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Images of Postgraduate Experience Photography Competition

The Images of Postgraduate Experience Photography Competition was recently held where postgraduate students were invited to capture the essence of their postgraduate experience with a single photographic image that they had taken themselves, accompanied by an abstract that articulated how the image related to their postgraduate experience at UNMC.

All entries were showcased online and members of staff and student were invited to vote for their favourite entry using an online voting portal. The entries were also displayed in an exhibition on 18th November 2015 and further provided an opportunity for visitors to vote in person. All votes were counted towards the People's Choice Award which carried a prize money of RM200. A multidisciplinary panel of judges determined the recipient of the Overall Winner Award which carried a prize money of RM500 and a *SELPHY CP910* compact photo printer sponsored by Canon Malaysia.

Wei Ling Chow, a second year PhD student from the Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering, won both awards. Her winning entry is featured on page 4.

The photography competition showed the diversity and breadth of postgraduate experience at UNMC. The participants were able to gain the experience in creatively presenting a compelling message about their postgraduate life and inspiring others with that message.

We look forward to yet another exciting and interesting chapter of the photography competition next year!

Future Event

UNMC Graduate School Christmas Party

18th December 2015

3pm — 5pm

Social Space, H1B14

We are pleased to invite all our postgraduate students to our annual Christmas Party.

We will be holding some fun activities in conjunction with the Christmas celebration. Stay tuned for updates!

Did you know?

The world's best known Christmas song, *Jingle Bells*, was written by James Lord Pierpont at a tavern in Medford, Massachusetts, home of popular sleigh races in the 19th century. It was originally written to be sung for American Thanksgiving.

Trainer's Column

By Dr Jiin Woei Lee, Research Training Development Manager

In the previous edition, I promised to tell you inspirational stories of two PhD students. These stories may not be inspirational in the conventional sense, however, it is hoped that they'd both help you in some fashion.

Student A

A worked hard on the project, marked assignments, demonstrated at laboratory practicals and dealt with questions from undergraduate students. A hardly cared how others commented on A's work and rest schedule; a PhD requires space for creative thought and includes erratic and long work hours, so the flexibility should be used to the student's advantage. A maintained a good work-life balance. If the negative words of naysayers affected A (gossip does tend to go around, sometimes back to the target), A used them as fuel to work harder and better. When an experiment went wrong, A looked at the problem, searched for solutions using various resources, and went back and fixed them. Unless particularly stuck, A asked for assistance. A helped others and participated in a few events – established academics call a trait like that as being a good citizen of the university.

A's supervisors (read: bosses) were distant at best, with the main supervisor not being an expert in the research field. The ideal situation would be a mentor-apprentice relationship, as postgraduates are after all apprentice researchers. As A gained experience, dealing with the main supervisor felt like it was dealing with a boss who knew less than the subordinate; a frustrating situation for A but (somewhat) luckily A had the 2nd supervisor and faculty staff who would pull their weight as appropriate. Publications are the bread and butter of academia. Publishing 2 papers in reputable journals during a PhD is very impressive; A published more than that. A also won poster competitions at international conferences. A submitted the thesis on time and passed the PhD.

To me, A's keys to success were sheer grit, problem-solving mentality, strong work ethic, humility, self-discipline, ability to get along with others, dogged determination, independence but willing to ask for help if needed, and the readiness to get the hands dirty.

Student B

"When doing research, follow your passion" is the saying. Partway through the project, B's supervisor left the university. B was appointed a new team of supervisors and B was assigned a new topic of research that was not B's interest. After some soul-searching, B found aspects within the project that coincided with the skills that B wanted to obtain – the project used the same technologies as the old topic, for example. B was proactive at suggesting to the supervisor for conferences to attend, conference funding to apply and papers to write.

B however, spent a lot of time doing non-project things and being distracted by problems. B tended to look at negatives and couldn't emotionally separate from the politics of B's multiple supervisors. B liked to make comparisons with others by keeping score about the achievements and not-so-good traits of colleagues.

Every minute spent in negativity loses 60 seconds of productivity. B's lack of professionalism angered the PG administrator and B's colleagues / friends. B had the habit of booking equipment and not show up on time to use it and sometimes not at all. B once stopped an equipment that was booked and in use by someone else for B's own use. B's ego was unbalanced. Although good at independently making decisions, B lied to supervisors when vital errors were made and over-generalised research findings. Honesty and integrity are key characteristics of a good researcher, by the way. B reported problems to supervisors when they became too big to be solved easily and, towards the end of the PhD, did not show up at supervision meetings. Over time, B's ties with colleagues and supervisors became severely damaged. Full time PhDs usually have a maximum of 4 years to submit the thesis. B did eventually pass the PhD, but at great cost.

Insecurity mixed with opposing priorities, was the problem.

Who would you want to be?

Being an apprentice researcher gauges your skills and how you deal with yourself. As an aside, during any interview, employers will see if you have the needed hard skills and the personality to get along with colleagues i.e. to have good professional working relationships (please note that making friends at work isn't important to an employer). Further, as you progress in research, reputation can spread fast as the research world is small. But hey, the real world isn't all that cut and dried. To be honest, being like B might get you hired and promoted in a job, but so will A. It's up to you how you want to be seen, how you want your work life to be and how you want your life to be.



Dr Lee supports the development of postgraduates which includes the Postgraduate Student Teachers Programme (PST) and the Researcher Development Programme (RDP) at UNMC. Dr Lee has a BSc Medical Genetics and an MRes Nanoscience to Nanotechnology from Swansea University, and a PhD Engineering through bi-campus PhD programme between the UK and Malaysia campuses of the University.

Dr Lee's previous work experiences include the UK as well as the Ministry of Health Malaysia.

Throughout her PhD she had taken part (and had won awards) in various Graduate School competitions such as Engineering YES and Research Showcase. Her research interest include surface science, bioengineering and educational research.

The views expressed here are entirely her own.

Images of Postgraduate Experience Photography Competition: The Winning Entry



The photo shows me enjoying a flash of inspiration when I found an energy source. My research focuses on turning wastewater into energy. In my studies, I have developed an innovative solution through an effective cost-saving treatment method. This ground breaking method known as co-digestion is used to generate renewable energy by treating wastewater from the oleo chemical industry. The impact of this study allows me to generate green energy and spread “beams” of enjoyment to the world.

- Wei Ling Chow, Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering



We will feature all the entries from the competition on a series of blog post via our [Postgraduate Blog](#).

Meanwhile, all the entries are currently being displayed and exhibited at the Postgraduate Hub, H1B12.

[Left] Wei Ling was presented with the Overall Winner award and People’s Choice award by Dr Christopher Hill, Director of Research Training and Academic Development (RTAD).

Past Event

UNMC Graduate School Deepavali Open House

An Open House was held on 27th November 2015 in conjunction with the festive celebration of Deepavali, also known as Diwali or the Festival of Lights. Deepavali signifies the victory of good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and hope over despair.

The special occasion gave us a great opportunity to get-together, experience the celebration of Deepavali and enjoy delicious traditional goodies.

The Open House offered a variety of local Indian delicacies such as chicken curry, vegetable dhal, roti canai, murukku, etc.

Open House is prevalent in the Malaysian culture especially during major festivals and celebrations. Through it, we hope to promote and foster the spirit of solidarity among the members of postgraduate community at UNMC.



UNMC Graduate School's Researcher Development Programme

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

Upcoming RDP courses in December 2015 are outlined below:

Date	Time	Course
2 nd December 2015	10am — 12pm	Preparing for Your Annual Review
7 th December 2015	10am — 12.30pm	Word Essentials for Researchers — Advanced
8 th November 2015	10am — 12pm	Anatomy of a Good Journal Paper
14 th December 2015	10am — 12pm	Communicating Your Research: Dealing with Media
16 th December 2015	10am — 12pm	Preparing for Your VIVA

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 rtad@nottingham.edu.my or graduateschool@nottingham.edu.my.





UNMC Academic Development Programme

Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE)

RTAD provides support and training for academic staff. Courses are designed to promote interaction amongst colleagues, sharing of good practice and an opportunity to develop key skills in areas such as research supervision and classroom delivery.

The PGCHE is a professional qualification for lecturers at the University of Nottingham. The PGCHE focuses on the teaching role of the academic in Higher Education, with reference to the diverse ways in which students learn. The PGCHE provides a practical and theoretical grounding in learning and teaching in Higher Education and emphasises the links between conceptual frameworks and your professional practice. The PGCHE aims to encourage you to develop a scholarly, reflective enquiry base to inform your teaching and its development. The PGCHE course has been designed with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for teaching and learning in mind and the course is accredited by the [Higher Education Academy](#).

Upcoming courses in December 2015 are outlined below:

Date	Time	Course
8 th December 2015	2pm — 3pm	Teaching Dialogue Module Workshop
8 th December 2015	3pm — 3.30pm	Progress Check Session: Teaching Dialogue Module
8 th December 2015	3.30pm — 4pm	Progress Check Session: Individual Pathway Module
8 th December 2015	4pm — 4.30pm	Progress Check Session: Portfolio Module
9 th December 2015	10am — 12.30pm	Presentation Skills for Lecturers

Note:

1. Courses indicated with (IP) can be counted towards PGCHE Individual Pathway Module.
2. Please register your attendance at <http://moodle.nottingham.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=21280>.

If you have any queries, please contact us via email at pgche@nottingham.edu.my.

SWIRL @ Nucleus

So What's It Really Like?

Find out about life at UNMC from current postgraduate students!

Give it a try!

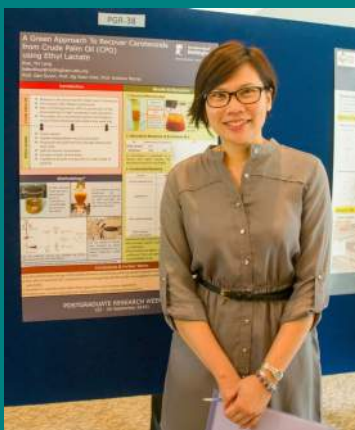
by Yin Leng Kua, PhD candidate, Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering

Often, I tell this to the undergraduate students during tutorial classes. I applied this on myself, as I have been involved in most of the presentation opportunities that came to me. Since April 2014, I had presented for a symposium on foods, a palm oil seminar, Engineering Research Showcase 2014, 1-min quick fire, Research Showcase 2015 and the most recent 3MT 2015. Thanks to the Graduate School, I was also given a chance to have a 3-min video recording to talk about my research and to present my poster to the UK judges through video conferencing. In 2014 and 2015, I was also invited to present my works to the UK delegates.

I am not a skillful presenter really. In fact, I have difficulty on public communication. I have fear to speak to those I am not familiar with. Before I enrolled as a PhD student, I was so curious about poster presentation. I am really happy to read the posters and to know about the research projects. However, I will never ever approach the presenter. If that person comes to me, I will try my best to escape from the scene.

Poster presentation is crucial for a PhD student and/but it was a nightmare during the first few months of my study. As the first step to overcome the fear, I decided to present in a symposium after 4 months of my study. I remember that day when I could hardly eat anything and forced a smile on my face to look friendly. The outcome was surprising as I received only positive and constructive feedback from the audience. All of them were being very kind and some of them were actually interested in my works. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who spared their time for me. The results of my first poster presentation turned out great as I was awarded as the best poster presenter.

Since it only happens during this time of my study life, just GIVE IT A TRY!!



SWIRL @ Nucleus is a sharing column featuring the life of postgraduate students at UNMC. There is no limit to what can be included in this column e.g. sharing of experience and knowledge, university life, social or educational activities, internal or external engagement, social awareness, etc.

If you are a postgraduate student, we welcome you to send in a brief write-up and picture (if any) via email to graduateschool@nottingham.edu.my or rtad@nottingham.edu.my.

Research Training and Academic Development (RTAD)

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: rtad@nottingham.edu.my w: www.nottingham.edu.my/rtad

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