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Mok: The most important thing is to always take time out to recoup and refresh so that we are ready to absorb and learn new things.

FOUR top achievers and three couples are among the 953 students graduating at Wawasan Open University's 12th e-convocation.

For open distance learning (ODL), the recipients of the Chancellor's Gold Medal for coming up tops at the undergraduate level are Opalyn Mok Pui Fong, 44, from Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English Studies and Se Hui Feng, 30, from Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting.

Mavis Ong Sze Mun, 28, from the Commonwealth Executive MBA (CeMBA) programme, won the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Memorial Prize for being the top ODL student at the postgraduate level.

Meanwhile for on-campus learning, the best graduate was Khoo Li Zhe, 23, from Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Finance, who was awarded the Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Memorial Gold Prize.

Mok is senior correspondent (Penang) for Malay Mail.

On thriving during the pandemic, she responded, "Time management is key to juggling a full-time job, family and studies.

"Family support is also important to keep me going. Without their support, it would not have been easy.

"The most important thing is to always take time out to recoup and refresh so that we are ready to absorb and learn new things."

Se is a senior accountant at Southern Accounting Services, Johor Baru.

Regarding her work and study balance, she said, "I made myself a study schedule as I understand that time management is essential for me to manage my study during busy periods at work."

On her motivation, Se remarked, "When I was young, my parents taught me that education is the way to success.

"When I chose to further my studies in WOU, they gave me their support as they wanted me to get the education they never had."

Ong currently runs her own digital advertising agency in Penang, helping small business owners to create digital content and manage their digital marketing strategy on social media platforms.

She chose CeMBA due to her interest in starting her own business, since she was employed with a company before that, with little knowledge about business.

Khoo, from Penang, is a proprietary trader at an investment company.

On his success, he said, "A well-planned time management allows me to prioritise my daily work.

"As life does not always go as we plan, it might be difficult to stay focused and get familiar with virtual learning during the pandemic period.

"So, I decided to work harder and do more research on those topics that I did not understand."

Three couples across Malaysia will be graduating together from WOU this year.

Angelina Jong Siew Phing, 43, and Gabriel Ong Hock Hee, 47, from Sarawak, enrolled in and will graduate together from the Bachelor of Management (Honours) with Psychology (BMPS) programme.

Ong is a senior physiotherapist at Sarawak Hospital and Jong is head of the physiotherapy unit at Rajah Charles Brooke Memorial (RCBM) Hospital, Kuching.

Another couple graduating at the same time from the same programme are Datuk Chan Wei Hua, 46, and Datin Chang Sam Yee, 45, from Johor Baru.

They will be conferred the Commonwealth Executive MBA degree.

Chan is the CEO of IJ Pharmacy (M) Sdn Bhd while his wife serves as a pharmacist there.

Jaswinder Singh Harban Singh, 36, a process engineer at Carsem Semiconductor Malaysia in Ipoh is graduating from the Bachelor of Technology in Electronics (BTEL) programme, while his wife Samreet Kaur Revindar Singh, 36, a teller at CIMB Bank, from the Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Management (BBMG) programme.