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UNMC Research Showcase 2016

We are pleased to invite all members of staff and student to attend the upcoming Research Showcase and vote for the best entry for People's Choice Award. The Research Showcase is an annual Graduate School event, where postgraduate research students present their research, in poster format, to a wider audience.

The Research Showcase is a great opportunity for researchers to share their passion for their work, practice their presentation skills and engage with the wider audience. It also showcases the diversity and breadth of research at The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC).



Key Dates

Online Voting

25th — 27th April 2016

**the online voting link will be provided in due course.*

Exhibition & On-site Voting

27th April 2016

10am — 1pm

SA Activity Room 1, H1B11

The aim of the exhibition is to promote public engagement, open discussion and exchange of views and opinions with a wider audience, who are not necessarily acquainted with the research topic or field.

Research Boot Camp

What do PhD students need to help them get started on their research degree?

Research Boot Camp is back, starting from 11th to 15th April 2016! It offers a range of intensive courses to help the new postgraduate students to get going with their research degrees. The courses offered are:

- Nature of the PhD and the Supervision Process
- How to be an Effective Researcher
- Creative Thinking
- Planning Research and Time Management
- Getting into the Habit of Writing

The boot camp is part of the Researcher Development Programme (RDP) by the Graduate School. In addition to the courses in the boot camp, the RDP includes 46 other courses, designed to support postgraduate students at different stages of their PhDs. The RDP was also designed to support the early stages in the development skills listed in the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#).

Research Showcase Training

How to write an effective press release?

A workshop titled **Preparing a Press Release** was held on Monday, 22nd February 2016. The workshop was conducted by Dr Jiin Woei Lee, Research Training Development Manager. It was designed to support those who are planning to enter the Research Showcase competition and for those who are interested in communicating their research to a wider audience. The workshop helped participants to identify what journalists define as news and further develop some strategies to get them interested. Some handy tips in preparing for a well written press release with a strong headline were also shared during the workshop.



How to prepare an effective poster? How to give an effective presentation?

A dedicated training for the participants of this year's Research Showcase was held on Monday, 28th March 2016. The training was conducted by the Research Training Development Managers, Dr Jiin Woei Lee and Dr Tissa Chandesa.

The training was designed to support the creation and design of posters to communicate research work in an innovative and informative manner for a non-research audience, provide assistance with developing the skills of effective verbal communication and for participants to practise presenting research effectively on posters.

Tell us how your research makes an impact is the tagline of the Research Showcase this year. The Research Showcase gives UNMC postgraduate research students the chance to share their research with new audiences and tell the world how their research makes an impact.

The View by...

Dr Suganti Ramarad

University Teacher, Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering

Transitioning from a PhD student to an academic staff

Nowadays, every time I glance at my mug, it reminds me of the quote that was haunting the finishing of my PhD life. “Keep calm and finish the PhD”. In my life context, the finishing of PhD life has its own beauty. I love it so much that I cherish every pitch of it, yet I hate it so much that I am so relieved it’s done and dusted now.

The most relinquished moments of PhD life came hitting me after the first submission of thesis to the office. It was a bizarre moment of celebration externally, but a cold fiery feel within. Once the celebration settled down, the preparation for the VIVA voce begun. Again, things seemed to fall back into the PhD life pattern (reading the thesis, looking through papers, reanalysing results & etc.), but yet the cold fiery feel followed me like a shadow. I brushed it off and went on with the PhD life. Then the dreaded VIVA voce took place. I passed the VIVA with minor correction (YEY! Celebration again!). The flurry of celebration settled down even sooner this time around and the internal fear rooted even deeper. I kept asking myself “What is wrong with me?” and then it hit me! Doing this PhD has turned into a lifestyle over this three years journey. I have been perfecting the juggling of PhD, family and personal developments all the while. It was a way of life now. The finishing/completion of PhD just meant that all this is changing. Another new life waits ahead and the process of perfecting the new life is about to start soon. I realised I feared the change. I didn’t want to let go.

Like the saying “Life goes on”, I had to move on, embracing the fear. I started applying for academic positions all around Malaysia. Resumes were sent flying around, tailored to every job applied. Months passed by with no answer from any employers. I call this phase as moments of uncertainty and self-doubts (all the **negativity** of being an expert of a field and accomplishing the PhD was self-proclaimed in this phase).

Fortunately, I was offered a temporary university teacher position, assigned to a module in place of a professor on sabbatical leave. I leaped at the opportunity and started to prepare for the teaching experience. Altogether, the teaching experience was delighting; once again I started to cherish life. There was definitely more money now that brought more smiles. I also enrolled into Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE), to enhance the skills of the teacher in me (You aren’t really a PhD holder if you stopped learning right?). The discipline in managing time from the PhD life came handy. I knew what, when and how will I prioritise my tasks at hand. As I deliver the classes every week and share my past experiences as real life examples with my student, life seemed to fall in place. The uncertainty and self-doubts has evaporated being replaced with euphoria of accomplishment. I know now for sure that the PhD journey has enriched my life in more ways than I could ever explain.

Living the life,
Suganti



SWIRL @ Nucleus

So What's It Really Like?

Find out about life at UNMC from current postgraduate students!

Strike a balance!

by Kalaimani Markandan, PhD candidate from the Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering

It all traces back to July 2008 when I joined UNMC for foundation in engineering. One's first semester in university is often an eye-opening experience. Mine was no different; in particular I found myself studying more than ever for good grades. Years passed; In July 2013 I graduated with a first class master's degree in Chemical Engineering. To be brutally honest, for those 5 years in UNMC; I had not been to Broga Hill (a must-do if you're studying at UNMC), I had rarely hit the gym and little did I know about restaurants that served the best food near UNMC; be it Broga, Semenyih or Kajang.

Just when I thought I was about to leave UNMC, I was offered a PhD position. It is common knowledge that getting a PhD degree is hard, well it's meant to be! It was during this period that I realised I was missing on a lot of activities which I should have done during my undergraduate years. It was time for me to strike a balance between research and social life. I made many amazing friends who have today become an integral part of my life. We had lots of fun and managed to stay focused on research.

I'd like to express my gratitude towards UNMC Graduate School for their training courses which has made a significant impact on my research, professional skills and confidence level. Thanks to these skills which I developed, I had the fortune to receive the People's Choice and Best Press Release awards during the Research Showcase 2015 and the best speaker award amongst 17 international researchers at the 3rd Asia Conference on Materials and Mechanical Engineering held in Chengdu, China. The final icing on the cake and probably the best achievement I have till date was winning the grand prize at the annual FOE postgraduate research showcase where the grand prize was a travel fund to the UK, for which I am very grateful to the Faculty of Engineering.



There's nothing wrong with striving to do the best you can for academic excellence, the key is to attain balance in different aspects of life. I will always cherish the precious moment I had in UNMC during my PhD.

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*P.S. I did finally hike Broga Hill



Doctoral Training Programme



CFF-UNMC DTP

The DTP Research Model

Welcome to the ongoing CFF-UNMC DTP column. In this month's issue we look at the approach that the DTP (Doctoral Training Programme), and CFF (Crops For the Future) at large, have taken for scientific inquiry.

Universities are built from blocks of well-defined subject areas, such as “biology” or “economics”. These are known as “disciplines”, and focus on the depth of knowledge within that subject area (and are usually even more specific; plant genetics, physiology, molecular biology, etc.), rather than breadth of knowledge. The ‘reductionist’ approach to experimentation underpins many of the great strides that research has taken. Although disciplines exist within their own faculties, they increasingly engage with each other and exchange knowledge—sometimes even working on projects together. However, at the end of the day, each discipline returns to its own unit and publishes their own findings within their own journals.

When disciplines co-exist, unique approaches for addressing global issues arise. Different models of research have come out of these collaborations, and they include:


Multidisciplinary research involves different disciplines, who may work together at some point in the project. However, each discipline will address a separate question and come up with their own conclusions. The final intention is to solve the problem that initiated the collaboration and return to their respective disciplines.

Interdisciplinary research allows knowledge transfer from one discipline to another in a multi-phase project. While multidisciplinary approach is rooted on the framework of one discipline, interdisciplinary approach transfers methods from one discipline to another. This model relies on a methodology or design developed from all the involved disciplines, and makes use of the perspectives and skills of each discipline at some point of the research project.

Transdisciplinary research brings in experts from across, between and beyond different disciplines to work on the entire complexities of a project together. This involves the unique expertise that each discipline offers, but working on the whole project together with different parts of society, including business, civil society and other groups that have interest in or are effected by the problem and any potential solutions. By bringing in different disciplines and non-disciplines for a common single goal, resources are shared and discipline-specific approaches are modified and embedded within the greater whole. In its place, new concepts, theories, methods are created for an innovative attempt at addressing complex problems.

Societal challenges are interconnected, and can rarely be addressed through one discipline. Feeding the growing population in a hotter world is a question for transdisciplinary research since it requires input from different scientific disciplines and society at large. This is the challenge that CFF are currently addressing.

Research at CFF aims to follow this holistic approach for unlocking the potential of underutilised crops. The “Research Value Chain” approach adopted by CFF is driven by end-use to identify specific problems with candidate crops. Research is then undertaken across the value chain, through projects within the different ‘CFF Research Programmes’, to resolve issues from agronomy and breeding all the way to government policy.



This interconnectedness extends to the DTP programme, where studentships are located within the CFF Research Programmes, thus complementing one another. The studentships make use of research input from across the value chain while also exploiting advanced technologies, such as geographical information systems, genomics or policy research. The next few issues of the DTP column will shed more light on the current activities and ongoing research within the DTP programme.

It is clear that the complexities of today require us to be more creative and innovative – to make use of the advanced tools that we have and to address the increasingly complex problems that we face. Knowledge transfer on its own is not sufficient, we need to build on the expertise and work of each discipline to create new intellectual spaces and answer key issues, such as global food insecurity.

Take-home message: How can your current research fit within a transdisciplinary model?



Crops For the Future (CFF) Headquarters. Digital image. Crops For the Future, n. d. Web 1 Apr 2016
<http://www.cropsforthefuture.org/Our_Research-@-LandingArticle.aspx#sthash.AJeYqmLW.dpbs>

Researcher Development Programme

The Graduate School's Researcher Development Programme (RDP) provides free training for University of Nottingham registered postgraduate researchers and taught Masters students of the University to develop a range of transferable skills.

Upcoming RDP courses in April 2016 are outlined below:

Date	Time	Course
4 th April 2016	10am — 12pm	Preparing for Your Annual Review
11 th April 2016	10am — 12pm	Nature of the PhD and the Supervision Process
12 th April 2016	10am — 5pm	How to be an Effective Researcher
13 th April 2016	10am — 12pm	Creative Thinking
14 th April 2016	10am — 12pm	Planning Research and Time Management
15 th April 2016	10am — 12pm	Getting into the Habit of Writing
25 th April 2016	10am — 12pm	Getting Going on Your Thesis
29 th April 2016	10am — 12pm	Writing Research Proposals

Note: Please register your attendance at <http://moodle.nottingham.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=11606>.

We are also open to conducting tailor made courses which are driven primary by the students request, input and interactions. If you wish to us to conduct such courses, please get in touch with us via email to graduateschool@nottingham.edu.my.



Postgraduate Student Teachers Programme

The Graduate School offers postgraduate research students, who are involved in teaching, a range of workshops. The workshops cover different methods of teaching, including giving feedback when assessing undergraduates' work. Schools identify which of the workshops are relevant to the style of teaching that the postgraduate student teachers (PST) will be doing. PSTs must complete the specified workshops before they can take on their teaching duties.

Upcoming PST courses in April 2016 are outlined below:

Date	Time	Course
19 th April 2016	10am — 12.30pm	Demonstrating in Laboratory Practicals
20 th April 2016	10am — 12.30pm	Assessing and Giving Feedback
20 th April 2016	3pm — 5pm	Health and Safety Workshop
21 st April 2016	10am — 12.30pm	Lecturing for Learning
26 th April 2016	10am — 12.30pm	Small Group Teaching

Note: Please register your attendance at <http://moodle.nottingham.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=12021>.

If you have any enquiries, please get in touch with us via email to graduateschool@nottingham.edu.my.

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The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus
Jalan Broga
43500 Semenyih
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Malaysia

t: +60 3 8924 8633/8634/8280 f: +60 3 8924 8651

e: graduateschool@nottingham.edu.my

w: <http://www.nottingham.edu.my/GS/index.aspx>

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