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English News

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PASSION FOR SCIENCE AS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND SUCCESS

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USM, PENANG, 27 March 2016 – A passion for science has driven Professor Dr. Lee Chow Yang, 47, to succeed in his career to become among the youngest appointed full professor in Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

Although he was offered the opportunity to pursue his studies in Chemical Engineering at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) twenty-seven years ago, his eagerness to further explore the field of Biology had made him choose Pure Biology instead at Universiti Sains Malaysia.

“The decision, which would not be “fashionable” by today’s standards, was probably the wisest decision I have ever made,” said Lee, who is now the Professor of Entomology at the USM School of Biological Sciences.

Besides being a Professor of Entomology in USM, he had brought honour to USM and Malaysia by becoming the first Asian scientist to be invited by the University of California-Riverside (UCR) in the United States to deliver the Ebeling Memorial Lecture recently, a lecture series held to give recognition to outstanding entomologists who have contributed significantly in urban entomology research.

Apart from that, he had received a number of awards including the National Young Scientist Award (2000), the Outstanding Young Malaysians Award (2009), and the Top Research Scientists Malaysia (2012).

Despite his many achievements, his gratitude and appreciation towards his career has encouraged him to rise further to the challenges.

“The eventual success is not determined by how fast one arrives there, but the ability to go from one failure to another without any loss of enthusiasm,” he said.

Armed with deep enthusiasm in science, the most meaningful experience being a professor to him in USM was the opportunity to inspire students to do well in science.

He further added, “I have seen the changes in lives of students who come from poor families, it has been my policy to find the first job for them who graduated from my lab.”

In relation to pest-related issues which are affecting human lives due to the increasing rate of urbanization in Asia, he strongly believes that the demand for graduates in the field of urban entomology to be in with the industry, government sector or research institutions will be further aggravated in the future to come.

Lee, who was born in Malacca in 1969, was awarded a scholarship by PHP Institute of Asia, Japan to pursue his Ph.D in USM on insecticide toxicology and resistance in the German cockroach (*Blattella germanica*). He graduated with a First Class Honours in B.Sc (Biology) in 1993, and Ph.D. in 1996. After joining USM in 1996, he switched his field of research to Urban Entomology and has focused on it ever since.

Text: Elezise Oh Ming Han (USM Internship Student)



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