prof Asha Kanwar being conferred the Honorary Doctor of Letters degree by WOU.

Contents

2	Vice Chancellor's voice
in the limelight	
3	Glittering milestones at 7th Convocation OCL grads find scope and relevance in professional careers
4	Building on WOU's strength for another ten great years Upholding a nation's democracy with "soft laws"
5	Penang is not real estate, says economist Andrew Sheng Staff with lengthy bonds with WOU honoured
in the know	
6&7	Triumphs and dreams of Wawasan graduates
in the schools	
8	Germany's Luebeck University looks to extend global network WOU welcomes visits from Hull University and South African ministry WOU grabs awards at Asian open universities conference
9	New diploma for teachers at preschools and childcare centres Korean university's inspirational 'Mobile Campus in Hand'
in the heart of society	
10	WOU takes on St Nicholas Home project to help visually impaired Students hold campaign to encourage blood donation Enlightening campaign on safety, security and health
11	Industries mingle with students at inaugural Career Fair Seasonal festivities blend with University's anniversary cheers
in the lives of people	
12	Maiden Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Memorial Gold Prize awarded From studying under candlelight to the Chancellor's Gold Medal

One has been at the forefront of making the dream of quality education possible for people in far corners of the Earth. The other is passionately immersed in the quest to make medical care available to suffering communities wherever they may be.

Two women leaders at the helm of international organisations that work towards the betterment of individuals and societies across the world were awarded honorary degrees by Wawasan Open University (WOU) during its Seventh Convocation Ceremony from 24 to 26 November 2016. The Honorary Doctor of Letters degree was conferred upon Prof Asha Kanwar and Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood.

Prof Kanwar is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), an inter-governmental organisation of the Commonwealth of Nations headquartered in Vancouver, Canada. Dr Jemilah is Under-Secretary-General for Partnerships at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) based in Geneva, Switzerland. She is also the founder of MERCY Malaysia, a medical charity which she led as President from 1999 to 2009.

Chancellor Tun Mohamed Dzaiddin Abdullah lauded the honorary graduates for the achievements "in their respective field of expertise and for raising the global profile of women in leadership".

In his convocation address he also highlighted the importance of unity in diversity and urged all to make Malaysia better for our future generations.

"As citizens who love Malaysia, we want to see the nation develop further, for the ringgit to be strengthened, for the country to prosper socio-economically, and for the general standard of living of the *rakyat* to improve," he said. "For this to happen, we require those in administration and leaders representing the interests of the people to be of high calibre, capable, honest, trustworthy, accountable and transparent individuals."

"A peaceful Malaysia, with united citizens, with minimal violence in its midst, with proper management of the nation's wealth, with all the positive values of a healthy society, will make the country stronger and better," Tun Dzaiddin added. "This is the kind of country we can be proud of and which we want our descendants to inherit."



Dr Jemilah honoured for her humanitarian work.

The University sailed past a momentous 10th anniversary last September, its gaze set resolutely on the next great milestone of its journey in the New Year and beyond.

The year 2016 was brought to a close in a fitting manner with a town hall session to update staff on developments in the spirit of inclusiveness and participation that has helped steer WOU forward. In that same vein we also acknowledged the dedication of staff by giving long-service awards to several colleagues.

The Convocation Ceremony in November was an inspiring occasion. We saw our highest graduation number to date – a total of 622 radiant faces brimming with promise. We also recognised two distinguished global women leaders with honorary degrees for their leaderships of international organisations that promote higher education opportunities and humanitarian service worldwide. I wish to express my congratulations to Prof Asha Kanwar and Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood, and to all graduates on their fine accomplishments.

A hallmark of WOU's emergence as a hub for thought and dialectics has been the Centre for Dialogue (C4D) under the able leadership of Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan. The Centre held three enlightening talks under the Chancellor's Lecture Series last year to educate, provoke and motivate Malaysians towards preserving peace, justice, human rights and growth. I want to thank Prof Dhanarajan for his stewardship of WOU's Institute for Research & Innovation (IRI), which funds C4D, as his term as Honorary Director ended on December 31. We appreciate his immense contribution and commitment in shaping and growing IRI to what it is today.

The University has also continued to receive delegations from overseas, many with interests for potential collaboration in the area of open distance learning (ODL). We welcomed visits of representatives from Luebeck University of Applied Sciences and Kiron University for refugees in Germany, from University of Hull in the UK, and from the Ministry of Higher Education and Training in South Africa.

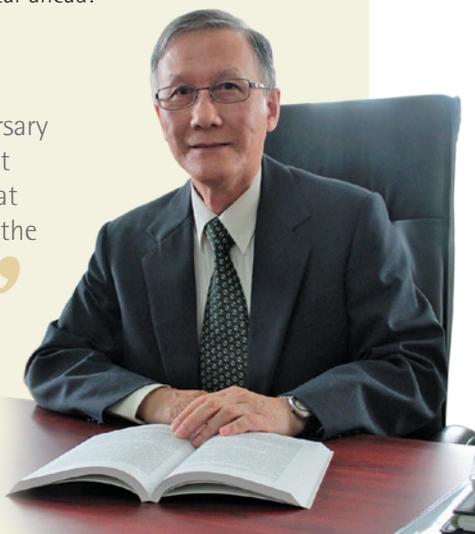
We also received academic accolades on the international front. I wish to commend the University staff who won silver in the Best Paper Award and the Best Practice Award categories at the Annual Conference of Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) in Manila.

In upholding its corporate social responsibility, WOU undertook the St Nicholas Home project through two of its departments (ETP and ITS) to help the visually-impaired in online learning, and a blood donation campaign organised by the ODL students. The inaugural WOU Career Day to boost industry-student linkages also had a positive start.

Lastly, in an exciting venture for the future, WOU is collaborating with Think City on a project to establish PenangPedia – an integrated and accessible digital repository of vital documents related to the history of Penang – to be housed in the WOU Library.

All in all, I wish everyone a good year ahead!

“The University sailed past a momentous 10th anniversary last September, its gaze set resolutely on the next great milestone of its journey in the New Year and beyond.” ”



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

Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye also congratulated Prof Kanwar and Dr Jemilah. "As individuals and leaders, they dare to step up and impact societies and nations with the strength of their vision, passion and determination."

Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon lauded them for their devotion to humanitarian values. "These two global women leaders are excellent examples of strong commitment and absolute dedication to the ideals of service to the people in their own nations and to the world at large in the fields of education and healthcare respectively," he said. "They have brought positive changes and real meaning to the lives of many people, especially the disadvantaged. They are indeed good role models for all of us to emulate."

In her inspiring video acceptance message, Dr Jemilah spoke about the realities of living in an increasingly polarised world. "How do we make sure we do not allow this degree of polarisation to happen in our own backyards?" She told the graduates to reflect on how they will "contribute to society, whether in Malaysia or outside, to think of yourself not just as Malaysian citizens but also global citizens" and "to make your mark in the world today".



(From left) Dr Koh, Prof Kanwar, Prof Ho, and Emeritus Prof Dato' Dr Wong Tat Meng.

Editorial Board

- Editor** Rasidah Mion
Corporate Communications Manager
- Copy Editor** Himanshu Bhatt
- Members** Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye
Vice Chancellor of Wawasan Open University
- Dr S Nagarajan
Dean, School of Humanities & Social Sciences
- Professor Phalachandra Bhandigadi
School of Education, Languages and Communications
- Associate Professor Dr Wendy Bong Chin Wei
Dean, School of Science and Technology
- Deehbanjli Lakshmayya
Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Administration
- Editorial Team** Selva Suppiah, Samuel Low Eng Jin
- Photographer** Nuramin Yahya

KDN Permit: PP 14958/11/2012 (031535)
Published by **Wawasan Open University**
Wholly owned by Wawasan Open University Sdn Bhd (700364-W)
Printed by **Print Resources**
90-H, Lorong Perak,
11600 Penang.

Glittering milestones at 7th Convocation



The first batch of OCL graduates.

The 7th WOU Convocation Ceremony held from 24 to 26 November 2016 boasted a sparkling new milestone in the history of the University, and this was not just due to the record 622 graduates that it produced. The ceremony also saw the first batch of 45 graduates who successfully completed the On-Campus Learning (OCL) degree programmes at the main campus in Penang.

The remaining 577 graduates at the convocation were part-time open distance learning (ODL) graduates, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Adding another feather to the event, these graduates included the very first batch of ODL graduates from the

Bachelor's degree programmes in English Studies, Multimedia Design and Networks & Data Communication.

The recipient of the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Memorial Prize for best graduate from the ODL postgraduate programmes was Irene Cheng Chiew Ping. She emerged with an MBA in Manufacturing & Production Management.

The Chancellor's Gold Medal for top graduate from the ODL undergraduate programmes went to Kalaiyalagan Karuppiah, while the inaugural Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Memorial Gold Prize for top OCL graduate was awarded to Shirley Leong Yan Yan (see page 12).

OCL grads find scope and relevance in professional careers

Positioning itself as a 'Northern University of Choice', WOU began offering full-time on-campus learning (OCL) degree programmes in September 2013 at its resplendent main campus along Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah in Penang. Today, some 200 students are enrolled in six

full-time programmes under this mode of learning.

Here are testimonies of three aspiring individuals who have completed their OCL programmes at WOU and have found new scope and outlook for their careers.



Subashini Tavamany, 24, from Kulim, Kedah, started work as a real estate negotiator at Oriental Realty in mid-June 2016. She graduated in Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting. She says WOU helped to empower her with knowledge and capabilities to fulfil her role in performing as a sales and marketing agent for developers.

"When clients want to buy a property or land, we recommend them the products of our developers," she explains. "WOU helped build my confidence. In this job, you need to be street smart, good in communication, networking and accounting."

"While studying in WOU, I did a lot of presentations and communicated often with others. This proved useful as I have to talk and meet clients and members of the public every day. I have to teach them, based on their salaries, the amount of loan they can apply and what kind of house they can afford."

Her aunt in Penang recommended WOU and Subashini agreed due to the University's quality education and proximity to her aunt's residence that reduced travelling costs.

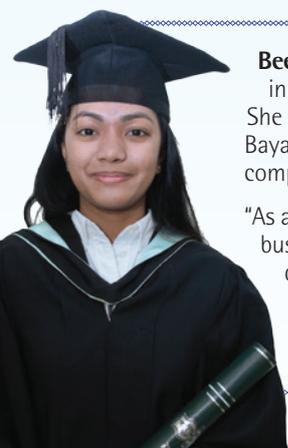
"Though my job is not directly linked to accounting, I believe the relationships and connections in WOU are now helping me to cope as I deal with clients from various strata of society," she says. "My desire is still to become an accountant in an established firm but I feel I need to gain more experience in the current field first."

Lim Zhu Ying, 23, from Ayer Itam, Penang, graduated in Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting. She started work in October as Assistant in Accounts and Administration at Old Penang Hotel Sdn Bhd which manages two hotels in Penang. She herself is based at the company's main office along Kedah Road in George Town.

"What I learnt at WOU I can apply to my job," she says. "At WOU, we learnt the theory, but here I have to translate what I learnt into practical, real-life tasks that form part of my job. Normally I will monitor the sales of the Penang hotels and of the outlets inside. I monitor the petty cash and how they control their cash flow."

"Most, if not all of the subjects at WOU, are helpful because what I do now is all related to Accounting. For example, the *Advanced Financial Accounting* course helps me in managing the accounts."

Lim's parents were delighted with her graduation and job. Her father works as a purchaser for a restaurant, while her mum is a homemaker. "My ambition is to become an accountant in a private or multinational company. I consider the job I am doing right now as the starting point to becoming an accountant," she adds.



Bee Siou Lee, 23, from Sungai Petani, Kedah, graduated in Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management. She has been working as a buyer with Jabil Circuit in Bayan Lepas, Penang, since September last year upon completion of her degree.

"As a buyer, I need to know the supply chain of the business and how to negotiate. I learnt through this degree programme how to negotiate, how to work as a team, and how the business flows. I find that the Operations Management course was especially helpful in understanding my job role," she says.

"The lecturers and all the courses are good. The lecturers are very friendly and they really helped me a lot in my studies," she stressed. Bee had previously worked frontline in a retail outlet and a private hospital during her three years of study at WOU. "With the experience and now the degree, it helped me get this job."

The younger of two children, she resided with her married sister in Penang for the duration of her studies. Bee's father, who used to work as a logger, is retired and her mother is a homemaker. She yearns to make them all even more proud of her. "I hope that I can climb up the ladder in the future to become a manager or higher, preferably in MNCs like Jabil."

Building on WOU's strength for another ten great years



Prof Ho briefs staff at the town hall session.

Even as WOU celebrates a grand milestone of 10 years in growing from strength to strength since inception, there is a need to step up the pace and remain positive for the University to achieve sustainability and future growth – particularly in the next ten years to come.

This was the call made by Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye when speaking about the current global environment of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, or VUCA, that affect the nation and the education sector today.

The management and staff, he stressed, should strive to "to turn WOU into a university that projects Value, Ubiquity, Competence and Agility," also abbreviated VUCA.

Prof Ho said this in highlighting the challenges ahead for the University during a town hall session on 15 December 2016, which was attended by about 100 staff members at the main campus. The presentation was streamed live to all Regional Centres via video-conferencing.

The University is in the midst of celebrating its 10th anniversary, beginning from 22 September 2016 till September this year.

"Let us continue to grow WOU and make 2017 our best year yet," Prof Ho said. "Let us surpass set goals in the spirit of excellence. Let us build on the strength of our people with the right kind of nurturing. Let us heed the call of research. Let us work for the community. Let us connect WOU with the world."

He also spoke about WOU's 5-year strategic plan (2017-2021) and how important it is for the stakeholders, comprising the Board of Directors of WOU Sdn Bhd and Wawasan Education Foundation as well as staff at all levels, to move together as a team.

He stressed that if WOU as an open distance learning (ODL) institution is to stay ahead of the pack, there is a need for it to remain vigilant at all times in view of the increasing numbers of higher education institutions that are actively delivering online courses in the ODL or online mode.

For WOU to increase its present lead, he said it is imperative that "we increase market share, recruit and retain more students; we strengthen our educational technology capacity and capability; we make our online delivery system more robust; we deliver our programmes and courses offshore".

Upholding a nation's democracy with "soft laws"

When it comes to safeguarding a nation's democracy much is said about the importance of codified principles like the Constitution and laws enacted by Parliament. However, just as significant are "soft laws" which are vital for infusing democratic values in a country's institutions as well as among its people.

Soft laws – referring to aspects like human rights norms, consultation, regulatory impact assessments, policies, codes, ombudsman and independent Police Complaints Commission – are necessary for the preservation and upgrading of democracy.

Veteran lawyer Roy Lee, who has practised public law, drafted legislation and consulted in various countries in Asia and Australasia, addressed this in a public lecture where he emphasised that soft laws, good laws and human rights are key features in modern democracy.

Titled *Upgrading Democracy: Soft Laws, Good Laws and Human Rights*, the talk was organised by Penang Institute in collaboration with WOU at the main campus on 1 December 2016.

Lee said soft law institutions help design standards for good laws in a democracy. They do not rely on litigation or criminal law, but infuse democratic values like "accountability, transparency, fairness, human rights and rationality, into decision-making and actions by public officials".

All in all, the democratic system is borne on four benchmarks – accountability, transparency, fairness and independence. There are enough international standards and best practices to emulate on judiciary, parliament, campaign and political finance, discrimination and equality, Lee added.

He listed eight features of good laws, which include clear objectives and guiding principles; appointment, removals, accountability and independence of decision-makers; sufficient safeguards; sufficient transparency; and international standards and best practice.

Sufficient safeguards refer to court appeals, independent panel, and judicial reviews, while sufficient transparency should cover amendment revocation and concessions/agreements with utilities or monopoly providers.

In addition to this, rights like freedom of expression, assembly and association are indispensable in a democratic society. These serve together with a collection of robust mechanisms for democratic governance to keep the Executive honest, ensure the Executive does not abuse its powers, acts fairly, and works hard for the people.

Lee also gave examples of democratic governance institutions, including the written Constitution, judicial review, independent Courts, domestic and international human rights laws, the Ombudsman, Freedom of Information legislation, public procurement laws and guidelines, a Human Rights Commission, free media, free social media, NGOs, interest groups and Parliamentary oversight committees.

He also spoke of countries without written Constitution like New Zealand and the UK, which have learnt to use their parliaments properly to protect the rights of the people.



Roy Lee expertly elaborates on soft laws.

Penang is not real estate, says economist Andrew Sheng

One of the world's most respected economists has cautioned Penang to not fall into focussing overwhelmingly on the property sector with inadequate emphasis on developing innovation and talent.

Tan Sri Andrew Sheng, Chief Advisor to the China Banking Regulatory Commission, said Penang is geographically well located; however it is not real estate but people and talent that create wealth. He stressed that innovation can be the driver of real growth in cities. This requires human capital, research and development inputs, risk capital, and workforce and tech concentration.

He specifically pointed to the success of the Silicon Valley in the USA which has some 40 universities and is now home to the top 39 high-tech companies, including giants like Adobe, Apple, Facebook, eBay and Netflix.

Sheng was speaking at the public lecture on *Why East and West Will Meet in George Town*, organised by WOU's Centre for Dialogue under the Chancellor's Lecture Series at the main campus on 3 December 2016.

He said that in order to create a better future in terms of physical and social wealth, individuals and communities must have the right mindset and work together in the face of obstacles, without laying blame on anybody.

In addition to making sure it avoids from solely relying on real estate, Penang is faced with several other long-term competitive challenges. These include loss of talent to overseas, growing over-reliance on foreign labour for construction and service jobs, and intensifying competition from other cities, he stated. There is also the issue of lack of coordination between academic circles, business fraternity and the civil service.

"What's stopping us to go to the next level? It's the individual." He advised people to affect their sphere of influence as individuals and work as communities to create the future. He said: "It's not a matter of how you do it as the technology is available, but whether we have the mindset to do it."

He suggested Penang seize on the best of the East and the West, and organise social technology and business packages into a workable model to take the state to the next level. He cited research that forecasted 940 million online shoppers spending US\$1 trillion on cross-border e-commerce transactions by 2020.

Penang must position itself in the networked global economy, where the world is today our customer base, Sheng stressed. There is easy access to information on content, branding, infrastructure and marketing. Penang must improve productivity and increase labour

utilisation to generate growth, through continuous education, training and skills upgrading at state, corporate and individual levels.

Noting that universities form the hub for knowledge and content generation, he remarked that they must work with the community – business, government, civil society – to be a platform for knowledge exchange and innovation. Input from Penang's corporate captains, civic leaders and academic profession are also invaluable.



Staff with lengthy bonds with WOU honoured



Appreciation to Yeong (left) for 10 years of service.

A total of 44 WOU employees were recently presented with long service awards for their continuing loyalty, dedication and commitment to the future of the University which now celebrates 10 years since inception.

Thirty-one of the recipients were given the 10-year service award while another thirteen the 5-year service award. The honours were given during a simple ceremony in the main



Marnisya gets a congratulatory handshake from Dato' Seri Stephen.

campus on 15 December 2016. On hand to present both awards was WOU Sdn Bhd Chairman Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap.

Heading the list for the 10-year service award was Chief Operating Officer Yeong Sik Kheong. The Educational Technology & Publishing (ETP) Unit followed by the Registry had the highest number of recipients. They included Assistant ETP Manager Khoo Chiew Keen,

Senior Multimedia Technologist Marnisya Abdul Rahim, and Senior Assistant Registrars Lim Swee Choo, June Cheah Ruenn Ling and Cheryl Ooi Hui Hui.

The other recipients included Director Andrew Joseph and Assistant Manager Sharifah Azura Syed Osman from General Services & Administration; Manager (Application) Ch'ng Eng Hoo from Information Technology Services; Manager Chew Bee Leng and Assistant Manager Norhasni Abdul Aziz from Learning & Library Services; and Director Dr Ng Peng Long from the Johor Bahru Regional Centre.

Among the recipients of the 5-year service award were School of Business & Administration Senior Lecturer Dr Chuah Poh Lean, School of Science & Technology Senior Lecturer Dr Teoh Ping Chow, and Regional Operations Senior Executive Clement Justus Gomez.

The ceremony was followed by an annual gathering arranged by the Staff Recreational Club at the Homestead Hall. Guests included Tan Sri Dr Chin Fook Weng and Dato' Emeritus Prof Dr Wong Tat Meng, both of whom are members of WOU's Board of Governors.

Triumphs and dreams of Wawasan graduates

Graduating from WOU comes with a great deal of satisfaction, pride, promise and hope. A few new graduates share with *WawasanLink* their joys and aspirations.

Tay Sin Ying, 34, from Nusajaya, Johor, graduated with an MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management. She was working as a manufacturing engineer at FMC Technologies for five years before quitting in May 2016 to follow her husband on a year-long overseas assignment.

"I was introduced to WOU by one of my colleagues, Tee Jay Sun. He did the same programme as me along with his sister Hui Ping and her husband Calvin Cheok. All four of us enrolled in the January 2013 intake, and are happy to be graduating at the same time."

Expected to return to Malaysia in mid-2017, Tay is eager to use her MBA credentials to gain a good job. "Armed with this higher educational qualification and with my knowledge on the manufacturing sector, I am confident of my future career prospects."

Engineer gains better professional options



Housemates studied and graduated together

They are housemates in Kluang, Johor and former colleagues at Flextronics Technology. Today, the 31-year-olds, **Praveena Prakash** and **Farah Shuhadah Ibrahim**, have both graduated with a Commonwealth Executive MBA (CeMBA) degree from the University.

"Farah and I revised our studies together. It was very convenient as we were housemates," Praveena recalled. She has been an assistant manager at Linocraft Printers at Skudai for two years since she left her job as a planner in Flextronics. "Most of the things I learnt like leadership skills, how to organise people, are very applicable in my current managerial-level position," she added. "CeMBA helped me get this job because my future employers wanted someone with more knowledge."

Farah, a programme administrator in Flextronics, relished the opportunity to network with other working adults while studying for the degree. "As project lead at work, what I learnt at WOU helps me to manage my focus team, which includes engineer, buyer and planner. I need to manage everything, right from the delivery order, so that the products are shipped on time."

While working with the Sarawak State Health Department as Senior Assistant Director in the Pharmacy Management Branch, **Kho Boon Phiau** was in charge of human resources, coordinating the posting of pharmacists. The 31-year-old from Kuching recently graduated from the Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CeMPA) programme.

"With CeMPA, I gained more knowledge on human resource management and administration, which helped me evaluate better whether a pharmacist or pharmacist assistant was needed for a location," he said. He is now pursuing full-time, a Master in Social Pharmacy at Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang under a government scholarship.

His colleague, a pharmacist, had recommended WOU as he had enrolled in the same CeMPA programme. "I went to inquire during Open Day, and found the programme to be a well-structured and relevant." Kho aspires for a senior management position in the pharmacy division of the Health Department upon completing his second master's degree.

Pharmacist chose CeMPA for HR and admin knowledge



An MBA to heighten construction management skills



Pang Boon Hee from Butterworth works as a site supervisor at a construction company owned by his father. Although he gained tremendous experience there he still yearned to heighten his intelligence in the field.

The 31-year-old recently graduated with an MBA in Construction Management at WOU. "I took the MBA to improve my knowledge about the construction industry," he said. "I found that courses like *Advanced Construction Management* and *Advanced Procurement Management* helped me to deal with logistics and management."

Pang had learnt about WOU through a friend. "It was purely self-motivation that led to me to enrol as I wanted to achieve a higher academic qualification, especially related to my career," he said. "I can apply what I learnt at WOU to tasks like making sure the project is running smoothly and is on time. I manage the construction of buildings from start to finish."



English graduate who fell in love with research

Khoo Wei Cyn, 24, from Ayer Itam, Penang, became enamoured with performing research while undertaking her studies for a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in English Studies at WOU. "This degree is a stepping stone for me to go into other fields," she said after graduating recently. "The programme has given me basic research skills that I can expand on."

"It was while doing my research proposal and research paper for the programme that I realised how much I love research," she added. "I am planning to go further into social research and become a lecturer and eventually a professor."

Buoyed by her new-found passion and qualification, Khoo started work in May 2016 as a researcher at the Penang Convention and Exhibition Bureau. "Our focus is on MICE, which covers meetings, incentives, conventions, congresses, conferences, exhibitions and expositions," she explained. "I research market leads and sales leads on bringing business to Penang, and pass these to my sales team."

He founded a family business with his brother at the youthful enterprising age of 22. More than four decades later, **Hoe Min**, 66, from Subang Jaya, Selangor, has seen enormous success and is today the technical manager of the company named HISCO (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

A chance encounter while returning from a business trip at Johor Senai airport saw him finding some pamphlets on the programmes offered by WOU. The upshot of this was that he recently graduated with a Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Software Engineering.

"In my career world I am always dealing with technology equipment, so it is very important that I equip myself for knowledge and also of course for my own personal satisfaction. I had the experience from working so many years, but with this degree I learnt a more systematic way of running the business." Not one to rest, Hoe has now applied to undertake a Master of Science degree by research with WOU.



Entrepreneur's lifelong learning continues



An academic feat towards promotion

Mohd Amirruddin Abdul Halim, 31, can look forward to an exciting escalation in his career after graduating with a Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronics. Holding the position of Associate Product and Test Engineer at Keysight Technologies, the native Penangite was assured by the company that he would get a promotion with the degree.

"This programme helped to improve my communication skills and relationships as I met a lot of professionals in my tutorial classes, and learnt a lot from talking to them and from their experiences."

Undergoing the programme has also helped him with a side business he started with a partner six years ago. "We have a lot of projects for installing CCTVs, and maintaining and renting photostat machines," he said. "I find that I have a better knowledge of employee and customer relations from this programme at WOU. I also learnt how to communicate more effectively with clients."

For **Dalbina Kaur Jagjeet Singh** from Johor Bahru, achieving a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology degree seems to have been a befitting move for her calling and career.

The 25-year-old has been a supervisor at a private preschool for six years, taking care of about eighty children aged from 2 to 6 years, while her mother is a full-time helper in an orphanage. "I also used to help out once in a while as a volunteer at the orphanage. Perhaps this developed my interest to work with disadvantaged kids," she said.

Dalbina found out about WOU through a road-show in a mall. "Psychology caught my interest because they offered courses like *Child Development*," she said. "Since I am interested in students with special needs, I might continue my studies with a Master's, and after that open up my own preschool centre specialising in kids with special needs."

Heart of gold for kids with special needs





The visitors (from right) Prof Granow, Prof Klein, Wulff and Bleyder.

Germany's Luebeck University looks to extend global network

A four-member delegation from Luebeck University of Applied Sciences (LUAS) in Germany recently visited WOU's main campus to explore potential collaboration in the offering of international online Master's degree programmes.

The move came about as Luebeck's Institute for Digital Learning (IDL) seeks an academic partner in Malaysia to extend LUAS' global network. IDL also wants to work jointly on curricula and modules to deliver its planned international online Master's degree programme on 'Production Engineering and Management'.

Leading the team during the visit on 14 October 2016 was Prof Rolf Granow, Academic Director of IDL.

Together with a consortium of 12 affiliated universities in Germany and Switzerland, LUAS currently offers eight bachelor's and master's online degree programmes. Prof Granow said they plan to develop 100% online programmes - the first was designed in 2001 - where everything is conducted online except for the proctored exams.

Others in the delegation were Prof Juergen Klein, Director of Luebeck's Institute for Entrepreneurship and Business Development; Kristin Bleyder, Coordinator for Luebeck's international online degree programmes; and Linda Wulff, Coordinator for online study programmes for refugees and for international and continuing education online degree programmes.

They held discussions with WOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye and senior academics. Prof Ho briefed the delegation on the University's open distance learning (ODL) delivery system and the quality-assured course development process. School of Science & Technology Dean Assoc Prof Dr Wendy Bong Chin Wei spoke about the structure of WOU's MBA in Manufacturing & Production Management programme.

Prof Granow found the visit and detailed discussion with WOU to be a fruitful one. He was also impressed by WOU's practice in online learning.

WOU welcomes visits from Hull University and South African ministry

WOU has held a discussion with UK's University of Hull (UoH) to explore potential partnership arrangements that can deliver benefits to both institutions, particularly the students. This came about during a meeting with Prof Mark Lorch, Associate Dean, International Engagement, Faculty of Science and Engineering, UoH, at the main campus on 3 November 2016.

WOU was represented by Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, Chief Operating Officer Yeong Sik Kheong, Regional Operations and Marcom Director K H Chong, and the Deans of the various Schools.

The meeting explored a few potential areas of collaboration. They included co-developing a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) short course in a Computer Science specialisation, such as Game Development that could be delivered as a distance learning module. They also discussed the idea of delivering UoH's MSc in Computer Science courses, like Security and Distributed Computing, in distance learning mode.

Founded in 1927, UoH's faculties include science & engineering, arts & humanities, medical & social sciences, law and business. The university's students are mainly in full-time study, while a small number pursue blended learning supported by online learning materials and online tutorials.

Meanwhile, WOU also welcomed a 10-member delegation from the Ministry of Higher Education and Training, South Africa, during a visit to the main campus from 22 to 23 November 2016. The ministry is in the early stages of establishing an Open Learning Unit.



Prof Lorch from University of Hull.

The team was led by Trudi van Wyk, Acting Chief Director responsible for open learning at the ministry. They were briefed on WOU's open distance learning model, the development and delivery of programmes, its enrolment and assessment processes, learning management system and learner support.



The delegation from South Africa meets with WOU senior management.

WOU grabs awards at Asian open universities conference

WOU left yet another significant mark internationally by winning two silver awards at the 30th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) organised by the University of the Philippines Open University in Manila from 26 to 29 October 2016.

The paper on *Soft Computing Model in Educational Data Mining: A Distance Learning Experience* by Assoc Prof Dr Wendy Bong Chin Wei, Dr Andy Liew, Dr Tan Choo Jun and Dr Lim Ting Yee won silver in the Best Paper Award.

The University also grabbed silver in the Best Practice Award through research on *Integration of EBSCO Discovery Service Widget into the Learning Spaces of LMS: A Case Study of WOU* by Chew Bee Leng, Marnisya Abdul Rahim and Dr S Vighnarajah.

New diploma for teachers at preschools and childcare centres

The new Diploma in Early Childhood Education (DECE) programme via open distance learning (ODL) has taken off at WOU in January with the aim of providing professional upgrading opportunities for existing and would-be teachers working in childcare and preschools centres who do not possess diploma qualifications.

This is in line with the Ministry of Education's (MOE) ruling for all preschool teachers, both in government and private agencies, to have at least a diploma by 2020. The DECE was developed by external experts in the field of early childhood education. The courses cover pedagogy, psychology, management and administration, curriculum planning, law and social policies, as well as entrepreneur development.

The 90-credit programme, consisting of 29 courses, may be completed in 6 semesters over 3 years. In preparation for the offering of the

programme, WOU conducted briefings for principals of kindergartens and nursery centres. The first briefing cum tea-talk session in the main campus on 3 November 2016 was attended by ten principals. Similar briefings were also held at WOU Regional Centres in Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, Ipoh and Johor Bahru.

"There are four courses in the first semester, and five courses in each of the remaining semesters," School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC) Dean Prof Santhiram Raman shared at the first briefing.

He said the DECE will enhance teaching professionalism and quality of the teachers in Early Childhood Education. He called on the principals to send their teachers to pursue the diploma in WOU as the ODL part-time mode allows them to continue working while they study.

The programme is also run by an extensive network of learning centres with electives provided for mother-tongue teachers where they can opt for Mandarin language pedagogy or Tamil language pedagogy.

Prof Santhiram assured that the tuition fees are affordable, and has been further reduced due to the attractive 10% tuition rebate given in conjunction with WOU's 10th anniversary. Additional rebates are given to preschools that send at least five teachers.

Learners may attend tutorials in any Regional Centre or study independently via the learning management system, *WawasanLearn*, and submit assignments online.

The DECE programme is accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and approved by MOE. Upon completion, graduates will have the knowledge, skills and competencies to be employed in childcare settings and preschools as teachers and administrators, while those teachers in preschool centres previously without formal qualifications will be suitably qualified to teach.



Prof Santhiram conducts a briefing at the main campus.

Korean university's inspirational 'Mobile Campus in Hand'

The experiences of Korea National Open University (KNOU) in progressing to a highly advanced stage in mobile learning (m-Learning) for open distance learning (ODL) proved to be both eye-opening and motivating for WOU staff recently.

Prof Tae Rim Lee, from KNOU's Department of Information Statistics, presented a lecture on *Mobile e-book for Open & Distance Learning* to the staff at the main campus on 29 November 2016. Among those who attended were Chairman of WOU's Board of Governors Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan and School of Science & Technology Dean Assoc Prof Dr Wendy Bong Chin Wei.

Prof Tae shared extensively on KNOU's m-Learning project which is dubbed 'Mobile Campus in Hand' due to its sophisticated yet easy access via devices like the smartphone. She elaborated on the components of m-Learning, comprising contents, technology, service and the learners. Contents are raw data or original draft, technology is learning management system or multimedia, while service is training, delivery methods, operation, system and reference.

Prof Tae demonstrated how to access mobile e-book and run the application using her smartphone. The m-Learning at KNOU is accessed through a main menu featuring sections on Campus Information (MyPage, Academic Calendar, Phone Book), Administrative Information (Enrolment, Courses, Grade, Register) and Learning Service (VOD Lecture, AOD Lecture).

KNOU built its e-Learning hub site, e-campus, in 2002. It kicked off its m-Learning hub site, U-campus, in December 2008 with 17 departments

of online graduate school. KNOU presently has 13 regional campuses nationwide and its own cable television network, which proves useful for web lectures.

Prof Tae said the initial u-KNOU service or 'Mobile Campus in Hand' provided students with instant access to video lectures, multimedia lectures and their academic information with the use of 3G cellular phones. The improved u-KNOU service was expanded to various mobile devices and a variety of service networks, with upgraded interface and display methods. Other service functions like ID and password, seamless display, variation of play speed and so on have also been added.



Prof Tae elaborates on mobile learning at KNOU.

WOU takes on St Nicholas Home project to help visually impaired

In a move to help the visually impaired, WOU has undertaken an initiative to develop and deploy a web-based resource sharing platform for educational materials to benefit vision-impaired students.



Marnisya shares on the learning management system.

This St Nicholas Home project is designed to benefit the multi-service centre based in Jalan Bagan Jermal in Penang which specifically serves the visually disabled. The first phase involved the University helping the Home set up a Moodle-based learning management system (LMS).

The project started in June 2016. The St Nicholas Home hopes to launch the LMS soon to manage its own set of courses for the students. With the LMS the Home can offer better learner support for improved academic excellence.

WOU also held a training workshop on *Moodle for Beginners* from 10 to 12 October 2016. It was conducted for administrators of LMS from the Home to teach them how to use and update content so that they can use this platform to manage their own set of courses. The workshop focused on uploading course materials, using assessment tools and having online communication.

The administrators learnt about creating an account and course settings in Moodle, managing and updating content, creating resources and uploading files, creating quiz, conceiving collaboration tools, managing a course, creating backups, and restoring and importing courses.

The workshop was facilitated by WOU's Educational Technology & Publishing Director Grace Lau and Senior Multimedia Technologist Marnisya Abdul Rahim.

Students hold campaign to encourage **blood donation**

Ten part-time open distance learning (ODL) students held a blood donation drive at the main campus with the support of the Penang Hospital on 15 October 2016.

The organisers consisted of Year 2 and Year 3 students pursuing the Co-Curriculum course in the July semester. Ten staff members from the Penang Hospital blood bank and two from the organ donation department were on hand to manage the event.

Lim Shu Fan, the project leader, said the purpose of the campaign was to help save lives and contribute to society by topping up the hospital's blood bank. The Penang Hospital requires around 4,000 units of blood every month.

"We wanted to create awareness and cultivate a culture of donating blood among the students and society," she said. "We wanted to get the younger generation to involve themselves actively to save people's lives by becoming regular blood donors."

Some 50 people, mainly part-time ODL students and a few WOU staff, turned up to donate blood.



Regional Operations & Marcom Director K H Chong donating blood.

Enlightening campaign on **safety, security and health**

WOU's Safety & Security Committee (SSC) took its responsibility a step further when it organised a safety, security and health campaign at the main campus on 29 September 2016.

Among other things, staff and students were reminded by experts about the importance of good eating habits and regular exercise. Eight exhibitors also set up booths to offer free basic health screening and create safety and health awareness.

In her talk on *Healthy Eating and Active Living*, Senior Clinical Dietitian from Loh Guan Lye Specialists Centre, Wendy Yeow Kim Sian, highlighted some staggering figures on obesity. "Worldwide obesity has more than doubled since 1980. In 2014, more than 1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, were overweight. Over 600 million were obese. And 42 million children under age 5 were overweight or obese in 2013."

She said a body mass index (BMI, a measure of body fat calculated as weight divided by the square of the height) of less than 18.5 kg/m² is underweight, with 18.5 to 24.9 normal, 25.0 to 29.9 overweight, and over 30.0 being obese.

She noted that almost 50% of the population in Malaysia is overweight or obese, and the waist circumference for Malaysian males should be less than 90 cm and females less than 80 cm. Highlighting differences in calories among various types of foods and cooking methods, she advised: "Choose low-fat, low-sugar and high-fibre options."

She stressed that exercise, besides diet control, is important for weight loss. "For normal weight loss, you need 200 minutes of exercise a week while healthy people need 30 minutes exercise, two or three times a week. Also, have plain water after exercise."

Muhamad Nor Hikshan Sam, Factories & Machinery Inspector, Department of Occupational Safety & Health (DOSH), spoke on *Ergonomic Safety*, explaining the need to design the job to fit the worker to prevent injury or illness and to make the job more pleasant.



Yeow highlights the overweight and obese status in Malaysia.



Exhibitors entertain queries from students.

Industries mingle with students at inaugural Career Fair

The first WOU Career Fair held at the main campus from 8th to 9th October saw exhibitors and speakers from professional bodies and industries giving students precious insights for their professional futures.

The two-day affair also saw the participation of eight exhibitors including ViTrox Corporation, Plexus Manufacturing and Jabil Circuit.

WOU students who came were treated to talks by industry experts - representatives from Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA), CPA Australia and JobStreet - on the first day. Those pursuing Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting received ideas and tips on career pathways they need to become fully certified accountants.

In her talk on *Malaysian Institute of Accountants and the Profession*, Few Say Ling, who is MIA's Northern Regional Office Assistant Manager, elaborated on what it means to be a professional accountant as stipulated by law.

Edwin Wong, Relationship Manager-Education of CPA Australia in Kuala Lumpur spoke on *Opportunities with CPA Australia*. The CPA (Certified Practising Accountant) is the title of qualified accountants in numerous countries in the world.

He presented an interactive session in which he offered insights on what students should look forward to once they complete their degrees. He highlighted on how they can groom and develop themselves while still in University, and also the opportunities available at CPA Australia, as one of the largest accounting bodies in the world.

Miguel Chong, Corporate Account Manager of JobStreet, Penang, gave students pointers on what they should consider when preparing resumes and the kinds of questions to expect in prospective job interviews. He also demonstrated a few practical interview tips and shared statistics from JobStreet surveys of employees and employers, along with industry and salary survey results.

Seasonal festivities blend with University's anniversary cheers

WOU's Christmas party at the main campus on 9 December 2016 had an added reason for significance and cheer as it also recognised the 10th anniversary of the founding of the University.

The highlight was a special cake with ten candles, one for every eventful year, and the staff enthusiastically singing 'Happy Birthday to WOU!'. The ceremonial blowing out of the candles and cutting of the cake were performed by Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Madhulika Kaushik, Chief Operating Officer Yeong Sik Kheong and Registrar Dr Andy Liew Teik Kooi.

In his speech, Prof Ho reflected on the ten fruitful years, saying the milestone "will give us the strength to bring WOU to a higher level and put us in a better position".

The gathering was taken on a trip down memory lane as photographs of staff since the early days in 2006 to the present period were flashed on the screen. The spirit of peace and goodwill was evident as staff relaxed and mingled during the Christmas luncheon.

Meanwhile the Deepavali celebration at the main campus on 18 November 2016 resounded with an underlying message to cherish the value of ensuring harmony, respect and integration among cultures. His forehead adorned with a traditional Indian *pottu*,



(From left) Prof Madhulika, Prof Ho, Yeong and Dr Liew prepare to cut the cake.



Lighting the oil lamps.

Prof Ho spoke about the importance of ethnic integration in a rich multi-cultural country like Malaysia.

"There is the need to be wary of the negative impacts of polarisation creeping into society, he said in a short speech. "Respecting each other's culture and participating in joint festive celebrations like this is a step in the right direction."

The celebration kicked off with the customary breaking of coconuts at the Homestead entrance by Prof Ho, Yeong and Dr Liew. This was followed by the lighting of traditional oil lamps at the hall entrance by Prof Madhulika and Group Finance Director Chua Saw Nee.

Guests were greeted by an enchanting floor drawing or *kolam* of a peacock and door gifts of bangles and *pottu*. A group of WOU full-time students modelled traditional costumes of various cultures, and also performed a number of lively Indian dance items.



Belting out Christmas carols.

Maiden Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Memorial Gold Prize awarded

The inaugural Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Memorial Gold Prize has been won by an aspiring 23-year-old business graduate from Ayer Itam, Penang, who emerged as the most outstanding on-campus learning (OCL) student.

Shirley Leong Yan Yan, who achieved a Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management, is already on the path to a promising career, having started work as Senior MTM Material Controller in Pen Apparel Sdn Bhd in September.

Leong had enrolled for the full-time OCL degree programme in WOU during the May 2014 intake. She received the inaugural award from Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon during WOU's seventh convocation ceremony.

"WOU's course materials are well prepared and delivered, and I feel that it has a better learning mechanism and skilled lecturers who provided excellent guidance to me over the past two years," she said.

WOU also helps students become all-rounded and civic-conscious through participation in co-curricular activities, she added. "I remember a charity dinner my course mates and I organised to raise funds to aid the operation of a one-and-a-half month old baby who was suffering from a severe congenital heart disease," Leong recalled.



Receiving her award from Dr Koh.

"I learned time management skills and also improved on interpersonal skills since I had to communicate with people both inside and outside of WOU to raise the necessary funds."

Her career goal is to move up to a managerial level position in the next three years. "The knowledge from WOU helps me a lot as a material controller in ensuring that the materials are available for production and products are ready for delivery to customers. It also helps me to know how to effectively maintain the lowest possible material and safety stocks in the store."

From studying under candlelight to the Chancellor's Gold Medal

When he signed up for his first semester of studies with WOU, Kalaiyalagan Karupiah from Kuala Lumpur was stationed by his company at rural secluded places in India. Many of his work assignments involved travelling to remote areas where his company was constructing highways, and electricity was in limited supply for a set time every day.

"It required minimum four hours of driving to the nearest big town for Internet access and there were countless late nights where I had to study under the light of a candle!" he recalled recently.

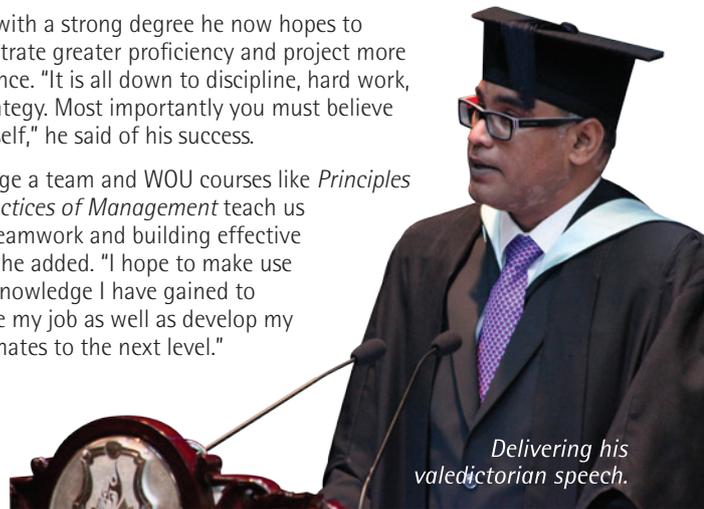
His path to success may not have been all rosy, but it certainly was fulfilling. Kalaiyalagan, 47, overcame the odds to surpass his class and graduate with a Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting degree. He emerged as top student in the Open Distance Learning (ODL) undergraduate programmes and was awarded the Chancellor's Gold Medal by the Vice Chancellor at the recent seventh convocation ceremony.

Kalaiyalagan has been an internal audit manager with IJM Corporation Bhd for three years, having joined as assistant manager about nine years ago. "WOU's model was very suitable for me because my work involves

travelling a lot, and I only needed to attend tutorials once a month, and even that is not compulsory," he said.

Armed with a strong degree he now hopes to demonstrate greater proficiency and project more confidence. "It is all down to discipline, hard work, and strategy. Most importantly you must believe in yourself," he said of his success.

"I manage a team and WOU courses like *Principles and Practices of Management* teach us about teamwork and building effective teams," he added. "I hope to make use of the knowledge I have gained to enhance my job as well as develop my subordinates to the next level."



Delivering his valedictorian speech.

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)  019-474 9323

Main Campus
Wawasan Open University
 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 BUB, 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

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
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