An Alumnus’ Passion for Lifelong Learning!

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Celebrating 10 Years Of Making A Difference
BUILDING BRIDGES

Our Newsletter Editorial Group (NEG) recently attended a workshop on writing skills organised by the Alumni Relations Department. Well-attended, the training saw our full-time students get together with our alumni volunteers—graduates of UniSIM’s part-time study mode.

This interaction provided the students with an understanding of the roles played by us, alumni volunteers, and served to encourage and smoothen their transition to becoming a volunteer. Not only were they able to clarify on the exact role of a volunteer, especially that of an NEG volunteer, they were also able to better understand the critical role played by each member. For example, they came to realise how a deadline miss by just one NEG member would likely delay the production of the entire alumni newsletter.

This gathering was also an example of how attending alumni events, our students act as representatives of the student population, and can help heighten awareness about the history and traditions of SIM University (UniSIM) among themselves. Such engagements with the alumni also provide our students with networking opportunities that can be a gateway towards internships with companies where the alumni members work or own.

This bridge that connects the past, our alumni, with the future, our students, is important. Let’s continue to work together and further develop this even as the foundation stones are being laid.

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

Being LinkedIn

By Daniel Koh

LinkedIn is a name that resonates widely with working class professionals for its business-oriented social networking service. With more than 347 million users, LinkedIn can be considered one of the top networks overall. On July 24, a UniSIM-invited guest speaker shared with us how to leverage the network to seek a career change or attract potential employers.

Standing tall and a true professional, Mr Atul Harkisanka, Regional Sales Manager at LinkedIn Singapore, explained to the attentive audience how LinkedIn is different from Facebook. He stressed that LinkedIn is a social networking tool for working professionals and that it does not encourage individuals to post personal lifestyles and habits, giving an example of how one can even post pictures of breakfast online unreservedly.

According to him, his friends and acquaintances have said the following to him: “I’m in LinkedIn, but I have no idea what to use it for,” or “I don’t see the point of joining—my colleagues know me, my work and my email address. I don’t need to connect with them on LinkedIn.” Atul explained in simple terms how LinkedIn is a valuable tool for professional networking and shared ways to enhance one’s career.

Mr Loganathan s/o Ramachandra, Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, Class of 2014, commented that the seminar provided him with the know-how in following companies he is keen on, updated him on the trends from relevant industries, and enabled him to apply for jobs of his interest through connections with such companies. Instead of sending out curriculum vitae to potential employers the traditional way, he finds such breakthroughs to be more useful. “This is a definite must-have for working professionals,” added Loganathan.

The event ended after a tea session and the attendees left presumably somewhat wiser. Perhaps we should “Like” LinkedIn.
Traditional Chinese Medicine Talk

By Janet Yong

On Aug 27, UnSIM alumni gathered to learn more about managing health through traditional Chinese medicine, or TCM as it is commonly known.

The guest speaker at the talk was Dr Steven Loh, a physician with ECON Chinese Medicine, who has a doctorate from Nanjing University and is a known expert on internal medicine, acupuncture and pain management.

He shared that TCM uses the Five Elements Theory to interpret the relationship between the physiology and pathology of the human body and the natural environment. Dr Loh explained that a number of ailments can be healed using TCM, which zooms in to and addresses the root cause.

According to Dr Loh, “TCM is a medical practice that utilises natural ingredients such as herbs, animal parts, minerals and other bio-organic matters to nourish and strike a balance within the system.” It does not involve surgery nor use synthetic medicine that usually have side effects.

Mr Vickneswaran s/o Krishnasamy, Bachelor of Science in Information and Communication Technology, Class of 2013, is a true believer. “My two-year-old son had bronchitis when he was less than one. After three months of TCM treatment, he recovered fully.” His wife said that the talk was delivered in a clear and concise manner. She added: “I have always turned to TCM instead of Western medicine. The talk was truly informative. We enjoyed it thoroughly.”

One-day Kukup Trip

By Janet Yong

Kukup, Malaysia, is well known to Singaporeans as the place for seafood. So, when the Alumni Relations Department organised a day trip there on June 13, it was well-attended.

That morning saw nearly 40 alumni and staff gather as early as 6.30 am at our campus. On arriving at Johor Bahru, we headed immediately to the famous noodle place Ah Koong at Taman Sentosa for breakfast. Next was a visit to a batik factory and a pewter factory.

The highlight of the trip was the sumptuous lunch at High King Seafood Restaurant in Kukup where we feasted on a wide range of extremely fresh and delicious seafood. Next up was a visit to the Kukup Fishing Village, where we took a short boat ride to a fish farm built on stilts. It was indeed memorable exploring this village as we experienced first-hand, the simple, happy, rural way of life. We adjourned for a spot of shopping at Bukit Indah after that, before sitting down for a Thai dinner at Taman Nusa Bestari.

Many of the alumni who went on this excursion gave it their two thumbs-up. Ms Liew Sai Chin Leona, Bachelor of Early Childhood Education with Management, Class of 2014, commented: “The whole trip was very enjoyable and nice. The Thai dinner was good. What I liked best about this event was the networking with fellow alumni members whom I connected with.”

Mr Yeo Yong Keong Bernard, Bachelor of Science in Finance, Class of 2012, commented: “This outing has been an eye-opener. I saw how the archer fish, found normally in the forest amongst the mangrove swamps, is bred in captivity. It is the first time that I witnessed how they catch their prey by spitting. I will be looking out for more of such trips.”
**Speak Up, Shout Out for UniSIM!**

**Dear Alumni,**

A country's survival, progress and success is only as strong as its people. Imagine the power of one united nation, led by visionary and caring leaders where citizens are committed to contribute their best and supported to realise their full potential. WOW!

The Singapore spirit is what we saw in abundance especially over the Jubilee weekend where we celebrated SG50 as a nation. Despite our little warts and all (Well, who is perfect, anyway?), we are the envy of many from other nations.

Just like the country, an organisation's reputation is also very much dependent on its constituents. At UniSIM, we too are dependent on many stakeholders to carry and fly our flag high. And one of them is YOU, our alumni community. Imagine if each alumnus speaks well of and fly the UniSIM flag high in all that you do, collectively as a 25,000-strong alumni community working with other stakeholders; we can reach literally millions that we come into contact with both locally and overseas. And a strong university reputation also enhances the value of your qualification!

While we look towards our alumni to uphold our reputation, we too continuously try to improve our communication and events offering to meet your needs. In July, we invited a core team from LinkedIn to share with our alumni on how they can create a more impactful corporate presence online as this is a significant platform where many employers tap into for talent. In August, we conducted an alumni focus group session to seek more views and feedback on how we can better support alumni in various forms including career development, continuing education, community service and recreation. So, look out for more such events coming on-stream.

Our objective is to uplift your capability just as you help uplift UniSIM's reputation. So, let's work "hand in glove" on this joint mission.

Best wishes,

**Evelyn Chong**  
Director, Office of Student and Alumni Relations

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We heard the media exclaim superlatively about the June 5 opening ceremony of the 28th SEA Games over a few days. Yes, it was indeed spectacular. I can certainly testify to it.

As I headed to the National Stadium by train that evening for the 8 pm start time, I observed many fellow travellers dressed in red and white, obviously heading to the same event. I felt a sense of camaraderie instantly.

I alighted at the Stadium MRT station and joined a “snaking” queue at the stadium. It was not long before I was ushered to a “good” seat by a very alert volunteer. The 55,000-capacity National Stadium has a retractable seating capability making it the only stadium in the world able to host a multitude of events. As I sat there, I was entertained by the pulsating music playing in the background and a psychedelic laser show that punctuated the landscape. Big screens flashed past memorable football games by the Singapore national team.

The famous Kallang Wave spontaneously erupted – repeatedly. The spectacular show of lights and sound transported me to a different world!

Kicking off the opening ceremony was The Big Singapore Welcome segment, which saw Singapore’s rich cultural diversity brought to life through stunning art forms by a large number of performers from various organisations including the Singapore Soka Association and Eurasian Association.

Nila, the Games’ mascot, parachuted in accompanied by a roar, which also signalled the entry of the contingents and officials. Rapturous cheers enveloped Singapore’s contingent – its biggest ever at 749 – led by flag bearer and swimmer Quah Ting Wen.

Following a speech by the chairman of the SEA Games organising committee, Mr Lawrence Wong, who is also Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, and Second Minister for Communications and Information, President Tony Tan Keng Yam declared the Games open.

I found the tribute by Minister Wong to Singapore’s founding Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, significant as the late Mr Lee had played a key role in developing a sporting Singapore. Mr Lee had officially opened the former National Stadium in 1973, when Singapore first hosted the SEA Games then known as the SEAP Games. I remember this clearly as I was present that day too.

Five acts – mass performances by students from all over Singapore, volunteers from the Singapore Soka Association and notable Singapore celebrities – came up next. Finally, it was time to officially light up the Games cauldron. Thirteen athletes acted as torch bearers, with the honours to ignite the flame of the cauldron given to ex-national footballer Fandi Ahmad and his son, Irfan Fandi. Yes, I mulled: “Let the Games begin!”
hat is your perception of a taxi driver? Would it be different if you know one personally? Well, we do, and here, we hear it from alumnus Selvakumar s/o Muthusami who shares his drive for lifelong learning.

“When I first introduced myself, the class went very still,” chortled Selvakumar with a smile. A taxi driver by day and a UniSIM student by night a few years ago, the 46-year-old achieved what others perceived he could not attain; a degree.

Obtaining a degree has always been in Selvakumar’s bucket list. However, he decided to work immediately after his ‘A’ Level, instead of pursuing a law degree overseas like his peers, to support his ageing parents. It was not until he was 40 years old that he realised there was more to life besides working. Quitting his job as an operations manager, he became a taxi driver where he found his flair and developed a passion for psychology.

“Quite a number of my passengers would start to open up to me and share their problems after an initial ice-breaker. Besides being a taxi driver, I consider myself a counsellor,” mused Selvakumar. He shared that he once encountered a well-to-do female passenger who broke down spontaneously after sharing her struggles with stress due to bad investments. Instead of being daunted by her tears, he encouraged her to let it all out as “sadness is just a cycle”. “People should laugh out loud, but even more they should cry out loud,” expressed Selvakumar. Through meditation, he discovered more about how the mind works. Thus began his personal journey into psychology, to find out the inner workings of the mind that controls one’s behaviour and feelings.

When Selvakumar decided to enroll for the Bachelor of Science in Psychology programme at UniSIM, his wife was the first to support his decision. It was a major family decision as it involved the loss of income that he could have earned from plying the road instead of attending classes. She understood his passion and encouraged him to go for it.

Juggling family, work and university was not an easy feat. But his wife, a Tamil language teacher in a primary school, became his pillar of support. She also ensured the home environment was always conducive for him to study. Nevertheless, he made time for his three daughters every day by reading bedtime stories to them before hitting for his books.

Observing their studious father in action motivated his daughters as well and he became a role model to them. With the support of his family, Selvakumar obtained his degree in Psychology in 2014, within the span of three years.

Thankful to UniSIM for giving him the opportunity to achieve what many thought was impossible, Selvakumar praised the professionalism of his lecturers, especially a female lecturer who taught him Cognitive Psychology. According to Selvakumar, it was her patience in explaining difficult concepts and supportive guidance that made it “very difficult for him to disappoint her”. Though he cannot remember her name, she has made an immense impact during his studies and he would just like to say thanks again to her. (we helped check and found that she is none other than our Associate lecturer, Ms Darrell Chay Yuet Lye)

Selvakumar is still driving a taxi now though on a part-time basis and is looking for a career in counselling. With his degree in Psychology, he can dream again and hopes to persuade others to understand the eastern perspective of psychology where “East meets West”. But right now, he is happy. In his own words, he is “happy to be happy”.

What a mantra!
ICSD 2015

A treat for many to hear from Professor Michael Sherraden, named one of Time magazine’s Top 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2010, presenting on “Fifty Years Of Social Innovation: Reflections On Social Policy In Singapore”.

Minister Lawrence Wong delivering his speech at the Daniel S. Sanders Memorial Lecture.

DPM Tharman (centre) looking at one of the exhibits at the symposium.

(From left) Professor Tan Ngoi Tong, Dean of the School of Human Development and Social Services; Professor Michael Sherraden; Mr Gerard Lee, Chancellor and Chairman of the UniSIM Board of Trustees; DPM Tharman; Professor Barbara Shank, President of ICSD; Professor Cheong Hee Kiat; Dr Noelleen Heyzer; and Mr Ang Hak Seng.

From July 7 – 10, UniSIM hosted the 19th International Symposium of the International Consortium for Social Development (ICSD 2015), bringing together over 400 delegates from 38 countries to discuss community leadership and social development issues.

Themed Transforming Society: Trends And Models In Community Leadership And Social Development, ICSD 2015 saw the gathering of researchers, scholars, practitioners, educators, and students, who explored vibrant models and discussed latest trends to build societies that are inclusive, cohesive, and resilient. They heard from three distinguished keynote speakers, viz., Dr Noelleen Heyzer, former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) and Special Advisor of the UN Secretary-General to Timor-Leste; Professor Michael Sherraden, George Warren Brown Distinguished University Professor and founding director of the Center for Social Development at Washington University; and Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Director of the People’s Association.

The event received special attention from Singapore leaders, with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam grace the opening ceremony, and Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, and Second Minister for Communications and Information Mr Lawrence Wong as Guest-of-Honour at the ICSD President’s Dinner. In their speeches, the ministers shared their thoughts on how Singapore’s policies should be shaped to support social development, citing lifelong learning as one of the critical factors to social mobility.

In his welcome address, UniSIM President Professor Cheong Hee Kiat shared the University’s mission to equip learners for a better future and serve society through lifelong education, emphasising that universities play a significant part in transforming society by training leaders who will change the world for the better. He also drew attention to UniSIM’s programmes which address the growing need for effective leaders who can play a progressive role in Singapore’s social development.

Throughout the symposium, plenary speakers presented on topics including social development in the Asia Pacific region, social work education, and the implications of the newly-adopted Global Definition of the Social Work Profession for social work practice. Besides attending these sessions, delegates had opportunities for more intimate interactions in the form of poster presentations, roundtables, workshops, and breakout sessions, with close to 300 papers being presented. They also had further discussions with community workers, grassroots leaders, and volunteers when they visited Singapore’s community clubs and organisations.
Flash Your Alumni Card To Enjoy These Special Deals:

**Sentosa Islander**

Enjoy **10% off** Sentosa Islander Individual or Family Membership. Key in the relevant promotion code at www.islander.com.sg to enjoy the offer.

**Individual** (U.P. $25 per year) UNS6YMVR • **Family** (U.P. $50 per year) UNSFZSNR

Promotion is valid till March 31, 2016.

**Kula Yoga**

15% off standard packages. **One complimentary** trial class for first-timers to Kula Yoga.

Promotion is valid till April 1, 2016.

**Partner Merchant**

*In partnership with UniSIM, alumni members may visit Raffles Medical clinics for Health Screening, Dental and Chinese Medicine services.*

**Raffles Essential Health Screening**

- Raffles Basic at $55.85
- Raffles General at $136.75 / $152.15 (with pap smear)
  Available at Raffles Medical clinics.

**Raffles Enhanced Health Screening**

- Raffles Lifestyle
  Available at Raffles Medical clinics.
- Raffles Deluxe, Deluxe Plus, Executive, Elite and Platinum
  Available at Raffles Health Screeners at Shaw Centre and Raffles Hospital.

**Raffles Dental**

- Dental Screening Package at $100
  (Includes Dental (GP) consultation, scaling, polishing and topical fluoride)
  Available at Raffles Dental clinics.

**Raffles Chinese Medicine**

- Consultation from $38.52
- À la carte acupuncture from $52.95
  Available at Raffles Chinese Medicine at Shaw Centre and Raffles Hospital.

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**CONTEST GIVEAWAYS!**

We are giving away UniSIM 8GB Credit Card-sized Flash Drive. Simply SMS the answers to the two questions below to 9113 6795 in the following format:

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Newsletter<space>PI number<space>Email address <space>Answers for Q1 and Q2.
Example: Newsletter Q1234567 alumni@unisim.edu.sg Answers for Q1 and Q2.
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**QUESTIONS**

1. Which UniSIM programme did Mr Selvakumar graduate from?
2. Where was the opening ceremony of the 28th SEA Games held?

**Closing Date:** October 31, 2015

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**Congratulations to the Contest Winners of Issue 30!**

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For advertising enquiries, call 6248 9215 or email alumni@unisim.edu.sg
Welcome High-Tea for Class of 2015

Date: October 24, 2015
Venue: Asian Market Cafe, Fairmont Singapore
Time: 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm
(Registration starts at 11:30 am)
Registration: www.unisim.edu.sg/alumni_events

Terrarium Workshop (Christmas Theme)

Date: November 14, 2015
Venue: SR B2.10 (SIM HQ, Block B, Level 2)
Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 noon
(Registration starts at 9:30 am)
Fee: $12.00 (Alumnus) / $19.00 (Guest)
* Terrarium kit will be provided.
* Each alumnus is allowed to register a maximum of two seats only, inclusive of the alumnus’ seat.
Registration: www.unisim.edu.sg/alumni_events

Wine and Cheese Appreciation for UniSIM Alumni & Associates

Date: November 21, 2015
Venue: Three Bistro, Marina Square
Fee: $10.00 (Alumnus) / $20.00 (Guest)
* Each alumnus is allowed to register a maximum of two seats only, inclusive of the alumnus’ seat.
Registration: www.unisim.edu.sg/alumni_events

Alumni Movie Special

Date: December 19, 2015
Venue: Golden Village, Suntec City
Time: 3:00 pm – Ticket Collection
4:00 pm – Movie Screening
(timing is subject to confirmation by Golden Village)
Fee: $8.00 (Alumnus) / $9.00 (Guest)
* Each alumnus is allowed to register a maximum of two seats only, inclusive of the alumnus’ seat.
Price is inclusive of popcorn combo and 7% GST.
Registration: www.unisim.edu.sg/alumni_events

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461 Clementi Road Singapore 599491
Tel: 6248 9215 – alumni@unisim.edu.sg – www.unisim.edu.sg/alumni

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