

SOAR TOGETHER WITH A NEW WAVE OF GREAT MINDS



Meet Professor Dr Chan Nee Nee, the newly appointed Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts (FOSSLA) at UCSI University.

She is active in research with external consultancy and research grants in internationalisation, cyberbullying, and vaccine hesitancy and vaccine refusal. Besides spearheading the supervision of the PhD students in Education, Professor Dr Chan Nee Nee is continuously on a mission to make FOSSLA the top social sciences faculty in Malaysia and beyond.

Professor Dr Chan's qualifications include a Doctorate in Education (Durham University, UK), an M.A. (English

Studies), a BA (Hons) and a Dip. Applied Linguistics, with distinction (National University of Singapore). She was an external examiner for the Master in Communication at Monash University and had served as guest editor and journal reviewer for several high-ranking journals.

To further develop the faculty, she is currently hiring new professors and associate professors from various public universities to bring their expertise to FOSSLA as part of one of her initiatives. Listen to what Professor Dr. Chan Nee Nee has to say about bringing this new wave of great minds together.

1. We learned that FOSSLA has recently hired a new group of professors and associate professors. Can you tell us more about these new professors and associate professors?

Yes, our postgraduate and PhD student numbers have increased dramatically in the last one to two years. We currently offer a PhD in Education, a Master of Clinical Psychology, and a Master of Child Psychology programme. We will offer a Master of Education, a PhD in Psychology, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching soon as we are awaiting MQA approval. As we grow, these professors and associate professors' step in to provide much-needed high-level expertise.

One of our new joiners is Professor Dr Mansor bin Abu Talib, who has a PhD in Counselling from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom. His interest in research and consultancy work has earned him a total of 30 grants, 10 as principal investigator, amounting to more than RM 3.5 million from both local and international fund providers.

Professor Dr Ong Eng Tek, PhD in Science Education, University of Cambridge, is one of our most sought-after professors among our students as he comes with years of experience in Science Education. In terms of consultancy, he has chaired numerous quality control panels for primary science textbooks for Years 1-6 at the invitation of the Textbook Division of the Ministry of Education and also by Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.

Moving on to Associate Professors, we have Associate Professor Dr Mohd Sallehuddin Bin Abd Aziz, PhD (Testing and Evaluation), previously from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. A subject matter expert on testing and evaluation, language and educational assessment, English for Specific Purposes, and computer-based assessment.

Associate Professor Dr Sabariah Binti Md Rashid has recently joined us from Universiti Putra Malaysia. In 2011, she received her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in English Studies from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. She has over 25 years of experience teaching English, linguistics, and language testing. She has taught courses in Language Studies such as Language Testing and Evaluation, Semantics and Pragmatics, Research Methods, and Quantitative Research Methods.

We also have Associate Professor Dr Azhar bin Mohd Adnan, whose qualifications include a PhD in Early Childhood Education (University of East Anglia, Norwich, England), Master Science (MSc), and Bachelor Education (BEd). He was the President of the Early Childhood Care and Education Council Malaysia from 2015 until 2017 and is still a member and panellist.

In addition, Associate Professor Dr Wong Bee Eng comes from the University of Putra Malaysia. She taught linguistics and applied linguistics courses and researched in the areas of L2 acquisition, vocabulary learning, writing and discourse

studies, as well as language testing and assessment. She has published 45 articles in reputable journals that are recognised locally and internationally, 33 book chapters and edited a book (Second Language Acquisition: Selected Readings, 2005) with contributions from two well-known professors (Prof Roger Hawkins from the University of Essex and Prof William O'Grady from the University of Hawaii at Manoa). Her work has been cited by other researchers. She has also written several modules for the distance learning programme at UPM and one for WOU.

Lastly, we have Associate Professor Dr Zahari Bin Ishak, who is an educator and applied psychologist from the University of Malaya. He has been a Senior Panellist of Assessors for the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) since 2001 in the fields of higher education, psychology, and early childhood education. Besides that, he is also an external programme assessor for higher education at several public and private universities. He has been a prominent member of the Research Evaluation Panel (IRPA and FRGS) at the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and has also been an Auditor for Malaysia Research Assessment (MyRA) since 2018.

2. What is the role of these professors and associate professors?

FOSSLA has been extremely fortunate in attracting these distinguished professors and associate professors from a wide range of universities to work with us. These new professors and associate professors are essentially focused on obtaining research grants, conducting research, and supervising PhD students, particularly those pursuing a PhD in education. Aside from that, these professors and associate professors bring to FOSSLA not only knowledge but also the right attitude in terms of setting high standards and broadening the horizons of our students and staff members.

In fact, they constantly collaborate with our staff to provide training and workshops, such as setting exam questions and analysing previous exam questions, in order to improve the quality of our exams for our students. Not only that, but these professors and associate professors give talks to our PhD students every Friday. Each of them conducts webinars for the students on relevant topics like qualitative and quantitative methodology and preparing for the proposal defense.

3. How are these professors and associate professors assisting our FOSSLA staff?

These are experts in their respective fields. They not only contribute their knowledge, but they also volunteer to be mentors and coaches to our younger academics, guiding them in their intellectual and career development.

4. What is your advice to students who choose to study at FOSSLA?

The world of social sciences is an enthralling place to learn about the disciplines and how we can better society and our lives. Whatever we seek, investigate, and discover reflects the values and norms of our society. We fight for social justice and want to improve the world through great intellectual discovery and societal applications of our acquired knowledge. I believe that with the influx of new professors and associate professors, we will be able to guide students toward achieving their life goals while also propelling the Faculty of Social Sciences to previously unimaginable heights. We are now at the start of a great era in the pursuit of UCSI's mission and vision!

