Double happiness

Taylor's College School of Hospitality and Tourism made waves at an Asia Pacific-level conference in Phuket, writes SUMITHA MARTIN.

TAYLOR'S College School of Hospitality and Tourism (TCHT) scored two firsts at the Asia Pacific Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (APacCHRIE) conference in Phuket, Thailand in May.

TCHT lecturer N. Nancy Veilisala received the Best Paper Award for her presentation on The Challenges of Microbiological Food Safety Risks in Mahasarakam, her home town.

Her entry was one of three selected for the award during the conference which featured 85 papers and was attended by about 200 delegates from 23 countries.

Nancy's award was also instrumental in TCHT's winning bid to host the 3rd APacCHRIE conference in May next year, in collaboration with the Tourism Educators Association of Malaysia (TEAM).

APacCHRIE is the Asia Pacific chapter of International CHRIE, founded in 1946 and based in Virginia, United States.

Next year's APacCHRIE conference will be the first to be held in Malaysia.

TCHT's successful bid, said Dr. Viknesvaran Nar, TCHT's head of research and development and a senior lecturer, is "a great honour for us because CHRIE is an authority in the international hospitality and tourism industry."

The other shortlisted contender for the bid was the National Taiwan Normal University. Nair, who made TCHT's bid presentation in Phuket, said the win also symbolised APacCHRIE's recognition of TCHT's academic focus besides its traditional vocational skills emphasis.

He said APacCHRIE's recognition of Nancy's paper "tells us that we have the right people".

The award was a boon to Nancy as her participation in the conference was only her second attempt at submitting an academic paper for a conference, in her nine years as a lecturer.

Nancy, who teaches Food Science and Nutrition, and Food Hygiene and Sanitation, took four months to prepare her paper which investigates how big outbreaks of microorganisms in street food can be avoided through proper hygiene.

The topic is related to her current research for a Master's in Food Science and Nutrition, which she is pursuing at University Kebangsaan Malaysia.

The two other TCHT lecturers who presented papers in Phuket were Nair and Hema Subramaniam.

Nair presented two papers, "A Technological Approach in Ecotourism Rating and Management in Peninsular Malaysia and A Concept Paper On The Implementation of Bachelor's Degree in Business Information Technology Specialising in E-Tourism For Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia."

Hema, who teaches Hotel Engineering and Business Mathematics, presented a paper on "The Perception of Hospitality and Tourism Educators Towards Information and Communication Technology Pedagogy in Education (A Malaysian Context) in the Year 2006."

Looking forward, APacCHRIE will also give local lecturers exposure to the top academic minds in the international scene.

Citing his experience at the recent conference, Nair said his second paper received tremendous constructive criticism from delegates, particularly senior academics.

Such feedback, he said, is lacking in local conferences.

To Hema, APacCHRIE was also a good opportunity to pick up creative presentation methods which featured cartoons in PowerPoint presentations, as well as newspaper and magazine clippings and catchphrases.

These are methods "which we can implement in our classes", added Nancy.

For more details on the 3rd APacCHRIE conference, contact Nair at 06-787-9777 or go to ml@taylors.edu.my.