

In great depths

IN many ways, the deep sea is the last great unexplored frontier on Earth. In the last 10 years alone, thousands of previously unknown species have been pulled from its depths and many more will continue to be discovered throughout the years. It was this fascination with the underwater creatures that helped Yeoh Shenshen decide on her education.

"I want to be involved in the conservation of living things and there is nothing more urgent and important than the conservation of aquatic life," she said.

The ambitious student of UCSI's Diploma in Aquaculture with Entrepreneurship added that aquatic conservation in Malaysia was not as advanced as other countries, but she is hoping to lead it one day.

A bubbly and active girl who is a state-level judo competitor, Yeoh also enjoys the hands-on aspect of her studies.

A particular favourite of hers is the fieldwork expeditions with her lecturer and UCSI aquatic science programme head, Asst Prof Dr Teo Swee Sen, a leading research authority on the *Gracilaria changii* (a type of red

seaweed found in Malaysia) whose passion has rubbed off on her student.

"Dr Teo has shared her experiences in the field with me and provided useful tips regarding samples and data collection. This will give me an edge once I enter the workforce," Yeoh says.

A leader in aquatic education

Riding on the success of its Diploma in Aquaculture with Entrepreneurship, the university recently launched a new programme – BSc (Hons) Aquatic Science, which enhances the scientific understanding of the aquatic ecosystem using multi-disciplinary studies.

UCSI has the distinction of being the first private university in Malaysia to offer this degree that covers the study of both freshwater and marine ecosystems. The degree focuses on preserving, managing and exploring the various water sources.

Good management, preservation and conservation of the environment allow full utilisation of the various water resources on the planet to benefit the ever-growing human

population. The Aquatic Science programme will prepare the students to assess, analyse and plan methods to prevent or overcome pollution and mismanagement of the environment. It will also ensure the qualities of our water resources are maintained even when being harvested.

During the final year of the BSc (Hons) Aquatic Science programme, students have the option to specialise in either Aquatic Health and Management or Seafood Processing and Safety.

Students can also decide to focus on the research field and eventually academia, as aquatic research is heavily supported by the Malaysian Government.

With UCSI being the first private university in Malaysia to offer both the BSc (Hons) Aquatic Science and Diploma in Aquaculture and Entrepreneurship, students can rest assured they will be ahead of the pack when they graduate.

Further adding to these programmes' credibility is the prestige of the university. UCSI has been ranked Tier – the highest ranking received by a private institution of higher learning in the SETARA 2014 ranking by the

Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

It is also among the Top 300 in the 2015 QS Asian University Rankings. This comes on the back of increasing research output, internationalisation and affiliations with renowned universities like Harvard and Imperial.

But who are the students that should be interested in this programme?

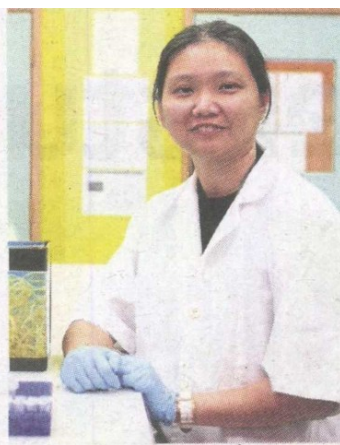
"Having a strong interest towards the aquatic world, the environment and science subjects are important to pursue a future in aquatic science," Dr Teo answers, adding that patience is a valuable trait in this field.

"The aquatic ecosystem is mysterious and fascinating. There is so much of the aquatic world left unexplored," she says.

■ To find out more about UCSI University's Faculty of Applied Sciences, contact 03-9101 8882 or e-mail www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry



UCSI student Yeoh Shenshen intends to pursue a career in aquatic wildlife conservation.



Asst Prof Dr Teo Swee Sen brings much credibility as UCSI's Aquatic Science programme head.