

## **UTB -- UNIVERSITY OF CHOICE TO UNLEASH POTENTIALS**

With a dynamic and diverse learning environment, Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) aims to deliver a distinctive exceptional educational and co-curricular experience to its students.

From an outstanding faculty, to an international reputation for research and innovation, UTB does not only provides academic excellence, but also equips Bruneians with the skills and confidence to become future leaders, problem-solvers and innovators.

### **'The best decision I ever made'**

Umami Hafidzahtun Nadzhira Ahmad Suhaimi is a former Mechanical Engineering student from UTB who graduated with First Class Honours in 2019.

"Back in 2015, I was looking for a university that not only focused on academics but also extended co-curriculum activities that can prepare students with the knowledge, skills and capabilities demanded by industries out there," she said.

She added that her time as an undergrad was a "testing ground" for her to experience real-world industries, allowing her to carve out her own career path using the available resources and support provided by UTB.

In 2018, she completed a six-month internship at Piper Aircraft in the United States through UTB ExperiencePlus, a programme intended to extend students' experience beyond the walls of academia.

Now an engineer at the Ministry of Defence's Centre of Science and Technology Research Development (CSTRAD), Umami said UTB was pivotal to gaining the work experience she needed to pursue a demanding career.

"The rare opportunity I received from UTB that I will never forget. Equipped with the skills I gained while at university, coupled with the hands-on training from my internship, UTB has helped me to achieve my goal to be market-ready," Ummi said.

"I am proud to say that my decision to study in UTB is still one of the best decisions I ever made."

She added that UTB's Mechanical Engineering Programme was recently accredited by Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) which is professionally recognised and beneficial for those who wish to become a Chartered Engineer.



**Ummi Hafidzahtun Nadzhira Ahmad Suhaimi**

*Graduate Student of BSc (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering*

### **Finding Solutions to National Problems**

For Doctoral student Ak Syazwan Pg Sulaiman -- who is researching how to boost Brunei's agricultural output by tackling issues such as soil acidity -- with UTB's global connection with international universities, it provided him with the opportunity to undertake a highly-coveted research

scholarship at the University of Alberta in Canada under the Canada-ASEAN Scholarships and Educational Exchanges for Development (SEED) programme.

"I decided to do my PhD at UTB once I saw they introduced a programme in Agrotechnology, which has been my focus since my Undergraduate Degree," he said.

Keen to address issues on Brunei's food security and production, Ak Syazwan said his research project aims to find an environmentally-friendly solution to ameliorate soil acidity, thereby lifting one of the limitations on crop production in the sultanate.

Currently in his third year of his PhD candidacy, the doctoral student took the opportunity to apply for an international scholarship from the Government of Canada, and will spend six months under the supervision of Dr. Guillermo Hernandez Ramirez at the University of Alberta's Sustainable Land Ecosystems Research Group.

This joint research will lay the groundwork for future collaborative research and academic activities between the University of Alberta and UTB, Ak Syazwan added.

"The work that I am greatly passionate about is research – exploring the frontiers of knowledge and finding solutions to problems we do not already know. I see myself making an impact in that way and that is something I wish to continue to do for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ASEAN and Brunei."

Ak Syazwan said the chance to become a graduate teaching assistant at UTB has also provided invaluable experience in his education journey.

"The experience to mentor students at the Undergraduate level has been a great plus of my journey in UTB thus far. I also hope to develop myself in

new areas, putting myself in a position where I can lead a growing team and aspire people to achieve their absolute best."



**Ak Syazwan Pg Sulaiman**

*PhD Student of Food Science and Technology*

**Confidence to take the path less travelled**

UTB has also produced a number of notable entrepreneurs, among them Wan Syiffawiaam Alya'a Farhah Zulkiflee, who was the co-founder of Thryffy Brunei, an online mobile marketplace for new and preloved fashion items.

Back in 2021, the former computing student started a prototype mobile marketplace called 'Nearly New' as part of her undergraduate thesis, and ended up partnering with Thryffy Technologies to launch the 'Thryffy' app in Malaysia in May 2021.

The start-up was eventually launched in Brunei in 2022 after receiving a \$9,100 grant from the DARE Accelerate programme.

"Back in 2020, during the first wave of COVID, I used to make my own bags with my sewing machine and sold them on Instagram. I then realised



that fashion has always been my passion, but my parents always pushed me to do something outside of the creative industry because they believed that it would guarantee me more security and stability," said the former Data Analytics major.

"However, I have always felt the need to express myself and do something I love, so I put two and two together; my computing skills and fashion, thus creating a fashion marketplace for people to buy or sell their fashion items and explore their own individual style."

Wiamm said the education and mentorship she received at UTB helped propel her onto a path less travelled.

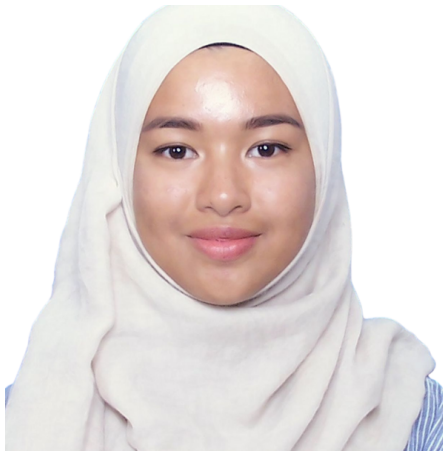
"After graduating, I had the opportunity to turn my thesis project into a business venture called 'Thryffy'. I had the full support from my supervisor to showcase the project on campus, and got permission to use the facilities to further expand the business.

"I also sought out mentorship from my supervisor, and he was generous with his time, given that I have graduated in the past year," she added.

"UTB has provided me with the confidence to move forward. I have always been an average student in my class. I try my best to stay on top of things and UTB has always given me the right resources to hone my skills."

Wiamm said while fashion has always been her chief passion, programming skills helped her launch an e-commerce app, with the endgame of promoting a more sustainable fashion culture.

"Programmers are in high demand all over the world, and UTB students can apply these skills to so many different industries and disciplines."



**Wan Syiffawiaam Alya'a Farhah Zulkiflee**

*Graduate Student of BSc (Hons) in Computing with Data Analytics*

**Flexibility of part-time study**

UTB also offers part-time study for a number of its programmes.

For 47-year-old Suzanah Hj Ja'afar, having a stable and secure job in the Finance sector did not deter her from levelling up her qualifications.

The mother of four from Kuala Belait is currently enrolled in the MSc in Management and Technology, studying part-time while also working a full-time job. Her three eldest children are also in university!

"I decided to continue my studies for my own personal achievements and to challenge and discover more of my capabilities," she said.

"Another reason for selecting UTB was because it holds sentimental value - I obtained my Higher National Diploma in Business & Finance there when it was still known as ITB."

Suzanah said despite not having an Undergraduate Degree, the combination of her HND and 20 years of work experience made her eligible for UTB's postgraduate programmes.

The availability of nighttime classes, and partial or scheduled fee payment options, also made UTB an ideal choice for her to do her masters.

"The lecturers have been cooperative and flexible towards the part-time students in replacing physical classes on campus through online platforms or utilising hybrid classes. With this formatting, we are able to proceed with our studies without much hassle."

"Juggling work and studies while managing my family is quite a challenge," Suzanah said. "Nights of insufficient sleep to study for exams while simultaneously trying to complete assignments and projects, and still going to work the next day was the most challenging part of the process."

"I'm thankful to have the support from my family, spouse, children, siblings, in-laws, friends, colleagues and also my university course mates."

She added: "Being in the same programme with people from different working backgrounds, ages and experiences, has improved and broadened my perspective. In such a short period, we were able to bond and work together in achieving our shared goals."



**Suzanah Hj Ja'afar**

*Part-Time Student of MSc in Management & Technology*