

Education for a lifetime

HANDS-ON learning that emphasises the learning process and outcome instead of mere rote learning is part of UCSI University's (UCSI) Praxis approach.

To ensure its students are equipped with the skills needed to achieve their dreams, UCSI works closely with industry experts for their insights. In the fast-changing field of IT in particular, it is important that education is not isolated from the realities of the working world.

According to Asst Prof Chloe Thong, head of the School of Information Technology (SolT) under the Faculty of Business and Information Science, this is achieved through an industry-relevant curriculum, co-op placement and industry collaboration.

Each programme is designed to emphasise the learning process so that students can thrive in times of change. Whether it is the advancement of new technologies or climbing the career ladder, SolT students are known among employers for their flexibility, adaptability and talent.

The school works with numerous co-op partners to provide students meaningful work experience during their studies. With its strong industry linkages, the school has tremendous support from big names in the IT world.

For example, its IT research and development laboratory is fully sponsored by Ricoh Malaysia. The laboratory contains cutting-edge devices and solutions such as iPhones, iPads, Macintosh computers and Ricoh's latest multifunctional printing products.

The Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC) also participates in the school's annual programme review. Its input is invaluable as MDeC sets breakthrough standards for multimedia operations, oversees the development of the Multimedia Super Corridor Malaysia and advises the government on related matters.

Through advice from MDeC, the school constantly revamps its programmes to meet industry expectations. As a result, students of the SolT are in high demand.

"Many of our students are offered permanent jobs during their second internship – even before graduating," says Asst Prof Thong.

Through site visits and lectures by external speakers, input from people who work in the industry helps students stay

abreast with the latest developments in the IT industry.

Recently, students of the school had the opportunity to listen to a guest lecture on the works of the late mathematician, George Boole, that are used for many computer programming systems, including Pascal and Java.

The lecture was delivered by Dr Michael Murphy, president of University College Cork, Ireland, where Boole was its first professor of mathematics.

"We want our students to be experts in their fields and, at the same time, well-rounded individuals. We connect them to the people and opportunities that can help them on their way," says Asst Prof Thong.

One of the many students who has benefited from the Praxis approach is Mok Yun Liu. Inspired by how Apple products transformed the computing and mobile industry, Mok decided to pursue a degree in computing.

He chose UCSI as it was one of the few universities that included the Apple iOS operating system in its curriculum.

Currently in his second year, the BSc (Hons) Computing student has been on the dean's list almost every semester and has won the UCSI University President Award for his outstanding academic and co-curricular achievements.

Besides being a computer enthusiast, Mok is an outgoing all-rounder. He is the president of the IT Student Association and has posts in other clubs such as the UCSI Scholars Club and the UCSI Photography Club.

He chose to pursue computer science because he believes that it is the most available tool to make a difference in society.

"Computing is like the 'magic' of our generation. You can use it to make your ideas a reality, such as by creating a simple mobile app," he explains.

Mok credits UCSI's Praxis approach for giving him the avenue to garner industry experience while he is still studying.

Through the Praxis approach, students are required to complete a two-month internship every academic year. Therefore, students gain industry exposure even in their first year.

In his first year, Mok worked for a global insurance bank. Despite only doing minor

work in line with his basic knowledge, he believes that the experience has changed him.

"I could observe how things were executed in a global company and learnt about their banking system. Not everyone has the chance to experience that," he says.

Summing up his enthusiasm for computer science, Mok points out that a human being spends the first 20 years of his life learning and the last 20 retired.

"Time is limited, so you might as well spend it doing something you love. For me, it's computer science."

■ For more information, call 03-9101 8882 or visit www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my



Asst Prof Thong, Dr Murphy and School of Information Technology student Mok Yun Liu during the guest lecture on the works of the late mathematician, George Boole, at UCSI University.