

BLAZE

THE SUNWAY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

A portrait of Professor Elizabeth Lee, a woman with dark, wavy hair, smiling. She is wearing a black blazer over a black top, a pearl necklace, and a gold brooch on her lapel. The background shows a wooden shelf with various awards and a framed certificate.

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH LEE

AN EDUCATOR AT HEART

Imbued with a lifelong culture of learning, unlearning and relearning



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FOREWORD

FROM THE PRESIDENT
PROFESSOR SIBRANDES POPPEMA



During these unprecedented and uncertain times, it is comforting to know that some things never change. It therefore fills me with enormous gratitude that our Sunway University community continues to persevere and excel through this pandemic.

We have now completed the first semester of the year 2021 and are preparing to enter a new season, full of anticipation and a promise of positive changes to come. Against the backdrop of this challenging pandemic, we have witnessed some incredible efforts, noble endeavours and excellent achievements from the wonderfully dedicated team at Sunway University.

While the past year has been one of the most challenging periods in the history of Malaysian education, I am incredibly proud of the commitment of our students and staff. While we must adapt and make sacrifices to

successfully work alongside the harsh realities of COVID-19, it's essential that a "Business as Usual" mindset prevails within our Sunway University community and that the needs of our students continue to be our highest priority.

An excellent example of this is our cover story which discusses leadership in the time of COVID-19, outstanding success stories of our students, and exceptional achievements of our researchers. Another great article features the enthralling story of the world's biggest ever virtual classical music competition organised by Sunway University and Persatuan Chopin Malaysia.

Other key stories included within this issue capture some of the inspiring work of staff and students over the first quarter of the year.

We have learnt that to move forward successfully, we have to quickly adapt to the pandemic climate and the challenges it offers. Our dual-mode teaching has been an excellent example of this drive to ensure minimal disruption to the learning and education process, whilst maintaining the highest possible quality of content and delivery.

Sunway has succeeded in providing a fully integrated learning platform for offline as well as online students.

The central challenge of dual-mode teaching and learning is to make sure that both online students and face-to-face (F2F) students benefit equally from a rich and engaging educational experience.

As we continue to anticipate what 2021 may bring, let us continue to embrace the challenges and thrive upon the opportunity to change with positivity, resilience, and dedication.

May you and your loved ones continue to stay safe and healthy.

I look forward to the day when the whole Sunway University community can enjoy and embrace our exhilarating campus atmosphere together once more.

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH LEE

AN EDUCATOR AT HEART

Imbued with a lifelong culture of learning, unlearning and relearning

Written by Hailey Chung

Time passes, seasons change, and crises strike, yet come what may, she is unwavering in her mission of nurturing young minds. Always forward looking and excited by new technologies and trends, she has remained a relevant and endearing educator to generations of learners.

This month, Blaze speaks to Professor Elizabeth Lee Fuh Yen, the Chief Executive Officer of Sunway Education Group (SEG). Recently appointed as a professor in recognition of her leadership in the field of education management and academic leadership spanning over 30 years, Professor Elizabeth communicated her stories in simple non-extravagant language, sharing her vocation in an uncomplicated manner, helping us connect with her and her joy of teaching and passion for education.

COVID-19: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TOGETHER

Reflecting on the recently faced challenges brought about by COVID-19, Professor Elizabeth said, "I never felt alone on the journey."

She said survival instincts immediately took over when the pandemic hit. As she was ready to serve those in need through the uncertainties, a great army was soon behind in support.

"Many rose to the call for action and our staff, lecturers, and even students were heroes. God bless them all. The Sunway team worked hard throughout the pandemic, starting from the time it first landed on our shores last year."

In such unprecedented circumstances, Professor Elizabeth said there were victories to cheer. She continues to give credit and celebrate the dedication of her comrades.

"There was a concern for our students who were stuck on campus during the first movement control order (MCO). We provided them with food and support whenever possible. It was a combined effort from various departments of the Registry, Student LIFE, International Office (IO), Philanthropy, and the Residence Management Team."

Aside from caring for the students who were stranded physically, the Sunway team also provided guidance to those who were stuck at crossroads in their lives.

"Our marketing team were on hand to provide the necessary consultation, programme counselling and briefings in their efforts to communicate with prospective students and their parents on their education pathways."

She added, "I am grateful to our team. Everyone played a key role. Health and safety as well as our security team were crucial in ensuring the campus was protected and sanitising when required; Registry, Student LIFE, International Office and the Residence Management Team in ensuring our students were doing alright and not forgetting, the support we received from the Ministry of Higher Education and the authorities. Where would we be without those who worked tirelessly to bring the infections down? Or those in essential services throughout the MCO?"

DIFFICULT DECISIONS DESIRED

Professor Elizabeth believes that a good leader during such challenging times would have to be responsive, practical and empathetic. "At times, it felt like there was no difference between night or day. Sleep was secondary."

"From the onset of the first MCO in March 2020 and throughout the various iterations of it, including the Conditional and Recovery MCOs,

there were many matters to consider. Being an education provider put us in a unique position. From delivering online learning to safeguarding valuable research specimens, we had to approach each and every need keeping in mind the health situation and our responsibility to flatten the COVID-19 infection curve. I am thankful to our students and their families for their patience, endurance and understanding."

"Uncertainty demands direction and action. While I felt a deep sense of responsibility to provide a way forward, consultations with and listening to my colleagues were vital in understanding the different viewpoints before making decisions."

"It was not easy to find a middle ground to the most common student questions, including 'When will classes resume? Are their exams affected in any way?' Answering these were made more challenging as different stakeholders held different views."

As recently as March 2021, Professor Elizabeth and her team have been occupied managing the return of certain categories of students to campus (which have been allowed by the authorities). Among these include travel from their hometowns, pre-entry isolation, as well as on-campus SOPs in the event of emergencies.

Professor Elizabeth shared that one group wanted face-to-face classes to reopen immediately while another group preferred the campus to remain closed indefinitely.

"I understand my colleagues' concerns as COVID-19 is around us. Nevertheless, we also had to think of our students who needed access to campus and support for their learning. For instance, by this point the Ministry of Higher Education allowed students to return to campus if their surrounding environment was not conducive for online learning and their education attainment was at risk of being jeopardised. The decision to reopen was made despite some other institutions remaining firmly shut."

"It was and is scary. But, we must remain vigilant, adhere to SOPs and remember that our students' education is a priority," adds Professor Elizabeth. She remarked that Sunway University was no exception to the effects of a post-COVID world and is proud of the institution's quick transition.

"Our institutions have deployed a dual learning approach, where students can choose either to attend classes online or face-to-face throughout 2021."

"Students, being young, are resilient and can adapt easily. Teachers and academics have to adapt too. Life for all of us will never be the same again. Our education system will never be the same again," she said. "That's why they dub it the 'New Normal'."

CHAMPIONING SUSTAINABILITY

Over the years, Professor Elizabeth's focus has expanded from solving reading problems to solving Earth's greatest challenges.

"Sunway is championing sustainability and is committed to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). As an education conglomerate, our natural focus falls on no. 4 of the UN SDGs - 'Quality Education'."

"Moving forward this year, we are concentrating on Mission 4.7, a new global initiative. Sunway City has been selected as one of three UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN) centres, together with New York City and Paris."

She explained that the UN-SDSN centre in Sunway University will coordinate continent-wide sustainability initiatives for Asia. It will host the head office of the SDG Academy, which is the UN-SDSN's flagship education platform.

The incredible development to the institution is hats off to the efforts of the founder and chairman of Sunway Group, and Chancellor of Sunway University, Professor Elizabeth said.

"Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah is a visionary. SEG will not be where it is today without him. As we often say, Sunway was a wasteland turned into a wonderland. I am honoured to have seen it grow into part of this amazing Sunway City township that it is today."

A FOREVER LOVE STORY

Professor Elizabeth is no stranger to the education scene in Malaysia. She is a thought leader not just within the walls of Sunway, but also a prominent figurehead in and out of the country.

Being a member of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) Council, her views are often sought by education policy-makers. Her international engagements have included speaking at the Harvard Business School, University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, and the University of Edinburgh.



"Education is my passion, you might even say that 'I breathe, eat, and live it'. My Twitter profile describes me as, 'Simply, a Teacher at heart' and I have remained true to that calling."

Currently, she is actively envisioning and plotting for breakthroughs in the education industry, one small win at a time, based on her role and capacity.

"I had dreamt that Sunway would be an institution of international repute, which students and alumni would be proud to name as their college or university, wherever in the world. I still dream of claiming a world leader as a former student, that is definitely in the making."

Professor Elizabeth holds a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Education from the University of Cambridge. She was conferred with two honorary doctorates – the Doctor of Laws (*Honoris Causa*) by the University of Nottingham, UK, and the Doctorate of the University (*Honoris Causa*) by Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia.

She has journeyed with Sunway College, Sunway University College, Sunway University to where it is today, and built the Sunway Education Group.

"When I joined back then in 1992, it was still Sunway College based in Petaling Jaya. When we moved to the Sunway City as we now know, it was just the one building – the current

Sunway College South Building, surrounded by empty land."

"I have brought my intended PhD research back from Cambridge to conduct in Malaysia. However, once I started work, I found no time to advance that. To have taken a sabbatical to complete my Doctorate could have affected the progress and trajectory of the institutions I am responsible for developing."

"Hence, to have been awarded two Honorary Doctorates and appointed Professor today were certainly something I thought I had consciously sacrificed some time ago for the love of what I do and my students."

In exchange for the attempt to realise all of her personal hopes and dreams in one lifetime, she holds onto the belief that "my students' success is my success" which motivates her to keep impacting and inspiring her students.

"I would not change my profession for all the gold in Arabia as they say. If I were to start all over again, I would still choose the same profession. I have derived so much fulfilment in what I do. Education is my forever love story." 

CAMPUS UPDATES



Professor Reuben Clements awarded USD21,500 grant by Panthera for wildlife trafficking study!

Professor Reuben Clements who is the Associate Dean (Research) of School of Medical and Life Sciences and Research Fellow at the Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development has been awarded a USD21,500 grant from a New York-based wildcat conservation non-government organisation, Panthera.

This grant was awarded to conduct research on the impact of in-country Vietnamese communities on wildlife trafficking, as part of Panthera's project, "Building International Capacity and Transnational Networks to Counter Big Cat Trafficking".

We congratulate Professor Reuben Clements on his grant win and wish him all the success in his conservation work and contribution to the eradication of wildlife trafficking.

Jeffrey Sachs Center awarded RM163,200 to develop a framework of Sustainable Development for Indigenous Peoples

The study intends to highlight important alternate representations of development and wellbeing that cannot be sufficiently captured through traditional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accounting. Specifically, it hopes to incorporate Indigenous Peoples' unique visions of development in the Sustainability Development Goals.

The study is led by Professor Wong Chin Huat from Jeffrey Sachs Center (JSC) and Karen Chand from Jeffrey



Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia (JCI). The research team from JSC has already completed a preliminary literature review, mapping report and have consulted with key experts in indigenous studies in Malaysia.



Appointment of Dr Elizabeth Lee as Professor at Sunway University

Heartiest congratulations to Professor Elizabeth Lee, Chief Executive Officer of Sunway Education Group on your appointment as Professor at Sunway University!

We believe her appointment as a professor is not only timely but will further empower the university's mission and vision towards becoming a world-class university.



Sunway Baby Lab – Participants needed!

How do babies understand the world around them?

Sunway Baby Lab is looking for participants for the Learning Tones study. If you're interested and meet the requirements below, please scan the QR code to register!

Requirements:

- 3-month-old to 18-month-old
- Full term infant (gestation week 37 weeks and above)
- Infant is spoken to in Mandarin, English AND/OR Cantonese





BETTING ON BATS FOR A BETTER WORLD

“I love durians! And durians need bats!” This is Yong Joon Yee’s inspiration to embark on his bats research. His interest in the relationship between bats and durians was founded on how the species plays a role in durian pollination.

Ever since he attended a presentation by Dr Sheema Abdul Aziz, the Principal Investigator of Project Pteropus, also the President of Malaysian non-profit research enterprise – Rimba, he was hooked on the topic. The presentation was on her bat conservation work in Tioman Island.

Recently, the second-year MSc in Biological Sciences student won a grant of USD3,000 from Bat Conservation International (BCI), and an additional USD500 as an award winner of the Verne and Marion Read Bat Conservation Honor. Both awards recognise the contribution to the protection of bats.

Selected from a global pool of student applications, Joon Yee’s application highlighted his and his team’s



conservation actions in demonstrating the importance of flying foxes and other fruit bats as pollinators to farmers across Malaysia.

Project supervisor Professor Reuben Clements, who is also a prolific conservation scientist, attributed that the team’s communication of scientific research outputs probably impressed the judges.

He recalled meeting Joon Yee in early 2019 during a tropical biology field course that he was co-teaching. He noticed Joon Yee’s great enthusiasm and curiosity to learn about conservation issues in Malaysia then.

“Overall, I find Joon Yee to be a bright, motivated, and diligent team player. He is clearly passionate about bats and I foresee him establishing his name in the world of bat conservation!” said Professor Reuben.

YOUNG AND TALENTED

Passionate for those struggling with mental health, Arjun Thanaraju has actively contributed towards policymaking for discrimination-free healthcare.

“It is my belief that every person should be able to seek help for their mental health in the same way that they would seek care for their physical health,” he said.

Arjun graduated with first class honours BSc (Hons) Biology with Psychology programme under School of Medical and Life Sciences.

Today, he works as a regional programme officer of INGSA-Asia, a regional chapter of the International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA).

INGSA improves access and dissemination of science advice globally and supports policymakers within the region.

He continues to work with Professor Abhi Veerakumarasivam, Chair of INGSA-Asia. Professor Abhi said he recruited Arjun for his outstanding achievement in academics and extracurricular activities.

“He stood out during his internship at the Galen Centre for Health and Social Policy – receiving excellent reviews from his employers.”

“His degree has certainly helped him further pursue his passion in promoting science diplomacy and evidence-based policies for a more humane and inclusive world. We are so proud of him.”



When he was a student, Arjun was a member of the Sunway Peer Counselling Volunteers where he was instrumental in coordinating campaigns addressing mental health issues.

He also worked on a research project under Associate Professor Dr Audrey Lim Wei Ling of the Department of Biological Sciences, investigating the structural and functional brain differences underlying transgenderism.

His study was said to have found compelling differences between

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE WINS SCHOLASTIC AWARD FOR BEING BEST FRIENDS WITH SUN BEARS

Joon Yee began his postgraduate journey with Sunway University in January 2020. "I have immense gratitude towards my supervisor, Professor Reuben, for his patience and guidance throughout the project, as well as Dean of School Professor Abhi Veerakumarasivam for his support and advice," he said.

Although his fieldwork has been disrupted in 2020 with the ongoing lockdown restrictions, Joon Yee is pleased to use the lab facilities at the Department of Biological Sciences (DBS) to continue his work on pollen identification.

Joon Yee said bats have been negatively associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and it affected the public's perception of the animal. He hopes that his team's research will "rebrand" the bats as they are integral to the ecosystem.

The School of Medical and Life Sciences congratulates Yong Joon Yee on his scholarship and award and hopes that he continues to protect our increasingly fragile ecosystem. **B**

the brains of transgender and cisgender individuals which helped proposed a biological explanation for the occurrence of transgenderism in humans.

"Arjun was in my Abnormal Psychology class. He was very interactive in tutorials, writes well, and with a great character that others find endearing. I am glad he has found work at INGS-Asia where I believe he will be of great service," said Professor Alvin Ng Lai Oon, Associate Dean (International) of the School of Medical and Life Sciences.

We congratulate Arjun Thanaraju on his role and we wish him all the best in his work and personal development. **B**

With the knowledge that sun bears tend to rub on surfaces with strong smells, Tee Thye Lim used shrimp paste, duct tape, and remote cameras to capture images of sun bear chest marks and simultaneously collect hair samples.

His project was entitled, "Habitat relationships of sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*), and an evaluation of non-invasive methods for estimating sun bear population size at Tabin Wildlife Reserve, Sabah, Malaysia".

Through it, he has developed logistically feasible methods to gather data on sun bears non-invasively. He has also developed a landscape model of sun bear habitat use at the Tabin Wildlife Reserve.

The Master of Science in Biological Sciences graduate was conferred the Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award.

Thye Lim expressed surprise at his win and appreciated being nominated for it. "Team effort contributed to the research success. I am extremely grateful to have had a very supportive supervisory team that guided me throughout the whole research process," he said.

He also thanked the committed research assistants who were in the field with him. "It was a thrilling

achievement at the end of this project. I hope this award will give our society a better exposure to wildlife conservation issues."

A seasoned bear researcher, Associate Professor Dr Shyamala Ratnayake of the Department of Biological Sciences at School of Medical and Life Sciences, was Thye Lim's supervisor.

Dr Shyamala commented that her student is a tough field biologist who is very independent and responds well to feedback. "He was based in Sabah throughout his research work and we communicated as close as was possible, via limited network coverage, when he conducted his fieldwork."

Originally from Kerayong, Pahang, Thye Lim had his pre-university qualification with a Malaysian Higher School Certificate (STPM) from SMJK Yok Bin, Malacca. He then completed his studies at the University Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) with a degree in Conservation and Management of Biodiversity in 2011.

The following year, he became a centre coordinator at the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre until February 2021. Despite leaving his 10-year job, he hopes for continued collaboration between the centre and Sunway University.

Thye Lim was a recipient of a partial tuition fee waiver at Sunway University and said he enjoyed his postgraduate experience. "Sunway University's mascot is a sun bear too! There is even a poster on the Tabin sun bear project outside the sun bear enclosure at Sunway Lagoon!" Thye Lim exclaimed.

The School of Medical and Life Sciences wishes Thye Lim the best of success in his future endeavours and hopes that he continues to champion sustainable development projects. **B**



Tee setting a motion-capture camera trap at Tabin Wildlife Reserve, Sabah

FIRST BATCH OF GRADUATES ON PRIMARY CARE FOR ELDERLY

The School of Medical and Life Sciences saw the inaugural cohort complete their training in the Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care for Elderly (PGDPCE) programme at the end of 2020.

The cohort is made of 12 medical officers and general practitioners from throughout Malaysia was trained on advance knowledge and competencies in geriatrics – a specialisation within medicine that focuses on the health care of elderly people.

In collaboration with the Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine (MSGM), the programme addresses the need for doctors as the ageing population grows.

Professor Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin, Head of Department and Programme Leader led the one-year full time programme consisting of seven core modules and one elective, with each module running for six weeks at a time.



The first cohort during their first semester: (standing from left to right) Dr Wong Ping Foo, Professor Datin Dr Chia Yook Chin, Dr Tan Wan Chuan, Dr Ho Willee, Dr Lawrence Ng, Dr Chung Wai Mun, Dr Ooi Q-Lun and Dr Gan Jia Ching. (Seated from left to right): Dr Nor Faizah binti Ghazali, Dr Nagammai A/P Thiagarajan, Dr Nabeela Saadah binti Shafwan Badrie and Dr Khoo Vi Vien.

These modules included a weekly live stream, three days of clinical attachments every six weeks and weekend workshops every three months for face-to-face learning.

Professor Chia has expressed her joy and pride in the success of her first batch of graduates. She is also grateful to all the instructors who contributed to upskilling these medical officers, especially during the COVID-19 times.

A graduate of the programme, Dr Lawrence Ng, a medical officer at Klinik Kesihatan Taman Universiti, Johor Bahru, commented that the programme was timely because geriatric medicine was hardly a topic during his basic medical training.

“This programme has given me confidence in examining and treating elderly patients, as well as helping

them prevent many common health problems associated with older people,” said Dr Ng.

Another graduate, Dr Ho Willee, a general practitioner in Tangkak, Johor, said that it was impactful to realise the condition of current geriatric practice in Malaysia compared to more advanced countries.

Dr Ho said, “I learnt that the process of clerking (the assessment and examination of patients) in geriatrics involves a very comprehensive and relevant history which provides a more holistic approach to managing elderly healthcare.”

The school congratulates the new graduates and hopes that this programme continues producing competent medical practitioners in geriatric medicine. **B**



Three of the PGDPCE trainees during their attachment at Hospital Melaka. Geriatricians, Dr Keng Jun Ni, from Melaka Hospital, and Dr Harnek Singh from Hospital Sultan Ismail Johor Bahru are flanked by the specialist trainees (from left to right) Dr Ho Willee, Dr Lawrence Ng and Dr Gan Jia Ching.

Lecturers who are geriatrics experts:

1. YTM Dato' Dr Tunku Muzafar Shah bin Tunku Jaafar Laksamana, Deputy Head of Geriatrics Service, Ministry of Health Malaysia, and Consultant Geriatrician, Hospital Selayang.
2. Dr Ungku Ahmad Ameen bin Ungku Mohd Zam, President of the Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine (MSGM)
3. Dr Duncan Forsyth, Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge UK
4. Dr Nor Hakimah Makhtar, MSGM member
5. Dr Low Chung Min, MSGM Member
6. Dr Nor Azlina Abu Bakar, MSGM Member
7. Dr Aln Ch'ng Dr Hakimah Sallehudin, MSGM Member
8. Dr Goh Cheng Beh, MSGM Member
9. Dr Nor Azleen Ahmad Tarmizi, MSGM Member

Clinical trainers at geriatrics attachment centres who are also consultant geriatricians:

1. Dr Cheah Wee Kooi, Hospital Taiping
2. Dr Elizabeth Ching Gar Mit, Hospital Kuala Lumpur
3. Dr Rizah Muzzain binti Ghazali, Hospital Kuala Lumpur
4. Dr Alan Pok, Hospital Kuala Lumpur
5. Prof Tan Maw Pin, Universiti Malaya Medical Centre
6. Dr Khor Hooi Min, Universiti Malaya Medical Centre
7. Dr Keng Jun Ni, Melaka Hospital
8. Dr Harnek Singh, Hospital Sultan Ismail Johor Bahru



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AMIRAH FARZANA BINTI MOHD RADZI

Cambridge GCE Advanced-Level (A-Level)

I want to go on MRT rides again. I miss stopping at random stops for chances of a mini adventure and discoveries. This time, however, with my dearest college friends from the outskirts of KL. But dare I say, I want more to take a trip around their hometowns. I can already imagine an odd feeling of nostalgia, of novelty that could feel so familiar.



SAM JULIA CHANPISEY

Diploma in Communication

First, go back home and kiss the cat. Then grab the amazing job opportunity I had waiting for me before it expires. The MCO made me realise that I've taken everything for granted, my naïveté made me believe that I could just go hang out with my friends tomorrow because I was too tired today, or because I wanted to watch a show, all cozied up at home... I should have gone out every night with them, 3 hours sleep squad every weekend, be the real "Team Hangout a Lot". Once everything is over, I intend to fully "live" every day as much as possible.



**ONCE THE
IS OVER, WH
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DOING TH**

SYARIFAH NURSYAFIQAH BINTI SYED NORAZMAN

BSc (Hons) in International Business

One thing I'm really excited to do after this pandemic is over, is to attend physical classes. I miss my friends so much and video calling just doesn't feel the same. I'm looking forward to staying late on campus completing our assignments together, celebrating results at our favourite restaurants and honestly just going back to the norm of seeing them every day. I'm looking forward to experiencing a normal day again.



PANDEMIC WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOST?

JULIA ROSALYN MD YAZID

BSc (Hons) Psychology

What I yearn to return to once more is the simplicity of everyday life; not one distinct aspect of it, but rather the experience of mundanity. The tranquil regularity of morning car drives with the blooming sunrise overhead, the easy-going manner in which I would meet up with family and friends, and the silent joy and productivity of university life. Indeed, I am merely looking forward to peaceful normality.



PENG WEI KENT

BSc (Hons) Business Management

I'm looking forward to meeting people face-to-face again. I'm an extrovert, so being cooped up indoors is very painful for me. The pandemic has cancelled so many of my plans, my choir recital, my graduation, my other choir performance, my university orientation and so much more. I really miss saying hi to my classmates and just talking with them in class while pretending to be listening to the lecturer. Ultimately, I just want to meet people again cause I live alone and it really takes a toll on your mental health.



NATASHA MAYA BINTI CHEK PA

Diploma in Communication

After the pandemic, I crave for close-knit interactions where I can experience cramming together in a small table with my group of friends, sharing stories, starting new inside jokes and laughing so loud that we forget our worries. I long for adventure, to travel to foreign yet exciting lands and create unforgettable memories along the way. I want to spend my carefree years sightseeing instead of staring blankly at a screen all day.



YASMEEN SURIA WRIGHT

BA (Hons) in Communication

What I'm looking forward to the most after the pandemic would be to make good memories while I am in my twenties. Staying at home isn't something any young adults would want to experience. Making memorable memories with friends, travelling, trying out new things and most importantly, finding and loving yourself during the process is kind of important as you would cherish all those experiences and well, experience does shape a person. Who knows, maybe I even get to check off a few ideas from my bucket list!



SUNWAY UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS LISTED TOP 2% IN THE WORLD



From left: Professor Sibrandes Poppema, Professor Edward Tiekink, Professor Saidur Rahman, Professor Kheireddine Aroua, Professor Yau Kok Lim, and Associate Professor Dr Adarsh Kumar Pandey

Six scientists from Sunway University were named among the top 2% of scientists in the world in the recently released list by Stanford University. The list represents the top 2% of the most-cited scientists in various disciplines.

Professor Sibrandes Poppema, President of Sunway University is listed in the subject category of immunology under the sub-field of oncology and carcinogenesis in clinical medicine.

He hopes that this recognition would encourage researchers at Sunway University to further develop multidisciplinary research teams, to contribute to the understanding and solution of the societally relevant questions.

Professor Edward Tiekink, Distinguished Professor and Head of Research Centre for Crystalline Materials (RCCM), School of Medical and Life Sciences ranked in the subject category for inorganic and nuclear chemistry under the sub-field of organic chemistry.

Research in the RCCM headed by Professor Tiekink pursues two key Sustainability Development Goals namely, Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being and Goal 13: Climate Action, on the development of novel therapeutics based on metals – metal-based drugs – to face the global challenges of drug resistance to anti-microbials, the need to cure cancer and other diseases.

Professor Saidur Rahman, Distinguished Research Professor and Head of Research Centre for Nanomaterials and Energy Technology, School of Engineering and Technology (SET) is ranked in the subject category of Energy under the sub-field of Mechanical Engineering & Transports.

Professor Kheireddine Aroua, who is the Associate Dean (Research) for SET and Head of Research Centre for Carbon Dioxide Capture and Utilisation is listed in the subject category of chemical engineering.

Ranked in the subject category of artificial intelligence & image processing under sub-field of networking & telecommunications is Professor Yau Kok Lim from the Department of Computing and Information Technology, SET.

With this recognition, Professor Yau hopes to set up a research centre that facilitates and promotes interaction between local and international research scholars and industry to pursue academic excellence, as well as creating research opportunities for solving industrial world problems.

From the Research Centre for Nanomaterials and Energy Technology, Associate Professor Dr Adarsh Kumar Pandey's field of research focused on advanced energy storage materials, renewable energy technologies and nanomaterials.

Dr Adarsh believes innovation in research is the main driver of the advancement of society. He hopes to develop more efficient advanced energy storage materials, to provide more efficient and affordable solar energy to the society. **B**

SUNWAY AND MYQAN BRINGS ASEAN STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER TO EVOLVE HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE

In an effort to drive the evolution of quality assurance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Sunway University, Sunway College and Malaysian Higher Education Institutions Quality Assurance Network (MyQAN) jointly organised a Seminar on Internal-External Quality Assurance (SieQA) 2021.

With the theme “Higher Education as Enterprise – Embedding the Quality Assurance Culture”, the virtual event was attended by over 400 participants from universities in the ASEAN region including Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia to identify how higher education institutions have been responding in this period of major change.

The delegates also explored practical strategies that can be used to embed quality assurance processes in education institutions to create a culture which maximises flexibility, encourages enterprise and raises standards for now and the future.

YB Dato’ Mansor Othman, Deputy Minister of Higher Education officiated the seminar by saying, “The Malaysian government is always supportive of internationalisation initiatives such as SieQA as part of our push to become an international education hub. I believe SieQA 2021 is timely for the exploration of the future of quality assurance in ASEAN’s education institutions.”

Professor Graeme Wilkinson, Vice-Chancellor of Sunway University explained during his keynote presentation that higher education institutions are going through a period of radical change globally and the COVID-19 pandemic has speeded up the evolution.

“Students are becoming ‘digital nomads’ who study anytime anywhere, not just on campus, and this will also become the model for how many will work during their future careers. Learning will

increasingly use combined on-campus resources and the myriad of online materials.”

Professor Wilkinson also emphasised that the big challenge for universities will be to ensure the high quality of the learning process and this is something that Sunway University is very passionate about.

During the seminar, YBhg. Professor Dr Ts. Hajah Roziah Mohd Janor, President of MyQAN chaired a Global Quality Assurance Dialogue, titled “Challenges Facing Higher Education Quality Assurance in Managing Disruption: Regional Perspective”. The dialogue invited Professor Sibrandes Poppema, President of Sunway University and academics from Myanmar, Philippines, and Thailand to share their research and recommendation on the topic from a regional standpoint.

The seminar also organised a session where academics and researchers from local universities presented their research paper on topics related to changes in higher education system due to COVID-19.



Associate Professor Dr Tommy Tong and his team of academics from Department of Biological Sciences, Sunway University were awarded best research paper with the topic “Evaluating the Perceived Effectiveness of Online Learning among Biological Sciences Undergraduates during the COVID-19 Pandemic”. His research found significant relationships between perceived effectiveness of online learning and internet connectivity, flexible learning hours and the ability to focus at home, providing insights for development of strategies to improve quality of education moving forward.

The conference also highlighted the need for more research in Quality Assurance areas in terms of relevance, and effectiveness of new approaches amongst other. Quality Assurance agencies, higher education institutions and researchers are encouraged to work closely together to ensure the continuity and development of Quality Assurance locally, regionally and globally. **B**

A TIME not forgotten, A TRADE not lost

The Ipoh Preservation on Heritage (acronym: I.P.O.H.) seeks to immortalise the heroes and caretakers of Ipoh's proud heritage.

The project was initiated by a group of researchers from both tourism and business marketing backgrounds.

Dr Teh Pek Yen, senior lecturer at the School of Hospitality and Service Management (SHSM), who as an Ipoh lass herself, saw how unsustainable tourism development emphasised gastronomy and ignored other precious treasures of Ipoh.

She believes modern preservation efforts are needed to share the legacy with future generations.

Malaysia is a burgeoning cultural melting pot that has harmonised histories and traditions from the largest parts of Asia.

This harmonisation brought numerous heritages in the forms of food, arts, craft and architecture, now intertwined and rooted within the fabric of Malaysian society.

In recent years, this legacy has come under the siege of modernisation and faces the threat of extinction.

In line with United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Dr Teh led team members Dr Teoh Chai Wen, Associate Professor Dr Derek Ong, and Associate Professor Dr Daniel Chong on the I.P.O.H. project.

They secured funding at their first attempt from the Sunway University Internal Grant in 2018 and later the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme from the Ministry of Higher Education in 2019.



Lion head making

Over three years, the team built a strong rapport with various craftsmanship masters and carefully documented their knowledge, stories, and personal values from their surroundings and history.

These craftsmen community included tin smith, traditional clogs, lion head, traditional Hainanese kopitiam, wooden shutter blinds, blinds painting, handmade *Hiong Piah*, and ancestral altar plaques.

Their products represent Ipoh's uniquely rich history and identity as they have played pivotal roles in the early years.

The I.P.O.H. project team hopes these craftsmen will not be coerced to the twilight of their art because of the waning interest by people today. **B**



From left: Associate Professor Dr Daniel Chong, Associate Professor Dr Derek Ong, Dr Teoh Chai Wen (second from right) and Dr Teh Pek Yen (right) with the craftsmen



Traditional clogs making

STUDENTS HELPING THE NEEDY IN ONE SPIRIT

The “One World One Family” project successfully assisted over 3,700 international students and foreign workers during the implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO).

The project was initiated by international students from the BSc (Hons) in Culinary Management programme – Bristi Khatun (Bangladesh) and Idris Mohd Hoppie (USA).

Due to the MCO, some international students found difficulty in receiving allowances from their parents back in their hometown.

Bristi was first approached by her juniors from SEGi University for assistance in cash and necessities. With urgency, she, Idris and their team stepped up in fundraising to purchase and then distribute groceries to the affected students and foreign workers.

Along with the project, they also reached out to students in Pahang by sending them cash assistance of RM50 to RM100, subject on the student’s situation.



Bristi (right) distributing groceries to affected students

Sunway University International Office supported the project together with volunteers from Sunway International Student Ambassadors, Taylor’s University, and SEGi University.

Yayasan Harapan Negara and the Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce also contributed to the cause. **B**

RESEARCH



“Research needs to be impactful, niche, and strategic in solving global and local energy problems, Professor Saidur Rahman,” from the School of Engineering and Technology said.

He is on the journey to develop clean energy using solar and emerging nano-material, including MXenes, Graphene, and Carbon Nanotubes (CNTs), to reduce environmental pollution.

DEVELOPING RENEWABLE ENERGY USING EMERGING NANO-MATERIALS

Professor Saidur was listed in the 2020 Highly Cited Researchers List by Clarivate Analytics in Engineering for the third consecutive year. Not only that, he was also listed in the Stanford University List of Top World’s 2% Scientists.

Having joined Sunway University in 2016, he is the Distinguished Research Professor and Head of the Research Centre for Nano-Materials and Energy Technology.

He leads his team at the research centre and also supervises post-graduate students on the research work on renewable energy and energy storage.

Professor Saidur shared that the availability of an impressive lab with state-of-the-art equipment has helped the team to establish local and international research collaboration.

“We have developed MXene, a synthesised emerging nano-materials, for the first time in Malaysia,” he said.

According to Professor Saidur, the energy or heat transfer performance of fluids used in heat exchangers such as solar collectors and refrigerators are poor. He said it can be improved by suspending nano-sized particles into fluids.

As a result of using emerging nano-materials, heat exchangers can be made lighter, compact, energy-efficient, and cost-effective.

They are currently working on the development of nano-materials for solar energy system products with research collaborators from the University of Malaya, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Pahang, and Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS. **B**

THE GREATEST SHOW *must go on!*

The biggest ever virtual competition held for the Classical Music Competition in the world was jointly organised by Sunway University and Persatuan Chopin Malaysia.

The Virtual International Music Competition Malaysia has showcased the local talents and others in the world.

It involved an International Jury consisting of prominent Maestros and Professors from across 16 countries and a total of 600 participants from 44 countries.



Professor Snezana Panovska, the Piano Professor, Music Director and Founder of Persatuan Chopin Malaysia, and the Director of Sunway Conservatoire of Music, said the online platform has indeed been the paradigm shift.

“We achieved great success with an overwhelming response from all over the world. For the first time,

we received such an overwhelming number of entries.”

She added that many of the top prize winners were young talents from Malaysia.

“They are the cream of the crop who have been under the tutelage of our excellent music teachers of the Sunway Conservatoire of Music at Sunway University.”

“The acknowledgement of the young talents and commendation to their teachers by the International Maestros is very encouraging. These young talents do us proud.”

Sunway Conservatoire of Music under the School of Arts is the first music education institution in Malaysia.

“Our newly established Conservatoire will give great recognition worldwide for our University as a great destination for this education from an early age up to University level.”

“We strongly believe in our specialist teachers for their commitment and professional excellence in realising a higher level of professional training,” said Professor Snezana. **B**



SHSM STUDENTS RAISED RM9,375.92 FOR SEG COVID-19 STUDENT SUPPORT FUND



Community Service students with Hairani M Nur, subject lecturer (standing second from left), Farah Atiqah, subject lecturer (sitting most left), Professor Marcus Stephenson, Dean of School of Hospitality and Service Management (sitting centre), Ng Beng Lean, Group Registrar (in red) and YM Datin Raja Riza Shazmin Raja Badrul Shah, Director of Philanthropy

117 students from BSc (Hons) in Convention and Events Management, BSc (Hons) in International Hospitality Management and BSc (Hons) in Culinary Management recently undertook the subject, Community Service. Under the guidance of subject lecturers, Farah Atiqah and Hairani M Nur, the students who come from the School of Hospitality and Service Management, collectively raise a total of RM9,375.92 for Sunway Education Group COVID-19 Student Support Fund.

The students were divided into 12 groups and went through the stages of proposal initiation and project implementation. During proposal initiation, each group proposed online fundraising ideas which were then approved by the subject lecturers. Upon approval, each group proceed with their marketing strategies, such as using social media and word-of-mouth marketing within their network of families and friends.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected students who are away from home. Standing united, Sunwayians came together to help those in need. The SEG COVID-19 Student Support Fund was set up by the Philanthropy Office to provide social support and assistance to Sunway students. The Fund is an additional avenue aside departmental-level and various other student support



Professor Marcus Stephenson, Dean of School of Hospitality and Service Management presenting the mock cheque to YM Datin Raja Riza Shazmin Raja Badrul Shah, Director of Philanthropy

services provided on campus. Funds were utilised to support students away from home around Bandar Sunway and Subang Jaya area, especially those who required assistance and support due to the MCO.

Throughout the course of their projects, the students demonstrated a high level of resilience, hard work and determination all in the purpose of a good cause. It is hoped that this subject has instilled the importance of volunteerism and enhance a sense of responsibility among students for them to practice civic consciousness in their surrounding community. **B**

FELLOWSHIP WITH POLITICS

“I do wish more political literacy is done for youths at an earlier age. Politics should not mix with education, but political literacy should. Besides textbook-learning at schools, experiential learning via workshops, simulation activities or Parliament visits are vital.”

Inspiring words by

CHOW SHENN KUAN
BSc (Hons) Business Studies alumna

Chow Shenn Kuan shares the importance of political literacy among youths after a fulfilling experience as a Perdana Fellow to the Minister of Finance Malaysia, YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz.

Shenn believes political literacy education should include basic subjects such as Forms of Government, Types of Elections, or Political Philosophies, as well as related topics such as Human Rights, Theories of Ethics, and Law – all in the global and local context.

Having several friends who were Perdana Fellows, the first-hand platform for young Malaysians in national governance, Shenn was intrigued to join as an Australian Matriculation (AUSMAT) student at Sunway College.

Back then, she submitted and failed her first application. But six years later, Shenn attempted again and became one of the 82 Perdana Fellows out of 900 applicants. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Shenn worked at the office daily and within six months, she took up to eight COVID-19 tests!



*View of Putrajaya from
the Ministry of Finance*



With YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Minister of Finance (second from right)



With Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Tengku Amir Shah, Crown Prince of Selangor (second from left) at Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa

"I came in with expectations – expectations to gain knowledge, expectations to learn from new people, and expectations to serve the rakyat," she said.

Working alongside Special Officers to the Minister, her tasks included crafting the initial drafts of the Minister's weekly public statements on the implementation of the RM305 billion COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Packages and submitting a policy paper to the Minister of Youth and Sports in tackling youth unemployment and entrepreneurship.

She also supported at Parliament sittings for the Senate and House of Representatives and served in the data and communications team for National Budget 2021.

"I learnt so much from the communications team, LAKSANA (Unit for the Implementation and Coordination of National Agencies on the Economic Stimulus Package) and the Special Officers to the Minister. One of my most memorable learning experiences is my Special Officers teaching me how to put together economic research decks."

Shenn enhanced her *Bahasa Malaysia* – the national language, and has learnt to use Power BI – a data and analytics reporting tool. She participated in additional events and meetings including with the Director General of Health Malaysia, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Noor Hisham bin Abdullah.

By the end of 2020, Shenn left the Ministry of Finance with knowledge,

mentors, and friends for life. She said that the steep learning curve provided her with the know-how for coming years as an active citizen in Malaysia and her future roles.

Shenn encourages students and graduates of Sunway University to apply for the programme that opens annually from February to March.

"It does not matter if the party or coalition ruling at the time of your fellowship is in or out of your favour. What matters is having self-introspection on our motivation of joining the fellowship, what our key takeaway would be, and how we can contribute to our communities post-programme," she said. **B**

Have an alumni story to share? Reach out to the Sunway Alumni Relations team via alumni@sunway.edu.my as we would love to hear from you!



With Tan Sri Professor Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, Ministry of Health Malaysia's Director General of Health (middle)



Interview at ASTRO

ALUMNI *on the move* >>



TAWANDA DANNY MADZURA

BSc (Hons) in International Hospitality Management

Spanish Technical Customer Support,
Zebra Technologies

Born in Zimbabwe, I later moved to a few different countries while growing up due to my mother's job. The flights we took and the hotels we stayed in meant meeting and interacting with people from different walks of life.

My background ignited my passion for hospitality and spurred me to pursue my degree at Sunway University.

I had always wanted to be in customer service. Currently, I am an English and Spanish technical support representative of Zebra Technologies – one of the largest manufacturers and sellers of printing technologies in the world.

My career started in start-ups and I have now landed in a Fortune 500 company. I had to grow in adapting to the culture from organisation to organisation. It is imperative to work on your interpersonal skills.

Students, cherish each moment because your academic performance might be on your transcript, but your university memories will be carried in your heart.



BEH SHANNON

Diploma in Nursing

Staff Nurse,
Sunway Medical Centre

Nursing is my dream career in supporting people into a better life. And "insightful" is the word to summarise my whole three years of studies at Sunway University.

I was exposed to the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), got posted in various hospitals including both the private and government sectors, as well as clinics.

Not everyone is privileged. Many are suffering due to bad economic status and poor health. I believe nurses can play a part to lift their spirits with every act of kindness.

The most memorable event for me was when I was posted in the labour ward and nursery. For the first time in my life, I witnessed the arrival of a newborn and it touched my heart when the baby safely came into the world. It was magical.

I wish all my nursing juniors, all the best in their future endeavours. Do not give up when facing difficulties, take a deep breath, put a smile on your face, find a way to motivate yourselves and do your best! Remember, your goal is always to provide the best for your patients.



FENNIE LEE JIAN XIAN

BSc (Hons) in Computer Science
Master of Business Administration

UX Cohort Head,
Hilti Asia IT Services

I am thankful to my lecturer who arranged an industrial visit in which I got to know better about my current company. On that visit, my resume was submitted to Hilti and I was granted an internship opportunity.

I initially planned to start my career as a web developer, but the interview with Hilti changed my direction. I had browsed through the company's website and discovered some user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) improvements that could be made.

So, I raised that during my interview with Hilti and was allowed to recommend solutions. My proposal was eventually shared to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) level.

I became one of the pioneering members in Hilti's UI/UX domain. In five years, I contributed to improving the user experience of Hilti's e-commerce website. I also led and designed a few of their flagship applications that boost the productivity of Hilti's more than 10,000 salesforce.

To my fellow Sunway students, my advice is to be guided by your instincts, stay persistent and strive towards your passion.



VIVIAN KWAN WAI CHUNG

BSc (Hons) Business Studies

Senior Executive for Customer Development,
Coca-Cola Bottlers (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd

I like observing how fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies market their products. It is interesting to analyse the various strategies used by companies to stay competitive in the market.

Thus, I enrolled in the BSc (Hons) Business Studies, which prepared my success in joining Coca-Cola. Sunway University Business School also organised workshops for students to develop ourselves further.

My career started in Coca-Cola under the Management Associate Programme. Slowly but surely, I managed to transition well into the fast-paced working environment and endure the challenges involved.

“ The road to success and the road to failure are almost exactly the same ”

- Colin R. Davis

This is the quote that I live by as I always believe that failure is a lesson that shapes you towards success. Failure is never a disaster to me because it shows you how to improve and how to work towards success.

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As part of our nation building ambitions, Sunway University has travelled the world seeking out the finest educational opportunities, bringing them closer to you.

LIVE

Whilst most universities have a campus, only Sunway University has a city. Experience a world-class education right here at Sunway City; Malaysia's model smart-sustainable city enabled by 5G.

LEARN

International collaborations with the world's most renowned institutions offer Malaysians world-class education at local prices, avoiding the expensive cost of overseas travel and unfavourable exchange rates.

LEAD

Currently pioneering research with the University of Cambridge to collaborate on ways to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre at the University of Cambridge.

LEGACY

Located at Sunway City, Malaysia, Sunway University joins New York & Paris as one of the three United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Centres in the world to coordinate continent-wide sustainable initiatives.

ONE UNIVERSITY, A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES

A CLASS ABOVE

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