

Pharmacy degree can take you places

ASK any UCSI University student how far studying pharmacy can go and the answer would be "around the world".

Recently selected by the University of Chicago for summer research programmes, students Eugene Low Yi Ming and Lee Shuo Yu have an invaluable opportunity to contribute to the advancement of cutting-edge science.

The duo are focusing on pharmacogenomics – the study of how genes affect a person's response to drugs.

Their research would contribute to ongoing efforts to ensure the right medicine – and the ideal dosage – is tailor-made for an individual's genetic makeup.

They will also be exposed to therapeutic drug monitoring – a branch of clinical pharmacology that focuses on measuring medication concentrations in blood.

"Chicago is one of the world's best universities", said Low.

"It ranked ninth in the QS World University Rankings 2018 – and such arrangements say a lot about the quality of UCSI's pharmacy programme."

Noting that a one-size-fits-all approach to medical prescription was a thing of the past, Lee explained that personalised medicine is the future of healthcare.

"Drugs can respond differently to different people," she said.

"What is greatly beneficial to one could have little or no effect – or worse, adverse effects – on another. This is why pharmacogenomics is so important."

Lee is expecting to conduct DNA testing in Chicago.

The two UCSI students will receive a certificate of recognition from Chicago and are mentored by leading researcher Prof Dr Jerry Yeo Kiang Teck, who serves as director of Chicago's clinical chemistry, clinical pharmacogenomics and clinical translational mass spectrometry laboratories.

Prof Yeo said that Low and Lee were selected from a pool of hopefuls on the composite of their academic achievements, leadership qualities, interpersonal skills and their propensity to take on research as a career choice.

"We worked with UCSI to identify the right talents and I was impressed with the students' enthusiasm and positive mindset," said Prof Yeo.

Previously, three pharmacy students were selected by the University of British Columbia for research on predictive modelling techniques to treat Parkinson's disease and the formulation of new antiepileptic drugs.

The faculty also stands out for its 18-year excellent track record of graduating more than 1,300 pharmacists.

Its students have recorded a 98% success rate in the qualifying examination for registration as a practising pharmacist for three



Lee (left) and Low have been selected by the University of Chicago for a high-impact summer research programme.

straight years.

Public health campaigns that carry a unique theme are organised annually and UCSI pharmacy students have benefited thousands in Malaysia.

Students are committed to professionalism through their undergraduate studies, which culminate with the swearing of the oath of pharmacists when they graduate.

The vibrant student life at the faculty is further exemplified by activities like World Pharmacists' Day – an event that sees students interacting with guests from the Ministry of Health and the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society, intervarsity debates, colour festivals, healthy eating fairs and other team building activities.

Apart from its Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons) programme that begins in August, the faculty also offers Master's programmes in clinical pharmacy practice, pharmaceutical chemistry and pharmaceutical technology, as well as a PhD in pharmaceutical sciences.

The faculty also started Provisionally Registered Pharmacists (RRP) training in the area of research and development this year.

Post-SPM students may get the right start by enrolling for UCSI's foundation studies in September.

Apart from pre-university scholarships, those who progress to degree studies will enjoy a further RM9,000 rebate to be spread over the first two years of study.

Students with foundation, STPM or A-Levels results are also eligible for education grants that waive 10%-20% off tuition fees for the first two years of the pharmacy degree programme.

Scholarships offering a 25% tuition fee waiver during the duration of study are also available.

■ For details, contact UCSI's Student Enrolment Centre at 03-9101 8882.



Lee (left) and Low receive extensive training at UCSI's pharmacy labs as they prepare for their summer research programme in Chicago.