

# ALUMNI bulletin

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## CELEBRATING RESILIENCE





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**Cover rationale:** Capturing the moment of celebration during USM 58<sup>th</sup> Convocation. Models are Winifred Woi Yun Jing, Naavin A/L Balasingam Yasmin Rafid, Daniel Robert Martin Hughes, Pamela Rebecca Saraswathy and Abdullah Ali Mahfoudh Bameyeir.

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## From the Vice-Chancellor

This year, USM retained her lead over local universities on SDG-driven policies, initiatives and accomplishments, as can be seen from the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings.

The same rating agency has also ranked USM the highest in Malaysia in terms of Global Employability, highlighting the quality of USM graduates. Meanwhile, Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS), the agency that tracks the intake of international students by universities in Malaysia, ranked USM at number 1 for 2021 among all private and public universities.

USM's rooftop solar projects in her main and engineering campuses are currently the largest in terms of MW among all universities in Malaysia. USM's strong industrial collaborations saw a 200% increase in industrial grants secured in 2021, compared to 2019. USM currently hosts 15 spin-off companies with technologies ranging from AI to medical devices.

These are but a very small sample of USM's recent successes in the face of mounting competitions and challenges.

USM continues to grow with the support from all its communities.

Let us together celebrate our resilience.

At the same time, here's wishing everyone a Happy New Year 2022, and for more wonderful things to come our way.

Have a great 2022!

**Professor Dato' Dr. Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan**

*Vice-Chancellor*

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# From DVC to Alumni

Respected USMers,

I would like to once again congratulate the Class of 2020. One of the sweetest memory a new USMer can have is walking across the commencement stage and collecting that sought after degree. With our world facing many obstacles right now the USM graduation class of 2020 finally celebrating resilience on this 58th Convocation Ceremony. Congratulations!

We also welcome our future alumni intake of 2021/2022. Here in USM, our main goals are to offer students a vibrant on-campus experience, provide a platform to acquire knowledge and to give students an opportunity to meet people and friends. We hope that at the end of their journey, students would have then developed their potential and polished their skills in preparing them for their future.

Recognizing the majority of our students who still needs additional financial support, we have a special programme JORAN, which is a platform for students from B40 families to get a job on campus while studying. Our merchandise shop at The Bricks is used as a case study and a test bed for entrepreneurial activities. Students will then be indirectly exposed to the real process of entrepreneurship such as the accounting and financial management aspect as well as in handling the operations, retailing and marketing of these products. If you wish to share ideas and opinions with the students or to shop for cool merchandise, you are welcome to do so. Come and visit us here at The Bricks.

Last but not least, to our donors, I offer my most sincere thanks and gratitude – your generosity ensures that future generations of students will all have the advantage to pursue their studies regardless of their financial situation. The outpouring support we received from our alumni and friends through various projects and activities will have a long-term impact on the lives of deserving students. We are so grateful to those of you who has contributed for scholarships, Adopt Your Hostel Room @USM, gold medal award, book prize, school's development and those who volunteer to participate by sharing your professional experiences, workplace wisdom and career-related advice with our students. Thank you.

Your continued involvement in the mission of our university is a wonderful testament to USM's past, and a promise for our future. Your dedication and support will help make a difference to our students in their future.

I would also like to wish everyone a Happy New Year 2022.

**Professor Dr. Aldrin Abdullah** (B. Sc. HBP 1993, B. Arch 1994)  
*Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
Students Development Affairs & Alumni*



## GOT NEWS?

- Are you moving?
- Started a new business?
- Doing a charity work?
- Received a promotion?

## STAY CONNECTED WITH USM

We'd like to hear from you. Email your stories to Alumni Development Centre [[dir\\_alumni@usm.my](mailto:dir_alumni@usm.my)]. Include your photo, full name, course and graduation year.

# USM AND BATANGAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Ink MoU on Staff and Student Exchange



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)  
VIRTUAL SIGNING CEREMONY  
BETWEEN  
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA  
AND BATANGAS STATE UNIVERSITY, PHILIPPINES

17th September 2021 | 4.00 pm | Webex

In a historic first, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Batangas State University (BatStateU), Philippines have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate student mobility and staff exchange programmes.

The MoU was signed by both universities through a virtual ceremony conducted using the WebEx video conferencing application, in part due to restrictions on international travel brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The MoU would allow both institutions to encourage academic exchange among faculty members and student exchange via mobility programmes; implement beneficial activities and conduct collaborative projects such as research exchange on mutually identified subject matters.

USM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Professor Dato' Dr. Narimah Samat signed the MoU on behalf of the university, while BatStateU was represented by its President, Dr. Tirso A. Ronquillo.

Present to witness the virtual signing ceremony were USM International Mobility and Collaboration Centre (IMCC) Acting Director, Aizat Hisham Ahmad; senior officers of the USM Academic Management Division along with various heads of departments of BatStateU.

**“The MoU would allow both institutions to encourage academic exchange among faculty members and student exchange via mobility programmes; implement beneficial activities and conduct collaborative projects such as research exchange on mutually identified subject matters.”**

**“We, at USM, as one of Malaysia's top-ranking research universities and the first science university in the country, has always believed in effective collaborations with other academic institutions. I am sure this partnership will significantly benefit both parties through the exchange of students, staff and scholarly research materials.”**

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“We, at USM, as one of Malaysia's top-ranking research universities and the first science university in the country, has always believed in effective collaborations with other academic institutions. I am sure this partnership will significantly benefit both parties through the exchange of students, staff and scholarly research materials,” said Narimah.

“Among the fields of study that USM champions are the Pure Sciences, Applied Sciences, Pharmaceutical Studies, Architecture, Business Management, Social Sciences, Humanities, Languages and Translation, Arts, and Education. USM also offers studies in Engineering and Medical Sciences at its branch and offshore campuses.

“On behalf of USM, I would like to thank the delegation from Batangas State University, Philippines for having us as a partner in pursuing excellence with the signing of today's MoU,” she added.

Meanwhile, according to Tirso A. Ronquillo, the signing of this MoU opens a new chapter for both institutions to collaborate in areas which have been mutually identified, and he looks forward to a fruitful relationship with a prestigious university like USM in the years ahead.



“Hence, we would like to welcome USM staff and students to BatStatesU when the pandemic situation so permits. I hope through this MoU, we can both increase the expertise of our academic staff and enhance the experience of our students,” he added.

BatStateU is the first state university in the Philippines with engineering and information technology programmes accredited by the US-based Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology or ABET – Engineering Accreditation Commission and Computing Accreditation Commission.

With 15 development centres, it is recognised by the Regional Development Council of Region IV-A as the Regional Centre for Technology Business Incubation and Development, and as the Regional Centre for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Environment Research.

**“...the signing of this MoU opens a new chapter for both institutions to collaborate in areas which have been mutually identified, and he looks forward to a fruitful relationship with a prestigious university like USM in the years ahead.”**

**- Tirso A. Ronquillo**

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*Text and Photo: Mohamad Hafiz Asyraf Mohd Arop  
Editing: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin*



Milestone MoU aims to close the tech talent gap in Malaysia, cultivate diverse talent.

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Dell Technologies Malaysia (Dell) have signed a two-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in a milestone industry-academia move to produce more industry-ready graduates.

**“...this collaboration with one of Malaysia's oldest leading universities, and a premium research-intensive institution in the country, is an example of Dell Technologies' commitment to work together with academia and share its knowledge and resources to innovate and build a skilled workforce of the future.”**

**“Just as important as the technology solutions we create, we are committed to helping Malaysia build a future-ready workforce that has the skills and values critical to meet the needs of our digital future.”**

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The MoU provides a platform for USM and Dell to work hand-in-hand to groom and equip USM undergraduates to be highly employable graduates under the USM LIFE Programme, a new academic initiative that advocates creative and experiential learning.

Signing the MoU at the virtual ceremony were Senior Vice-President, South Asia, and Managing Director, Malaysia, Dell Technologies, Pang Yee Beng, and USM Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato’ Dr. Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan.

According to Pang, this collaboration with one of Malaysia’s oldest leading universities, and a premium research-intensive institution in the country, is an example of Dell Technologies’ commitment to work together with academia and share its knowledge and resources to innovate and build a skilled workforce of the future.

“At Dell Technologies, we believe in creating a positive and lasting impact on communities and the planet – using our reach, technology and people. It is with this in mind that we embarked on our Progress Made Real 2030 plan, which outlines our social impact goals and strategies.

“Just as important as the technology solutions we create, we are committed to helping Malaysia build a future-ready workforce that has the skills and values critical to meet the needs of our digital future,” said Pang, who is a USM alumnus himself.

Expressing his delight to be collaborating with a leading, trusted brand like Dell Technologies, Faisal Rafiq said, “I’m really excited to have guest lecturers from Dell Technologies to be involved in the USM pilot LIFE programme, the first of its kind, that kicked off this

month, where participants (students) will be exposed to a myriad of subjects such as genomics and gerontology, innovative thinking (computational and design), financial literacy, philosophy and grit, Social Development Goals (SDGs) and Living Labs, among others.

“It is my fervent hope that with Dell’s support, we will be able to enrich the students’ learning experiences and that they will be groomed and equipped with the necessary diverse knowledge, skill sets, exposure and wisdom.

“This is especially important in preparing them to be agile, resilient, adaptable and innovative in these challenging times, and to be industry-ready well before they graduate and enter the job market,” he added.

**“I’m really excited to have guest lecturers from Dell Technologies to be involved in the USM pilot LIFE programme, the first of its kind, that kicked off this month, where participants (students) will be exposed to a myriad of subjects...”**

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Also present at the virtual ceremony were USM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Development Affairs and Alumni), Professor Dr. Aldrin Abdullah; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) Professor Dato’ Ir. Dr. Abdul Rahman Mohamed; Dean of the School of Housing, Building and Planning, Associate Professor Ir. Dr. Abdul Naser Abdul Ghani; Director, Medium Business Sales and Women in Action Malaysia Chapter Lead, Dell Technologies, Teoh Ean Na; Architecture Lecturer from the School of Housing, Building and Planning, Ar. Tan Bee Eu; senior management of Dell Technologies; USM faculty members and LIFE Programme members.

*Text: USM and Dell Joint Press Release*

*Photo: Dell Technologies*



# USM, DITROLIC ENERGY SIGN PPA; USM Turns to Solar-powered Electricity for Campus Use



Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) entered into a 20-year solar Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Ditrolic EnergySolutions Sdn. Bhd., a Malaysian clean energy solutions company for corporate and institutional customers in Southeast Asia, to set up a 10.6MWp on-site rooftop solar system in the varsity.

This cooperation in the installation of the solar photovoltaic (PV) system through a Request for Proposal (RFP) offer is believed to be the first of its kind and the single largest public university PPA deal in Malaysia.

By end of the year, with the completion of 22,374 pieces of solar modules installation across 90 buildings, solar carports and ground mounted system around its main campus, USM expects most of the energy supplied to its campuses to be clean and renewable.

The solar system will be able to generate power for 63.73% of its peak power demand. Over its lifetime, approximately 278,683MWh of clean energy will be generated, enabling USM to eliminate 217,705 tonnes of CO2 emissions in total.

Expressing his delight to be collaborating with Ditrolic Energy in this maiden project, USM Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr. Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan said, "With the installation of the solar modules in the main campus, USM will be among the first public university in the country to have up to 75% of its maximum demand and about 40% of the total usage for electricity to be generated by solar energy. This will in turn help the university to potentially save up to 30% on its utility bills."

"USM aims to lead into the future, and using clean and renewable solar energy will be among its prioritised initiative. This will ensure that USM can continue to be proactive in the fight against climate change, reducing its CO2 emissions, and at the same time reducing its energy cost.

**"By end of the year, with the completion of 22,374 pieces of solar modules installation across 90 buildings, solar carports and ground mounted system around its main campus, USM expects most of the energy supplied to its campuses to be clean and renewable."**



“This will also demonstrate the university’s serious efforts in pursuit of greener and cleaner energy source for the entire varsity and in doing so, contributes towards creating a sustainable future,” he said.

Faisal Rafiq added that USM is also optimistic to carry out similar arrangement to install solar systems at its Engineering Campus in Nibong Tebal with other companies around June or July next year.

Group CEO of Ditrolic Energy, Tham Chee Aun expressed his appreciation to be able to partner with USM, one of the oldest public university in Malaysia, in their journey to achieving net zero carbon emission.

“We are honored to become the clean energy partner for USM. This initiative will showcase to the nation as well as the students on how a leading public university can lead by example in the fight against climate change while hedging their energy cost at the same time.

“We believe the educational sector is a resilient and fundamental part of the society which should plan for the future and inspire the future generation.

**“We believe the educational sector is a resilient and fundamental part of the society which should plan for the future and inspire the future generation.”**

**Tham Chee Aun,  
Group CEO  
Ditrolic Energy**



“Hence, we are ever ready to provide our strongest support to this sector to deploy further investment under our SunLease programme. Currently, Ditrolic Energy is one of the largest clean energy provider to the educational sector with more than 15.7MW of projects under construction,” he said.

Faisal Rafiq and Profesor Dr. Md Roslan Hashim (Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Sustainability and Institutional Development) signed on behalf of USM, while Tham and Raziah Hamdan (Business Development Manager) signed on behalf of Ditrolic Energy.

Also present were USM Bursar, Kamarul Ariffin Ngah; USM Strategic Corporate Development Director, Muhamad Sabri Said; USM Asset Development and Management Department Director, Ir. Mohd Nizam Mohd Razak; and Ditrolic Energy Senior Business Development Engineer, Nasrul Izwan Abdul Halim.

Ditrolic Solar Group is the leading solar photovoltaic company in Malaysia. It is an integrated downstream solar company where it is involved in project development, design & construction, and Independent Power Production (IPP).

It serves customer in three business segments; small power solution, commercial power solution and power plant solution.

Regionally it has undertaken various projects in Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines and Bangladesh, and has developed, design and build 280MW of project to date.



**“USM aims to lead into the future, and using clean and renewable solar energy will be among its prioritised initiative. This will ensure that USM can continue to be proactive in the fight against climate change, reducing its CO2 emissions, and at the same time reducing its energy cost.”**

*Source: USM and Ditrolic Energy joint press release*

*Photos: Ditrolic website*

*Editing: Tan Ewe Hoe*



## JAPANESE AMBASSADOR VISITS USM

### Strengthen Bilateral Ties

The courtesy visit from the Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia, H.E. OKA Hiroshi and wife, OKA Rieko to Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) brought closer ties between the two parties and to further strengthen several existing collaborations between USM and Japan.

The collaborations include those in the academic programmes, research and development, student relations, cultural exchange, language studies, student mobility, and industry and community relations.

Discussions were led by USM Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr. Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan.

Faisal Rafiq also gave a brief overview of the University and presented some of the recent impactful initiatives as well as the direction the University is heading towards in making its presence felt on the local front, regionally and globally.

Also present were Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Professor Dato' Dr. Narimah Samat; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor Dato' Ir. Dr. Abdul Rahman Mohamed; Director of KUFS-USM Japanese Cultural Centre, Division of Industry and Community Network (BJIM), Masatoshi Soeda; Principal Assistant Registrar (performing the duties of the Director) International Mobility and Collaboration Centre (IMCC), Aizat Hisham Ahmad; as well as several Japanese Embassy officials.

This was OKA Hiroshi's second visit to USM, after having made his first visit to the university on 28 September 2020, shortly after being appointed as the new Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia.

**“The collaborations include those in the academic programmes, research and development, student relations, cultural exchange, language studies, student mobility, and industry and community relations.”**

*Text: Tan Ewe Hoe  
Photo: Mohd Fairus Md Isa*

# INDIE@USM

Self-Publish Your Thoughts & Get Connected



## CALLING ALL USM ALUMNI

Centre for Academic Excellence (CDAE) proudly presents **indie@USM** – the youngest child in our “Go Digital” initiative. **indie@USM** is an e-commerce platform for digital publications that primarily focuses on self-published e-books.



Promotion for Dr Zainal's books

**“Self-publishing is basically a do-it-yourself (DIY) publishing method that does not require you to publish your work through a traditional publishing house.”**

The Internet has brought about a huge change in the way we live our life nowadays, and so does our printing and publishing industry. From Gutenberg to factory printing machines, from handwritten books to typewriters to computers, and from crumpled papers to Kindle, we have never seen an industry that evolves rapidly just within 200 years!

With the evolution of the printing and publishing industry, so does our writing and reading routine. People are spending more time reading on-screen now – on their mobile phones, tablets, or computers. Writing and publishing a book (or in this case, e-book) has never been so easy. We’re certainly familiar with WordPress, BlogSpot, Facebook, Watt pad, and so many other writing mediums that offer an opportunity for people to write and get feedback almost immediately. And then we have Amazon Kindle, Barnes & Noble NOOK, and our very own home-grown E-Sentral which are the pioneers in the e-book industry.

'A Caterpillar's Tale' by Angela Kong



Promotion poster for Dr Yanny's book



'25 Ways to Teach Students to Think' by Abd Karim Alias

What is interesting about e-book is its simplification of the publishing process (minus the printing, of course). What is more interesting is that almost all e-books are self-published. Self-publishing is basically a do-it-yourself (DIY) publishing method that does not require you to publish your work through a traditional publishing house. Simply put: you are the author, you are the designer, you are the editor, you are the publisher, and you are the seller as well. You have total control on how and where you wish to market your works (and the pricing too!).

Looking at the growing trend of self-publishing industry today, indie@USM aspires to become a key component in supporting the self-publishing ecosystem in Malaysia – a platform not only for self-published authors to market their works, but also one that welcomes everyone in the industry be it freelance editor, proof reader, designer, or illustrator. More than selling e-books, it is about connecting people and providing resources that could be useful for both amateur and veteran authors in creating their works.

Since its launching on 18 June 2021, indie@USM is currently hosting more than 100 titles (all self-published) on our platform with more than 800 registered customers local and abroad; and we are growing bigger by the day!

So, did we get you hyped about self-publishing your first e-book? Start writing now and publish your work on indie@USM!

We'll be waiting!

**“From Gutenberg to factory printing machines, from handwritten books to typewriters to computers, and from crumpled papers to Kindle, we have never seen an industry that evolves rapidly just within 200 years!”**

Visit our website



For more info, contact us at [indie@usm.my](mailto:indie@usm.my).

## USM VC Pays Courtesy Visit to EU AMBASSADOR

The Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr. Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan paid a courtesy visit to the EU (European Union) Ambassador, His Excellency Michalis Rokas at the Eastern and Oriental (E&O) Hotel.

The Vice-Chancellor was accompanied by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Professor Dato' Gs. Dr. Narimah Samat.

The aim of the courtesy visit was for EU to provide insights into the collaboration with USM in areas of research, academic (Erasmus grant), webinars and conferences, sustainability, and the increasing enrolment of students from EU at USM.

As said by Faisal Rafiq during the discussion, USM has always prioritised on the growth of science and technology and sustainability-related matters, and the university is also keen on bringing experts from industries for future research development.

Following that, Michalis gave an overview on how the presence of EU embassies may serve to facilitate cooperation in relation to business and cultural matters, with established partnerships in industries, education, and economy.

From 2017 up until November 2021, collaborations between USM and EU countries have been established in the forms of Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and other agreements, totalling 80 in all.

Additionally, during the pre-COVID-19 era, USM has been receiving a huge number of exchange students from EU countries as well. However, the number has declined during the pandemic, with the exchange programme being conducted fully through programmes held online.

Overall, it was a short yet fruitful discussion between the two heads.

Also present at the discussion were Mr. Francesco Floris, EU First Counsellor Head of Trade and Economic Relations, and Mr. Pekka Pentilla, Trade and Economic Attachè.

*Text: Nur Farrah Ezlin Mohd Suhaimi  
Editing: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin*



**“From 2017 up until November 2021, collaborations between USM and EU countries have been established in the forms of Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and other agreements, totalling 80 in all.”**



# Adopt Your Hostel Room @USM

usmalumni.usm.my



Respected USMers,

As part of the alumni, some of our fondest memories are of the days we've spent in the hostel. The hostel rooms we occupied became the first port of call during the visit of any alumnus to the campus, particularly the ones who would visit the campus after a long while. So much so that the hostels are dear to our hearts....

The hostels have been maintained over the years with USM funding the repairs, upkeep and maintenance. We strive to provide each student with a room that is clean and comfortable, with friendly and attentive service at a value-conscious price. We want the students to enjoy every day of every stay throughout their studies at USM.

This proposal seeks to set up an endowment called **"Adopt Your Hostel Room"** to raise funds which will help in this endeavour. This endowment will be utilized to refurbish the rooms. With the gift of RM5,000, you will be sponsoring shared rooms and those who adopt a room at RM10,000 will be sponsoring single rooms.

Here's a win-win scenario for you - world-class ambience for the students, a feeling of pride & joy for you in giving back to your alma mater... Let's sustain the fond memories with your contribution.

I \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

IC. No: \_\_\_\_\_

agree to adopt: -

Amount (RM)	Number of Room (S)
10,000.00	
5,000.00	

Payment can be made to:  
**Name: UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**  
**Bank: CIMB Bank Berhad**  
**Account No: 9898 6101 3005 21**  
**Swift Code: CIBBMYKL**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

Kindly return the form to:  
 Mrs Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal  
**Alumni Development Centre**  
 Building D02, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800, USM Pulau Pinang. Tel: 04 - 653 4796 / 4790

# MESYUARAT AGUNG TAHUNAN

Persatuan Alumni  
Universiti Sains Malaysia  
(PAUSM) Ke-25



Persatuan Alumni Universiti Sains Malaysia (PAUSM), Pulau Pinang telah mengadakan Mesyuarat Agung Tahunan Persatuan Alumni USM kali yang ke-25 pada 27 November 2021 bertempat di Dewan Pembangunan Siswa 1, Kompleks Cahaya Siswa (KOMCA), USM. Seramai lebih daripada 50 ahli PAUSM yang berdaftar telah menghadiri mesyuarat ini untuk meluluskan agenda mesyuarat serta memilih Jawatankuasa Eksekutif PAUSM yang baru bagi penggal 2021-2023.



Mesyuarat ini telah dirasmikan oleh Timbalan Naib Canselor, Hal Ehwal Pembangunan Pelajar & Alumni (HEPA), Profesor Dr. Aldrin Abdullah. Dalam perasmian tersebut, Timbalan Naib Canselor membentangkan perkembangan alma mater terkini serta projek-projek Pusat Pembangunan Alumni (PPA) dan HEPA. Antara yang dikongsi adalah perkembangan projek Adopt Your Hostel Room @USM (AYHR@USM) yang turut menerima sumbangan daripada Presiden PAUSM yang baru dilantik bagi sebuah bilik di Desasiswa Aman Damai. Selain itu, beliau memaklumi ahli bahawa setiap pelajar baru USM akan menerima kad ucapan daripada Naib Canselor sebagai mengalu-alukan kedatangan mereka ke USM.



“Projek AYHR@USM telah membantu Universiti untuk menaik taraf bilik-bilik di Desasiswa. Secara tidak langsung, projek ini dapat memupuk minat para pelajar untuk mengenali para alumni yang telah menyumbang semula kepada Universiti ini. Nilai-nilai ini diharapkan dapat diteladani oleh para pelajar supaya mereka juga akan menyumbang semula kepada Universiti. Saya yakin melalui projek ini banyak kerjasama dan jaringan yang dapat dilaksanakan antara PAUSM dengan USM amnya” kata Aldrin.





**Sekretariat PAUSM 2021/2023**

Sebelum merasmikan AGM tersebut Aldrin mengalu-alukan kedatangan semua alumni dan menjemput para alumni untuk melawat The Bricks setelah selesai mesyuarat tersebut.

Turut hadir ke Mesyuarat Agung Tahunan Ke-25 ialah ahli Lembaga Gabenor USM, Encik Noor Azam Mohd Noor, Timbalan Naib Canselor Kelestarian dan Pembangunan Institusi (KPI), Profesor Dr. Md Roslan Hashim, serta Penyelaras PPA, Puan Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal.

*Teks: Dr. Khairul Anuar Shariff*  
*Suntingan: Azlina Md Sadik*  
*Foto: Sekretariat PAUSM 2021/2023*

**AHLI JAWATANKUASA PAUSM 2021-2023**

**Presiden**  
 Dr. Mohamed Maliki Mohamed Rapiee (B.A. 1998)

**Timbalan Presiden**  
 En. Muhammad Iqbal Ismail (B. Eng. 2006)

**Setiausaha Agung**  
 Dr. Khairul Anuar Shariff (M.Sc. 2011)

**Penolong Setiausaha Agung**  
 Pn. Siti Zaharah Jemaron (B. Sc. 2007)

**Bendahari**  
 En. Shamsudin Husin (B. Applied. Sc. 2002)

**Exco**  
 En. Kamarul Badlishah Kamarulzaman (B. Eng. 1999)  
 En. Kumanan Kandasamy (MPA 2014)  
 En. Mustaqin Alpi (M. Sc 2018)  
 Pn Mu'azzah Ismail (B. Comm 2006)  
 En. Mohd Azad Jasmi (B. Mgmt. 1998)

**Juruaudit**  
 Dr. Zulfahmi Mohamed Jaafar (M. Sc. 2012)  
 En. Mohd Zulkarnain Mohamad Tajulariffin (MPA 2014)

Dalam mesyuarat ini, Presiden PAUSM bagi penggal 2019-2021, Tn. Hj. Mohd Aziz Ismaon telah mempengerusi Mesyuarat Agung ke-25 dengan membentangkan laporan sepanjang penggal 2019-2021. Seterusnya, majlis diteruskan dengan sesi pemilihan jawatankuasa baru yang dipengerusi oleh Dr. Ahmad Ezanee Mansor.

Dalam pengundian yang dijalankan, Dr. Mohamed Maliki Mohamed Rapiee telah dipilih sebagai Presiden PAUSM yang baru bagi penggal 2021-2023.



**Be part of the  
 Awesome Family  
 of PAUSM!  
 Join us today.**





## PPPJJ LAKSANA PROGRAM PEMBERSIHAN PANTAI

Bersama Pelajar dan Alumni

Pusat Pengajian Pendidikan Jarak Jauh (PPPJJ) Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) menganjurkan Program Tanggungjawab Sosial Korporat (CSR) dengan membersihkan kawasan pantai dan mengutip sampah sekitar Pusat Penyelidikan Samudera dan Pantai (CEMACS) baru-baru ini.

Program ini adalah sebagai sokongan pusat pengajian kepada agenda kelestarian yang sememangnya menjadi pegangan USM selama ini. Selain itu, program sebegini dapat mengeratkan lagi hubungan sesama staf, pelajar dan alumni PPPJJ.



**"Program ini mendapat penyertaan sebanyak 20 orang setelah hanya seminggu diuar-uarkan dan ianya juga mendapat kerjasama yang baik dari CEMACS yang menawarkan tempat untuk lawatan sambil belajar dan makan,"**

Menurut Pengarah Projek yang juga Penolong Pendaftar Kanan PPPJJ, Nor Rafizah Md Zain, program yang dirancang kurang dari dua minggu ini mendapat sambutan yang baik walaupun negara masih di dalam situasi pandemik COVID-19.

"Program ini mendapat penyertaan sebanyak 20 orang setelah hanya seminggu diuar-uarkan dan ianya juga mendapat kerjasama yang baik dari CEMACS yang menawarkan tempat untuk lawatan sambil belajar dan makan," tambahnya.

"Saya ingin merakamkan jutaan terima kasih kepada semua yang telah menyokong aktiviti ini termasuk Dekan PPPJJ dan Pengarah CEMACS USM serta semua peserta," kata Nor Rafizah yang juga Alumni Ambassador untuk PPPJJ USM.

Salah seorang alumni PPPJJ, Noor Azlina Yusoff berkata beliau sangat hargai usaha ini dan akan mengikutinya lagi jika dianjurkan selepas ini.

"Pelbagai program alumni telah dirancang sejak penubuhan Chapter Alumni SDE awal tahun ini terbantut akibat limitasi dan juga situasi pandemik yang melanda negara.

"Namun saya berharap program ini menjadi titik tolak dalam menganjurkan lebih banyak aktiviti pada tahun hadapan oleh Chapter Alumni SDE," tambah Azlina yang juga menjadi pengasas dalam mewujudkan Chapter ini.



**Memastikan barangan terbuang tidak kembali ke lautan dan mengganggu hidupan air**



**Antara sampah yang dikutip adalah penyedut minuman, bekas makanan serta botol plastik**

Begitu juga dengan Redzuan Jamal Mohd Radzi yang sangat aktif dalam membantu program-program PPPJJ.

"PPPJJ sangat dekat di hati saya walaupun telah menamatkan pengajian sebagai seorang perintis program Sains@Alor Setar dan saya akan terus menyumbang dan menyokong semua aktiviti PPPJJ," katanya yang kini sedang menyambung pengajian di peringkat Sarjana di Institut Pergigian dan Perubatan Termaju (IPPT), USM.

Program ini berjaya mengutip sampah sebanyak 13 beg yang dianggarkan berjumlah lebih 15 kilogram berupa botol plastik dan kaca, bekas makanan, kotak rokok serta penyedut minuman.

Di samping itu, semua peserta juga gembira dapat melihat hidupan-hidupan laut yang ada di CEMACS dan merasai keenakkan makanan laut yang dikenali sebagai latok.

**Teks: Nor Rafizah Md Zain**



**Peserta turut diberikan penerangan tentang kajian-kajian yang dijalankan di CEMACS oleh para penyelidik**



**Sampah yang telah dikutip perlu dibawa keluar dari kawasan Taman Negara**

## MAJLIS KEMUNCAK

Sambutan Hari Alumni  
UNIVERSITI AWAM MALAYSIASAMBUTAN HARI ALUMNI  
Universiti Awam Malaysia

Majlis Alumni Universiti Awam Malaysia (Majlis Alumni UA) telah ditubuhkan pada 18 Julai 2020 dengan persetujuan 20 Pengarah Pusat Alumni UA dan telah menyambut ulang tahun yang pertama dengan penganjuran Sambutan Hari Alumni Universiti Awam Malaysia. Tujuan penubuhan Majlis Alumni UA adalah untuk memperkasakan agenda pengurusan alumni di negara ini dan memperkukuhkan peranan alumni bersama Alma Mater.

**“Bagi memastikan penubuhan Majlis Alumni UA dapat berfungsi secara optimum, tiga teras perlu dititikberatkan di bawah pengurusannya iaitu Teras Pemerkasaan Alumni; Teras Jaringan Industri dan Masyarakat dan Teras Kerjaya.”**  
- Dr Raman Noordin

Sambutan Hari Alumni ini telah dirasmikan oleh Pengarah Bahagian Governan IPTA Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi, Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi (KPT), Ahmad Rizal Adnan yang mewakili Ketua Pengarah Pendidikan Tinggi KPT, Profesor Dato’ Dr. Husaini Omar.

“Saya ingin merakamkan ucapan tahniah kepada semua atas penubuhan Majlis Alumni Universiti Awam yang merupakan Majlis yang kesembilan ditubuhkan di bawah Sekretariat Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Timbalan Naib Canselor (Hal Ehwal Pelajar & Alumni).

“Langkah memperkasakan institusi alumni di Malaysia yang melibatkan 20 buah Universiti Awam mempunyai sejarah yang panjang kerana usaha penubuhan Majlis Alumni Universiti Awam telah lama dibincangkan.

“Kewujudan Majlis ini menjadi kemuncak kepada usaha memartabatkan institusi Alumni agar seimbang dengan peranan yang dimainkan dalam pembangunan pelajar,” tambah Ahmad Rizal.



Di samping itu, beliau turut menyatakan enam teras utama agenda Pusat Alumni iaitu pengesanan alumni, pembudayaan alumni, penajaan sumber kewangan, pembangunan bakal alumni, penjagaan kebajikan alumni dan sumbangan alumni kembali ke Universiti.



Pameran ADC di Majlis Sambutan Hari Alumni



Sementara itu, Pengerusi Majlis Alumni UA yang juga Timbalan Naib Canselor Hal Ehwal Pembangunan Pelajar dan Alumni Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Profesor Madya Dr. Raman Noordin, menyatakan hasrat beliau agar visi dan misi Majlis Alumni UA setanding dengan universiti antarabangsa serta merapatkan ukhwa alumni dengan Alma Mater secara komprehensif dan sistematik agar alumni Universiti Awam di Malaysia juga dapat menjadi seperti Alumni dari universiti luar negara yang ternama seperti Harvard University.

“Bagi memastikan penubuhan Majlis Alumni UA dapat berfungsi secara optimum, tiga teras perlu dititikberatkan di bawah pengurusannya iaitu Teras Pemerkasaan Alumni; Teras Jaringan Industri dan Masyarakat dan Teras Kerjaya,” tambah Raman.

Majlis Alumni UA telah menganjurkan pelbagai program yang dapat membantu dalam meningkatkan penjenamaan alumni di Malaysia seperti Majlis Sambutan Hari Alumni, *International Alumni Convention and Innovation Exhibition* dan Konvensyen Alumni Universiti Awam. Majlis Alumni UA juga bakal menerbitkan buku Perkongsian Amalan Terbaik Pengurusan Alumni dan juga Direktori Usahawan Alumni.

**Teks: Syahnaz Riza Sukor**

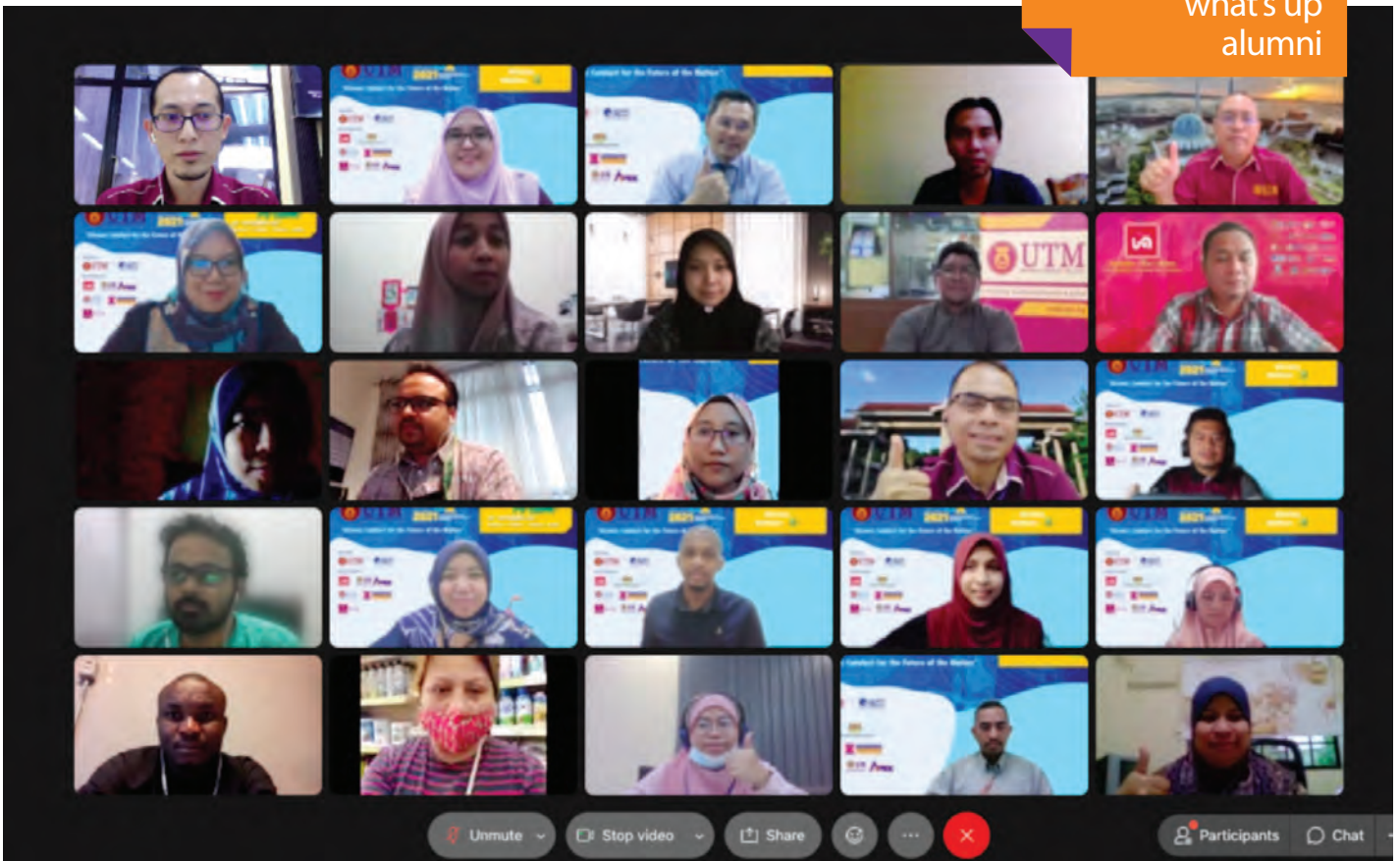
**Suntingan: Nor Rafizah Binti Haji Md Zain**

**“Kewujudan Majlis ini menjadi kemuncak kepada usaha memartabatkan institusi Alumni agar seimbang dengan peranan yang dimainkan dalam pembangunan pelajar,”**

**- Ahmad Rizal Adnan**

“Saya ingin merakamkan ucapan tahniah kepada pihak penganjur Majlis Sambutan Hari Alumni Universiti Awam walaupun terdapat pelbagai kengkangan terutama pandemik Covid-19 majlis ini dapat dianjurkan dengan jayanya dan berjalan lancar,” kata Timbalan Naib Canselor Hal Ehwal Pembangunan Pelajar dan Alumni, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) merangkap Jawatankuasa Penganjur Majlis Sambutan Hari Alumni UA, Profesor Dr. Ariffin Abdu.

Pelbagai program dianjurkan sempena Sambutan Hari Alumni ini termasuk Forum Kebersamaan Alumni Universiti Awam serta pameran yang dianjurkan oleh Pusat Perhubungan Alumni UKM dan Pusat Pendidikan Berterusan Universiti Malaya (UMCCed) yang disertai lebih dari 5 Universiti Awam termasuk Pusat Pembangunan Alumni (PPA), Universiti Sains Malaysia.



# USM ALUMNI DASHBOARD

Dibentang di INACIX 2021

Dua pelajar Pusat Pengajian Sains Komputer, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) iaitu Musab Hussein Ahmed dan Nur Nafisah Najihah mewakili Pusat Pembangunan Alumni membentangkan kertas kerja yang bertajuk 'Interactive Alumni Tracking Dashboard Using PowerBI' pada Konvensyen Alumni Antarabangsa dan Pertandingan Inovasi (INACIX 2021).

Konvensyen ini adalah anjuran Unit Alumni Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) dan Unit Alumni Universiti Teknikal Malaysia (UTeM) melalui Majlis Alumni Universiti Awam (UA) yang turut dianggotai oleh USM, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) dan Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSII) serta universiti awam lain.

Tema bagi konvensyen ini adalah 'Alumni Catalyst for the Future of the Nation' dan enam belas (16) kertas kerja telah dibentangkan. Lebih 90 orang dalam kalangan staf akademik dan pentadbir dari Universiti Awam turut hadir secara dalam talian.

Konvensyen telah ini dirasmikan oleh Naib Canselor UTM, Profesor Datuk Ts. Dr. Ahmad Fauzi Ismail serta dihadiri juga oleh Pengerusi Majlis Alumni Universiti Awam, Prof. Madya Dr. Raman Noordin.



Pada majlis yang sama, Global Chapter Alumni – Nigeria telah dilancarkan termasuk penyampaian hadiah bagi pertandingan Inovasi yang disertai lebih dari 20 peserta dari UTM.

**Teks: Syahnaz Riza Sukor**  
**Suntingan: Nor Rafizah Hj. Md Zain**  
**Foto: UTM Alumni**



## MAKING TIME

### To Celebrate a Birthday at the Golf Course

A group of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) alumni golfers, many of them coming from the late 70's and early 80's, celebrated Pak Sako's birthday at the Bukit Beruntung Golf & Country Resort on 7 December 2021.

Dato Ishak Haji Mohamad, (B.Soc. Sc.'82) or always known as Pak Sako to his friends recently celebrated his 68th birthday.

According to Husin Yahya (B. Sc. '84) and also former Deputy Registrar at the USM Student Development Affairs and Alumni Division, this is the first tournament to be held after two years.

"There are about 40 alumni members who joined the tournament, and we have always had a great time together," he said.

"Besides, we managed to contribute RM2,000.00 to the Alumni Fund to help any alumni member who is in need.

"We plan to organise a golf tournament among the alumni twice a year, and we have managed to organise it last year, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We will be organising the ALUMNI USM JELAJAH UTARA golf tournament on 21-22 February 2022 at the Penang Golf Resort (PGR) and Cinta Sayang Golf & Country Resort (CSGCR) in Sungai Petani and I would like to invite all alumni golfers to join," Husin said.

"I can be contacted at 019-4721159," he added.

Among the alumni who joined the tournament were Dato' Ayob Awang (B. Soc. Sc. '84), former General Manager, Perak State Islamic Economic Corporation and Abd. Razak Abd. Aziz (B. Soc. Sc. '82), former Senior Director, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

*Text: Nor Rafizah Binti Haji Md Zain  
Photo: Haji Husin Yahya*

**Pak Sako**



First of all, my management journey was motivated by my love for human beings and ensuring harmony within the social context they exist in, whether at the workplace or at home. Consequently, I fell in love with an aspect of management: human resource management, and I have been in this field since my undergraduate years up till my PhD.

My journey to Malaysia and USM was one that was never planned. I was supposed to pursue my PhD at the University of Vaasa, in Finland, through the European Union Marie Currie Early Stage Researcher Fund. However, events did not turn out as planned, after consult with few friends and colleagues I decided to study in USM. After few research on the university around Asia, USM was the first university that I choose to study with the flexible time for registration that open throughout the year.

Apart from the exposure that is given to students due to the high level of internationalization activities from USM, students receive both academic and social experiences that will make them employable all over the world. Moreover, this alone is worth being proud of and would encourage individuals to associate with the name USM confidently!

The experience I have had being part of this beautiful and great citadel of learning and its impact on my current activities cannot be overemphasized. I find it hard to get a phrase to express how USM has impacted my life both academically and socially because there are so many different beautiful and positive impacts that I have had. For this, I would like to express the academic impact at this point. Firstly, the research support activities organized by the Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS) and the library have greatly influenced my understanding of advanced research methods and tools. Also, the various student association's colloquiums especially School of Management (SOM) also assisted me greatly in understanding research more. Additionally, my school's scholar at SOM activities has also impacted my current growth as an academic.

## You Are The ARCHITECT of Your Own LIFE

**“You are the architect of your own life, and no one will do that assignment for you; you can only get that progress you want. So, don't stop pushing until you achieve your goal and remember, be good to others.”**

**“We should prepare our minds to give their best in both performance and character demonstration. This, I believe, would attract the right ambience for their progress in their career.”**





As a full research mode student, I do not have much to say about the class situation and professorial influence in the classroom. Many USM professors, especially in my area of discipline (Management), have given much influence. I would like to express my thank you to all that assist me with this journey. My Dean Professor Noor Hazlina, Assoc. Professor Dr. Anees Janee, Professor T. Ramayah, Professor Surianty, Professor Azizah and much more. I would also like to thank the Vice-Chancellor Professor Dato' Dr. Faisal Rafiq, Professor Dr. Aldrin Abdullah and Professor Dato' Dr. Narimah who influenced me greatly.



Currently, I would say I am engaged in a dual assignment. First is my PhD research which is currently in the data analysis stage. My PhD research is within Human Resource Management (remember I mentioned my marriage to the HRM field), and my work is centered on employee engagement within the public sector organizations of developing nations. My current research seeks to address the current performance level of the public sector organizations through finding the proper drivers (i.e. antecedents) for employee engagement within the public sector whose motivation does not rely on profit generation. The main focus is to improve the way public servants perceive and get attached to their work as government employees in a more natural, spontaneous, and organic manner. It also focuses on improving the employees' psychological conditions to generate a more conducive work context, which would positively impact the overall performance of the public sector.

The other assignment (which can be likened to community service) is related to my creative/fine art assignment with the Muzium Galeri Tuanku Fauziah MGTG USM as its resident artist. This is an opportunity given to me by the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dato' Dr. Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan due to my several collaborations with the Chancellery in producing portraits, sketches and offering other creative art assistance to the university community. My artist residency research is to document the disappearing landscapes in selected Penang paintings and sketches as well as some spots inside USM.

**“Apart from the exposure that is given to students due to the high level of internationalization activities from USM, students receive both academic and social experiences that will make them employable all over the world.”**

I have had much positive influence in my growing up years until this stage of my life, most of which I am most grateful for. First is from my parents; my dad and mum have immensely encouraged me to be what I am today, both as an artist and HRM researcher. They have shown me that there is no limit to what a man's mind can achieve given the right nurturing. In USM, many people have crossed my life's path and have left indelible positive impressions on them. Starting with my academic work, my supervisor, Dr Azura, has greatly encouraged me to work independently. For several other opportunities relating to art, Puan Fadzila Bossman (Win) would be the first I would like to mention. I would say that her purchase of my winning painting in the USM international painting competition led to where I am today as an artist in USM. Also, the exposure given to me through the International Mobility and Collaboration Center (IMCC) and USMi under the leadership of Prof. Dr Sam, Dr Sha, and Dr, Hafizal (Pitt) catapulted my progression in a more rapid and proliferous way than I can imagine. Indeed, Allah has used these individuals to establish my name in the hearts of the TNCs, headed then by the former Vice-Chancellor Professor Dato' Asma. When I was commissioned to produce the portrait sketch for all TNC members, past and present. It was that same opportunity that the current V.C. Prof. Faisal Rafiq also saw and being a leader who encourages talent management, he not only commissioned me to paint a giant portrait of the immediate past and present V.C. (which is now hanging inside the Chancellery conference room), he also extended an opportunity for my artist residency project with the MGTfUSM. Indeed, I cannot be thankful enough for choosing to come to USM and Malaysia!



In my opinion, we should prepare our minds to give their best in both performance and character demonstration. This, I believe, would attract the right ambience for their progress in their career. My second piece of advice is for international students. They should develop positive perceptions and mindsets wherever they want to migrate to be it for their studies or otherwise. With this positive mindset, they will only see positivity and not the negativity. They should try to know and understand the people's beliefs, cultures, and characteristics before judging, and they should try discovering all these characteristics on their own and not allowing anyone to tell them about things as such. Finally, every student should be prepared to contribute their effort, make a positive impact, and not wait for what the university or community will give them.

Lastly, you are the architect of your own life, and no one will do that assignment for you; you can only get that progress you want. So, don't stop pushing until you achieve your goal and remember, be good to others. You will undoubtedly meet them again at a later point in your journey!

**“I find it hard to get a phrase to express how USM has impacted my life both academically and socially because there are so many different beautiful and positive impacts that I have had.”**

**Abdullah Adewumi Sulaiman**  
 (PhD, Human Resource Management)  
 Nigeria

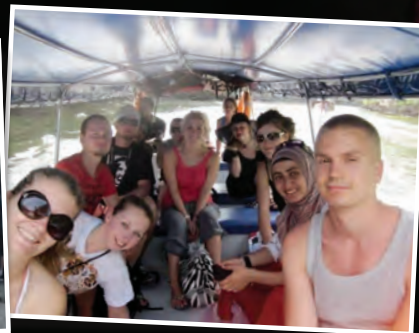
*Text: Abdullah Adewumi Sulaiman*  
*Editing: Isyam Amran*

I joined USM as one of the exchange students from Utrecht University, Netherlands at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) back in 2010. As my university and USM hold good relations with the establishment of MoU between the two universities. I joined as an exchange because of its strategic location in Asia and one of the BEST universities in this region.

The reason USM is my first choice is because I want to explore International experience for one semester here and looking at different perspective on my course (Management & Human Resource Development) that I studied. After browsing about the courses in USM, I found out that the subjects taught in USM are in English and that interest me to actually do my exchange here.

While in USM, I enjoyed learning Bahasa Melayu (LKM100). It really helps me to communicate and mingle around with USM staff and students and people around me. I love hanging around with Buddies of International Office (IO) and always join the activities organised by them. What I enjoyed the most is during Deepavali season where we get to draw 'henna' on our hands and wear the Indian costume 'Sari' during Deepavali.

## Sharing experience from Netherlands



I am working at one of the company in Singapore. As I have stayed in Penang before, it feels similar while working in Singapore. The multicultural society in Malaysia, has inspired me to work and stay in Asia to know and learn more about international environment while working.

Be Curious and Open Minded to meet new people. That is my principle in LIFE! I love meeting new people and enjoy trying different types of food.

During this pandemic, I keep myself healthy through exercise and by following the SOP accordingly.

Lastly, Stay Focus and stay HAPPY. Keep Connected to People.

**Judith van Delft**  
**International Exchange Program 2010**  
**Netherlands**

**"I enjoyed learning Bahasa Melayu (LKM100). It really helps me to communicate and mingle around with USM staff and students and people around me. I love hanging around with Buddies of International Office (IO) and always join the activities organized by them."**



*Disclaimer: All photos were taken before the COVID19 pandemic.*



# SHARING EXPERIENCE

From Finland

USM holds a very special place in my heart as I spent two (2) years doing my MBA in USM from 2006 until 2008. It is also the place where I met and fall in love with my wife. USM, provided me with the basic foundation through networking with people and also established who I am today. Not only in academic, USM also has equipped me with confidence and the drive for me to venture into my professional journey.

USM is known as a well and established university in this region hence, I am proud to be an Alumni! I love the green campus and friendly staff that I met during my studies here. From the lecturers to supervisors and most importantly the variety of food that can easily be found here within the campus.

**“The academic journey especially at doctorate level takes commitment and a lot of hard work. I did my PhD part time while running multiple businesses and working for other companies, which was admittedly tough. What worked for me was that I did my research on my area of passion, so the research and works came naturally.”**



Little did I know I would become the founder and CEO for both, Industria Sdn Bhd in Malaysia and Industria Pte Ltd in Singapore. Industria is a creative brand agency that helps brands bridge the gap between creative work to obtain real results. The agency is led by a group of creative professionals. Our clients consist of big brands such as British American Tobacco, Panasonic, Volkswagen and few others. Apart of being the CEO, I'm also the author and founder of Pants Bear Pte Ltd, a children's education and entertainment brand which is viewed throughout the world. Pants Bear is a digital brand that includes Pants Bear stickers which have over 3.6 billion viewers worldwide. Pants Bear provides a holistic digital experience and is an entertainment brand operating in Singapore.

**“USM, provided me with the basic foundation through networking with people and also established who I am today. Not only in academic, USM also has equipped me with confidence and the drive for me to venture into my professional journey.”**



I owe my success to my FAMILY! They’ve been nothing but supportive, my wife and child, my parents and family as a whole have been my pillars of success and the niche that pushes me to strive comes from within. I know I’d have to come up with new things and ideas in order to make it work, ultimately bringing these ideas into execution. The academic journey especially at doctorate level takes commitment and a lot of hard work. I did my PhD part time while running multiple businesses and working for other companies, which was admittedly tough. What worked for me was that I did my research on my area of passion, so the research and works came naturally. This takes a lot of commitment. You need to have the right support network to push you through and to pull you up especially when the going gets tough. Don’t start a PhD journey for the sake of starting it. You need to make sure there’s a purpose and willing to do what it takes to go through it, the journey and the destination it takes you to is priceless. Always remember, if you work hard, you’ll reap the rewards. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Professor T. Ramayah, Professor Osman Mohamad and also Associate Professor Dr. Anees from School of Management who’d pushed and led me to success.

When the pandemic struck in 2020, we played our part by staying home. It has gravely affected and wounded everyone and everything, including my business. Having had a rather outgoing lifestyle for years leading up to 2020, it was an interesting adjustment switching to a life and lifestyle 24/7 at home with family. We are forced to normalized new norms. To tell you the truth, I would not change any of it. It’s been a wonderful reprioritization to focus on family and the real life priorities. Positive energy is everything to me and my family and as such we enjoy the family time and discovering new hobbies and interest. We even started a YouTube channel with my kids <https://youtube.com/c/BossOrders>.

To sum up, it’s all about mindset and looking ahead with big picture in mind. When everyone is on the same page, it enables priorities to be defined clearly. We’ve of course been blessed with business success during all this time, and these past few years have taught us not to take anything for granted. Years of optimization in life and business has allowed us to adjust our business accordingly to be pandemic-proof and with few adjustments, we can happily manoeuvre our lives at home 24/7 and still stay happy and positive. It’s all good.

**Dr. Taavi Kuisma**  
**MBA 2008, PhD 2020**  
**Finland**

*Disclaimer: All photos were taken before the COVID19 pandemic.*

# unicef



## for every child

by *Ksenia*



My ambition is to become an Ambassador. This is because I love peace and stable country. I want to establish good relationship with another country, hence, I studied Political Science under School of Social Sciences Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

I came to USM when I was 19 years old to pursue my first degree in Political Science. I love Malaysia as it's fascinating plus it's a multicultural country which rich with history. In USM, it's all about meeting new people and giving you the chance to experience the best learning environment.

USM Alumni connects people of various backgrounds across the globe. It is undeniably one of the best universities in northern region and I am proud to be the alumni of USM. I love the place so much and decided to do my Master in Psychology here as well.

I have a list of people who I would like thank for making this journey pleasant and memorable. Associate Professor Dr. Mohamad Zaini Abu Bakar had encouraged me to study at School of Social Science and became the first foreign student in that school. It was tough since the subjects were taught in Bahasa Melayu, but with his help, I survived.

I would also like to thank Associate Professor Dr. Benny Teh Cheng Guan. He is truly an inspirational figure for me and many of our classmates. He encouraged us to believe in ourselves and grab the opportunities coming our way. He taught us to challenge our views and master our skills in debate and critical thinking which come in handy to me today. He also treated us with respect and as equal individuals. Being an educator myself, I admire my previous lecturers and learned from their ways of inspiring the young talents.



Upon graduation I grabbed the opportunity to work in a local NGO which provides education to the underprivileged communities and orang asli. I was working as a community center manager as well as being the main educator in Dengkil community Centre. We provide courses in English and teach both, children and adults how to boost self-esteem. Apart from that, we arranged events for the community such as sport, wellness and health, education, cultural and others. Then, I started to teach students online classes after the pandemic hit us.



After graduation I had an absolutely mind-blowing opportunity to do an internship in UNICEF Malaysia. This laid the foundation to my interest to work with communities, educate and empower those who need their voices to be heard. Often the most sustainable way to create change is through education. Our mentor and supervisor Keith Woo was an inspirational figure for me and other interns because he had taught us to be the change that we want to see in the world. We have seen challenges, obstacles, things that we couldn't change, but yet he has shown us how much of an impact just a single person with the right heart and right knowledge can do.

**“I love Malaysia as it’s fascinating plus it’s a multicultural country which rich with history. In USM, it’s all about meeting new people and giving you the chance to experience the best learning environment.”**



**“So, my advice is - do your best to reach the final goal but enjoy the journey and make life-long friends! Most of your learning will not be in the classroom but in the interactions that you have.”**

I strongly believe that it is okay not to know what you want to do in life as a career and it is okay to change your mind as you go along the journey. Many of my peers were feeling lost after graduation as they have learnt more about the job in real life. So, my advice is - do your best to reach the final goal but enjoy the journey and make life-long friends! Most of your learning will not be in the classroom but in the interactions that you have.

“One who has a 'why' to live for, can endure almost any 'how'". During the holocaust many of the survivors said that they had a reason to keep on striving and overcoming obstacles. We live in challenging times but if you find your purpose in life nothing will ever stop you.

I inspired by seeing my students enjoy classes and celebrating their progress despite the fact that they aren't always able to come back to physical classes. I hope I bring a little light and encouragement in uncertain times like these.

**Ksenia Kondratenko**  
**B. Soc. Sc. 2018**  
**Russia**

*Disclaimer: All photos were taken before the COVID19 pandemic.*



what's up  
alumni

Antara reka bentuk yang diajar  
dan dimuatnaik di Instagram

Ketika negara dilanda pandemik COVID-19 dan ketika seluruh pergerakan terbatas akibat *lockdown* kita merasakan sangat susah untuk menghitung hari-hari akan bebas sehingga kadang lupa akan tanggungjawab.

Pandemik ini bagai satu tentangan namun ia juga memberikan satu inspirasi dan motivasi untuk seseorang memulakan satu inovasi.

Begitu juga dengan seorang pendidik dari SMK Nenasi Pekan Pahang, Nurjanna Rusli yang juga graduan Ijazah Sarjana Muda Sastera dengan Pendidikan dari Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Pendidikan, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

Beliau mengambil kesempatan ketika *lockdown* bagi berkongsi ilmu merekabentuk dan mengedit menggunakan aplikasi Canva di media sosial.

"Semasa PKP 3.0, saya merasakan saya perlu melakukan sesuatu perkara untuk kekal aktif samada secara fizikal dan mental kerana sekolah juga ditutup dan perlu untuk mengajar di atas talian.

"Jadi, saya merasakan dengan berkongsi ilmu merekabentuk dan mengedit menggunakan aplikasi Canva, saya akan lebih aktif kerana saya akan sentiasa berfikir untuk memberikan idea reka bentuk kepada pengikut saya di media sosial.

"Setiap hari saya akan muatnaik satu video dan ianya sangat menyeronokkan apabila mendapat sambutan yang baik daripada pengikut saya," kata Janna yang mempunyai pengikut sebanyak 113.8K di aplikasi Tiktok dan 13K di Instagram setakat bulan Disember 2021.

Janna yang telah menjadi guru selama 5 tahun berkata perkongsiannya di media sosial tidak mengganggu tugas hakikinya sebagai seorang guru.

Janna ketika Upacara Konvokesyen ke-52 pada tahun 2015



Tugas seorang pendidik tidak menghalang beliau untuk mencipta nama sebagai 'Instafamous'



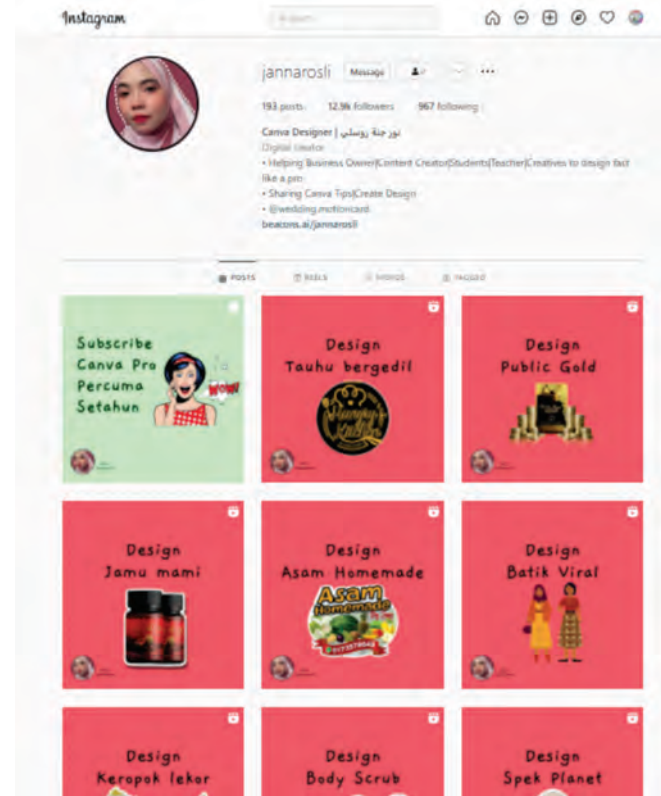


“Kebiasaannya, saya akan siapkan perkongsian/video pada sebelah petang dan akan muatnaik pada pukul 8.00 malam setiap hari. Saya telah membuat perkongsian ini selama lima bulan di media sosial dan ianya mendapat sambutan yang baik,” tambah Janna yang bergraduasi pada tahun 2015.

“Sebenarnya ilmu merekabentuk dan mengedit ini sangat membantu seorang guru dalam melaksanakan tugas hakikinya kerana banyak tugas sampingan guru yang perlu untuk menyediakan pelbagai reka bentuk bagi program atau aktiviti yang diadakan di sekolah.

“Hebahan program yang jelas dan menarik dapat ditonjolkan melalui reka bentuk poster yang dibuat. Ilmu reka bentuk ini juga sangat membantu pelajar terutamanya pengawas atau pengawas pusat sumber sekolah untuk membuat hebahan aktiviti dan program di sekolah,” tambah Janna kebanyakan pengikut beliau di media sosial adalah dalam kalangan guru dan pelajar.

Apabila ditanya mengenai cabaran dalam dunia media sosial dan digelar ‘instafamous’ atau ‘tiktokers’ Janna berkata kebanyakan pengikut akan menghantar mesej peribadi dan kebiasaannya mereka akan meminta tip atau minta saya buat reka bentuk poster untuk produk jualan mereka.



Instagram Janna



**“Saya merasakan dengan berkongsi ilmu merekabentuk dan mengedit menggunakan aplikasi Canva, saya akan lebih aktif kerana saya akan sentiasa berfikir untuk memberikan idea reka bentuk kepada pengikut saya di media sosial.”**

Teks: Nor Rafizah Haji Md Zain  
Foto: Sumbangan Nurjanna Rusli

“Kalau diikutkan memang saya tidak sempat membalas mesej mereka dan ini akan menimbulkan rasa marah dan tidak puas hati kepadanya dan mereka juga cuba untuk provokasi emosi saya. Tetapi semua itu tidak mengganggu saya pun dan perkara ini adalah lumrah sebagai seorang yang memberi perkongsian di media sosial,” jelas Janna lagi.

“Pada pandangan saya, seseorang yang mempunyai pengikut yang ramai di media sosial perlulah memberikan sesuatu yang memberi manfaat kepada pengikut kita. Sebarkan sesuatu yang berguna kepada mereka dan dapat membantu mereka dalam pelbagai segi. Namun begitu, bantu tersebut perlulah mengikut kemampuan dan kelebihan yang ada pada diri ‘instafamous’ itu sendiri. Jadilah diri sendiri dengan keunikan yang ada pada diri kita.

“Pandemik dan endemik yang melanda negara kita sangat memberi kesan kepada fizikal dan mental kita. Saya berharap akan sentiasa kekal aktif dan lakukan perkara yang membantu fizikal dan minda saya untuk sentiasa bekerja dan berfungsi, supaya terhindar daripada kemurungan dan tekanan. Bagi saya sebagai seorang guru di sekolah dan seorang guru Canva di media sosial tidak ada yang berbeza kerana kedua-duanya mendidik dan mengajar.

“Semua orang boleh menjadi instafamous/tiktokers dengan cara yang betul namun perlulah memberikan sesuatu yang bermanfaat kepada pengikutnya dan tidak menjatuhkan maruah diri semata untuk menjadi seseorang yang ternama di media sosial,” kata Janna mengakhiri temubual.



178<sup>TH</sup>

191<sup>ST</sup>



## USM CLIMBS UP THE RANKINGS in the latest Global Employability Survey

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) today made its mark as it jumped in the latest Global Employability University Ranking and Survey (GEURS).

As reported in a local daily, USM jumped up 13 spots, from being ranked at 191<sup>st</sup> previously to 178<sup>th</sup>.

GEURS, which is published by Times Higher Education (THE), is run by Emerging, a higher education human resources consultancy.

According to a statement from THE, the survey presented rankings of the world's top 250 universities according to recruiters. These recruiters and managers selected up to 15 universities from a list of 2,000.

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual survey was carried out across 23 countries and regions, resulting in 118,196 votes cast by 10,928 international recruiters and managers supervising five or more graduates yearly.

**“USM wishes to convey its appreciation for the support given by the Alumni, industry collaborators, various agencies, and the wider USM communities for this exceptional achievement. We hope to build further on this.”**

*Text/Editing: MPRC*



## A HARD DAY'S NIGHT, | Leading to a Successful Entry into the Malaysia Book of Records

PPBLT (School of Language and Literature Studies) succeeded with the organisation of the 24-Hour Matsda-International Language Learning Conference 2021. It is a collaborative effort with UK-based MATSDA (Materials Development Association) and Wasit University, Iraq.

The non-stop virtual conference began at 9.00am on 11 August until 10.30am on 12 August 2021 with the theme: "Developing L2 Materials and Designing Language Learning to Promote Creativity and Criticality".

It was officiated by USM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Professor Dato' Dr. Narimah Samat, who represented the Vice-Chancellor.

Among the distinguished panelists invited as Plenary Speakers were Professor Rod Ellis (Curtin University/Perth, Australia); Professor Alan Maley (England); Professor Brian Tomlinson (University of Liverpool, Anaheim University/England); Professor Hitomi Masuhara (University of Liverpool/England); and Professor Jayakaran Mukundan (Universiti Putra Malaysia).



An official from the Malaysia Book of Records was in attendance throughout the whole session. The conference was then verified and acknowledged as the 'Longest Non-Stop Virtual International Language Learning Conference' held for 25 hours and 30 minutes.

A total of 134 participants and presenters from 18 countries (Malaysia, Japan, China, Korea, Singapore, Australia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Iraq, Palestine, South Africa, Italy, Spain, Poland, United Kingdom, United States of America and United Arab Emirates) attended the conference which

showcased 60 research papers.

All conference papers were presented via three breakout sessions on WebEx, the official online platform that was used to host the conference. Presenters shared various aspects of research related to the main theme of the conference.

*Text: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin  
Based on Report from  
Dr. Anne Rowena David (Conference Secretary II)*



## USM 58<sup>TH</sup> CONVOCATION

A Success; Strict COVID-19  
SOP Compliance Still A Priority

*USM celebrates Convocation under new norm in COVID-19 era.*



Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) recently concluded its 58<sup>th</sup> Convocation which began with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session on Monday, 13 December 2021 at its historic Dewan Tuanku Syed Putra (DTSP) at the USM Main Campus.

The 1<sup>st</sup> session has been held earlier at Istana Arau, Perlis on 2<sup>nd</sup> December for the honorary degree recipients. The Chancellor graced the ceremony and presented the degrees to the 4 respective recipients and the Chancellor's Gold Medal Award to the best final year student in all fields.





**“The three USM Pro-Chancellors handed out scrolls to 5,964 graduands in the nine sessions. This brings the number of USM alumni to 185,563.”**





The convocation continued with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session from 13 December onwards for the next 9 days, with one session held each day in the morning. This was to facilitate the process of sanitisation of DTSP in the afternoon.

The three USM Pro-Chancellors handed out scrolls to 5,964 graduands in the nine sessions. This brings the number of USM alumni to 185,563.

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> session, a total of 538 graduands received their doctorate (PhD) degree, 1,361 master's degree, 4,031 bachelor's degrees and 34 diploma of nursing.

As the current COVID-19 situation demands strict compliance to preventive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) from the government, USM has decided to only allow graduands to enter the hall.

At the same time, graduands and staff/committee members involved with the graduation ceremony were also required to follow strict SOPs.

A slight change in movement of graduands was established upon arriving at the campus grounds. Graduands were dropped off by their parents or family members at the 'Padang Kawad'. The USM commuter buses then transported

them to the 'Kompleks Dewan Kuliah', from which they proceeded to the adjacent DTSP on foot. Once the ceremony at DTSP ended, the graduands boarded the commuter buses to return to 'Padang Kawad', where they met and returned home with their parents or family members.

Similarly, only 30 people, namely members of the Board of Governors, the University top management and selected Senate members were allowed to be on stage for each session. The much trimmed down stage party was again in adherence to the SOPs.

Preparations at DTSP, which included the usual decoration of flowers and plants, were made, as are the banners and bunting which were placed at strategic locations throughout the Main Campus. The aim was to create a festive atmosphere, though on a slightly moderate scale.

USM recognises and appreciates the tireless efforts put in by its Convocation Working Committee which comprised mostly of its staff members over the past week in readying the Campus for the big day.

*Text: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin*

## Tiga Penerima Pingat Diraikan Dalam Majlis Makan Tengahari

Bersempena dengan upacara Konvokesyen ke-58 Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Bahagian Hal Ehwal Pelajar (BHEPA) telah meraikan tiga orang graduan penerima Anugerah Pingat Emas Utama di majlis makan tengah hari baru-baru ini.

Majlis yang ringkas dan penuh bermakna itu disambut dengan mematuhi Prosedur Operasi Standard (SOP).

Dekan Pusat Pengajian Sains Fizik, Profesor Dr. Abdul Razak Ibrahim memperkenalkan penerima Anugerah Pelajaran Diraja Muhammad 'Izzat Mohd Zubir yang merupakan graduan Ijazah Sarjana Muda Sains (Fizik) dengan Kepujian dengan major Fizik Tulen dan minor Astronomi.

Seterusnya, pemegang Ijazah Sarjana Muda Sains Kepujian Matematik, Nur Anati binti Mahmud Sabri, telah dipilih sebagai pemenang Hadiah Pingat USM pelajar wanita tahun akhir terbaik dalam semua lapangan, di mana ianya dihadiahkan oleh Persatuan Wanita USM, dan diperkenalkan oleh Timbalan Dekan, Pusat Pengajian Sains Matematik, Profesor Madya Dr. Lee See Keong.

Pemenang Hadiah Pingat Emas USM pelajar tahun akhir terbaik dalam sukan pula dihadiahkan oleh Profesor Dato' Indera Dr. Rosihan Mohamed Ali kepada Ong Hui Fen yang telah menamatkan pengajiannya dengan Ijazah Sarjana Muda Pengurusan, major Kewangan dan minor dalam Teknologi Maklumat.

Wakil penerima Anugerah Pingat Emas Universiti, Muhammad Izzat dalam ucapannya berkata Hadiah Pingat Emas Majlis Raja-raja Malaysia adalah pingat yang sangat berprestij dan beliau tidak menyangka akan tercalon dan memenangi pingat itu.

“Proses pembelajaran itu sentiasa berjalan; walaupun kita telah menerima skrol ijazah, tapi proses pembelajaran tidak akan tamat dengan skrol ijazah, ia akan terus berlaku dan berlangsung walaupun di luar pagar universiti,” katanya yang kini bekerja sebagai Penganalisis Pasaran Kripto.

**“Proses pembelajaran itu sentiasa berjalan; walaupun kita telah menerima skrol ijazah, tapi proses pembelajaran tidak akan tamat dengan skrol ijazah, ia akan terus berlaku dan berlangsung walaupun di luar pagar universiti,”**  
- Muhammad Izzat

Bagi Nur Anati yang kini sedang bekerja sebagai guru tuisyen, beliau berasa amat gembira dan bersyukur kerana pada awalnya beliau tercalon dalam Anugerah Hadiah Pingat USM Pelajar Wanita Tahun Akhir Terbaik Dalam Semua Lapangan dan setelah itu, beliau dianugerahkan pingat tersebut.

Bekerja sebagai Konsultan Teknologi, Ong Hui Fen pula berkata, beliau berasa amat bangga dan gembira kerana terdapat atlet lain yang mewakili negara juga yang tercalon dalam anugerah itu.

“Walaupun saya sibuk bekerja, saya akan terus bermain sukan softball dan menjadi wakil negeri walaupun kekurangan pertandingan akibat wabak penyakit Covid-19. Pesanan saya buat semua atlet agar terus berusaha dan jangan putus asa hanya kerana faktor situasi semasa dan pelajaran juga perlu diutamakan,” katanya.



Teks: Nur Farrah Ezlin Mohd Suhaimi  
Foto: Mohd Fairus Md Isa dan Muhammad Fikri Omar (BHEPA)



## Empat Pemenang Pingat Emas Berkongsi Formula Kecemerlangan



**“Saya juga sering berfikir secara kritis dan memberanikan diri untuk bersemuka dengan pensyarah jika ada perkara atau jawapan yang kurang memuaskan yang berkaitan dengan sesuatu subjek,”**  
**- Khaw Teng Kang**

Sidang keenam Upacara Konvokesyen ke-58 Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) baru-baru ini telah meraikan empat graduan penerima Anugerah Pingat Emas.

Penerima Anugerah Pingat Emas Canselor, Khaw Teng Kang yang berkelulusan Ijazah Sarjana Muda Kejuruteraan dengan Purata Nilai Gred Keseluruhan (PNGK) 3.97 berkata, dia tidak pernah menyangka bahawa dia akan menerima anugerah pingat tersebut kerana dia belajar di kelas sama seperti pelajar lain juga.

“Saya tidak pernah menyangka saya akan menerima anugerah tersebut dan saya berpegang kepada prinsip ‘cuba dahulu baru tahu hasilnya’. Saya juga sering berfikir secara kritis dan memberanikan diri untuk bersemuka dengan pensyarah jika ada perkara atau jawapan yang kurang memuaskan yang berkaitan dengan sesuatu subjek,” kata Teng Kang yang kini bekerja sebagai jurutera perisian di sebuah syarikat perniagaan kecil dan sederhana (PKS).

Sementara itu, graduan Ijazah Sarjana Muda Sains, Muhammad ‘Izzat Mohd Zubir turut terpilih sebagai penerima Anugerah Pelajaran Diraja oleh Majlis Raja-raja Malaysia (Pingat Jaya Cemerlang) kategori bumiputera berkata, minat yang mendalam dalam bidang Fizik merupakan antara faktor membuatkan dia berjaya memperoleh Ijazah Sarjana Muda Sains (Kepujian) dengan PNGK 3.80.

Dalam anugerah yang sama, kategori bukan bumiputera dianugerahkan kepada Tan Meei Fern, pemegang Ijazah Sarjana Muda Ekonomi (Kepujian) berkata, dia memberikan sepenuh perhatian sewaktu kuliah dijalankan dan mengulang kaji pelajaran selepas kelas, berdiskusi and berusaha mendapatkan penerangan lengkap dari pensyarah berkaitan.

Ditanya mengenai perancangan masa hadapan, Mei Fern yang kini bekerja sebagai akauntan eksekutif di sebuah firma perakaunan berkata, buat masa sekarang, dia akan fokus kepada pekerjaannya untuk memperolehi pengalaman sebanyak mungkin dan seterusnya akan mengambil khusus profesional dalam bidang yang diceburi.

Bagi penerima Anugerah Pingat Emas Naib Canselor Pemimpin Pelajar Cemerlang pula dianugerahkan kepada Dr. Muhammad Mujaahid Mohd Amin yang kini berkhidmat sebagai Pegawai Perubatan Siswazah di Hospital Enche’ Besar Hajjah Kalsom, Kluang, Johor.

Muhammad Mujaahid yang meminati bidang pengurusan berkata, dia bercita-cita untuk menjadi Pengarah Kesihatan di Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), dengan menjadikan Tan Sri Dato’ Seri Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah sebagai idolanya.

Muhammad Mujaahid pernah berkesempatan menyertai program Felo Perdana selama seminggu di bawah seliaan Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin, tetapi kerana terikat dengan tempoh latihan housemanship di hospital, dia terpaksa menangguhkan penyertaannya dalam program tersebut.

*Teks: Nur Farrah Ezlin Mohd Suhaimi*



## Hari Istimewa Buat Dua Graduan Genggam Ijazah

Kemeriahan Upacara Konvokesyen ke-58 Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) sidang Ke-6 berlangsung dalam keadaan sederhana dengan kehadiran graduan-graduan semasa negara masih berada dalam situasi pandemik global.

Graduan Sarjana Muda Ekonomi, Tee Chiew Rong antara yang tidak melepaskan peluang untuk hadir dan berada di atas pentas bagi menerima ijazah beliau pada sidang pagi ini, walaupun beliau baru sahaja menjalani pembedahan tumor (ketumbuhan) dalam otak buat kali ke lima.

Chiew Rong, 26, dikesan menghidapi tumor otak sejak 2019 ketika dia berada di tahun akhir pengajian. Setelah tamat pengajian, beliau telah menjalani pembedahan seterusnya sebanyak tiga hingga empat kali di kepalanya untuk membuang tumor. Ia bermula dengan hanya sakit kepala yang tersangat kuat, yang kemudiannya perlu dirujuk ke hospital dan ketika dalam rawatan doktor telah mengesan terdapatnya tumor.

Keinginan, kesungguhan dan semangatnya masih mahu mengutamakan pelajaran ketika doktor mahu segarakan pembedahan, namun begitu beliau sedaya upaya meminta untuk menangguhkan pembedahan kerana terdapat lagi satu peperiksaan yang beliau perlu jalani ketika itu sebelum tamatnya pengajian.

Menerusi penganugerahan kali ini, para graduan masih berpeluang memakai jubah konvokesyen, merakamkan gambar kenangan dan akan menerima skrol serta transkrip seperti upacara konvokesyen seperti yang terdahulu, cuma yang membezakannya hanyalah SOP situasi pandemik.

“Sentiasa positif, jangan berfikir banyak dan jika sakit, dapatkan segera rawatan sebelum tumor membesar” ujar Chiew Rong, yang juga memberitahu penglihatannya menjadi semakin kurang dan beliau memberi nasihat dan kata-kata semangat kepada sesiapa yang mengalami nasib sepertinya.

**“Keadaan beliau yang masih bertongkat ketika menerima skrol tidak mematahkan semangatnya untuk hadir ke hari upacara konvokesyen yang hampir dua tahun dinanti-nantikan.”**

Muhammad Afnan Annuar Samsuri pula yang berasal dari Padang Serai, Kedah, graduan Kejuruteraan Bahan antara yang tidak terlepas peluang menjadi penerima istimewa hari tersebut. Keadaan beliau yang masih bertongkat ketika menerima skrol tidak mematahkan semangatnya untuk hadir ke hari upacara konvokesyen yang hampir dua tahun dinanti-nantikan.

“Saya berasa sangat gembira dan bangga walaupun datang dalam keadaan begini,” kata Muhammad Afnan.

Beliau mengalami patah dua jari kaki akibat terjatuh ke dalam longkang ketika pulang dari kerja untuk mengambil anaknya dan pulang ke rumah. Sewaktu kejadian berlaku, keadaan cuaca hujan lebat menyebabkan pandangannya menjadi kabur, seterusnya menyebabkan beliau dan anaknya terjatuh ke dalam longkang.

Dalam Upacara Konvokesyen ke-58 ini, sesi Sidang Ke-6 kali ini dipengerusikan oleh Tan Sri Datuk Mustafa Mansur. Seramai 687 graduan penerima ijazah di dalam sesi ini, yang terdiri dari graduan Sarjana Muda Kejuruteraan, Sarjana Muda Ekonomi, Sarjana Muda Seni Halus, dan Sarjana Seni Muzik.

Teks: Mahirah Mahyidin • Foto: Mohd Fairus Md Isa





## Konvokesyen Ke-58 USM: Tiada Yang Mustahil Jika Usaha Disertai Semangat

Walaupun berada dalam kekangan fizikal, tiada yang mustahil jika usaha disertai dengan semangat, terutama buat graduan yang mempunyai masalah penglihatan dan berstatus Orang Kelainan Upaya (OKU).

Pemegang ijazah Sarjana Pentadbiran Awam, Mohamad Fairus Azmi merupakan antara seramai 672 graduan yang menerima ijazah pada sidang keempat hari ini yang dipengerusikan oleh Pro Canselor USM, Tan Sri Datuk Zulkefli A Hassan.

Dalam sesi temu bual, Mohamad Fairus berkata kekangan semasa pandemik Covid-19 adalah salah satu cabaran yang perlu dihadapinya, iaitu apabila beliau perlu menggandakan usaha untuk mempelajari aplikasi pengajian secara dalam talian.

“Pada awalnya saya berasa agak kekok untuk mengadaptasi kaedah pembelajaran secara dalam talian kerana ianya satu perkara yang baru buat saya, tetapi dengan komputer yang mempunyai perisian pandu suara dan semangat untuk belajar bersungguh-sungguh, semuanya dapat diatasi,” katanya.

Tambah Mohamad Fairus, beliau mendapat motivasi untuk meneruskan pembelajaran sehingga ke tahap sekarang daripada rakan-rakan kelainan upaya (OKU) seperjuangan.

“Kepada rakan senasib, jangan ragu-ragu jika berkeinginan untuk menyambung pembelajaran kerana institusi pengajian di Malaysia sudah mempunyai polisi eksklusif

dan mesra OKU,” katanya yang kini sedang mengikuti kursus latihan komputer.

Sementara itu, dalam sidang yang sama, meskipun sedang berpantang selepas melahirkan anak sulung, graduan Sarjana Sains Kejuruteraan Mikroelektronik, Nadia Mohamad Rozali, turut serta dengan penuh semangat hadir ke sesi upacara konvokesyen.

Nadia yang berasal dari Sungai Petani, Kedah berkata, beliau telah selamat melahirkan bayi perempuan pada 22 November lalu.

“Upacara konvokesyen ini merupakan hari yang dinanti oleh semua graduan dan kehadiran saya ke upacara ini adalah dengan izin suami dan ibu kerana kesihatan saya yang semakin baik,” kata Nadia yang kini bekerja sebagai jurutera di syarikat Intel.

**“Pada awalnya saya berasa agak kekok untuk mengadaptasi kaedah pembelajaran secara dalam talian kerana ianya satu perkara yang baru buat saya, tetapi dengan komputer yang mempunyai perisian pandu suara dan semangat untuk belajar bersungguh-sungguh, semuanya dapat diatasi,”**

**- Mohamad Fairus**



## Being Visually Impaired Not An Obstacle In Eyeing Success

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) recently awarded Ng Wey Kean, who is a visually impaired, the Gold Medal Award for Best Disability Gold Medal Award Final Year Student which was donated by M.K. Basjaran Nair at its 58th Convocation Ceremony.

Ng, who graduated with a Bachelor of Computer Science (Honour's) said, there was no issue for him though visually impaired in one eye, to compete with others as he was able to adapt to the situation after his left eye was injured when hit by the ball while playing basketball in 2014.

Ng, who's currently working as a Software Developer at SiteGiant Sdn Bhd said that, he doesn't feel like his impairment is an obstacle for him to achieve what he is today, and he said that to be successful in studies, what is most important is to behave, be confident and to strive in doing whatever you want to do and eventually, you will achieve your dreams.

"I understand that some might have a low self-esteem, especially when they are disabled, and my suggestion is that they need to improve their self-esteem to be more confident and with that, they can go far," he said.

A total of 700 graduands received their respective scrolls during the seventh session of the Convocation Ceremony.

At the Ceremony, a total of 5,964 graduates received degrees in their respective fields from the second to the tenth session which took place from 13 to 21 December at Dewan Tuanku Syed Putra (DTSP), USM, here.

*Text: Nur Farrah Ezlin Mohd Suhaimi*



## Jordanian Siblings Shared Memorable Convocation Experience

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) recently held its 58th Convocation Ceremony. Among the graduands receiving their scrolls in the Fourth Session were Marya Mustafa Abuzaid and Sara Mustafa Abuzaid, who received their Master of Instructional Multimedia degree at Dewan Tuanku Syed Putra (DTSP) in USM.

Both were elated and grateful, amidst the ceremony that was celebrated in a moderate yet meaningful manner.

Marya Mustafa Abuzaid, 26, said, "We finished our Master's degree before the pandemic started in March 2020, then we continued with our PhD in July and we've started our journey since the degree level at USM Kuala Lumpur".

"We chose to continue our PhD at USM because we love the environment, and the people in USM are very helpful which makes me feel like USM is the place that encourages the seeking of knowledge to the students," said Marya.

In the Fourth Session, USM Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Zulkefli A. Hassan handed out scrolls to the 672 graduates from various disciplines.

Meanwhile her sister, Sara Mustafa Abuzaid, 25, said that she likes the friendly environment in USM and encourages students to come and study here.

*Text: Mahirah Mahyidin • Editing: Mazlan Hanafi Basharuddin  
Photo: Mohd Fairus Md Isa*



## 6 Staf Pentadbiran USM Bergelar Doktor Falsafah



Enam staf pentadbiran Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) menerima ijazah doktor falsafah di Upacara Konvokesyen kali ke-58 USM 2021 sidang kedua, hari ini.

Mereka yang menerima ijazah doktor falsafah ialah Dr. Subramaniam Govindan, Ts. Dr. Hazrieffendy Bakri, Ts. Dr. Mohamed Azlan Ashaari, Ts. Dr. Shahrizal Nazri, Dr. Lim Chee Ann dan Dr. Nazrul Hassan.

Dalam satu sesi temu ramah, Subramaniam yang berkelulusan ijazah Doktor Pentadbiran Perniagaan (DBA) berkata, pendorong utama beliau untuk melanjutkan pelajaran ke peringkat yang lebih tinggi adalah kata-kata terakhir dari mendiang ibu beliau, hasil dorongan dari isteri, pengurusan tertinggi universiti dan tenaga akademik yang sentiasa memberi semangat serta galakan untuk meneruskan pengajian.

Bagi Hazrieffendy yang kini berkhidmat sebagai Penolong Bendahari Kanan universiti, cabaran yang paling sukar selama menjalani pengajian adalah di mana beliau terpaksa menyelesaikan kajian dan melaksanakan projek ERP@USM pada masa yang sama.

Selain Hazrieffendy, Mohamed Azlan pula berkata, sebagai seorang Timbalan Pendaftar universiti, motivasi utama yang mendorong beliau melanjutkan pelajaran adalah untuk memastikan golongan pentadbir juga boleh bersama-sama dengan golongan akademik untuk menyumbang idea dan tenaga dalam membangunkan USM secara harmonis sebagai satu pasukan yang berjaya tanpa ada sebarang diskriminasi dan perasaan prejudis antara satu sama lain.

“Sepanjang saya memulakan perjalanan melanjutkan pengajian di peringkat ijazah sarjana sehingga ke peringkat kedoktoran, saya memegang falsafah ‘No Pain,

No Gain... No Retreat, No Surrender’. Kepada rakan-rakan seperjuangan, ingatlah pepatah ini, ‘Great things will only happen to those who never stop believing, trying, learning, falling and being grateful to Allah for whatever challenges outlined ahead,’” tambah beliau.

Berkelulusan Ijazah DBA juga, Shahrizal yang merupakan Pegawai Teknologi Maklumat berkata, beliau mengambil masa selama empat tahun untuk menamatkan pengajian.

“Perit jerih menjadi adat apabila bekerja sambil belajar dan saya mengalu-alukan rakan lain jika berkeinginan untuk menyambung pengajian. Saya merancang untuk menyertai bidang penyelidikan pula dan mengambil semua peluang yang ada bagi memajukan diri,” katanya.

Bekerja sebagai Pegawai Keselamatan di USM, Lim yang berkelulusan ijazah kedoktoran dalam bidang Ekonomi Pembangunan berkata, walaupun tugas hakiki beliau bukan dalam bidang akademik, akan tetapi dengan kemahiran atau ‘soft-skill’ yang diperolehi, beliau telahpun mengaplikasikannya dalam tugas harian seperti perkongsian ilmu dan kemahiran bersama staf jabatan dan sebagainya.

Sementara itu, Nazrul yang kini menyandang jawatan sebagai Ketua Penolong Pendaftar di Penerbit USM berkata pengalaman yang paling bermakna semasa menjalani pengajian adalah beliau dapat meningkatkan tahap penguasaan ilmu, mengasah bakat menulis, menajamkan kemahiran menganalisis, yang telah membantu beliau untuk memahami budaya ilmu dan wacana kesarjanaan dalam konteks kerjaya sebagai Pegawai Tadbir dan staf di USM.

**Teks: Nur Farrah Ezlin Mohd Suhaimi**

# Project monyet

*Project Monyet@USM is organized by Universiti Sains Malaysia, the Malaysian Primatological Society (MPS), Langur Project Penang (LPP), Roots & Shoot Malaysia and Project Monyet. Project Monyet@USM as an outreach initiative meant to bring people closer to our fascinating wildlife heritage and the arts.*

Great apes, gibbons, monkeys, tarsiers, lemurs, and lorises make up the diverse and beautiful world of primates. Did you know that we share more than 90% of our DNA with most primate species and up to 97% with the orangutan? Malaysia is home to 25 different species of non-human primates. 'Non-human' because biologically speaking, we are 'primates', too!

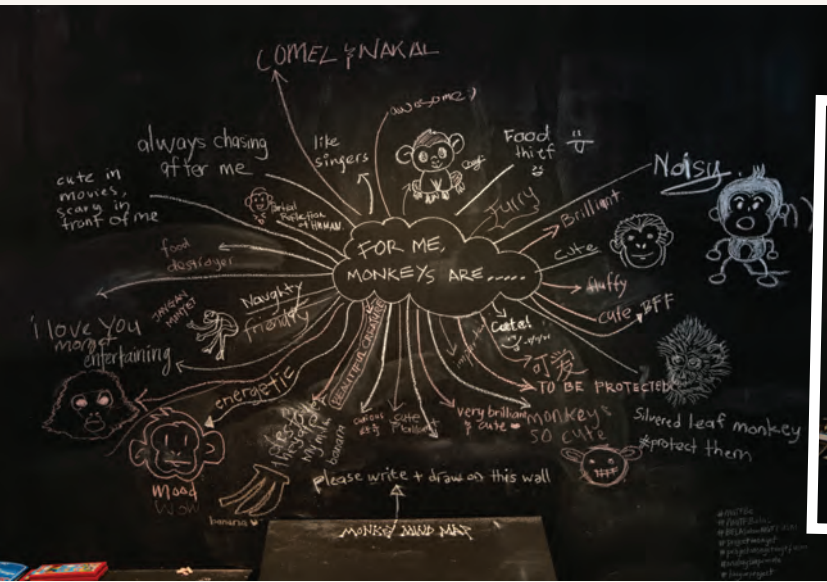
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah (MGTF) has taken the initiative to advocate for primate conservation with a project called 'Project Monyet@USM'. It is a hybrid exhibition that showcases the works by Peter Ong, a wildlife photographer whose journey was to document Malaysia's diverse fascinating primate species. Alongside his primate portraits, this exhibition has also invited the public to contribute artworks and photographs about our arboreal cousins, encouraging the free use of media and style to highlight the diversity and wonders of these primates. Under the expertise of Dr. Nadine Ruppert, head of the Primate Research and Conservation Lab at the USM School of Biological Sciences (SBS), 'ProjectMonyet@USM' is curated by USM MGTF's Director, Associate Professor Hasnul Jamal Saidon and his curatorial team. In conjunction with the 'Project Monyet@USM' exhibition, another showcase of primate artworks entitled "LangUR – Building bridges between the worlds" ran at the Penang State Gallery between October until 14 December 2021. The LangUR art exhibition, curated by Ivan Alexander Francis Gabriel is a collaboration with 'Langur Project Penang (LPP)', which was founded by USM PhD student Jo Leen Yap and Dr. Nadine Ruppert back in 2016, with the aim to motivate and inspire local communities to be involved in activities relating to primate conservation and nature education.



*From left: Nadine, Hasnul and Peter*

**“Many of us thought that there is orangutan in Peninsular Malaysia. It’s our natural heritage. How many kids have seen a Siamang? A Binturong? We do not want to wake up one day and realise that we have lost everything. Let’s do something now.”**

**- Peter Ong**



The Project Monyet exhibition at MGTF

In an effort to raise the awareness of the public on Malaysian primates, Peter Ong, who is a passionate wildlife photographer and activist, managed to capture photos of 14 out of 25 species of primates. Alongside his primate portraits, the 'ProjectMonyet@USM' displays creative contributions from the public, through the free use of media and style to highlight the diversity and wonders regarding our arboreal cousins, who we call (pri-)MATES.

"When I met the renowned primatologist Dr Jane Goodall during her visit to Malaysia, she asked me on the state of primates in Malaysia. I was stunned and quickly searched through Google for information. To my surprise, I found hardly anything about the primate species in our country and yet, Malaysia is one of only two countries in Asia and five countries globally, that is home to members of five primate families. Malaysia is one of the 17 recognized megadiverse countries, which together hosts more than 70 percent of the world's biodiversity," Peter said.

"We cannot save anything if we do not know what to save. Conservation is not the main concern now, as we are still at ground zero. We are still at the awareness level."

He added that, "as a country, we do not know our own diversity and some of our children still think we have giraffes in Malaysia. Many of us thought that there is orangutan in Peninsular Malaysia. It's our natural heritage. How many kids have seen a Siamang? A Binturong? We do not want to wake up one day and realise that we have lost everything. Let's do something now."

"There's one time when I was taking a photo of a beruk kentoi (stump-tailed macaque) and randomly talked to the hikers while taking the photo. They were unaware and don't even know that [in Malaysia] beruk kentoi can only be found in Perlis."

We are blessed to have a country with rich biodiversity. The project also helps to support the researchers. It is not just our primates, we have endangered trees, our insects being wiped out and it's very sad that we are not playing our part to make things better. We have to be aware of what is happening to our biodiversity. Once it's gone, IT'S GONE; just like our Sumatran rhino. Now is the time Malaysians need to support our research.

Let's contribute something as simple as to dispose rubbish properly to save our biodiversity. Educate and engage with your children or students. Nurture the love for the primates at an early age. Inspire your children on the ways to make a difference. This is about their future, and they can share videos and stories through social media or even at home. As the saying goes, 'Sikit-sikit, lama-lama jadi bukit (in for a penny, in for a pound). Consistency will soon become a habit. We cannot do more things if we do not have enough awareness.

Let's take one example. The development in the area of Serdang had caused the hill to be cut off by the highway and to be surrounded with a huge housing development area. Little that we know, there in the small batches were gibbons that used to be a family of four and slowly they died and now we are left with the last one and nobody documented it.

The gibbon is as much a Malaysian as I am, as everyone else is. How is it that we think our life is worth more than his?

We cannot build another tiger; even money cannot buy the extinct species. However, buildings can be refurbished and rebuilt. We need the support from all levels of society to support our researchers. I believe knowledge is everything, to ensure that we are creating the appropriate awareness, and this is special as it is in our country, Malaysia. If we don't take this seriously, we will never know what we have in our own backyard," Peter concluded.

Dr. Nadine Ruppert, Head of the Primate Research and Conservation Lab at the USM School of Biological Sciences (SBS) shared with us that in Germany, her home country, there is no single primate species which exists there, not even in the whole of Europe, except for a tiny population of macaques at its most southern tip, in Gibraltar.

“We only have human ‘primates’ in Germany. But there are still some researchers wondering, why I didn’t study primates in Germany”.

Peter added that Malaysians are taking things for granted, “but not that we are doing it purposely, but because we don’t know and we lack the awareness.”

However, the feedback we received from the previous ‘Project Monyet’ and this project were incredible. It’s so good to know that people are sharing and exchanging thoughts on Facebook and Instagram. Now that we have the iNaturalist app, all of primate sightings by citizen scientists in Malaysia can be shared and linked. The app is useful in helping to cite data and USM is doing a wonderful effort in supporting the project.

“All my first-year students need to install iNaturalist to capture data of the rich biodiversity in their backyards and in USM. This is their assignment. They will need to upload their observations of plants and animals to the iNaturalist Project “BioDiv Universiti Sains Malaysia” and so they simultaneously engage with nature. We are happy that we have more data now recording more than 800 different species of plants and animals on USM’s main campus.” (Link: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/biodiv-universiti-sains-malaysia>)



*Peter showing Hasnul his essential gadget*

**“It’s so good to know that people are sharing and exchanging thoughts on Facebook and Instagram. Now that we have the iNaturalist app, all of primate sightings by citizen scientists in Malaysia can be shared and linked.”**  
**- Dr. Nadine Ruppert**

Nadine added, “Educating the students and the USM community on how they can contribute to recognizing and protecting biodiversity is just one piece of a bigger puzzle in producing the big picture before trying to educate more people about protecting Malaysia’s threatened wildlife, like the primates”.

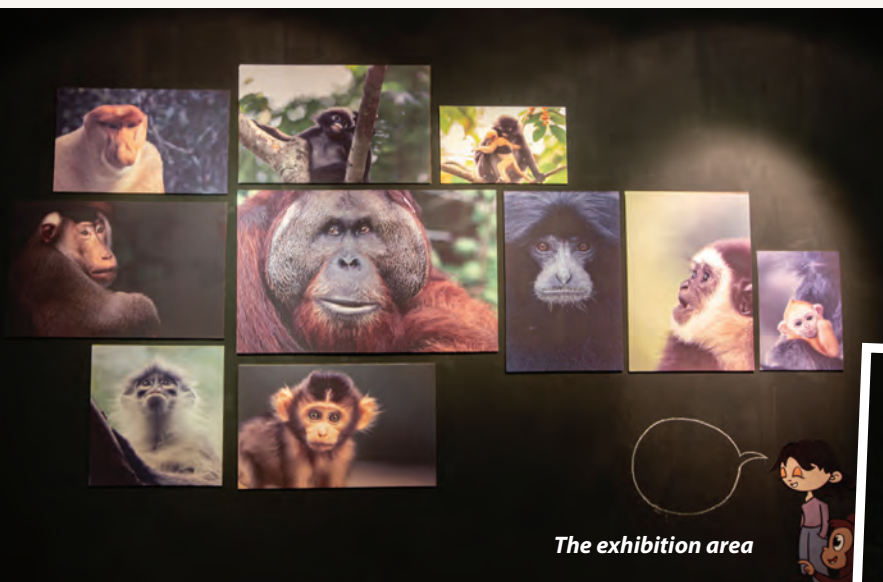
“We have also been engaging citizen scientists to report sightings of endangered gibbons in Malaysia to us to create better maps. We have received updates through Facebook postings from the hiking groups, where they share a photo or sound recording of gibbons. The hikers’ posts contributed in helping to protect the gibbons as now, we know more about where they are.”

“We have to stop questioning whose job it is to protect biodiversity; it’s everyone’s and it’s my job. As a Malaysian, it is my job to make sure that the land is doing fine. Let’s start by doing the job and making a difference. It is the least you can do to take the responsibility,” said Peter.

Peter, who managed to compile photos of 14 out of 25 Malaysian primate species, shared that it was challenging to capture some species as we do not have accurate data. Among the hardest to capture was the East Borneo Grey Gibbon at a small village in Sabah called Long Pasia. The journey took eight hours by car; four hours by road and four hours off-road. It was adventurous, and it provided a unique glimpse into rural Borneo, located near East Kalimantan. The journey was long but offered great rewards as the village was beautiful and very clean.



*The creativity ambience from the MGTF team*



The exhibition area

**“Be the people that is worthy of the land. It’s a blessed land. This land is home to other beings, too. We as human beings, with our brain capacity and compassion, can make a difference.”**



Trying to capture a good shot of an East Bornean Grey Gibbon is another story, as the species is confined to thick primary rainforests in the lowland and lower mountainous areas of north and northeast Borneo and East Kalimantan. Gibbons are exclusively arboreal, and do not descend to the ground and they stay in the tallest tree. They will swing from tree to tree, so you need to be very quick before they disappear.

Peter has always loved animals and wanted to pursue studies in Zoology, but instead he graduated with Law from the University of Bristol and completed his Master’s in Economics.

“I was born in a generation where only certain careers were acceptable, such Medicine, Engineering, Finance, and Law. However after earning both my degrees, I decided to pursue what I love to do most. Dr Goodall’s questions on our primates encouraged me further to be part of capturing our biodiversity and help our researchers in collecting data. She has instilled my interest in photography and in finding out more about our primates.”

His avian and primate images have also been featured by Canon Malaysia on their social media feeds and their annual corporate calendar. He is currently a board member of Roots & Shoots and is one of the mentors of the Roots & Shoots Malaysia Award (RASMA) programme, where he interacts with and encourages youths to get involved with Malaysian NGOs to be part of the solution on the issues faced by wildlife, society and environment.

Peter added, “Be the people that is worthy of the land. It’s a blessed land. This land is home to other beings, too. We as human beings, with our brain capacity and compassion, can make a difference. We can be the steward, the custodian that we were meant to be. We can do better. It needs to start with ourselves”.

“As humans, we need to value life, and the life of animals should not be any less than a human’s life. Life is life.”

“What I love most when taking photos of primates is the moment when you look at their eyes, you can see the mutual intelligence, and the ability to recognise and feel; that there’s a thought process going on. You can see that he is interested in you, as you are interested in him immediately. You can feel the deep connection. So I wonder, why would anyone think that his right to enjoy this land is worth less than my right to enjoy the land? Why can’t we share? We have been sharing this land for so long. The ugly truth is humans tend to want to possess, to own everything.”

“As we know, there are more tigers in captivity in the United States than in the wild around the world. Why do we have to own everything that we see? We need to protect the wildlife for our children because the wildlife is part of the children’s future. As human beings with high intelligence, we are depriving our children of the chance of a better life in the future, with fresh air and clean water. We have already witnessed that rapid development can lead to numerous natural disasters and extinction of species. It’s time that we step up, because there’s urgency in this matter.”

“We are losing so much of the natural heritage in Malaysia. We have to be aware that development comes with a price. There must be proper planning on how to move forward, and to consider the needs of nature seriously. Cutting some trees might be of little consequence to our human ‘primate’ eyes, but it could lead to a reduction in food supplies, inbreeding, and stress on the wildlife. That will create a big impact on our biodiversity. Many habitats will become lost or fragmented due to deforestation. Concurrently, it will lead to an increase in poaching activities when forests are made more accessible by nearby development,” said Nadine.





**“Educate yourself not to feed wildlife. Even if you want to feed stray cats and dogs, take responsibility to bring them to the vet and neuter them, if not they will just reproduce more and more and can become aggressive or sick,”**

Nadine added that gibbons are in many ways like humans. “They can only have one baby every five to seven years. So, when you take the baby from its mother, can you imagine how the mother’s heart is ‘ripped out’ when her baby was taken to be sold in the illegal wildlife pet trade? When you take away the babies to be sold, there will be no offspring that replenish the already threatened population. Gibbons also play an important role in the forest because there are some trees that can only grow from interactions with these primates, so taking away primary seed dispersers will eventually lead to a decline in plant diversity too. Probably you don’t see it, but it’s an evil synergy. Every threat will be affecting another threat,” said Nadine further.

To take a quote from Sir David Attenborough, “A tale of the smartest species doomed by that all-too-human-characteristic of failing to see the bigger picture, in pursuit of short term goals”.

“Primates in an intact forest do not want to seek contact with humans. Having the trees in the forest as their natural habitat, they do not want to make contact with you at all. Remember how Peter needed to wait so long to get the photos?”

“But we as humans, we tend to empathise. We always feel the monkeys do not have enough food. We are overwhelmed by the primates’ cuteness, thus we will feed them and then can easily take their photo. Once you start feeding them, you’ve done the worst thing. Never feed any wildlife just because you feel pity for them! They will survive. They have lived for thousands of years, and the jungle is their place. They can eat leaves and shoots and grass.

“Obviously, they our food, our food has better flavours and is rich in sugar and fat. When we start feeding them, the primates’ natural behaviour will be affected in some way. They will become interested in humans, and they’ll start to picture us as their food source.. They can become aggressive when we keep feeding them, and they will breed more and more and this can lead to a reduced food supply. It will further result in the transmission of diseases. And now with Covid-19, primates can become infected too. We can transmit the virus to them.

“Human interacting with wildlife is always a negative thing. We do not want this to happen. I saw a lot of photos being uploaded at Kuala Selangor, where the public are feeding the langurs and macaques, while taking selfies with the primates. Of course, they will become tame and climb onto your shoulders and head. I was actually shouting to myself when I saw the posts. Let’s not forget that the primates have a high risk of being infected with various disease, as we do, they could have herpes, hepatitis, tuberculosis, parasites, and we could then re-infect each other.

“Educate yourself not to feed wildlife. Even if you want to feed stray cats and dogs, take responsibility to bring them to the vet and neuter them, if not they will just reproduce more and more and can become aggressive or sick,” Nadine concluded.

This project is hoped to address the problem and create awareness that each of us can do something to protect our rich biodiversity. It could also help us to understand better and be more aware in bringing people closer to our interesting biological heritage through the arts on Malaysia’s diverse primate community. The exhibition at USM MGTF is open to the public free-of-charge from 25 October to 15 January 2022. Visitors will get to experience, explore, discover, and learn more about the primates’ habitats, survival, and challenges that they have to face and encounter in their lives.

# Dr. Nadine Rupert's Top 3 Primates "Fun" Fact:



**Pig-tailed macaques ('beruk')**

(Source: IG- @peterthedragon)

**1. Pig-tailed macaques ('beruk').** From our research ('Macaca Nemestrina Project') we learned that, apart from owls, macaques too are good rat-catchers. The presence of pig-tailed macaques in oil palm plantations is normally be associated with the kind of animals having destructive and uncontrolled behaviour. However, macaques undeniably have a distinct role in maintaining the ecosystem, more specifically as seed dispersers in the forest and as nature's pest controllers in agriculture.

With these findings, we can promote greater awareness to the oil palm planters to leave the macaques alone, as they are contributing positively to support and sustain the palm oil industry with their voracious appetite for rats, which are known to cause damage to oil palm fruits on a large scale. By allowing the macaques to continue living amongst the oil palms, it would not only protect the threatened species and other forest-dwellers, but it could also bring greater economic benefits to the farmers. What's more interesting is that these macaques could serve as an alternative to the use of harmful pesticides, commonly used as conventional means in dealing with crop-damaging rodents.

The farmers and oil planters could help save the habitat by taking care of our tropical rainforest more carefully, as it serves as a natural habitat that would support the living ways of these primates which are being threatened.

Nadine said that habitat conservation activities around oil palm plantations positively contribute to enhancing greener practices in the pursuit of sustainable palm oil production. By allowing the macaques to enter oil palm plantations from nearby protected forests and wildlife corridors, it would not only protect the threatened species and other forest-dwellers, but it could also bring greater economic benefits to the farmers.

**2. Raffles' banded langur.** Probably the most endangered primate in Peninsular Malaysia (only found in Johor and a small patch in Rompin). They are listed as Critically Endangered and we do not have enough valid data of their remaining number, although they sometimes even roam in housing areas. This is not actually a fun fact, as it is sad. However, I would like to create awareness that the public can help in the process of gathering data whenever they see the langur. We want people to know and to help save them.

Be careful not to mistake them with the **Robinsons banded langur**, which can only be found in the northern states of Peninsular Malaysia. Even when we think we might know their differences, actually we might not. They are always playing with us. Now, that's a fun fact. They look the same but they are not the same.



**Raffles' banded langur**  
(Source: www.mandai.com)



**Robinsons banded langur**  
(Source: IG-@mpwhiten.jpeg)



**Slow lorises ('Kongkang')**

(Source: www.nationalgeographic.com)

**3. Slow lorises ('Kongkang').** This primate is only active at night. Even if we want to find them during the day, they will be sleeping. 'Kongkang' is being overtraded as a pet, because of their cute looks. However, do not be fooled by their cute looks, as they are the only primate that is venomous.

'Kongkang' has a toxic bite, a trait rare among mammals and unique among the primates. The toxin is obtained by licking a sweat gland under their arm, and the secretion is activated by mixing with saliva. Their venomous bite could cause a severe allergic reaction to most people, and it can worsen into

an epileptic shock for some people. Still, you can scroll on social media and see that many people are happily playing with them and keeping them as a pet. Most often, they have plugged out the teeth of this primate leading to severe pain and potentially deadly infections. The illegal wildlife trade is such a horrible and damaging activity to our country. Please never keep primates as pets!



## For The, of The and By THE STUDENTS

University Sains Malaysia (USM) undeniably holds as much a special place in the hearts of its alumni as it has been with the current students, for more reasons than one. USM has always endeavored to provide a multi-cultural ambience for its students, embracing and welcoming non-natives with open hands, a vision exemplifying inclusiveness. USM has proven itself as a world-renowned university for a variety of reasons. Not surprisingly, the courses and degrees offered by the University have enticed high intake of international students, semester after semester.

Arguably, the advantage at USM is its organisations inside the campus, tailored to suit several needs of the international students whose aspirations are nurtured, polished, and fulfilled. One such setup is the International Mobility & Collaboration Centre (IMCC). It is mandated to tackle all kinds of issues and problems that an international student might face. The USP of the IMCC is its voluntary arms, USMi (USM International Students Organisation) and KAWANs, established to help create a comfortable environment keeping in mind the students' needs. They complement each other, offer invaluable training to face the challenges and, more importantly, cultivate the qualities of self-confidence and leadership. In that sense, the KAWANs and USMi form the cruxes. And they always attend to the needs of the students. These organisations do not merely help them find solutions to their impending problems. The primary job of the IMCC is to fully satisfy all concerned, especially the students who are new to the milieu. Of course, the other important task at its hand is to organize and manage events at the University.

**“USMi is a student organisation under IMCC that serves all kinds of needs and requests such as student affairs, alumni and industrial relations, community representations, activities and engagements. On the other hand, KAWAN is a buddy system which is a subset of USMi as well as IMCC.”**

USMi is a student organisation under IMCC that serves all kinds of needs and requests such as student affairs, alumni and industrial relations, community representations, activities and engagements. On the other hand, KAWAN is a buddy system which is a subset of USMi as well as IMCC. The members are appointed through elections. KAWAN is divided into two segments, one is where international student ambassadors look after their communities and manage events in sync with USMi; and two, is the buddy/agent system that facilitates the recruitment of new international students without any monetary benefit from the students. KAWAN recruitment is via a system where the applications are screened and a panel of IMCC staff will shortlist the applicants for interview. For both USMi and KAWAN, local students can also apply to bridge the gap between the international and locals students. Students who are interested in volunteering for USMi or KAWAN, can contact the USMi president, vice-president and KAWAN coordinator, respectively. They can be reached out through IMCC website, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram.



**“A KAWAN can be a student from any of the schools at USM, providing individualized assistance to an applicant seeking admission.”**



**“USMi prepares new students and visitors to get acclimatized to the campus life, history, traditions, and achievements of the college through the Student Life & Leadership Departments.”**

USMi, a family of international students, aims to provide a space for international and Malaysian students at the University to interact and unleash their creativity in sharing each other’s cultural identity within the USM community. It is an initiative that directs the two to understand each other through various events and programs and create harmony between the local and international students. USMi is the place for anyone who is hoping for diversity, support and entertainment. USMi prepares new students and visitors to get acclimatized to the campus life, history, traditions, and achievements of the college through the Student Life & Leadership Departments. It also conducts campus tours and supports Presidential and Foundation functions other than organising cultural events. USMi’s Executive Members handle alumni relations. One major highlight is the event called USMi Motivates where the alumni shared their experiences as well as how USM helped build their careers and future.

KAWAN, known as students' ambassadors, is a new volunteer initiative to facilitate and assist postgraduate international students. The group of KAWAN helps aspiring international students in the process of applying for admission to pursue their academic careers at USM. A KAWAN can be a student from any of the schools at USM, providing individualized assistance to an applicant seeking admission. Besides that, the service of KAWAN is pro bono and unconditional. Strictly a voluntary job and, as such, no KAWAN can be branded as a full-time agent.

In most cases, USMi and KAWANs work together under the supervision of IMCC. This collaboration has worked well. Some of the key events organised by this collaboration, such as Familiarisation (2019), Penang Hill Trip (2020), Ramadhan Football Championship (2021) and Ramadhan Iftaar Gathering (2021), need to be highlighted here. USMi, soon, will be emphasizing a broader scope that will include a group of international students from the attachment programme, UG and PG.

Meanwhile, below are some extracts from the personal experiences of the volunteers, reproduced here as excerpts of the international students. They are part and parcel of these organisations at USM.



**“...the advantage at USM is its organisations inside the campus, tailored to suit several needs of the international students whose aspirations are nurtured, polished, and fulfilled.”**

“The University allowed me to live in a multi-cultural and multi-racial place which I anticipated. USM provided an intimate environment of security, peace, and love. This coexistence of cultural diversity contributed significantly to correcting many of the rooted ideas and beliefs that had been on my mind constantly. Every individual could live and integrate easily in a place, rather than observe and adapt to his non-native environment and listen to what is surrounding him. Every individual is allowed to teach and learn from other cultures, languages, values, principles, habits, and behaviours from different cultures, which are all available here at USM. In short, USM is a vessel full of intellectuals and cultural diversity. Students of USM will not only return to their home countries with a set of documents and certificates but also as Alumni who will carry with them a new background and concepts from various races and cultures”, **Beribeche Houssam Eddine** (USMi President) said.



“I attended the USMi Ramadhan Iftaar Party as a volunteer a few months ago. It proved to be an amazing experience for me during my study life in Malaysia! It helped me develop social sensitivity, besides enabling me to collaborate in getting the best attitudes of the people. Working with different people in a different environment will let volunteers appreciate and value our work situation, family, cultural, and environmental, etc.” **Ye Zar Ni** (Executive Committee member, USMi) reminisced.

“When I came to USM, roughly a year and a half ago, the first thing that happened to me was to run into a KAWAN Ambassador at the registration desk. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that the old students were trying to help the new with registration, accommodation, transportation etc. And that too, at no cost! I had taken up an apartment, living outside the campus then. Because of COVID-19, they locked down USM, but this memory stayed on with me. I got in touch with a lot of Student Ambassadors and figured out what it was all about. It was a volunteer initiative set up by IMCC to assist the new students. Since then, I knew what I wanted to be—a KAWAN! Cut to one and a half years later. Here I am, serving as the KAWAN Coordinator, doing all that I had imagined I would do once the university reopened. It has been a tremendous experience for me because I never thought I would find people in USM who would help me out selflessly,” **Karthik K Kumar** (KAWAN Coordinator) shared his thoughts.



“Though I joined the USM not so long ago, my experience and memories are going to stay for a lifetime. A KAWAN contacted me much before I landed here and helped me with all the paperwork, making my registration a cakewalk without any hassle. Once I came to USM, the USMi President took it upon himself to make me feel at home, away from home! I have always wanted to interact with people from varied backgrounds, and USM has allowed me to experience this. I am glad to be a part of USM as a new entrant to the USMi’s joint family,” said **Sowmya Ramachandran** (Executive member, USMi).

As the saying goes, those actions speak louder than words, the experiences of KAWAN speak for themselves. And the USM is the place to be in, undoubtedly etched in our hearts forever.

*Text: Sowmya Ramachandran  
Editing: Isyam Amran*

*Disclaimer: All photos were taken before the COVID19 pandemic.*

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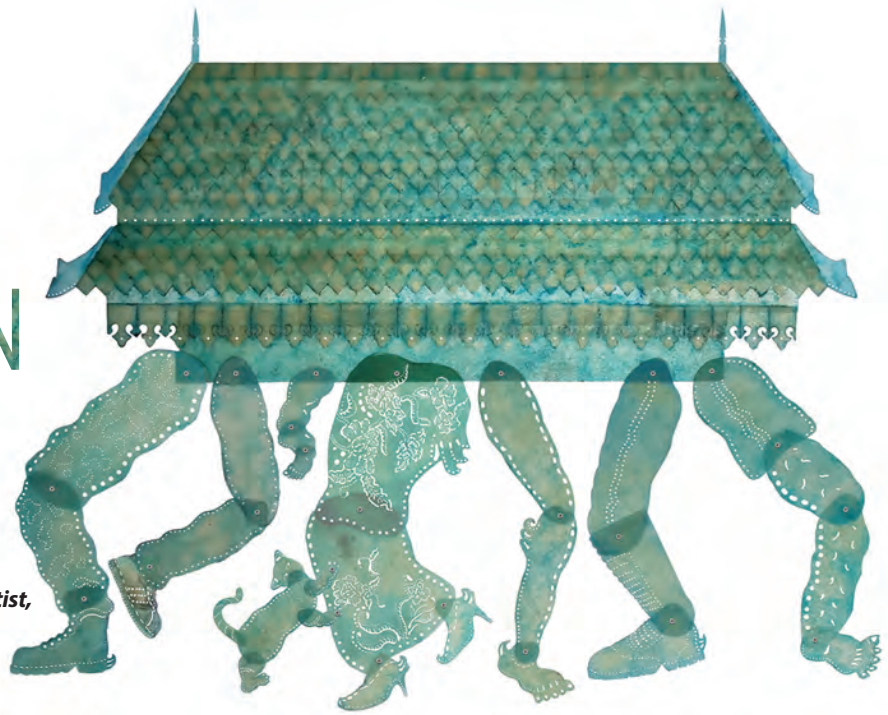
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# RAGAMAN



*Karya ini memenangi kategori Established Artist, Silver Award di UOB Painting of The Year 2021*

Cinta dan minat pada seni ini bermula sejak kecil lagi kerana saya telah didedahkan oleh ayah yang turut mempunyai minat pada hasil kerja seni. Bakat seni ayah yang bagi saya seorang yang cukup kreatif dan mempunyai 'tangan seni' menjadi pendorong utama buat saya. Saya masih ingat, ketika berumur lima ke enam tahun ayah sentiasa membelikan blok lukisan dan pensel sebagai buah tangan sewaktu pulang dari kerja. Hampir setiap hari aktiviti saya tertumpu pada aktiviti melukis dan mewarna. Keluarga juga menjadi faktor utama seni halus sentiasa menjadi pilihan utama jika ditawarkan untuk melanjutkan pengajian di universiti. Walaupun dilahirkan bukan dalam kalangan keluarga yang berpendidikan formal dalam bidang seni namun saya yakin bidang seni ini ialah pilihan yang paling tepat dengan jiwa dan kemampuan saya untuk eksplorasi seni ke arah lebih profesional.

**“Cinta dan minat pada seni ini bermula sejak kecil lagi kerana saya telah didedahkan oleh ayah yang turut mempunyai minat pada hasil kerja seni. Bakat seni ayah yang bagi saya seorang yang cukup kreatif dan mempunyai ‘tangan seni’ menjadi pendorong utama buat saya.”**



**Azrul Azrai Mohyi,**  
**B.Arts '13**

Selain melukis saya suka memancing. Hobi ini mungkin timbul kerana sering mengikut ayah sejak dari kecil lagi. Bagi saya memancing adalah salah satu terapi yang cukup mendamaikan diri dan banyak mengajar saya menjadi lebih sabar dan yakin pada rezeki. Bagi saya hobi ini banyak membentuk jiwa saya untuk menjadi seorang yang lebih baik dari hari ke hari dan nilai kesabaran itu juga diterapkan dalam proses kerja seni sehingga kini. Selain itu, saya juga suka bermain bola sepak dan badminton jika ada kelapangan. Semenjak di bangku sekolah hingga ke universiti saya aktif mewakili sekolah dan Desasiswa Cahaya Gemilang sebagai pemain.

Salah satu punca saya berminat dan memilih Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) adalah atas faktor pengiktirafan USM itu sendiri sebagai antara salah sebuah universiti terbaik di Malaysia. Apabila mendapat panggilan temu duga bagi kursus pengajian Sastera Seni Halus saya merasakan bahawa peluang ini peluang terbaik untuk saya mencuba dan melakukan sesuatu yang bermakna. Alhamdulillah, akhirnya saya telah terpilih sebagai salah seorang pelajar untuk mengikuti pengajian dalam bidang Sastera Seni Halus di Pusat Pengajian Seni, USM bagi sesi 2010-2013. Saya beranggapan bahawa peluang ini pilihan yang tepat untuk saya mengejar cita-cita dan karier dalam bidang seni.



**Azrul Azrai Mohyi bersama kedua ibu bapa semasa Upacara Konvokesyen USM pada tahun 2013**

Menjadi seorang alumni USM ini sebenarnya satu tanggungjawab yang besar bagi saya kerana secara tidak langsung saya akan mewakili nama baik USM itu sendiri. Saya perlu membuktikan diri kepada masyarakat bahawa alumni USM boleh bersaing secara sihat bersama-sama graduan universiti lain terutama dalam bidang seni yang saya ceburi. Saya cukup bangga apabila USM terus melahirkan graduan yang berkualiti dari segi sahsiah dan ilmunya. Tahniah USM!

Sewaktu bergelar mahasiswa di USM, banyak pengalaman yang dilalui memberikan kesan kepada perjalanan hidup saya hingga kini. Pengalaman merantau ke negeri orang untuk mendapatkan segulung ijazah adalah satu permulaan bagi saya mengenal erti kehidupan sebenar kerana segalanya perlu dibuat sendiri tanpa bergantung sepenuhnya pada keluarga. Rakan pelajar dari negeri lain dan perbezaan kaum antara pelajar juga banyak membantu saya untuk lebih memahami nilai persefahaman dan toleransi dalam melakukan apa jua perkara sehingga ke hari ini. Para pensyarah juga memberikan kesan dan impak yang kuat kepada saya dari segi ilmu yang disampaikan termasuk nasihat dan idea yang telah dikongsikan untuk memajukan lagi ilmu seni yang diajarkan. Kesemua ilmu dan pengalaman ini saya cuba gunakan sebaiknya dalam membentuk diri menjadi seorang yang berupaya memberikan manfaat pada orang ramai.

Jika diambil kira ketika zaman pengajian, saya lebih bersifat terbuka untuk memahami dan membuat yang terbaik dalam semua kelas dan subjek yang dipelajari, namun saya lebih terdorong pada kelas catan dan lukisan kerana kelas tersebut memberi saya satu kepuasan sewaktu menghasilkan karya berbentuk catan atau lukisan. Pada ketika itu kelas catan dikendalikan oleh Prof. Madya Fauzan Omar yang diakui sebagai artis dan tenaga pengajar yang berwibawa dan cukup berpengalaman. Semasa peringkat awal mengikuti kelas beliau, saya berasa sedikit janggal dan tidak memahami perkara sebenarnya yang ingin disampaikan beliau. Banyak tugas dan karya saya pada awalnya ditolak, dibuang dan dugaan yang paling berat karya saya dibuang sehingga pecah ke lantai kerana gagal menepati standard karya yang diingini beliau. Tugas untuk subjek yang diberikan juga agak banyak dan padat menjadikan waktu tersebut terasa semakin sukar. Sifat beliau yang agak tegas dan bersahaja menjadikan saya lebih bersungguh untuk memberikan hasil yang terbaik walaupun kadang kala terasa ingin mengalah sahaja. Segala pengalaman bersama beliau itu sebenarnya banyak membentuk saya menjadi seorang artis yang lebih banyak berfikir dan melihat sesuatu itu dari sudut pandang yang lebih baik dan kini saya mula memahaminya. Alhamdulillah, sehingga kini saya masih berhubung dengan beliau melalui media sosial bersama pensyarah yang lain. Dr.Tetria juga antara pensyarah yang ada berhubung dengan saya selepas tamat pengajian di USM dan sentiasa mengikuti perkembangan pelajar-pelajarnya. Terima kasih saya ucapkan kepada semua pensyarah Sastera Seni Halus, USM yang begitu banyak membantu dan memberikan ilmu yang saya kira sangat berharga.

**“Saya perlu membuktikan diri kepada masyarakat bahawa alumni USM boleh bersaing secara sihat bersama-sama graduan universiti lain terutama dalam bidang seni yang saya ceburi.”**



**Azrul Azrai Mohyi bersama rakan-rakan dari Pusat Pengajian Seni USM**



Buat masa sekarang saya dalam fasa eksperimentasi karya dalam medium kaca gentian (*fiberglass*). Medium *fiberglass* juga menjadi pencetus pembikinan karya 'Ragaman' bagi pertandingan UOB Painting of the Year (POY) 2021 tersebut sehingga terpilih sebagai pemenang dalam kategori *Establish Artist, Silver Award*. Sebelum ini saya banyak membuat karya berbentuk catan dua dimensi dan lukisan arang kerana ia merupakan antara kekuatan saya sejak dari universiti lagi. Bermula tahun 2021, saya mula membuat eksperimentasi medium kaca gentian secara serius dan konsisten. Bagi saya medium kaca gentian ini amat menarik jika ia digunakan sebagai salah satu media dan alternatif dalam berkarya kerana ia mampu memberikan hasil di luar jangka dari segi bentuk, ruang dan teksturnya. Buat masa sekarang, saya juga aktif membuat lukisan arang kerana seni ini merupakan satu proses awal ke arah menghasilkan idea-idea karya yang lebih kuat dan bermakna.



**Setelah saban tahun menyertai pertandingan, 'Ragaman' karya Azrul Azrai Mohyi diangkat sebagai pemenang di UOB POY 2021**

**“Pengalaman bergiat aktif sebagai artis seni selama lebih kurang 8 tahun banyak membantu saya membentuk corak dan gaya seni sendiri walaupun pada awalnya masih ada sedikit pengaruh daripada artis rujukan yang lain.”**



**Azrul Azrai Mohyi bersama salah satu karya seni beliau di pameran FYP 2013**

Sejujurnya penyertaan saya dalam UOB POY ini sudah bermula selepas tamat pengajian di USM lagi. Hampir saban tahun mencuba dan kebanyakan karya saya hanya terpilih dan melepasi peringkat ke penilaian akhir, namun tidak terpilih sebagai pemenang sehinggalah tahun 2021 menjadi rezeki saya untuk mendapat tempat sebagai salah seorang pemenang. Bagi saya keluarga faktor utama yang sering memberikan galakan kepada saya untuk menyertai pertandingan berprestij ini. Sekarang isteri dan anak saya juga turut menjadi pendorong kuat menyokong saya dalam pertandingan UOB POY dan apa jua pameran seni yang berlangsung dalam acara seni di Malaysia. Semua insan ini menjadi kekuatan dan inspirasi sebenar saya untuk lebih bersemangat bagi menghasilkan karya yang lebih baik.

Saya tidak dapat untuk menjelaskan secara lanjut cara mendapatkan sumber inspirasi untuk menghasilkan karya tersebut. Cuma yang boleh saya katakan ia merupakan salah satu proses kematangan seorang artis dalam berkarya iaitu ia melibatkan masa, pengorbanan tenaga, pembentukan proses berfikir secara kritis dan juga pemerhatian pada persekitaran seni semasa. Pengalaman bergiat aktif sebagai artis seni selama lebih kurang 8 tahun banyak membantu saya membentuk corak dan gaya seni sendiri walaupun pada awalnya masih ada sedikit pengaruh daripada artis rujukan yang lain. Namun pengalaman yang banyak mengajar dan membantu saya untuk menghasilkan karya sendiri yang lebih kukuh dan kritis.

'Ragaman' merupakan satu karya yang saya anggap cukup istimewa. Ia merupakan usaha pertama saya menghasilkan karya sepenuhnya dari medium kaca gentian yang bukan kekuatan saya dalam berkarya sebelum ini. Banyak proses eksperimentasi dan percubaan berlaku sepanjang proses menghasilkannya. Karya ini sebenarnya membawa tema kekeluargaan dan situasi yang pernah saya alami sewaktu membesar di kampung halaman di Terengganu.

Sewaktu darjah lima sekitar tahun 2001, saya dan keluarga telah berpindah dan tinggal di rumah nenek secara sementara bersama beberapa keluarga yang lain. Sepanjang tempoh tinggal sebumbung bersama yang lain saya banyak melihat pelbagai sifat dan ragam setiap orang di rumah tersebut. Walaupun keluarga besar ini merupakan saudara sendiri, namun perbezaan sifat dan ragam setiap orang itu menarik minat saya untuk dijadikan sebagai isu karya kerana terkandung pelbagai elemen satira, kelucuan, ketegasan, kasih sayang dan perbezaan haluan.

**“'Ragaman' merupakan satu karya yang saya anggap cukup istimewa. Ia merupakan usaha pertama saya menghasilkan karya sepenuhnya dari medium kaca gentian yang bukan kekuatan saya dalam berkarya sebelum ini.”**

Saya juga memasukkan elemen tradisional dalam karya ini sebagai simbolik bahawa semua penceritaan ini berlaku di rumah nenek di Terengganu. Atap singgora yang terkenal dalam pembuatan rumah tradisional di Terengganu dan Kelantan telah dibentuk kembali dalam karya ini sebagai satu visual yang jelas untuk menyokong kisah kehidupan sebumbung beberapa keluarga di dalam sebuah rumah di kampung halaman. Elemen pepotong seakan wayang kulit juga dijadikan elemen penting untuk membina watak-watak bertujuan mewakili sifat dan ragam yang berbeza setiap orang dalam karya tersebut. Proses pembentukan karya ini sedikit rumit dan memerlukan ketelitian yang tinggi untuk membentuk potongan yang dikehendaki termasuk membuat himpunan bagi setiap watak. Secara asasnya, fizikal karya ini bersifat tiga dimensi dan berbentuk pepotong untuk memberikan kesan yang lebih jelas melalui komposisi, teknikal dan estetika medium kaca gentian itu sendiri.



**Pameran 3D dan skulptur di Permatang Pelajar**

Pandangan saya jika ada sesiapa yang betul-betul berminat untuk mengikuti pengajian seni dan mempunyai perancangan kerjaya dalam bidang seni, pilihan untuk melanjutkan pengajian seni di USM adalah antara pilihan yang terbaik. Kualiti pengajian yang ditawarkan juga amat baik dan mampu melahirkan graduan seni yang mempunyai kekuatan menyeluruh bukan sekadar kemahiran semata-mata. Hampir semua pensyarah yang terlibat sebagai tenaga pengajar di Pusat Pengajian Seni, USM adalah

antara barisan pensyarah dengan artis yang mempunyai pengalaman luas dalam bidang masing-masing. Saya percaya, hasil kekuatan para pensyarah ini juga merupakan satu titik permulaan kepada apa jua kejayaan yang saya capai sekarang. Jika anda mempunyai motivasi yang tinggi untuk menjadi seorang artis mahupun ingin mengembangkan kerjaya dengan baik dalam bidang seni, kursus Sastera Seni Halus ini akan membuka jalan yang luas bagi perjalanan kerjaya anda pada masa depan. Insya-Allah.

Teruskan usaha hingga ke puncak. Yakin pada Allah dan diri sendiri. Sentiasa berusaha untuk menjadi yang terbaik dalam kalangan terbaik.

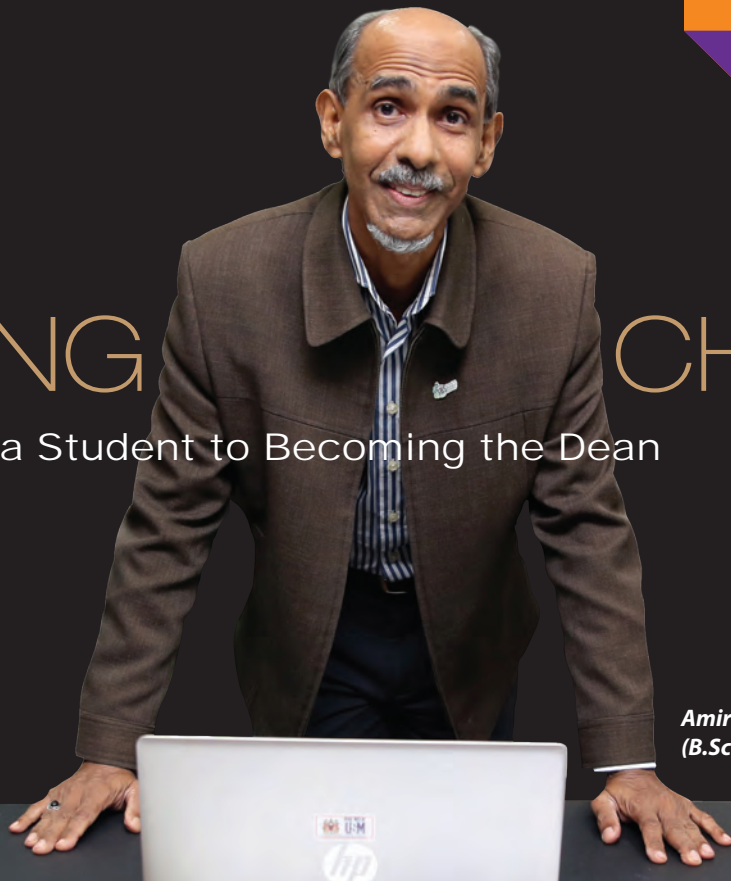
*Teks/Foto: Azrul Azrai Mohyi  
Suntingan: Azlina Md Sadik*



**Azrul Azrai Mohyi dipilih sebagai Pelajar Terbaik Seni Halus di RINTIS SHIFT 2013**

# TAKING CHARGE

From Being a Student to Becoming the Dean



*Amirul Al-Ashraf Abdullah  
(B.Sc. '88)*

*Professor Dr. Amirul Al-Ashraf Abdullah is currently the Dean of the School of Biological Sciences (SBS). He is a proud USM alumni member, who graduated in 1988 with a Bachelor of Science (Hons), a Master's Degree in 1994 and later receiving his PhD in 2007. Throughout his career, he has been a research officer, a teacher, a lecturer, a consultant and he has also served at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) for three years. Besides being heavily involved in academic journey for 32 years, he is also actively contributing to the community. Currently he is involved with association such as MUFAKAT and MSA (Malaysia Science Association) Northern Zone. During his leisure time, he will spend his time cooking for his family and staff. His signature dish is Mutton Kurma.*

I registered in 1984 as a student, who went through the process via the second intake. As a student, I hardly went home for the semester break, even though my hometown is in Kulim. I would stay on campus and assist my lecturers with various kinds of projects. Indirectly, that had increased my knowledge and love for research. To be honest, I have always been passionate about research. However, many of my colleagues told me that I have the makings of a good teacher. Probably then it became a du'a and made me into what I am now.

"After graduating and then employed directly for research project in USM were big achievements for me. While doing research, I also pursued my Master's Degree in Biochemistry. I have gained a lot of exposure in teaching, handling projects, requesting grants and supervising students while working as a research officer and a student. Upon completion of my Master's Degree, I was appointed as a Chemistry teacher at the USM Matriculation Centre" said Amirul.

**"I would like to thank everyone who has taught me especially my supervisors, Prof. Dr. Mohd. Azizan Mohd. Noor and Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohamed Isa Abd Majid. Thank you!"**

While working at the Matriculation Centre, through word of mouth, he also did part-time tutoring to the children of USM staff and the matriculation centre. Most of his students said his energetic approach to teaching and learning invigorated the students and kept them focused.

"I taught Chemistry in Matriculation and definitely it is hard to explain something that you cannot see. So, you need to be creative in commanding the classroom and in engaging with the students. When I look at their faces, I will know either they understand my lectures or they just give me an empty nod," he added.



*Amirul during his early years at USM*

**“I have always been passionate about research. However, many of my colleagues told me that I have the makings of a good teacher. Probably then it became a du’a and made me into what I am now.”**

“Over the years, I found that as I was becoming more and more entrenched in research and teaching, I was still keeping my dream of becoming a lecturer. I love what lecturers do, and always wonder whether “can I become a lecturer one day?” I also had very good role models in academia that cemented my feelings during my time as a student. My dream came true when I received the offer letter from SBS in 2000 for a lecturer’s post.”

“I liked working with students. I wanted my students to experienced what I’ve gained during my student days. I was comfortable where I was then until the late Professor Dr. Ahyaudin Ali (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Development then) motivated me to pursue my PhD. So, I challenged myself again by enrolling part-time for my PhD, while continue to work in USM. I could have opted for another university, but it seemed that my fate had been written at USM, and it was the best option for me as I had just settled down with a family.”

Amirul completed his Doctorate in 2007. “It was a challenging and exciting journey even if it took me seven years to complete my research and thesis. My whole PhD journey had been sponsored by the University. Thank you USM!”

“Besides serving at SBS, Amirul was also seconded to MOSTI for three years as the Director of Bioprocess. Working with the Ministry is totally new, with a 360-degree difference. The greatest challenge was in having to start from scratch; even the office building was not yet there. I had to learn from the development process, which was new knowledge for me and of course, I experienced the way how the Ministry operated. There are numerous different procedures compared to the University. I described my secondment as part of my leadership training.

“When I returned to USM, I was entrusted to be the Deputy Dean in Academic and a Deputy Dean in Research. At the same time, I was appointed as Deputy Director at the Centre for Chemical Biology (CCB). In 2016, I was appointed as the Dean of SBS. I like that I have the opportunity to make decisions and to change things that I thought needed to be changed and of course not alone, but within my teams. I like dealing with people. I like solving problems. I believed that the Deans were making a difference in students’ lives and I wanted to be part of that. These were opportunities that not everyone would get, so I made the most of them.”

In between his various university positions, he wrote a research book, numerous international and local journals. “As I’ve been nurtured by my mother, I would start my days very early. I will be around the campus at 7.00am, settling administrative work and ending my days at 7.00pm after my session with the students. Normally, I will allocate my time to meet my students at 5.00pm onwards. That’s my routine every day. If I reach home early, my family will be asking if I’m not feeling well, hahaha.”

We all know children tend to observe, imitate and follow the activities carried out by their parents and siblings. As for Amirul, coming from a poor family, it was challenging enough. When his father passed away, he was only six years old when the family lost one of their breadwinners. His mother became a single mother, being the one who made sure all of them have food on their table. There were some of the days that they would not have any food at all.

you just opt to work as a teacher. Understand the problem of your students, guide them towards a solution, and provide them motivation to see the real thing. I will always try my best to provide a clear picture to my students. I could detect from their faces whether they could follow my lecture or not."

"COVID-19 gave me big challenges, as I have to admit that I am an 'old school guy' who prefers face-to-face interaction. I want to engage my students and see their facial expression. I will simply throw a question to those who seemed distracted from the class, to check whether they have understood the lecture. From there, you could solve the problem directly in making sure they understood the subject. However, when you teach online, you will be talking alone, rarely see their faces and hardly any questions asked. Probably the newer generations enjoy the online learning style. You could even do blended classrooms with regard to the new normal, and with various types of technology which are now emerging. Still, if given a choice, I would prefer the students to be in front of me."

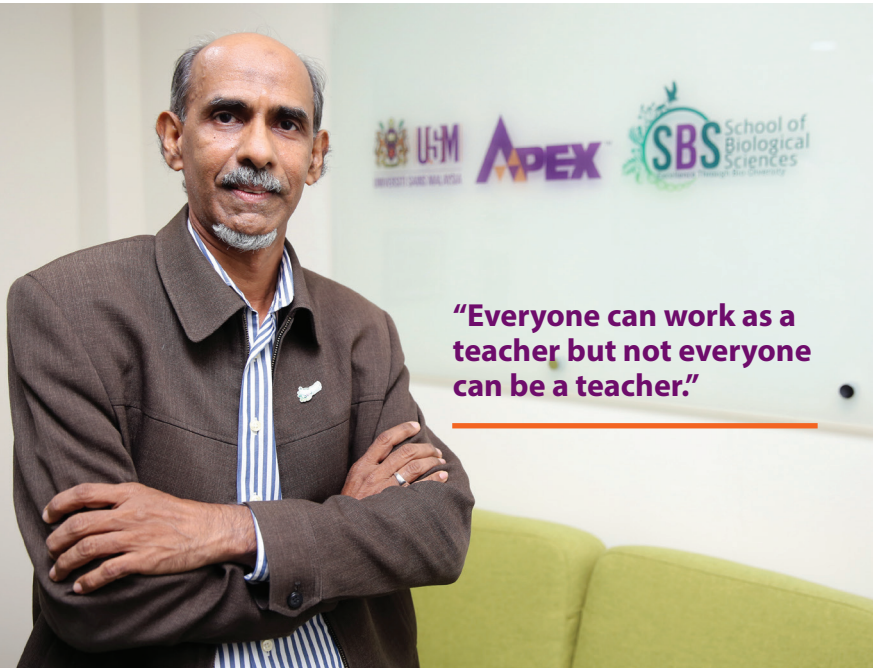
When asked why USM then became his choice, Amirul paused for a while before continuing with his sharing. "There's no word

to describe why I chose USM. The moment I registered as a student in 1984, I already became attached to my alma mater. Apart from being 'fated', it felt so right to serve USM. When I started my career as a lecturer, most of my colleagues were offered to serve at other places. I had to admit, there were junctions for me as well, but the path had been set up. I belonged to USM; the ambience, the love of what I'm doing. Even when I started as a contract staff, I feel so attached to USM."

"Life has its ups and downs. So, embrace everything as your new experience. Through that, you will increase your maturity to face new challenges. You need to draw a line at each problem and not to take it personally."

"I believed that nothing is more effective than sincerity, and to keep giving your best."

*Text: Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal  
Editing: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin  
Photo: Mohd Fairus Md Isa*



**"Everyone can work as a teacher but not everyone can be a teacher."**

"Yes, it was not easy. Being a rubber-tapper, my mother would start the day very early. She will wake us up at 3.00am for us to do revision. Even though she does not have any educational background, she would remind us every day that the only thing you need in your life is education. All eight of us will be waking up very early just to read our books. With her determination, it has really shaped me to value education and work hard. I was lucky to have obtained an education loan from the state of Kedah, and that was the motivation for me to study harder, not only to strive for the A's but also to be the best in whatever subjects I studied."

"Everyone can work as a teacher but not everyone can be a teacher. If you just work as a teacher, you will just teach to settle your part and that is it. However, if you become a teacher, you will understand the audience, which are your students, and how would they accept your style of teaching. So you can make teaching fun. I would normally walk around the class and made sure I really zoom into what I'm explaining. You could not do this is

# I AM USM

**Max Lee Kong Kit graduated with Bachelor of Accounting in 2018.  
He is now a Manager at ActiveHQ, Penang. ([www.swimmingschool.com.my](http://www.swimmingschool.com.my))**

Some people wonder, "What does it mean to be a USM alum?" To me, being a USM alum is like carrying a badge of honour that sticks with you for the rest of your life. With it, we USM alumni carry with us the responsibility to do our best to contribute back to the society in any way possible, be it by climbing the corporate ladder or making the world a better place to live in.

My USM story began long before I received an offer letter from the School of Management (SOM) to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting (with Honours) in 2014. It began when I was 5 years old, when my parents sent me for swimming lessons. When I was 8 years old, I joined a swimming club and trained for competitive swimming. I swam in many competitions since then and so far, I have collected many medals (more than 200 medals at the last count) throughout my career.

From 10 years old onwards, I was selected to represent Penang in many national-level competitions. I was even selected to represent Penang in the Malaysia Games (SUKMA) in the 2010 and 2012 editions, which was the most prestigious sporting event in Malaysia. I had a lot of fun competing and the sport became an inseparable part of me.

**"One of the many reasons I chose USM was because there was a special programme (i.e., Warga Sukan) for athletes like me which offers a 50% discount for our annual tuition fees."**



**USM's relay team during MASUM 2017.  
We won 3 gold medals for all the relay events**



**Top: HSBC's Business Case Challenge 2018 Semi-finalist (Team USM)**  
**Bottom: ICAEW Business Case Challenge 2018 Malaysian Grand Finalist (Team USM)**

"So, how does it relate to my story in USM?," you might ask. As a matter of fact, I was offered to pursue my Bachelor's Degree in Accounting at two universities, one being USM. One of the many reasons I chose USM was because there was a special programme (i.e.,Warga Sukan) for athletes like me which offers a 50% discount for our annual tuition fees. Being a typical future accountant, saving costs is always a priority. Also, SOM is located at the main campus, which is closer to home in Penang, saving me even more costs.

"But why accounting?," you might ask further. My love for accounting began when I was in secondary school. I have always wanted to start my own business and I realized early that knowledge in accounting is important to understand the condition of the business and is useful in making business decisions. Hence, I took an extra subject in Principles of Accounting during my SPM, even though I was a science stream student. I had been accepted into the local matriculation programme in accounting and lo and behold, on 1 September 2014, I was finally at the USM main campus for my orientation week as a newly-minted student of USM.

One of the best things in USM was that it provided many avenues and opportunities for students to explore and to do things which are worthwhile, given that the students take the effort to find that opportunity. During my time in USM, I took the liberty to venture into starting up a few businesses, which ultimately failed (a different story for another day). At one point, I almost quit my degree to pursue a business opportunity with a friend in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor. I honestly thought I might be the next successful college dropout like Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg. Fortunately, I had a heart-to-heart chat with the Deputy Dean of SOM of the day, and he managed to talk some sense into me to continue my degree.

As part of the requirement for the Warga Sukan programme, I needed to undergo my training every weekday and to represent USM in swimming competitions throughout my four (4) years in USM. Eventually, in my 4th year, I had the opportunity to set up a joint-venture with a few fellow USM swimming team members to form a swimming academy to provide learn-to-swim lessons in USM.

We sent a proposal to the USM Pusat Sukan to rent the swimming pool in USM to conduct our lessons on weekends and it was approved by Pusat Sukan. The business proved to be quite successful, and we were profitable. At its highest point, we had more than 120 active students learning with us in a single month.

**"To those who are wondering how I have managed to balance my studies, swimming, presentation competitions, and business, I'd say that it is possible with proper time management and prioritizing what is important."**



My 4th year in USM was the busiest and the most productive. On top of all the accounting subjects getting tougher, daily training schedule and swimming lessons on weekends, I further participated in many business case study presentation/competitions and represented SOM and USM in many national-level competitions against other top tier universities in Malaysia. I was elected as the team leader in those competitions, and we managed to make SOM and USM proud by becoming the Malaysian grand finalists in ICAEW Business Case Challenge 2018 and semi-finalists in HSBC's Business Case Challenge 2018. Did I also mention that I was also the USM swimming team captain for the 2017/2018 academic year?

**“One of the best things in USM was that it provided many avenues and opportunities for students to explore and to do things which are worthwhile, given that the students take the effort to find that opportunity.”**

To those who are wondering how I have managed to balance my studies, swimming, presentation competitions, and business, I'd say that it is possible with proper time management and prioritizing what is important.

During my 4th year, I attended a particularly memorable subject and its lecturer also, Management Accounting and Control that was taught by the same Deputy Dean I had mentioned earlier. I ended up scoring a C+ for his class, but the lessons I took home was so much more than just the theory of management accounting and control. I did not know it then, but looking back, it was the most important lesson in my entire degree life, which is learning what it means to be a “human being”.



*USM's relay team during MASUM 2018*



*With students during swimming lessons in USM*

Fast forward to today, I am currently managing Active HQ, a sports company which provides swimming and yoga lessons and rental of futsal courts. One of my many goals in life is to give back to society and to make the world a better place to live in. Hence, one of the ways we are giving back now is to provide swimming lessons to children with special needs. These children are gifted in unique ways that we may yet understand, and we think that we can do our part to help them discover their uniqueness and potential as we teach them how to swim. Conducting special needs lessons may be challenging as each special needs child is unique in their own way, and it takes a lot of patience and empathy to understand their uniqueness and to figure out a way to help them to be better.

Through sports, we can see that people are coming together as a community and we wish to continue building that community that is focused on having fun and being active. Our hope is that more people will realize the potential of sports and how it plays a major role in preserving our physical and mental health, especially during a pandemic.

Last but not least, if I may offer some advice to my fellow USM alumni and juniors, it would be to learn to be a decent human being. In the current world of advanced artificial intelligence, we do not need more mindless robots graduating from USM. We need leaders who are compassionate about others and who can think critically and morally to do what is right for the betterment of society as a whole.

*Text/Photo: Max Lee Kong Kit  
Editing: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin*

*Disclaimer: All photos were taken before the COVID19 pandemic.*





# Medan Pantun Arena Persilangan Budaya

Viknesvaran A/L Kandasamy  
(B. Tech. 2013)

Umum beranggapan bahawa pengucapan pantun ialah adat dan tradisi khusus bagi masyarakat Melayu yang sering kali dapat dilihat penggunaannya dalam majlis keramaian seperti kenduri kahwin serta persembahan seni. Sesuatu yang di luar kebiasaan tercetus apabila salah seorang bekas pemantun Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Viknesvaran A/L Kandasamy (B. Tech. '13) yang berbangsa India, melibatkan diri secara mendalam dalam warisan berpantun. Penglibatan beliau dalam gelanggang seni interaksi unik ini bermula sejak beliau terlibat sebagai Exco Majlis Penghuni Desasiswa Restu pada tahun 2011.



"Tugas saya lebih kepada membantu dalam persiapan pasukan pantun Desasiswa Restu dan menguruskan hal ehwal pentadbiran termasuklah pendaftaran peserta, penginapan dan sebagainya sewaktu menjelang Pesta Pantun Antara Desasiswa USM (PADU). Tidak terlintas pada akal fikiran saya untuk turut sama bersaing sebagai pemantun di mana-mana acara pantun antara desasiswa

apatah lagi intervarsiti. Lebih manis lagi, penyertaan saya sebagai pemantun bermula secara tidak sengaja apabila pada tahun 2012, Pesta Pantun Bestari anjuran Kolej Kediaman Ke-4 (BESTARI) di Universiti Malaya, meletakkan syarat baru iaitu setiap pasukan perlu mempunyai sekurang-kurangnya seorang pemantun bukan Melayu. Oleh hal yang demikian, jurulatih pasukan pantun USM pada ketika itu, Allahyarham Encik Ezal Ezham meminta saya untuk turut serta dalam acara tersebut. Oleh sebab usaha jurulatih kami, Pesta Pantun Bestari yang berlangsung di Universiti Malaya pada tahun 2013, menjadi titik tolak penglibatan aktif saya dalam arena pantun."

Kejuaraan yang disandang oleh beliau bukan sahaja pada peringkat desasiswa USM, malah pada peringkat varsiti serta luar negara juga. Coretan kenangan manis ini terpahat di Universiti Malaya melalui pertandingan Pesta Pantun Bestari pada tahun 2013.

“Saya pada mulanya tidak menyangka yang saya mampu menghasilkan pantun secara spontan dalam masa kurang daripada 60 saat dan mampu memberikan tentangan hebat kepada pasukan-pasukan yang tidak kurang hebatnya dari universiti lain. Berkat tunjuk ajar jurulatih dan rakan sepasukan, kami berjaya merangkul Johan sekaligus mencatatkan kemenangan kali ke-3 berturut-turut buat USM. Saya juga turut terlibat dalam acara-acara pantun di luar negara, khususnya di Singapura.

Baru-baru ini, saya bersama-sama dengan tiga lagi rakan dari USM, menyertai Pertandingan Lafazkan Pantun 2.0 anjuran Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, dan kami berjaya merangkul Naib Johan. Tambahan pula, penyertaan ini merupakan penyertaan kali kedua kami dalam pertandingan seumpamanya dan dalam edisi sulung yg diadakan pada tahun 2020, pasukan kami memenangi tempat ketiga.”



Berbekalkan pengalaman dan pengetahuan yang sedia ada, beliau turut aktif melibatkan diri sebagai juri serta tenaga pengajar teknik berpantun. Antara penglibatan beliau sebagai juri isi adalah pada tahun 2016 di Pesta Pantun Piala Seri Melaka dan di Pesta Pantun Antara Desasiswa Universiti (PADU) pada tahun 2019. Pada tahun yang sama, beliau turut dijemput sebagai juri di pesta pantun anjuran Universiti Kebangsaan Singapura (NUS). Beliau turut berkongsi ilmu dan bakat yang dimiliki dengan pelajar-pelajar sekolah di Singapura. Kemahiran yang diketengahkan oleh beliau dalam perkongsian tersebut ialah cara-cara khusus untuk menghasilkan pembayang yang berkualiti serta teknik yang sistematik untuk menghasilkan sesebuah pantun.

“Pantun yang sempurna dilengkapi dengan pembayang dan maksud yang baik. Pembayang perlu mengambil kira unsur alam semula jadi tanpa mengubah sifat asli unsur tersebut. Fungsi bahagian maksud pula ialah menyampaikan sesuatu maklumat bagi tujuan tertentu seperti berpesan-pesan tentang sesuatu isu. Pada hemat saya, pengucapan pantun merupakan kearifan tempatan yang menonjolkan kebolehan warga setempat menggunakan hasil pemerhatian mereka terhadap alam semula jadi lalu menerapkan unsur tersebut ke dalam puisi tradisional,” tambah beliau lagi.

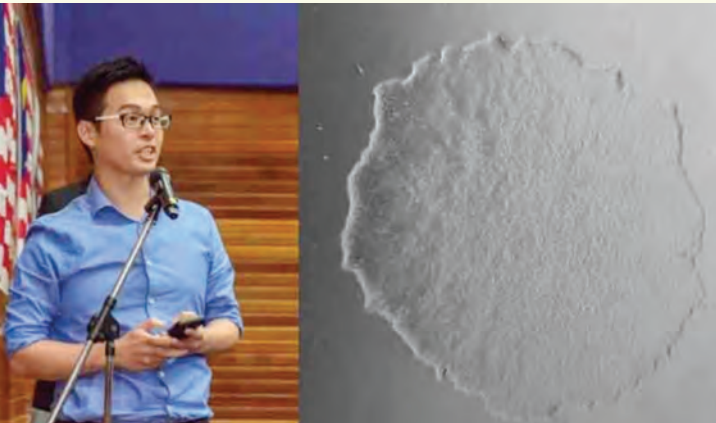


“Saya juga turut terlibat dalam beberapa acara secara maya dan salah satu acara yang saya kira sangat bermakna buat saya ialah acara yang dianjurkan Balai Pantun Singapura yang mengumpulkan para pemantun dari Nusantara (Malaysia, Singapura dan Indonesia) dan kami berkongsi pengalaman dan perjalanan kami sepanjang terlibat dalam arena pengucapan pantun ini.”

Selain berdepan dengan era pasca COVID-19 ini, pelbagai sektor terutama sektor perkhidmatan dan pendidikan turut terjejas kerana menghadapi kekangan untuk berkumpul secara fizikal sebagai ekoran Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP). Walau bagaimanapun, harapan beliau agar aktiviti seni seperti pantun dan puisi tradisional dapat diberikan perhatian oleh pelbagai pihak penganjur secara maya, agar seni ini tidak ditinggalkan. Beliau turut menegaskan bahawa penggiat seni khususnya bukan hanya disarankan untuk menganjurkan aktiviti pertandingan semata-mata, malahan menitikberatkan hal perkongsian ilmu dan wacana. Hal ini demikian kerana acara seperti ini dapat memangkin dan mengekalkan aspek estetik semangat berpantun yang ada dalam diri seseorang untuk kekal aktif berseni.

*Teks: Mohamad Syukran Abdul Rahman @ Omar  
Suntingan: Azlina Md Sadik  
Foto: Viknesvaran Kandasamy*

## SAINTIS IPPT Berjaya Mengkultur Sel Pluripoten Manusia



Sel pluripoten adalah sejenis sel tunjang (stem cell) yang mempunyai keupayaan untuk menjadi lebih daripada 200 jenis sel di dalam badan manusia termasuk sel saraf, otot, jantung, paru-paru, mata, hati, buah pinggang, dan lain-lain.

Buat julung kalinya saintis Institut Perubatan dan Pergigian Termaju (IPPT) berjaya mengkultur sel tunjang pluripoten manusia keluaran syarikat ATCC dan Gibco di makmal perubatan regeneratif di sini.



read more



Sumber: Pasukan saintis penyelidik sel tunjang IPPT • Suntingan: Tan Ewe Hoe

## PENSYARAH PERUBATAN PPSP Garap Pengalaman Pesakit Dalam Penulisan

"Penulisan adalah minat saya dan saya akan terus menulis, berkongsi segala maklumat berkaitan perubatan agar masyarakat khususnya pesakit-pesakit saya memahami jenis penyakit serta situasi kehidupan mereka dengan penyakit yang sedang diharungi," demikian perkongsian Pakar Perunding Obstetrik dan Ginekologi, Pusat Pengajian Sains Perubatan, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Profesor Dr. Nik Hazlina Nik Hussain dalam Siri Syarahan Umum Kebangsaan yang diadakan menerusi platform WebEx.



read more



Teks: Lailatul Hafiza Abdul Rashid • Foto: Abdul Hasib Abdul Rahman dan UKAST TV



## PELANCARAN USM HAPPY LUNCH PUSAT ISLAM Kampus Kejuruteraan Sasar Kelaparan Sifar

Pelancaran Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) *Happy Lunch* Kampus Kejuruteraan hari ini mensasarkan kelaparan sifar yang merupakan matlamat kedua Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs), Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu.



read more



Teks: Siti Faizah Abd Halim • Foto: Muhammad Taufik Abdul Rahman



I'll serve with USM once I'm done with my studies in India,"  
- Aishah

A second-year student undergoing the USM-KLE International Medical Programme (IMP) in India, Nur Aishah Budiman, 21, would like to serve with Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) once she is done with her studies.

Though at present she is in India, Nur Aishah has USM in her heart, as can be seen when viewing her viral YouTube content, which constantly talks about USM.

The YouTube Channel with the name 'Aishah Budiman' now has 30,000 subscribers and most of her videos revolved around her life as a USM student at the USM-KLE campus located in Karnataka, India, altogether inspiring those who would like to pursue their studies there.



Nur Aishah in front of administration building USM-KLE, Karnataka, India

Nur Aishah said that, she chose to pursue her studies in India through the USM-KLE programme as India is a popular country in the field of medicine.

She continued further by saying that, she totally appreciated the opportunity given to her by USM to study in India, and that is why she would like to serve at Hospital USM Kubang Kerian, Kelantan upon finishing her studies and graduating later on.

**"...she chose to pursue her studies in India through the USM-KLE programme as India is a popular country in the field of medicine."**

"Surely I would like (to return and serve at USM); while undergoing the USM Pre-University programme, I had the opportunity to visit the USM Kubang Kerian campus. Just by looking at the surroundings of the USM Kubang Kerian hospital and campus, I have already set my heart there," she said.

When asked about her success in her studies, Nur Aishah who hails from Teluk Intan, Perak said, her ambition to become a doctor has driven her to work hard and to succeed in her studies in the medical field.

She further said that, encouragement from friends and her seniors made her even more determined, to the extent of trying to secure a sponsorship to study in India as she did not want to burden her parents.

On study techniques while being in India during the COVID-19 pandemic, Nur Aishah said, they studied online as how students from other parts of the world did too due to the very high number of COVID-19 cases in the country.

**"I had the opportunity to visit the USM Kubang Kerian campus. Just by looking at the surroundings of the USM Kubang Kerian hospital and campus, I have already set my heart there."**

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**"She further said that, encouragement from friends and her seniors made her even more determined, to the extent of trying to secure a sponsorship to study in India as she did not want to burden her parents."**

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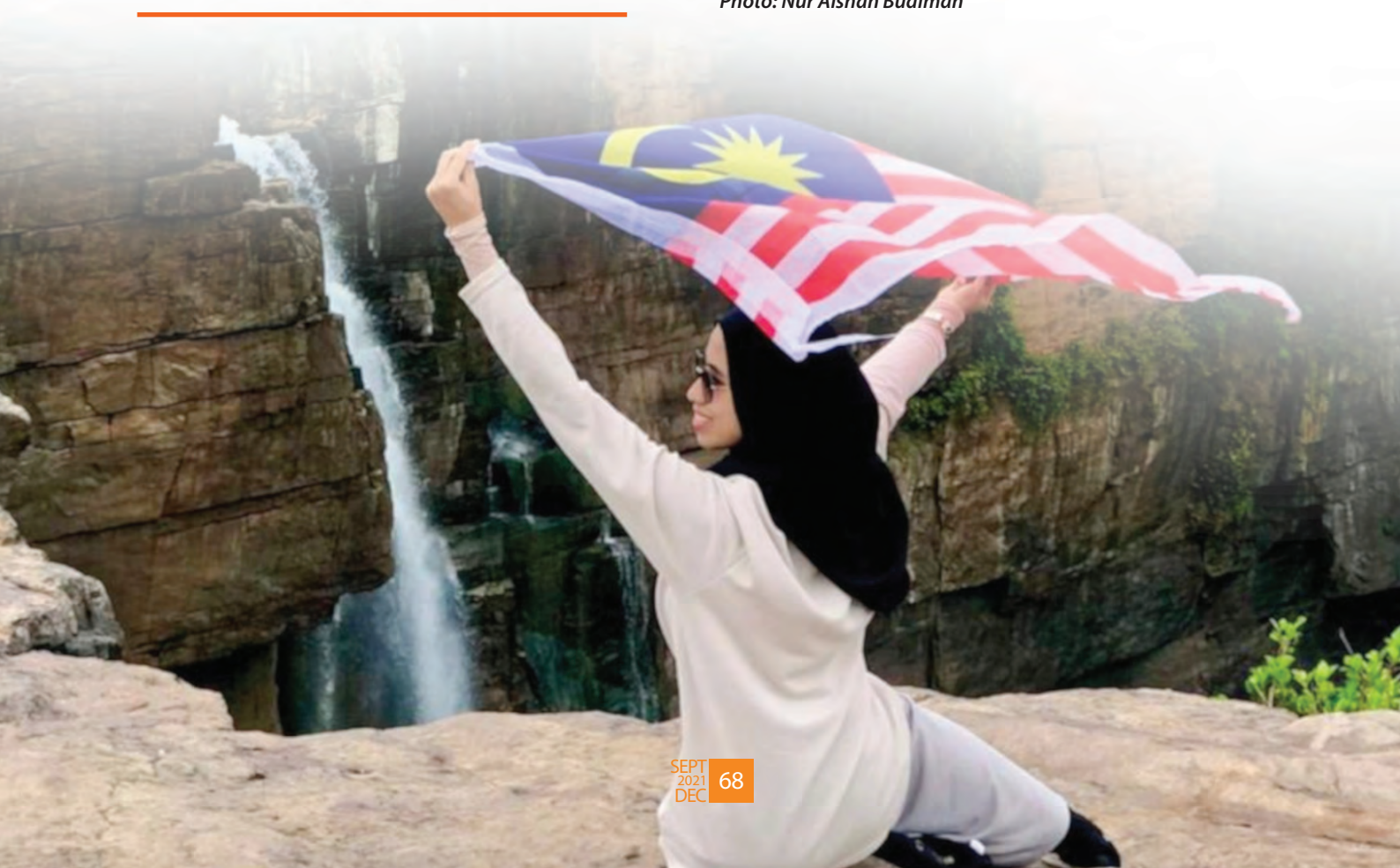
"If we can remember, the second wave of COVID-19 in India showed extremely high numbers, even up to 400,000 cases a day. Nevertheless what I can say was that, the 'total lockdown' that was implemented was very effective, even reducing the number of cases to 40,000, and with very strict enforcement.

"During that time, we studied online until the cases were reduced, following then we were allowed to go to our classes in stages," she said.

The fourth child of six, Nur Aishah also shared how she missed her family in Malaysia and her favourite dishes.

"I really miss all my family members, and surely the Malaysian food, which to me is second to none compared to dishes from other countries," she added.

*Translation: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin  
Photo: Nur Aishah Budiman*



# TASIK HARAPAN.

A Site for Modelling of Biological Behaviour



A mind filled with creativity and imagination can produce countless 'wonders' which can be appreciated or pondered upon.

Take for instance, the site where Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) is located now.

Though not a nuclear test site, it used to belong to the British Army during mankind's last global war. It has since become a 'battlefield' in seeking excellence as one of the nation's prominent research universities.

Don't be surprised (and therefore no need to ask why) if you see road signs with Godzilla and Kong hand-in-hand crossing the road as you come into the campus grounds.

It's part of the 'imaginary/imaginative' atmosphere in USM that we hope more people will embrace as the COVID-19 restriction MCO (Movement Control Order) has been withdrawn and we (and our minds) are free to roam again.

One of the more prominent features of the university is 'Tasik Harapan', a lake located close to the campus mosque fronting the side entrance. It's a favourite spot for the campus citizens to keep fit amidst nature.

No Godzilla or any other underwater creature has been seen here, save for the resident monitor lizards or 'Goji', at times seen in the university Facebook postings, highlighted along with other parts of the natural landscape of the 'university in a garden'.

Recently however, academicians from the USM School of Mathematical Sciences (located within the vicinity of the lake) have shared some of their work regarding the lake and its condition.

**"...more research from the mathematical modelling fields can be done on the aspect of biodiversity in this university. One example will be on the Goji's habitat i.e., 'Tasik Harapan' USM, which has been their living place for a long time."**

Associate Professor Dr. Teh Su Yean, Dr. Mohd Hafiz Mohd, Dr. Tay Chai Jian and Professor Dr. Koh Hock Lye (from Sunway University, formerly from USM) have been doing mathematical modelling research work in biological fields such as COVID-19, epidemiology and ecology, to name a few.

Hafiz said, more research from the mathematical modelling fields can be done on the aspect of biodiversity in this university. One example will be on the Goji's habitat i.e., 'Tasik Harapan' USM, which has been their living place for a long time.

"It has been reported by some studies that the algal concentration in 'Tasik Harapan' may reach 300 µg/L. This result implies a highly eutrophic condition and some steps to remedy this problem should be taken," Hafiz said.

*\*\*Eutrophication: excessive richness of nutrients in a lake or other body of water, frequently due to run-off from the land, which causes a dense growth of plant life.*



In order to address some of these issues, this team has employed mathematical modelling and dynamical systems techniques to examine the algae-phosphorus interactions and its combined influences with distinct biological factors in mediating eutrophication dynamics in Tasik Harapan.

Their work has recently been published in the Journal of Theoretical Biology (Q2 with IF 2.691) and the paper can be found below:

*Internal Phosphorus Recycling Promotes Rich and Complex Dynamics in an Algae-Phosphorus Model: Implications for Eutrophication Management - ScienceDirect*

**"At the same time, it can also demonstrate the efforts done by USM in the preservation of nature and its green areas, which are integral in spurring the university's development of the intellect, and thus enhancing the spirit and practice of nature conservation,"**

Overall, the modelling work suggests that a combination of external phosphorus loading, algal mortality, and internal phosphorus recycling rates play an important role in the eutrophication process which occurred within the lake, particularly in a shallow tropical lake like 'Tasik Harapan'.

Therefore, Su Yean explained, to facilitate the restoration process of 'Tasik Harapan' in the future, methods to reduce internal phosphorus recycling such as sediment dredging and flushing are recommended, in conjunction with the control of external phosphorus loading.

"Research work such as this will surely highlight USM's role as one of the top universities in relation to the world sustainability rankings.

"At the same time, it can also demonstrate the efforts done by USM in the preservation of nature and its green areas, which are integral in spurring the university's development of the intellect, and thus enhancing the spirit and practice of nature conservation," she added.

Yes, Godzilla exists only on the silver screen, the product of a fertile imagination.

However, the 'Goji' that we can see around 'Tasik Harapan' can definitely serve as an impetus in developing research ideas through creativity, in understanding more about our surroundings and what we can do to improve its existence.

Let's take the lead.

*Text: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin*

*Source: Dr. Mohd Hafiz Mohd and researchers from School of Mathematical Sciences, USM*

*Photo: Ebrahim Abdul Manan, Dr. Mohd Hafiz Mohd and Mohamed Talhah Idrus*



Happy New Year

2022

The last two years were marked by moments of extreme challenges, but the approaching new year provides a chance to look ahead for a better future.

Wishing that 2022 brings continued health, happiness and peace to the USM community while we continue to recognize the strengths, as well as the opportunities, in our differences.

Alumni Development Centre

