

Building character and confidence

FOR many students finishing secondary school, important questions begin to swirl: Which path should I take? Where do I begin?

The first step after leaving school is often the most important one, for it shapes the direction of everything that follows.

At Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT), the Centre for Pre-University Studies (CPUS) understands this pivotal phase well.

According to Jeswynna Roy, division head of quality assurance and senior lecturer at CPUS, the pre-university phase is more than just a bridge to higher studies; it's a transformative period of self-discovery.

"At this stage, students are discovering not just what they want to study, but who they are. That's why our focus at CPUS is to guide them through this self-discovery, not just academically, but personally," she shared.

Guidance through the panic

That sense of personal growth and guidance is echoed by Lu Jia Qi, who completed his Foundation in Computing and is currently pursuing his Bachelor of Software Engineering (Hons).

"During the second semester, my groupmates and I were working on a web development assignment, building a full website.

"Everything seemed fine until two days before the deadline, when we realised several parts weren't working. Panicking, we reached out to our lecturer for help.

"Even though she had already finished her classes for the day, she stayed back to guide us through every problem patiently. I genuinely appreciated that moment as I learnt that my lecturer's goals weren't just about the assignment, it was also about



For Lu, the support from lecturers transformed a moment of panic into a valuable learning experience.

showing care for her students' growth."

A safety net for students

Adding on to Lu's sharing, Jeswynna said, "We encourage students to learn independently, but we never leave them to figure things out alone.

"Each student is paired with an academic advisor who checks in regularly, offering guidance not only on studies but also on the emotional ups and downs that come with this phase.

"When students first enter CPUS, many struggle with time management or self-doubt. Some feel anxious about making the right academic or career choices.

"As lecturers, we recognise these early struggles, and we make it a point to provide clear guidance and regular feedback. We want them to know they're never alone in this journey, as at times, just knowing that someone cares can make a lot of difference. When students are happy and feel supported, they naturally do better."

Growth beyond the classroom

Another important aspect of

studying at TAR UMT is that students are encouraged to step out of their comfort zones through events, clubs, and social activities.

Lu fondly remembers one such event.

"One of the most memorable activities I joined was the rock-climbing session organised by the CPUS head, Teddy Nelson. It was such a refreshing break from studying, and Mr Teddy made sure everyone was safe and even helped us take photos, which have become precious memories for me.

"The best part was meeting new friends, including juniors from my course, and we've stayed close ever since. That event reminded me that some of the best memories in university come from moments outside the classroom."

On the whole, his first-hand experience completing Foundation studies at TAR UMT has helped him with his confidence and perspective.

"If I could choose again, Foundation studies at TAR UMT will still be my choice because I was challenged, supported, and inspired every step of the way."

Jeswynna concluded, "My advice to every new student is simple: stay open, stay curious, and embrace every opportunity. This is your time to grow, to make mistakes, and to discover who you're meant to be."

■ To find out more about the programmes at CPUS, join the Open Day on March 14-15 and March 28-29, from 10am to 5pm or visit www.tarc.edu.my.

Alternatively, contact CPUS at 011-1075 8537 or email them at cpus@tarc.edu.my.

Prospective students are encouraged to apply online at www.tarc.edu.my. Various financial aid and merit scholarships are available for qualified students.