

# A Japanese approach to biotech

**W**HAT does biotechnology have in common with the Japanese people? According to Lee Siew Wei, a recent graduate of UCSI University's (UCSI) Bachelor of Science (Hons) Biotechnology, both are driven by excellence and a sense of accountability.

She saw this first-hand when she was selected as the only biotechnology undergraduate to participate in the JENESYS 2.0 programme.

Like its predecessor JENESYS (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths), JENESYS 2.0 aimed to promote the younger generation's interest and understanding of the country.

Fully funded by the Japanese government, Lee was among 130 participants from Malaysia's local and private universities brought to Japan from April 14 to 22.

The participants were placed with a host family for three days. Lee stayed with The Umemura Group of Educational Institutions Board of Directors chairman Kiyohide Umemura and his family. The Umemura Group is the parent company of Chukyo University.

She soon gained insight into the Japanese culture of striving to meet the expectations of customers. 'I learned that customer feedback, even students', are taken seriously."

Visits to Nagoya Kaizan University and the Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology further exemplified the Japanese's emphasis on ethics and responsibility in their studies and profession – something just as important in the field of biotechnology, which deals with technology based on biology.

Always having been interested in health sciences, Lee chose to pursue biotechnology as it provided the opportunity to find a cure for entire generations and not just diagnose the limited number of patients she treats. She is particularly fascinated with biotechnology's ability to modify genes for the benefit of humankind.

Having completed her undergraduate years at UCSI, she speaks highly of the experience, particularly of the Faculty of Applied Science's research emphasis and strengths. Through lecturers who are respected researchers

themselves, Lee and her coursemates were introduced to research early in their studies.

She feels the dedication of her lecturers is an advantage at UCSI. Additionally, the lecturers also encourage students to broaden their horizons to excel in both studies as well as external competitions and seminars.

This saw Lee presenting her undergraduate project at The World Anti-Cancer Congress and Exhibition held in Penang this year. On top of that, she graduated with First Class Honours.

Her juniors matched her success when they emerged triumphant at the recent 25th Intervarsity Biochemistry Seminar, sweeping four out of the six awards presented.

The university's unique Praxis approach makes it compulsory for students to undergo a two-month internship placement at the end of each academic year so that students like Lee have the advantage of working for two months each academic year, instead of just during their final year.

Her passion for biotechnology and research as well as the faculty's reputation for research excellence saw Lee choosing to pursue a postgraduate qualification at UCSI. She is currently enrolled in the MSc Applied Sciences, by Research programme.

With a smile, she shares that her research ambition was made possible by UCSI.

"I would not be able to pursue my dreams in research if it was not for UCSI giving me scholarships – both for my bachelor and master's degrees."

## **The nutrition and wellness advantage**

Like the Japanese, the Faculty of Applied Sciences takes its students' feedback seriously and constantly reviews its programmes to ensure relevance and quality.

In addition to its popular BSc (Hons) Food Science and Nutrition programme, there was demand for a more holistic nutrition programme. It is with this holistic approach to health in mind that it designed its BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Wellness programme.

UCSI University is at the forefront to merge the rigorous scientific aspects of nutrition with the holistic aspects of wellness into this four-year programme.

■ To find out more about UCSI University's Faculty of Applied Sciences programmes, call 03-9101 8882 or e-mail [www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry](http://www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry)



Through frequent internship stints and exposure to external competitions and experiences like JENESYS 2.0, Lee (right) a First Class Honours graduate, is ready to go further in biotechnology through her postgraduate studies.