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Blazing a trail to success

SEAN Wei Xiong Wen is currently pursuing a DPhil of Medical Sciences programme at the University of Oxford.

During the four years of his studies here, he hopes to work on single-cell genomic and transcriptomic analysis of blood-related cancers to further elucidate the pathogenesis of this disease.

This is made possible by the auspices of the Clarendon Fund and Oxford-Radcliffe Scholarship in conjunction with WIMM (Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine) Prize PhD Studentship.

For Sean, it all started with an interest in a career in forensic science or perhaps something along the same line, such as a medical laboratory technician – mostly behind-the-scenes job with investigative and scientific components.

This interest prompted Wei to enrol in the Biomedical Science programme at the International Medical University (IMU) in July 2010.

He relates his experience studying Biomedical Science at IMU: "The Biomedical Science programme at IMU offers a wide range of modules, from microbiology to medical jurisprudence, biochemistry to bioinformatics, and general chemistry to genetics, to name a few. Did I also mention that there was a forensic science module in there?"

Wei said the comprehensive set of modules was useful in helping him identify the areas of science that would be of most interest to him.

"Furthermore, a majority of the modules were often accompanied by several laboratory sessions spread across the relevant semesters," he said.

"These sessions provided insight into the practical aspects of the knowledge learnt from lectures.

"In addition to laboratory and classroom sessions, we had problem-based learning sessions consisting of a smaller number of students where we discussed specific topics in more detail and in an interactive manner under the guidance of a lecturer," he added.

After two and a half years of interesting lectures, gruelling

examinations and fun extra-curricular activities, Wei entered into his internships.

"My first placement was at Thomson Hospital (formerly known as Tropicana Medical Centre) and my second placement was at Cancer Research Malaysia (formerly known as Cancer Research Initiatives Foundation).

"The latter was where I subsequently spent four years as a research assistant investigating breast and ovarian cancers and bridging molecular biology (wet-lab) and bioinformatics (dry-lab) under the tutelage of Prof Teo Soo-Hwang and many bright members of the Breast Cancer Research Team," he said.

"In parallel, and under the auspices of the company, I undertook the Masters in Medical Sciences programme at University Malaya under the co-supervision of a consultant breast surgeon, Prof Nur Aishah Mohd Taib."

At IMU, the curriculum of the biomedical science programme is developed to meet international standards and is accepted by renowned international partner universities (University of Newcastle, Australia, University of Otago, New Zealand and University of Strathclyde, Scotland) for credit transfer into relevant programmes.

Graduates of these degrees can undertake postgraduate degrees in any related disciplines.

The next commencement dates for this programme are in July and September.

If you have pre-university qualifications and an interest in Biomedical Science, apply online now and join the university in your pursuit of a promising and rewarding career.

If you have just completed your SPM and do not have any pre-university qualification, consider enrolling in the one-year IMU Foundation in Science – the preferred foundation and direct route for entry into any of the University's local degree programmes.

■ For more details, refer to www.imu.edu.my or email start@imu.edu.my or call IMU at 03-2731 7272.