



*Recognising volunteerism  
and the founder  
of WOU*

## Contents

pg **2** Vice Chancellor's voice

### in the *limelight*

pg **3** Convocation sees inaugural graduates from seven programmes  
Perodua's move to enhance human resource through WOU bears fruits

pg **4** Student enrolment surges in 2015  
Appreciation to long-serving staff

pg **5** A safety, security and health campaign for all  
Volleyball fun as WOU participates in National Sports Day

### in the *know*

pg **6&7**

The world opens up with broader career options: WOU's newest graduates share their insights and experiences

### in the *schools*

pg **8** Pakistani women academics attend leadership workshop at WOU  
WOU shares its APEL expertise at ASEAN stage

pg **9** Making presentations impactful with innovative screencasts  
As online study enrolment rises, tutors' role hits the spotlight

pg **10** WOU researchers bag two medals at Asian varsities meet  
Stressed? Depressed?  
Find space to talk and think through counselling

### in the *heart of society*

pg **11** Talent, creativity and fun at festive Christmas celebration  
Klang Valley students invigorated with visit to seafront main campus

### in the *lives of people*

pg **12** Forensic chemist earns second Masters and top graduate prize  
Corporate trainer and mother of two strives to be role model

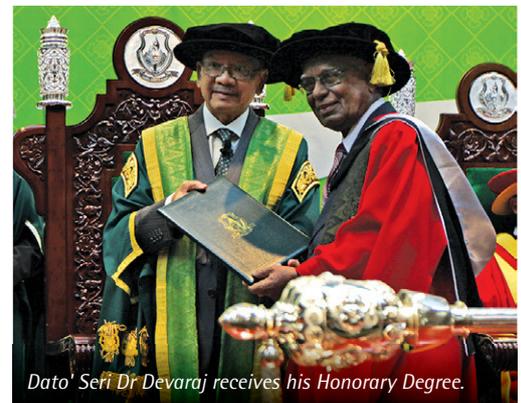
The spirit of volunteerism and the memory of Wawasan Open University's unwavering founder formed part of the limelight at the 6th convocation ceremony held at the main campus on 28 November 2015.

Dato' Seri Dr T Devaraj, 91, the Vice Chairman of the National Cancer Society of Malaysia, Penang, and also Vice Chairman of Penang Hospice Society (since 2001) was conferred the Honorary Doctor of Letters degree by Chancellor Tun Mohamed Dzaiddin Abdullah.

Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood, founder and former President of MERCY Malaysia, the nation's international charity aid agency, will be conferred the honorary degree at a later date.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Devaraj spoke on tertiary education in Malaysia and the need to eschew race politics. "Some years ago I heard this statement 'make learning your companion for life'," he said. "It was part of the eulogy of a very good friend of mine who in his time was awarded the honour of Tokoh Guru. That was his message to his students. I would like to commend that call."

"With learning as our companion in life we can be rational human beings with the ability to lead a fulfilling life for oneself, family and for our country. With *wasatiyyah* (the middle way) or moderation as our guide Malaysia can be an example of a truly plural society living in peace and harmony. Can we rise to this challenge?"



*Dato' Seri Dr Devaraj receives his Honorary Degree.*

In conjunction with the convocation, WOU also renamed its main 384-seat capacity lecture hall as Auditorium Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik, in recognition of the immense contributions of the late second Chancellor.

Witnessed by Tun Lim's family, including son Datuk Lim Si Pin and his mother Toh Puan Wong Yoon Chuan, Tun Dzaiddin performed the unveiling of the plaque on the naming of the auditorium.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye paid tribute to Tun Lim for pioneering the initiative to form WOU. "Tun Lim will always be remembered as the key Founder of Wawasan Open University," he said. "It began with his vision of a virtual university. With sheer grit and determination he brought in key people and the funds and turned that vision to life."

*cont. page 2*

Each New Year celebration draws with it fresh challenges, new opportunities and rejuvenated hopes. Now, as we begin 2016, the scenario is no different. I take this opportunity to exhort all staff and students to forge ahead with optimism and renewed zeal to achieve their professional and collective corporate goals.

The fact that we ended 2015 on a rather high note should serve as inspiration for us to work harder this year. After all, we not only achieved the highest student enrolment, but also produced the highest number of graduates to date.

Furthermore, we took pride in maintaining the positive growth of the University and the increasing recognition of WOU's institutional achievements and academic credentials, both locally and internationally. The University will certainly continue to widen its geographical outreach and extend to a larger cross-section of the population to promote its brand of quality higher education. We need to bring this to the awareness and grasp of the people at large, particularly working adults and fresh school leavers.

We also witnessed the proud and upbeat countenances of our graduates during the WOU convocation held in late November, close to the tail-end of 2015. I wish to congratulate them and trust they would use their newly-acquired qualifications to further advance themselves in their personal and professional lives.

I take this opportunity to also congratulate Dato' Seri Dr T Devaraj who was bestowed with an Honorary Degree during the convocation ceremony. We shall also remember the occasion for its stirring homage to the late Chancellor, Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik, through a simple yet meaningful gesture of renaming the main lecture hall in the Albukhary Building in his honour. We were privileged to have Tun's family with us to share in this memorable event.

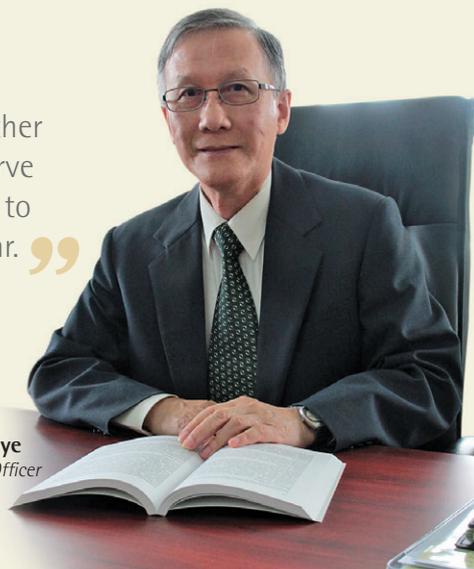
On the academic front, we witnessed with pride as two conference papers presented by Dr S Vighnarajah and Ms Chew Bee Leng won silver medals at the 29th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities held in Kuala Lumpur in December last year.

WOU also successfully organised and hosted a women's leadership training programme, upon request, for senior academics from Pakistan. This bodes well for the University and testifies to its growing recognition in the international arena.

On a lighter note, I wish to congratulate our on-campus full-time students for their novel efforts in organising the impressive Christmas party which will be well-remembered by students and lecturers who attended. The way they had pitched their individual talents and skills to create at minimal cost using recycled materials a snow-themed décor, complete with snowmen and fireplace, was truly commendable. It brought a fitting and significant close to the eventful year of 2015.

It is with this spirit and fervour that we now move forward through the rest of 2016, facing the waves of new opportunities and challenges, to hopefully eventually emerge with even more successes and records to our credit, for ourselves, our colleagues and the University.

“The fact that we ended 2015 on a rather high note should serve as inspiration for us to work harder this year.”



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



(From right): Datuk Lim, Toh Puan Wong, Tun Dzaidin, Dr Koh, Prof Ho and Chief Administrative Officer Yeong Sik Kheong.

He said Tun Lim liked to remind that 'no person wishing to learn at a higher level should be denied the opportunity for lack of money'. "Tun Lim's deeds and legacy will endure and continue to reverberate for years to come," Prof Ho added.

Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon stated that Tun Lim was "highly regarded as a no-nonsense leader, and noted for his intellect and integrity, his grit and determination, his candour, his fiery speeches, and often times, his off-colour humour and remarks."

"Nobody could match his stamina and tenacity when it came to promoting and pursuing what was right and good for the country and the people, including bringing forth this University," Dr Koh remarked.

He also commended Dr Devaraj, describing him as "a towering Malaysian and a living proof that age should not deter us from volunteerism".

The convocation also witnessed the award of the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Memorial Prize for best graduate at the postgraduate-level to forensic chemist Dr Chan Kar Weng, and the Chancellor's Gold Medal for best undergraduate to David Chin Toh Ming from Sarawak.

In his convocation address, Tun Dzaidin called on the graduates to emulate great leaders of strong character and values, like Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi, who lead with humility and accountability.

"Many people want to be leaders, whether in the corporate or public sector, or at national or international levels," he said. "However, only a few are prepared to accept the accountability that comes with it - taking responsibility for the outcome, whether good or bad, instead of laying blame or making excuses."

### Editorial Board

- Editor** Rasidah Mion  
Corporate Communications Manager
- Members** Professor Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye  
Vice Chancellor of Wawasan Open University
- Dr S Nagarajan  
Dean, School of Foundation and Liberal Studies
- Professor Phalachandra Bhandigadi  
School of Education, Languages and Communications
- Associate Professor Dr Wendy Bong Chin Wei  
Dean, School of Science and Technology
- Deebanji Lakshmayya  
Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Administration
- Editorial Team** Selva Suppiah, Samuel Low Eng Jin
- Photographer** Boey Hein Lee

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.

## Convocation sees inaugural graduates from seven programmes

A record 493 graduates emerged through WOU's open distance learning (ODL) mode of study during the 6th convocation ceremony held at the main campus on 28 and 29 November 2015.

They comprised 116 students from postgraduate programmes and 377 from undergraduate programmes. Aged between 23 and 67 years, they hailed from diverse occupational backgrounds. They included lecturers, teachers, engineers, accountants, technicians and clerks.

Among those proudly donning ceremonial robes were 15 who represented the first graduating batch from seven programmes. They were the Graduate Diploma in Sales & Services Management programme as well as the six Bachelor's degree programmes in corporate administration, management with psychology, entrepreneurship & small business management, database management, software engineering and telecommunications.



Jubilant graduates.

WOU Pro-Chancellor and Wawasan Education Foundation (WEF) Chairman Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon presided over the second session of the convocation, and Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye over the last three of the five overall sessions.

## Perodua's move to enhance human resource through WOU bears fruits

A collaboration between WOU and Perodua Sales Sdn Bhd (PSSB) for a special customised programme bore its first fruits with the first batch of graduates from the national car maker at the University's 6th convocation ceremony.

Four employees of Perodua received their Graduate Diploma in Sales and Services Management (GDSM). The programme was tailor-made to help improve customer service and sales volume at Perodua. Their study was fully sponsored by the company.

For **Abdul Rahim Md Ghazali**, 38, from Padang Serai, Kedah, it was clear that the programme was selected by Perodua's management to provide the staff with knowledge and a high-level educational qualification.

"It is really helpful since we are already doing and applying most of the things learnt in our daily routine," said the Service Manager at Perodua's Juru branch. "We learnt how to handle marketing and customer service in a more precise manner, and how to tackle the market."

Abdul Rahim has been with Perodua for almost twenty years, starting his career as assembly production operator at the Rawang headquarters after his SPM. "I am very grateful to Perodua for giving me the chance to take up this programme at WOU. The University delivers a high standard of education and the courses all relate to my job," he said.

Meanwhile **Mohd Syahmi Mohd Noor**, 39, from Ipoh, who has been a Branch Manager at the Prai branch for eight years and employed with Perodua for 14 years, said they learnt both the theoretical and practical aspects of management. As he comes from an engineering background, the programme enabled him to gain much-needed management skills.



Programme coordinator Chong Fook Suan (centre) flanked by happy graduates from Perodua.

"Our graduation will hopefully encourage more of our colleagues to enrol in this programme to improve their sales and services management," he said. On a personal note, Mohd Syahmi also wants his graduation to motivate his two school-going kids in their studies.

**Fadzly Helmy Hamdan**, 42, a Branch Manager and Sales Manager at Perodua Johor Bahru, has been attached to the company for ten years.

"I love to study so as to gain extra information and knowledge to update myself on new approaches and happenings," he said. "From the subjects and topics discussed at WOU, we learnt new things like how to create interest and get the young generation into the market, and how to reposition ourselves in the market and handle challenges."

The father of six kids stressed that not everyone is given such a "not-to-be-missed opportunity" to study by their employer and it will help the company achieve a high quality workforce.

**Ng Joon Hoe**, 53, from Kulim, Kedah, a Service Manager in Perodua Sungai Pinang, has been with the company for 12 years. Having only a diploma in civil engineering, he acquired at WOU significant knowledge about marketing techniques and sales related to his work. "We handle a lot of marketing, and through this programme, I now understand why and how to carry it out, and to better manage my service branch and the 30-40 employees in my team," he said.

*The 60-credit GDSM programme is fully accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and can be completed in two years. It offers a total of 12 courses, including Personal Selling and Salesmanship; Services Management; Consumer Behaviour; Services Marketing; and Marketing Communications.*



From left - Mohd Syahmi, Fadzly, Ng and Abdul Rahim.

## Student enrolment surges in 2015

*Listening to the Vice Chancellor.*

WOU has achieved a significantly high student enrolment in 2015, especially for those pursuing part-time study through open distance learning (ODL), Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye has revealed.

A large part of this accomplishment has been due to the University expanding from two intakes a year to four intakes. "New student enrolment in 2015 compared to 2014 increased by 17%, continuing student enrolment increased by 7%, and total ODL student enrolment by 9%," he remarked.

He said this during a town hall session held at the main campus on 8 December 2015. The meeting was attended by University staff as well as the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, as well as board members Tan Sri Dr Chin Fook Weng and Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap.

Prof Ho stressed that the growth of total student numbers is among several essential steps to help meet next year's budget target. He urged all staff to reduce the expense to income ratio in order for WOU to achieve break-even latest by 2017.

The other essential steps he listed included generating extra revenue through the Centre for Professional Development & Continuing Education (PACE); space optimisation at the main campus; and offering of WOU programmes overseas.

In this light, he also expressed optimism with WOU's academic initiatives overseas, including the ongoing discussions and potential collaborations with institutions in Mauritius, Nepal, Nigeria and Botswana.

Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap, who is also WOU Sdn Bhd Chairman, congratulated and thanked the staff for their efforts and announced an attractive bonus. "Your achievements through your creative innovations, new technologies, cost management and new marketing strategies, will be reflected through this year's bonus," he said.

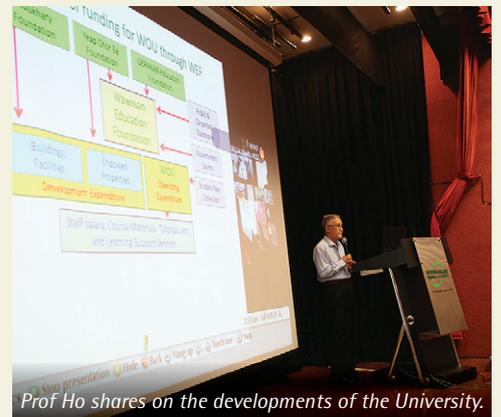
"Going forward next year, we will have to look for growth vertically and horizontally," he added. "New targets will be set next year for us to achieve sustainability while retaining our quality through accountability.

"Every department will have to be self-regulating, harmonised and coordinated to meet the targets set. We have to rely on making full use of our assets through skilful re-engineering, new innovations and smart collaborations with industries to be ahead of other institutions.

"I believe we will prevail supported by our strengths and by working smart," he asserted.



*Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap.*



*Prof Ho shares on the developments of the University.*

## Appreciation to long-serving staff

Seven pioneer staff members who have rendered dedicated service to WOU for ten eventful years were given special and much deserved recognition in conjunction with the University's annual gathering held at the main campus on 8 December 2015.

The occasion presented an opportunity for all to reflect and admire the dedication of the WOU family over a fruitful and challenging decade that saw the University rise to a highly respectable echelon in Malaysia's tertiary education.

Leading the list was Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, founding Vice Chancellor and current Chairman of WOU's Board of Governors, along with his secretary, Khoo Suan Choo. On hand to present the 10-year service awards was Dato' Seri Stephen Yeap, the Chairman of WOU Sdn Bhd.



*Appreciation to Prof Dhanarajan (left).*



*Prof Ho presents 5-year service award to Tan Pooi See.*



*Puan Kamsiah receives 10-year service award.*

The other long timers were founding Registrar R Padmanathan, QA & External Relations Director Dr Andy Liew, Learning & Library Services Director Kamsiah Mohd Ali, School of Foundation & Liberal Studies Deputy Dean Jasmine Emmanuel, and Senior Finance Executive Chan Bee Lean.

They were among a total of 26 staff members formally recognised for long years of service towards the development and growth of the University. Nineteen staff members received the 5-year service awards from Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye. They included Information Technology Services Director Tan Pooi See, Senior Human Resources Executive Chan Yang Yang and School of Science & Technology Lecturer Chandrasgeran Natarajan.

The event also saw a lucky draw with various prizes up for grabs. Andrew Joseph, Director of General Services & Administration, won the first prize – a 32-inch LED television set. The second prize, a microwave oven, went to Sharon Alice Wiessy from Educational Technology & Publishing, and the third prize – an electric rice cooker – went to Senior Lecturer Lilian Yap from the School of Business & Administration.

## A safety, security and health campaign for all

Staff, students and visitors at the WOU main campus were given an interesting and essential glimpse into the importance of preventive measures against accidents and emergencies, together with tips on healthy living, on 22 October 2015.

A 'Safety, Security and Health Exhibition' was held at the ground floor foyer of the Albukhary building to educate and enlighten individuals on personal safety. They were also exposed to information on the dangers of haze, smoking and other hazards.

Seven exhibitors were invited to display their information and be on hand to answer related queries. They included the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP), the Road Safety Department of Malaysia, State Health Department's Non-Communicable Disease Control Unit and the National Cancer Society of Malaysia, Penang branch.



CAP officer N V Subbarow explains on organic farming.



Zumba workout.



Some facts on cancer.

Organised by the University's Safety and Security Committee with the support of the Staff Recreational Club (SRC), the half-day event was part of a Safety, Security and Health campaign to raise awareness and promote a healthy lifestyle among the staff.

The State Health Department distributed leaflets along with stick-on labels signifying 'no-smoking' and 'smoke-free zone', while the Road Safety Department displayed safety tools and posters. CAP education officer N V Subbarow was present to explain to the crowd how to make organic fertilisers and non-toxic repellent for plants.

The campaign had earlier in the day kicked off with a vigorous zumba workout led by full-time student Robin Cheah Kai Yang, who incidentally is the President of the on-campus learning (OCL) student body. He is pursuing his Bachelor of Business (Hons) degree in Accounting at WOU.

Some 25 WOU staff members dressed in sporting outfits participated in the 30-minute early morning exercise, gamely following the energetic dance routine to songs like *Oppa Gangnam Style* and other lively music. Chief Administrative Officer and Registrar of the University, Yeong Sik Kheong, was among those spotted performing the manoeuvres.

## Volleyball fun as WOU participates in National Sports Day

The WOU main campus was a boisterous and lively scene of sporting cheers and exercise when 32 staff members and full-time students got together to pit skills against each other in a volleyball tournament on 10 October 2015.

They were joining thousands of Malaysians who participated in various sporting activities held simultaneously across the country. The mass campaign was held following the federal government's declaration that October 10 be celebrated every year as a National Sports Day in a move to imbibe the culture of sports and promote healthy lifestyle.

The volleyball tournament held in tandem with the nationally observed day was jointly organised by Lecturer Kevin Tan Pooi Soo from the School of Science & Technology (SST) and WOU's Staff Recreational Club (SRC).

After sweating it out in several tiring matches, the team from the Educational Technology & Publishing (ETP) Unit won the tournament, with General Services & Administration (GSA) Department emerging as the runner-up.

Tan congratulated the triumphant teams and thanked all participants for making the event a success. He expressed hope that the activity would grow as an annual event at WOU. "Let us make next year's sporting activity an even grander affair," he said. "I hope to see a lot more participation from the staff and our full-time students."

He added that the purpose of holding the competition was not so much about winning or scouting for best players. "Through games like these we aim to encourage staff and students to mingle and have some good, wholesome outdoor fun," he said. "It will help to foster closer ties among staff and students, and let everyone feel connected and become a close-knit WOU family."



The joyful winners congratulate each other.



The full-time students participating.



The finals.

# The world opens up with broader career options: WOU's newest graduates share their insights and experiences

## Inroads in construction with an MBA

**Saw Si Ling**, 40, from Kuantan, Pahang, graduated in MBA in Construction Management.

Married with two kids, aged 7 and 12, Saw diligently drove to Kuala Lumpur every month for tutorials, and headed back the same way afterwards. The journey took about three hours each way.

"WOU was the first to offer this MBA and I could enter using my Advanced Diploma," she said. "I saw a newspaper advertisement, and came to the KL Regional Centre to enquire."

Employed for 15 years as a quantity surveyor in a private construction firm in Kuantan, she said she took the MBA to improve her management skills. "I learnt about strategic and project management, and other helpful areas. My contract manager encouraged me to take the MBA and my tuition fees were paid by my company."

Having been assured of a promotion, her next goal is to become a member of the Board of Quantity Surveyors Malaysia.



## Politician with public health in mind

**Dr Thor Teong Gee**, 45, from Penang, the Deputy Secretary-General of Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia was beaming on receiving his Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration.

He has been practising medicine for almost 20 years after graduating with a medical degree from Universiti Sains Malaysia. He now runs a clinic in Bayan Lepas. "I wanted to upgrade myself in public administration, as I am quite active in politics. Moreover, the flexibility of open distance learning suited my unpredictable schedule."

"Being in Gerakan, I know WOU well. I enrolled and my learning experience confirmed that it is indeed a good, quality university. I deferred one semester during the May 2013 General Election as I stood in Sungai Pinang (state constituency). My studies got disrupted but with the support of the WOU staff, I was back on track again."

His Master's thesis was on the policy aspects of electromagnetic field radiation to safeguard public health. "With the help of my supervisor, we managed to publish and present the research paper at an overseas forum," he said.



Dr Koh congratulates Dr Thor (right).

## Three Directors, their study group and a precious MBA

**Xavier Sinathamby**, 45, from Johor, along with his two colleagues, graduated with an MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management. He holds a Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering.

Xavier joined Flextronics, Johor Bahru 15 years ago as Senior Engineer and has been Quality Director for two years now. He and CK Chong, Director of Engineering, visited the WOU exhibition booth at their workplace and subsequently persuaded another colleague, Gunalan, also a Director (Business), resulting in all three getting enrolled.

"We do group study. It helps because when we share and discuss, it registers in our mind," Xavier said. "The programme package is really relevant to my job. Having a Master's from a recognised university is always an advantage. I just got to know that I will get a salary increase."

His philosophy in studying is not to stress oneself and take required subjects. "When you have one heavy subject, balance it with another you are familiar with. Do your best in assignments," he said.



Xavier (right) with Gunalan.

## Counselling, 'tis my vocation

**Lim Siew Heoh**, 36, from Butterworth, obtained her Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology, and has already enrolled for a Master's programme in counselling.

She joined the Women's Rights Awareness Association, Bukit Mertajam two years ago as a full-time counsellor, and had also volunteered for ten years in Mitra Line, an NGO-run hotline that offers counselling.

"I decided to switch my profession to counselling and so took up psychology," said Lim, who also used to be a corporate trainer.

"I became a full-time counsellor, with less income, because I want to serve the community as nowadays you see many problems affecting the people. I hope to create awareness so that people are comfortable seeking advice."

"WOU was recommended by my friends. This programme has enhanced my knowledge on how people think, behave, their cognitive level and so on. When you know why people act a certain way, you then know how to react towards them."



## Realising knack for psychology through liberal studies

**Santi T Iyerdouria**, 44, from Skudai, Johor, was thankful for her Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Liberal Studies. She has been a dental nurse for over twenty years and currently works in a dental clinic in Johor Bahru.

Santi started work after her SPM to support her single mother, a housewife, and five siblings. "I am grateful to WOU as it gave me the golden opportunity to get my degree," she said.

"I took up liberal studies as it offered a wide scope of courses. I soon realised I have the skills and a desire for counselling and motivating people, and so my electives were mainly psychology courses," she stressed, adding that she would like to continue with a Master's in Counselling.

"I visited the WOU booth at an Education Fair, and registered the next day," she recalled. "As a student, I learnt to create my own timetable and to push myself."



## Managing human behaviour and the complexity of logistics

**Ng Lay Lee**, 42, from Rawang, Selangor was a pioneer graduate in Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management.

Having worked at Scientex Great Wall Sdn Bhd, a manufacturing company, for 16 years, she was promoted from senior warehouse executive to logistics manager in August 2015 upon completion of her studies.

"Being in charge of logistics, I handle the shipping out of goods to foreign and domestic markets," she said. "This programme taught me about business planning and marketing management, since I need to do comparison pricing and know the market."

"I also learnt how to manage human behaviour to ensure my team works together with me," said Ng, who is married with two children.

Ng found out about WOU through radio and newspaper advertisements, and proceeded to enrol. "The time is flexible and I can study at my own pace," she said.



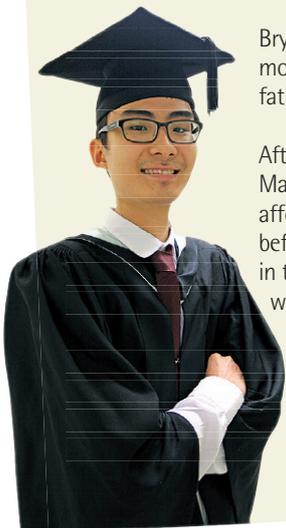
## Budding entrepreneur found WOU suited him

**Bryan Tan Yew Jin**, 25, from Ipoh, graduated with Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Sales and Marketing, and is now pursuing CeMBA at WOU. He started work as an accounting clerk in a secretarial and tax audit firm five years ago and was promoted to accounts executive last February. He is presently also undergoing hands-on training as a photographer in a photography shop.

Bryan's immediate family is just his mother, who is a housewife, as his father passed away a few years back.

After finishing his Foundation in Marketing, he searched for an affordable university to do his degree before learning about WOU. "I walked in to enquire as I often see it on my way to work. WOU suited me," he said.

"With my knowledge in marketing as well as accounting, I have wider career options. I want to become an entrepreneur, start my own business."



## A vision to empower women

**Jarina Mohammed Zakir**, 49, from Kuching, Sarawak was among the three pioneer graduates in Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Corporate Administration.

She volunteers at an NGO that helps empower women. "I am all for empowering women. My ultimate aim is to become the director of an NGO." She is also a freelance motivational trainer for school students sitting for exams and a corporate trainer for the last few years.

Jarina discovered WOU when visiting an education road-show. "After a few years of nurturing my kids, I wanted to study again to improve myself," she said. "I applied the same method of learning at WOU to help my kids with their studies, like how to locate online resources and the e-library."

Interestingly, she was not always attached to an NGO. She in fact worked in the banking sector for 13 years before leaving to take care of her four kids, and showing that one can undergo change to pursue one's aspirations.



## Pakistani women academics attend leadership workshop at WOU



Prof Dhanarajan shares on leadership.

A group of 22 senior women academics from 19 universities in Pakistan attended a high-level 10-day leadership development training workshop held mainly at WOU from 16 to 26 November 2015.

The workshop titled *Leadership Development for Women in Higher Education* was conceptualised by WOU and organised in collaboration with the British Council, Pakistan, and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.

It was coordinated by WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic-ODL) Prof Madhulika Kaushik and Dr Barry Tan who shared their experiences and expertise along with Tan Sri Emeritus Prof Gajaraj Dhanarajan, who is Chairman of WOU's Board of Governors and founding Vice Chancellor of the University.

Prof Madhulika said it was gratifying that WOU is recognised as a provider of high-end leadership training by international organisations. "Working with senior women from another Asian country in the area of higher education leadership was an enriching learning experience and should help the University in raising its profile as a knowledge provider," she said.

The training programme was divided into six themes: leadership concepts and theories; leadership and the gender dimension; operational challenges for women in leadership; managing change and innovation;

managing environment and stakeholders; and managing good governance.

Invited experts from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and University of Nottingham Malaysia, also shared on the leadership roles they play and their work experiences. They included Prof Dato' Dr Susie See Ching May of USM, Tan Sri Dr Rafiah Salim of UKM and MQA Consultant Prof Zita Mohd Fahmi.

The participants were also taken on visits to USM's Centre for Research on Women and Gender (KANITA) and UKM's Tun Fatimah Hashim Women's Leadership Centre. During the visit to USM, they were briefed by KANITA Director, Associate Prof Dr Noraida Endut. They discussed women's leadership role in research, and in building bridges between university and community.

The first week of training was conducted mainly at the WOU main campus. Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye presented an overview of the University, while Prof Dhanarajan spoke on *The Leadership Challenge in Higher Education today: The Vision of the Leader*.

Participants discussed effective leadership qualities and styles, identifying their own leadership styles as well as leadership challenges, coping strategies and necessary support systems.



Getting acquainted with the participants.

## WOU shares its APEL expertise at ASEAN stage

WOU was given the honour of sharing its knowledge and expertise on Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) at an international forum held in conjunction with the 27th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

More than 130 participants at the 2015 ASEAN Young Quality Assurance Officers Forum and Roundtable Meeting got the opportunity of learning about WOU's trailblazing implementation of APEL.

Organised by ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) and hosted by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) the event was themed *Peer Ingenuities – Approaches to and Challenges in Quality Assurance of Higher Education*. Held in Putrajaya on 19 and 20 November 2015, it saw participation of professionals and experts from various nations including Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia Lao PDR, Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia.

Dr Andy Liew Teik Kooi, WOU's Director of QA and External Relations, spoke on the University's involvement in the development of APEL in Malaysia during the session on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

In his presentation titled *Opening Doors: APEL in Malaysia*, he elaborated on the current status of APEL and the challenges to be addressed. He also highlighted how Malaysia has opened the doors for adult learners through APEL, as well as on its policy and guidelines. "Recognising prior learning experience is not new but formalising it as a recognised means of entry and learning process is," he said.

APEL allows 'non-traditional' adult students without post-secondary diploma or degree, who find their professional careers restricted, to

undergo formal higher education, he explained. While APEL is currently applied in Malaysia for admission purposes only, it will be implemented for advanced standing or credit transfer as well in 2016, he added.

Dr Liew also spoke about APEL assessment instruments and WOU's appointment as a Partner University of MQA since 2012 in conducting APEL assessment. WOU has recently been invited by MQA to be the National APEL Assessment Centre.

The forum was officiated by the Minister of Higher Education Dato' Seri Idris Jusoh and attended by the Chief Executive Officer of MQA, Dato' Prof Dr Rujhan Mustafa, and President of AQAN, Prof Channarong Pornrunroj. It was held to provide opportunities for young QA officers from ASEAN countries to update their knowledge on QA in higher education and on current best practices.

Other topics of discussion included National Quality Assurance and Qualifications System, ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF), ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf), and RPL.



All dressed up for the dinner reception.

# Making presentations impactful with innovative screencasts

WOU academics have been urged to make course presentations more interesting and engaging for students and tutors through the use of innovative screencasts.

During two half-day workshops titled *How to create an effective screencast?* Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye challenged the academics to create new and impactful screencasts instead of just uploading basic PowerPoint or PDF files.

The workshops, held at the main campus on 29 September and 4 November 2015, trained about 15 staff from the four Schools and the Educational Technology & Publishing Unit.

Prof Ho explained that a screencast is the digital recording of a presentation shown on the computer screen together with the instructor's narration. "It allows you to create engaging videos to communicate, educate or to train tutors and students."

He gave tips on producing a good screencast at low cost for the respective ODL courses. "Try to combine images, videos, audio, and screen recordings for your screencast. Today we can capture sharp images/videos with a good smartphone and clear voice recording using a USB microphone. You do not need very expensive multimedia equipment."



Elaborating on screencast.



A participant shares her short video production.



Prof Ho shows some of the multimedia tools to use.

When planning a screencast, one must be cognisant of the audience, draft an outline, prepare scripting, and produce the right file size for easy distribution. The developed screencast can be uploaded to the learning management system, *WawasanLearn*, for students and tutors to view, or even placed on YouTube for public viewing.

He also demonstrated how to creatively use simple, freely available open-source, Windows-based multimedia applications or software to produce a 5-minute high definition video.

The participants learnt the salient features of multimedia tools like *CamStudio* for PC screen capturing, *Audacity* for audio editing, *VirtualDub* for editing video, and *FormatFactory* for audio and video format conversion. They later presented their newly-developed screencasts for feedback.

## As online study enrolment rises, tutors' role hits the spotlight

A case study research by WOU's School of Education, Languages and Communications (SELC) on the role of tutors as online facilitators has revealed interesting insights on the subject.

The study specifically investigated the delivery of teaching and learning in an online environment, with focus on English Language Teaching (ELT) courses. It collected data from eight tutors teaching SELC courses through semi-structured interviews.

The research was particularly timely as there has been higher student enrolment for online courses due to the growth of technology. This has made the role of tutors vital for successful online facilitation.

SELC lecturer Ooi Li Hsien shared his findings in a talk on *The Role of Tutors in Online Facilitation of ELT Courses* held as part of the WOU Seminar Series at the main campus on 16 October 2015. He remarked that tutors' effective characteristics can lead to successful online facilitation, with all tutors in the study uploading various teaching materials and useful links, while posting thought-provoking questions for students onto the learning management system (LMS).



Lee shares on his research.



Listening to the findings of the study.

The study identified student participation as one of the major challenges tutors face in online facilitation. "Tutors find it difficult to get students to access the LMS or answer questions posted during tutorials, and to participate in online discussions in the LMS forum," Ooi said.

A student's lack of attendance in online tutorials makes it hard for tutors to gauge his or her progress. Unstable Internet connection, a factor contributing to the problem, forces tutors to find other platforms like WhatsApp and WeChat to reach out to students.

He also highlighted a few best practices of the WOU tutors in online facilitation, such as using platforms like the LMS to maximise online facilitation so that students do not feel isolated; and remembering students' names to foster a closer relationship and motivate them to participate in tutorials. "One notable best practice of WOU is the learning partner concept where the tutor is considered more like a friend or partner, and therefore is more approachable to students," he said.

Ooi delivered the paper on the case study at the International Conference on English Language Teaching organised by Universiti Putra Malaysia in Melaka from 19-21 October 2015.

## WOU researchers bag two medals at Asian varsities meet



The WOU delegation pose with OUM Vice Chancellor.



Chew receiving her award from Tun Jeanne Abdullah.

Two research papers by WOU academics have hit the spotlight in the international arena after they were recognised with silver medal distinctions at the 29th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) recently.

School of Education, Languages and Communications Senior Lecturer Dr S Vighnarajah won in the Best Paper Award category for his presentation titled *Profiling Information Seeking Behaviour of Distance Learning Students in WOU*. It was co-researched by Farzanah Ali Hassan, Norhasni Abdul Aziz and Ooi Siew Lee from WOU's Learning & Library Services (LLS) Department.

Library Manager Chew Bee Leng won silver as well in the Best Practice Award category for her paper on *Open Access Repositories on Open Educational Resources: Feasibility of Adopting the Japanese Model for Academic Libraries*. The co-researchers were LLS Director Kamsiah Mohd Ali and Information Technology Services Manager Ch'ng Eng Hoo.

The conference themed 'New Frontiers in Open and Distance Learning (ODL)' was held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from 30 November-2 December 2015. Over 200 participants from some twenty countries across Asia attended the conference. They included those from Brunei, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Japan, China and Hong Kong.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye led a 12-member delegation from WOU. As one of four invited guest panelists at the AAOU Conference panel discussion, he shared his views on *The Way Forward in ODL*, focusing on the situation in Malaysia, while highlighting current trends, enabling environment and future challenges.

Dr Vighnarajah's paper examines how WOU students engage in information-seeking for learning and research. The findings offer insights on improving students' information search behaviour and the effective utilisation of information. "The Library has the potential to facilitate an effective learning experience, especially in distance learning institutions," he said. "I am privileged to have had the opportunity to do my part to amplify the important role the Library plays in WOU."

Chew looked into using an Asian-built open source software called WEKO to develop two web-based repositories on open educational resources, which has proven to be as good as other commonly used repository software. She added, "We intend to share our knowledge with other information providers interested in developing their own institutional repositories using WEKO."

The next 30th AAOU Conference will be hosted by University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) in Manila from 26-29 October 2016.

## Stressed? Depressed? Find space to talk and think through counselling



WOU counsellor Shirley Cheah.

In the course of pursuing tertiary studies, one may come under severe pressure, especially while also earning an income. Students may face problems such as anxiety and stress, depression and loneliness, adjusting to a new culture, lack of family, friends or intimate relationships, and study difficulties.

One may also encounter personal issues like bereavement and loss, harassment, trauma, and addictions or distractions.

Full-time students at the main campus in Penang who face any of these problems can now meet up with WOU's appointed counsellor who has been operating here since May 2015.

Shirley Cheah Seeh Lee is ready to give counselling on various issues, including family, relationship, stress, behaviour, trauma and absenteeism. "Counselling can offer you space to talk and think about problems and

difficulties, and many people find it helpful to be able to do this with someone who is not a friend or family member," she said.

"Counselling is not about giving advice, but it can help you understand difficulties. Your counsellor can work with you to help you make decisions and changes that may work better for you."

Cheah is a lecturer for psychology and liberal studies courses with the School of Foundation & Liberal Studies. She holds a Bachelor of Psychology (Hons) in Counselling Psychology from Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and a Master of Education in Guidance and Counselling from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

She is a registered and licensed counsellor under the Malaysian Board of Counsellors. She also volunteers as a counsellor at Agape Counselling Centre, Penang.

"I have been interested in psychology for most of my life. I read a lot about psychology and human behaviour as a teenager. I wanted to deal with people on a more individual level and make a personal connection with the people I meet."

Cheah was once an intern medical social worker and counsellor at Universiti Malaya Medical Centre where she dealt with critically ill patients, family issues, suicide, sexual abuse and rape cases. She was also a counsellor at the USM Medical Centre and assisted in a USM research in which she interviewed police inspectors and NGO officers to investigate the support system for sexual abuse victims.

Cheah can be contacted by email at [slcheah@wou.edu.my](mailto:slcheah@wou.edu.my) or by phone at 04-2180 427 for an appointment (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm).

## Talent, creativity and fun at festive Christmas celebration



*Singing 'Jingle Bells' at start of the event.*

A Christmas gathering held at the main campus on 18 December 2015 will be remembered for much more than its pomp and merriment. It also fittingly showcased the promising talent, creativity and team spirit of the on-campus learning full-time students who conceptualised and organised the event.

As over 80 students mingled, danced and participated in the games and fun-filled activities, amid spectacular décor and a sumptuous dinner spread, few would have thought that such splendid arrangements had been made with great ingenuity at very frugal cost using recycled materials.

The theme was *Rolling in the Snow*. Well, there was certainly a snowy feel in the party's environment which was replete with snowmen, reindeers, a cosy fireplace and festive backdrops.

The students had in fact employed quite a bit of resourcefulness and imagination to create the items. The snowmen were made of newspapers rolled into balls, with manila poster cut-outs used for the adorning caps and noses. The 'fireplace' was fashioned out of wooden crate panels collected from supermarket floors and cut out to resemble the fireplace mantle, while cardboard illuminated by lights were used to give the effect of the glowing 'fire'.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dato' Dr Ho Sinn Chye and academics Jasmine Emmanuel, Lim Peng Keat and Kevin Tan Pooi Soo who attended the event were among those suitably impressed.



The main feature at the front consisted of wooden panels painted with drawings of reindeers and snowmen, while the 'Rolling in the Snow' board was made by pasting letters and snowflakes made from white paper. A bicycle decorated with a Christmas stocking added to the overall design.

The décor was made in-house over a course of five days prior to the event. "We want to show people that WOU is a happening place not just to study, but to have fun and make friends as well," said on-campus learning student body president Robin Cheah Kai Yang.

The key students responsible for the decorations at the Homestead Hall were Chow Bai Quan, Yeoh Lee Quen, and Lee Kah Wei.

The celebration began with a dance performance by Robin and singing of *Jingle Bells* by a group of students. Other activities included a selfie corner board, gift exchanges, and lucky draws of shopping vouchers and other prizes.



*Self-made 'fireplace'.*



*Wooden panel painted by the students.*

## Klang Valley students invigorated with visit to seafront main campus

A visit by a group of WOU students from the Klang Valley to the University's headquarters in Penang proved to be an enthusing experience for the students while helping to deepen bonds of the WOU fraternity across the peninsula.

The visit on 12 December 2015 left the students particularly impressed at the breezy seafront ambience of the campus which lends a conducive environment for learning.

The thirty students were from KLRC and the Bandar Utama, Subang and Klang Regional Support Centres. They were accompanied by head of the Kuala Lumpur Regional Centre (KLRC), Audrey Keong Mei Cheng, and Klang Valley Senior Finance & Administration Executive, Tan Chia Yun.

Keong said the visit was made to help forge better relations between students and the University, as well as to enrich their learning experience at WOU. "We organised this visit as part of student activities upon the request of some students who had long desired to see the beautiful main campus," she said. "It allows them to interact and know each other better since they usually only meet during tutorial classes once a month."

They were briefed by Head of Penang Regional Centre, Teh Kim Kow, Dean of the School of Foundation & Liberal Studies, Dr S Nagarajan, and Senior Lecturer from the School of Business & Administration, Chong Fook Suan. The students also dropped by WOU's Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Library and met Library Manager Chew Bee Leng.



*SBA Senior Lecturer Chong Fook Suan (left) with Audrey Keong (right) and the visitors at the main campus.*

They also toured the majestic Homestead mansion and experienced the scenic sea view from the Albukhary Building.

Ku Cu Ying, a third year Banking & Finance degree student, said WOU should continue to organise such visits to the main campus for new and returning students every year. "I was able to know the other students better and the trip is a good way to relieve stress after exams," she said.

Student Clement Tan also suggested visits every year as they would benefit outstation students like him. "We study online and in Kuala Lumpur. Many of us have never seen the main campus before," he said.

Johnny Lee added: "We really enjoyed to the max in terms of eating, shopping, taking photos, and our main campus is really awesome. I wish to see more such outings where we can relax and get better acquainted."

## Forensic chemist earns second Masters and top graduate prize

Forensic chemist Dr Chan Kar Weng had just obtained his PhD from Universiti Malaya (UM) in 2012 when he decided to pursue his second Masters degree, and immediately enrolled at WOU for the semester beginning January the next year.

Not only did he eventually graduate with a Master of Education (MEd) degree, Dr Chan also won the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Memorial Prize for emerging as top graduate at the postgraduate-level during the convocation ceremony in December last year.

His success has certainly set a fine example for his work colleagues. Like other adult learners, he capably managed his time between studies, work and other activities. "Before office hours and during lunch break, I used the time to gather information for my assignments," he said.

Dr Chan has come a long way from his humble background; his father used to work as a carpenter and his mum washed other people's clothes for a living.

Today, Dr Chan, who holds a Master in Analytical Chemistry degree from UM and a Bachelor degree in Forensic Science from Universiti Sains Malaysia, has been employed as a forensic chemist with the Malaysian Department of Chemistry in Kuala Lumpur for the last ten years.

Fervour to share and an appetite for knowledge motivated him to take up the Master of Education programme at WOU. A believer in the need to educate oneself and in lifelong learning, he aspires to join the education profession as a lecturer in another five to ten years.

He chose WOU for his MEd because "the programme structure and arrangement of the courses are ideal for me". "With two subjects per semester, it is manageable and not too heavy, especially since I am working," he said.



Dr Chan receiving the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Prize from the Chancellor.

## Corporate trainer and mother of two strives to be role model

Determined to be a shining role model for her children, 50-year-old Tan Poow Suan graduated with a Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronic Commerce at WOU recently, and immediately enrolled for the Master in Education (Education Management) programme for the January 2016 semester.

A corporate trainer and lecturer in IT at the Penang Skills Development Centre (PSDC), Tan was aptly chosen to give the valedictory speech at the undergraduate-level at the WOU convocation.

"Going back to study after having left school twenty years ago was a challenge," said Tan, who has two daughters aged 15 and 19 years. "I was a bit apprehensive. You have got to motivate yourself. I wanted to prove to myself and my kids that even at this age, I still can do it, and be a good role model for them."

Stressing that "preparation is the key to success", she also credited her boss, PSDC's Dean of the School of Engineering, Tham Kok Kee, for pushing her to further her studies.

Tan undertook the degree to upgrade herself and to become qualified to teach full-time diploma students in PSDC. Prior to this, she conducted training for workers from factories and multinational corporations, and taught diploma students on an ad-hoc basis.

She found the learning experience in WOU invigorating, and the course coordinators and tutors very supportive. She now hopes to advance in her career and become a university lecturer one day.

Building on someone's quote, she remarked: "Life is a journey. Day by day we learn more and this is just the beginning of our journey. Our graduation is not the end but the beginning of yet another journey."



Tan receives her scroll from Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Get the latest WOU updates from Facebook and Twitter!



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](mailto:mediainfo@wou.edu.my)

For more details, visit [wou.edu.my](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:rso_klg@wou.edu.my)

**Subang Regional Support Centre**  
No. 34-1 Ground Floor, Jalan PJS 8/2, Mentari Plaza, Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.  
Tel: 03-5635 5323/ 5632 5323 | Fax: 03-5635 1323  
Email: [rso\\_sbg@wou.edu.my](mailto:rso_sbg@wou.edu.my)

**Johor Bahru Regional Centre**  
17 & 19 Jalan Jaya 2, Taman Jaya, 81300 Skudai, Johor.  
Tel: 07-556 4323 / 556 6323 | Fax: 07-554 9323  
Email: [ro\\_jb@wou.edu.my](mailto: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](mailto:ro_kc@wou.edu.my)