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Alumni Sharing Session: Inspiring Work experience and Covid-19 Pandemic Challenge

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UTM Alumni Sharing Session: Inspiring Work experience and Covid 19 Pandemic Challenge

By Teh Jing Ling, S M Tashdid Hassan, M D Shafiur Rahman

DECEMBER 29, 2020 – UTM had held a sharing session "Inspiring Work experience and Covid 19 Pandemic Challenge" at 10 a.m with three alumnae through the online platform, Webex. This sharing session had involved all Technology and Information Systems students to attend. The purpose of this session was to help the student to get more information about their future jobs through sharing work experience and the suggestions to solve their problems faced during the study life by alumnae.

Dr. Johanna Ahmad, senior lecturer of UTM (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia) as the host of this session. This session had invited three alumnae which were Tan Yong Keong, Qistina Batrisyia Binti Azman Shah and Mohamad Zamarul Akmal bin Mohd Hussin. Tan Yong Keong, who graduated with Bachelor of Software Engineering in 2019, currently worked as Data Science Engineer in Micron Semiconductor Asia Operations Pte Ltd for one and a half years. Qistina Batrisyia Binti Azman Shah and Mohamad Zamarul Akmal bin Mohd Hussin both were graduated with Bachelor of Data Engineering in 2020. Qistina currently worked as Data Analyst for one year in TM ONE and Zamarul currently worked as Data Engineer in a new company which is PPG Coating(M) Sdn. Bhd.

How to manage to secure your job?

Yong Keong shared that he participated in many competitions and also gained some achievements during his university life. Through the competition, he also gained some professional skills and presentation skills get improved. He also did some freelance jobs which helped him to gain more technical skills. During the competition, he got an interview chance from his internship company, ViTrox Corporation Berhad and was awarded in Chancellor's Award at 63th Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Convocation at the same time. He said that a nice resume with high technical and soft skills had a higher chance to get a job easily. He also shared that the common questions asked by the interviewer to fresh graduates. During his interview, he had asked about his final project and some sub-topics like competition and hobby. His job currently was gathering a lot of data and optimized the market demand based on the current factory tools.

Zamarul said that he was getting an offer to become a permanent staff in his industrial training company which was his internship company. It can say that he got this offer by paying proactive and he tried to explore himself by giving some ideas or opinions. During his internship, he proposed to create a monitoring dashboard for the company's data link. This is because the company using a big data company environment and there will have a lot of data coming in and out every day and there were using manual monitoring which was Talend. Thus, he created a system that could monitor all jobs at once by using a single click which was a support dashboard. This proposal became his FYP and he came under the attention of his supervisor. After the internship was over, his supervisor still tried to absorb him as a permanent staff member and finally, he got the job.

Qistina had almost the same experience with Zamarul. During her internship, she joined the real-life project in her internship company which helped her gained the attention of her supervisor and manager. They asked her to join TM ONE to further the project. Currently, she is working on the same project since her internship. She gathered social media data and interpreted that information into a dashboard for their clients which was used to improve their branding. She added that it was mostly on the marketing side.

How do you learn the programming languages that new to you?

"Not learn the new language but learning the concept in one language that you can spray all similar concepts to other languages." Yong Keong said.

Any advice or tips about the skills that need to have?

Qistina had given some tips to students about the need to have great skills in Microsoft Excel, Python and SQL. When giving a task and did not how to do it, you should find the solution or ask your supervisor or people who know it and not just do nothing. She advised students to be more proactive in everything that you learned, no limited yourself and contributed to every group work.

Zamarul encouraged students to learn a new technical skill and not just the fundamental knowledge in university during the pandemic. For example, taking free courses like code camp and edx and joining training programs like datastar. He also advised students to improve soft skills, good communication skills and teamwork skills.

How to improve programming skills? How to love programming?

"Practice makes perfect." Yong Keong said. He suggested students do practice such as using leet code which was a website that provided free coding dan programming tests and exercises. He also shared that he hoped to create something new app through coding that can contribute to the real world and help the community.

How to gain confidence?

Yong Keong said that he participated in many competitions and showed a high level of confidence through sharing project ideas. Through sharing ideas, he could gain the confidence of speaking with others. Zamarul partook that he joined a lot of programs during university and volunteered to present the ideas in front of the clients. Qistina also said that she also did a lot of programs and suggested students not to be shy and spoke more during the study life.

What is the difference between study life and career life? Which one did you love more?

Zamarul said that he enjoyed university life more because he had a lot of free time during semester break where he had much time to sleep and take rest or could do some part-time jobs. However, there is no free time except lunch time and weekends during working life. Every week had to do the same thing repeated for five days. He also added that there are a lot of responsibilities in work life. When making a mistake in student life, it could just affect the particular subject but it will affect future career and had difficulty getting a new job. He recommended students to be discipline by minimizing making mistakes even during class. If there is any doubt, students should refer to the lecturer or senior.

How is your CGPA?

This question was asked by a student and many students were scared that CGPA will affect their future careers. Dr. Johanna Ahmad had shared her cases. She said that she asked to write coding during the interview in the private sector. However, the government agency just looked at her CGPA only.

Qistina also agreed with Dr, Johanna Ahamad because the private sector was not looked at CGPA that much. They more consider that you can qualify for the job and have the right attitude. She said that her CGPA was not that good but above 3.0.

Zamarul said that if his previous company look at his CGPA, he would not work at that company. This is because there are 8 candidates during his internship but he was the only one be selected even though have another two candidates who had a high CGPA compare to him. He also said that he learned new skills in the online course and attached it to his resume. He thought that CGPA is not a big deal but needed to make sure above 3.0.

Yong Keong said CGPA was one of the criteria that the company filter out many people so he suggested students should maintain it at a certain level or minimum level of CGPA. He shared that his CGPA was 3.9. Compare to high CGPA, he said that learned more extra skills which were non-academic stuff would have a high chance to be selected as permanent staff.

Will a student be hated for losing a competition?

This question was asked by a student that worry about when losing a competition would be hated by anyone. Yong Keong shared that there were always have winners and losers in a competition. University would not tend to hate a student who lost in a competition. Yong Keong replied and said that he won many competitions as well as lost many. He said that we are winning by just attending the competition and that is getting new skills, exposing to a new environment and also learning from the winners in other words we win the experiences. Qistina also said that the most important things were experience and teamwork. The management also said that we were getting teamwork skills from the new environment.

How to stay motivated on daily basis?

"Love the jobs, love what you do, that's why keep you motivate to do better." Qistina said. Yong Keong said he stayed motivated himself to make a mindset to create somethings that contribute to the world. Zamarul said that he was started working with a new employee so it is a big chance for him to develop a new skill. He stayed motivated to learned new things every day in a big project that he was involved in.

How you join the competition? It is supported by UTM to pay the fee or yourself?

Yong Keong said that half of the competition was supported by UTM and half of them are not. He said to join a competition, students need to get approved by the supervisor to get the resources that were needed to access or a people that had the proper position that can justify the resources that needed by you for competition.

This sharing session had discussed the working experience and the challenge during the pandemic by the host, alumna and students. Alumna had shared their experience with the students that benefit to student's future. They mentioned that CGPA is not a big deal but it must achieve the minimum requirement which is 3.0. The most important were students should enhance themselves in technical skills, soft skills, communication skills and teamwork.

By:



Teh Jing Ling



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Reflection

Teh Jing Ling:

This sharing session had provided us many information and the challenges that we may be faced in the future. Alumna had share d their inspiring working experiences and study life with us. The weakness of the talk is one of the alumni was not attended the sharing session. I feel a little bit of pity because I hoped to hear more inspiring experiences from different alumnae. From this session, I learned that I should not just focus on academic study and CGPA only. I should learn more extra skills by attending free online courses to improve my knowledge and soft skills. I also need to participate in more programs to improve my communication and presentation skills. I will motivate myself to learn more new skills every day. Besides that, I should do something to contribute to society and help the people that needed my help through various ways such as creating a new program or app. I am glad that my faculty had held this sharing session for us.

S M Tashdid Hassan

The webinar was good and helpful. For me I got extra motivation to learn new skills and to be more proactive. I learned that CGPA is important for a job but not more than Extra curriculum skills and soft skills. I also learned that you need to have ideas to get noticed by your manager. I also learned that Entering a competition for winning is not that important. The main purpose is to gain extra knowledge and experience. In the world of business companies look for people with good technical skills, especially in the private sector. So, I need to gain more technical skills as well to get a good job. The three guests did a very good job of explaining all of their situations and answered questions accordingly it was the strength of the talk. The talk was kind of slow. It started 11 minutes after everyone had entered the room and many students including myself had to class so we could not see it to the end. If it only started earlier we might have gotten more information regarding Jobs and internships. That is the weakness of the talk in my opinion.

M D Shafiur Rahman

The Alumni sharing session was very inspiring. Dr. Johanna and the speakers were very friendly and cooperative but because of some internet issue, the 4th speaker couldn't join. We got to learn a lot about real-life experiences from the seniors. They shared the difference between student life and work life. We learned about the experiences they had during their first semester at University. We got to know how to be more productive and information about getting a good job in our upcoming future and advice for career life. All in all, it was a great experience learning from the honorable alumni and getting to know them and their life after university.