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Alumni Sharing Session – Inspiring Work Experience and Covid-19 Pandemic Challenge

DECEMBER 29, 2020 - School of Computing in University of Technology, Malaysia(UTM) held an online talk about alumni sharing sessions for Technology and Information course students. The talk was conducted online via Webex about inspiring work experience and Covid-19 pandemic challenge. It was hosted by Dr Johanna Ahmad and there were three alumni as our speaker. The alumni were Tan Yong Keong which has experience as a Data Science Engineer about one and a half years, Qistina Batrisyia binti Azman Shah worked at TM as a Social Media Data Analyst for almost one year during internship, Mohamad Zamarul Akmal bin Mohd Hussin working as a Data Engineer and all of them are successful in their career. They delivered their talk by answering questions asked by Dr Johanna Ahmad and after the talk, a Q&A session was held for juniors to ask questions to the seniors.

This sharing session initiated by lecturers specially for this Technology and Information subject are meant for students to have exposure on what are the chances and challenges to secure a job in this pandemic. Covid-19 pandemic really affected us in many ways and most people lost their jobs due to the unstable economy and it is not easy to get a job. From this talk, they shared with students on the tips on

getting employed “Based on my experience, how I manage to secure my job



Figure 1: Poster Alumni Sharing Session

are by being proactive during my internship time.” said Muhammad Zamarul Akmal bin Mohd Hussin. He said that he also gave out more opinions and ideas until his supervisor began to notice him. This is a very good quality that students should apply starting from now on to ensure that in the future they know how to express themselves. Some students tend to be shy. By the end of this sharing session, students should be able to get all the inputs given by alumni on their experiences and apply it to become a high-quality student that can easily secure a job later.

During the webinar, a few important aspects and questions were discussed by the alumni regarding work experience for future graduates. The first question asked was how can a graduate secure a job right after graduation. Mr Tan Yong Keong said that it is important to join competitions or events during university to improve our soft and hard skills. Both Mr Zamarul and Ms Qistina said to be more proactive during internship and have a good relationship with your supervisors.

Next, the alumni discussed how students can increase their chance to get hired during this pandemic. During this pandemic, we should take advantage of

what resources are available now such as free online courses. We should try to polish our technical skills during this time. It is also important to strengthen our soft skills such as communication and team work skills. Furthermore, the alumnis discussed how to gain confidence in the workplace. Based on the speakers, confidence is something that can be learned. Especially in university, there are lots of opportunities for students to gain confidence such as presenting in class, debate and so on. Next, the speakers discussed the differences between study life and work life. The alumnis explained based on different aspects. During study life, there is a lot of free time while in the workplace, there's less free time as the holidays you get are based on public holidays. Next, we need to be more responsible and disciplined in the workplace as we are working for others.

Then the alumnis answered some of the questions from the audience. One of the questions answered is how to stay motivated on a daily basis. The alumnis shared that we need to love our job and have a good mindset. Then, the session was then ended by answering some more questions on the salary, hobbies and CGPA needed. The speaker thanked the alumnis for sharing their experience with the audience.

The speech delivered by the three alumni, Tan Yong Keong, Qistina Batrisyia binti Azman Shah and Mohamad Zamarul Akmal bin Mohd Hussin that covers mostly everything were very helpful for students in every aspect. The talk made us students realize that it is very important to know the skills to secure a job especially during this economic downturn due to the pandemic. The informative talk thus gave the students an idea on how work life looks like which is totally different from what we are doing

now. All in all, this talk gave a lot of information and knowledge which could be beneficial for us now and in the future.

“This session has really changed my perspective on securing a job. I always thought that excellent results are good enough to secure a job, but they prove me wrong. Balancing between studies and soft skills are so important. You need to know how to communicate, how to express your ideas and give more efforts. Great academic results won't be able to secure you a job but excellent results with high soft skills will. In addition, this sharing session really boosted my eagerness to learn and participate in many competitions to gain more knowledge and skills. But I also wish that this sharing session has more speakers because I like to know more about others' experiences and what they do after they graduate. All in all, this talk has given me so much information and gained my spirit in learning more skills and being more active in class. Not just that, it also teaches me to improve my communication skills.” said Amirah Raihanah one of the students who attended the session.

“This alumni sharing session had impacted me positively to improve myself in various aspects and gave me a clearer vision to be successful in life. After attending this talk, I learned that experience is not something that could be fabricated in a day, instead it needs to be built up throughout the years by learning both hard and soft skills and participating in various competitions. Previously, I always thought that having a CGPA of 4.0 was enough for me to obtain my dream job. Unfortunately, it was the absolute opposite, having a good result is just a part of

being selected for the interview. In order to obtain my dream job, I would need to furnish myself with excellent hard skills management skills. However, I hope this talk could also include step-by-step ways on how to prepare for an interview and problems that they faced in work and how they overcame those problems. Furthermore, the alumni have motivated me to explore and do more practices in various programming languages by using leet code and exposing myself by involving in competitions. Besides, one of the alumni also taught me that it is important to implement the concept learnt in lecture classes to the field of work. In short, I enjoyed this talk and I hope to be as successful as them in the future.” said Chloe Racquelmae Kennedy from School of Computing.

“After hearing the talk, I realized that we need to prepare as much as possible starting from now in order to secure a job in the future since we live in a very competitive era. In my opinion, this sharing session with the alumni is truly beneficial for me as a student since I have become much more motivated as I am very inspired by all of the

such as programming skills and admirable soft skills like communication, critical thinking and

alumni. I really enjoyed every seconds of this session since the content of this talk is very new to me and I really loved how genuinely those alumni share their experiences throughout the talk. However, the time allocated for the talk was only an hour and I wish the organizer could provide more time for this talk as they did not cover much about the pandemic.” said Radin Dafina, one of the Data Engineering students.

“In my opinion, the sharing session was very well prepared. I would say the weakness of this session was that it did not cover much on how the pandemic affected the employment of students. Besides that, it helped me to understand how the workplace will be in the future when I graduate. It also helped me to realize what skills I need to work on in order to secure a job in the future. I will do my best to prepare myself for the future. In conclusion I really learned a lot from this session and also enjoyed it very much.” said by Rasmin Kaur Sandhu after hearing the talk.