

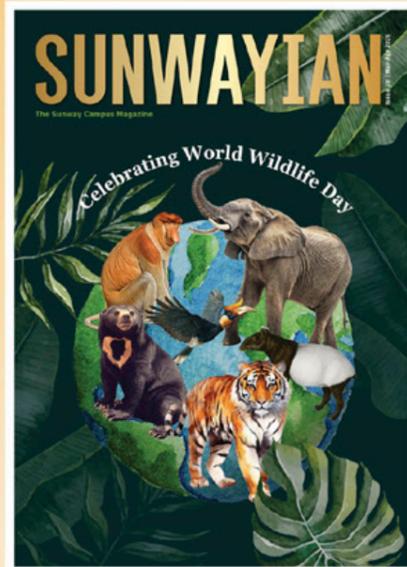
SUNWAYIAN

The Sunway Campus Magazine

Issue 20 | Mar-Apr 2026

Celebrating World Wildlife Day





CONCEPT & DESIGN

Branding & Corporate Communications

EDITORIAL TEAM

Ang Hui Yen
Caryn Lee
Kylie Chow

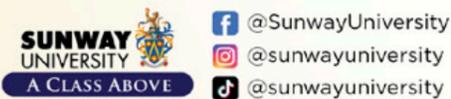
ADVISORS

Joanne Teo
Patrick McVeigh

ADDRESS

Sunway University
No. 5, Jalan Universiti, Bandar Sunway,
47500 Selangor Darul Ehsan

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HELLO SUNWAYIANS

Welcome on board, fellow explorers, to the 20th issue of the Sunway campus magazine.

This edition of the Sunwayian invites you on a safari of a different kind, one that journeys through compassion, communities, and conservation. As with any wild adventure, every stop brings new stories, new voices, and a chance to see things a little differently.

We begin at base camp, seeking campus updates and milestones at the #MostHappeningCampus to set the terrain for the quest ahead.

As we move further along the trail, we pause to honour long-standing partnership between Sunway University and Lancaster University, because it is proof that the strongest ecosystems are built on balance, trust, and time.

So, explorers, eyes up. You may just spot Malaysia's native wildlife, the incredible species that call our country home. A closer look reminds us that conservation begins with awareness, starting right here at our #CampusWithAConscience. After all, every small act of empathy and sustainability helps us move forward.

Along the way, you will also see creative works by our Sunway College A-Level

student Khairina Aliya and MUFY student Shanice Lee, emerging like hidden gems along the safari trail and showcasing the creativity, talent, and diversity of our student community.

Take a moment to paws and meet the first foreign minister featured in Leaders' Log, Hon Stephen Dawson MLC of Western Australia, as he shares his experiences in Malaysia and offers a global perspective on leadership, inspiring the next generation and strengthening nation-to-nation ties.

Toward the final stretch, we shine a light on stars within our community, the proud valedictorians of the Class of 2026 convocation, who are celebrating excellence, grit, and the adventure well-travelled. Let us congratulate these brilliant individuals as they take their next steps beyond the campus.

As with any great safari, the journey matters as much as the destination. The world is a shared habitat, and the footprints we leave along the way truly matter.

So take your time to wander through these pages. May this expedition help you lionize your dreams, giraffe your perspective, and see your place in the wild world a little more clearly.



Sunway University Advances Global Sustainability

Sunway University marks a historic double triumph, crowned the top private university in Malaysia and ranked #124 among the World's Most Sustainable Universities in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings 2025. Rising an impressive 21 places from its previous standing, this achievement reaffirms Sunway's global leadership in sustainability and planetary health.



Sunway TES College JB Hosts Interspersary Badminton Tournament

The Sunway TES Interspersary Badminton Tournament brought together four universities, Sunway TES College Johor Bahru (JB), Raffles University, the University of Reading, and the University of Southampton, for Singles, Doubles, and Mixed Doubles matches. The event showcased strong sportsmanship while fostering inter-university camaraderie and an engaging student experience.



First Day Feels at SIS Iskandar Puteri

New faces, new spaces, and the start of an exciting journey ahead for many new students at Sunway International Schools (SIS) Iskandar Puteri's orientation day. Welcome to the SIS family!

CAMPUS UPDATES



Churen Li Becomes Sunway University's Artist-in-Residence

Sunway University is excited to announce that Churen Li, an internationally celebrated pianist and interdisciplinary artist, joins Sunway University as our Artist-in-Residence for 2026. Praised for her artistry that bridges classical and contemporary worlds, Churen has performed globally, from opening the Singapore Symphony Orchestra's season to headlining Singapore's National Day Parade.



Sunway College Records High Achievements in Examinations

Sunway College delivered outstanding results in the Cambridge Assessment International Education and Western Australia Certificate of Education examinations. In the November 2025 examinations, Sunway College achieved a 100% pass rate for Cambridge A-Levels, with 51.8% of candidates attaining straight As, while 28% of AUSMAT students scored an ATAR of 90 and above, placing them among the top 10% globally.



SIS Iskandar Puteri Learns with Heart, Serves with Purpose

Grade 6 and 7 students from SIS Iskandar Puteri turned compassion into action through their Service as Action excursions where they connected with communities through hands-on engagement and fundraising. It was a powerful reminder that service rooted in empathy and teamwork can create lasting impact.



Sunway University Welcomes Russian University of Economics

The School of Education hosted a delegation from the Russian University of Economics (Tashkent branch) at Sunway University. The visit provided a valuable opportunity for open discussions and idea sharing, with both sides expressing strong interest in exploring future partnerships and areas of collaboration.



Sunway College Kicks Off the New Year with Orientation

Sunway College's Pre-university programmes, Sunway Diploma Studies, and Sunway TES kicked off the new year with orientation week, welcoming new students eager to begin the next chapter of their educational journey. A variety of fun activities, ice-breaking sessions, and campus tours were organised to help students settle in.



Be the Spark of Someone's Tomorrow with SIS KL

The student-led Hope Outreach Project Club from SIS Kuala Lumpur raised funds for the children of Rumah Hope in Petaling Jaya. The students got to spend meaningful time with the children through fun activities, fostering empathy, kindness, and a spirit of giving back to the community.

Sunway University and Lancaster University Celebrate 20 Years of Partnership

Sunway University and Lancaster University, UK, mark 20 years of a landmark partnership that has redefined cross-border higher education. Established in 2006, the collaboration has grown into one of the world's leading transnational education partnerships, with students across 45 programmes and a strong, expanding research profile.

Over two decades, the partnership has evolved into a globally recognised model of academic excellence, quality assurance, and international mobility by expanding access to world-class UK education in Malaysia, strengthening graduate employability, enabling faculty collaboration, and delivering consistently strong outcomes across teaching, learning, and student experience.

In response to rapid national demographic shifts, evolving geopolitical realities, and accelerating technological innovation, the institutions jointly developed the Lancaster-Sunway Partnership Co-Strategy 2024-2030. The Co-Strategy focuses on sustainable growth, including scaling student enrolment, expanding programme offerings, strengthening mobility pathways, and optimising joint operations, while maintaining academic quality and global competitiveness. It also places strong emphasis on increasing academic, social, and environmental impact, through collaborative research, innovation initiatives, and engagement with industry, communities, and policymakers.

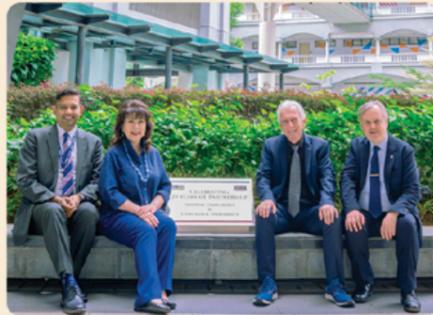
As a mission-driven fifth-generation university, Sunway University is committed not only to

educating future leaders, but also to generating positive societal and environmental outcomes. Professor Sibrandes Poppema, President and Vice-Chancellor of Sunway University, said, "Our partnership with Lancaster University demonstrates what can be achieved when two institutions are united by shared values, long-term vision, and a commitment to excellence. The 2024-2030 Co-Strategy signals our shared ambition to deepen academic collaboration, elevate global standing, and translate knowledge into solutions that benefit communities across borders."

Professor Simon Guy, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global) of Lancaster University, added, "Over twenty years, the Lancaster-Sunway partnership has been on a fast-rising trajectory, starting with a pioneer graduating cohort of 18 and growing to more than 15,000 students graduates to date. We are proud of our growth but aspire now to co-create a values-driven model of Transnational Education that embraces sustainability, inspires entrepreneurial thinking, engages new

technologies, and enables students to follow their own lifelong learning pathways across our global campus network. We call this TNE 5.0, and Lancaster-Sunway are leading the way."

Throughout the anniversary year, joint activities will celebrate the partnership's impact, as both universities reaffirm their commitment to building on two decades of trust and positioning the Sunway-Lancaster partnership as a global benchmark for impactful, sustainable, and future-ready transnational education.



AVENUE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Innovation Recognition for SCAI Students

Students from the School of Computing and Artificial Intelligence (SCAI) achieved an outstanding milestone by securing the Merit Award at the 2025 Malaysian Inventor and Innovator Convention. The team was recognised for their "AI-Driven Intelligent Recommendation & AI+VR Shopping Experience for MUJI Mobile Application" project, which integrates F&B and retail concepts and uses SAS analytics to enhance customer experience through A/B perception studies.



Sunway Business School Book Prize Award

Sunway Business School hosted the Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics Book Prize Award 2025, recognising students for their strong commitment and academic excellence in accounting, finance and economics. The event also celebrated their hard work, perseverance and potential as they progress in their academic and professional journeys.



SUF Yap Qi Yi Wins Bronze in SEA Games

Sunway University Foundation student Yap Qi Yi represented Malaysia and secured a bronze medal in the Triathlon Mixed Relay at the SEA Games Thailand. He is now actively preparing for the Asian Beach Games and SUKMA, focusing on the cycling individual time trial event as part of his continued development as an endurance athlete.



VU @ Sunway Tham Hui Zhong Aces National Challenges

Tham Hui Zhong from Victoria University @ Sunway emerged as Champion of the Sunway Springboard Challenge, winning an RM1,200 Unit Trust Fund prize. He later represented the university at the Nationwide Financial Gameboard Challenge, securing 1st runner-up and an additional RM2,000 prize.



SIS Iskandar Puteri Golden Sisters Sweep Medals

Ailin and Zere Kanatova from Sunway International Schools (SIS) Iskandar Puteri represented Johor at the international Bambi Games in Bangkok and emerged as champions in all four gymnastics disciplines; bars, beam, floor & vault. Their talent and dedication proved victorious as they keep soaring.



National Pride from SIS KL

Biggest congratulations to Saif Nordin from SIS Kuala Lumpur (KL) for bringing home the Silver Medal (Men's Foil Team) at the 33rd SEA Games in Bangkok, followed by a Bronze Medal (Men's Foil Individual) at the National Fencing Championships 2025 (Junior). His dedication and competitive spirit continue to inspire the SIS community and make Malaysians proud.



CELEBRATING WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

In conjunction with World Wildlife Day, observed annually on 3 March, let us take a closer look at the wildlife that is uniquely native to Malaysia. From the lush rainforests of Borneo to the cool montane forests of the peninsula, these animals and plants showcase the incredible diversity and richness of Malaysia's natural heritage. Each species is a reminder of the beauty and wonder of our forests, and you can try spotting some of them at the Brain Forest 🐾



Proboscis Monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*)

Endemic to Borneo, this monkey can be recognised by its oversized nose, which can grow even larger in dominant males. Living in mangroves, riverbanks and coastal forests, these monkeys are excellent swimmers and have partially webbed hands and feet. When danger approaches, they leap dramatically from trees into rivers, escaping predators with impressive splashes.

Malayan Tapir (*Tapirus Indicus*)

Malaysia's largest land mammal, the Malayan tapir is famous for its black-and-white "panda" colouring. Found in the rainforests of Peninsular Malaysia, as well as parts of Thailand and Sumatra, this gentle, nocturnal herbivore is a master of camouflage, using its contrasting colours to disappear among the forest shadows. It is also a skilled swimmer and an important seed disperser in the rainforest.

Malayan Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*)

The world's smallest bear, the Malayan sun bear is named after the golden, sun-shaped patch on its chest. A skilled tree climber with long claws and an extra-long tongue, it loves honey and insects, earning it the nickname "honey bear." Despite its teddy-bear looks, it is a vital rainforest resident that helps keep insect populations in check.

Fun fact: Sunway's own mascots, Samson and Sophia, are inspired by this adorable and energetic bear.



Bornean Pygmy Elephant (*Elephas maxlmus borneensis*)

Native to Sabah, this is the smallest subspecies of Asian elephant, and arguably the cutest. With rounder faces, larger ears and longer tails, Bornean pygmy elephants are known for their gentle nature and strong family bonds. They are also excellent swimmers and can often be spotted crossing rivers in calm, coordinated groups like a floating parade.

Ridleyandra chuana

A rare gem of Malaysia's montane forests, *Ridleyandra chuana* is a tiny, shade-loving plant that grows on mossy rocks. Its delicate white flowers, streaked with maroon, bloom quietly but beautifully, making it one of the country's most unique and endangered flora.



Rafflesia (*Rafflesia keithii*, *Rafflesia cantleyi*)

Malaysia is home to several species of the world's largest flower, which can grow over one metre wide. Nicknamed the "corpse flower" for its strong smell of decaying flesh, the Rafflesia uses this scent to attract flies for pollination. It has no leaves, roots or stems of its own and lives as a parasite inside vines, making its sudden, spectacular bloom even more extraordinary.



Rhinoceros Hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*)

One of Malaysia's most iconic birds, the Rhinoceros Hornbill is instantly known for its large, upward-curving casque that resembles a rhinoceros horn. Native to the rainforests of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, this striking bird is also the state bird of Sarawak. Known for its powerful wingbeats and loud calls, it plays an important role in the ecosystem by dispersing seeds across the forest, earning its reputation as a true guardian of the jungle.

The Sunway Desa Mentari Back2School 2026 initiative, led by Sunway University with support from the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF), marks the third year of a long-term effort to uplift underserved urban communities through education-driven social transformation.

Back2School is part of the Sunway Desa Mentari Community Development Programme—a long-term, multidisciplinary effort designed to address the complex challenges faced by Desa Mentari community through four key areas: education and training, research and development, community transformation initiatives and community observatory cohort study.

This year, 1,200 schoolgoing children from Desa Mentari received school uniforms, shoes, socks, and stationery sets, ensuring they begin the academic year with confidence, dignity, and the necessary tools to learn.



Campus With A Conscience Inspiring Change



As a MissionDriven 5th Generation University, Sunway University addresses real societal challenges through its Campus with a Conscience philosophy, integrating education, research, student engagement and community partnerships to co-create sustainable solutions, beyond one-off aid.

"Sunway University is focused on nurturing a culture of giving back to society and creating meaningful, long-lasting impact within our communities. Initiatives such as Back2School reflect our responsibility to collaborate on social development and nation building, particularly in communities facing persistent structural challenges," said Professor Sibrandes Poppema, President and Vice-Chancellor of Sunway University.

Back2School is anchored in a vision to empower more youths from Desa Mentari to complete primary and secondary education, attain at least SPM-level qualifications, and, over the next 10 to 15 years, significantly increase tertiary and university enrolment from the community.



"Back2School is more than a yearly distribution of school supplies - it is one of the first building blocks in a long-term journey with the Desa Mentari community," said Professor Mahendhiran Sanggaran Nair, Chair of the Sunway Desa Mentari Community Development Programme. "Our hope is that by walking alongside parents, community leaders and young people, we will see more children not only stay in school and complete their formal education, but eventually step into universities and return as future leaders of their own community."

This sustained approach reflects the belief that education is the most powerful lever to break the cycle of urban poverty, enabling generational upliftment and long-term socioeconomic mobility.

I'm just a girl, can I make it anymore obvious?

Khairina Aliya binti Khairul Annuar, Sunway College A-Level

I'm just a girl.

Which apparently is a lot. At least, that's what people tell me — depending on who's talking.

Being a girl comes with invisible instructions. Speak up, but not too loudly. Care, but don't care too much. Be confident, but stay polite. Somehow, you're always being watched, measured, judged — in moments so small you wonder why they even matter.

Advice comes in fragments. "Smile more." "Don't smile too much." "Stand out." "Blend in." "Be yourself —but not too much." You notice patterns, contradictions, rules no one wrote down. And then you break them anyway. Quietly. Sometimes without realising it. Because everything is right and somehow wrong.

People see what they want to see. Keep quiet, and you're "shy," "standoffish," or "trying too hard to fit in." Speak up, and you're "bossy," "angry," or "confrontational." Make one small choice, and someone has an opinion. Study too much? Nerd. Not studying? Tardy and ungrateful. There is no universal standard — just endless tests, tiny and absurd.

Pop culture doesn't make it easier. Remember those classic teen movie moments? The girl who studies hard, aced the test, and still gets labeled "too much" or "not enough"? Britney Spears owning the stage while the world whispers about her outfit. Avril Lavigne skipping around in her tank top and tie, unapologetically herself. Cady Herron navigating cliques, school rules, and gossip with grace under pressure. Lizzie McGuire trying to figure out how to be herself without losing her mind. All of it familiar, all of it chaotic, and somehow all of it inspiring.

And then there's the fun little world of girl-on-girl scrutiny. Internalised misogyny pops up everywhere: compliments that sting, advice that feels like judgment, whispers that echo louder than anyone expects. Bodies become a battlefield too — too skinny, too curvy, too tall, too short. Wear the wrong shoes, eat too much, post the wrong photo — and suddenly you're a cautionary tale.

I know I'm not perfect. I overthink lines, trip at the worst possible moment, forget small things I promised. But I'm trying. Not trying to impress anyone. Not trying to follow invisible rules. Just trying to keep track of myself, enjoy the chaos, and maybe learn a thing or two along the way. And honestly? That's enough.

Being a girl is noticing. A friend's joke that stings. A compliment that lands. The way people glance, and what they choose to ignore. It's realising how much effort you put into carrying yourself — shaping yourself, navigating yourself — and how visible it all becomes.

Every girl experiences it differently. Some praised for speaking up, some punished. Some told to fit a mold, others told to break it. No one gives a manual. You just think. A lot. About choices, appearances, reactions, consequences, yourself. Thinking is exhausting. But thinking is also what makes you unmistakably you.



And that's the point. The effort, the calculation, the quiet work of becoming — it's deliberate. It's visible. It's obvious. Being a girl is obvious, because we design ourselves, adjust, observe, and keep going. Every choice, every compromise, every little assertion — it all says: this is who I am. This is who I want to be.

So let things be complicated. Let the world invent impossible standards, whisper judgments, and set rules that change by the second. At the end of the day, it's our world — ridiculous, messy, loud, and ours. Chase dreams. Shape your life. Be obvious.

GR17



OPEN ENDINGS VS CLOSED ENDINGS

Written by: Chien Yi, Poorani and Sarah Rachel
 Edited by: Ruby



If you are someone who feels there has to be a conclusive ending to a story, then I am sorry, you are just plain boring. You are missing what makes a story remarkable: that lingering sense of wonder. Stories like this seep into your mind, take root, and make you reflect. Days, weeks, or even months later, you might ask others, "What do you think the ending meant?" Such questions spark insightful exchanges and seeing how others interpret the same story can be deeply entertaining.

In fact, there is a reason why movies such as Inception, American Psycho and Gone Girl get raving reviews, as they do possess a certain charm that comes with open-ended stories. The countless articles, videos, and fan theories dissecting their endings show how these stories continue to live on long after the credits roll.

Nevertheless, do understand that a cliffhanger and an ambiguous or open ending are two different things. An open ending is where the main event has ended but does not necessarily depict a happily-ever-after. A cliffhanger is where the story leaves you hanging...literally. The story feels unfinished and is sometimes considered lazy writing.

There is a reason why the phrase, you become what you consume, hold true in most circumstances. The movie Black Swan perfectly captures how bitter emotions can turn into something ugly and cruel, leaving you pondering about the attributes of human nature. At times, it is good to venture into more thought-provoking narrations, just to spruce it up, rather than always going for your go-to movies or series.

If you are someone who prefers open endings, then you are someone who understands there are endless possibilities in a story, since that is what life is all about in the end. There is no conclusive ending to the story called life. Well, unless you die. But, we digress - open endings also present us with something meaningful. Your favourite character might not know what is ahead for them, but we will always hope for the better, and that is what makes open endings sweet.

- Poorani, who as you can see, is highly emotional and likes to believe that stories do live on beyond a book or a movie.



In the world of literature and film, there exists the duality of open and closed endings. I am here to tell you why closed endings are usually a better choice for most of the creative media we love and consume.

What makes a story good? For most people, it is the magic of compelling storylines, the intricate details, the characters we love, and the impact it leaves on us. Often, however, it is the ending that shapes whether we consider a story truly remarkable.

Oftentimes open endings end on an inconclusive note and leave it up to the viewers to form their own conclusions. Take Marriage Story for instance, Scarlett Johansson and Adam Driver close the film by her tying his shoelace for him despite the whole movie detailing their rocky relationship; closing the film in an air of uncertainty. Many viewers were left with the upsetting thought of, "How does their story end?"

All in all, closed endings make a whole lot of sense to utilise in ending a story. They resolve issues introduced and provide us with conclusive answers. Although I rarely enjoy open-ending stories, I understand that their existence benefits some storylines and brings about diversity and a balance to the world of creative media.

- Sarah Rachel, who from observation, enjoys the comfort that closure provides and not the uncertainty of the unknown.

Reading a new book or watching a new movie is like starting a new life, stepping into another world and living through the protagonist's journey. Closure may not be what everyone wants, but the reality is that all stories must come to an end. Like the final chapter or a season finale, endings provide a reason to move on to a new and better beginning.

Take Percy Jackson & the Olympians for example, where Rick Riordan wrapped up the main storyline neatly and expanded his tale beyond Camp Half-Blood in the Percy Jackson: Heroes of Olympus and the Trials of Apollo. He masterfully crafted endings that concluded each series while connecting to the next. Closed endings do not limit a story's growth; they provide a foundation and hope for new series that complement the original plot.

I am not trying to offend the pro-open-endings community, but genuine question, why do you put yourself through the torment of not

knowing? From marathon series following a protagonist's highs and lows to twisting plots that toss us on emotional rollercoasters, everyone deserves closure for the characters they have followed from the very beginning. Can you imagine if Avengers: Endgame had an open ending with an inconclusive war? Everyone would have gone ballistic.

While I favour closed endings, I appreciate unresolved subplots that allow writers to explore deeper stories. I find greater satisfaction in finishing a book or movie with a proper ending, rather than an open-ended conclusion that leaves a lingering void after full immersion.

- Chien Yi, who thinks that there already enough reasons why we are losing sleep, thus open-endings should not be another contributing factor.



Sunway International Students



Eileen Alexa Colim



My name is Eileen Alexa Colim, and I am from Indonesia. I am currently enrolled in the Australian Matriculation (AUSMAT) programme at Sunway College.

When choosing where to continue my pre-university studies, I explored several options, and what ultimately stood out to me among all the AUSMAT providers was how Sunway goes beyond academics. The way the college brings together diverse cultures, learning experiences, and global exposure truly sets it apart. Even though Sunway is based in Malaysia, the opportunities here do not feel limited by borders.

Students are encouraged to explore multiple pathways rather than being pushed toward a single "standard" route. For example, as an AUSMAT student, options such as pathways to Germany highlight just how flexible and open the system is.



Having previously experienced a more stringent curriculum in Singapore, studying AUSMAT allowed me to realise that there are multiple pathways to reach the same goal, and AUSMAT is one of them. While the programme is relatively more flexible, it still ensures that students are well equipped for the next stage of life. Most importantly, it prioritises balance, ensuring that academic excellence does not come at the expense of students' well-being.

Although it may seem trivial, I believe that a supportive study environment plays a crucial role in one's academic journey. Sunway's provision of conducive learning spaces across the campus reflects the institution's strong commitment to student support. Access to comfortable and well-designed spaces enables students to focus, stay motivated, and ultimately thrive in their studies.

As an Indonesian who has studied in both Indonesia and Singapore, Malaysia feels like a comfortable middle ground and often reminds me of home. The environment is welcoming, and the people at Sunway make it easy for international students to settle in and feel included.

While I have yet to decide on a specific country or university, I am currently considering pursuing a degree in either engineering or finance. Regardless of where I choose to continue my studies, I strongly believe that Sunway AUSMAT has provided me with a solid foundation to pursue my ambitions and work towards a brighter future.

To all my fellow international students, feeling homesick is completely normal, especially when you are far from home. One thing that really helps is getting involved in school activities and events, as this allows you to connect with others and gradually build a sense of belonging. Over time, you begin to find your people and feel more at home in your surroundings.

There is no need to rush the process of adapting, give yourself time, enjoy the experience, and stay present in the moment. Before you know it, this chapter of your life may become a place where you truly feel you belong, and something you will always look back on fondly.



Leanné Steyn



My name is Leanné Steyn and I am currently a Year 11 student in the Sunway Cambridge International Programme at Sunway International Schools (SIS) Kuala Lumpur. I am 15 years old and I am from South Africa.

I have been living in Malaysia since August 2024. It was a big leap and came with many changes, but I am now really happy here. Although there are some cultural and lifestyle differences, I love being able to learn and grow from it. Being part of SIS makes every moment enjoyable.

I really enjoy the SIS environment and the diversity of both the student body and teaching staff. I also value the wide range of opportunities available to students, especially in academics and sports.



Many of the students in the older year groups have inspired me to work harder towards my aspirations while supporting me through my journey. A lot of my teachers and coaches have also helped and motivated me endlessly by inspiring me to become the best version of myself.

Being an SIS student has helped me strive to do my best, not only in terms of studies with my upcoming International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examination, but also in sports. Under the Sunway Cambridge International Programme, I have strengthened my critical thinking skills while staying informed about global topics and current issues. These are essential in preparing me for the next steps in my life.

My advice to other potential international students would be to remain open-minded and fearless. It is important to not be scared and to step out of your comfort zone. Studying and living abroad feel scary at first, especially if you are far from home, but this opportunity is incredibly rewarding. I would recommend getting involved in school activities or sports, and making the effort to talk to your classmates. This will help you settle in faster, feel more confident, and most importantly build a network of friends. Lastly, do not be afraid to ask teachers for help, they are always there to support and guide you through these times, just like your family and friends, teachers just want the best for you.



FROM BUSINESS STUDIES TO BIG SCREENS



Looking back at my time at Sunway, my fondest memories are of campus life, the friendships forged, the long nights spent preparing for exams, and the experience of living in Malaysia, which was so different from Jakarta. Even when I returned nearly 20 years later, certain corners of the campus stirred a sense of familiarity.

I was fortunate to have lecturers who left a lasting impression on me. Mr Jason made marketing such an exciting subject, and his lessons remain relevant to this day. I also remember Puan Haslinda, who shared that my batch was her first year of teaching. The friendships I formed, especially with fellow Indonesians, remain an important and enduring part of my life.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Business in collaboration with Victoria University, I wanted to pursue a career in advertising or FMCG. Later on, while completing my Master's in Finance at the University of New South Wales, Australia, I began to envision a future

in banking. However, upon returning to Jakarta, I found myself drawn to entrepreneurship. That path eventually led me to film.

While running a digital marketing agency, I met a group of creators producing a web series for YouTube and encouraged them to try making a feature film on a small budget. To our surprise, the film succeeded and even turned a profit. As a lifelong lover of cinema, I was instantly hooked and decided to immerse myself deeply in the film industry.



What began as an experiment soon became a serious pursuit. I met directors, producers, and investors, learning the ropes of a tough yet exhilarating industry. Producing my first film in early 2020, however, came with unexpected challenges. Just a week after we wrapped, COVID-19 forced Indonesia into lockdown. Vendors closed, investors pulled out, and the film could not be released until 2023. When it finally premiered and achieved commercial success, my business partner and I knew we had found the path we wanted to follow.

Throughout this journey, my business education has proven invaluable. The knowledge of marketing, finance, and business law I gained at the Victoria University programme continues to guide me today. While the world evolves and new knowledge is always needed, those fundamentals remain the cornerstone of my work.

One of my proudest moments came when our company was entrusted to collaborate with one of Indonesia's most established production houses. This company has shaped the local cinema industry for over 50 years. Breaking into this industry has been challenging, which makes earning that level of trust a milestone I value deeply.



All in all, the biggest lesson I have learned is that film is built on trust. Producers must earn the confidence of investors while also empowering their creative teams to realise their vision. Believing in myself and the individuals I work with has been essential.

Looking ahead, I want to produce films that not only entertain but also inspire and educate. Film is a medium that reaches millions, and with it comes both opportunity and responsibility. This is the vision I intend to continue pursuing.

SUNWAY STARS

In this edition of Sunway Stars, we shine the spotlight on four valedictorians from the Class of 2026 (January), whose commitment, discipline, and passion have set them apart and inspired those around them. Let us discover how Chan Jay Huey (JH), Hamzah Bin Mohd Musthafa (HM), Quinsley Ryan Pynam (RP), and Michelle Thong Mei Yin (MT) made the most of their time at Sunway, and what propelled them to the pinnacle of their academic journeys.

Scan the QR codes to hear more about their academic journeys.



CLASS OF 2026

Chan Jay Huey
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Psychology



CLASS OF 2026

Hamzah Bin Mohd Musthafa
Bachelor of Science (Honours) Business Studies



CLASS OF 2026

Quinsley Ryan Pynam
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Contemporary Music (Audio Technology)



CLASS OF 2026

Michelle Thong Mei Yin
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Actuarial Studies



What is your ultimate dream and goal in the field you have chosen?

JH: Building a meaningful career where I can apply my knowledge to create real-world impact. I hope to contribute to work that is ethically grounded and socially relevant, and mentor others to drive positive change within the industry.

HM: After being exposed to academic journal articles during my studies, I developed a deep appreciation for academia. My goal is to become a Professor of Marketing at Sunway University, contributing meaningfully through research, teaching, and intellectual inquiry.

RP: My ultimate dream is to become a touring artist and, more importantly, a singer whom people can relate to and connect with through my music.

MT: To become a fully qualified fellow and contribute meaningfully to the success of an insurance company. I also aspire to mentor others entering the field by sharing insights from my own learning journey and helping students navigate a path that once felt unfamiliar to me.

How has your time at Sunway prepared you for the next chapter of your life?

JH: Through coursework, supportive lecturers, and active involvement in clubs and projects, I developed resilience and a strong appreciation for collaboration. Sunway also taught me to embrace uncertainty, take initiative, and view challenges as opportunities for growth.

HM: Sunway has prepared me by providing countless opportunities to learn from and be mentored by world-renowned lecturers in this field. The surau also plays an important role in my journey, offering a quiet space for reflection, balance, and spiritual grounding amid academic life.

RP: I was fortunate to have the opportunity to perform at events of various scales through Sunway University, experiences that helped prepare me for what I hope to pursue full-time one day. My time at Sunway also showed me that achieving our dreams begins the moment we believe in ourselves and take steps to make them happen.

MT: Sunway built my strong actuarial foundation through rigorous coursework, continuous assessments, and the Actuarial Practice Course, while six IFoA exemptions gave me a valuable head start toward fellowship. Serving as President of Sunway Actuarial & Financial Excellence, competing in actuarial events, and volunteering at major industry conferences strengthened my professional skills.

What advice would you give to juniors pursuing the same field?

JH: I would encourage them to stay curious and not be afraid to take paths that may feel uncertain at first. Growth often comes from stepping outside your comfort zone. Focus on learning, seek guidance from mentors, and remember that progress is not always linear.

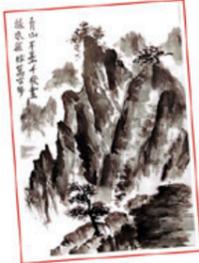
HM: There is no special mantra you need to focus on; it all comes down to effort and belief. You are in a hub of endless opportunities, seize them before the window closes. At the same time, do not neglect your relationship with your Creator, for success ultimately comes from Him and Him alone.

RP: I would tell my juniors that pursuing music studies is still not always taken seriously by many people, but the moment you take yourself seriously and put in the effort, others will begin to recognise your potential and respect your hard work.

MT: Step out of your comfort zone and seek as much exposure as possible during university. Get involved in actuarial clubs to connect with industry professionals, attend actuarial-related events, and build your network. Participating in competitions also sharpens critical thinking, enhances technical skills, and provides opportunities to be evaluated by experienced industry professionals.

GALLERY OF GRAPHICS

Artworks by Shanice Lee Jia Xin,
Sunway Monash University
Foundation Year (MUFY)



Inspiration:
Inspired by traditional Chinese ink landscape paintings, I wanted to capture the peaceful, poetic atmosphere they evoke.

Description and Style:
The artwork depicts mountains, trees, and mist in a classic ink-wash (shui-mo) style, using soft gradients and expressive brushstrokes to convey depth and atmosphere. The monochrome, fluid technique emphasises calmness and simplicity, demonstrating how minimal colour can still convey a strong mood and the beauty of nature.

Materials:
Black ink



Inspiration:
I was inspired by several artworks I saw online and wanted to create my own version with brighter colours and stronger reflections. These works also motivated me to explore how light and colour can bring simple objects to life.

Description and Style:
This artwork combines realistic objects with expressive, vibrant colours, using an impressionistic style with bold contrasts to convey energy and movement. The contrasting colours and dynamic strokes emphasise the interplay between calm and vibrant elements, making the objects stand out and feel livelier.

Materials:
Oil pastels

Voices of Jazz

Louis Armstrong (1901–1971)

Often called the father of jazz, Armstrong's powerful trumpet sound and unmistakable gravelly voice brought the genre into the mainstream. A master of improvisation and swing, his charisma and joyful style transformed jazz into a global phenomenon, turning songs like *What a Wonderful World* into timeless classics that continue to resonate across generations.



From smoky jazz clubs of the early 20th century to today's genre-blending stages and streaming platforms, jazz has been shaped by visionaries who dared to experiment, improvise and redefine sound. In celebration of International Jazz Day on 30 April, we spotlight a mix of pioneering legends and modern trailblazers who continue to influence how the world listens to jazz.



Now, let us fast-forward to the modern jazz scene, where the genre continues to evolve through bold collaborations and genre-blending sounds. These contemporary artists are redefining jazz for a new generation, proving that its spirit of improvisation and innovation is very much alive.

Esperanza Spalding

A bassist, singer and composer, Esperanza blends jazz with soul, funk and classical influences. Known for her virtuosic musicianship and poetic songwriting, she brings a fresh, genre-defying voice to modern jazz and has helped broaden its appeal among younger, global audiences.



Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996)

Known as the "First Lady of Song," Ella's voice was both silky and incredibly agile. She popularised scat singing, using her voice like an instrument and proving that improvisation was not just for horns. With her remarkable range and phrasing, she set the gold standard for vocal jazz.



Kamasi Washington

A leading figure in contemporary jazz, Kamasi is known for his powerful, spiritual saxophone sound and large-scale, cinematic compositions. His collaborations with artists like Kendrick Lamar and his epic albums have introduced jazz to a new generation, blending tradition with modern influences and social consciousness.



Miles Davis (1926–1991)

A true innovator, Miles constantly reinvented jazz, leading movements from cool jazz to modal jazz and jazz fusion. Never afraid to push boundaries, he also mentored future legends such as John Coltrane and Herbie Hancock, shaping generations of musicians with his bold, experimental vision.

Robert Glasper

A pianist and producer who seamlessly fuses jazz with hip-hop, R&B and neo-soul, Glasper represents the genre's evolution in the 21st century. Working with artists such as Erykah Badu, Common and Kendrick Lamar, he has shown that jazz can be both intellectually rich and culturally current, bridging classic musicianship with today's soundscape.





24-Hour Student Flow

Freshly launched at Sunway Square Mall, The Sunway Library by BookXcess is Southeast Asia's largest 24-hour bookstore and a new go-to spot for Sunway students. Featuring cosy reading corners, functional workspaces, and towering shelves packed with books, it offers a vibrant environment for both focused learning and casual browsing, any time of day. Join our fellow Sunwayian, Darren Koh Zhi Sern, from Bachelor of Software Engineering (Hons) programme, as he shares how this space fits into his campus life and study routine.

What does a typical 24 hours in your life as a student in the city look like?

My day usually starts with classes, then catching up with projects and assignments. If there is time, I'll head to the gym for a quick run in the evening. Nights are often when I'm most active outside of school, prioritising extracurricular activities, meetings, editing or hanging out with friends.

Are you more of a morning person or a night owl?

Night owl. I feel more productive and creative late at night due to the silence around me. The fact that the Tun Hussein Onn Sunway Library stays open past midnight is a huge advantage, particularly during exam seasons. I spend a lot of time at the library studying and working on my own hobbies. I also utilise the discussion pods for group assignments, meetings, and collaborative discussions, as they provide a comfortable space for exchanging ideas.

How did you first discover The Sunway Library by BookXcess?

I discovered it through word of mouth. The open space, accessibility, and late hours make it a comfortable space to study, hangout and also grab a quick bite at Kenny Hills when needed. It's a place where creativity never stops and allows me to power through the night.



How do 24-hour places like this help you focus, unwind, or feel connected to the city as a student?

They give me freedom and flexibility. Being in a space that's still open late at night makes me less "ganjiong" and allows me to think through things thoroughly rather than rushing to finish tasks or wrap up catch-ups urgently before a space closes.

You mentioned living a very 24-hour lifestyle. How has this influenced your productivity, social life, or mental well-being?

It's improved my productivity because I can work during my most focused hours late at night. Socially, it has allowed me to pay equal attention to friends and catch up with friends, but I also make a conscious effort to rest so it doesn't affect my mental well-being.

A secret word is hidden somewhere on this page! Your mission: read the descriptions carefully, fill in the gaps, and piece together the letters that stand out.

A E E U E O F A H E V M N S

Where Sunway students' milestones and success stories take centre stage.

P S G R D A T H B

A dedicated space for postgraduates to study, connect, and collaborate.

R E S D N C S

Comfortable living spaces that make campus feel like home.

L B S

Where ideas turn into innovation and entrepreneurship takes shape.

L B R R Y

A quiet space for research, learning, and discovery.

F R S C

A relaxed spot to dine, recharge, and catch up with friends.

B S R V T I N D C

Take in sweeping campus views from a whole new perspective.

O T R E A H

Create meaningful impact by joining the Sunway Desa Mentari Community Development Programme.

L C T U R T H A R E

Where daily lessons are held.

S N G M

Stay active, energised, and balanced on campus.

E S I Y

A public sculpture by Sunway's Resident Artist, Infantino Fernandez.

A T N R

A place to dine and experience French and Fusion cuisine prepared by our School of Hospitality & Tourism Management.

O G A C U B

One of Sunway's club activities where students come together to stretch, unwind, and recharge.

Once you've discovered the secret word, scan the QR code to submit your answer and show off your Sunway smarts.



Can you crack the code?

- Answers:
- AVENUE OF ACHIEVEMENTS
- POSTGRADUATE HUB
- RESIDENCES
- LIBRARY
- FRESCO
- OBSERVATION DECK
- Outreach
- LECTURE THEATRE
- SUNWAY
- DESTINY
- ATHANOR
- YOGA CLUB

SUNWAY
UNIVERSITY



A CLASS ABOVE

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP



THE NATION'S CHOICE