

# Promoting soft skills and leadership among youths



(From left) Wan Suriyani, Muhammad Ariff and Syafiah Najihah.

CAREERS in Information Technology (IT) and its related fields are often considered less glamorous.

Software engineers, network administrators and computer technicians (to name a few) are often associated with their unkempt appearance, geeky glasses and awkward people skills.

IT students are often portrayed as the whizz kids with no time for any co-curricular or leisure activities, let alone joining any sports or leadership programmes.

Walk into Universiti Kuala Lumpur's Malaysian Institute of Information Technology (UniKL MIIT) and you will be surprised to meet a bunch of lively, energetic and spirited students enrolling in the Foundation in Computer Technology (FiCT) programme offered by the institute.

FiCT aims to provide a fast-track opportunity for those who wish to pursue a bachelor's degree in Information Technology.

Thus, it is hardly surprising to see close to 500 students enrolling into the one-year programme ever since it was introduced in November 2018.

"Who could resist the opportunity of being directly absorbed into any of the degree programmes offered by UniKL after just a year of study," says UniKL MIIT's Foundation Centre head Wan Suriyani Che Wan Ahmad.

FiCT is a combination of academic skills and content-specific modules, providing an introductory ground to computer technology, as well as developing one's critical thinking, academic literacy and communication skills.

"Nevertheless, excellent technical skills can only take you to a certain extent. Communication skills and leadership qualities are an added value. Hence, we encourage our students to take part in the various activities conducted by the university," adds Wan Suriyani.

Muhammad Ariff Idham Onn, an FiCT Batch 5 student, finds satisfaction in joining the many activities offered by the university, including being an active member of the recently established Sekretariat Rakan Muda of UniKL MIIT.

On top of his involvement in a series of leadership and team-building programmes organised by the club, Muhammad Ariff was also selected to participate in the Malaysian Association of

Youth Clubs National Youth Council conference back in 2022, together with nine other UniKL MIIT students.

"It was certainly an invaluable experience. I was truly honoured as I got to meet and mingle with student leaders from other academic institutions and speak on topics and issues related to youths!" says Muhammad Ariff.

Muhammad Ariff is also a registered student buddy for the UniKL MIIT Brand ME, a personal development programme to assist one in identifying their skills and talents.

His involvement in this particular project has taken him to various secondary schools, conducting leadership programmes for the young ones and assisting in mock meetings and resume writing sessions, especially for students in Form 4 and 5.

He also gets to share his experience of being a varsity student and eliminates the misconception of being a geeky IT student.

Muhammad Ariff is currently completing his FiCT programme and intends to major in Software Engineering for his bachelor's degree at UniKL MIIT.

Syafiah Najihah Mohd Nasir, who hails from a religious high school in Shah Alam, proves that she is more than just a pretty face.

Being an avid fan of Malay martial arts, Syafiah has participated in various tournaments and events related to the Silat Seni Gayong. It is hardly surprising to see her being elected as the secretary of UniKL MIIT Silat Seni Gayong club.

"I chose silat for so many reasons. Other than improving one's physical fitness, strength, flexibility and coordination, silat helps me to improve my confidence and discipline levels," she says.

"I get to meet new friends who share the same interest with me at training and the tournaments I've attended. Since I have been involved in this kind of martial arts for quite some time, I get to help the others who just joined the club."

Syafiah's involvement in silat has also assisted her greatly in coping with the demands of FiCT programme.

"Indeed, silat has taught me to be a disciplined and organised person, two crucial traits that one needs in order to succeed, especially in their studies," she said.

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