

OF late, there has been an increasing debate on how Gen-Y should not be blamed for being unable to find employment in the United States.

These young adults are found to be lacking in the soft skills needed in the workplace because, according to articles by *The Guardian* newspaper and *TIME* magazine, they have been too busy pursuing a paper qualification. It is the perennial chicken or egg situation in Asia as well: Should the emphasis first be on education or experience?

At UCSI University, the focus is on both.

Its unique praxis approach brings together theory and application.

This is perfectly exemplified by its Faculty of Applied Sciences (FoAS) that provides not just world-class academic knowledge, but also unique opportunities to apply that knowledge.

The challenge is to practise it in a way that gives students the skills to help them stand out.

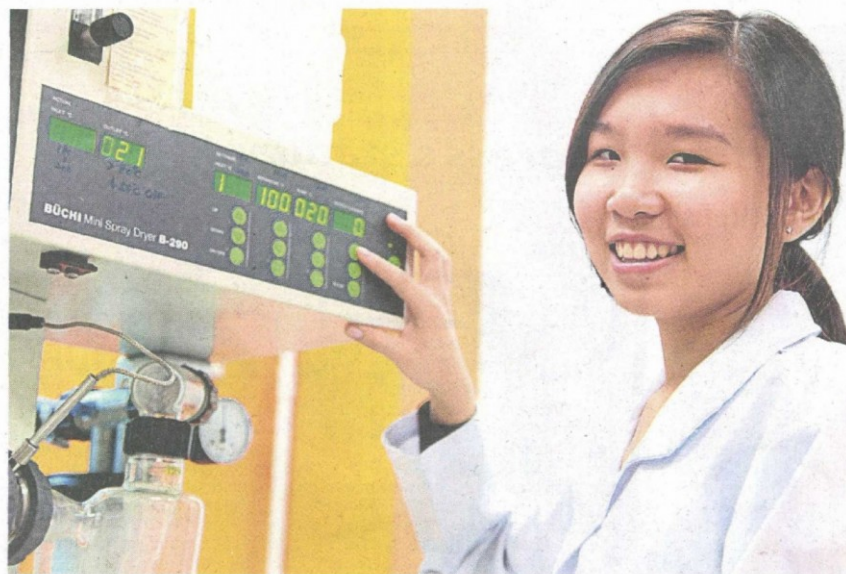
A key way FoAS does this is through its annual Applied Science Week (ASW).

As one of the highlights, UCSI's BSc (Hons) Food Science and Nutrition students were tasked with creating new and innovative food items to be sold during the ASW food fair.

According to Charis Wong, a Food Science and Nutrition student, the ASW provided the opportunity to multi-task and learn additional skills such as marketing, designing and persuading sponsors to back their project.

These would help them hit the

Master the praxis approach



Wong: The Applied Science Week provided me the opportunity to multi-task and learn additional skills.

ground running when they enter the working world.

Being the recipient of the Governor General's Academic Medal awarded by the Governor General of Canada in recognition of her excellent pre-university academic results, Wong would have had no trouble entering any institution

of higher learning to pursue her interest in food science.

Also, during the ASW, the BSc (Hons) Biotechnology students set up booths showcasing various biotechnology concepts focusing on the role of biotechnology in food processes.

The students had to come up

with innovative and interactive displays to accurately convey the chosen topic, while capturing the public's attention.

They needed to understand their topics of study to be able to repack-age the knowledge and explain it to a person with no scientific background.

This would help them prepare for the workforce where key stakeholders are not scientists.

According to Emerson Liang, a second year biotechnology student, the ASW helped him understand his studies better, particularly the molecular cell biology and fermentation course.

His team, Misolicious, showcased how biotechnology processes are used in creating miso.

The team also showcased its research on various methods to get better yield from the miso fermentation process.

This merging of sound scientific knowledge and soft skills would ensure a holistic education that would enable them to make a seamless transition to the working world.

Always innovative in its teaching methodologies, the faculty also held a mini symposium during the ASW, where the BSc (Hons) Food Science and Nutrition and BSc (Hons) Biotechnology students gave oral and poster presentations on their research projects.

"The faculty's aim is to extend the learning experience beyond the classroom walls," explained Faculty of Applied Sciences dean Assoc Prof Dr Chan Hor Kuan.

■ For details, call 03-9101 8882 or e-mail www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry. Alternatively, drop by its Open Day on April 12 and 13 (9am to 6pm).