



TURNING ASPIRATIONS INTO ACHIEVEMENTS

| A year of perseverance, growth, and success, as our graduates
pave the way for a bright tomorrow.

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04	In the Limelight DBA unlocks new heights for high-flying executive From construction site to boardroom	
05	In the Limelight Leveraging PhD research and AI to launch an innovative startup Logistics professional gains key operations and leadership skills through specialised MBA	The 15th Convocation, held on 23 and 24 November 2024, awarded graduate diplomas, diplomas, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral degrees to 160 postgraduates and 645 undergraduates across six sessions. Additionally, WOU honoured semiconductor industry leader Dato' Seri Lai Pin Yong with an honorary Doctor of Business Administration degree, recognising his outstanding contributions to the nation's semiconductor sector and global technology education.
06	In the Limelight Carving a path in Mechatronics with dedication and hands-on learning An IT professional's journey of growth and self-reinvention	At WOU, we believe that education should be a lifelong advantage, not just a one-time achievement. As industries evolve, so too must the workforce. To stay ahead, professionals must continuously refine their skills, expand their knowledge, and adapt to emerging trends. That is why WOU is strengthening its role as the nation's preferred upskilling partner for employers, offering flexible and practical pathways for working adults to advance their careers.
07	In the Limelight The unexpected path to success Finding purpose beyond the paycheck	This year, we are doubling down on our efforts to promote micro-credentials as a key component of workforce development. By integrating industry-aligned, stackable learning modules with adaptable academic pathways—such as Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning—we ensure that professional growth remains both accessible and responsive to change. Whether upgrading existing skills or transitioning to new fields, these structured yet flexible credentials empower working professionals to stay agile in an ever-evolving job market.
08 & 09	Focus Generative AI and lifelong learning take centre stage at WOU Convocation	We are also at the forefront of integrating generative AI with lifelong learning. AI is not only reshaping industries—it is revolutionising how we learn, work, and grow. As part of our commitment to staying ahead of these changes, we continue to innovate and equip learners with the tools needed to thrive in an AI-driven future. The pursuit of knowledge is a continuous endeavour. Whether taking small steps through micro-credentials or committing to a rigorous academic pathway towards a full degree, WOU is here to support every learner's ambitions. Your next step starts today.
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HONOURING A VISIONARY LEADER IN BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY



▲ Dato' Seri Lai receives his honorary degree from Tan Sri Koh, recognising his significant contributions.

This year's convocation was celebrated by conferring the Honorary Doctor of Business Administration degree upon **Dato' Seri Ir Lai Pin Yong**, a prominent figure in the global semiconductor industry. His visionary leadership and transformative contributions have propelled the industry' and significantly impacted education and talent development in Malaysia and internationally.

Born in Ipoh, Perak, Dato' Seri Lai graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the National Taiwan University. In 1980, he was admitted as a Chartered Engineer by the Institute of Electrical Engineering, London. With an illustrious career spanning over 50 years, he has held key leadership roles, including Managing Director of Intel Malaysia, Vice President of Intel Asia Pacific, and Chairman of Motorola China.

At Intel, he was pivotal in driving advancements across the Asia Pacific region, particularly by implementing process development and failure analysis capabilities to enhance after-sales quality service. Under his leadership, Motorola China achieved remarkable revenue growth, solidifying its position as China's top foreign investor.

Dato' Seri Lai has been a strong advocate for industry-academia collaboration. He established the Motorola Research Institute and fostered partnerships with universities and research institutions to advance wireless technology and software engineering development. As founding Chairman and Executive Chairman of the Global EduTech Management (GEM) Group, he established three renowned higher learning institutions in China, specialising

in business, management, software and technology education. These initiatives resonate strongly with WOU's commitment to nurturing global talents and promoting industry collaboration.

His dedication to education, innovation and leadership aligns seamlessly with WOU's mission to provide accessible, high-quality education and promote lifelong learning. "The business world is constantly evolving, marked by rapid advancements and unforeseen challenges," he emphasised. "I have learned that adaptability, integrity and a commitment to lifelong learning are essential throughout my career," he added.

"In receiving this honour, I am reminded of the responsibilities that come with it. I pledge to continue striving for excellence," he promised.

"The current challenge in my lifelong endeavour is to actualise my advocacy for upscaling the Malaysian semiconductor industry to include design, advanced packaging and equipment manufacturing, transforming it to include more robust local participation," Dato' Seri Lai acknowledged.

In 2023, Dato' Seri Lai founded BlueChip Venture Capital, a specialised venture capital firm, where he currently serves as Chairman and Chief Executive. His lifelong commitment to the semiconductor industry and visionary leadership are evident in BlueChip's initiatives to nurture Malaysia's semiconductor ecosystem as it transitions from back-end assembly to front-end chip design and manufacturing.

DBA UNLOCKS NEW HEIGHTS FOR HIGH-FLYING EXECUTIVE

Balancing a demanding career with doctoral studies is no easy feat. **K Prasad S Krishnapillai** has demonstrated that it is possible to excel with effective time management, determination, and discipline.

The Chief Operating Officer of Sacofa Sdn Bhd, a telecommunications infrastructure provider in Sarawak, spent five years 'walking a tightrope' to pursue and successfully earn his Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) from WOU.

The 54-year-old Kuala Lumpur native said his determination to achieve the goal was the main drive that pushed him forward, no matter how many late nights were involved. Juggling a business schedule with thesis deadlines wasn't exactly a walk in the park, but the intensity of those moments felt like an adrenaline rush to him.

Prasad, who built a thriving telecommunications and information technology (IT) career for over 31 years, said completing the DBA was the final milestone in his academic journey. He said, "WOU's DBA programme stood out for its flexibility and affordability. Perfect for busy professionals like me".

"The insights gained from the programme have already



▲ K Prasad S Krishnapillai.

helped with strategic decision-making, and I foresee it further enhancing my leadership capabilities, particularly in driving innovation and digital transformation across industries," Prasad elaborated.

An avid sports enthusiast, Prasad attributes his success to a blend of passion, perseverance and careful planning. "I thrive on challenges, so integrating my professional experience with the academic framework at WOU made the journey incredibly rewarding," he said.

FROM CONSTRUCTION SITE TO BOARDROOM

Fauzan Choon bin Abdullah, a 59-year-old Project Director from Southville, Bangi, recently achieved a significant milestone by graduating with a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) from WOU. This accomplishment marks a culmination of years of dedication and a testament to his commitment to lifelong learning.

With over 35 years of experience in the construction industry, Fauzan's career trajectory has seen him rise from a Senior Project Manager overseeing high-rise buildings to his current leadership role. He credits his DBA from WOU as instrumental in this advancement, enabling him to enhance his people management skills and strategic decision-making abilities.

Fauzan acknowledged facing challenges during his studies, particularly during the thesis phase. "Choosing the right research topic and adhering to my supervisor's guidance was crucial," he explained. However, his unwavering dedication and effective time management strategies proved instrumental in overcoming these obstacles.

Fauzan's motivation stemmed from a deep-seated desire for personal and professional growth. "The satisfaction of achieving a doctorate and the recognition it brought were



▲ A testament to dedication and achievements: Fauzan receives his degree from Tan Sri Koh.

significant motivators," he shared. He added that his core values and skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving and effective communication, were further refined through the rigorous coursework.

For aspiring DBA graduates, Fauzan has a simple yet powerful message. "Don't procrastinate. Keep the ball rolling, and you will see the progress. Remember, tomorrow never comes."

LEVERAGING PhD RESEARCH AND AI TO LAUNCH AN INNOVATIVE STARTUP



▲ Matthew Lim Eng Chor.

Matthew Lim Eng Chor is strategically future-proofing his career with ambitious plans to launch his artificial intelligence (AI) powered business in the accommodation sector.

His vision combines entrepreneurial drive, shaped by his extensive sales experience, with insights from his PhD research, focused on consumer satisfaction and loyalty among Airbnb guests.

"Pursuing this programme has sharpened my research capabilities, improved my ability to think critically and enhanced my skill set in leveraging data-driven analytics to optimise business operations," said Matthew, a sales manager with a property developer in Penang.

"I gained a deeper understanding of consumer needs, which is a key factor that will differentiate my future startup," he added.

At 43, Matthew has spent over 15 years in sales, honing his skills of grasping people's needs to drive business growth and deliver results. "Meeting people from all walks of life and bringing revenue into the business has been exciting and eye-opening," he shared.

Balancing a fast-paced corporate career with equally active family commitments, Matthew credits WOU's flexible learning structure and supportive environment for enabling him to successfully complete his PhD.

"The approachable and knowledgeable supervisors at WOU made this a fulfilling and intellectually stimulating journey. I was able to advance academically despite a hectic work schedule and the joys and challenges of starting a young family," said the father of a three-year-old daughter, with another child on the way.

Matthew also attributes his success to his mother, calling her the driving force behind his journey.

"It was her dream to see me complete this programme, which I started in 2018. I'm overjoyed and proud to have made her dream come true, becoming the first in my family to achieve this highest academic accolade," he said.

LOGISTICS PROFESSIONAL GAINS KEY OPERATIONS AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH SPECIALISED MBA

For **Janis Lim Chia Hui**, WOU's MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management offers the perfect blend of operational expertise and strategic leadership, essential skills that are highly valuable for advancing in the logistics and supply chain industry.

One key factor that influenced Janis's decision to enrol in the programme in 2021 was WOU's flexible learning approach. It was also driven by a strong desire for professional growth, particularly to enhance her knowledge and skills.

"The digital learning platform FlexLearn made it convenient to manage my studies alongside a demanding job. Balancing the MBA programme with my job was incredibly tough, especially during peak project periods with all the late nights, tight deadlines and self-doubt. However, I managed to overcome these challenges by setting clear priorities, staying disciplined and leaning on the support of my family and peers," said Janis, who has previously worked as a demand analyst, planner, logistics officer and supply chain specialist.

The 27-year-old from Penang, currently employed in a management programme specialising in logistics, shared that the best part of her MBA journey was interacting with

peers from diverse industries and applying classroom knowledge directly to her job.

"For instance, what I learned about production optimisation helped me implement improvements in a logistics project. Seeing real-world results was both satisfying and motivating," she noted.

"It has given me a broader perspective on production strategies and leadership in logistics, building on my experience. This degree has helped me develop the skills needed to take on leadership roles later in my career," Janis explained.

Aspiring to become a transformational leader in supply chain management, she said, "I aim to drive impactful innovations and strategic advancements in the manufacturing and logistics sectors and at the same time mentor the next generation of professionals in this field."



▲ Janis Lim Chia Hui.

CARVING A PATH IN MECHATRONICS WITH DEDICATION AND HANDS-ON LEARNING



▲ Wira and his colleagues are in discussion at their work site.

Wira Anak Nankai, who graduated with a Bachelor of Technology (Honours) in Mechatronics, is an inspiration to aspiring engineers. His dedication, supported by WOU's interactive learning environment, has paved the way for a successful career in mechatronics.

Hailing from the small, bustling town of Serian in Sarawak, Wira, 31, went the extra mile - literally - flying across the country to attend face-to-face lab sessions in Penang, ensuring he could gain the hands-on experience essential in his field.

With a Diploma in Manufacturing Technology and an Advanced Diploma in Mechanical Technology already under his belt, Wira is no stranger to hard work. His job in the semiconductor industry has fueled his desire to delve deeper into the world of mechatronics.

"The interconnectedness of the fields within mechatronics inspired me to pursue this degree," Wira explained. "I saw an opportunity to expand my knowledge and skills to a more advanced level."

At WOU, Wira focused on electronics, which opened up new avenues of study for him. He gained valuable hands-on experience and knowledge, appreciating the correlation of subjects within the field.

"When learning new topics, they often reminded me of what I had studied before," he said.

Currently working in the oil and gas industry, Wira expressed his gratitude to his tutors, colleagues, and supervisors for their support throughout his educational journey.

AN IT PROFESSIONAL'S JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND SELF-REINVENTION



▲ Tan Wei Quan celebrates his graduation with his girlfriend, posing for a photo on his convocation day.

Tan Wei Quan's passion for technology, particularly in network design, systems integration, and cybersecurity, inspired his successful pursuit of a Bachelor of Information Technology (Hons) in Computer Systems and Networks with distinction from WOU.

Now a 26-year-old Global Information Technology (IT) Executive based in Singapore, Wei Quan always recognised the importance of upskilling and reinventing himself to thrive in the ever-evolving tech industry.

"WOU appealed to me because of its reputation for quality education and emphasis on professional development, which aligned perfectly with my career goals," he said.

Wei Quan began his IT journey at 18, starting with entry-level

roles such as working for an IT Helpdesk before progressing to more technical positions like L2 Engineer. Today, he oversees IT operations for companies across Asia, including Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"The programme deepened my technical knowledge and problem-solving skills in IT systems and networking. With this expertise, I'm now prepared to pursue higher-level roles whenever the opportunity arises," he shared.

One of the highlights of his WOU journey was his final year project, where his tutor's insight broadened his understanding of technology's role across various industries. "The tutor not only imparted technical knowledge but also shared real-world ideas and industry experiences," he said.

Armed with an ambitious vision for the future, Wei Quan is determined to build extensive industry experience across various aspects of IT operations before pursuing a postgraduate degree. He has also set clear milestones, including earning certifications and mastering specialised, in-demand skills that align with emerging industry trends.

With a confident smile, he said, "I see myself as a senior IT professional - perhaps a network architect, IT manager or consultant, leading innovative solutions in a global organisation."

THE UNEXPECTED PATH TO SUCCESS

Beh Jia Ai, a recent graduate with a Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting from WOU, exemplifies the university's commitment to student success. Awarded the prestigious Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Memorial Gold Prize for her outstanding academic performance, her journey underscores the power of perseverance and the flexibility of WOU's learning model. Now a Tax Executive, Jia Ai credits her career success to the robust foundation of practical and theoretical knowledge she acquired during her studies. This empowers her to excel in her role, encompassing tasks such as preparing and submitting tax returns, conducting tax planning, and optimising tax strategies for individuals and corporations.

Balancing professional commitments and studies demanded a flexible approach, and WOU's self-paced learning model proved to be a game-changer for Jia Ai. She attributes her enriching learning experience to the support of her lecturers and the university's empowering environment, emphasising practical, industry-relevant knowledge.

Interestingly, Jia Ai developed valuable life skills rather unexpectedly - through her passion for shopping! This hobby sharpened her eye for detail, enhanced her decision-making abilities and instilled a strong sense of financial discipline. "When I shop, I often compare prices, look for deals and carefully consider my needs," she shared



▲ Beh Jia Ai.

with a laugh. "It has made me more financially aware and disciplined!"

Jia Ai's story demonstrates that with dedication and the right support, skills (and dreams) can be cultivated in extraordinary ways.

FINDING PURPOSE BEYOND THE PAYCHECK

For many, higher education is a stepping stone to a lucrative career. However, for **Ooi Soo San**, the pursuit of knowledge extended far beyond the promise of a higher salary.

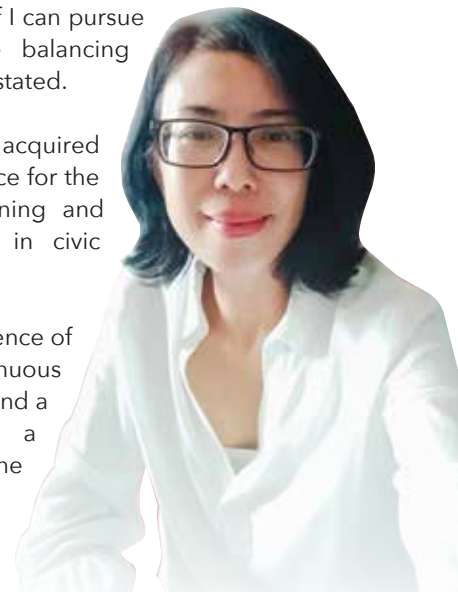
After completing her Bachelor's in Human Resource Management, Soo San embarked on her academic journey in 2022, pursuing a Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CeMBA). Her dedication was recognised at the WOU 2024 Convocation, where she earned the prestigious Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Memorial Gold Prize.

While acknowledging the importance of career advancement, Soo San emphasises that her motivation extends beyond financial rewards. Currently working as a Business Support Executive at Bayer, she believes education is valuable regardless of its immediate monetary returns.

"I want to show others that if I can pursue my academic goals while balancing family life, anyone can," she stated.

Soo San aims to use her acquired knowledge to become a voice for the promotion of lifelong learning and inspire others to engage in civic activities.

She exemplifies the true essence of education: a journey of continuous growth, personal fulfilment and a commitment to making a positive difference in the world.



▲ Ooi Soo San.

GENERATIVE AI AND LIFELONG LEARNING TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT WOU CONVOCATION

Celebrating WOU's Class of 2024 and Honouring an Exemplary Industry Veteran



▲ Joyous graduates pose for a group photo in front of WOU.

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) will shape the future of work, redefine roles and create new opportunities in the workforce. Highlighted in the Chancellor's Convocation Address delivered during WOU's 15th Convocation Ceremony on 23 November 2024.

Over 800 graduates received their scrolls in six sessions held on 23 and 24 November 2024 at WOU's main campus in Penang. This year's graduating cohort, comprising 160 postgraduates and 645 undergraduates, represents a dynamic and diverse group of individuals from various industries, including business, technology, and healthcare. They join WOU's thriving alumni network, now surpassing 8,800 members.

ADAPTING TO AN AI-DRIVEN FUTURE

In the address delivered by Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Chairman of WOU's Board of Governors, WOU Chancellor Tunku Tan Sri Imran Tuanku Ja'afar urged graduates to equip themselves with GenAI skills and knowledge to stay ahead of the rapid technology-driven changes shaping the work landscape.

"AI may be able to process data and make predictions, but it cannot replace the human capacity for creativity, empathy or moral judgment. In an AI-driven world, it is not the most intelligent who will succeed, but those who can adapt, learn, and collaborate with emerging technologies," he said.

Emphasising the necessity of collaboration between academia and industry to cultivate a future-ready workforce, Tunku Imran stressed, "Educational institutions and industry leaders must join forces to create an immersive, industry-centric educational environment." He encouraged graduates to be proactive when pursuing a collaboration. "Share your experiences, advocate for the skills in demand, and pursue win-win partnerships to elevate your talents and the industry."

COMMITMENT TO AI-DRIVEN EDUCATION

WOU Chief Executive and Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Lily Chan, reinforced the theme in her speech, "AI proficiency is no longer just an advantage but an essential skill in today's workforce. By embracing these advancements, you are positioning yourselves to thrive in a rapidly evolving job market."

Prof Chan cited the joint Microsoft and LinkedIn Work Trend Index report, which showed that 84% of knowledge workers in Malaysia, compared to 75% globally, are incorporating AI in the workplace.

She highlighted that WOU has incorporated AI into its teaching and learning delivery, allowing students to progress at their own pace and receive real-time feedback. Since September 2024, all WOU students have had access to GenAI courses in Business, Digital Transformation, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) through FlexLearn, WOU's innovative digital learning platform.

HONOURING A VISIONARY INDUSTRY LEADER

Session 1 of the Convocation also saw renowned semiconductor veteran-turned-venture capitalist Dato’ Seri Ir Lai Pin Yong conferred with the Honorary Doctorate of Business Administration. The ceremony also saw seven graduates receiving the Doctor of Business Administration degrees, while a graduate received the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.

In his acceptance speech, Dato’ Seri Lai expressed his profound gratitude to WOU on the conferment, describing the recognition as “one of the highest honours of my life”.

CULTIVATING A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE

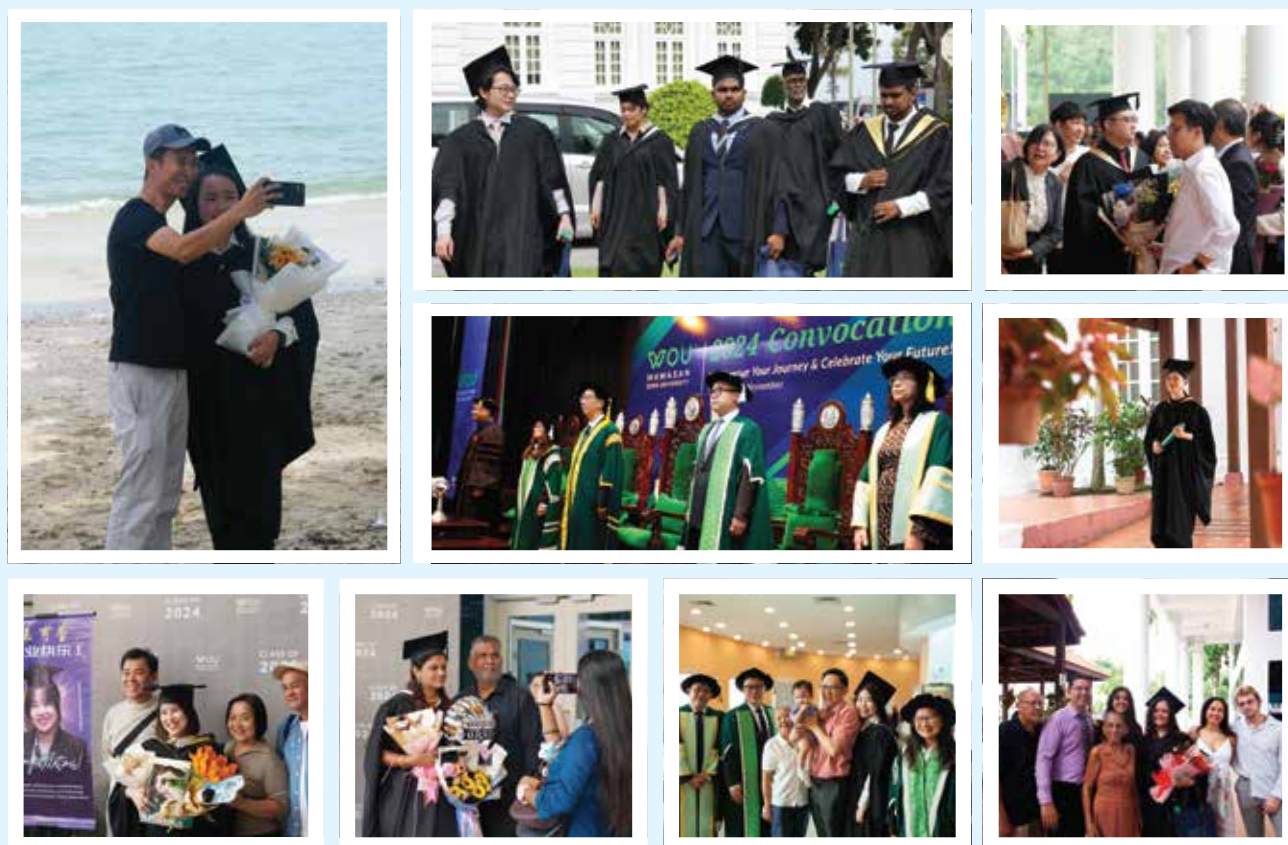
Presiding over the convocation’s fourth session on 24 November 2024, Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon paid tribute to Dato’ Seri Lai’s extraordinary achievements and contributions in the electronics industry and global education sector. In his speech, he called on the graduates to emulate the work ethics and leadership demonstrated by Dato’ Seri Lai, which included grit, devotion, team spirit, and lifelong learning.

He noted that while the impacts of AI, automation, and robotisation are best on manual and mechanical low-skill jobs that incorporate routine and repetitious, data-based and process-based tasks, jobs that require analytical, creative, social, and interactive skills will continue to be in high demand.

Tan Sri Koh further reminded the graduates to “cultivate the spirit of life-long learning, as well as a positive attitude towards learning new knowledge, ideas and skills.”

The School of Business and Administration leads the way with 486 graduates, with the largest cohort of 84 graduates from the Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting programme, followed by the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CeMBA) programme producing 81 graduates.

Notably, almost 80% of the graduates are under 40, reflecting WOU’s steadfast commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders and innovators poised to drive change and make meaningful contributions to their fields.



▲ Highlights from the memorable 2024 Convocation.

DYNAMIC DUOS FULFILL THEIR ACADEMIC ASPIRATIONS

Two inspiring husband-and-wife duos proved that love and learning go hand-in-hand as they celebrated their academic achievements at WOU. For **Helen Lee Bee Ean** and **Ryan Loo Peir Yong** from Penang, and Sarawak's **Cynthia Atan Anak Rekep** and **Constentine Sanders Anak Henry**, earning their dream degrees was the fitting finale to their shared journey of growth, determination and resilience.

A LESSON IN LOVE AND TEAMWORK

Helen, 34, and Ryan, 35, navigated the challenges of raising young children while climbing the career ladder in the semiconductor industry. Their decision to pursue an MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management was driven by the flexibility and accessibility of WOU's open distance learning (ODL) mode.

"As an employee and a mother, finding a programme that fits my busy schedule was crucial. The digital learning platform, FlexLearn, allowed us to study without compromising our professional commitments and our responsibilities at home," said Helen, a Production Supervisor at Keysight Technologies.

Ryan, a Customer Service Support Executive at KLA-Tencor, remarked, "Even during work travels, I was able to attend online classes and complete my assignments. The lecturers were incredibly supportive - they were always there to guide us, ensuring I never felt alone."

The couple fondly recalled their "study dates", turning assignment discussions into bonding sessions while waiting for their children to finish extracurricular activities.

NEVER TOO LATE TO UPSKILL

For Cynthia and Constentine, both 48, WOU offered the perfect solution to their upskilling needs. With over 20 years of experience in the semiconductor industry, WOU's ODL approach provided the flexibility and support they needed to pursue their educational aspirations. The couple graduated with a Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronics, with Cynthia awarded a distinction in her degree.

"This accomplishment means the world to me," Cynthia said. "It was my husband who encouraged me to take this leap, and I'm glad we did it together." She became the only one among nine siblings to earn a degree, fulfilling a lifelong dream she had once put on hold due to financial constraints.

Based in Kuching, Sarawak, the couple balanced demanding jobs - Cynthia at Western Digital and Constentine at X-FAB Sarawak - while raising two teenage daughters, aged 16 and 18. The programme's flexible learning options made it possible to juggle their shifts, family commitments and studies.

For working adults considering pathways to upskill, Cynthia

"We made so many memories studying together, even competing with each other on our results, which was fun!" Ryan quipped.

Today, the MBA is paying off, with Helen earning a promotion and Ryan applying new insights to enhance his efficiency.

"For anyone considering "going back" to school, I'd say it's never too late to invest in yourself. It's a decision that pays dividends in so many ways," Helen encouraged.



► Helen and Ryan celebrate their graduation together, with their adorable son cheering them on in his own little gown.

advised, "It's a long journey, but take it easy and don't worry too much. With ODL, you can balance work experience with your studies, which makes the learning process much more effective. You gain knowledge both on the job and in the classroom."

Constentine was proud that their learning endeavour set an example for their daughters to emulate. "We wanted to show them that education is a lifelong journey and it's never too late to achieve your dreams," he said.



► Together they conquered their studies, Cynthia and Constentine celebrate with flowers and smiles.

NEURODIVERGENT DOCTOR OVERCOMES CHALLENGES WITH INNOVATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES



▲ Dr Cheah Boon Eu.

Dr Cheah Boon Eu, a 39-year-old medical officer from Penang, embarked on a life-changing journey when she enrolled in WOU's Master of Arts in Psychology programme in 2021 while serving in her paediatrics posting at Hospital Pulau Pinang. Driven by a deeply personal goal, she wanted to "help neurodivergent children who may be struggling silently, as I once did."

Living with ADHD, dyslexia, Irlen Syndrome, and self-diagnosed autism, Dr Cheah's academic journey was more about self-discovery than career advancement. Inspired by neurodivergent friends with psychology degrees and a passion for the subject, she described her pursuit as "a personal challenge to explore different learning strategies and discover what works best for me".

For Dr Cheah, the support from her kind, understanding and encouraging lecturers has been central to her positive experience at WOU. She chose the programme for its flexible, part-time format, which allowed her to balance her demanding work schedule with her academic pursuits.

However, juggling medical duties with her neurodivergent traits meant that tasks like focusing, reading and writing could often be overwhelming. Yet, whenever she felt discouraged, Dr Cheah concentrated on the goal: not grades or competition, but discovering effective learning methods.

"One helpful strategy is to set earlier deadlines. If an assignment is due on a specific date, I set a personal deadline a week earlier to take the pressure off," explained Dr Cheah, who is currently with the Department of Genetics at Hospital Pulau Pinang.

Her approach to writing research papers was equally unique. "I don't strictly follow the traditional structure. Instead, I write sections based on my available time and mental state. If I'm overwhelmed, I might start with the methodology or objectives, which requires less reading and citation."

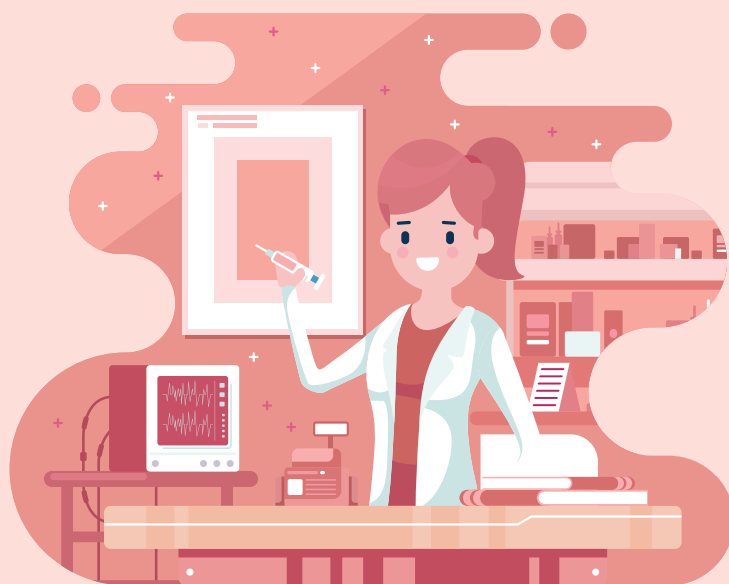
Dr Cheah found that her focus was sharpest early in the morning, often rising at 4am to study and write. "Exercise is key for me. Without it, my attention span lasts only 10-15 minutes. But after a 3-5 km run, I can focus for 40 to 45 minutes," she said.

"Another effective technique for me is a form of multitasking. Given my short attention span, I work on multiple tasks simultaneously. I might start with Task A, then switch to Task B when my focus wanes, and so on. By the end of the day, all tasks are completed," she said.

Graduating with a Master of Arts in Psychology is just one chapter in Dr Cheah's path. Her ultimate goal is to write a book about her life to inspire others facing similar challenges.

"While my experiences may not always be recognised, they are real and deeply personal. I continue navigating these conditions, understanding that this is a lifelong journey. I hope for a more compassionate society that acknowledges and supports neurodivergent individuals."

Dr Cheah's story reminds us that everyone's journey is unique, and no two neurodivergent experiences are alike.



FROM A LIFELONG PASSION TO A FULL-FLEDGED PROFESSION



Yin Yue Feng, a 26-year-old Penangite, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology, exemplifies the transformative power of higher education. Driven by a lifelong fascination with human behaviour, Yin chose WOU for its accessibility and affordability, recognising the value of a quality education within her budget.

"Understanding people is crucial in my current role as a Personal Assistant. My psychology degree has provided invaluable insights into human behaviour, significantly improving my communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills," she said.

Looking ahead, Yin envisions a fulfilling career in psychology. "I aspire to pursue a career in clinical psychology or a leadership role within human resources. In the next decade, I aim to complete an advanced degree, contribute meaningfully to my community and achieve financial stability," she shared.

Her core values – perseverance, empathy and curiosity – guide her every step. "Curiosity," she explains, "drives me to explore new ideas and approach challenges creatively."

Beyond academics, Yin is an avid reader and enjoys journaling and design. These hobbies have enhanced her critical thinking skills and fostered her creativity, proving invaluable in her studies and professional life.

"I am incredibly grateful to my family for their firm support. I am also thankful for the experiences and growth I have gained at WOU. I am excited to apply my skills and continue to grow personally and professionally," she concluded.

IGNITING A LIFELONG PASSION FOR PSYCHOLOGY



Graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology from WOU was a significant and proud milestone for **Rekha Sahadevan**. Her achievement demonstrates that with determination, it is possible to balance work, academics and family commitments - a challenge she embraced when she enrolled in the programme five years ago.

"I've always been fascinated by human behaviour and mental development, particularly in children. Studying psychology helped me understand the reasons behind certain behaviours and how to address them effectively," she shared.

WOU's flexible learning structure was ideal for Rekha, 48, who juggles part-time tutoring in English and Mathematics for primary students with family responsibilities in Iskandar Puteri, Johor Bahru.

"As a full-time homemaker, managing my time effectively between family, work, and studies is very important. Proper scheduling of my tasks has helped me stay on track and meet my deadlines and goals," said Rekha, whose hard work earned her the Outstanding Student award in her cohort.

She credits the programme with boosting her confidence, enhancing her critical thinking, and equipping her with problem-solving skills essential for her career aspirations. "It has opened doors to better opportunities, strengthened my credibility and prepared me for bigger roles that require higher qualifications," she said.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Rekha aims to further advance in her career, potentially pursuing a full-time position while continuing her personal and professional growth.

Rekha is grateful to her husband and two children, aged 18 and 24, who have been her pillars of support, throughout her educational journey.

"Their encouragement made all the difference. I also want to thank all the lecturers who guided and inspired me along the way, as their support was key to my success," she shared.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING FUELS HR PROFESSIONAL'S CAREER GROWTH



For **Sharifah Masha Al Bokhari Binti Syed Yusof Al Bokhari**, earning her Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Management from WOU marks a key milestone in her journey as a recruitment specialist.

The 27-year-old Penangite views her degree not just as an academic achievement but as a strategic investment and a key asset for advancing her career.

"I have been working in human resources for five years, where I have developed a strong foundation in areas such as talent acquisition, employee relations, and human resources (HR) administration," she said.

Sharifah highlighted how her educational journey has strengthened her expertise, stating, "This programme has deepened my knowledge in HR, particularly in areas like talent management, organisational development, and employment law. It has equipped me with practical skills and strategies that I can apply directly to my HR work, helping me contribute more effectively to my organisation and advance in my career."

She chose WOU because of its flexible learning structure, which allowed her to balance her studies with work and personal commitments. "WOU offers a well-structured curriculum tailored for working adults. The programme aligns with my career goals, and WOU's reputation for providing affordable, accessible education made it the perfect choice."

With her sights set on becoming a Human Resource Manager, Sharifah is committed to lifelong learning.

"In 10 years, I see myself leading a team to develop and implement strategic HR initiatives that drive employee engagement and organisational success," she shared.

Sharifah's journey with WOU has been nothing short of memorable. "I am truly impressed with the staff and lecturers, who are not only knowledgeable but also empathetic and incredibly helpful to students. WOU made my convocation day extremely special, adding to the lasting memories of my time at the university."

FROM WAREHOUSE TO WORLDWIDE LOGISTICS

Goh Shyh Khye's journey towards a career in logistics began unexpectedly. While initially planning to pursue a degree in Business Administration, visiting WOU with a friend sparked an interest in its Bachelor of Business in Logistics and Chain Management (BBLC) programme. Intrigued by the logistics-focused courses, Goh chose to embark on this new path, a decision that would significantly shape his career trajectory.

What began as curiosity about logistics blossomed into a full-blown passion. The BBLC programme provided Goh with the necessary knowledge and skills to delve deeper into the intricacies of logistics and supply chain management. This academic foundation laid the groundwork for a successful career in the industry.

Today, Goh thrives as an Air Pricing Executive at Apex Logistics International, a China-based company. He plays a crucial role in handling air freight quotations for the Singapore branch, a testament to the practical application of the knowledge gained during his studies at WOU.

For Goh, the BBLC programme was more than just a degree. It was a transformative journey of personal and professional growth. He learned the importance of persistence, resilience and the value of learning throughout life.



▲ Goh receives his degree from Tan Sri Koh, marking his academic success.

POSTGRADUATE PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE EMPOWERS EDUPRENEUR TO DRIVE EDUCATION AND MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Earning a Master of Arts in Psychology from WOU is a game-changer for Ridhwan Shariff, allowing him to strengthen his credentials as an edupreneur dedicated to shaping young minds and advancing mental well-being.

As the Director of two Penang-based centres focused on education and mental well-being, he leverages his postgraduate expertise to elevate learning experiences and expand access to psychological support services.

"I chose this master's programme at WOU because of its reputation, the unique curriculum that aligns with my career goals, and the opportunity to learn from renowned faculty members who are experts in their respective fields," shared the 37-year-old Penangite.

Ridhwan shared that the programme has deepened his expertise as a behaviour therapist while also equipping him with valuable insights into education and business management.

"This has benefitted me in my current roles—not just in managing daily business operations, but also as a hands-on educator," he added, as he continues to grow both of his ventures—an education centre catering to primary and secondary students, and a counselling and therapy centre

focused on emotional and mental well-being.

Reflecting on his WOU journey, Ridhwan described it as a fulfilling and enriching experience. "I've found the academic environment stimulating, the faculty supportive, and the resources available to students impressive. Engaging with my peers and participating in various extracurricular activities has made my journey even more enriching."

He credits his family and friends as his pillars of strength. "They instilled in me the values of perseverance and dedication, constantly fuelling my drive to excel in my studies and reach my goals."



▲ Ridhwan Shariff

With his master's degree now in hand, Ridhwan is set to make an even greater impact, empowering students and individuals in their educational and mental health journeys.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVE ACADEMIC SUCCESS



Tiew Miew Kee, a 44-year-old substitute teacher at SJKC Khai Chee, recently graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Primary Education (BEPE). Her journey to academic success was marked by dedication and a strong desire for personal and professional growth.

With over 10 years of experience as a teacher in SJK(C) Khai Chee and 20 years in private tuition, Tiew has always possessed a deep understanding of education but recognised the importance of formal academic qualifications to enhance her career prospects

"One day, I saw an advertisement for WOU while driving," she recounted. Intrigued, she contacted the university and pursued the APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) pathway, which led her to the BEPE degree programme.

Tiew believes the WOU programme has significantly enhanced her teaching abilities and opened doors to new career opportunities. "Yes, with this I can increase my income," she stated, emphasising the financial benefits of higher education. Looking ahead, she aims to further her education with a master's and potentially a PhD, driven by a desire for a better life for herself and her family.

"It is not about excelling, but it will be good for my future," she stated, highlighting her motivation for completing her studies. "I want to have a better life, so I must pursue my master's, and maybe a PhD after that," she concluded.

FROM MIRI TO THE CLASSROOM: JIA JING'S JOURNEY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Sim Jia Jing, a 29-year-old from Miri, Sarawak, recently graduated with a Diploma in Early Childhood Education (DECE) from WOU. This achievement culminates five years of dedicated service as a kindergarten teacher, driven by a desire to deepen her understanding of child development.

WOU's programme significantly impacted her teaching approach, providing insights into children's psychological needs and developmental milestones. This knowledge empowers her to tailor her methods to individual learning styles and create a more enriching learning environment.

Balancing work and study presented challenges, but Jia Jing overcame them through disciplined scheduling and proactive communication with lecturers. She excelled academically by prioritising note-taking and clarifying doubts.

Looking ahead, Jia Jing plans to pursue further studies overseas, exploring the different cultural approaches to education. Beyond her professional aspirations, she is passionate about reading, singing, and dancing, hobbies that enrich her teaching methods and provide a creative outlet.

Jia Jing's journey exemplifies the transformative power of education, inspiring aspiring educators with her dedication and commitment to lifelong learning.



► Sim Jia Jing.

A PASSION FOR NURTURING YOUNG MINDS SPARKS JOURNEY INTO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Serena Chong Hoi Yin's passion for nurturing young minds was sparked early on by the profound impact her kindergarten teacher had on her.

This passion, combined with the encouragement from the principal at the kindergarten where she used to work, inspired her to pursue the Diploma in Early Childhood Education in 2019, marking the start of her career in early childhood education (ECE).

"I've always loved interacting with young children and felt that ECE was the perfect fit for me," shared Serena, 24, who now teaches at Tadika Methodist Trinity in Kuching, Sarawak. The programme helped her develop a keen understanding of children's learning levels, behavioural patterns and emotional needs.

"I've learnt how to tailor my teaching methods to support each child effectively, which has made a big difference in my career," she said.

Initially, Serena found it challenging to balance full-time teaching with part-time studies. However, with WOU's flexible learning mode, she soon found her rhythm by dedicating nights and weekends to completing assignments.

"Once I established a routine, managing work and studies became much easier," she explained.

Reflecting on her WOU journey, Serena expressed gratitude for the role her family and tutors played. "My family encouraged me throughout my studies while my tutors provided advice and answered all my questions," she said.

She sees herself continuing to hone a fulfilling career in ECE, teaching and inspiring children.

"Enrolling in WOU was one of the best decisions I've made, and I would have regretted it if I hadn't taken that step," she concluded.



▲ Surrounded by love and support, Serena made her family proud.

TAN WEI HONG'S JOURNEY WITH WOU



▲ Tan Wei Hong.

Tan Wei Hong, a seasoned engineering professional with over three decades of experience, recently graduated with a Commonwealth Executive MBA (CeMBA). This achievement signifies a pivotal moment in his career, reflecting his unwavering commitment to lifelong learning and his aspiration to ascend to higher echelons of leadership.

As a Site Lab Manager at a prominent company, Tan started his academic journey at WOU with a Graduate Certificate in Business Management (GCBM), recognising the imperative to augment his managerial acumen and strategic thinking capabilities. He found WOU's flexible learning model an ideal

fit, enabling him to seamlessly integrate his studies with his demanding career and family responsibilities.

"The programme has profoundly impacted my career by broadening my perspective and equipping me with the requisite tools for strategic decision-making," Tan shared. "It has instilled a newfound confidence and prepared me to embrace more challenging leadership roles."

According to Tan, one of the most gratifying aspects of his WOU experience was realising his professional journey through the APEL.M pathway. He also expressed profound gratitude for the support and insightful guidance the university's esteemed faculty and staff provided.

Looking ahead, Tan envisions himself as an Engineering Director, spearheading innovative projects and mentoring future leaders. "I aim to build high-performing teams, mentor future leaders and contribute to advancing engineering practices in my field," he said.

Tan aspires to inspire others to pursue their educational goals, demonstrating that continuous learning is paramount for personal and professional growth, irrespective of age.

"I feel incredibly proud to have completed the CeMBA, and I truly appreciate the dedication in helping me reach this significant milestone. Their support has been invaluable, and I am grateful for the role WOU played in my academic journey," he concluded.

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