

Journey to become a doctor

IN the preface of one of his medical texts, Hippocrates wrote, in ancient Greek, "The life so short, the craft so long to learn".

The father of modern medicine described the study of medicine as requiring a long time – a journey of learning, so to speak.

For Wilson Tung Him Swon, a first year second semester student pursuing his Doctor of Medicine degree at UCSI University (UCSI), his journey into the field of medicine has only just begun.

A Public Service Department of Malaysia (JPA) scholar, Tung's introduction to medicine began when JPA arranged for him and his fellow scholarship applicants to spend a week in a government hospital to observe the doctors and housemen there.

"The one week exposure to the doctors' busy work schedules was important as it showed us what we should expect when we sign up for medicine – hard work and dedication," said Tung, noting that these continue well after graduation.

While Tung is prepared for the hard work – something the JPA scholarship selection committee clearly saw as they awarded him a full scholarship to pursue the Doctor of Medicine degree at UCSI – he does not fit into the stereotype of medical students who are often portrayed as nerds.

While his being the former high school secretary to the Prefects Board and Vice Chairperson for the English Language Society may not raise an eyebrow, his being the Chairperson for the Bodybuilding Club certainly does.

His interest in a wide range of extracurricular activities has made his academic journey an interesting one and he is adamant that his medical journey should not be solely about books.

Thus, he is glad that UCSI's Doctor of Medicine programme includes the Behavioural Science, Communication Skills, and Personal Professional Development" subject.

Under this subject, medical students are expected to organise events that are relevant to their medical degree.

For Tung, this is the perfect opportunity to utilise the medical knowledge he has learned for the benefit of the public, while learning the soft skills needed to organise events at the university and intervarsity levels.

For example, for the Sexual Health Awareness Campaign organised in February

this year, the medical students – under the supervision of their lecturers – informed the public on the importance of sexual

health awareness.

This also enables students like Tung to step up to the plate and take charge.

Leadership and communication skills cannot be taught in a classroom, and are part of UCSI's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences' aim to groom medical students to be doctors who can take the lead.

This will subsequently ensure a smooth transition from university student to houseman and finally doctor.

From student to doctor

This early interaction is something that Sobana Muthu has benefited from.

While Tung has only just begun his journey as a medical student, Sobana is about to complete hers with only two months left of her programme.

Having spent two years in the UCSI Kuala Lumpur campus and three in the Kuala Terengganu campus, Sobana's interaction with patients has grown; from her junior years of merely informing them about general health concerns during health events, to treating them during the clinical practice sessions.

Senior students like Sobana start their day at the hospital at 8am until noon before going for classes from 2pm to 6pm.

The students will also be on call from 7pm to 7am. On these occasions, they will still have to continue their usual hospital work the next morning.

On weekends, students can practise their skills on campus in the medical lab which is equipped with a medical mannequin.

"UCSI has done a good job in ensuring our clinical hours are enough. We get ample hospital exposure and patient interaction," said Sobana.

Judging from the warm way the patients responded to Sobana, it's clear that the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences' approach of introducing its students to patients from the onset is a noble practice.

It is said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. Whether it involves students who are just starting their journey, or those who are about to complete theirs, students pursuing the Doctor of Medicine programme can be assured of one thing – UCSI University's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences will be there,

every step of the way.

■ To find out more, call 03-9101 8882 or e-mail www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry. You can also drop by the Info Days on June 15 and 16, from 9am to 5pm.



UCSI student Sobana (left) attending to a patient and putting into practice her medical knowledge.