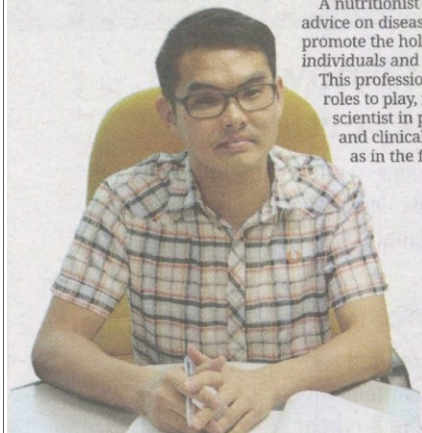


ACCORDING to head of UCSI University's nutrition with wellness programme Assoc Prof Dr Yim Hip Seng the human body is similar to a racing car.

"Put in the wrong fuel or let it go without maintenance and it will not deliver its full performance. Without healthy eating, your body will suffer – just like a car engine," he says.

Findings from British medical journal *The Lancet* showed that Malaysia had one of the highest rates of obesity among Asian countries with 45.3% of its population obese. The number of diabetes patients jumped to 31% this year, up from 15.2% in 2011.



Assoc Prof Yim Hip Seng says that it is vital for nutrition students to have good communication skills as well as passion and enthusiasm in improving human health.

Advancing research in nutrition and wellness

On the other end of the spectrum, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are on the rise due to the growing influence of the media and today's celebrity-centric culture.

These lead to the increasing need for nutritionists.

A nutritionist is qualified to give advice on disease prevention and promote the holistic well-being of individuals and communities.

This professional has various roles to play, including being a scientist in public health and clinical settings as well as in the fields of sports

nutrition, health promotion and education.

UCSI introduced the BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Wellness programme to mould qualified and well-rounded nutritionists.

Unlike other programmes on nutrition, this degree has a dual focus on the scientific understanding of nutrition and food science as well as fundamentals of marketing and entrepreneurship.

The degree is the latest of a string of successful programmes offered by UCSI, which is the first private university in Malaysia to offer a food science with nutrition bachelor of science degree.

The dual focus of the BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Wellness gives students an added edge in the competitive working world.

"The programme enables graduates to venture into traditional nutritionist roles such as health consultants for disease prevention, public health and education or venture into the booming wellness business," explains Assoc Prof Yim.

When it comes to fields related to human health, research and innovation are crucial to ensure continuous advancement for mankind.

Innovation and research are two things UCSI's Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS) is well known for. To maintain the highest level of academic and scientific standards, the faculty emphasises evidence-based learning and takes pride in having state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment.

Students also learn from the programme's experienced academicians such as Prof Dr Mirnalini Kandiah, one of the first three nutrition officers in Malaysia's Health Ministry in the 1970s.

She is a respected researcher specialising in the fields of cardio metabolic risk and herbal remedies for cancer patients.

In line with the university's praxis approach, which advocates the application of theory to practice, the programme also includes two months of cooperative placement for every year of study.

This offers students the opportunity to pursue their internship with some of the most prestigious names in the industry.

"Having passion and enthusiasm in improving human health is important for students to do well in the programme," says Assoc Prof Yim, adding that having good communication skills is also an advantage.

"There are multiple health awareness projects in which nutritionists are required to work with the community, so always be ready to venture out of your comfort zone."

To ensure students improve their communication skills, the final year of the programme also sees students embarking on a community project.

This involves them working with a community – be it a school or residential area – and advising members of the public on nutrition and wellness.

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