Headline	**Competing with the big boys**			
Date	**27. Jan 2008**	Language	**ENGLISH**	
Media Title	**Sunday Star**	Page No	**19**	
Section	**Star Education**	Article Size	**464**	cm2
Circulation	**322322**	Frequency	**Weekly**	
Readership	**998000**	Color	**Full Color**	

Competing with the big boys

WHILE most undergraduates are busy concentrating on their exams, four teams of Taylor's Chemical Engineering students took on a bigger challenge by taking part in the 21st Symposium of Malaysian Chemical Engineers (SOMChE) held at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) recently.

Symposiums are the channel for postgraduates and professors to present their ideas and research to a panel of academics.

Thus it was an added feat that the teams from Taylor's were the only undergraduates at the symposium.

One of Taylor's teams, which presented a paper entitled *Flow Past Square Cylinder*, won the Best Poster Award.

Project team leader Chang Li Zher, a first-year chemical engineering student, said the project focused on the mechanics of fluid flow across a cylinder.

"The two major parts of the project are, firstly, to chart the flow visualisation of fluid behaviour which enables the observation of vortex formation and secondly, to measure drag formation where the reduction in drag can be examined quantitatively.

"The experiments emerged as a result of the necessity for drag reduction in a lot of engineering applications today.

"However, the method with which we derived our experiments was inspired by the work of P.F. Zhang and his colleagues in Beijing," he said.

A total of 150 papers were presented along with 70 posters depicting various aspects of chemical engineering.

About 300 delegates comprising postgraduates, lecturers and professors from local and regional universities attended the symposium.

UPM Chemical Engineering Department head and chairman of the SOMChE 2007, Assoc Prof Dr Robiah Yunus, said the quality of the papers presented by Taylor's students was on par with the ones received from postgraduates and professors.

"We do not have restrictions on who can participate. The thing that matters most is for the papers to be accepted based on merit and importance to the chemical engineering industry," she said.

Another team leader, Lee Kathryn, elaborated on their project – Flow Visualisation of Flow Patterns in a Ring-Disc Static Mixer.

"Our project is a type of static mixer to mix liquids using the energy of the flow stream of the liquids to form uniform mixing. The energy is created when the streams of liquid flow through a series of motionless inserts installed in tubes," she added.

Taylor's School of Engineering programme director Mushtak Al-Talib said undergraduates, given a chance, could do as well as postgraduates in terms of quality and creativity of their presentations.

"The school also organises an engineering fair every semester to enable students to showcase their projects and inventions to other students at the campus," Mushtak added.

Li Zher advised students to persist in their research even if things went wrong in the beginning. "But if the effort and hard work is put into your work, results will eventually follow.

"I learnt to be more confident when presenting our research. In believing in what we are doing, we managed to work it out. But don't be afraid to ask for help, too."

Taylor's students M.W. Chan (left) and L.S. Chang discussing their research with Prof Dr Richard Darton from Oxford university.