BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

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Musings of a Wondering Alumnus

Just the other day while day-tripping with fellow alumni to Baram, a thought about the roles we play crossed my mind. As I mingled and spoke to fellow members, I realised that all of them were in communication with other alumni as well. The niceties and smiles while enjoying themselves with family and friends at the event suggested the presence of an “anchor” that binds our alumni members.

So, what is the role of the Alumni? The general definition of alumni is “graduates or former students of a specific school, college or university”. In the SIM University (UniSIM) context, our alumni is foremost the stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in fostering professional, academic and social links with UniSIM. In other words, we are a rich resource as our achievements and accomplishments ensure that the University and its reputation grows and flourishes. And with a growing alumni population exceeding 19,000 to date, the challenge is ever present as to how to build bridges with this large and diverse lot.

As working adults, our alumni can donate to lend a hand in shaping what tomorrow looks like through education at UniSIM. We can also share valuable insights gained at workplaces, which are in different companies and varied industries. As a feedback channel, we can provide the connection to literally wire up the alumni, University, employers and country.

A question often asked at all voluntary movements is “How does it benefit me?” Wikipedia suggests that volunteering is generally considered “an altruistic or selfless activity and is intended to promote good or improve human quality of life. In return, this activity produces a feeling of self-worth and respect, however, there is no financial gain”.

The bottom line is that volunteering for the Alumni can be rewarding in the long-term. What you initiate can be set in stone if it benefits all stakeholders. Your contributions may not necessarily be monetary; it can be in the form of creating new or joining existing interest groups, contributing articles to this magazine, spearheading events or promoting activities that can connect all alumni members. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. As the saying goes, it only takes a spark to get the fire going, so I hope my musings do come to fruition. Remember, nothing is impossible!

Gregory Athastaraj Francis | Editor (Alumni Volunteer) | Newsletter Editorial Group

Rev’ing Good Times

By Ambrose Tay

Over 40 car enthusiasts and owners gathered on the afternoon of March 23 to learn more about their vehicles at a talk organised by the Alumni Relations Department in UniSIM.

Speaker Mr Vincent Chia is an executive at the Automobile Association of Singapore (AAS) and oversees the fleet of tow vehicles for AAS members. He kicked off the talk by presenting on the anatomy of a car. Beginning with the engine as the heart of a car, he systematically and progressively presented on the other components, including the tyres.

Vincent’s experience with cars shone through during the talk as he provided rational and practical tips, and answered the many questions posed to him.

What began seemingly as a relatively dry “engineering” lecture became a sharing session on car care. With the Certificate of Entitlement, or COE, hovering at a record high price, this was timely as owners sought to prolong the lifespan of their cars.

Alumni and guests agreed that the session was informative. Mr Wilson Teo, alumnus from Class of 2009, BSc Information Technology and Business, commented that the talk added to his basic knowledge of a car.

Mr Rishav, an alumni’ guest, added that he usually sends his car to the workshop where he is charged a fee. Armed with the knowledge gained from Vincent’s talk, he figures that he will be able to troubleshoot some of the problems himself instead of having to rely on the workshops.
The much-awaited day-trip to Batam on May 18 for shopping, massage and fun at a special price of S$45 per alumnus was fabulous to say the least for shoppers at heart. Alumni members woke up early to assemble at the HarbourFront Centre to board the ferry. The smooth immigration clearance and efficient ticketing by the tour agency saw us cross calm waters amidst clear weather with much anticipation.

As soon as we landed at Batam, we were met by our tour guide, a gregarious Mr “Rocky” who herded us onto comfortable coaches and briefed us with wit and charm. Like clockwork, we headed straight to the first stop of a shopping bazaar where local favourites like keropok of different varieties were sold. We also sampled Batam Layer Cakes, or kueh lapis, that come in many flavours including pandan, chocolate and even prune. Alumni members queued dutifully and happily like good Singapore ambassadors for their purchases.

To further whet the appetite for lunch was a trip to the Go-Kart Circuit Centre where a few souls, ganged for action, primed themselves for a race. The track with turns and straights was a breeze for most geared up like fashionable F1 drivers. The rest preferred to shop at the factory outlet located conveniently beside the circuit. Just a stone’s throw away was the Miniature Park, which houses stone collections of Indonesian architecture and sited on individual pavilions. These miniature homes, modelled virtually from Indonesia’s 32 provinces, mirror the cultural vibrancy of the country.

Lunch at Saung Sunda Sawargi Restaurant for Sundanese food, which saw nasi timbel wrapped in banana leaves being served was an unusual experience for many first-timers. The dollops of sambal belachan were a treat for spicy food-loving alumni who even purchased the bottled version to bring home.

Not to be missed was the traditional massage where alumni members treated themselves to various treatments such as foot reflexology at their own cost.

To round off the trip, another shopping spree was mounted like a well-drawn battle plan. A visit to the Chocolate House and other shopping nooks and crannies were dutifully visited in the last part of the afternoon with the coaches literally filled to the brim as the journey home beckoned.

As we left Batam, a beautiful sunset loomed in the far horizon leaving thoughts of missed purchases and new-found camaraderie. I am sure many alumni are looking forward to another short overseas shopping trip next year, perhaps to a new destination.

Ms Rachel Goh, Class of 2008, BSc Technology, who was accompanied by her guest Freddie, “enjoyed the trip with its diverse mix of alumni” and found it “well-organised”. Another alumna, Ms Karen Seet, Class of 2010, BSc Business with Psychology, commented that everyone was “helpful” and enjoyed “goreng pisang” bought while shopping! The Alumni Relations Department has to be thanked for making this trip a fun, likeable and bonding experience.

On April 27, the UniSIM alumni community gathered at Golden Village VivoCity for the movie screening of Iron Man 3, which did not disappoint the sell-out crowd as it enthralled all with exhilarating and futuristic battle scenes.

UniSIM’s senior management team was also in attendance, sharing light-hearted moments, as well as on-going developments of the University.

Catching the highly-acclaimed film was not the sole intent of the gathering. Everyone arrived early to catch up with friends over light refreshments prior to the show. Ms Tan Wei Hsien, Class of 2007, BSc Technology with Electronics, said: “This event is very nostalgic. I get to meet old friends and rejuvenate. I will definitely try to attend future events organised by the Alumni Relations Department.” Sharing Wei Hsien’s sentiments was Mr Michael Pang, Class of 2003, BSc Computer Science with Management, who remarked: “I have attended a number of alumni events and I have always enjoyed the activities and camaraderie. I look forward to the next event.”
Taking Stock and Stepping Up

Dear Alumni,

Mid-year is usually a time when many of us take stock of what we had done (or not done 😟) for the past six months and also reassess our goals for the rest of the year.

At UniSIM, we continue to actively scout for opportunities to engage and benefit our alumni. In May, Alumni Relations organised its second overseas trip, a day in Batam for alumni and their guests. Many enjoyed the break. June is also an active month with new events introduced to meet diverse alumni interests. Examples include the World Street Food Jamboree Feast, held at the F1 Pit Building and Paddock, and the first upcoming UniSIM Alumni Family Day at Resorts World Adventure Cove Waterpark. Look out for more exciting events in the next few months.

All event alerts are available on the UniSIM Mobile and Alumni Portal. Do download the free application for the former and log in to your portal regularly so that you will not miss out!

Some of our alumni also volunteered for the first community project, led by the Student Support Department in partnership with the Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre. A block party was held on June 8 to orientate residents under the Interim Rental Housing (IRH) Scheme at Ang Mo Kio. With the generous donation from staff, students and alumni, we collected about $14,000 to purchase essential household items for these IRH families. We hope that such community projects will be an annual event for students and alumni.

UniSIM is also in the process of conducting our Employers’ Perception Survey to gather feedback on our strengths and also areas for improvement in meeting employers’ need for industry-ready graduates. UniSIM is steadily building up our presence both in the education arena and the community. But there is so much more that we can achieve with your support, contribution and participation.

We will be counting on you!

Best wishes,

Evelyn Chong
Director, Office of Student and Alumni Relations

UniSIM Board of Trustees (BOT), SIM University Education Fund BOT and senior management staff leading in the sing-along of the birthday song.

UniSIM celebrated its 8th anniversary on April 12, just two days shy of its actual “birthday”. Senior management and staff were joined by members of the UniSIM Board of Trustees (BOT) and SIM University Education Fund BOT for a buffet luncheon at the SIM Multi-Purpose Hall to commemorate this special day.

UniSIM Chancellor and Chairman Professor Cham Tao Soon, who gave the opening address, called for everyone’s continued support so that UniSIM could look forward to more reasons to celebrate even as he reminisced about the University’s milestone. He then led a cake-cutting and sparkling juice popping ceremony before everyone was invited to help themselves to a delectable lunch spread.
Why did you choose UniSIM?

I wanted to obtain a Business degree, and decided to enrol at UniSIM because it met my need to balance studies with work, family and social commitments.

I benefited from UniSIM’s flexible and modular programme that was customised to my demanding working schedule, as well as from its independent e-Learning technology, because it allows me to attend lectures and take part in group discussions with my lecturers and classmates anywhere that was convenient for me - even from home.

What were some of the modules you took?


How did you benefit from the programme’s flexible lesson schedules?

UniSIM offers an open and flexible learning environment. Its courses are tailored for independent learning, so I could learn at my own pace. This was especially useful as my work requires me to travel frequently. Other than e-Learning, we meet for classes on weeknights, sometimes up to thrice a week, from 7pm to 10pm.

How has the degree helped you in your managerial position at Schneider Electric?

The programme was directly applicable to my responsibilities at work. It helped me to develop competencies that include accounting, business law, economics, management, marketing – these are all useful in the administration of the physical and human resources and other areas useful to the organisation.

My degree also helped hone my interpersonal skills, foster decision-making and entrepreneurial thinking, and familiarised me with diverse business environments. The skills I have developed can be applied to areas such as team management, organisational behaviour and business ethics.

Overall, I feel motivated to keep learning, keep improving, take greater responsibility for my work, and inspire my colleagues. All this, while preparing myself for bigger roles and challenges in the future.

What were the challenges over the course of your degree studies? And what have been the lessons?

You need plenty of discipline and determination. Our third child was born while I was studying, and my wife has always been there to look after the family. Throughout the programme, I sometimes had difficulty submitting my TMAs, too. My classmates and I would share notes with one another. It is in times like these that our bonds became stronger.

I just hope that my experience, that the character I’ve developed would have a positive influence on my children too.

Strangely enough, on graduation, while I have much more free time to spend at home with my family, there would be some evenings when I do get a funny feeling...as if something is missing!
The World Street Food Jamboree Feast 2013 was the first of its kind to be ever held in the world. It brought together 10 street food cities and 37 food masters who offered more than 40 delectable dishes for people to sample. It was definitely a decadent affair for the foodie at heart. Bringing together the best of Asia, as well as dishes spanning from Denmark to Mexico to the United States of America, it was a titillating treat for the palate.

Held at the F1 Pit Building and Paddock, the event was well spread out, with maps, clear signages with important information such as the dish presented, the country represented and a short write-up about each stall. Portions were generous enough for one to sample the true essence of the dish while leaving enough space to try the rest of the dishes.

Apart from the array of food, there were master classes that were conducted by food heavyweights from around the world, including Culinary Institute of America’s Chef Anthony Ricco. There was also a demonstration by Tea Tarik Master Rafee from Singapore. As for the evening live performances, participants were treated to local talents such as Jack and Rai, the T’ang Quartet and many others.

Just when you thought that all you could bring back was the sumptuous aftertaste from each dish sampled, the World Street Food Jamboree Feast brings back the nostalgia in its memorabilia such as cheeky aprons, magnets crafted in the shape of Ice Gems (a biscuit from our childhood) and Kueh Tutu erasers.

What a perfect event for the Alumni Relations Department at UniSIM to organise for our alumni members, as eating, at the end of the day, is still our favourite past time. Yummy!

BEng Electronics Gets Further Accreditation

In June 2013, the Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) with Honours in Electronics programme received full accreditation from the Engineering Accreditation Board (EAB), the Institution of Engineers Singapore (IES). Through this full accreditation, the BEng Electronics graduates from 2008 onwards will have their degree recognised not only in Singapore but also in the other 14 countries (Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America) following the Washington Accord.

Poetry Appreciation

Brendan keeping the audience in rapt attention.

On April 23, the School of Arts and Social Sciences hosted a poetry reading by Mr Brendan Buxton. Brendan is a long-time instructor in the English Language and Literature programme, and a published author. His books include works of poetry, as well as textbooks on appreciating Shakespeare.

Brendan prefers to write traditional forms of poetry, especially sonnets. He writes about love, Asia, our inner journeys, and his heroes. At the recent event, students, alumni, staff and associates listened to a range of Brendan’s work including some earlier poems about his experience in Hong Kong in the late 1980s, his more recent experiences living in Singapore, and his reactions to world events such as the death of former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Brendan’s upcoming volume Single Parent Blues, which includes recent poems about his divorce, single parenthood and moving on, will come out later this year.
We are giving away exclusive UniSIM Caps to 10 lucky winners. Simply SMS the answers to the two questions below to 9113 6795 in the following format:

Example: Newsletter S1234567X alumni@unisim.edu.sg Answers for Q1 and Q2

Q1 Name the company that Mr Firdaus Abdul Samad works for?
Q2 What are the two upcoming alumni events?

Closing Date: July 31, 2013

For advertising enquiries, call 6248 9215 or email alumni@unisim.edu.sg

Congratulations to the Contest Winners of Issue 21!

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<td>Sxxxx674A</td>
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10% off Individual Membership (Usual price: S$25)
Valid from June 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014
Flash your Alumni Card at the Sentosa Islander Counter, Sentosa Station (VivoCity, Lobby L, Level 3) to enjoy the promotion.
Log on to http://www.sentosa.com.sg/en/islander/ to find out more!

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Upcoming Events

MAD COWS are welcome at OSIM!

A seminar by Mr Ron Sim – Founder and Chief Executive Officer, OSIM International Ltd

MAD COWS are welcome at OSIM!

UniSIM Alumni Bowling Competition

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<td>Time</td>
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<td>Fee</td>
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<td>* Prices are inclusive of game play, rental of shoes, breakfast and 7% GST</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* No refund for bowler who brings his/her own pair of shoes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td><a href="http://www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal">www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal</a></td>
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