

Meet the Vice Presidents Part 2: Associate Professor Daniel Quah



Associate Professor
Daniel Quah

Our second instalment of the “Meet the Vice Presidents” Series introduces you to the Vice President for Administration and Student Affairs, Associate Professor Daniel E. S. Quah.

Born in the rice bowl of Malaysia, Kedah Darul Aman, he has often been labelled ‘the kampong boy’.

“I do not mind people calling me a kampong boy,” said Associate Professor Quah. “What they do not know is that I received my early education at Kolej Sultan Abdul Hamid, Alor Setar, which produced two Prime Ministers – Tun Dr. Mahathir and the late Tunku (Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj).”

After completing his secondary education, Daniel (as he is commonly known at UCSI), went on to pursue his Matriculation studies and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information Systems from the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He also holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Heriott-Watt University, U.K.

Assoc. Prof. Quah has an amiable and approachable disposition but criticise his alma mater or UCSI, and you would be pushing it too far. “I am very passionate about the school and universities at which I have studied, and where I work. In my conversations with people, I usually hint which school or university I am from and where I work so that they do not step on the wrong turf,” he quipped.

The longest serving Vice President, he has been with UCSI for the past sixteen years. “I believe that I am the only person in UCSI, besides the Vice Chancellor, who has served with the University through its four stages of development and at all four locations from which it had operated or is operating,” he told the Weekly.

He joined the University when it was known as the Canadian Institute of Computer Science (CICS) as a lecturer in 1987 for a year. He then joined the software industry for four years while lecturing part-time at CICS. For that, he had been known as the “prodigal son” of the education institution at one point in time.

“It’s interesting how I got that name because I had never really left as I had still been lecturing on a part-time basis. In the four years with the industry, I managed to garner a wealth of project experience, which has added great value to my teaching career,” he said with a chuckle.

In July 1992, he returned to lecturing full-time at the-then Sedaya College. He has been with the organisation since then, a witness and participant in its evolution into an International College and, now, a University par excellence.

An avid sportsman, Assoc. Prof. Quah spends his weekends playing futsal or soccer. He is a self-professed diehard Liverpool (an English Premier League football team) supporter and is looking forward to the coming World Cup action, when he will be rooting for two of his favourite teams – England and Brazil.

“I used to tell my mother when I was in school, that the World Cup comes only once every four years but SPM is available every year. That was how important watching the World Cup was to me,” he joked.

Students can also see him, occasionally, playing badminton in the Multi Purpose Hall (MPH) on campus. Besides sporting activities, Assoc. Prof. Quah loves to read books or magazines, especially those related to his first love, information technology. He also reads material on management and leadership, financial planning, and of course his other great passion, soccer.



Assoc. Prof. Daniel Quah
with his first love

Another of Assoc. Prof. Daniel Quah's favourite past-times is listening to music. He appreciates all types of music except rap and country music. In case you are wondering, yes, he even enjoys hard rock and heavy metal! In particular, he likes to listen to Malay songs. His favourite artistes are Siti Nurhaliza and Fauziah Latiff.

"You may find it strange for a Chinese to enjoy listening to Malay songs but hey, what's wrong? We are living in a multi-cultural society. We are muhibbah. I think my taste for Malay songs is largely influenced by the neighbourhood I grew up in," explained Daniel.

As Vice President for Administration and Student Affairs, he leads UCSI's Computer Services, Software Development, Library Services, Student Affairs, International University Placement Centre, and Co-operative Education departments.

"Students who find it difficult to cope with the pressures of campus life, or have problems with their studies or even personal issues, can always come to meet us (Student Affairs department) and discuss these problems. We will make every effort within our powers to help them," he said.

"For that matter, the doors to all the Vice Presidents' offices are always open to students who need help," he added.

When asked if he had any words of advice for students, Assoc. Prof. Quah had this to say: "One must always cling on to the three Ps in life – passion, patience and perseverance. It is important to be passionate about the things you do in life. Begin with passion, add in a little patience and perseverance as you go along, and you will achieve what you want in life."



Assoc. Prof. Daniel Quah with an international student during the recent Nigerian Students' Night at UCSI