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Improving lives at UCSI

THE discovery that DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), the carrier of the genetic code for any form of life, can be transferred into other forms of life, opens the door to many possibilities for genetically modified plants, animals, and microbes not found on earth.

As a result of that, a career that is influenced by biotechnology is not just a job but it is also an invitation to participate in the development of new products and processes that can improve human life.

In line with this, the Biotechnology staff and students at UCSI University organised a workshop titled "Putting U in CSI: The Junior CSI Agent Workshop" recently.

More than 40 secondary school students were asked to "investigate" a fictitious case study on singer Lady Gaga and her meat dress, and to discover where the meat came from, or whom it belonged to.

In this case, Lady Gaga has been accused of murder to obtain the meat for her dress, and it was up to the students to prove her innocent or guilty.

The workshop introduced forensics tools to students and hoped to nurture practical learning in biotechnological forensic techniques (in this case, DNA fingerprinting), which includes DNA extraction, polymerase chain reaction and gel electrophoresis.

Faculty of Applied Sciences lecturer Dr Crystale Lim said: "Science has limitless possibilities to improve our lives as almost everything is linked to Biotechnology. And it is our job to make this a reality as the concepts and theories are there as guidelines but Biotechnology is definitely not textbook conventional.

"The key is to start figuring out how to make biotechnology a uni-

fying influence for students, who are the future researchers of the industry.

"Thus, it is our task to equip them and teach them how to analyse situations and understand the principles and concepts rather than learning all the details without understanding them."

Apart from the workshop that the students participated in, the course structure had also been revised to pique the interest of students to delve into biotechnology, namely, molecular biotechnology and how it may affect people.

One fun assignment was a movie assignment, where students were asked to separate fact from fiction in *Jurassic Park*, *X-Men* and *Spider-Man*.

The goal was to challenge students to think outside the box with applied theoretical information obtained from molecular cell biology

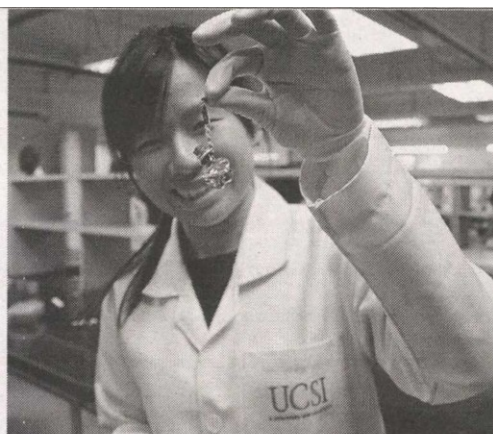
and common sense.

Tan Gek Mui, who is just starting her final-year project in Biotechnology, said: "The assignment that we were asked to do was fun and unique as we had to present our ideas of how theoretically possible the movie concept was. We had to do more research into the potential of molecular biotechnology."

Felius Yuseli, who has almost completed his final-year project, said this exercise also gave them an insight into what they might expect and envision in Biotechnology in the future.

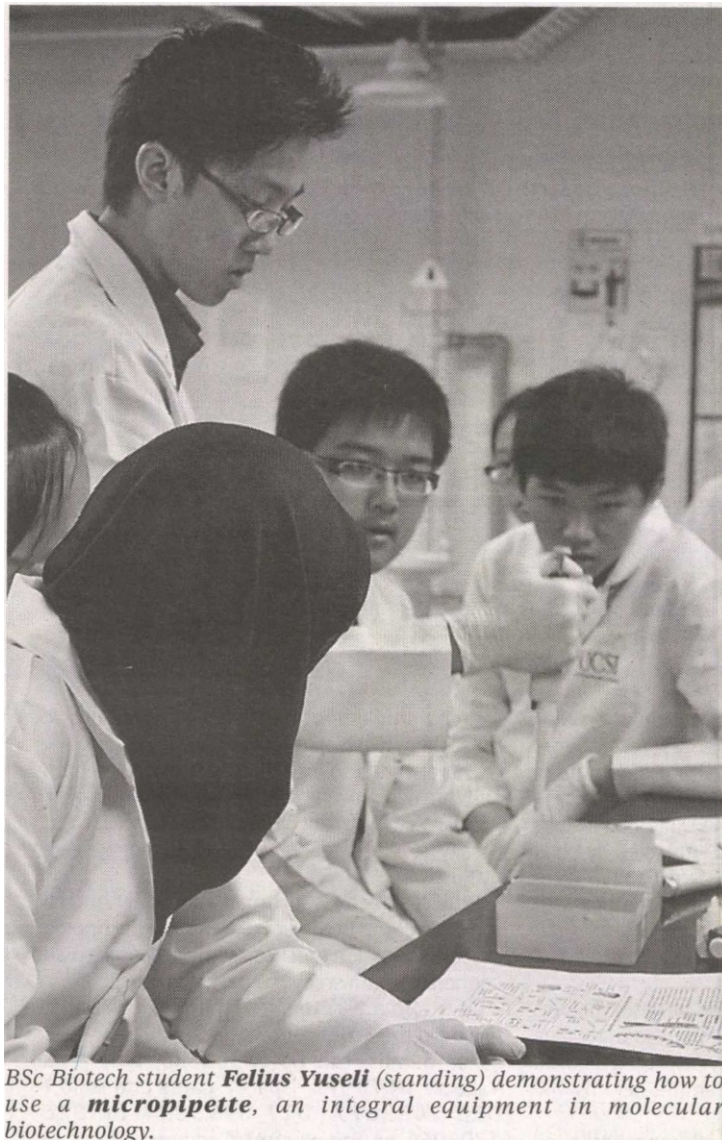
For details on biotechnology programmes, activities and the scholarships offered, visit the campus open day on Aug 25 and 26, from 9am to 6pm.

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



*A secondary school student participant of the **Lady Gaga workshop** showing off DNA that she isolated from her cheek cells and placed in a bottle.*

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BSc Biotech student **Felius Yuseli** (standing) demonstrating how to use a **micropipette**, an integral equipment in molecular biotechnology.