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From left: Datuk Phang Ah Tong, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of MIDA, Professor Graham Kendall, Provost and CEO at UNMC, Dato' Azman Mahmud, Chief Executive Officer of MIDA, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Zakri Abdul Hamid, Science Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, and Professor Claire O'Malley, Vice-Provost (Research and Knowledge Exchange) at UNMC.

Conference: Funding Research on a Changing Landscape

The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC) held its inaugural international research conference titled "Funding Research on a Changing Landscape" on 24th and 25th August 2016. This conference was organised as a joint collaboration with the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA).

The conference highlighted prominent research funding opportunities and featured critical topics dedicated to explore new opportunities and support from the various funding bodies.

The two-day conference provided a stimulating international forum for exploring funding opportunities related to research in the widest sense and from a range of different perspectives. The conference also offered a diverse range of speakers .

Future Events

UNMC 2016 Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT[®])

6th September 2016

Great Hall, Trent Building

**All staff and students are welcome.*

Postgraduate Refresher Programme

26th—29th September 2016

Postgraduate Hub, H1B12

**All new and returning postgraduate students are welcome.*

Research in Conversation: Moving Forward

Professor Claire O'Malley

Vice-Provost (Research and Knowledge Exchange)

Postgraduate research is the engine of new discoveries in science, technology, engineering, arts/humanities and social science. The very award of a PhD is premised on making a substantial and original contribution to the field. At the same time, PhD degree programmes are aimed at training the next generation of leaders in the discipline. As Vice-Provost for Research and Knowledge Exchange at UNMC, and as a former Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Nottingham, I am committed to ensuring that postgraduate research is at the heart of our research strategy. Particularly in the Malaysian context, any Government funded research must entail the training of PhD students, who are employed as research assistants on projects. This has great advantages, because it ensures that PhD students are suitably directed on a tightly specified programme of research under the guidance of their supervisors, who are (in the case of funded projects) signed up to delivering particular objectives. On the other hand, in order to develop as future independent researchers, PhD students need to be given the flexibility to develop their own independent thinking, with guidance. Thus, the PhD is always a balance between directed and independent research. The model is one of apprenticeship, where students begin with quite tightly specified research plans, directed by their supervisors and supported by training activities, then they gradually progress to the stage where they take on more leadership in the direction of the project.



Increasingly, PhD training in the UK and in Malaysia involves engaging with the beneficiaries of research – what used to be termed ‘users’. The nomenclature these days is ‘impact’. This has become a very important part of the research and funding landscape in the UK, and universities there are partly evaluated on the success of their impact, both in economic and social terms. This is now becoming the case for Malaysia too, as one can see in the new Higher Education Blueprint. Universities worldwide have moved from the ‘ivory towers’ of the past and are increasingly held to account by their Governments to deliver outcomes in the national interest and, even more so in the 21st century, to deliver outcomes that address global challenges, both technical and social. One of my roles as VP RKE is to develop UNMC’s capability to deliver research outcomes that directly benefit industry/commerce and society as well as making impact in high quality scientific journals and conferences. So I will be working closely with the Business Engagement and Innovation Services team to further develop our portfolio of contract research, much of which will involve engaging PhD students.

This increasing emphasis on the impact of research also has advantages for the development of PhD students as they transition to future careers. Whilst many PhD students embark on their research in the hope of becoming academics in universities, the fact is that only a small proportion of PhD graduates get jobs in academia. Most will go on to careers in the worlds of industry, commerce, the public sector (whether governmental or non-governmental). Therefore, developing experience throughout your PhD study of working in those sectors will be increasingly important in giving you the edge over competitors when you go for jobs. I hope to work with Faculties, the Graduate School and other Professional Services in giving you the opportunity for such experience, whether through voluntary work, internships or contract research.

UNMC 2016

Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT[®])



Fancy hearing an 80,000 word thesis explained in less than 180 seconds?

The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC) will hold its 2016 Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT[®]) on **6th September 2016**, from **11am to 3pm** at the **Great Hall, Trent Building**. We are pleased to invite all staff and students to come and provide support to the participants who will showcase their on-going research work.

The audience can also participate in the competition by taking part in the 3MT[®] People's Choice competition where audience will get the chance to vote for the participant who best explains his/her research work. More information regarding the 3MT[®] People's Choice will be provided on the day of the event.

Postgraduate Refresher Programme

The Graduate School will hold its annual welcoming event for new and returning postgraduate students on **26th to 29th September 2016**. It is a chance to find out about the dedicated support and facilities available to postgraduate students.

Monday, 26th September 2016

10am—11am	Introduction to the Graduate School
11am—12.30pm	Introduction to Development Needs Analysis
12.30pm—2pm	Networking Lunch
2pm—4pm	How to make the most out of your postgraduate studies

Tuesday, 27th September 2016

10am—11.30am	A Session with the Careers Advisory Service (CAS): How to Write an Effective CV and Cover Letter
11.30am—12.30pm	Introduction to the Postgraduate Student Network (PGSN)
12.30pm—2pm	Networking Lunch
2pm—4pm	Graduate Attributes

Wednesday, 28th September 2016

10am—3pm (tentative)	Faculty of Engineering's Poster Competition
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Thursday, 29th September 2016

11am—12.30pm	A Session with the Alumni and Donor Relations Office (ADRO)
12.30pm—2pm	Networking Lunch
2pm—4pm	Continuing Your PhD Journey

*The Graduate School has made every effort to ensure that the information in this newsletter was accurate when published. Please note, however, that the nature of the content means that it is subject to change from time to time, and you should therefore consider the information to be guiding rather than definitive.

Past Event: Coffee and Cake Session—National Day Special

The months of August and September are of utmost significance to Malaysians as we commemorate and celebrate National Day on 31st August and Malaysia Day on 16th September.

In conjunction with the momentous celebration of Malaysia's 59th National Day, a Coffee and Cake Session was held on 26th August 2016. Information sheets on some of the Malaysia's Firsts e.g. First Prime Minister, First Malaysia Plan, First Olympic Games Participation, First Railway Line and Station, etc. were also exhibited during the session.



The theme for this year's National Day celebration is *#SehatiSejiwa #OneHeartOneLove*. The theme reflects the spirit of solidarity, understanding, togetherness and humanity of all the people in the country.

We hope that the session enabled our postgraduate students to rekindle their patriotic spirit, which is essential for social cohesion and unity in a nation with diverse races, cultures and religions.

SWIRL @ Nucleus

So What's It Really Like?



Our third year PhD student from the School of Geography, Nagulendran Kangayatkarasu or better known as Nagu, had the opportunity to attend the Eighth Trondheim Conferences on Biodiversity.

Since 1993 the Trondheim Conferences on Biodiversity have provided an arena for open dialogue and capacity enhancement among stakeholders on the biodiversity agenda, seeking to create a transparent and scientifically sound basis for addressing current issues. Outputs and recommendations from this conference is presented to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of Parties for further deliberation and adoption as appropriate by nations who are Parties to CBD.

The Eighth Trondheim Conference brought together decision-makers and experts from around the globe to discuss interrelationships between the agriculture and biodiversity sectors and how their policies can address shared problems and provide shared solutions for the achievement of mutually supportive and

sustainable outcomes. Nagu attended this conference and had the opportunity to deliver a paper “Spatial planning as a tool to mainstream biodiversity in agriculture and related sectors by identifying conservation priorities”.

In his paper, Nagu shared Malaysia’s experience in elevating poverty which was at 52% at the point of independence in 1957 to just 0.6% in 2014 by among others having affirmative policies in agriculture and plantation sectors. At the same time Malaysia also has embarked on an ambitious Central Forest Spine initiative to link four major forest complexes in Peninsular Malaysia for biodiversity conservation and to maintain ecological functions of these important ecosystems. He underscored the importance of biodiversity mainstreaming and conservation for holistic socio-economic development.

He shared Malaysia’s pledge to the world to maintain 50% of her land area under forest cover in perpetuity. Nagu also highlighted the challenges and issues in implementing the CFS. Towards this end he presented his research work on identifying conservation priorities which can facilitate in addressing these challenges. By having these priority issues identified by a multi shareholder approach, it allows for more focus implementation as well as allow for better resource mobilisation and the governance of biodiversity.



Doctoral Training Programme

CFF-UNMC DTP

Working in an Interdisciplinary Team

Welcome to the ongoing CFF-UNMC DTP column. In this month's issue we continue our discussion on scientific collaborations, in the context of interdisciplinary team.

Interdisciplinary teams comprise of individuals with unique skills, expertise and knowledge, collectively forming a research team that aims to address a research problem that requires extensive expertise. Such expertise cannot be easily garnered from a single field, or even a single institution at times. As such, interdisciplinary teams arise as a key facilitator in today's organisational settings, offering an effective and economic solution to complex scientific concerns.

However, such collaborations rely heavily on successful communication between all parties involved. It is of utmost importance to ensure that you are understood and that you can trust your team-mates - whom are carrying out work you may not understand at all. Moreover, engaging with scientists from a different field offers an opportunity to discuss your discipline's science with intellectual novices, which may present a new way of tackling a research question.

Interdisciplinary communication is a very generic term and can refer to communication across institutes (albeit within similar disciplines), or may refer to communication between internal and external team members. All in all, effective interdisciplinary team communication is paramount to avoid errors and ensure an effective working environment. Forming an interdisciplinary team requires a lot of effort and investment – monetary and time-wise. Thus, with a lot at stake, team building and communication has become a subject of numerous studies. Following are a few principles for designing effective team communication:¹

1. Leadership and management

Decision making is complex in such teams, such having a clear leader with clear direction and management is essential. Moreover, leadership needs to be democratic and receptive to input from all team-members. Negotiation can be used to support the decision making process in reaching consensus.

2. Communication skills

Individuals with strong and effective communication skills are best for such engagements, and it can be helpful to make use of appropriate communication tools and systems.

3. Personal rewards, training and development

Incorporating rewards and opportunities for development within the project can serve as a good motivating drive for your team-mates. Additionally, it is also important to encourage participation in theoretical, as well as practical, training and development programmes.

¹Nancarrow, S.A. et al (2013). Ten principles of good interdisciplinary team work. Human Resources for Health, 11:19

4. Appropriate resources and procedures

As a dedicated team-member, it is important to ensure the appropriate structures and procedures are established and in place, such as regular meetings, suitable communication platforms, clear language with minimal jargon etc.

Managing interdisciplinary teams requires a set of skill that ranges from management of unhelpful communication habits to the ability to make the most of team-mates' backgrounds. Academic (and non-academic institutes) are increasingly turning towards training on team management and collaboration.

Have you taken part in such training programmes, or do you feel you could benefit from one?



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