

Meet the Vice Presidents Part 3: Professor Dr. Norfadzillah Hitam



Professor Dr.
Norfadzillah Hitam

Meet UCSI's Vice President for Research and Corporate Affairs (RCA), Professor Dr. Norfadzillah Hitam, in this third instalment of the "Meet the Vice Presidents" Series.

Hailing from Rantau, Negri Sembilan Darul Khusus, Professor Dr. Norfadzillah Hitam received her early education at the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus School, Seremban. She went on to further her education at the first fully residential girls' school in Malaysia, the Tunku Kurshiah College (TKC), also in Seremban.

In school, Prof. Dr. Nor was very active in games and sporting activities. In fact, she was Sports Captain for both the Convent and TKC. She participated in track and field events annually, and represented her school and district in basketball and volleyball tournaments. She was even a member of the Negri Sembilan state hockey team while in high school. Her passion for the game continued in her varsity days where she played for her varsity in hockey tournaments.

"I have not been active in sports since I graduated from university until I joined UCSI. Now I try to play badminton at least twice a week with staff and students at the Multi Purpose Hall," she told the E-Weekly.

Dr. Nor, as she is commonly known at UCSI, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) degree majoring in History from the University of Malaya (UM). She holds two Master of Arts degrees from the University of Ohio – one in International Affairs and the other in Political Science. Prof. Dr. Nor read for her Political Science Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree at the University of Hawaii-at-Manoa in Honolulu. The East-West Centre of Honolulu, a congress-funded educational institution that offers scholarships for international students from the Asia-Pacific region, funded her doctoral studies. She was the only Ph.D. candidate from Malaysia that won the award in her time.

If she had not chosen a career in academics, the "Singing Professor" would probably have made a name for herself in the music industry. If you have not guessed it by now, Dr. Nor has a profound passion for the performing arts especially poetry and music.

In fact, her passion in music led Prof. Dr. Nor to win the Negri Sembilan Teachers' Singing Competition many years ago. While she was pursuing her undergraduate studies at UM, she was a very active member of the university's cultural troupe known as Kesatuan Seni Universiti Malaya (KESUMA).

Shipped in by military helicopters, members of KESUMA performed for Malaysian troops that were on tours of duty in the Malaysian jungles of Kelantan and Terengganu. "It was very heart-warming to be able to bring some cheer to soldiers who have spent many months in the jungles" Dr. Nor explained.

Whilst pursuing her doctoral studies in Hawaii, she actively promoted the Malaysian culture. Her efforts included that of organising a Malaysian Night together with her compatriots showcasing Malaysian cultural performances. Dr. Nor was even responsible for bringing in the Sabah Cultural Troupe to the East-West Centre of Honolulu in 1990.

When asked what genre of music she enjoyed the most, Dr. Nor replied, "Definitely rhythm and blues, ballads, and asli (traditional music)." Personally, she has composed several songs and poems. "But many of them never get published or performed. They are just for my own personal satisfaction," she quipped laughingly. However, staff and students did get to listen to two of her masterpieces performed.



Prof. Dr. Nor singing at the installation of UCSI's first Chancellor early this year

The first was a poem entitled An Ode to Parents, which was recited by the valedictorian of the graduating class of 2005 at the convocation ceremony, and the second was a song entitled Dirgahayu Malaysiaku, which was performed by UCSI's very own Choir and Orchestra at the ceremony for the installation of our first Chancellor.



February 2005 :
Prof. Dr. Nor (left) with Laskar
Mujahiddin youths in Lampu-uk
Lhoknga, Banda Aceh, whose mission
was to search for the dead bodies of
tsunami victims and bury them

As an academican, Prof. Dr. Nor has clocked-in more than 30 years of experience. She spent the first seven years of her teaching career as a high school teacher. Prior to joining UCSI, she lectured on Malaysian Politics, Seminar on Development and Asian Civilisation at a local public university for two decades, from where she retired as an Associate Professor. She subsequently, spent another two years as Head of a local School of Hotel Management.

Dr. Nor joined UCSI as Vice President of Research and Corporate Affairs (RCA) in March 2004.

In her present capacity, Dr. Nor is tasked with developing, regulating, coordinating and promoting all research and development policies and activities both within and without the university.

"At the same time, RCA is also responsible for conducting corporate relations between UCSI and external parties such as government agencies especially the Ministry of Higher Education, the Immigration Department, the National Accreditation Board (LAN), the private sector, other institutions of higher learning as well as the general public," she said.

Before the interview ended, Prof. Dr. Nor offered some words of wisdom to students. "Take the opportunity to excel in your education without expecting to get a second chance. Seize that first chance and make the best of it. Always remember that whatever is worth doing is worth doing well."



Prof. Dr. Nor handing over a cash
donation to Pn. Hj. Kamariah
Lasim of Rumah Anak-Anak
Yatim dan Ibu Tunggai, Kampung
Medan on behalf of UCSI recently