

# From budding scientists to entrepreneurs

> UCSIU Applied Science students turn lab products into marketable

UCSI University's (UCSIU) Faculty of Applied Sciences students are an enterprising lot, perpetually seeking alternatives to improve the products researched and developed in a laboratory into valid business proposals. This was proven when three of the seven UCSIU's BizPlan Competition finalists came from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, with one of them emerging as champion in the service category.

Tan Lee Ngai, Lye Phil Yau and Tan Huey Ghee took home RM500, while standing a higher chance to win the coveted RM500,000 research seed fund put up by the university's Centre of Excellence for Research, Value Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CERVE). Their team, Be Leaf, had developed an Aquaculture Hatchery System that recycles agricultural wastes naturally using live fish and organic material using the aquaponic system.

While Yan Le Si, a Food Science and Nutrition student, was the first runner-up in the

service category for a beauty lotion she developed using natural industrial wastes, such as coconut husks, avocado peel and seeds, another group of Food Science and Nutrition students, was also the first runner-up in the product category.

Ngan Kok Yew, Sajid Ahmed and Varinderjit Singh had captivated the judges' attention with their healthy food kiosk, which provides fast, affordable and fresh takeaway foods. Both first runners-up, who took home RM300, are also in the running for the research grant from CERVE.

The competition was an eye-opener for the students as it involved them developing their business acumen to market and brand their products.

Many science students do not realise that the business aspects of the product are as important as the research.

Phui Yan said that the workshops they had attended before the finals were very

informative, and had guided them well in developing their proposals and presentations. During the lead-up to the finals, the participants were guided in a series of workshops to coach them in the areas of business, public speaking, writing and communication.

Developing their ideas from the start to the end had not been a smooth road for all of them, as they had to go through many trials and errors. This was an opportune moment for their lecturers as their mentors or advisers to spur the students on.

Kong Chee Leong, as the adviser for all of the teams under the Faculty of Applied Sciences, says: "I try to guide them by inculcating problem-solving skills in my lessons. Apart from that, it is also important for advisers to motivate and sustain students' passion towards realising their dreams."

All students are encouraged to develop research study skills in their everyday

assignments. "With critical thinking and problem-solving skills being the two main criteria for excellent researchers and entrepreneurs, those skills are honed into our students from day one itself," he says.

Although ideation is essential in getting a good business proposal off the ground, Kong adds that even more critical is the action one injects into these ideas. "It takes much more for your ideas to crystallise into something concrete. It takes effort, which in the long run, is far more important than any one talent a person could possess."

With the event's success, the BizPlan Competition will become an annual event. Aside from uncovering new talent, the competition is also the university's avenue towards help budding entrepreneurs kickstart their projects with the funding and training provided by CERVE.

With close to RM7 million worth of scholarships on offer next year, UCSIU is on the lookout for students with outstanding results and stellar extracurricular record. The scholarships are also for the highly sought degree programmes such as Pharmacy and Medicine.

Visit its Open Days from Dec 17 to 19 (9am - 5pm) and talk to its counsellors wearing the ASK Tag. These counsellors can also be contacted at 03-9107 8880 or visit: [www.ucsi.edu.my/onlineenquiry](http://www.ucsi.edu.my/onlineenquiry). Or visit [www.ucsi.edu.my](http://www.ucsi.edu.my)

## The disease detectives



Bio-medical science professionals help in the diagnosis of diseases, so that effective treatment can be prescribed.

It takes more than just doctors and nurses to help patients recover from illnesses or injuries. Many of us are not aware that doctors are assisted by a team of specialised healthcare professionals in diagnosis. They work in the medical laboratory, often called the "path lab", to detect changes in the cells and the body that are caused by an illness or disease. It is estimated that 70% of the medical decisions made by doctors are derived from conclusive findings in the labs.

Once an illness or disease has been diagnosed, the lab continues to assist the doctor by assessing the progress of the treatment through various tests. For example, in diabetes, the lab is able to tell the doctor about the effect of a treatment through a test called the HbA1c. The lab is also able to indicate the risk of certain chronic illnesses. For instance, blood tests on cholesterol levels can indicate the risks of heart attacks.

A variety of skilled professionals work in the lab. Medical doctors who specialise in this area are called specialists in laboratory medicine or pathologists. They are often the laboratory directors overseeing the lab. Working under their supervision is a team of medical lab technologists who hold diplomas in Medical Laboratory Technology (DMLT), or scientists who hold Bachelor of Science (BSc).

Increasingly, these BSc holders are graduates from Biomedical Sciences. The degree specifically trains students to work as laboratory professionals in a wide range of disciplines. The training covers biochemistry, microbiology, immunology, molecular biology, haematology, transfusion medicine (blood banking) and bio-

logy of diseases (pathology).

In collaboration with Northumbria University, UK, MAHSA's Bachelor in Biomedical Science is a four-year programme delivered entirely at MAHSA. The programme places strong emphasis on practical skills via intensive laboratory sessions. These skills are underpinned by sound theoretical knowledge provided through lectures conducted by lecturers from MAHSA and visiting lecturers from Northumbria University as well as local specialists in pathology.

Students are also expected to undergo a period of attachment in recognised clinical laboratories after the first year, and undertake a small research project in the final year.

Besides working in hospitals and pathology laboratories, graduates of BMS are employed in the pharmaceutical industry, research organisations, universities, and in the growing biotechnology and diagnostic sectors.

The BMS degree is broad in its coverage, thus allowing its graduates to subsequently pursue more specialised disciplines. It is also a stepping stone for higher degrees such as Master of Science and PhD, and for entry into the medicine and dentistry programmes.

### A MULTI-AWARD WINNER

MAHSA has won a host of awards and accolades since 2006, some of which are the ISO 9001:2000 certified for meeting international standards in Quality Management System, the University College status by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education in 2009 and Best Students' Choice Award 2009 for Most Popular Private College/University for Nursing.

Today, MAHSA has over 8,000 students

from over 20 different countries. It also provides hostel accommodation for students who are not from the Klang Valley. Feeder bus services from and to the campuses are also available during office hours.

MAHSA offers degree programmes in medicine, dental surgery, nursing (including top programmes), advanced healthcare, pharmacy, physiotherapy, environmental health and medical imaging. It also offers diploma programmes in

nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, medical imaging, medical lab technology, environmental health and dental technology, on top of certificate programmes for dental surgery assistants and the foundation in science.

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