An alumnus’ success story

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Time And Tide Waits For No Man!

Geoffrey Chaucer will still be resting in peace I presume, after coining the phrase “time and tide waits for no man”, which first appeared about 1395 in Chaucer’s Prologue to the Clerk’s Tale from The Canterbury Tales. Known as the Father of English literature, he is widely considered the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages.

This timeless quotation has become even more relevant today as the workplace becomes more of a pressure cooker with new challenges to be faced every day. An ever-changing employment panorama and increasingly round-the-clock workplaces have accelerated the pace of work tremendously. While this may be a competitive advantage for an economy in a fast-evolving and globalised world, it is also important to ensure that one’s well-being and work-life needs are met.

The tide is such a steady and unalterable force experienced the world over that man cannot change. Likewise, time is a never-ending movement that man cannot slow, stop or reverse. Both constantly surge forward with no regard for the will or desires of man. Life is short and one should not live one’s life in fear of the unknown. Instead, live in favour of the favourable. Take risks and strive forward through life, accepting the unchangeable flow of time and tide.

As we come to the end of 2013 and the beginning of a fresh new year, let us not forget the less fortunate in our society and those around the world. I am sure that we in Singapore are a little better off materially and perhaps even more so by being sheltered from natural disasters, unlike our fellow human beings living elsewhere. Take for instance, the calamity of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines that has left a multitude of suffering, catastrophic destruction and loss of lives.

Taking stock, perhaps, one can prepare resourcefully for the future. Are you thinking about furthering your studies, changing jobs or making some life-changing decisions? Change that takes one out of his or her comfort zone may seem daunting. Sometimes a little dose of courage, an injection of motivation and self-prescribed personal drive might deliver those vital signs into a life-saving turning point.

Remember, time and tide waits for no man! Further your education, constantly seek to improve yourself, secure your future and anchor your family as well! Our University has many programmes available, Take time to visit our website and find out more.

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

Mummies Come To Singapore

By Janet Yong

The British Museum has one of the world’s largest collections of Egyptian mummies and it collaborated with the ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands to present the show, Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb, in Singapore that ran from April to November 2013.

On Oct 19, about 50 UniSIM alumni and guests attended this exhibition, subsidised by UniSIM, that centred around the unwrapping of a 3,000-year-old mummy and explored the rituals and process behind mummification – an integral part of the rituals for the dead as the Ancient Egyptians believed that immortality could be achieved in the afterlife if the body did not rot and could serve as a host for the human soul.

To allay fears that the embalmed mummies would resurrect, the museum cleverly kicked off the exhibition with a 3D film before viewing of the actual exhibits took place. The film unlocked the secrets of the 3,000-year-old mummy of Egyptian temple priest Nesperennub and unveiled the story of his life and death using non-invasive X-ray and Computerised Tomography (CT) scanning techniques. After the 13 minutes film, we were guided to see the exhibits and artefacts that had been preserved so beautifully over so many years.

Amazed by the show of over 100 artefacts, we learnt that not only pharaohs and the elite were mummified at that time. Even commoners and animals such as cats and rats were also mummified. Why rats? Well, this was because they served as food for the revered cats after death.

Ms Jocelyn Huang, alumnus from the Class of 2012’s Bachelor of Communication programme shared that she was impressed by the exhibits, “I was amazed by the skills used in the mummification process, at the precise steps the embalmer took which required much expertise. And thanks to the use of cutting-edge technology, the secrets of Priest Nesperennub’s mummy have finally been unlocked and we can now learn and share in them.”
UniSIM To Begin Full-time Programmes And Host Third Law School

UniSIM will commence its full-time applied undergraduate programmes in 2014 with initial offerings in Accountancy, Finance and Marketing. The first intake will see up to 200 places offered for this new pathway which integrates students’ classroom learning with real-life applications on the job. Flexibility will be a key feature of the full-time programmes, e.g., students can crunch a four-year programme into three years by taking more modules in a semester, with evening classes. These programmes will also have a strong focus towards developing socially-aware professionals who can meet industry needs. Prospective students will experience a specially-crafted curriculum that combines soft skills development, a structured and substantial work attachment, a practice-integrated professional core, overseas experience and a sustained service learning project.

Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, President of UniSIM, said: “Our goal is to give Singapore an exciting, new and innovative applied university education, and produce graduates with three distinct qualities — professionals with strong skills in their chosen fields who are able to hit the ground running in their workplace, socially-minded individuals who are motivated to make a difference in society; and self-directed lifelong learners with strong work ethics and values — in short, graduates with Head, Heart and Habit.”

UniSIM will also host Singapore’s third law school. This new school will be developed with a strong focus on community law, such as criminal and matrimonial law.

Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education, said: “The new law school and the new applied degree pathway will add to the richness of our education landscape so that our students can keep up lifelong learning, to learn without end and without boundary. And once they benefit from the more diverse education landscape, I hope the beneficiaries of these new programmes will go on to inject their bright ideas and good work into whatever field they choose to make their own. In doing so, our students will keep our economy vibrant and our society resilient, so that we can continue to create a variety of opportunities for Singaporeans.”

Established in 2005, the SIM University Education Fund is utilised to build up the capability of UniSIM including the support of scholarly initiatives. UniSIM’s bold vision and dreams can only be realised with the financial support of donors like you.

Your gift, no matter how modest, makes a difference because pooled resources have an exponential impact on UniSIM’s efforts to support the causes for which the fund was established. When you contribute to the SIM University Education Fund, you are pledging your faith and support for our students and academic-related causes. You are building a bridge for us to serve society directly by giving bright minds unparalleled opportunities to develop to their fullest potential.

External organisations and individuals can make contributions and donations to the SIM University Education Fund. Donations will be channelled across the following:
- Infrastructure
- Systems development
- Course development
- Library development and administration
- Research and development projects
- Scholarly initiatives (including scholarships, sponsorships and study grants)

Donors can claim 2.5 times tax deduction on their donations (subject to change as announced by the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore).

Pledge your support to our extraordinary students and faculty today.

Log on to www.unisim.edu.sg/giving for more details.
Looking Ahead With Heart

Dear Alumni,

As we approach the dawn of 2014, how prepared are we to welcome and thrive in the new year?

We are constantly being told to run faster, to stay ahead of the competition and keep up with trends and technology. Yet, our beliefs and values are being assaulted daily, being influenced by bloggers, videos, and radicals whose views are just a mouse click away. Sifting the massive information available from the internet and distinguishing fact from fiction are mega factors to grapple with.

How can we remain grounded as real persons, engaged yet discerning in this anonymous digital sphere? I think the answer lies in our “heartware”. Nothing can replace the warmth of a real hug, a pat on the shoulder to encourage or congratulate another’s achievement, wiping away another’s tears, or loud and hearty laughter in sharing a joke or a joyous moment...

It is still the physical interaction that makes that difference. So, while we embrace more learning and communication via electronic means, let us commit to find and make time in 2014 to come together with friends, family and colleagues to lessen our burdens and share our joys. I urge you to also respond to the call from UniSIM to join us in student and alumni activities in the coming year as we continue to provide opportunities for career and personal development, networking and social interactions in 2014.

Here’s wishing you a fulfilling and brilliant year ahead!

Best wishes,

Evelyn Chong
Director, Office of Student and Alumni Relations

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On Oct 31, the School of Arts and Social Sciences (SASS) held its annual Alumni Dinner at 1Market. The event was attended by 170 SASS alumni, associates and staff – the largest turnout ever. It attracted alumni both old and recent; some had graduated from the old Open University days, while others had received their degree scrolls recently at the Convocation session on October 17. The event was an excellent opportunity to catch up on news and to meet old friends and make new ones. Staff and associates alike were gratified to see so many of their former students achieving success at work and in life. Many had gone on to good jobs, and some had pursued master’s and even doctoral studies. It was also a good chance for heads to share with their alumni, new developments in UniSIM and in their programmes. The alumni members were pleased to see their alma mater going from strength to strength, and being mentioned more prominently in the media.
Club Avatar at the Marina Mandarin Hotel came alive on Oct 26 as the lights dimmed, cameras flashed and the action on stage for UniSIM Graduates’ Night 2013 began. A vibrant emcee enthralled the crowd of UniSIM graduates and their guests with fun games and laughter, as they unwound and celebrated a momentous event in their lives.

The buffet was scrumptious, the lucky draw prizes attractive and the well-planned programme a delight – the result of hard work by the organising committee led by chairperson, Ms Jeslyn Chua. The Alumni Relations Department and the volunteer Events group were on hand to assist as well.

Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, President of UniSIM, in his opening remarks spoke about the rapid development of the University especially on the upcoming full-time programmes and Law School. This success was attributed to students and alumni who forged pride in their schools and workplaces. This has evolved into respect for the University from many quarters. He hoped that this cohort will come forward to contribute and make UniSIM a household name in the years to come.

One such individual is a valedictorian from the School of Business, Mr Daniel Koh Kian Wei, BSc Marketing programme, who faced multiple challenges in his quest. He commended the vigorous training and higher expectations from the school with its robust curriculum. He also spoke poignantly of rushing to hospital to witness the birth of his son on the first day of his capstone module! His motto is to strive for excellence and this has definitely spurred him on. He is currently pursuing his Masters of Science and Marketing at NTU and a PhD is in the pipeline. His advice to students – be passionate, develop a good attitude and inculcate useful values. His enthusiasm has also led him to volunteer with the Editorial Newsletter group.

Ms Cristy Foo, BSc Finance, spoke of overcoming personal challenges such as learning a totally new discipline; her background was in Chemistry. An adaptable and candid lady, she is now working at the Singapore Turf Club and spoke of “marrying herself off” in the foreseeable future. Guys, over to you!

Many thanks to the following sponsors:

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Success is, more often than not, judged by the amount of wealth that one is able to attain. For the younger generation, success typically means how fast one can climb the corporate ladder.

So how does Mr Desmond Tan, founder and director of DKT Business Services Pte Ltd, measure success?

A 2007 graduate from the SIM Open University’s Degree in Business Studies, Desmond exudes visible signs of being a contented guy despite his busy schedule. This despite looking after the growing needs of his two teenage children whilst managing his company at the same time.

An avid golfer and active volunteer in the UniSIM alumni community, Desmond has contributed profoundly to several notable UniSIM events. From the 10 hari Chinese New Year dinner gathering in 2010 to the unveiling of the UniSIM alumni logo by former President Mr SR Nathan in 2011, Desmond has always done them with utmost enthusiasm.

He related: “UniSIM is a very young university. Not many people know UniSIM and one of the most effective ways for the society and the world to know UniSIM is to continuously engage its graduates in meaningful activities.” Desmond added: “The educational standing and reputation of a tertiary institution relies largely on the quality of its graduates. The best people to make improvements to the University are the graduates themselves. They’ve been through pitfalls and they would not want the next cohort to encounter the same problems. If graduates are willing to invest a small part of their time to their alma mater, many things can be done or improved. As an employer myself, I believe that there are many employers out there who also view volunteerism and the contribution of community work as a positive trait, which is a great plus for the volunteer alumni’s work appraisal.

Volunteerism is not necessarily a sacrifice. “With each graduating cohort, the alumni pool gets bigger. When more like-minded people get together, their networks are enlarged and they can learn from one another. Some even get job and business referrals! To me, the advantages of knowing more people far outweigh the time spent as a volunteer,” reasoned Desmond.

The days of “rushing to the tutor’s house to submit the assignments before the stroke of midnight (of the deadline)”, as Desmond puts it cheekily, have somewhat shaped his determination, resilience and time management skills.

At the age of 37, in 2006, Desmond made the tough decision to embark on the entrepreneur’s route and started a sole proprietorship providing accounting services.

Ditching a high-flying Accounting Manager position in a software company, the switch to becoming his own boss presented a host of financial and domestic problems to Desmond. In Desmond’s words, it was like driving a car “from a nicely-paved expressway to a dirt track full of humps and turns”. Today, DKT Business Services Pte Ltd is an expanding accounting firm that provides accounting, corporate taxation and corporate secretarial services to local and overseas entities.

Whilst Desmond is contented with the present success of his business, he points out that he was never a bright student. When he was in Secondary 3, Desmond spent so much time on his extra-curriculum activities that he was almost expelled from school. For practical reasons, he chose the polytechnic route after his ‘O’ levels.

Back in the 1990s, there was a perceived lack of opportunity for higher studies at varsity level after graduating from a polytechnic, and Desmond admitted that there was a sense of loss amongst the polytechnic graduates. When he was introduced to SIM’s Open University, he became attracted to the institution’s methodology of lessons conducted for working adults like him. He signed up for a place in the Open University and never looked back.

Recounting the steps he took, Desmond expressed that he may not have what he has today if he has not gone to UniSIM. Understandably, Desmond feels a strong sense of reciprocal duty to his alma mater for what UniSIM has offered him. “Doing my part as an alumnus is the least that I could do for the University,” said Desmond.
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Although keeping his business in good shape is tough, it is Desmond’s strong belief that one cannot taste sweetness without putting in hard work and the never-say-never attitude imbued from the Unisim way of life that convinced him to remain on the entrepreneurial track.

It is also the experience and lessons gained in his Open University days that equipped him with the know-how to expand his business from sole proprietorship to that of a company. Serving local and overseas business clients with a small staff strength of six (excluding his wife and himself), Desmond recounted his personal success: “I would not be able to achieve what I have today without the strong support from my wife.”

“Karen was my confidante and pillar of spiritual support whenever I encountered my downs in the course of business. When she decided to join DKT, I was very happy because she will be able to add value to the company with her years of working experience in a multinational corporation,” he adds.

So, what exactly is success? To Desmond, it is not something that can be quantified by any measurement. He said: “I would not say that I have achieved success, I am still in my prime and there is so much to learn!”

“The business landscape is ever-changing and without the certainty of stability, I can only project how my business may be like in the next five years,” added the ICPA-accredited tax specialist, who wishes to branch into the business of distributing accounting software. “One thing for sure – I will remain happy serving the Unisim alumni community and giving away what I have learnt from some of the best in this institution and I will continue to do so while I can.”
Alumni Volunteers Lend A Helping Hands

There was a great spirit of camaraderie among the group of alumni who turned up to volunteer their services at the Geylang East Home for the Aged in Aljunied Crescent on Sept 21. The volunteers looked forward to a splendid afternoon working together and it really bode well for everyone from the young to the elderly.

The Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration event was attended by many residents living within the neighbourhood and its vicinity. The Guest-of-Honour, Ms Tin Pei Ling, elected Member of Parliament of the Marine Parade Group Representation Constituency who is in charge of the MacPherson ward, graced the concert and the numerous booths put up by different groups of volunteers from all over Singapore. The activities went well into the night with attendees lingering around even after all official events had ended.

Singapore Mass Rapid Transit volunteers (SMRT) commenced the Processional Lantern Walk in the night with children in tow. UniSIM volunteers then continued to keep these children enthralled in engaging and challenging games. The greatest reward for the volunteers was found among the candid smiles of and very sweetly-spoken ‘Thank you’ by the children who came to play at the games booths.

Although exhausted, the volunteers were happy as the cool night ended with resounding success for MacPherson Aljunied Crescent Zone ‘2’ RC, Geylang East Home for the Aged, and its Neighbourhood Link who were the organisers of this community event.

Look out for the next community event and do not miss the opportunity to offer your services and take home with you an awesome experience as a volunteer.

Alumni Volunteers Lend A Helping Hands

Movie Event

As the end of 2013 is close in sight, the hustle of everyday life makes way for the approaching festive cheer. Close to 600 UniSIM alumni and guests joined in the festive mood as they gathered for a movie screening of the highly-anticipated Marvel superhero blockbuster sequel, Thor 2.

Fans did not miss the chance to get up close with the life-size movie poster. Posing for pictures, they certainly showed that the Thunder God is popular in sunny Singapore.

Our alumni and guests tuckered into a sumptuous reception before proceeding to join Thor in his fight against the evil dark elves.

Ms Candace Lim, BA (Hons) English with Business, Class of 2007 – a self-professed Thor fan – shared that watching a movie she likes allows her to catch up with her friend.

Movie screenings seem to be popular with families too. According to Ms Florence Teo and Mr Chan Cheow Hong, both graduates from BSc Mathematics, Class of 1999, this was not the first screening that they had attended and that it allowed them to get together as a family.

Ms Yeeh Siew Ping, BSc Business, Class of 2011, shared that she likes to attend alumni activities. These activities enable her to enlarge her circle of friends and also serve as good platforms to stay up-to-date with happenings at UniSIM.

The UniSIM movie screening is part of a series of activities organised by the Alumni Relations Department to enable alumni to connect with their alma mater.
As earth fills the grave, a past is believed to be buried with the dead. In the circle of life, it is the start of a new journey but not until a death wish is met. Ghosts do not narrate their histories. They want you to live it. Renowned for spilling your guts in theatres, the stars of popular Thai horror flicks such as Pee Mak and Shutter held a "meet-the-fans session" in their trails of hell at Fort Siloso on Oct 19.

Before entering the gates, visitors were placed in groups of 10. Each team had to complete a mission or task being cursed by the spiteful spirits. Whether it was locating lonely boy Vichien (in Dorm) in a haunted school or assembling the decomposed body of Dararaj (in Body), everyone was told "to expect a little more in creepy Fort Siloso". Appraisal rites were also conducted by staff of Sentosa to keep the supernatural beings at bay.

Unlike conventional Halloween events, there were no special effects or scare tactics at the start. The trails were pitch dark and eerily quiet. Everyone had to walk in a single file with a hand on the shoulder of the person in front.

Just when they started to get comfortable, unknown objects loomed randomly in sight and loud noises echoed in all directions. The sudden environmental changes disillusioned everyone and the group started to drag itself to the exit.

Unfortunately, their situation could only get worse. The main characters of the respective trails eventually showed up and frightened visitors with their rage. At times, they were even drifting in the midst of the group while maintaining a ghostly stare. Everything was so surreal that some people started the appeasement rites while others stood firmly rooted to the ground. At the end of each tour, there would be reports of unusual sightings over their shoulders, which felt gruesome.

I was made to walk the Shutter trail alone, which resembled a photography dark room. I was encouraged to look at the grotesque pictures as they were said to be "real". The spine-chilling yet innocent photo exhibition soon became my worst nightmare. There were occasional sightings of apparition and one of the models in a paper photo moved – like the portraits in Harry Potter movies. As I entered the next room, an actress (I hoped!) fell on me. She had a pale face with no eyes. I pushed her aside and moved a few steps forward. When I looked over my shoulders, she had disappeared. Coincidentally, her wake was held in that room. So was the previous encounter part of the act? A few metres before the exit, the same "girl" appeared. This time, her head was bowed as she bade farewell. I was shocked and ran straight to the door.

After my rendezvous with fear, I went home shivering. The experience made me wonder if someone is always looking over my shoulder.
Graduates meet
the UniSIM
Alumni Family

By Janet Yong

UniSIM held its 2013 Graduation lunch cum high tea at the Asian Market Cafe in Fairmont Hotel on Nov 30.

There was an overwhelming response with 178 alumni and 20 guests attending the event. For the alumni of 2013, it was a treat from UniSIM with door gifts which included an exclusive UniSIM collar pin. Registration by staff from the Alumni Relations department started well before noon as the guests streamed into the cafe filling it with their light-hearted chatter. With exuberant faces and beaming smiles, they searched for their fellow graduates to catch up as well as share many anecdotes.

Many commented that the food at the cafe – halal-certified pan-Asian cuisine comprising a delectable spread ranging from local to Thai to Japanese food – was delicious and catered to the local taste buds. Mr Frederic Tan, BSc Management and Security Studies, complimented on the “efficient registration, excellent door gift and cordial welcome” he received. He also felt that it was a “good time to meet old friends and make new ones”.

Mr Khairil Tahir, BSc Management and Security Studies, shared that he came to network with former classmates and meet up with friends. “I also like the venue as it is easily accessible and the halal food is good,” said Khairil. He pronounced the event a success. Another alumnus, Ms Michelle Tang Shi Yee, Bachelor of Human Resource Management, echoed Khairil’s observations and was delighted to be present for the occasion. “UniSIM organises a lot of activities for its alumni. It is a caring university. They allow us to bring friends for many of the events. I will definitely come back for more.”

The event ended towards the late afternoon as nostalgia lifted the air while memories lingered even more for the participants.

Alumni Family Day @
ADVENTURE
COVE
WATERPARK

By Melinda Kaur

“Splish-Splash” Saturday was how 124 alumni along with their family members and friends started their weekend on Nov 23. They enthusiastically assembled at UniSIM early for a quick breakfast at 8am before departing for Adventure Cove Waterpark.

On arrival at the waterpark – part of the Marine Life Park at Resorts World Sentosa – we were welcomed into an aquatic wonderland with 14 different attractions that kept everyone entertained and pumped up with adrenaline till 7pm!

For those who enjoy water slides, Adventure Cove has a number of them, each with its own uniqueness. The Pipeline Plunge is a high speed plunge in darkness, like being in a tornado but exiting with a splash! The Rip Tide Rocket is another heart-wrenching and intense ride with dramatic acceleration that had many alumni queuing up for more!

Always wanted to snorkel? Rainbow Reef allows us to snorkel with hundreds of friendly fishes over a coral reef environment. This experience, especially the up close encounter with the myriad of fishes, was a truly memorable experience for many alumni members.

My personal favourite with no queue requirements, was the Adventure River. Even after three long trips through 14 stunning habitats, I was not too tired for nor bored with this adventure. I call it the “Lazy River”. We grabbed a tube and rode down the river leisurely through a jungle-themed habitat of an underwater tunnel where you could see fishes and stingrays, and through caves with many more exciting discoveries. Adventure River is worth the visit and a pleasant ride even for toddlers!

This year’s Alumni Family Day was a truly amazing and memorable experience. It was indeed a perfect day for our alumni! Happy Holidays!
Flash Your Alumni Card to Enjoy These Special Deals:

**Pamper yourself with one of the following delights at only $18.**
- Deep Cleansing Face Spa (Duration 45mins, U.P. $128.40)
- Relaxing Back De-Stress Massage (Duration 30mins: U.P. $96.30)

Promotion is valid till June 30, 2014.
Call 6841 1141 and quote SM50.

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**CONTEST GIVEAWAYS!**

We are giving eight exclusive UniSIM umbrellas. Simply SMS the answers to the three questions below to 9113 6795 in the following format:

**Newsletter**<spac**e**>IC number<space>**Email address**
<space>**Answers for Q1, Q2 and Q3.**

**Example**: Newsletter S1234567X alumni@unisim.edu.sg
Answers for Q1 and Q3.

**QUESTIONS**

**Q1** Name the two alumni who attended the Mummy event at the ArtScience Museum.

**Q2** What is the UniSIM website address for donors to make contributions and donations?

**Q3** Name the company set up by Mr Desmond Tan.

**Closing Date**: January 18, 2014

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**Congratulations to the Contest Winners of Issue 23!**

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For advertising enquiries, call 6248 9245 or email alumni@unisim.edu.sg
**Pre CNY Shopping Trip to Johor Bahru**

**Date**
January 18, 2014

**Venue**
SIM HQ, Blk A, Clementi Road (Meeting and Drop-off point)

**Time**
6:30 am – Assemble at SIM HQ, Clementi Road
7:00 am – Coach depart for Johor via Tuas, 2nd Link
8:30 pm – Estimated time of arrival at SIM HQ, Clementi Road

* Above timing are based on estimation and subject to traffic condition.

**Fee**
Alumni – $25 per person
Alumni Guest – $40 per person

* Each alumnus is allowed to register a maximum of 2 seats only. Inclusive of alumnus’ seat.

**Registration**
www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal

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**Request For Your Red Packets from January 14, 2014!**

UniSIM alumni may request complimentary red packets through the Alumni Portal (www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal). Each alumnus is entitled to two packs of red packets (10 pieces per pack). While stock lasts.