



Group photographs, taken during the Postgraduates' *Satay* Night.

Postgraduates' *Satay* Night

A postgraduate "*Satay* Night" networking event was held on Tuesday, 24th May 2016. Hosted by the Post-Graduate Student Network (PGSN) in collaboration with the Graduate School, this event brought together postgraduate students and a few academic members as well as administrative staff of the University.

The event provided a great opportunity for the postgraduate community to interact, network and build rapport with one another. Special thanks to the PGSN for their commendable effort in successfully organising the event. We hope everyone had a good time!

Full story at: <https://blogs.nottingham.edu.my/postgraduate/2016/05/27/postgraduates-satay-night/>

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The event started off with an opening speech by Ms Deepa Kumari Veerasingam, Head of Graduate School, followed by a welcoming remark from Rachel Maeve Taylor, the Student Association (SA) Postgraduate Officer.

MyMentor Awareness and Networking Event

MyMentor Awareness and Networking Event was held on Monday, 16th May 2016 at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). The public universities were invited to send five early career researchers as potential mentees who are eligible to undertake the MyMentor post-doctoral programme.

MyMentor is a six-year initiative that is being supported by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. MyMentor aims to develop post-doctoral research in Malaysia, in line with the National Higher Education Strategic Plan. It is designed to motivate and support both experienced and early career researchers who work in public universities. It is delivered primarily by The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC), the University of Southampton Malaysia Campus (USMC) and Monash University Malaysia (MUM).

The event was launched with a keynote address by YBhg Datin Paduka Ir Dr Siti Hamisah binti Tapsir, Deputy Director General of Higher Education (IPTA).

An inaugural MyMentor seminar series titled “How to Publish in a High Quality Journal” was presented by Professor Graham Kendall, Vice-Provost of Research and Knowledge Transfer where he shared 50 tips for writing good academic papers.

The event also included a sharing session where the current mentees shared their experience undertaking the MyMentor post-doctoral programme. An annual review was later held in the afternoon where mentees and their mentors presented their annual review report to the MyMentor Management Board.



Professor Graham Kendall



YBhg Datin Paduka Ir Dr Siti Hamisah binti Tapsir



Some of the mentees and mentors who were present at the event



A group photograph of mentees, mentors and members of the MyMentor Management Board

The Experience

The Best Press Release and Overall Winner of the UNMC Research Showcase 2016, Lillian Joyce Among Olule, shares her experience and tips from the competition. Here is what she has to say...

One of my greatest fears in life is the regret of not living up to my full potential. This was in part what initially drove me to participate in the Research Showcase this year. The other driving factor was that I made a pact with two friends that whoever failed to submit an entry into the competition would have to buy lunch for the other two for a week so...

The first phase of the competition was to submit a press release. The Research Showcase is all about clearly communicating your research to a general audience. I used my mother as my test subject. After I explained it to her the first time, she asked me to explain it again, in English. So I went back to the drawing board. I also had great input and support from my supervisors, Dr Gnanam Gnanagurunathan and Dr Nandha Kumar whom I would like to thank profusely.

The second phase was the poster design. Again my first attempt was dismal but thanks to the training conducted by Dr Tissa Chandesa and particularly Dr Jiin Woei Lee who painstakingly went over my design and gave pointers, I was able to improve my work with successive attempts.

The third phase was the video presentation. I wrote out key information that I wanted to highlight and practised. In retrospect, it is better to record yourself and watch it back and adjust your presentation accordingly. Thank you Ms Amirah, Ms Lisa and Ms Fazlin for patiently enduring all the retakes.

The last phase was presenting to the judges and the general public. This was a little daunting at first but with successive presentations, I got more comfortable explaining my research. Interacting with the audience was quite fun and I got a couple of interesting ideas, questions and feedback. The experience was definitely an enriching one.

To summarise, my tips for future entrants would be:

1. **Keep it simple:** Simplify as much as you can. Find everyday examples that can help explain things. However, consult your supervisor to see if your simplification is distorting the description of your research.
2. **Have a support system:** Friends, family and God can help to keep you motivated and accountable.
3. **Practise, practise, practise:** Enough said.
4. **Read the judging criteria:** Frame your presentation around hitting all the key points they are looking out for.
5. **Lastly pray, attend the trainings, give it your best and have fun!**

I will conclude by thanking the Graduate School for organising this event and with a quote from the book *The monk who sold his Ferrari* by Robin Sharma which will hopefully motivate you to take advantage of any opportunities you come across (like next year's UNMC Research Showcase!) *"Dare to dream that you are more than the sum of your current circumstances. Expect the best. You will be astonished at the results."*

Be inspired.



Lillian Joyce Among Olule, PhD student, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, with her poster titled "Using Your Wireless for Power!"

The View by...

Nabila Shariff Al-Baiti

University Teaching Fellow, Centre for English Language Education

The Culture of Teaching

“A Tanzanian, teaching at a British University in Malaysia, what could be more ideal?”

I had asked myself that question — or variations of it, depending on my geographical location — almost every single day for the last decade or so of my life. I had never really acknowledged my (unique) background, however, in the way my former boss did when I volunteered to take over teaching a module that centred on the dichotomies of culture. Those were his exact words to me, and that question was what had me thinking, ‘sold!’ My big break had arrived.

It is my firm belief, and I do not know of any other professional who would disagree with me, that teaching encompasses passion, thirst for educational challenges, and a love of all that is diverse. We have all heard of—and had—conversations about culture at one time or another, but seldom has one looked at the actual culture of teaching. The way we instruct is greatly influenced by where we are from, where we have drawn our experiences, and what we want future generations to take away from their learning journeys. Even though it is something you know to be true deep within yourself, the marriage of culture and teaching is one of those concepts that is more often than not taken for granted.

What I have learned from teaching (and being!) in a multitude of places, in seas of different faces, against the backdrop of a myriad of the colourful infusions of culture, is this:

1. Fully embracing your own background, in whatever form or shape it takes, allows you to be —by default— open to seeing and appreciating other cultures through your students’ eyes. It creates an almost instant rapport, building up to solid relationship that will not only go beyond one’s teaching scope, but also one that will last a longer than many academic tears.
2. Explore and consciously learn — as much as possible, taking into account time restraints! — about the people you are teaching. Learn about the cultural aspects of their lives (their lives back home if they are not native to the land you are instructing in). Open doors to what makes them who they are. This goes beyond superficial aspects (‘how do you greet people in your county/culture?’) to a little under the tip of the iceberg (‘how are women viewed?/What can you tell me about gender dynamics in your town?’).
3. Listen to how they respond. And I mean attentively, and emotionally. You will ‘hear’, in the recesses of your mind, away from the buzzing of reality, doors opening. You may even find an untapped source of motivation being released.

At the end of the day, when all is said and done, teaching culturally in its most basic form, is preparing to open yourself up to students, and having them open up to you, regardless of societal norms, ethnic obstacles and language barriers.

I am fortunate to have had it all.



SWIRL @ Nucleus

So What's It Really Like?

Find out about life at UNMC from current postgraduate students!

My Research

by Tay Sook Hui, PhD candidate from the School of Pharmacy

Are we doomed to a life of obesity or disease because of our genes? My PhD expedition seeks to uncover the mystery of long heated debates of nature (Genetic) versus nurture (Epigenetic) in obese diabetic subjects.

When visiting the nature versus nurture dispute, the recent paper published in Nature Genetics on 14.5 million pairs of twins, ascertaining that both genetic and environmental factors contributing a draw influence of traits and diseases. Indeed, this has shed light to us that we have domination over our health status and not condemned by bad genes. Buoyantly, my doctorates investigations can breath hope to this quest.



To identify the influence of genetic impact to alarming ever-rising incidents of obesity and diabetes, I will explore the genetic sequencing to detect the chance of mutation on our target gene in our subjects. Our obese diabetic subjects will be undergoing an established dietary intervention, medical nutrition therapy (MNT) recommended by American Diabetes Association and Malaysian Dietitian Association. Although such intervention with MNT has appreciably delivered clinically favourable results, the underlying molecular mechanism is rare. Additionally, we attempt to understanding the possibility of either personalised genetic or epigenetic biomarkers contribute to some variation of results. With this in mind, we will then explore the effect of diet in our gene, explicitly epigenetic and how epigenetic influence our genes. The next

-generation sequencing, namely Pyrosequencing will be used to deliver this purpose. We hope to find novel biomarker(s) in the complexity of molecular medicine, transforming into simplicity of personalised healthcare solution.

My pursuit of Dual PhD in Pharmacy (The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus, UNMC) and in Molecular Medicine (Universiti Putra Malaysia, UPM) has enriched me with synergistic and converging value as a researcher. Simultaneously, having prudent co-supervisor currently at Harvard Joslin Diabetes Centre, being attached to National Diabetes Institutes, having very supportive erudite supervisors from both UNMC and UPM, I am enthusiastic that the endeavours of our PhD research will bring an optimistic contribution to Medical Revolution Transformation especially in the area of obesity and diabetes epidemic.



Tay [right] with her supervisors, Dr Pung Yuh Fen [left] and Professor Nashiru Billa [centre]. Tay is our very first student for the dual PhD programme, a collaborative programme between Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and The University of Nottingham.

Doctoral Training Programme



CFF-UNMC DTP

Collaborations in a PhD Programme

Welcome to the ongoing CFF-UNMC DTP column. In this month's issue we continue our discussion of bridging the gap between real life issues and the scientific quest through the pursuit of collaborations.

Academia today encourages researchers to maintain active collaborations throughout their research activities. As a result, collaborations are a common element in PhD programmes. The conventional expectation of a PhD programme is that PhD candidates will be an expert in a specific discipline/sub-discipline. However, trans-disciplinarity remains an intrinsic aspect of DTP programmes, and collaborations form a key element of these studentships. Thus, the candidate is no longer grounded by the expectations to be a leading expert in one discipline/sub-discipline and can expand on these skills through transdisciplinary collaborations.

This goes hand in hand with the current trend towards globalisation of science in tackling global issues that are shared across international boundaries and scientific disciplines. It offers an ideal platform for combining research and innovation in addressing global issues. Consequently, researchers increasingly work in large research teams that cross various disciplines, carrying out research activities at multiple sites or institutions.

Prior to the commencement of a research collaboration, it is common that the partners would agree on defining the research project to meet set key goals. The collaborating parties would each have expectations with regards to the research relationship, and it is crucial to ensure these rights and responsibilities are aligned. In some instances, the parties might have differing definitions of what the collaboration involves and these need to be resolved at the very start.

Two key considerations in order to avoid stagnation or unravelling of a collaboration:

1. **Communication and work habits:** A common issue encountered in collaborations (especially transdisciplinary) is communication. Maintaining regular communication is a primary concern, however it is important to also realise that the communication that occurred might have been unproductive as well. Carefully consider the differences between disciplines in the use of language/jargon as well as with regards to work habits, standards, paradigms etc. Guarding such issues before they arise can protect a rewarding collaboration.
2. **Data usage and retention:** This is usually agreed on by the collaborators since the onset. Data is typically owned by the key researcher (and institute) who are involved in the generation (or collection) of the data, while allowing the collaborating researchers access to the data. Data retention is important for all aspects of research projects, such as reporting back to the funder, verification of results etc. Intellectual property is also usually agreed on for scenarios where patentable inventions may be made during the research. Generally, the parties would have a shared interest in publicising findings from a successful research project. However, a formal agreement on this will also play a key role in terms of authorship and giving due credit to the contributors, especially when it comes to scientific meetings and publications.

In a small or large scale, your research project is a key example of a collaboration. How have you contributed to the ongoing collaboration in your research project? What experiences have you gained from it?

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 June 2016 are outlined below:

Date	Time	Course
1 st June 2016	10am — 1pm	Further Presentation Skills
8 th June 2016	10am — 12pm	Communicating Your Research: Dealing with Media
13 th June 2016	10am — 12pm	Finishing Your Thesis

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.

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