

Headline	Taking research to another level		
MediaTitle	The Sun		
Date	25 Sep 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	National	Circulation	270,506
Page No	20	Readership	171,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	363 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 6,456
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 19,368



# Taking research to another level

> It is the driving force behind modernity

**T**HE laboratory isn't exactly the usual place to strike up a conversation on Japan with a local academic. But then again, assoc prof Dr Hwang Jung Shan is not your usual academic.

Having worked for 12 years in the Land of the Rising Sun, Hwang is very much the right person to speak to on all things Japanese. With her fair complexion, she certainly looks the part. But her soft-spoken nature masks the many endeavours she has undertaken. Endeavours like research on protein DNA interaction; gene regulation in E.coli; and the study of protein in viruses.

And as her career is related, one can't help but ask the burning question: Why return to Malaysia?

The fact that she missed

her motherland—and its food—aside, Hwang returned in order to share her experiences with local students. Or so she says.

And by heading the postgraduate programme at UCSI University's Faculty of Applied Sciences (FOAS),

Hwang has the right platform to inculcate an interest in research amongst her students.

"I really want to encourage them and help them understand that research can be rewarding, professionally and financially," she opines.

"Traditionally, research isn't really a strong point at local private universities but I'm confident that this will change. A basic degree won't cut it anymore in certain fields and research opportunities will increase in line with Malaysia's push to become a

developed high-income nation.

"After all, research is really the driving force behind modernity. A significant discovery will propel an entire industry forward and this is what the public must be mindful of."

One with a plan—another quintessential Japanese trait—Hwang's immediate objectives are to strengthen the faculty's postgraduate offerings, enhance the level of delivery, and spur interest amongst the local students.

Presently, three postgraduate programmes are offered at UCSI, namely Master of Science (MSc) in Biotechnology; MSc Biotechnology with Business Management, and MSc Applied Sciences by Research.

Another two programmes, the MSc Food Science, and

MSc Food Science with Business Management, should be launched next year.

With around 30 postgraduate students—most of them international—in the three programmes, FOAS is one of the leading faculties at UCSI when it comes to postgraduate endeavours.

Hwang points out that the programmes are divided into two pathways: the traditional research intensive route and a more accessible coursework-based variant.

"Traditional research-based routes are important but things tend to get very specific," she muses.

"Sometimes, there is a tendency to get too focused to the point where one neglects other areas.

"Coursework-based programmes are becoming increasingly popular as they

Headline	Taking research to another level		
MediaTitle	The Sun		
Date	25 Sep 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	National	Circulation	270,506
Page No	20	Readership	171,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	363 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 6,456
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 19,368

enhance access to postgraduate studies.

“Working professionals who are interested in further study often look at this pathway as they may not be able to commit to the research-based programmes that are generally more time-consuming.”

Plant manager Tevan Rambunathan is one who could not agree more.

He could only dedicate his weekends to further study, making the coursework-based programme his only option.

“Although I am interested in research, which is still an important component of my course, I can’t afford to spend entire weeks in the lab due to work commitments,” explains Tevan, who is in the midst of

completing his thesis.

“I’m happy to find what I was looking for in UCST’s Master’s in Biotechnology with Business Management. My work was not adversely affected as I travel to Kuala Lumpur for weekend classes.”

At the same time, Tevan has had the opportunity to dual specialise in strategic planning and human resources management.

“The programme is a natural fit for me as I manage more than 50 people at the factory,” he muses. “Looking back, I must say that the course has helped me immensely.

“I have become a more effective manager and I am ready for bigger responsibilities in the organisation.”



Hwang says research can be rewarding, professionally and financially.