

Connecting UniSIM

A quarterly newsletter for UniSIM alumni

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UniSIM Alumnus Flies High

Ben Chong

Co-Founder, Wow Adventures Group

Class of 2009

BSc (Honours) in Information Technology and Business



WIN!
UniSIM
Jacket

HIGHLIGHTS

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Priscilla Wu, UniSIM Alumna, Class of 2009,
BA (Honours) in Psychology with Sociology



Greetings from Sydney!



editor's note

After graduating in 2009 with a BA (Honours) in Psychology with Sociology from UniSIM, alumna Priscilla Wu embarked on yet another exciting journey as an international student. In February this year, she enrolled in a one-year postgraduate Diploma in Psychology at Macquarie University, Sydney.

Priscilla shared that the Australian education system is different from Singapore's. Students are given ample opportunity for hands-on experience and are encouraged to think critically and be extremely independent.

Like all developed cities, Priscilla shared that Sydney has both her beauty and vices. The pace of life in Sydney is more relaxed compared to other cities in Asia, with work starting around 8am and ending at 5pm sharp. However, streets are not as clean in Sydney while the crime rate is notably higher than Singapore's.

In a short span of three months, Priscilla has already visited most parts of Sydney including breathtaking tourist attractions like the Opera House and Darling Harbour. She visits Hyde Park or the Royal Botanical Garden occasionally to have a cuppa and read a book to de-stress.

With Singapore being a known gourmet paradise, Priscilla shared that her greatest craving was the local delicacies back home.



To fellow alumnus who are keen to further their studies overseas, Priscilla shared, "Do your homework before deciding where. There are four points you should take note of, (1) Does the university and programme fit your personality and academic future?; (2) Do you have a well-planned budget for an acceptable standard of living?; (3) Keep an open mind to embrace changes in culture and lifestyle; and (4) Make an effort to stay in touch with family and friends back home."

The Newsletter Editorial Group wishes Priscilla success in both her studies in Sydney and all future endeavours!

Let's Get Away!

Imagine this scenario: You will be departing for the airport for your holiday in four hours and your clothes are still strewn all over your bed. You can't seem to decide what to pack. Everything seems absolutely necessary for you to bring along. One hour before you head out to the airport, you decide to stuff everything and anything into your bag. Upon reaching the airport, you realise that you have packed in excess.

Does this scenario seem all too familiar?

Ironically, going on a holiday for me seems to induce a tremendous amount of unnecessary stress when I would have to think of things to pack and check the weather conditions of my intended destination. However, I do recall that most of my trips end up being extremely wonderful.

I have never been on group tours until December last year. I had intended to go somewhere exotic and decided on Egypt. Since I do not speak any Arabic, I felt that it would be best if I went on a group tour. It was indeed one of the best trips I had taken. I made new friends from my tour group and till today, we still keep in touch with each other. The entire tour was also a pleasant experience with a wonderful guide and tour leader.

In this issue, you will get tips on how you can avoid insurmountable anxiety when you join group tours. There is also an interesting feature on one of our alumni who has turned his passion into a career. Enjoy this holiday issue!

Mohammad Noor
Editor (Alumni Volunteer)
Newsletter Editorial Group

Stock Market VS Casino Gambling



Mr Charlie Lau speaking to a rapt audience.

What is the relationship between gambling and the economy? UOB KayHian Remisier Mr Charlie Lau answered this question during his Investments and the integrated resorts (IRs) talk to alumni on 20 March 2010.

Delivering to a crowd of both amateur and experienced investors, Mr Lau explained the rationale behind the government's initiative to open two IRs simultaneously and the secrets to winning at the roulette table. However, Mr Lau quipped, "No one can beat the casino. No one ever gets rich from gambling. The only way to beat the casino is to buy its shares. You can still enjoy yourselves at the casino by preparing to lose. So leave your credit cards at home and do not befriend any money lenders."

The speaker also shared some of his personal experiences with gambling losses and the avenues that one could approach for help in curbing compulsive gambling habits.

Separately, he also touched on the stock market and how investors were becoming more cautious with their investment plans following the crash of the market two years ago. "In a stock market, no single person, theory or fundamental is 100 per cent dependable", said Mr Lau.

To be a savvy investor, one must have good comprehension of investment concepts, a positive attitude, an enquiring mind and good foresight.

"Charlie is a very good speaker. His wealth of experience is valuable to this workshop as he showed us the practical world beyond our textbooks," said Sebastian from the Class of 2007, who was among the audience

A Perfect Time to Unwind



Students and guests registering for the movie.

On 29 May 2010, UniSIM organised the second run of the "Unwind Saturday" movie event for UniSIM students. Arranged to coincide with the last day of UniSIM's semester examinations, this event was the perfect way for students to relax. And they did by being among the first in Singapore to watch "Prince of Persia – Sands of Time".

Second year Mathematics student, Shen Cui Ping, who attended and enjoyed the inaugural run last year said that she joined her friends from other faculties this time round. First-timer, Year 1 Chinese Language and Literature programme student, Yu Fang said, "I am impressed with the organisation of this event."

UniSIM's President Professor Cheong Hee Kiat who joined the students in watching the movie noted that the event provided an opportunity for students to mingle and interact with peers from other faculties, and urged them to stay bonded with UniSIM even upon graduation.



Ben Chong
Co-Founder, Wow Adventures Group
Class of 2009
BSc (Honours) in Information Technology
and Business

Sky – Diving 'Daredevil'

Daring. Enterprising. Innovative. These words come to mind upon meeting Ben Chong.

The bright-faced UniSIM alumnus, who graduated in 2009 with a BSc (Honours) in Information Technology and Business, partnered his buddy, Mr Ryan Quah, who is currently pursuing an undergraduate programme in UniSIM, to start Wow Adventures Group (www.wowadventuresgroup.com), a two-man travel outfit that arranges sky-diving trips and other extreme sports activities locally and in neighbouring countries.

An avid sky-diver since his National Service days, it has always been Ben's dream to organise sky-diving trips for enthusiasts and to carve out a career relating to sky-diving. However, his hectic schedule as a Marine Communications Engineer, as well as his academic commitments in UniSIM, prohibited him from pursuing his dream.

Things started to change with each passing semester. After every class, Ben realised that seeking an education in UniSIM was not simply for the sake of raising his academic profile to gain a stronger foothold in the marine engineering sector. He realised that the education in UniSIM had transformed his perspective and outlook on how work achievements and self-fulfilment could be attained without having to be employed in a mega-sized corporation.

Upon graduating from UniSIM and armed with newly-acquired business knowledge and a "never-say-die" attitude, Ben started exploring different business concepts and models with Ryan. Ben and Ryan got the business up and running after two to three months of intense preparatory work. Currently, the company organises an average of one to two sky-diving trips every month, alongside other trips that do not involve sky-diving activities. During the school holidays, there can be as many as three to four sky-diving trips. Ben and Ryan work from home after obtaining a Home Office Scheme licence from the Housing and Development Board in order to keep costs down.

The Newsletter Editorial Group member managed to catch up with Ben (at ground level, of course) for an exclusive interview. Let's hear more from him on what he has to say about his affiliation with UniSIM and how his experience in UniSIM geared him up for a high-flying career.

What attracted you to study in UniSIM in the first place?

Long before I enrolled in UniSIM, I heard that the institution offers an honours-based undergraduate programme in Information Technology and Business. Although I was pretty comfortable in my job as a Marine Communications Engineer, I was drawn to IT as it was an area which requires one to constantly upgrade himself to remain relevant. My pragmatic view was to continue to understand the development of IT in other industries so that I can move on if I wish to. I was also drawn to the business-related subjects in this IT degree programme which would allow me to undertake new responsibilities in other areas such as human resource management.

I visited UniSIM during one of its Open Houses and was impressed with the institute's flexible and modular programmes and how they were customised to accommodate the demanding schedules of working adults. I decided there and then that UniSIM was the university for me.

Describe the challenges you faced when you were in UniSIM.

(With a grin) I guess the first challenge that I faced, or should I say, that everyone faced, was to reach class on time by 7pm. As I was always on board merchant ships which were berthed at sea, it was not possible for me to get off the ship at 6pm and be back at the shipping port at 6.15pm. It was a mad rush every time I had to attend classes and dinner was always a packet of milk (laughing).

The other challenge that brought up love-hate memories was the tackling of the never-ending assignments. I hated it because I never had enough sleep or rest before every submission. I loved it because these were the things that brought me and my peers closer as we always met up on weekends to work on our assignments.

Tell us what are some of your fondest moments when studying in UniSIM.

Most of the assignments were required to be completed with a video presentation. When I was reading Statistics and Qualitative Methods, one of my project group members offered to let us use his office at MTV Asia to record the video presentation. Being in the entertainment industry, the office was furnished with interesting things like a pool table. We had so much fun that we forgot we were there to complete a project. I am still very much in contact with this particular group of project members.

What made you decide to pursue an entrepreneurial path in the tourism industry?

After intense encounters with concepts and case studies in the many business modules that I took, I realised that many things could be and needed to be viewed from different angles. UniSIM has instilled in me the well-rooted principle that there is often no right or wrong in the business landscape. It is not so much how a problem must be solved; it is how one approaches a problem and how that problem can be overcome using the resources available.

Apart from the tangible values, the decision to undertake a part-time degree course while juggling work and family commitments and completing the course is testament to UniSIM's belief that nothing is impossible, as long as we put our heart and soul into it. I will never forget what one of my business lecturers said, "**The biggest challenge in life is to challenge yourself.**" Given the strengths that UniSIM has instilled in me, I convinced myself that I have what it takes to be an entrepreneur, and I decided to take the plunge.

I must also say that I am lucky. My business partner, Ryan, is equally passionate towards sky-diving. Without him, I don't think the business can operate as well as it is now. Ryan plays a big part in the business's success, and I wish to thank him for everything.

Describe the challenges you faced in managing your business.

The initial stages of setting up a business and its infrastructure are always the hardest for any entrepreneur. Given the limited manpower, Ryan and I had to go about handling every single aspect from managing upfront capital outlay to sourcing suitable marketing channels. In addition, we had to handle all other administrative areas such as registering the business to ensure corporate governance, designing the corporate website and inking memorandums of understanding with airlines and other travel agencies.

The other big challenge is safety. Sky-diving, being an extreme sport, requires all safety precautions to be in place. We need to ensure that the instructors we engage are qualified sky-diving masters and that the parachutes and all other equipment are properly maintained. We also need to ensure that safety audits are done throughout the year.

Any future plans for your business, family and academic life?

We are looking at organising a wider range of extreme sports for Singaporeans. In fact, we are presently expanding our range of extreme sports-based team-building courses and holiday retreats for government agencies and private corporations.

As for my family life, I hope to settle down in five years time. In terms of furthering my studies, it would have to depend on the development of my business.



Participants moving up a jet plane to prepare for the jump in a sky-diving trip organised by Wow Adventures Group.

Exclusive to UniSIM Alumni

- 20% off the Tandem Skydiving package for the first 10 UniSIM alumni who sign up.
- 10% off the Tandem Skydiving package for all UniSIM alumni.

What to Take Note of When Making Your Travel Arrangements



UniSIM alumna, Ms Janet Yong, a member of the Newsletter Editorial Group, shares her unpleasant encounter with a local tour agency.

This is my personal encounter with a Singapore tour agency.

Sometime in early March this year, the local travel agency advertised a Western USA tour for \$1488 in the newspaper. As it was quite a good deal, I went down to the company to check if there were available travel dates in April. I was told that this price was applicable for the recent travel fair. If I wanted to travel to USA, they suggested going on May 19 at an additional \$200 per person.

On March 24, the same advertisement appeared in the papers again. I thought they were looking for more people to confirm a tour in April. I went down again to book and to pay a deposit for this April 14 trip. I was told that as it was still not confirmed, the trip might be cancelled and a refund would be reimbursed in four to six weeks time. Meanwhile, they once again recommended that I go on May 19 (a confirmed trip) at a higher price of \$1688. I rejected it as the date was not suitable for me.

The April 14 trip was subsequently cancelled and the agency continued to offer me the May 19 tour at a price of \$1688. Upon further probing, I discovered that eight passengers from the April 14 trip had been moved to the May 19 date.

Having booked and paid the deposit for travel on 14 April at the price of \$1488, their refusal to let us travel at the agreed date and price seemed suspicious to me. I hope that by sharing this, fellow alumnus will exercise greater caution when making travel plans.

Here are some travelling tips published on the Consumer Association of Singapore (CASE)'s website.

Tips for Consumers:

- 1) **Consider accredited travel companies.** Consumers may wish to consider companies that are accredited by CaseTrust. While this does not guarantee that they will have zero complaints, choosing an accredited company reduces the chances of problems, and accredited companies should have clear dispute resolution procedures.
- 2) **Put verbal agreements down in writing.** As it is not easy to enforce verbal agreements, it is prudent to put them in writing. Most travel companies can only confirm group tours two weeks before departure as such tours are subject to group size. So if a company promises that a particular group tour can be confirmed on the spot, get it down in writing.
- 3) **Consider taking up travel insurance.** It is prudent to take up travel insurance to protect oneself from risks, for example, cancellation of tours due to unforeseen circumstances such as flooding, H1N1, etc.
- 4) **Find out travel documents required.** Consumers are advised to find out more about the relevant travel documents required rather than rely solely on advice given by their service providers. Greater caution should be exercised if they have non Singaporeans travelling in the group.
- 5) **Get tips on travelling.** The National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS)'s website (www.natas.travel) provides useful information on what to look out for when considering a travel package. Members of NATAS are also committed to adhere to a standard refund policy.
- 6) **Know the methods of dispute resolutions.** Should a consumer have a dispute with a travel agency and is unable to resolve it, the consumer can seek CASE's assistance or file a claim at the Small Claims Tribunal.

Back to School?

UniSIM alumnus who are considering going back to school, will be glad to know that there are some subsidies available for you if you intend to pursue a second degree at UniSIM.

To qualify for the subsidy, you will need to possess either one of the below pre-requisites:

1. If you have not previously received a government-subsidised/sponsored undergraduate education, you will enjoy a 40 per cent government subsidy from the Ministry of Education if you pursue a second bachelor degree at UniSIM.
2. You will enjoy a 20 per cent tuition subsidy as an alumnus if you pursue a second bachelor degree at UniSIM (applicable to degree or masters qualification holders only).

Terms and conditions apply.



Hanabi Japanese Restaurant

- 10% off for ala-carte buffet menu (Daily)
- 20% off for ala-carte menu (Sunday to Thursday)
- Complimentary Desserts

Above offers not valid on Eve of Public Holiday and Public Holiday.

Valid till 26 September 2010.

559 Bukit Timah Road #01-03 King's Arade Singapore 269695
☎ 6465 5525



V-KOOL®

- Up to \$200 off all V-KOOL® Packages

Please refer to www.unisim.edu.sg/alumnibenefits for the price packages. Terms & Conditions apply.

Valid from 1 June 2010 to 31 August 2011.

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☎ 6776 5432

UniSIM shall not be held responsible for any changes in the promotion or quality of the products/services offered.

CONTEST • GIVEAWAY!

We are giving away 10 UniSIM jackets. Simply answer the two questions on the right, fill out the form, and mail it back to us! Please paste the cut-out portion on the back of an envelope.

Closing Date: 23 July 2010

Winners will be notified
by e-mail.

Mailing address:
SIM University
Alumni Relations Department
535A Clementi Road
Singapore 599490



Name: _____
 NRIC no: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Mobile: _____
 E-mail _____
 Address: _____
 Mailing _____
 Address: _____
 Jacket Size: S / M / L

1) Name the two alumni featured in this issue?

2) Tell us how we can improve the Alumni newsletter.

Congratulations to the Contest Winners of Issue 9!

Ang Kheng Boon SXXXX862Z
 Chiang Mui Kwee SXXXX158B
 Doo Lee Seah SXXXX192Z
 Gee Mun Chow SXXXX286C
 Huber Adrian Mark SXXXX927C

Lee Kway Liang SXXXX786C
 Leong Siu Marn SXXXX758D
 Ng Tian Hao SXXXX489B
 Tan Bee Geok Serene SXXXX387F
 Wong Lai Ying Marie SXXXX999H

Ride the DUCKtours

Venue	Boarding location is at Suntec City (Galleria)
Date	4 September 2010, Saturday
Time	2.15 pm – 3.00 pm (Registration) 3.00 pm – 4.00 pm (DUCKtour)
Fee (An UniSIM Alumnus can invite up to 3 guests including 1 toddler)	S\$20.00 nett/Adult S\$17.00 nett/Child (3-12 years old) Free for Toddler (below 3 years old) (Published Public Rate: S\$ 33.00/Adult, S\$17.00/Child, S\$2.00/Toddler)
Registration	Register at www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal (Seats availability is on a first-come, first-served basis)
Payment Method	ePayment



Capture UniSIM Moments Through your Lenses!

Participate in UniSIM's 5th Anniversary Photography Competition. Open from 21 June to 30 August 2010. Attractive prizes to be won! Log on to <http://5.unisim.edu.sg> for more information.

Many Ways to Update Your Contact Details!

1. SMS to 91136795 or email to alumni@unisim.edu.sg indicating your name, NRIC number and latest change in contact details.
2. Update your personal particulars through the Alumni Portal at www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal.
3. Call the Alumni Relations Dept at 6248 9215 on Monday to Friday, from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

//// //// New items on our eShop //// ////



Mini Photo Frame with USB Hub



Wireless Optical Mouse



Cap

Information is accurate at time of printing and is subject to change without prior notice.

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