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First of all, it is my pleasure to wish all our readers a Happy New Year!

In the spirit of new years, I am delighted to say that this month spells many great new beginnings here at OUM. Firstly of course, is the chance to embrace the arrival of 2016 with a clean slate, rejuvenated goals and new ambitions. Secondly, January marks a new semester at OUM, with senior learners returning from a short break and new learners are welcomed to our community. Thirdly, January denotes my first month as the new President/Vice-Chancellor of OUM.

And finally, I am happy to introduce all our readers to this special first issue of OUM Education, which replaces the OUM Today magazine that has been around for more than a decade. Last year, we did something radical – we brought together OUM, International Open College (IOC) and the Institute of Professional Development (IPD) and placed them under the OUM Education banner.

This new initiative is meant to consolidate the entire spectrum of education under one roof. OUM Education is a one-stop centre for lifelong learning that fulfills full-time, part-time and casual learning needs. It comprises three subsidiaries - OUM offers part-time academic programmes, IOC provides full-time undergraduate programmes for fresh school leavers while short courses and professional programmes are provided by IPD.

Our regular readers will find that OUM Education is more than a facelift to the previous magazine. We have introduced a new, more reader-friendly format with plenty of practical tips and useful information, while retaining sections that give our readers a chance to keep up with the happenings at OUM, IPD and IOC.

In the spirit of new beginnings, I am also looking forward to fresh starts and new opportunities for improvement for our learners, tutors and others in our community.

For me, personally, I hope that I will be able to do my level best for OUM Education so that I can help steer our institutions towards greater success. In turn, I am positive that our learners will give their full commitment and dedication to their studies. Thus, 2016 can surely be a year in which we reap the benefits of all our efforts combined.

My best wishes to all our readers and have a productive year ahead!
On 15 December last year, members of METEOR Group had their final assembly for 2015. It was greeted with mixed feelings by the staff as the assembly was the last for Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali as the CEO of METEOR Group and President/Vice-Chancellor of OUM.

METEOR Group Chief Operating Officer, Prof Dr Ahmad Hashem, presented the welcoming address, in which he explained about OUM Education and OUM Solutions, METEOR’s new branding initiatives for 2016.

He also re-told the folk lore about the race between the rabbit and the tortoise using a different perspective. He said that when the rabbit and the tortoise raced, they teamed up to overcome the course’s obstacles. As the rabbit was faster, it carried the tortoise as it ran and when they reached a river, the tortoise carried the rabbit across. The story highlighted the importance of understanding core competencies, leveraging on strengths and practising teamwork.

The then Senior Vice President and current President/Vice-Chancellor, Prof Dato’ Dr Mansor Fadzil, took to the stage next and talked about learning through experience. He highlighted three principles for staff inspiration - nothing is impossible, believe in ourselves and believe in possibilities. He said that if we adhered to these principles, we would be able to think creatively, strategise on how to move forward and make the impossible possible.

Dato’ Mansor also shared his experience at INSEAD, an international graduate business school at Fontainebleau, France, where he attended a month’s training to become an insightfully aware leader. He said that he was able to interact with leaders of institutions who came from diverse backgrounds as he had 72 classmates from 28 countries. He concluded his speech with a reminder to the staff that leadership is a journey, not a destination.

Next to speak was Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali who congratulated Dato’ Mansor on his appointment as the new President/Vice-Chancellor effective from 2 January 2016. He urged all members of the Group to give Dato’ Mansor the same support which he had received.

In reminiscing about the staff assemblies he had presided over in 12 years, he hoped that the staff had learnt from the things he shared. He said the position of President at a big organisation such as OUM carried a big responsibility and that it was important to practise OUM’s shared values and to be humble.

Tan Sri Anuwar then thanked the staff for their hard work in ensuring OUM’s success and asked them to continue practising teamwork and improving their efforts for further success.

On a final note, the outgoing President/Vice-Chancellor wished everyone a Happy New Year and hoped that 2016 would bring good fortune, luck and happiness.
Prof Dato’ Dr Mansor Fadzil is one of the easily recognisable faces at OUM. He was part of the pioneering group of individuals who founded the University back in 1999 and has served under both Allahyarham Tan Sri Dato’ Dr Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad, OUM’s first President/Vice-Chancellor, as well as his successor, Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali. He joined as the University’s Vice President (Academic) - a post that he held from August 2000 to May 2003. From May 2003 to July 2007, he served as Vice President (Technology) and in August 2007, he was made the Senior Vice President - a position that he held until his appointment as the new President/Vice-Chancellor in January this year.

In all his years at OUM, Dato’ Mansor has managed a formidable number of portfolios, including faculty and academic matters, assessment, instructional design and technology, the digital library, support services, learning centres and information and communication technology services. In this respect, he has been involved in virtually all areas relevant to the day-to-day running of the University - from overseeing programme delivery to negotiating agreements and partnerships, and even engaging with learners and tutors, whether at his office or during various University events, such as colloquia, seminars and dialogues.

Dato’ Mansor was formally trained as an engineer and employed as a lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering, Universiti Malaya (UM), from 1985 to 2001. He has leveraged on his diverse managerial experiences at OUM to become an important figure in open and distance learning in Malaysia. In fact, it was during his time at UM that he began to take a personal interest in online learning. He played an instrumental role in introducing this approach to UM lecturers in 1998. This growing interest in online learning led to his involvement with Allahyarham Tan Sri Dato’ Dr Abdullah Sanusi and several others in the early days before the founding of OUM. Later, he was requested to prepare a concept paper required by the Government which led to the official establishment of Malaysia’s first open and distance learning institution in August 2000. He opted for optional retirement from UM in 2001 and eventually joined OUM full time.

Dato’ Mansor and his wife, Datin Norizan Nuruddin, are parents to seven children and a grandchild. He lives with his family in Klang, Selangor, and enjoys jogging and reading books, especially those on aviation.

Now that he has officially taken over the position of President/Vice-Chancellor, Dato’ Mansor hopes to continue the legacies of both his mentors and predecessors i.e. Allahyarham Tan Sri Dato’ Dr Abdullah Sanusi and Tan Sri Anuwar. In this new capacity, he hopes to succeed in steering OUM and its sister institutions, IPD and IOC, to greater heights and creating even greater milestones for many years to come.
A HEARTFELT TRIBUTE

PROF EMERITUS TAN SRI ANUWAR ALI

Having served for 12 years, Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali recently handed over the mantle of President/Vice-Chancellor to Prof Dato’ Dr Mansor Fadzil.

This leadership change is a happy-sad moment for us because in welcoming a new leader bursting with fresh ideas to bring the organisation forward, we need to bid farewell to a dearly cherished person who has been showing us the way forward with grace and good humour.

Tan Sri Anuwar took over the helm in January 2004 from OUM’s founder and first President/Vice-Chancellor, Allahyarham Tan Sri Dato’ Dr Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad, who had served from 2001 to 2003. Previously, he had been the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia from May 1998 to April 2003.

Heading a university which is different from others in terms of approach, services and delivery is a formidable responsibility, one which Tan Sri Anuwar handled with single-minded focus – to help OUM become the leading provider of flexible learning.

As the CEO of METEOR Group, Tan Sri Anuwar also headed its other subsidiaries, namely, IOC and IPD.

Like OUM, both IOC and IPD also work towards widening access to education, with IOC focusing on fresh school-leavers and IPD catering to professionals seeking continuous development. It is a tough call, driving forward three educational establishments seeking to make a mark among Malaysians and Tan Sri Anuwar knew it could not be achieved single-handedly.

Instead, he marshalled the collective resources of staff from the different subsidiaries to join forces with commitment to a set of shared values. These five shared values are integrity, professionalism, caring, innovativeness and teamwork. At almost every staff assembly, which was held once every two months, he encouraged staff to internalise and practise these timeless values for their collective benefit.
Under his guidance, OUM has continued to grow as a trend-setting university which offers a pragmatic approach towards higher education for working adults. It is now the largest ODL learning institution in the country, with a cumulative enrolment reaching 150,000 learners, as well as more than 65,000 local graduates and 33 learning centres nationwide.

It is also the first institution in Malaysia to implement the open entry system in 2006. In addition, it has been involved in a special programme to upgrade the qualifications of more than 50,000 in-service teachers throughout the country.

Tan Sri Anuwar’s passion for the advancement of higher education and ODL served as the driving force behind his efforts to take OUM to greater heights, as well as to build rapport with the relevant authorities and institutions related to ODL, in Malaysia and abroad.

His efforts have been acknowledged through a slew of awards. In 2008, he was made an Honorary Fellow of COL. He was conferred meritorious awards by Eszterházy Károly University of Applied Sciences in Hungary and Delta Academy in Egypt.

In addition, he has received the Jewel of the Muslim World Award from OIC Today as well as honorary degrees from Soka University in Japan and his alma mater, Queen’s University, in Ireland. Last year, he received the Meritorious Service Award from the Asian Association of Open Universities.

However, going beyond these awards, we know we owe much to Tan Sri Anuwar. He has been a guiding light for us in our daily operations and it has been undeniably tough to say goodbye. Nevertheless, we know that he will continue to contribute to the organisation, as dedication such as his does not simply fade away. Finally, we would like to say thank you, Tan Sri Anuwar, for all that you have done for the METEOR Group, especially OUM.
LEARNING HOW YOUR PRIVATE WORLD DETERMINES YOUR PUBLIC SUCCESS

SUCCESS is greatly valued in the corporate world. For organisations, success would mean hitting the bottom line, meeting shareholders’ expectations and achieving their organisation’s vision.

Corporate leaders will often spare no effort to achieve these goals. On one hand, success is sweet and welcomed. It brings with it personal satisfaction, financial rewards and meaningful purpose.

On the other hand, in the lust of achieving success, there can be downsides. Leaders can end up working too hard and working too late. This may lead to organisational culture and relationship breakdowns, and may even resort to unethical ways in business dealings.

All this is done in the name of achieving organisational success. So, does the end justify the means? Hopefully you will say no.

A leader’s job is to lead their organisation. But good leadership that leads to meaningful success can only be achieved when the leader first learns to lead himself.

The logic is simple: If you can’t lead yourself, you can’t lead others. The leader’s private world will often determine their public success. However, leading oneself begins with self-awareness.

I used to be an American Idol fan. My favourite part of this reality television show is at the beginning of the season. This is where the auditions are held. It’s fun to watch!

If you have followed the show, you know how this pans out for some contestants. You see this guy who “tries” to sing. Once he finishes, the judges deliver their verdict that he fails to move to the next round.

What happens next? He storms out of the audition room and the cameraman follows him. He is obviously upset. He fights back. He accuses the judges of not appreciating his unique talent and being prejudiced against him.

But wait. You and I who are watching the television know this guy cannot sing. The judges who are professionals know this guy cannot sing.

However, the only person who does not know that he cannot sing is himself! He has absolutely no sense of self-awareness with regard to his ability (of rather inability) to sing.

I’m afraid many corporate leaders are in the same boat. In their drive to achieve success, they have very little self-awareness as to how they are actually leading themselves and others. They are often blind-sided by the immediate and lose sight of what really matters.
What motivates a leader’s drive for success? I wish I could say that all leaders have pure motives to deliver sustainable corporate goals, help their employees develop and progress in their careers and ensure that their organisation makes a positive impact in the society.

Unfortunately, far too often we see leaders that are self-serving and egocentric instead. They often mask their selfish motives behind strategic insights and claim they see the big picture.

In the process, positive organisational culture is eroded, unnecessary restructuring takes place, trust and loyalty are broken and good people leave the company.

In return, the leader’s short-term goals are met. He gets his big fat bonus. He looks good in front of his bosses. He positions himself as the turnaround expert. His curriculum vitae is perfect for the next big job.

However, he leaves behind structural chaos, distasteful culture and unsustainable business strategies. Leaders motivated by money, power and ego often make decisions for self-gain. On the other hand, true great leaders have pure motives and build with a clear conscience.

I like the way John Maxwell defines success. He says, “Success means having those closest to me love and respect me the most.”

I agree.

For all of us, those closest to us would be our spouses, our children, our parents and siblings. It is going to be disappointing for many leaders to have worked so hard to climb the ladder of success to find out that at the end of the climb, the ladder was leaning on the wrong wall.

I once spoke to a group of leaders from a multinational company about the importance of work-life balance. In that session, I touched on issues relating to family.

At the end of the session, the most senior person in the room approached me privately to thank me for the talk. With teary eyes, he told me he wished that he had heard me talk about the importance of family relationships 30 years ago.

He then related to me on how he had worked so hard building corporate success over the years that he neglected his relationship with his two daughters. Today, both his daughters have their own families and are living abroad. He and his wife meet them once every year or two.

What saddens him most is not the geographical distance between him and his daughters but the relational and emotional distance he experiences with them. Good leaders always focuses on what really matters – their families.
TOP 10 WAYS TO EMPOWER PEOPLE IN YOUR WORKPLACE

10 SHOW EMPLOYEES THAT YOU VALUE THEM

Show your employees how much you value them with simple acts such as congratulating them on a job well done, thanking them for their hard work and effort, or just a simple pat on the back. As a leader, it is essential that you demonstrate your appreciation for each individual’s unique value add.

09 SHARE OBJECTIVES AND DIRECTION

Share the companies’ goals and direction with all employees. Tell them that these goals are not only for the leadership of the company, but for every employee because every individual plays a crucial role in achieving the target. This will give employees a sense of ownership and belonging.

08 REWARD INITIATIVE

When an employee takes ownership and takes the lead on tasks, reward them for their extra effort, and be sure to recognise them in front of others. This way, they would be motivated to keep up the good work, and other employees would be encouraged to follow suit.

07 DELEGATE AUTHORITY

Don’t just pile more work on your employees, give them opportunities to take on leadership roles. Let them run big projects, lead client meetings and give them a degree of power to make decisions. As they are exposed to more situations, they will be able to grow and develop new skills.

06 BE GENEROUS IN TEACHING

Some employees require training and preparation for their roles. Arrange for their training and development, and be available if they have questions or need guidance in their roles. Give them reassurance, but also challenge them continuously as they continue to learn.
01 SPREAD THE LOVE
One of the key steps in employee empowerment is getting them to love the company. When they love their company, they are motivated to give their best for the company. Have group activities and outings and make your employees feel that they are part of a big family.

02 PROVIDE GUIDANCE BY ASKING QUESTIONS
Most people do not like being told what to do. Instead of always directly telling your employees what to do, ask them questions. Know that they are capable of providing the right answers if they have the opportunity to come up with them. Ask them questions like “which do you think is the most effective way to...?” Or “what steps do you recommend for...”

03 GIVE SOLUTIONS INSTEAD OF POINTING FINGERS
When a problem occurs, instead of asking what is wrong with people, ask if there is something wrong with the work system. Identify the root cause of the problem, and work together with the team to create solutions for the problem.

04 TRUST YOUR EMPLOYEES
A common norm in most organisations is to withhold company information for the top managerial levels. Trust your employees with the truth. Let them in on what is happening. Share numbers and keep them updated with where the company is and where it is heading.

05 PROVIDE FREQUENT FEEDBACK
Give your employees feedback on their performance. Let them know what they are doing right, and offer ways for them to improve. Stick to using positive words. For example use phrases like “perhaps you can try doing it this way...” or “why don’t we try this approach?” This way they won’t feel demotivated.

“Which do you think is the most effective way to...? Or what steps do you recommend for...”

This article was brought to you by Leaderonomics, a social enterprise with the purpose of transforming nations through leadership development. To read more leadership articles, visit www.leaderonomics.com
Companies that close themselves to the world and focus internally may miss the boat when change occurs. Organisations that stop looking outside and don’t see changes that are happening around them soon lose their way.

At the same time, innovative companies were replaced by others who just copied them. Xerox invented the photocopiers but Canon took it to a whole new level with the colour copier. Ford and GM had automobile leadership for years until the Japanese copycats came in with their high value economic cars and wiped them out. Why did all these companies get dethroned?

WHY DO ORGANISATIONS FALL?

Companies that close themselves to the world and focus internally may miss the boat when change occurs. Organisations that stop looking outside and don’t see changes that are happening around them soon lose their way.

It’s the same with us personally. When we are so busy with our work, our kids, our schedules and meetings, we sometimes miss important changes that are taking place around us. And these changes have a direct impact on our careers.

I recall a friend’s mother working as a secretary in the 1970s who was great on the typewriter. She could really type words fast. But when computers debuted in the 80s, she was made redundant and replaced by a savvier computer user, who couldn’t type as fast as her. But she was so focused on improving her ability to type fast, she completely missed the bigger picture— that typing fast on a typewriter would not be as important as learning to use the computer.

Companies face the same dilemma. When they are so busy with their internal operations and processes, they lose sight of the world and are soon replaced by new companies.

Just think of the products and services you use today. How many of these products are from companies that existed 60 years ago? We fly on AirAsia, buy furniture from IKEA, buy our computers from Dell, drink coffee at Starbucks, search for information via Google, get leadership training from Leaderonomics and study at OUM!

Having a company byline that includes “established 1850” is almost a liability today. Reputation counts for nothing anymore. Shell, has a home base in the UK and has a reputation as a producer of high quality petrol. Yet, in their UK home market, Tesco, a supermarket, is the biggest petrol retailer.
One reason may be “social proof”, a theory developed by psychologist Robert Cialdini. The larger a crowd of people at the scene of an accident, the more likely no one will help the victims. If everyone is passive, everyone thinks that there is no emergency. Cialdini’s theory claims, “If a lot of people are doing the same thing, they must know something we don’t.”

Companies foolishly adopt this “follow-the-leader” attitude. Wang Laboratories, who established themselves as a major computer force in the 80s, decided to follow industry leader IBM and forgo the PC market. Today they do not exist.

Another reason, assert business gurus Charan and Useem, is that “a number of studies show that people are less likely to make optimal decisions after prolonged periods of success. Enron, Lucent, WorldCom - all had reached the mountaintop before they ran into trouble. Someone should have told them that most mountaineering accidents happen on the way down.”

Gary Hamel adds:

**“The seeds of failure are usually sown at the heights of greatness.”**

Once a company becomes an industry leader, defensive thinking seeps in and no one challenges the status quo. Many become insular and miss changes taking place, becoming irrelevant to their customers.

Great leaders are forward looking and don’t bask in past glories or get caught up with internal issues. Bill Gates constantly says:

**“Microsoft is always two years away from failure.”**

Gates understands the need to be engaged with the world, its trends and market changes.

Jim Collins, author of Good to Great, writes, “The key sign - the litmus test - is whether you begin to explain away the brutal facts rather than to confront the brutal facts head-on.” Great leaders force themselves to see from the outside, recognise the brutal facts facing them and make the necessary changes.

**SO, WHAT LESSONS CAN WE DRAW FOR OUR CAREERS AND LIVES?**

Firstly, change happens all the time. It is not something to be paranoid about. What we need to be vigilant about is to always be observing what is happening from the outside in. And it’s not just about changes happening in your industry but changes everywhere as well. Book retailers never quite understood how Amazon.com suddenly appeared and wiped them out as they were not tracking the internet revolution.

Secondly, we need to be wary when we start becoming so internally focused and consumed by tasks and to-do lists. Great leaders learn to reflect and take time off to notice the “little things” that are walking into their lives. There are small little signs everywhere telling us about the next wave that will hit our careers and lives. Are we seeing those little signs?

Finally, watch out when you become defensive and reactionary. This is the starting point of your fall from the mountaintop. Great leaders that stay at the top for long periods are usually ones who have humbled themselves to believe that learning and growth never ends.

So, what do we need to do? We can start by taking short little breaks to take ourselves from the “busy-ness” of our lives to “observing the world”. Just spending 20 minutes a day to open our eyes by taking some time to be still and mindful of the changes that are taking place, can significantly enhance your career. There are many little “changes” walking into your industry and workplace and if you are too busy working hard to improve your “typewriting skills” inside your organisation, the “changes” may just consume you and make you an irrelevant dinosaur.

So, open your eyes and when needed, change your story!

Roshan Thiran is CEO of Leaderonomics, a social enterprise focused on inspiring people to leadership greatness. For more Be a Leader articles, visit www.leaderonomics.com.
When it comes to the democratisation of education and lifelong learning, OUM stays true to its vision of being the leading provider of flexible education for people from all walks of life. Beginning 1 January this year, with the provision of admission through Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), the opportunities for individuals to pursue tertiary education widens. With less stringent academic requirements, individuals may now gain access by capitalising on their prior learning and work experience.

OUM was given approval by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to implement the APEL admission from Certificate and Diploma till the Bachelor and Masters level of studies. To be eligible, applicants must meet the criteria set by the MOHE and pass the APEL Assessment for the level of intended study.

The APEL Assessment focuses on two main objectives – (1) Gauge applicants’ knowledge and skills in generic areas such as Bahasa Malaysia, English Language, Mathematics, General Knowledge and Critical Thinking through an Aptitude Test; and (2) Enable the applicants to present evidence of their prior learning through the submission of a simplified portfolio. The APEL Assessment is necessary as it ensures that applicants have the basic knowledge and skills to cope with the demands of tertiary studies. At the same time, the portfolio reflects the applicants’ prior experiential learning or work experience related to the intended programme of study.

Interested applicants may find out more information on APEL and its assessments at http://apel.oum.edu.my. Alternatively, enquiries could be made at any of the OUM Learning Centres throughout Malaysia or via email to enquiries@oum.edu.my or the OUM Speedline at 03-2773 2121 / 012-303 9934 / 012-303 9935.

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Mau Chee Pean is the General Manager at the Survey Department in Sunway Construction Sdn Bhd. He has 134 staff under his supervision and his department provides survey services for the company. It is currently handling more than 10 projects such as Mass Rapid Transit, Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rapid Transit, Sunway Medical Center 3, Sunway Pyramid Mall 3, Velocity Intergrade building, Putrajaya Parcel F and Sunway Iskandar Johor construction.

With all these large-scale projects demanding his attention, one would think his schedule would be too packed for him to even consider taking up further studies. One would be proved wrong.

Mau, 55, took up the Executive Bachelor in Construction Management programme at the Institute of Professional Development (IPD). Not only that, he grabbed the President’s Award when he graduated last year. In recognition of his achievement, he was chosen to be the graduate representative at IPD’s 11th Awards Ceremony on 22 December last year where he delivered a rousing speech.

Married with three children, Mau sacrificed precious family time to attend weekend classes and do his assignments.

For aspiring students, he has this to say: “Commitment and perseverance are key to achieving the goals we set in life. Always begin with an end in mind before embarking on a new journey. Age is not a hindrance for us to achieve higher goals, whether in our career or life. Let the sky be your limit.”

IPD offers professional and management development programmes for organisations intent on improving their workforce. A centre of excellence within OUM, it offers training on technical, interpersonal, leadership and managerial skills.

At present, the Institute works closely with AEDN, Perwira Niaga Malaysia (PERNAMA), Panasonic and PNS Academy to enhance its business, hospitality, retailing and manufacturing programmes with on-the-job training models. IPD is also working with the Centre of Technical Excellence (CENTEXS) under the purview of Sarawak Foundation to offer programmes in food and beverages as well as housekeeping and front office operations.

IPD has also ventured abroad, especially in India, where it offers programmes in tourism, hospitality, logistics and aviation.
18TH OUM CONVOCATION
21 DECEMBER 2015
11TH IPD AWARDS CEREMONY
22 DECEMBER 2015

R. Boominathan, the CEO and Founder of Chennai Amrita International Institute of Hotel Management in India receiving the IPD-OUM Meritorious Award
The University recently held a special convocation in Manama, Bahrain, in collaboration with Arab Open University (AOU) where 39 graduating students received their scrolls.

Thirty-seven of the graduates received the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree while the remaining two, the Master of Information Technology.

Malaysian Ambassador to Bahrain, Dato’ Ahmad Shahizan Abdul Samad, was among the guests of honour at the convocation. The OUM delegation comprised Vice President (Campus Development) Prof Ir Dr Rosli Hamir, Registrar Kamariah Mohd Noor and MBA programme coordinator Bibi Nabi Ahmad Khan.

OUM began collaborating with AOU in 2005 with the offering of the MBA programme to 127 learners. Since then, the University has enrolled close to 2,000 students with the majority of them in the MBA programme.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was also signed between both institutions to renew the existing academic collaboration for the MBA programme to continue being offered in Bahrain. Prof Rosli signed the agreement on behalf of OUM while AOU was represented by its Rector, Prof Dr Moudi Al-Humoud.

OUM also has international collaborations with partners in other countries such as Bahrain, Hungary, Maldives, Ghana, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Yemen and Zambia. Through these smart partnerships, the University offers its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to learners in those countries.
Pham Minh Triet is the head of micro insurance at a leading financial services provider in Vietnam. A few years back, he decided to improve his knowledge so that he could become a trainer. Through online searches and social media, he learnt about OUM. In March 2013, he enrolled in its Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme.

Pham did not have to travel to Malaysia to study at the Main Campus in Kuala Lumpur. Instead, he was able to undertake the programme in his home country because of OUM’s collaboration with the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH). In October 2014, he received the degree he had worked hard for.

For Pham, 42, the MBA fulfilled his expectations. “The courses used up-to-date materials from well-known publishers and the fees were reasonable too,” he said.

He liked studying about marketing, human resource and strategic management and found that reading modules and completing assignments were the most impactful modes of learning for him. Pham, who is married and has two daughters, set goals for his studies and skilfully divided his time between his job, family and studies. His aspiration for the future is to do a doctorate and to engage in teaching.

His graduation is one of the many success stories borne through the OUM-HUTECH collaboration which jointly offers two programmes - Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and MBA.

The history of the collaboration goes back to June 2011 when the Education Attaché of Malaysia in Vietnam visited HUTECH and introduced OUM. In the following months, both universities held discussions and obtained the approval of the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training to offer the BBA and MBA programmes.

In mid-September, the MBA programme began with a first intake of 110 new learners divided into three classes. In September 2012, the BBA programme was started with a first intake of 150 new learners divided into four classes.

The programmes involve tutorials on weekday evenings and weekends at HUTECH using OUM modules. There are now 806 active learners and 840 graduates. Six Special Convocations have been held at HUTECH, with three of them taking place last year alone.
With over 10,000 learners in 10 countries, OUM has made an impact as a reputable open and distance learning provider particularly in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Those who enrol are mostly working adults who could not attend full-time and campus-based classes because of job commitments. While many opt to continue studying due to socio-economic reasons, OUM’s entry into Somalia, for instance, is to help in the country’s human capital development as decades of civil war had rendered many of the educational institutions dysfunctional.

The University collaborated with Simad University in 2012 for its MBA programme and witnessed the inaugural graduation two years later.

In Sri Lanka, in-service nurses benefit from the nursing programmes that OUM offers while in the Maldives, the bulk of learners are teachers who want to upgrade their teaching qualifications.

OUM’s programmes in these countries and others like Vietnam, Mauritius, Yemen, Bahrain, Zambia, Ghana and Hungary have been well-accepted as the degrees are recognised by employers.

The PhD programme has been life-changing. It taught me new learning techniques and how to access the vast resources of the e-library and be part of a unique research community. I plan to keep my research profile relevant by attending conferences and seminars as I plan to be a university lecturer one day. I would say that I am proud to be a graduate of OUM.

Doctoral study requires high metacognitive skills and a lot of research. As an online learner, the computer was my greatest partner. It made me an independent learner as I did most of my research online.

Studying through open and distance mode was convenient and attractive in terms of content coverage, time flexibility and programme delivery. It taught me a lot about self-directed learning and also, everything that I learned is applicable to my job as a teacher and educator.
Enthusiasm was palpable at the OUM Main Campus on 30 December as members of the media and academia were introduced to a book by former politician turned social activist, Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye. The launch was especially significant for him as it was held on his 69th birthday.

Entitled Through My Eyes / Melalui Kaca Mata Saya, the book is a compilation of 500 press statements and letters to the editors in Malay and English newspapers from 2011 to 2015.

The book was published by OUM, where Tan Sri Lee is a member of the Board of Directors since 2005 and its Chairman since 2012. Through his association with OUM, he is constantly advocating for lifelong learning among Malaysians.

Committed to serving society, Tan Sri Lee is also the Chairman of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health under the Ministry of Human Resources.

His other posts include Chairman of the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research; Vice Chairman and Member of the Executive Council of the Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation; Member of Board of Trustees of 1Malaysia Foundation and Chairman of Eco World Foundation.

Tan Sri Lee’s writings have faithfully graced the pages of local dailies and his opinions are frequently sought in matters concerning various social issues and current affairs in the country, thus providing the impetus for the publication of the book.

The book covers a gamut of topics such as unity, social ills, crime prevention, mental health and organ donation as well as occupational safety and health. It provides an excellent glimpse into Tan Sri Lee’s relentless efforts to contribute to a more caring, peaceful and unified Malaysia.
The IOC recently held a gathering called Mi’Famiglia Prom Night, which brought together its most recent batch of graduates as well as its new and senior students. The event in Kuala Lumpur on 6 January was meant to fete the graduates, who had received their scrolls at IOC’s third convocation. They had completed diploma programmes in human resource management, management and accountancy.

The night was organised as a final-year project by seniors in the Diploma in Mass Communication programme. Having enrolled in May and December 2013, these seniors looked forward to their own graduation by throwing a party for those who had already succeeded.

And what a fabulous celebration it was! With the theme centring around the 1940s to 1960s era, everyone was attired accordingly. The students sang Malay and English songs and performed a Bollywood dance followed by a modern dance. The performances were interlaced with lucky draws and announcements of awards such as for best friendship, best supporter and best dress. For the finale, all of them got together on stage to sing one last song together, share endearing memories and bid farewell to those who had completed their studies.

The event was sponsored by Zalora, Mamee, Altel, This and That Creative Resources, Kunzense, Aprilia, De’ Cake and Tales and Nadi Bakes.
I took up the Diploma in Mass Communication programme at IOC because I was confused about which direction to go and mass communication was the closest to my interests. Furthermore, my parents are in the mass communication field so I am pretty familiar with it.

They had a production company and also did event management when I was younger. Then when I started secondary school, my father became a restaurant manager and also did some catering while my mother came up with her own motorcycle/travel magazine. Now, they are working together again in organising events.

I enrolled in IOC because it accepted my credit transfer, plus it is new and still small. It being small made me feel that I would be able to concentrate more and have a closer connection with the lecturers.

The best thing about studying in IOC is of course the people I am with, my friends and the amazing lecturers. The teaching quality is pretty good, especially in my earlier semesters. The lecturers motivate me to strive in my studies and are very supportive. We can contact them whenever we need to ask about anything. They would guide us on assignments and some of them are even with us while we are doing them.

My favourite place to be on campus is the cafe because you can always see a familiar face. It is where we usually hang out and eat. I also like the class area downstairs because it is much more quiet.

I am involved in a number of college activities and have helped to host a few orientations. I have danced and sung at events organised by the college, provided voiceover for IOC’s jingle radio commercial for HotFM and served as a OUM Convocation choir member. I helped to organise the Earth Hour celebration, Language and Arts Club Night, Black & Gold Gala Night and recently, the IOC Graduation Night.

These activities have boosted my confidence level. I am socially awkward around new people so when I got involved in these activities, I made new friends and learned to be more comfortable with them. My advice for other students is to be active in college activities.

IOC is a private college under OUM Education, which also comprises OUM and IPD. It leverages on OUM’s experience in providing:

- Courses, learning materials and resources
- Virtual learning environment
- Blended pedagogy
- Learner-centred services
- Flexible schedule

Why IOC?
- Affordable fees
- Student allowance provided
- Free hostel
- PTPTN
- EPF Withdrawals
- Scholarships (subject to terms & conditions)
- Free transport
- Free books/modules
- Technology-based learning
- Easy and flexible instalment scheme

Financing Available

Programmes
Foundation | Foundation in Arts
Diploma | Diploma in Management
| Diploma in Accountancy
| Diploma in Human Resource Management
Bachelor | Bachelor of Management (Hons)