



Final-year pharmacy student Khoo Zi Yu (right) with his supervisor and mentor Dr Chin Jin Han at a research session.

UCSI boasts strong culture of research

IN 2004, members of UCSI's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences (FOPS) decided that the undergraduate research project should be offered as an elective course to motivate students to think out of the box and not study merely to pass examinations.

By doing research, students would become critical-thinking individuals capable of formulating new and beneficial ideas.

Thus, a young lecturer at FOPS may begin his first research step by supervising undergraduate projects, build a portfolio of publications or research projects to boost his academic excellence and career prospects, as well as establish a research culture at the faculty to reinforce the post-graduate programmes developed at FOPS.

This is in line with the Higher Education Ministry's efforts to raise the research culture in public as well as private Malaysian universities, with the introduction of the 2007 SE-TARA ranking scale whereby research activities represent one of three ranking criteria.

The first batch of stu-

dents selected to do the course have completed their dissertations.

The students agreed that when they started the Bachelor of Pharmacy programme at UCSI in 2006, they had no inkling that there were other professions they could go into other than being pharmacists in hospitals or pharmacies.

Undertaking the projects have opened their eyes to consider other fields such as law enforcement, industrial pharmaceuticals, research and academia.

Their experiences not only taught them to make observations and evaluations of laboratory experiments before drawing conclusions, but also taught them to cite research findings found in scientific journals.

Khoo Zi Yu, Vun Vui Kiat, Teh Chie Chek and Wong Sue Zin all agreed that they had developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as the ability to source for information through person-to-person interactions, library sources, and e-journals and e-books posted on the Internet.

They agreed that the course had exposed them to

self-assessment by having to maintain their personal portfolios.

While acquiring skills in the laboratory, they also learnt to source for chemical quotations, to budget for funds allocated per project and to write project proposals.

They also learnt to prepare and deliver oral presentations.

Above all, the students expressed their appreciation for FOPS staff at UCSI University, for exposing them to pharmacy-linked activities such as industrial training, public health campaigns, community clerkship, hospital pharmacy clerkship and the incorporation of the problem-based learning approach, instead of learning through formal lectures.

Students from the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences are planning for next year's public health campaign which will kick off next month in Seremban.

Visit UCSI for its open days from Dec 11 to 13 and from Dec 18 to 20 (between 10am and 5pm).

For details, call 03-91018880 or visit www.ucsi.edu.my/onlinenquiry/