• Minister @ Future Leaders Camp
• Nilai U launches module on personal branding
• IWorld Culture is a hit!
The tail end of the year is always a busy time for staff, lecturers and students at Nilai University (Nilai U) as quite a number are involved in the organising and hosting of our University events. The “1World Culture” was successfully held on 8 November 2014 and the “Future Leaders Camp” was well conducted between 15-17 November 2014. We have been hosting and organising these two events for six consecutive years and they have become indelibly linked to our University.

The primary reason for Nilai U’s continued involvement is that the administrators recognise the positive impact these events have had on the students. It is not just those who are participating but all those who have worked very hard in organising, volunteering as student helpers or just being ushers on the day. At the end of it, all the students enjoyed themselves and had a fulfilling experience.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who had a hand in making both these events a huge success. I realise what a huge undertaking it was to co-ordinate events which involve hundreds of participants from institutions from all over the country. The logistics are mind boggling but the fact that both events ran like clockwork is testament to Nilai U staff and student co-operation in making them huge successes. It is part of the learning process and underlines Nilai U’s philosophy of ‘Enrichment for Life’ where students are provided with various opportunities to learn and broaden their horizons. Helping organise events of such scale is part of that learning process. I am certain that all students who helped have learnt valuable lessons which they will benefit from later when they enter the working world.

Speaking of working world, I am also proud to announce that Nilai U has signed an agreement with a brand image consultant, Chapter One, to provide a module which coaches students on how best to present themselves. How a person dresses is of great importance as many surveys have indicated that employers make snap judgments based on first impressions. So it is imperative that our graduates know how best to present themselves, especially in a corporate setting.

This underlines Nilai U’s commitment to educating our students and also preparing them for the realities of the working world. It is after all our promise to the parents that we return their children in better shape than we received them. I believe the aforementioned events and the newly launched module will help us achieve that.

Prof Datuk Dr Megat Burhanuddin
Vice-Chancellor

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Learning is a life-long process. But it is most crucial during a young adult’s tenure at university. I say this because everything is attuned towards the goal of empowering students with knowledge, real-life experiences and heightened sense of responsibility. In that respect, every department at Nilai University beyond the academic faculties also do their part by offering internship and student-helper opportunities.

To all students who are applying for their internships, do not overlook the many opportunities that are available at your alma mater. The Corporate Communications department, which publishes this newsletter, is always on the look out for students who want to learn editorial skills, flex their photography skills, and help organise events.

If you want to learn from experienced staff, please drop me a line.

R Balan
Editor
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Ps: We have amended the date system to the Explorer. Previously, the cover dates indicate the duration of the events covered. It now denotes the time period in which the edition is issued to avoid any confusion. Thus, we have ‘skipped’ what would have been the October-Dec 2014 issue.

Next Intake: Jan & Mar 2015

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Branding Yourself!
Chap One to offer Personal Branding elective course to help boost Nilai U students’ soft skills.

“Image is very important. It is how you brand yourself,” says Wendy Lee, Brand Image consultant with Chap One Sdn Bhd (Chap One). “What matters is how you stand out from the crowd.” She was speaking at the Memorandum of Understanding signing event at Nilai University (Nilai U). Under the terms of the MoU, Chap One will offer this Personal Branding course three times a year as an elective University Course with three credits.

Prior to signing the MoU, Wendy conducted a brief workshop for the assembled students, staff and lecturers. A few areas highlighted during this workshop included the right way to shake hands, how best to choose the right attire for work, and even the length of facial hair! Wendy’s exuberance and enthusiasm was contagious and she soon had the crowd eating out of her hand, with many responding to her positive demeanour by signing up for the course.

Also present to sign the MoU was Prof Datuk Dr Megat Burhanuddin (Nilai U Vice-Chancellor) and Alan Hoo (Executive Director of Chap One), while witnesses to the agreement were Prof Dr Lee Boon Thong (Nilai U Deputy Vice-Chancellor) and Wendy Megat, in his speech, pointed to various examples such as the late Steve Jobs and Facebook-founder Mark Zuckerberg, who though seemingly casual dressers were very adept at using clothing to reinforce their own brands. He also emphasised the importance of making a good first impression as, like it or not, many human resource executives will begin to assess the minute a graduate sits down in an interview chair.

Nilai U administrators have sought to emphasise the importance of ‘soft skills’ needed when students eventually enter the employment market. They have sought to mould well-rounded students by offering them opportunities to learn and grow as individuals. This Personal Grooming module is very much part of that plan to afford students a new skill set which will benefit them greatly when entering the work market.

Apart from this module from Chap One, students will also have choices which include courses by Dale Carnegie and Outward Bound. Students who successfully complete these courses will receive certification from these internationally-recognised organisations. As Dr Megat pointed out in his speech, “It is one thing for a student to claim they have great soft skills but quite another to back up that claim with a certificate from an internationally-recognised organisation”. Given the enthusiastic applause that greeted Wendy’s workshop, there is likely to be plenty of takers for this programme.

This module is part of the many exciting modules available at Nilai U which are designed to improve students’ soft skills. These include Dale Carnegie’s Skills for Success, Outward Bound’s Survival Skills and Theatre and Acting class designed to improve students communication skills.
USM grabs top prize at 1World Culture
Private and public universities compete in dance competition celebrating cultural diversity at Nilai U.

University Salma Malaysia (USM), Penang, walked away with the top prize at the annual 1World Culture event held at Nilai University last weekend. The event that started as a song and dance competition to celebrate international students in local institutions of higher education is in its sixth edition and since its inception has been hosted by Nilai University (in collaboration with the Ministry of Education).

This year's event only featured the dance contest and attracted a dozen public and private universities and colleges. Other prize winners include Universiti Teknologi Petronas (1st runner-up), Universiti Putra Malaysia (2nd runner-up), and Universiti Teknologi MARA (Judges' Special Prize). The champion's performance was a combination of traditional Tibetan culture and Malaysia's very own Wau Bulan dance. USM performers (closest rules allowed) consisting of international students included those from Finland, Switzerland and Germany. They must have certainly wowed the judges as they also walked away with the Best Choreography (ging).

In his closing speech, Nilai University (Nilai U) Vice-Chancellor Prof Dato’ Dr Megat Suhainuddin, urged all the participants to cherish these moments as they would provide them with a golden album of memories of their varsity years. He also urged them to encourage more of their peers to make their presence felt through such competitions as it is a great platform for them to share their respective cultures and customs through the medium of dance.

Nilai U believes in providing students with the Total Student Experience which is aimed at making their varsity years truly memorable and enriching. This is done through the delivery of quality higher education as well as a campus scene full of activities and programmes such as the 1World Culture.

The 1World Culture event is designed to promote better cultural understanding among students.
Gender issues was the focal point for this year’s Nilai U-NIEW Future Leaders Camp.

NILAI U-NIEW FUTURE LEADERS CAMPS’14
Innovations in Leadership: A Focus on Gender Issues

Datuk’ Sri Rohani Abdul Karim, Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, delivered the closing address at the sixth annual Future Leaders Camp, held at the Nilai Springs Resort Hotel. The event was organized and hosted by Nilai University (Nilai U) in collaboration with NIBM Institute for the Empowerment of Women Malaysia (NIEW). The focus this year is on Innovations in Leadership: A Focus on Gender Issues.

In addressing the participants of this three-day leadership camp, Rohani responded to former Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak’s claim that the disparity in the number of women in institutions of higher education could lead to problems to the traditional patriarchal family structure in the country. Rohani said that while the imbalance was not ideal, it was by no means creating a negative impact on socially, citing various overseas examples where similar trends existed. She was also quick to point out that, while the number of female graduates have been on the increase, this rise has not been reflected in the employment market. Saying that her ministry was committed to improving this statistic, Rohani urged the gathered female student leaders to make a positive impact on the nation building process.

Nilai U has been actively involved in the organizing and hosting of the Future Leaders Camp since its inception six years ago. Its administration is committed to providing students the Total Student Experience, which aims to give students a complete education, from both within and outside the classroom. Nilai U believes that students need to be exposed to more activities and forums which would positively impact their thinking and the way they interact with one another. Many measures were made to initiate a camp where student leaders from institutions of higher learning both public and private have the opportunity to learn and listen from renowned speakers, industry experts and even, activists.

Previous editions of the Future Leaders Camp have championed gender issues as well as fostering better cultural understanding. These are two issues which Nilai U administrators have found to be key in developing students’ identity and self-awareness. The camp this year was especially equipped with talk, discussion, groups, and panel discussion to address the main achievements and debates as well as a series of workshops designed to cultivate a new generation of future leaders who are in touch with the issues of the day.

The keynote speaker of this year’s event was Dato’ Sutradina Abdullah (CEO of Global Movement of Moderates). The Future Leaders Camp has always featured high profile keynote speakers and VIPs who can make a real impact on the assembled young minds. Previous speakers include Tun Dr Ismail bin Abdul Rahman (Chief Justice of Malaysia), Tun Dato’ Dr. Haji Usman bin Haji Mohd. Ali (former Chief Minister of Sarawak), Tan Sri Dato’ Mohamed Ali bin Dato’ Ali (former Penang State Secretary), and Prof. Haji Ab. Daud bin Haji Daud (former Director General, Ministry of Education). Nilai U firmly believes in exposing students to a variety of experiences which will further broaden their horizons.

Student leaders from institutions of higher learning from all over the country were invited to participate in this annual event.

This group of students obviously benefited from the personal grooming session.

Students proudly showing off their certificates of participation.

The Future Leaders Camp attendees share insights and solutions of issues relevant to students.

Participants organise a group activity and facilitate the Future Leaders Camp theme up.
Getting Acclimatised

Maldives student has no regrets coming to Malaysia to pursue her business degree.

"I keep being mistaken for a local, especially at the night markets where the vendors insist on speaking to me in Malay!" states Maeesha Ibrahim, who hails from Fuvahmulah, Republic of Maldives. The 21-year old first arrived in Malaysian four years ago to pursue a Diploma in Business Administration at Nilai University (Nilai U). "In the beginning, the language barrier made it pretty difficult. But through the mandatory Malay language classes and help from local classmates, I now am able to communicate with these vendors," she laughed while displaying her rudimentary haggling skills.

The journey to these shores began when Maeesha’s mother began to plan for her eldest daughter to study abroad. Maeesha’s step-brother had actually graduated with a BBA (Hons) in Management from Nilai U and had given them a glowing account of the institution and the quality of the programmes. Decision was made for Maeesha to follow in her step-brother’s footsteps. The former student of GN Atoll Education Centre says she initially thought about enrolling in the Diploma in Culinary Arts programme as she is an avid baker, having helped her mum run a bakery in her hometown. But after giving it some thought, Maeesha decided she wanted to learn more about the business world and opted for the Diploma in Business Administration, before joining the BBA (Hons) in Human Resource Management programme.

"Many have asked why I chose the longer diploma route over the one-year Foundation in Business programme. To be honest, I did so because I believed that the Diploma in Business Administration would give me a more solid groundwork on many of the business modules, which are also taught at a higher level in the degree programme," she explained. "I have been proven right as I am finding many of the subjects in the Human Resource degree programme easier to follow because of my Diploma in Business Administration background." The young lady also said that she chose Human Resource Management as her business major as she is very much "a people person" and that she hopes to use this knowledge to help expand her mother’s businesses in Maldives (which apart from the bakery, also includes a clothing store). Having a Diploma in Business Administration also allowed her to enter the 2nd year of the degree programme.

Apart from the initial language difficulties, Maeesha said that she had settled in very well. "I have made many friends here and revel in the multi-culturalism of the campus. I also have my own apartment which allows me to cook and bake in my spare time," she said. She has absolutely no regrets joining Nilai U as her step-brother had assured her of the quality of the qualifications as well as the teaching staff. "The teachers have been wonderful. They are always providing extra consulting hours and extra classes, especially towards exam time," she stated.

She is also keen to stress that the ambience of Nilai U’s campus is perfect for studies. "When I first arrived here, I was struck by its peace and quiet. I absolutely love the sound of birds chirping in the morning when I walk to classes," she recalled. "The quality of the teachers here is great and the campus is so peaceful and serene. I would absolutely recommend Nilai U to any of my friends and relatives."

Maeesha Ibrahim, who hails from Fuvahmulah, Republic of Maldives, first enrolled in Nilai U’s Diploma in Business Administration before joining the BBA (Hons) in Human Resource Management programme.
Excellence In Sports Helps Student Win Scholarship

Former state table tennis player excelling in both studies and sports events at Nilai U.

Yeong Ming Yue scored 9As in SPM in 2012 but was still anxious that it was not good enough to secure her a scholarship for a private tertiary institution. She remembers the competition being very intense as many of her schoolmates had also scored excellent results and everyone seemed to be aiming for the same scholarship avenues. But Ming Yue had an ace up her sleeve which separated her from the rest of the academic high achievers - she was a state table tennis player who had represented Wilayah Persekutuan.

Sure enough, Nilai University (Nilai U), which has always been keen to reward students with excellent extra-curricular achievements, offered the young lass the Extra-Curriculum Excellence Award covering 100% of her tuition and accommodation fees. "I am so glad that my parents, in particular my father, encouraged me to be active in sports. In fact, he coached me with my table tennis. So many of my friends were forced by their parents to give up sports to concentrate on their studies," she recalled. "In the final reckoning, it was my sporting activities that got me my scholarship from Nilai U. I hope more parents will encourage their children to pursue sports as it may help them secure a vital scholarship."

Fast forward two years and Ming Yue has already completed her Foundation in Science programme and entered the BSc (Hons) in Biotechnology programme just as she had dreamed. She is still working hard at keeping up her academic scores and is just a few credit points shy of a first class honours degree. She still has a few semesters to get that right and she is determined to prove to the administrators that they were right in awarding her a scholarship.

Yeong Ming Yue (BSc (Hons) in Biotechnology) was offered Nilai U’s Extra-Curriculum Excellence Award covering 100% of her tuition and accommodation fees based on the fact that she represented Wilayah Persekutuan at table tennis.

The former SMJK Yu Hua student is also determined to disprove the myth that excellence in sports comes with the price of academic results. Along with Lew Pei Yen (another Extra-Curriculum Excellence award recipient who has since completed her BBA (Hons) in Finance programme), Ming Yue has represented her alma mater at various table tennis tournaments. The girls’ achievements include winning gold in the IPTA - KPT sports meets table tennis doubles event twice.

Ming Yue is keen to stress the importance of being active in extra-curricular activities as a means of improving one's mental and physical health. This automatically translates into a better state of mind and improved concentration in one’s studies. According to her, the regular table tennis training is a release valve from the pressure of deadlines and examinations. "I can also confidently affirm that my table tennis background enables me to think faster and react quicker. I believe it helps me focus and stay disciplined which is essential to succeed in university," she claimed.

Her long term plans are to further her studies onto a Master's degree and possibly even a PhD in the field of food science. "This is where my interests lie and I believe it would be better to complete my studies in one go," she said. Thus far, she is thoroughly enjoying her biotechnology programme and says students should check it out as Nilai U has all the required laboratory facilities. "BioTech may still in its teething stage in this country but I urge school leavers to do more research," she cajoled, saying that it opens up employment opportunities in a variety of fields and graduates are not confined to laboratory settings.

This vibrant 22-year-old is also keen to encourage potential applicants to visit Nilai U’s campus saying its peaceful environment is ideal for higher education. "I visited other campuses before but none were like Nilai U’s. This is a great place to study. No distractions at all," she quipped. Since her long-term table tennis partner had already completed her studies, Ming Yue is hoping that other table tennis starts will apply to Nilai U. "Like me, you may be offered a scholarship. And maybe we can start a new doubles partnership and win plenty of medals!"
Bowled over by Nilai U

Peaceful campus atmosphere is key to academic success, says former national bowler.

Lim Hsu Zen admits to being less-than-attentive when she first enrolled in a Foundation programme in a university based in the Klang Valley. “To be honest, I spent way too much time in shopping malls, which were situated close to the university’s campus,” she confessed somewhat sheepishly. “I would try to catch a movie in between classes instead of spending time in the library. There were just too many distractions.” Those distractions proved her undoing and her results suffered. Her mother was quick to realise that Hsu Zen needed to be in a somewhat quieter environment.

Both mother and daughter decided to check out Nilai University as her aunt has a house in the locality. They were impressed by the lush greenery and peaceful atmosphere of the campus. The American Degree Transfer Program (ADTP) caught the 21-year-old’s imagination as she has always harboured dreams of studying abroad. She was then informed of the various scholarships available and was told that as a former national and current state bowler she was entitled to apply for the Extra-Curriculum Excellence Award.

She promptly turned up for the scholarship interview with a box laden with her trophies and medals. The play must have worked as she was offered the scholarship which covered her tuition and accommodation fees. “I am very fortunate to have gotten this scholarship as it will help my mother save up for my studies in the US,” said the 21-year-old former student of SMK Pulai, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan.

Hsu Zen first caught the bowling bug while watching her parents play. Her late father took her bowling regularly from the age of 10 and enrolled her in coaching clinics. She was soon good enough to represent her school before donning state and national colours. Given the fact that she has gotten a scholarship based on her sporting credentials, she is quick to advise school pupils to take up sports and other extra-curricular activities. “It is not just at local universities but many institutions abroad, especially the United States, offer scholarships for sporting excellence,” pointed out Hsu Zen, who will be applying for a scholarship from the American universities which she is applying to.

She has narrowed her choice to Wichita State University, Iowa as she has an aunt living nearby and more pertinent, there is a bowling alley on campus. “I want to pursue a degree in sports management as I believe it is a field which suits me. I am not the sort who likes to be chained to a desk all day and this degree will open doors to a career in sports event management,” she explained. It is her dream to be involved in a grand sporting bonanza such as the Olympics or the World Cup. “That would indeed be a dream come true to be involved in organising an international sporting event. I have competed in SUKMA games and seen how they are organised. I now want to see things on a larger, grander scale,” she said.

As for Nilai U’s ADTP, Hsu Zen is full of praises for both the programme as well as the lecturers. She states the easy transfer of credits and cost saving as the main factors in choosing the programme. She also likes the fact that the classes are kept deliberately small to allow for maximum teacher-student interaction. “Unlike my previous institution where the classes were really large, the ADTP classes allow for lecturers to really devote quality time with each student as the numbers are kept low,” she stated. Her current CGPA of 3.35 is definitely a huge improvement from her previous academic performance in a city campus. Thus, she does not hesitate in endorsing Nilai U as a superb educational destination. “It offers quality and value-for-money education. When overseas education is so expensive, being able to save on costs is crucial. The quality of the education with good lecturers is also top notch,” she emphasised.

Nilai U’s ADTP allows students to do two years of study locally before transferring to an American university of their choice, with a maximum transfer of 90 credits.
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Yee Yin Sinn
Nilai U Valedictorian for the Class of 2014

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