

REFLECTIONS

on My Bittersweet Journey as a UiTM Pharmacy Student

How time flies, with just a few months until graduation. For that, let me take you down memory lane about my experiences as a pharmacy student at UiTM. I am proud to be one of their undergraduates because our faculty has the largest infrastructure and its lecturers are excellent role models.

May 2019 was the day I was filled with excitement and enthusiasm when I attended my entry interview at this university. Flashing back a bit further, upon finishing my foundation year, I prepared myself for the interview. With everything geared up, I took the interviewer along my aspirational path and pictured how this course could benefit me and, in return, what the university could gain upon my graduation. It was an exhilarating moment when, a month later, I passed the interview and returned to UiTM as a tertiary student, all excited to pursue my dream of becoming a successful pharmacist in the future.

I was keen to begin my days here, to make new friends, and to explore more about university life. Like any other freshman, I also felt nervous about what the universe had in store for me. Nevertheless, with passion and faith, I dared to carry myself forward and persevere through the challenges that lay ahead, both socially and academically. I also realised how diverse yet full of potential the pharmaceutical industry is, with numerous career prospects. Furthermore, as technology advances, the pharmaceutical industry is always evolving.

During my first few months at university, my friends and I were frequently getting lost on our route to find classes, and we relied on the directory virtually every time. Perhaps it was a watershed moment in the way academics were taught. On the other hand, the manner lectures were delivered using a somewhat different method when compared to my days at school had all been past paced with increased workload. I made it through the first semester only to discover that my grade was mediocre, which did not surprise me. But rather, it became my motivation to work harder and refine my study techniques for the subsequent semesters.



Then COVID-19 became a global pandemic. The university had embraced online learning with lockdowns and strict health restrictions. Consequently, I was required to complete four semesters of online coursework, which amounted to a duration of two years. Adapting was simple, but staying motivated was difficult, especially on days when your individual academic demand increased.

I knew it was a valid, temporary feeling, and therefore, I learned how I could manage it better. I was glad that the pandemic had made me more focused on my priorities. Furthermore, I volunteered myself to become the Vice President for the student society (SOPHYS), and because of the transition from physical to online, societal activities and approaches had to be changed as all were conducted online. There were too many limitations, but nevertheless, it gave me valuable experiences and wonderful memories with respect to leadership skills, responsibilities undertaken, and valuable connections.

As the pandemic slowly subsided with the onset of vaccinations, everything became nostalgic once I entered the campus in my 6th semester. As precious time had been lost due to the lockdowns, I decided to make the most of my time here while it lasted by exploring the whole campus and spending time with friends. This was when the thought of creating my own YouTube channel came into play. I felt compelled to share my priceless experience to benefit others by sharing a bit of life as a pharmacy student (check it out; Ainin Ir1). Thank you in advance if you subscribe!

My excitement increased as I entered my final year. It was due to the visualisation of finally going to the hospital and interacting with real pharmacists and other healthcare providers. The hospital module covered for semester 7 was to rotate between all pharmacy departments. From this, I was able to learn and familiarise myself with working in a hospital environment. Furthermore, I was also given the opportunity to complete my industrial placement at Pharmaniaga Berhad, Malaysia and I would say it was truly an eye-opening and meaningful journey. To top it up, UiTM also provided me with a four-week community attachment, which enhanced my approach to minor ailments within the community.



By the time this article is published, I will have completed my clinical pharmacy clerkship, which I am most excited about! It is hoped that by the end of this clerkship, it would give me a better perspective of the job scope of a clinical pharmacist and the areas that I could work on to improve.

You must wonder if pharmacy courses are all sunshine and rainbows. It is definitely not, but it is not always doom and gloom either. Typical days would be back-to-back classes, and that includes lectures, problem-based learning, labs, tutorials, and exams. As for me, I would say I had the best experience here, including the good and bad moments, because I believe these experiences have their own lessons to teach me to strive better in the future.

The last piece of advice I have for juniors—or anyone else at UiTM—is to have fun. Even when the journey gets rough, remind yourself that the real world out there is even tougher and more competitive. If you cannot stand here, how will you survive later? Therefore, be brave enough to face it.

Stay positive, have faith, and believe in yourself.



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