

□ Stories by TEE LIN DEE, LEOW YONG MAY, CINDY YEOH and LAVONNE CHEAH

# GLORIOUS RESEARCH

**UCSI students show their mettle in exploring new pharmaceutical applications.**

**A**T UCSI University, the Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons) degree programme emphasises research to explore new drugs that could contribute to optimal healthcare.

Recently, final year students from the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences held a seminar to present their research projects before the UCSI University community.

Each student under the supervision of a faculty member made significant discoveries during their research. One such student was Vun Vui Kiat who was mentored by his lecturer, Assoc Prof Dr Gabriel Akyirem Akuwoah.

His research into Infra-red Profile and Free Radical Scavenging Activities of Selected Botanicals identified antioxidant properties in botanicals that could be beneficial to humans.

Vui Kiat said that he gained more confidence after the presentation of his research findings.

"I used to have stage fright, but during the course of my research, I've had a lot of training to overcome that. I feel that I have better presentation skills now, and of course, my supervisor, Assoc Prof Dr

Gabriel helped me a lot," he said.

Another significant research was made by Wong Meng Fai together with his supervisor, Bontha Venkata Subrahmanya Lokesh. Meng Fai's research on Dissolution Medium Development of Valsartan Tablets found a feasible, economical and precise dissolution method that could be applied to solid dosage form.

According to Lokesh, UCSI University pharmacy students are a hardworking lot who made teaching an enjoyable experience.

Every year, final year pharmacy students undertake the "Oath of a Pharmacist" whereby they pledge to devote their professional life to serve communities globally and to apply their knowledge and skills to the best of their ability to assure optimal drug therapy outcome. This year's oath was in front of the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society president Datuk Nancy Ho.

Ho expressed eagerness to work with the university to uphold the quality of its pharmacy programme.

She also emphasised that pharmacy graduates from UCSI University would be



**Lab rat:** Final year student Khoo Zi Yu and his mentor Dr Chin Jin Han working on a research project.

joining a booming industry, which the Malaysian Government had targeted to produce more than 8,000 qualified pharmacists by 2010, with a ratio of at least one pharmacist to 3,600 Malaysians.

Malaysia hopes to achieve a ratio of 1:1,600 in the near future.

Final year student Jason Lee, who led the oath-taking ceremony, said he was impressed with UCSI University's consistent efforts in maintaining high standard-of the pharmacy programme.

"I believe that those who graduate after our batch would be of an even higher quality, having the advantage of new resources made available at our rapidly expanding university."

Lee said that UCSI University pharmacy programme is unique compared to other pharmacy programmes pursued by his peers in other universities and colleges.

"I believe the subjects in our fourth year which include Problem-Based Learning (PBL) are making all the difference. The knowledge and skills that we have acquired in our previous semesters were truly tested in this semester.

"In PBL, students are given a 'trigger' or

a problem that they need to solve in groups of seven to eight students. Observed by a facilitator, and with input from everyone, students solve the problem in a group setting. The 'weaker' groups have to do a presentation that requires more extensive research for a better understanding of the problem," said Pharmaceutical Sciences Faculty dean, Assoc Prof Dr Yeong Siew Wei.

Students are also given real-life cases to help prepare them for work.

The pharmacy programme which began at its Kuala Lumpur campus more than nine years ago, has grown from its first batch of 27 students in 2,000 to more than 240 students now.

Its rapid expansion also saw the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences being moved twice to accommodate its growth. Currently located on the fourth floor of the university's academic block, it has three fully equipped laboratories.

□ For more information on the UCSI University Pharmacy Degree Programme, call 03-9101 8880 or visit [www.ucsi.edu.my/onlineenquiry/](http://www.ucsi.edu.my/onlineenquiry/).