

School of Graduate studies

Graduate TIMES

EDITION #02 ■ DECEMBER 2012

FROM PALESTINE
TO UPM

PAGE 9

&
KEEPING IT
SIMPLE

PAGE 10

&
GAINING A NEW
PERSPECTIVE ON RESEARCH

PAGE 11

JOURNEYING
INTO TIME
Details on this
story
on
PAGE 04

TABLE OF CONTENTS DEC 2012

cover story

4 Journeying Into Time



4 Journeying Into Time

campus news

7 SFRII 2012 Young Investigator Awardees
8 IFT Awards

point of view

9 From Palestine to UPM

highlights

10 Keeping it Simple
11 Gaining a New Perspective on Research

activities

12 Attachments



7 A picture of young investigator awardees



12 Our activities picture feature describing the story

Editorial Board

EDITOR: Bujang B.K. Huat
EDITOR IN CHIEF: Noritah Omar

Photography

Affa Huraizah Abdul Rahman
Jamilul Khair Jabir

Designer

Ismail Mohd Ali

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Zone4, Off Jalan Stadium
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 UPM Serdang
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Tel: +603-8946 4200
Faks: +603-8946 4232/4234
E-mail: sgs@putra.upm.edu.my
Homepage: www.sgs.upm.edu.my

OPERATING HOURS

Monday to Thursday
8.00 am – 5.00 pm
Friday
8.00 am – 12.15 pm &
2.45 pm – 5.00 pm

Closed on Saturday, Sunday & Public Holidays

ISSN 1675 - 5197



UPM
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA
BERILMU BERSERTAI

School of Graduate Studies



Journeying into Time

cover story

As we reach another year's end, and approach the beginning of yet another new year, let us reflect on one of the best first lines ever written in an English novel:

“ It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us ”



Charles Dickens's famous first lines in *A Tale of Two Cities* above continue to remind us of our vulnerabilities in keeping to our provenience in the face of a continuously evolving world and changing times. Hence, we vacillate between the extremes as we battle through the temperance of times and strive to improve ourselves.



For this is what postgraduate education is about. The journey undertaken to improve one's self in more ways than one. At SGS, we are tireless in our efforts to be constantly there as our students embark on this life-changing journey. With a graduate student population of nearing eleven thousand, three thousand of which are international students, the SGS has to constantly reinvent itself to cater to the needs of an increasingly globalised educational environment.

Sustaining an academic tradition that has matured alongside UPM's own growth as a research university, a persistent resolution for SGS for 2013 is to fortify its efforts in providing and supporting quality postgraduate education which is no longer only culturally localised, but belongs to a wider international community.

Thus, its main challenge is to make its intellectual infrastructure one that is accessible to international students of different nationalities, religious, cultural and social backgrounds.

Further, an aggressive change in the infrastructure and the format and mode of programmes offered needs to be initiated to match the current demands for a university as a place which supports the dynamism of the inherent globalised market-driven educational competitiveness. Among the efforts that have been initiated by SGS in the past year include the dual PhD programmes, and more internationalised academic activities such as the Three-Minute Thesis competition (3MT).



The dual degree programmes now offered by UPM are the result of collaboration between UPM and other reputable universities in the region and other parts of the world. The dual PhD programme is offered in collaboration with universities such as the University of Sheffield, UK, the University of Newcastle, Australia, the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, Kyushu Institute of Technology, Japan, and Jordan University of Science and Technology. Meanwhile, the dual Master's programme is offered in collaboration with Ajou University, Korea, and the University of Glasgow, of Scotland, UK.

The addition of such programmes to our existing ones is hoped to add value and a competitive edge to our postgraduate research programmes. Through such programmes, students have the opportunity to experience other research facilities and academic communities, hence enhancing and enriching their academic experience. The acceptance of UPM as an academic partner by these universities demonstrates UPM's rising status as an academic institution which projects educational professionalism and promotes transformative intellectualism.



total of 36 PhD students from different faculties compete in the competition's heat. Out of the 36, 20 were selected for the final round.

Three students were finally selected as the top three contestants, winning first, second and third prizes respectively. They are, Aida Firdaus Muhammad Nurul Azmi from the Faculty of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences, Najla Gooda Sahib from the Faculty of Food Science and Technology, and Suriyani Ariffin from the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology. Aida and Najla's stories can be read in this issue of Graduate Times, as they reflect on their unforgettable experiences as the pioneer participants of 3MT for UPM.

The idea behind 3MT is simply to train research students to present their research in a succinct and engaging manner, to an intelligent, non-specialist audience. Given that they have only three minutes in which to do this, 3MT forces students to focus on the core of their research, and to spotlight what they see as the strengths of their research projects. Such effort requires an understanding of their research contribution not only to the academic area of specialisation, but to society as a whole. To be able to extend one's academic arm to reach outside of the very confined spaces of academia is a true test of an academic. Indeed, it is hoped that this effort will also help prepare students for their viva voce, as well as, in the long term, give them a much needed head-start towards a successful academic career.

This year, the Graduate Times will continue to highlight students' successes and achievements in their research activities, apart from showcasing those who obtain a distinction for their theses. This issue has also included media coverage of UPM's graduate students' award-winning research projects which mark UPM's growing prowess in postgraduate research.



Another highlight of the past year is the beginning of another academic tradition, the Three-Minute Thesis competition, or better known as 3MT. Originally introduced and popularised in universities in Australia and New Zealand, 3MT was held for the first time at UPM on the 23rd of October, 2012.

This historic event saw a



As the so-called borderless world continues to develop with hitherto unimagined innovations and entrepreneurship, so will the SGS continue to respond to the constant need for the redrawing of international postgraduate educational boundaries, in line with the vision of the University to be a top ranking world class university.

This remarkable journey that we have undertaken, to work towards providing quality postgraduate education in support of our students' own personal and professional journeys, certainly demand much of our patience and resilience. As a university community, we must not look back at our failures with regret, but proceed with heightened awareness of the rewards we hope to reap as a nation, and as a member of the international community.

Therefore, in all our academic and research endeavours, we must, as Alfred Lord Tennyson poignantly put it, continue to "strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield".

Noritah Omar, PhD
Deputy Dean
Student Affairs, Learning Support and Publication



SFRR 2012 Young Investigator Awardees

Society for Free Radical Research International
16TH BIENNIAL MEETING • Imperial College London • 6-9 September 2012 • United Kingdom
 Discuss the impact of the latest research, concepts and applications of free radicals and antioxidants.



SFRR-Australasia Award

Luke Carroll, The Heart Research Institute, Australia
Mustapha Umar Imam, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia
 Tracey Kajer, The Heart Research Institute, Australia
 Philip Morgan, The Heart Research Institute, Australia
 Paul Pace, University of Otago Christchurch, New Zealand

I F T
A w a r d s



Institute of Food Technologists

2012 Winners

2012 Theme: Mangoes--especially the Apple, Kent, and Tommy Atkins varieties--grow abundantly in Kenya, but a short harvest season, high fiber content, and typically irregular quality (size, shape, color, etc.) make it difficult for growers to realize the full potential of this crop.

Develop a mango-based product that addresses common

Kenyan nutrient deficiencies and can be produced rapidly in order to realize the full potential of this crop during its short harvesting season.

International

1st Place: Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia), Vit-A-Go

2nd Place: Bogor Agricultural University (Indonesia), Mangnut

3rd Place: Brawijaya University (Indonesia), Stift Oorrid Mango

Refaat Alareer

PhD candidate, English Literature

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication



From Palestine to UPM

Malaysia was plan C on my list of destinations in my pursuit of PhD, especially since I received my MA from London. But 7 months later, I am, I tell everyone, lucky to be here. I am now exposed to a culture that promotes diversity, hard work and research. I believe, too, that what I can achieve here, with the encouragement I get from my supervisor and faculty, may not be achieved anywhere else.

The thing I love most about UPM is that wherever I go, whether at the faculty, at the School of Graduate Studies, or at the library, I am treated as a special person and am given all the attention and care I need.

In the couple of courses I have attended so far, the professors were generously friendly in and outside the classroom. The classes themselves, apart from the rich knowledge the professors have, become a field of learning, enabling me to acquire more knowledge and skills. As students, we are always encouraged to have our say and be active contributors in the process of teaching/learning.

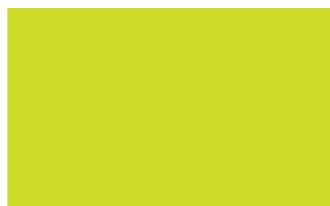
Further, thanks to UPM's policy of encouraging and promoting research, I have acquired many advanced skills in research and publishing. I believe, in terms of research interests and publication opportunities, the academic life can't be better. I am working with my supervisor now to produce my first journal article and I am only in my second semester.

I can say, unhesitatingly, that in terms of student support, UPM can compare with the best universities I have visited in the UK, particularly where research is concerned.

UPM cares about me. UPM professors make me feel worthy and do not hesitate to extend a helping hand when I am in need of advice, guidance, or a sympathetic ear.

I am certain doing my PhD in Malaysia, and at UPM, will be a life changing experience not only because I am doing a PhD, but also because of the value of the experience.

UPM is not only making me a better scholar, but also a better human being. UPM is inspiring me to truly make a difference and is also providing me with the experience and tools to do so professionally and efficiently.



I was very excited when I first received the email inviting all graduate students to participate in the 3MT competition organized by the School of Graduate Studies of UPM. The reason for my excitement was that this was the first time that the competition was going to be held at UPM. What interested me most was that the 3MT competition was an opportunity for research students to communicate and explain their research to the public. This is a very good way to make the public understand what goes on at the university and the beneficial impact of the research conducted.

I started to plan my allocated three minutes for the competition. My concern was how I could deliver my research in a very simple manner so that those not specialized in this area could understand my work. I searched for cartoon clips from the Internet in order to ensure that my slides looked interesting and funny at the same time. I felt that this would make my presentation more approachable and would better attract the audience's attention.

I began my presentation by posing some questions to the audience. This was to ensure that the audience was prepared for what I was going to explain to them. I felt that this strategy worked well, as the audience and judges seemed to give full attention to what I was saying. I could see some of them nodding their heads as I was explaining my research. I kept my presentation simple by posing questions and answering them in what I hoped was a clear and simple manner. This, I hoped, would hold the audience's attention up to the end of my three-minute presentation. I finally wrapped up my presentation by suggesting to the audience how they could benefit from my research. I thought this was most important because it was the climax of the presentation, which the audience was actually waiting for. I also threw in some light-hearted jokes and the response I received from the audience really made my day!

Keeping It Simple

I would strongly encourage other postgraduate students to take part in this competition as it can really boost our confidence level and help us learn to talk about our research, especially to a wider audience consisting of the general public. I would really like to thank and congratulate UPM, especially the School of Graduate Studies, for organizing such a great event. It was certainly one of the most unforgettable moments and the highlight of my PhD candidature, as I managed to be a part of its history: as the first winner of UPM's first ever 3MT Competition.



**Keeping It Simple
by 3MT 2012 Winner
of the First Prize**

Aida Firdaus bt
M.N.Azmi
Ph.D. Candidate
Faculty of
Biotechnology
& Biomolecular
Sciences



**Gaining a new
perspective on
research
by 3MT 2012 Winner
of the Second Prize**

Najla Gooda Sahib
Ph.D. Candidate
Faculty of Food
Science &
Technology

I was very excited when I heard that the famous 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition was finally coming to Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). I had first heard of the competition about a year ago, from Dr. Vijay Mallan of the University of Otago New Zealand, at one of the workshops organised by the Peer Support Group of UPM.

So, when the School of Graduate Studies announced that they were holding the competition last September, some friends and I registered to be part of this event. Little did we realise that we were embarking on a very fun, challenging and exciting activity.

The preliminary elimination round was quite nerve-wrecking. It was then that I realised how hard it is to communicate your research findings to a non-specialist audience, and on top of that, to be done in three minutes and with only one slide! In the first round, my delivery was a bit shaky, but somehow I managed to get through to the final round.

The briefing and training session was quite good as we got some really good tips on what the judges were looking for, and how to make our slides attractive and comprehensible. I took this opportunity to practise my speech to friends from diverse areas of expertise, ranging from engineering to Islamic banking. It was such an amazing and proud feeling when my friend who is doing linguistics told me that she was able to understand my nutrition-based PhD research clearly.

Finally, the day of the finale dawned upon us and the hall was buzzing with excitement as this was the first ever 3MT competition at the university. Most of the participants were in good spirits and the morning passed very quickly with many interesting and good presentations. I was proud that UPM had students of such high calibre and I am sure the judges had a tough time deliberating about the top three contestants.

I was certainly very happy when I was announced as the winner of the second place, but to me, the enriching experience of participating in the competition was priceless. Participating in this competition has enabled me to gain a new perspective on my research, and has also made me think of the ways with which I can communicate my research findings effectively. These kinds of events, I believe, are crucial for PhD students as they prepare for the most important day of their study: the viva voce.

I sincerely hope that the 3MT will become an annual event as a new tradition at UPM. All research students at UPM should take the opportunity to try out for the competition as it is really worth it.

Gaining a new perspective on research

Briefing for New Students



Intercultural Communication Series



Examiner Reports, Feedback or Assessment



English For Publishing

SEARCA



Statistical Analysis : SEM & AMOS





Human and Animal Ethics Seminar



Grant Proposal Writing



Writing Right - Avoiding Plagiarism



3MT - FINALE



3MT - FINALE



3MT - FINALE



Presentation Skills

3MT - FINALE





Examiner Reports, Feedback or Assessment



Examiner Reports, Feedback or Assessment



Putra Sarjana Speaker



“ Thought is the “Power”... Use it wisely... Your destiny is the result of the way you THINK. If you favor negative thoughts, you are never going to succeed because such people keep on crying about their fate. Instead, if you THINK of your strengths, be rest assured you can at least find ONE that can prove a savior for You!”

Written in 2012 by Mandar C. Jambotkar

“ Having limited resources is no excuse to continue living in ignorance. Reading is the golden key required to open the door of knowledge. So, READ, READ, & READ. We are limited only by our own mental shackles.”

Copyright © 2012 Dr. Maloney Hunter-Lowe

“ One key to success is to remove the word failure from your vocabulary! Don’t give up, don’t give in and don’t quit! Get up, get inspired and get motivated! Stay moving forward to go above and beyond your goals! Pump up the positivity! Energize the enthusiasm! Conquer the challenge of change and realize your greatest gift is to share your care with others! Do it every day and DO IT BIG!!!”

Copyright © 2012 Jimmy Hagewood

To become truly great, one has to stand with people, not above them.

Charles de Montesquieu