Chill Out At New Student Lounge

By Alicia Tan
alicia@tribune.com

This December, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students can expect a Christmas treat in the form of a snazzy new student lounge at the heart of campus.

It will take over the second floor of Block 72 which previously served as an examination hall and a carpark. The area is currently undergoing major reconstruction and Estate Management Office hopes to finish all works and open the lounge just before Christmas.

Mr Mui Cheng Hock, Director of the Estate Management Office, said, "NP decided that given the tremendous workload of students these days, it would be nice to offer them a place where they can simply have a cup of coffee and chill out with their friends, in a cool and relaxing environment. Hence the student lounge project."

The student lounge is most likely to be named OnTheSpace® 72, accommodating the most popular among the suggestions that have come in when names were sought among students and staff.

Liu Junwei, 20, a second-year Business Studies student, is looking forward to the opening of the student lounge, which will be another place where she and her friends can hang out.

"The library can get really crowded during peak hours and sometimes there is hardly any space for us to relax and take a breather. The student lounge should encompass a stylish and casual atmosphere where students will feel comfortable to do whatever they like, be it to chat with their friends, do project work or even just to have a coffee," she said.

Her sentiments were shared by Kelvin Yap, 20, a third-year Biomedical Engineering student, who envisions the lounge as a 'retreat space' he and his friends can go to during their breaks to escape from the mounting workload.

Mr Mui said that the draft had been changed several times since they were first proposed. He said it had been a long process with many discussions with the designers to come up with a suitable interior design which embodies the chill-out environment tailored for the students.

"Tribune understands the final blueprint has only more or less been decided on at press time.

A sneak peek into some of the proposed ideas for the lounge revealed a fully air-conditioned area decorated with chic and modern furniture with clean lines. The lounge will also be equipped with board-game rooms.

In addition, there will also be recreational rooms where people can sink comfortably into large plush sofas and an activity area which will allow students to exhibit their work.

The lounge will have space for a new locker room, a photocopying area and study rooms where students can have a quiet environment for project meetings.

But this also sounds too functional, Mr Mui added, "There are also plans to have full glass panels in the lounge so that students can really enjoy a scenic and serene view which over looks most of NP and who knows, it can even provide a source of inspiration for someone to write poems."

He added that there are plans for the lounge to be "largely unsupervised."

"Hence there is a concern over possible abuse of the facilities, but hopefully the students are mature enough to use the place responsibly and provide a conducive environment for everyone," he said.

Kongsi’s $15.6 Million Gift to NP

By Calvin Jang
calvin@tribune.com

A $1.8 million investment by the Lien Foundation (LF) in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) over three years will see NP students exposed to and helping to address pressing social challenges outside the classroom.

The LF-NP Social, Environmental & Educational Development (SEED) Capital programme involves NP developing programmes in three areas – Social, Environmental and Educational.

On the Social front, students from the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) will undertake projects for a campaign led by LF. The Foundation’s Programme Director Mr Lee Poh Wah said, "For a start, the school will work on a death and hospice campaign that the Foundation is spearheading."

Addressing the Environment, an annual national contest, the Singapore Junior Water Prize, will be staged. The competition will involve students aged 15 to 20 and winners will represent the republic at the prestigious Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

In the Educational scene, NP will be sharing its expertise with three tertiary institutions in the region, including Sekaya Polytechnic in Muis Bursyain (MUBA) in South Sumatra.

Mr Lee added, "By providing platforms for NP to make a difference, we hope to plant within Singaporeans an acute sense of pressing social and environmental challenges we face today."
focus-editorial

Our Struggle To Manage Time And Money

Taking on part-time jobs is very common for polytechnic students. Most do it for some extra cash, while a handful do it to see themselves through their polytechnic education. I think campus jobs are a godsend. It is a lot easier for students who work part-time on campus as they are free to clock in hours whenever they have a long break between classes and earn above-average hourly pay, while the rest of us have to fork out money for transport, makeup and a suitable wardrobe.

Some students cannot juggle their studies and part-time job successfully, and yet others stay on top of their classes with ruthless self-discipline and good time management skills [see pg. 4]. What is more important, however, is whether you have the self-control to spend your hard-earned money wisely. It is very tempting to spend it all at once. With the introduction of a new credit card meant for young people without a regular income [see pg. 5], the temptation to have it all has never been greater. Many youths are attracted to its perks of free entry to well-known clubs. Although the credit limit might seem very low at the cap of $500, the interest rate is higher than the usual 24 percent for working adults, and can snowball into an alarming sum.

I am reminded of a friend of mine who had for his 10 credit cards snowy holed to a whopping $80,000. Even with his monthly salary of $4,000 at the age of 26, he could not control his spending habits and got too used to wiping his plastic. Whenever he felt he wanted something, he would apply for additional cards for the perks they offered, such as dining discounts.

However, he was able to pay off all his bills for all his credit cards but after some time his income could not support his expenditure and every month he would only be able to pay off the interest. Eventually, he could not handle the bills from all 10 of his credit cards and ended up accumulating a debt equivalent to 20 months of his salary.

He is still trying to pay off his debts as the interest grows, and is in the process of declaring himself bankrupt.

I have come to distrust credit cards because of my friend’s situation. Not only does he struggle to pay his bills every month, he also has to take on freelance jobs to make ends meet.

His extravagant ways have affected his whole family, who have had to cut down drastically on daily expenses. It goes to show that even with a steady and an above-average income, poor money management can have disastrous consequences.

I really wonder what makes young people think that they can handle the responsibility of a credit card, as they struggle to balance their studies with a part-time job.

The secret to success is simply this: Work hard, play hard, then work even harder. Sunday will come every week. And if I look forward to the special day of the month when my pay is credited to my bank account in return for all my hard work.  

More Students Want To Be Part Of TDP

I n a poll of 80 Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students done by Tribune, 56 percent of the respondents, were in the opinion that they would like to be included in events and workshops held by the Talent Development Program (TDP).

Formally started in 2002, the TDP was designed to identify talented students early and develop them to their full potential. They are put through a suite of programmes designed to groom them in leadership skills while preparing them for scholarship opportunities and future careers. The programme currently has 148 students.

According to Mr Tan Kwek On, director of Student Development and Alumni Relations, students are identified for the programme at the start of each academic year and scholarship recipients are usually selected.

Students who perform consistently well and are active in their co-curricular activities (CCAs) are also considered.

These criteria must generally be met in order to remain in the TDP. However, the TDP unit may reconsider based on strong support of the school’s nomination and the student’s attitude.

The TDP has already produced some impressive results.

These include Creative Technology Gold Medallists Denise Teo who was awarded the Public Service Commission Scholarship, and Alvin Lim who was awarded the National University of Singapore (NUS) Global Merit Scholarship.

Silver Medallist Ronald Yee, 25, said that the TDP experience had helped him to bag a scholarship from the Ministry of Education (MoE). It gave him access to psychometric tests, which turned out very similar to what MoE tested him on.

Ronald eventually took the NUS Undergraduate Scholarship as the MoE scholarship required him to change his course of study.

Ronald said that not all have been offered the MOE scholarship if he did not get the chance to try out the sample psychometric test. "I was not the students who was my lecturer who asked us to apply to open up the sample test to me," he said.

The more successful CCAs and test results, could possibly be why students who want to be in the programme but are not found the programme "elites". In the same poll of 80 students, 57.5 percent of them answered positive to the question, "Do you think that such programmes (i.e. TDP) promote different classes (elites) within students?"

"People sometimes get into clubs or societies just because they are under the TDP. Isn’t it biased that they get into such places without going through the same processes as everyone else?" commented Liew Ming, 18, a second-year Early Childhood Education student.

Mr Mun clarified that the inclusion in CCAs is not based on TDP criteria and open to students as well.

Lin Seng, 19, a third-year Biotechnology student, added, "It’s just another reflection of the educational system where students were actually segregated into different streams of EM1, EM2 and EM3. That aside, I feel that many students opted to join the polytechnic to get away from such education stereotypes."

According to Joyce Lee, a first-year TDP student from Accountancy, her perception of “elitism” could be properly channelled and made helpful instead of harmful. "Yes if it does promote elitism, that can actually be a good thing. It spurs others who are not in the programme to work hard to get recruited and receive their well-earned recognition.”

Mr Mun stressed that the intention of the TDP is not to promote elitism. He said, "The range of programmes such as overseas attachments, enrichment talks and scholarship talks offered to the students are already available to other students. Schools and divisions have and are free to organise such programmes to all students."

"Any other student can apply for the overseas attachment programmes or seminars. We just want to offer these scholarships to students who are not labelled in the various workshops, seminars and talks to enhance their potential," he explained.

According to Mr Mun, TDP students are not also "labelled" or identified in some of the regional groups and hence, there is no issue of segregation.

Although there are no plans to open TDP to students who are interested in joining, Mr Mun said that if “there is a specific need for any workshop or TDP unit is open to opening it up to interested students as well, subject to availability of resources to support it.”

If a school nominates the students with justification, that would be open to their participation.
NP Graduates File Patent For Tennis Ball Retriever

By Yvonne Yee

Quality Management and Engineering graduates Zhang Kewang, 20, and Tautuun Bin Jasmin, 21, filed a patent at the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore in May for their invention – a tennis ball retriever which can be converted to a scoop net to scoop up balls as well as mop water off the tennis court.

Partly funded by Ngern Ann Enterprise scheme, the invention, named Pro Ten (short for “Professional Tennis”), was the pair’s final year project and took a semester to complete. It is in its final stage of refining and there are plans to manufacture it for commercial purposes.

“We were inspired to create Pro Ten by our technical support officer, Mr John Lam, who loves to play tennis,” said Kewang, who is serving his National Service now.

With the help of Mr Lam, Kewang learnt how to play tennis, and at the same time, gained an insight into some of the inconveniences that tennis players face.

“I think that our product will be especially beneficial to those who are learning how to play tennis as they usually need a lot of balls to practise. Picking up so many balls requires a lot of time and effort,” Kewang said.

Unlike the usual tennis ball retrievers, Pro Ten does not run on electricity and needs to be pushed over tennis balls to collect them – much like a lawn-mower. Adrian Lim, 16, a student who is currently attending tennis lessons, agreed.

“After the game, all you want to do is get a drink and hit the showers, but we still have to pick up all the balls. It really depletes whatever remaining energy you have left,” he said.

The manufacturing cost of a unit of the wain-high machine is estimated to be around $350. Kewang and his team did not have to fork out any cash to develop it as it was a school project.

Kewang said, “The ones in the Singapore market right now cost over $2,000 as they are mostly imported. Our product is likely to be cheaper. It also cleans the water off the tennis court and is also more compact and portable.”

Kewang and his team intend to develop more of such sports-related products such as a tennis ball launcher. They hope to set up a company dealing with sports merchandise.

“At first, we must wait for our current tennis ball retriever to create revenue and gain popularity,” said Kewang.

FMS Alumni Win Nine Crowbar Awards

By Selina Yap

Four teams from the Ngern Ann Polytechnic (NP) School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) received one Gold, five Silver, and three Bronze awards in the Film category of the Crowbar Awards 2007 presented on 18 August for their work on the final-year specialist projects, namely “Tan Xin”, “Bu Ye Tian”, “Lynch” and “Snip Snip”.

Justicia Phang, 21, a Film, Sound & Video (FSV) graduate and producer of “Tan Xin”, said that her team was “utterly thrilled” upon receiving news of their win.

“I felt that all our hard work was appreciated and recognised,” she said. The short film bagged four Crowbar Awards, including a Silver for Short Film, and is also a Best Film award recipient at this year’s Singapore International Film Festival.

For FSV graduate and director of “Bu Ye Tian”, Leon Chee, 22, winning a Gold in Film Craft – Art Direction was “very satisfying” as the team had put in immense effort to maintain the essence of “Bu Ye Tian” which, being a period film, required much detailed coordination.

FSV lecturer Mr Leonard Yip was proud of the achievements of the FMS students.

“I feel happy that they have achieved recognition,” he said. Mr Yip, together with FMS staff, Mr Michael Kham and Ms Kampita Dowupajar, worked to collate and submit over 400 FMS student entries to 70 international film festivals last year.

Juan Qi An, 20, FSV graduate and video editor of “Lynch”, which received the Silver for Film Craft – Editing, credited the win to his course mate and his supervisor, Mr Adam Habib, for their honest and constructive comments.

“As this is our first real award... it would definitely give us the upper hand when applying for jobs in the industry considering that the Crowbar Awards is a distinguished commendation,” he said.

The Crowbar Awards highlights the creative talent of promising students and provides them with an opportunity to showcase their original works and be judged by leading practitioners from creative industries.

Previous recipients of the Crowbar Awards include FSV final-year specialist project entitled “Eik Khon”, which was directed by Andrei Chen, 22, FSV graduate and 2007 Star Search winner.

The graduates are thankful to FMS for providing support and making their films accessible to local and international film festivals and competitions. According to

I felt that all our hard work was appreciated and recognised.

Justicia Phang, Graduate Film, Sound & Video (FSV)

Mr Yip, the school is supportive of alumni working on projects and encourages current students to perseveres. “It is important for students to have a vision and understand why they’re doing what they’re doing,” he stressed.

Mr Yip added, “These final-year projects will be a stepping stone for students in getting their desired jobs or in pursuing further education.”

NP Top In Marketing Competition

By Prince Phu

A team of third-year students emerged overall champion at the Annual International Marketing Competition (AIMC) themed “Competing Institute of Marketing, Singapore (CIMS)”, on 27 October.

The team bagged the top title in the local category and was crowned overall champion.

Ngern Ann Polytechnic (NP) bested finalist teams from foreign and local institutions including Singapore Management University, National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University.

The team from NP comprised third-year Business Studies (BS) students Marvin Kang, 26, David Lee, 19, Melvin Lim, 19, Yen Yi Pang, 19, and third-year Multimedia and Animation student, Lok Yen Wei, 19.

Their award-winning idea was Glack, a brand for two innovative beverages, FruitCha and FruitChine.

Dr Lim Cheng Hwee, Chairman of CIMS and chief judge, said, “This year’s competition has been of a very high standard... the overall winning entry impressed us with their maturity of thought and the way they understood the realities of the text.”

But victory was not a walk in the park for the students.

“We wanted to present a very real opportunity, and we called up agents to find collaboration possibilities,” Marvin said.

It is the fourth year that NP has taken part in this competition, and the recruitment of a student outside the School of Business and Accountancy (BBA) had boosted the team’s creativity.

Jun Wei’s expertise in multimedia and animation was tapped to execute creative marketing collaterals.

“I learnt a lot about the business side of things from this competition and it will certainly be useful in the future as I intend to pursue a career in advertising,” said Jun Wei.

The project has evolved into a possible future venture for the team.

Mr Simon Tay, Chief Executive Officer of Modern Moments International and a judge for the competition, said he would consider sponsoring the team’s idea.

Ms Tan Lai Wan, Assistant Academic Manager of CPIM, and member of the team, said, “When I opened the competition to all the Marketing students, this group of eager students stepped up and they have come a long way.”

She added that the students conceptualised the idea, with lecturers there to offer advice.

“They were very receptive to feedback, and were willing to put in a lot of hard work to improve on their project,” said Miss Tan.

The students won $3,000, a trophy, a plaque and individual certificates.

Ms Tan said she will continue to open the competition to Marketing students in future because “competitions like these help the students to learn and grow.”

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Time Is In Your Hands

Working part-time as a student may not always be a bad thing.

Melvina Pramanta, a second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student, is a perfect example of how a student can juggle a part-time job and full-time studies with effective time management.

She has a busy schedule but still has the power to caution or inspire. The 18-year-old has held a part-time job since her first year here.

Yet, she has managed to achieve impressive academic results for each semester, with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.7 in her first year and 3.85 for the first semester of her second year in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP).

Currently working at FoodWorks, NP's newest lifestyle restaurant which opened in April, Melvina attributed her success to hard work and good time management.

“I have been in my studying time after work, sometimes even burning the midnight oil,” she shared. “Even if I’m busy, I still squeeze in time. Student online quizzes and tutorials, because it really helps me to remember what I had learnt in class.”

Like Melvina, Lee Chii Hui, 20, who graduated a top student at Nanyang Polytechnic despite working part-time as a service staff in a wine bar, had to work doubly hard to maintain her good results.

“I had to put in extra effort in order to keep up with my studies,” she added. “If classes start at eight, I would arrive at school seven to finish my tutorials. That was one of my ways of revise what I had learnt, so I always make it a point to finish tutorials.”

Not everyone, however, is able to cope with the excess workload. Some students are unable to make ends meet due to the financial strain these success stories inspire students to do likewise. Mr Vichneswaran S/o Thangavelu from Career Services urged students to think twice before taking up a part-time job, even if money is tight at home.

“Plan ahead for what you need to do and how much time you have to spare for work,” Mr Vichneswaran advised. “Experiment to see if you can cope with the additional load of working part-time before you commit to anything in a big way.”

“If your grades seem to be affected, you should quit the job and concentrate on your studies. If you’re in a financial fix at home, come see us at Students Services – we will help you.”

Indeed, there are plenty of benefits for students who get a taste of the working world while still in school. Both Melvina and Chii Hui like working part-time for the experience and learning opportunity, not just because of financial constraints.

Chii Hui said, “True, we do have Industrial Attachment Programmes in school, but while you’re at a company as a student, you don’t get a realistic feel of what is like in the real world working.”

“They still regard you as a student, so your responsibilities are limited, and the work that they give you is very superficial and essentially, the unimportant ones,” she added.

Melvina agreed, “As a worker, you learn how to manage people-to-people relations. I have learnt about the social skills, understanding and communication, and also know how to deal with people properly.”

Unfortunately, not everyone can experience these benefits and learning experiences without a cost. Noor Faizal bin Zamaludin, a third-year ECE student who has been working since he was 16, struggled with juggling both school and work. Now in his last semester in school, Faizal’s cumulative GPA is only 1.0.

The waiter at a café located at Robertson Quay realised that working at night affected his grades, but maintained it was something he had to do as he comes from a low-income family.

“I’m tired most of the time, because I don’t get to sleep much,” Faizal, 20, lamented. “It is also extra stressful, because I don’t have much time to study for exams. But I have to work to earn the money.”

For students facing difficulties with managing their time, Melvina stressed that studying smart is more important than studying hard.

“If you listen to the lectures and tutorials in school, you will know the gist of what is taught. So studying won’t be that hard,” she said. The capable 18-year-old, who is also involved in the Astronomy Club and the Hearing Impaired Club, added, “Always do your own work, or you’ll never know whether you understand the lesson.”

Though, the work experience is invaluable for students in preparation for the working life, most students are not able to handle the double workload of part-time time management and their hard work.

Chii Hui advised, “If you are planning to work while studying, you must be prepared to put in that extra effort. Plan your time well so you can maximise it don’t jeopardise your studies because you have to work.”

Mr Vichneswaran believes that if a student can cope with both work and study, working can actually be a good motivational tool for students to do even better in school.

He explained, “If you can manage your time well, working part-time can push you to optimise your study patterns and help you do better in school.”

On-Campus Jobs Might Be A Wiser Choice After All

By Junice Kow

The convenience and flexibility that entice students to take up on-campus part-time jobs, the above-average pay given is part of the main lure as well.

“The hourly rate for all on-campus part-time jobs is a standard $5.50, which is pretty good for most students,” said Mr Vichneswaran S/o Thangavelu, a Student Services Manager.

Students are encouraged to balance their academic and social lives. It is not a new story but it is free.

“I believe that students who work part-time can gain valuable work experience and improve their communication skills,” he said. “This can be especially useful for students who are looking for jobs after graduation.”

Mr Vichneswaran advised students to choose part-time jobs that are relevant to their field of study.

“Students should consider the nature of the job and the amount of time they are willing to commit,” he said. “It is important to balance work and studies.”

Jobs available on campus

- Student Admin Helpers
- Student Technical Helpers
- Ushers
- Telemarketers
- Coaching Assistants
- Courseware design assistant
- Web/Graphic assistant
- Student writers
- Lifeguard
- Talent/artistic based jobs
Owning a credit card might sound like a key to financial freedom, but without a regular income, will Singaporean youths be enslaved instead? GRACE CHUA reports

When Joel Yap, a third-year student from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Multimedia & Animation, saw a pair of shoes he liked from Fred Perry, he knew he had to get it. The price: $249. Payment? Not a problem with an easy swipe of his credit card.

The 20-year-old might not be earning a steady income right now, but getting his hands on his first credit card is possible, thanks to a new credit card targeted at tertiary students and those without income.

CitiBank is the first to introduce the Citi Clear Card – a credit card that does not require applicants to meet the standard criteria of earning $30,000 per year, in July. Application is open to young adults aged 18 and above. However, those below 21 need parental consent before applying.

Targeting a new clientele, the Citi Clear Card has set the credit limit at $500 to minimise the risk of youths spending too much. Cardholders will have their cards blocked immediately if the minimum monthly payment is not made on time.

While the credit limit is low, the interest rate for this newly launched card is set at 28 percent per annum for outstanding balances. This is four percent higher than the standard rate for most credit cards.

With Christmas, the season of spending, drawing near, youths might be more susceptible to the temptation of spending more than they can afford. 

Mr. Samson Tanuwidaja, a personal banker at Citibank, explained, "Credit cards instantly give you more spending power, and instead of just having your allowance to spend, you have an additional amount 'given' by the credit card to buy more.

The launch of the card has caused much debate as to whether youths are able to handle the hefty responsibility of owning a card and spending within their means.

Mr. Tanuwidaja added that getting a credit card is not necessarily bad, but first-time cardholders should be clear that they are undertaking a heavy commitment.

When I got my card, I ended up splurging and in two weeks, I had already reached the credit limit.

Jamie Lim
Second-year Nursing

"Such a high interest rate serves as an indication for cardholders to control what they spend. At the end of the day, I am sure they are unwilling to pay so much just for interest alone," he said.

But in Joel's case, the high interest rate did not deter him from owning a credit card. Joel confessed that he does not pay his bills promptly all the time due to the lack of funds, but he reasoned, "I know I might be spending more by paying all the interests, but at least I get what I want immediately."

He admitted that he borrowed money from his parents first to pay off his bills. Joel is not the only youth struggling to maintain his card.

Jamie Lim, a second-year Nursing student shared her experience of owning the Citi Clear Card. "When I got my card, I ended up splurging in two weeks, and I had already reached the credit limit. My mum was really furious, so I ended up cancelling the card," she recalled. It was her mother who paid off her bills before terminating her first credit card.

Pan Hong Yi, 20, a third-year Business Studies student and a recent subscriber of the Citi Clear Card, views it differently. He explained that getting a credit card has made him more responsible.

He said, "By getting a card of my own, it's a step to start handling my own finances. I am sure I am capable of handling one as I will be paying my bills with what I earn giving tuition to secondary students.

Hong Yi was giving tuition even before he applied for the card. He enjoys the free entry to places such as Zoo, Velvet Underground, Phuture and Power House at James Powerstation.

Tribune did a small survey in NP to find out the monthly allowance of 20 students from different schools. It was found that the average pocket money received by nine students aged between 18 to 21 is about $300 per month. With an amount just enough to cover daily expenses and necessities, what are the possibilities of young adults falling into credit card debt?

Mr. Bryce Tan, a financial advisor consultant working at Phillip Securities, noted that one of the reasons young credit card users check up so much debt might be due to the choice of lifestyle.

"Many youths seek an extravagant lifestyle. They expect to dress well, party well, and eat well. All these consume money. To keep up with a certain lifestyle, they end up spending more than what they can afford," he said.

The Business Times reported that as of August, bankruptcies are getting younger. About four in 10 of them were aged between 21 to 40, which is six percent more in this age group from 2001, mainly due to credit card debt. The report noted that more affluent Singaporeans are falling prey to insolvency.

Some young people are wary of these pitfalls. An example is Eugene Lim, 20, a third-year student from Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, who is adamant about not getting a credit card just yet. "I can't even handle my money in my savings account; I really doubt I can handle having a credit card even though it has a low credit limit.

Though he admitted the perks offered by credit cards such as getting free entry to the hottest clubs and discounts at restaurants are tempting, he would rather pay using his debit card.

For some parents, allowing their child to have a credit card is a no-go. Mr. Robert Tan, a manager, gives $300 each month to his 20-year-old daughter as allowance, believes in teaching his daughter that money is not easy to earn. "She has yet to receive her first paycheck. If she wants a credit card, she will not be able to pay it," he said.

As Mr. Tan put it, "Credit cards are an asset for leverage when managed wisely. It could be a man-made disaster if managed otherwise."
Art Therapy Can Help Students To Open Up

BY JASMINE OH
jasmine.oh@tzu.edu@gmail.com

With crayons, charcoal, paint and even clay in hand, students from the School of Humanities (HMS) attended a workshop on self-discovery and confidence in art therapy.

The enrichment programme named The Art of Being, began in late August and lasted for four months. Students from the Psychology & Community Services (PCS) course and Early Childhood Education course took part in this therapeutic workshop.

According to Dr. Joanna Tan, the art therapist who conducted the workshop, "Art therapy is a method of treatment that combines psychotherapy techniques and therapy with creative process."

It aims to help participants gain personal insight into their life, issues and thoughts.

"I believe that art therapy has taught me how to love myself, granted me another channel to put forth myself and to get in touch with myself," said Wei Shi Xiao, 18, a first-year PCS student who participated in the programme.

"During the therapy, I was asked to appraise my flaws and embrace them as a part of me," said Wei Shi Xiao. "I have learnt that I am not perfect but it is my flaws and my strength that will mould and make me unique."

"In art therapy, the therapist does not diagnose the patient's 'ills'," said Dr. Glenys Benson, a certified art therapist.

Instead, the session is spent discussing the artwork that is produced to help participants with their problems and concerns.

In art therapy, participants can simply communicate via the art they produce.

"Healing and art can happen in silence," said Ms. Tan.

"For most people, we all have psychological issues that we manage to overcome, but there are some who can't," explained Ms. Benson.

"Sometimes, we may not know we are bothered,..." she added.

"We facilitate the process where the person can feel safe enough to express themselves," said Ms. Tan.

The underlying problem can come out through art therapy sessions," added Ms. Benson.

According to Mr. Choo Chee Hoon, Director of HMS, the programme is mainly introductory. Participants can visualise their emotions through playing with art and craft and they can do so individually or in a group.

"During the last session, we did canvas painting and five people were to share and paint on one canvas," recalled Shu Xia.

"With five people, each with a distinct personality painting what we want, I thought the result would be amazing," she added.

"However, in the process of painting, laughter and music filled the room. We were all working towards a common goal and in the end, each canvas painting turned out to be a beautiful art piece by itself.

"Students with problems and issues really benefitted from this programme," said Ms. Chong Yin Meng, a lecturer at HMS. "Their self-esteem grew and they have become less frustrated. These are more hope in them, more positive thinking."

Ms. Tan said, "I am impressed by a handful of students who really went deep and are now sorting out their issues themselves. They are more confident in handling change and their fears. Besides personally benefiting from the activity, PCS students can apply art therapy in their studies.

Shu Xia added sharing sessions about our artwork required them to show "empathy and a non-judgemental attitude", which are important qualities for their future in the helping profession.

FMS Inks New Agreement With Beijing University

BY CHARYN OOH
charyn.oooh@gmail.com

Film And Media (FMS) students will get to work with a Beijing University to produce documentaries - thanks to a new agreement between Communication University of China (CUC) and Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NAP).

The Deputy Dean of School of Television and Journalism, Professor He Suling and the Director of FMS, Mr. Henry Tan, inked a deal that covers a new collaboration between the two schools for the next four years.

For starters, 36 FMS students will be selected to go on a two-week trip to Beijing in February 2008. Students of both schools will get to exchange views and research on a video project, articles for Singapore magazines and possibly a coffee table book.

There are also plans to create a summer school programme, which is a fusion of CUOC and FMS modules and will include lessons about China and its culture. FMS students may also get to write about the Beijing Olympics.

Teaching staff from CUC will come to learn the NAP model of education and FMS staff will likewise be sent to China for the same.

Mr. Tan said this memorandum as a good opportunity for students as well as staff in both schools to benefit from one another.

"The media is a very global business, and therefore, we want to be engaged with the region as well as the larger sphere. If you look at the scheme of things, you can't ignore the rise of China," he said.

Mr. Tan added that China is only one part of the plan to reach out into the region and that FMS has plans to send students to other parts of the ASEAN region.

"Our students must be able to be comfortable enough to apply their skills in a variety of settings. We've actually started sending our students to various places, to Indonesia and to Thailand. This is to allow them to learn to apply their skills in different environments," he said.

Mr. Tan said, "At the end of the day, we want students who are able to adapt to working in different cultures, so they need to be familiar with the terrain, the culture, the values of different societies."

School Of ICT Launches New Diploma Plus Programme

BY PAUL KO
paul.teohp@gmail.com

Students from the School of Infocomm Technology (ICT) looking to advance their studies in mathematics will benefit from the Diploma Plus Certificate in Advanced Computing Mathematics (CACM) that was launched in February.

ICT has been offering enrichment programmes in mathematics to its students for three years. Students who benefited from such programmes when they were in secondary school then went on to universities, sparked the birth of CACM. It is an optional add-on to a Diploma course and is its aim to improve the mathematical foundations of students so they are better equipped for the challenges in computing degree courses.

"Taking CACM is in many ways similar to taking Higher Chinese," said programme leader Mr. Terence Choo. "It is not for everyone because it demands certain entry requirements, good time management skills and hard work."

Eligible students need to complete three extra modules, one for each semester. CACM will cover Advanced Statistics, Calculus and Discrete Mathematics. Each module is worth three credit units but will not contribute towards the Grade Point Average (GPA) of a Ngee Ann Polytechnic Diploma. Instead, students who complete the programme will be awarded a Diploma Plus Certificate in addition to their diploma.

Although CACM can prove to be challenging, Mr. Choo said that the benefits make it worth completing the course for.

He explained that CACM students will find it easier when they go to a university because the course has been tailored to suit many university curriculum. Students will find that they can easily understand and solve high-level mathematical problems.

"In this way, CACM serves as a bridge for students to cross over to a more advanced education," he added.

Michael Koh, 17, a first-year Information Technology student took it on as he felt that the field of mathematics is essential for taking a computing degree course and having CACM will further enhance his ability to survive in a university.

"I want to pursue a career as a software engineer and although CACM does not necessarily give me the absolute credentials necessary for the job, it will definitely make the road easier," he added.

Only first-year ICT students who have completed their Level 1.1 modules can sign up for CACM by applying directly to the school. Only 40 students will be accepted (see box for entry requirements).
MOT Students Have An Edge In Maritime Industry

BY JASMINE COH
jasmine.tibus@gmail.com

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) has collaborated with SPRING, an initiative to initiate the Marine & Offshore Technology (MOT) Centre of Innovation (COI) on campus. The $5.5 million COI will help marine and offshore companies to maintain and enhance their competitiveness. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), develop new and innovative products, services and processes, according to the NP press release.

The COI is expected to encourage SMEs to adopt technology to help them to compete effectively in the global market. This comes at a time when more students are drawn to MOT. The number of students who choose MOT as first-choice for the 2007/2008 academic year has increased almost three-fold from 49 to 158. The cut-off mark for MOT has dropped from 18 points last year to 16 points this year.

Over the years, MOT has trained students to become engineers, project supervisors and ship designers in meeting the growing demand for them.

The core modules include Ship-Designing, Thermodynamics, Naval Architecture and Project Management.

In their third-year, MOT students can choose to specialise in Design or Oil and Gas technology.

Students can look forward to a vibrant job market in the marine industry when they graduate.

According to Mr David Chin, Executive Director of the Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF), “Our shipyard operators provide 80 percent of the world’s jack-ups and orders for oil rigs have been lined up till 2012.

Aside from providing opportunities for practical experience through the COI, NP has also ensured that MOT students have access to scholarships in maritime industry.

For example, Tan Jun Wei, a third-year MOT student, 19, is a beneficiary of the Association of Singapore Maritime Industries (ASMI) scholarships, which are offered yearly to students in the Mechanical Engineering (ME) Division.

He will be given $30,000 over the span of three years and is already “considered accepted” according to Jun Wei, into Simbawang Shipyard’s scholarship sponsor.

There are two types of ASMI scholarships. Aside from what is offered to Jun Wei, which is only for Singaporeans, another scholarship provides $5,000 a year for five years. The latter is offered to both foreigners and Singaporeans.

Students taking other courses in the ME division are also finding lucrative jobs offers in the maritime industry.

Mr Chin, has been an increasing demand for more talents in the maritime ancillary service sectors, including ship brokerage, ship financing, ship planning and logistics, maritime arbitration and ship surveying.

According to Mr Clarence Chong, an Assistant Project Manager at Maritimehub Pte Ltd, new entrants to the industry have to be prepared for the demanding conditions.

He said the working hours are often erratic due to the nature of the job, especially for those working in the shipyards. Employees might even have to be on 24-hour standby, even though the pay is good.

Ms Loura Follis, General Manager of Simpson, Spence & Young Consultancy and Research (Singapore) and a member of SMF’s advisory panel, said the dynamic maritime industry is set to expand further due to China’s growing economy.

She said, “China’s consumption of imported raw materials mean that shipping services in the Asia Pacific region are in heavy demand - a trend that is likely to continue and require new talent as a result.”

Fitting Education In The Palm Of Your Hand

Nursing students get hands on with PDAs as their personal hospital assistants.

BY CHABY COH
charity.tibus@gmail.com

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) has taken “hands-on” education to the next level for its Nursing students by condensing essential information into the palm of their hands.

NP spent $87,000 buying 220 personal digital assistants (PDAs) for third-year Nursing students to aid them in their attachment period which began in August.

The PDAs can be used in the school or in the hospitals where the students are attached to.

They provide a whole host of information on diseases, drugs, procedures and even a list of commonly used phrases in dialect and Malay.

Chia Yin Ping, a third-year Nursing student, said that it is a useful reference to have by her side.

“It is very important to know what medications I am serving or dispensing. So I can check out an unknown drug in the PDA and it gives me a quick reference when I am serving medications to my patients,” she said.

This PDA initiative is believed to be the first of its kind in Asia for nursing students and is intended to enhance the learning experience during attachments and to boost the image of the degree.

Dr Phang Chiew Hui, the Director of the School of Health Science said that the PDAs “will revolutionise the mode of nursing education”. She hoped that this high-tech approach will encourage more young Singaporeans to take up nursing.

Students can also listen to instructional clips recorded by their lecturers, said Dr Phang.

“This will improve their communication skills and good communication with patients will translate into quality patient care,” she added.

The PDA can also act as a testing system to ensure that students are sufficiently knowledgeable before being allowed to perform their nursing skills on the patients, added Dr Phang.

Dr Phang also said that students would be automatically assessed by the PDA’s electronic logbook which updates itself based on information that is captured and collected in the polytechnic’s server.

This system aids in determining the student’s competency level.

Students’ records of their learning experience in the PDAs will also allow lecturers to track and understand the needs of individual students.

They are required to write reflections and thoughts in the PDA which include the problems and difficulties they face at work.

Lecturers can then be updated and will be able to help the students whenever needed.

This directs students in a practical way and Yin Ping explained that the PDA “is really handy and although thick textbooks are so much more in depth, it is good to get a glimpse of the current situation that needs immediate reference”.

Students have to return the PDAs to the school once they complete their attachments in hospitals.

“It is a pity if I can only use my PDA till the end of my attachment in 2008,” Yin Ping lamented.
Always Something Extra At Red Camp Four

A paches, Centurions, Ninjas, Spartans and Vikings stormed the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NYP) in the Roadmap to Explore and Discover (RED) Camp, with Student Leaders (SLs) at the forefront of the journey of exploration for visiting O-Level students. There were more than 2,400 O-Level students signing up, double of last year’s 1,200 participants. This tribal bonding scenario for RED Camp Four on 21 to 23 November, was the brainchild of NYP student Ambassador and Corporate Communications.

RED Camp is a three-day camp aimed to give the O-Level students a taste of a polytechnic student’s life.

Mr Adrian Phuah, Corporate Communications manager and the main person behind RED Camp, said, “The element of students planning the RED Camp was critical in making the camp vibrant on a personal level.”

This is the first time students were so involved in planning the camp at the start of the conceptualisation for the camp.

“Planned for students, by students. It’s very heartfelt, I guess we would have a slightly better impression of what the RED campers would like to know about,” he said.

Marvin Kang, 26, a third-year Business Studies student, was in charge of the various committees for RED Camp.

The SL committee had a two-day SL Camp to strengthen the bond among the SLs on 12 and 13 October.

Ang Jin Hui, 20, a second-year Information Technology student and Marvin’s camp assistant, said that the SL camp made a big difference in uniting the SLs before the actual RED Camp.

Mohammed Faizal Bin Azhar, 19, a first-year Product Design & Innovation student, had been to RED Camps Two and Three as a participant, and this was his first time planning for the camp as an SL. He agreed that the presence of the SLs in the RED Camps he had attended made “everything seem fresh and welcoming.”

This involved no small sacrifices as the SLs had to juggle planning for the camp while concentrating on their studies.

“At least 10 hours were put in every week in planning for the camp by each committee that we were in. However, I feel it’s a matter of compromise and balancing it out,” said Hannah Alphonso, 19, a second-year Early Childhood student, who was in charge of the SLs publicity committee.

Despite leading the various committees, the SLs, however, did not have to plan for everything. The logistics of the camp were mainly taken care of by the staff.

Although the main concept remained similar, the content of RED Camp Four had been largely changed. Participants were broken into five tribes instead of the last year’s colour-coded groups.

Another new addition to the camp, a mass dance choreographed by the SL committee, brought the element of fun and bonding to the students through synchronised dancing.

The students also had catered meals from eateries like Ramen Ten, Breko and Yoshinoya.

The RED Campers ended off their camp at Hop Night, at the convention centre. A guest appearance by a DJ from Zouk brought the smoke and alcohol-free clubbing experience to the RED Campers, most of whom have never experienced it before.

Mr Phuah said that this would only be the beginning for the RED Campers. There will be more in store for them.

“Corporate Communications has innovated a new programme called RED Camp Plus, which will provide the graduating O-Level students with more in-depth feel of what they will be experiencing in a particular course if they choose it.

“It will be run by the various faculties, and students can choose to attend the ones they are more interested in,” he said.

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义安理工学院中文系学生“东”游记

42学生浸濡中国19周

提笔：武楠

为期19个星期的中国之游，义安理工学院中文系中文专业课程的42名学生将返回新加坡，为中国之旅划下完美句点。

古色的东方——中国，狮城温暖室内的蜡烛花发出了怎样的异彩呢？

第一回 课堂心“经”——林佳恒

“笔记”实录：在新加坡，老师会把学习资料上传网络。以方便同学阅读，在中国可没有这项便利。听讲时就往往首处于"警戒"状态，生怕错过老师所讲的重点，这倒是个让学习者们的好方法。

历史：文化让她说平淡——北京之旅

刚到北京，觉得没有什么。空旷的街道，看上去没有什么文化气息，但是北京的确实有一种——历史、文化让她的感受格外的特殊。

中国人不少，我漫步在天安门广场，这地方散发着强烈的气息，故宫的威严，这是一座历史的建筑。也让我看到了北京这座城市的历史和文化。

第二回 钟声大到耳里震——卢子灵

在中国的时间虽然只是短暂的，但是却让我深深感受到中国的文化底蕴，让我深深地感受到中国的魅力。

荷兰村，湿故知新的宁静洲

咖啡馆——鲜艳的西方宁静

荷兰村的星巴克，店内虽是长长的大马，可是店铺内，其内部氛围却如世外桃源般

荷兰村的星空下，是咖啡馆的深夜，这里的时间与这里的空间仿佛融合在一起，显得格外宁静。

哈根达斯——一刹那的清凉

荷兰村的哈根达斯，是咖啡馆的深夜，这里的时间与这里的空间仿佛融合在一起，显得格外宁静。

Tribune 中文版  指导老师  陈颖  黄子琛  责任编辑 林琳  武楠 (Our VoiceBox 339)
lifestyle & entertainment

FMS Studios Backdrop To Wedding Photos

Remembering their polytechnic days in their wedding photos.

By Elaine Ng
elainen@nu.edu.sg

ike many students, Low Shir Li, 27, and Daryl Chua, 29, first met getting ready for their wedding day before tying the knot years later. However not many go back to their school to take their wedding photos.

The Film, Sound & Video (FSV) graduates returned to the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) in October for their wedding photoshoot in the school’s studios.

The couple, who graduated a year ago from the University of Queensland, Australia, decided to get married this December after six years of courtship.

They adopted an unconventional but sentimental approach for their wedding photoshoot, and hired a professional photographer to take pictures of them in the multi-track studio and the corridors of FMS.

“It’s nostalgic. Perhaps to the others, the FMS studios may not be that special, but to us, it brings a lot of good memories, because the times we spent there were the best days of our lives,” said Daryl.

Shir Li explained that FSV students spend almost every day in the FMS studios, especially during heavy assignment periods. The couple was classmates in their first year, and then assigned to different classes in the next two years.

“I remember we were supposed to do a 3D project together in our first year, but somehow there was a misunderstanding and we ended up pairing up with other people,” Shir li said.

“Maybe it was probably one of the times we missed each other,” Shir Li recalled.

“We weren’t very close friends. I knew him as ‘the guy in black’, she continued. Shir Li found Daryl charismatic, but most importantly, he was reliable and understanding. “He guided me through the good and bad times,” said Shir Li.

Daryl described his fiancée as his perfect match, “the one [he] wants to spend the rest of [his] life with”. “She’s gorgeous, extremely considerate and independent,” he said.

Daryl proposed to Shir Li in March during one of their trips to Bintan. “It was very romantic. We were canoeing in the middle of the sea and he popped the question with a ring,” recalled Shir Li.

Prestige Card Offers More Perks

By Ahmad Ali
ahmad.ali@nu.edu.sg

S

o one can look forward to discounts at more outlets in Singapore with the new Ngie Ann Polytechnic (NP) Prestige Card.

The Prestige Card is an annual card scheme planned and provided by the Student’s Union (NPSU) for NP students.

It offers price discounts at various fashion, food, beauty and entertainment outlets, such as NewUrbanMale, Toni&Guy and Spizas. Students can collect their free cards during Prestige Card fairs through their students’ years in NP. The NPSU, together with campus radio station Radio Heartawave and the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT), launched the new Prestige Card on 22 October in the Atrium.

A total of 440 students visited the booth and got their cards on the spot.

Teo Jie Wei, 19, third-year student from Electrical Engineering and Welfare Secretary of NPSU, said, “There are a lot of new participating outlets this year, and we’re still sourcing for more retailers.

“We even got restaurants in hotels who are offering discounts for their buffet.”

Serene Chia, 19, third-year student from Quality Management and Engineering and Project Chairman of NPSU, said, “The previous card scheme focused on fashion and entertainment, but we’re expanding into food and hotels.”

The NPSU also plans to incorporate mobile phone discounts and is looking into different companies right now.

New on the list of participating outlets are Grand Plaza Park Hotel along Orchard Road, Sunway, and two online apparel boutiques, Visual Trap (http://www.visualtrap.com) and Asia Styler (http://asiastyler.com/shop).

“We know it’s the online shopping trend right now, so we’re trying to keep up with it,” explained Jie Wei.

Besides the new outlets, Jie Wei pointed out that this year’s Prestige Card is customised to the owner.

A yellow label with the campus logo and the student’s name in large, cursive font is pasted at the back of the card.

The bar code number has been replaced with the student’s identity number.

Ng Wei Ting, a third-year Chinese Studies student said, “I like the idea of customising the Prestige Card because there is sense of ownership.”

“It seems that NPSU is putting in more effort to encourage students to make use of the card.”

The NP will be organising a second Prestige Card fair in one to two months’ time to further publicise the card and to showcase the updated list of outlets.

Jie Wei wants to remind students that they will still be able to collect their cards at that fair. “We also disclosed that NPSU will be launching their official website soon, so students can look out for updates on the Prestige Card and other events.”

Whipping Up Wonder Creams

By Amriah Ahmad
ahmad.ali@nu.edu.sg

A

pring cosmetologists island-wide were found concocting their very own cosmetic products in Ngie Ann Polytechnic (NP) laboratories in September.

In conjunction with science.07, NP’s School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSTC) launched three Laboratory Enrichment Programmes—one of which is “Cosmeceuticals, Science of Cosmetics”—as an outreach programme to 94 Secondary Two and Three students from Ngie Ann Secondary School, Pei Hwa Secondary School, Woodlands Ring Secondary School and Fairfield Secondary School, to name a few.

NP is taking the next step in bringing the latest in the burgeoning cosmetic market to our students, as well as potential students, said Ms Sally Soh, the lecturer who handled the programme.

This will simultaneously provide them with an insight into the industry and prepare them for what they can do in the field after graduation.

Cosmetical, said Ms Soh, is the marriage between cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

Instead of regular cosmetics that make women look good, cosmeceutical products promise drug-like effects namely anti-ageing, anti-bacterial and whitening.

There is a strong slant towards the concept of anti-ageing in the hands-on for the three-hour programme, one that is ubiquitous in the global cosmetic market today.

Ms Soh explained that anti-ageing cosmeceuticals are best-sellers in the market today.

Participants were given the chance to formulate their own cosmeceutical products such as sun-block, acne cream and medicated lipid balm.

The highlight of the programme was learning students experiment and play around with their concoctions, colourings and the different fragrances as their creativity led them.

In a field so often deemed as “dry”, she added, “The main aim of this hands-on session was to keep them interested and to attract them.”

Ms Soh agreed that there is fierce competition because of the endless product innovations in this rapidly developing globalised industry.

Apart from exposing participants to the field of Cosmetic Science, those programmes act as a teaser for LSTC’s admission drive. The strategy was to give participants a taste of what the Diploma in Pharmacy Science course in NP has to store for them.

Participants took away with them a substantial amount of scientific concepts as well as a deeper understanding of the skin, its response to chemicals, anti-oxidants and vitamins and how these ingredients work.

One of the benefits would be being able to make more informed choices the next time they buy their own cosmetics.

Now in its seventh year, science.07 is a month-long annual national event to promote greater public awareness and appreciation of the roles played by science, technology and biomedicine in Singapore today.

For more information, visit www.sciencemedia.sg
Dragon Boaters Top IVP And Nationals

BY ANISAH AHMAD

It was at the 25th Singapore River Regatta where the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Dragon Boat (NPDB) team made a comeback and bagged Championship titles under another on 3 November.

Charles Wong, 20, a third-year Electrical Engineering student and President of NPDB said, “We did not focus on the outcome goal, but rather we focused more on our process. A lot of emphasis was put into our technique, which we spent a lot of time perfecting.”

NP clinched the Gold for the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) Games, beating teams from 10 other tertiary institutes like the National University of Singapore, National Technological University and Republic Polytechnic. At the Singapore Dragon Boat Festival in July, NP had failed to clinch any title.

NP won the titles “National Championship (Men) Grand Final Champion” out of 42 teams and the “Tertiary (Men) Champion” out of 10 tertiary institutes that were in the same heat. It was also runner-up positions for three other races.

Jonathan Jung, 19, a third-year Biotechnology student and Vice-President of NPDB, shared that despite not finishing first for all races, they “still gave the other teams a run for their money” as the difference in timings were not far apart.

The team, however, is not complacent. “Winning the championship is easy but defending the title is difficult. We will have to work even harder for future races,” said Charles.

International Students Compete In NP

BY A.J. RICHARD

Three international students of NPDB were selected to participate in the 2007 IVP Games. The selection was based on the students’ performance in the NP’s internal competition. The three students are from China, India and Indonesia.

The selection process was rigorous and only the top performers were chosen. The three students have shown exceptional skills in rowing and have contributed to the team’s success.

The team is hopeful that their efforts will be rewarded in the upcoming IVP Games. They are looking forward to representing NPDB and making the institution proud.

Rowing Bonds Staff And Students

BY ENG YUWEN

Tides were turned as the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Dragon Boat team went for the Gold in the IVP Games.

Staff and student rowers gathered at the NP Canoeing Club to prepare for the event. The team, led by the captain, dedicated their hard work to maintaining their team’s momentum and securing victory.

The electrical engineer team, under the guidance of the vice-president of the Canoeing Club, put in extra effort to ensure the students’ success. They dedicated their time to perfecting their technique and ensuring that the students were well-prepared.

The team members were determined to win, and their hard work paid off. They emerged victorious, bringing glory to the NP Canoeing Club.

For the first time ever, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) hosted FunBuzz’07, a telematch tournament which was organised by the Overseas Students Association (OSA) for international students on 12th November at the Sports Complex.

The telematch event was attended by the international students who were eager to participate. There were games like knitting, eating sweets, and playing charades.

The event was well attended, with participants from various countries attending. It was a great opportunity for students to meet new people and enjoy a fun-filled day.

Some of the games that were organised were dodge ball, an obstacle relay race, a shooting game, dunking as well as arm wrestling and jousting. Ilang Pranata said that he had attended the event and that it had been in the planning stages for the past three months. It was a great event that allowed the students to come together and enjoy some friendly competition.

And they took a lot of time to prepare for this event. I also met my old friends whom I’ve met for a long time since I’ve been here, and also made new friends. I look forward to it next year,” he added.

“I think the outcome of this event has been very positive,” Ilang Pranata said. “I believe more students will take part next year.”

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Students Unaware of NAPFA Training Programmes

By Silene Yap
silene@tibn.com@gmail.com

With the compulsory National Physical Fitness Performance Award (NAPFA) test conducted throughout the year, third-year students at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NAP) may not know that they are required to participate in training programmes organised by their schools. Even then, there are students who are unaware of such programmes and still turn up unprepared for the test.

The NAP website states that third-year students preparing for their NAPFA test “can approach the Student Development Section (SDS) for assistance in the area of NAPFA training... demonstrations and NAPFA preparation talks are also conducted... by the SDS.”

However, Mr Gerald Ang, 36, Student Development Manager and coordinator of the NAPFA Scheme, said, “Individual schools in NAP are required to run their own training programmes and the SDS will only provide assistance where needed.”

Students are informed of the test dates through their schools and are required to attempt the NAPFA test before graduating. Their test results will be reflected in the students’ academic transcripts.

According to Mr Ang, NAP receives $15 from the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) for every student who achieves a Gold or Silver Award in their NAPFA test. This monetary incentive is channeled back to the students in the form of a new programme.

The MINDEF Physical Fitness Performance Award scheme for Learning Institutes is aimed at raising the physical fitness profile of pre-university students. Administered based on the NAPFA performance of the school, the monetary incentive awarded is intended to be used to promote physical fitness, such as buying or maintaining sports equipment or disbursing directly to students.

According to Heikal Shafuddin, a third-year Mass Communication student, felt that “students should be entitled to a more appealing incentive to encourage better performance in our NAPFA”.

While the SDS had previously organised NAPFA training programmes, these were eventually abolished due to lack of attendance among students due to time constraints.

Since then, individual schools have taken the initiative to organise mass training sessions to prepare students for NAPFA.

One such initiative is the Electrical Engineering (EE) Jogging Club, made up of 70 third-year EE male students.

The EE lecturer and NAPFA coordinator, Mr Low Thian Chye, ensures that all students eligible for National Service (NS) enrollment participate in the club’s weekly activities.

According to Kok Boon Hwee, 20, a third-year EE student and club committee member, the club conducts compulsory training with six sessions held over a month before the NAPFA test.

For the ZI Xing, 21, a third-year Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) student, such compulsory training sessions were extremly helpful in preparing students for the NAPFA test. ZI Xing eventually received a Gold Award for his NAPFA test.

Even with such help provided, there are still students who choose not to participate in such sessions. Dons Chiew, 19, a third-year Banking & Financial Services student, is one of many students who adopt a “wait-and-see” attitude and is unsure of his NAPFA test dates or of any existing training programmes organised by the School of Business & Accountancy.

Boon Hwee felt that third-year students had the responsibility towards the NAPFA test, considering the effort made by the schools to help its students.

However, Janne Qucen, 19, a third-year ECE student said that “the apathetic attitude towards NAPFA could be due to heavy timetables or just plain laziness.”

A Head Start for Radio Control Club

By Calvin Yang
calvin@tibn.com@gmail.com

The Radio Control Club (RCC) is the latest Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) to be added to the existing list of clubs and societies, bringing the overall CCA count to 104.

Set up in April, the RCC has already tasted success by clinching first and third places in an Inter-Polytechnic Competition on 29 September organised by Singapore Polytechnic’s Radio Control Drifters, as well as second and third places in a four-hour Endurance Race.

“We took four months of planning to get this started. With the help and support of fellow students with the same interest and goal to set up the club, we made a dream into a reality,” said Wei Jie, 19, a third-year Electronics and Computer Engineering student and student advisor of the RCC.

The RCC has made its presence felt by frequent displays and popular advertising in online forums, according to Wei Jie. The RCC has demonstrated in the CCA Fiesta, F1 in Schools, the Ngee Ann Challenge, and Reading to Explore and Discover (RED) Camp held from 21 to 23 November.

“We aim to promote this hobby to everyone,” said Wei Jie, who stepped down as the president of the club in his final semester. “It is not a guys-only hobby as we do have female members, but this is no child’s play. It isn’t brainless driving or flying by rote.”

“Our club is mainly into the drifting and touring (grip racing) category with a few of our members owning radio control airplanes, helicopters, buggies and monster trucks,” he said.

I hope that in time, people will accept radio control as a hobby.

Sing Wei Jie
Student Advisor
Radio Control Club

But the sessions are more than just mastering the best drifting techniques. Wei Jie said, “To put our creativity to the test, we design our own car or helicopter body shells to make it stand out from the rest and offer our own DIY modifications.”

Wei Jie hopes his team will grow and persevere as a whole. Through team spirit, we have performed well at events and competitions, and without the support of our friends and members, we may not be where we are today. I hope that in time, people will accept radio control as a hobby.”

Reaching the Highest Pinnacle

It was all smiles despite the rain as adventure-lovers ran, abseiled and rappelled their way into the record books at Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s (NAP) inaugural adventure race on 20 October, the first for a polytechnic in Singapore.

Organised by the Adventure Ropes Course and volunteers from The Adventure Seekers and Outward Bounders, The Pinacle saw 44 teams competing in spite of the heavy downpour before flag-off. The rain, however, was not enough to dampen the high spirits of the participants.

Ms June Phoon, Assistant Student Development Manager at the Student Development and Alumni Relations Office, said, “It was really a challenge to organise the race for the first time.”

The Pinacle, which took the organisers five months to plan, saw participants completing various tasks along the way, including the highlight of the race - abseiling down a six-storey high building at the heart of the NP campus.

From a six-kilometre run along the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve to a one-kilometre tandem bike dash around the campus vicinity, the race distance was scaled down to accommodate participants from the four different categories - Staff/Alumni, Student Mixed, Student Men and Student Women’s.

Jenny Chan, Project Director for the event, explained, “We wanted the non-adventurous people to take part and have a chance to win. That’s why our race route was built to test teamwork and endurance.”

For Muhammad Raffuddin, 19, whose mere thought of the race was a challenge in itself, a member of the Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) invasion team, he said, “We felt that it would be a disadvantage for us as we do not know the race route well, unlike the other teams who were from NYP itself.”

Undeterred by the stumbling block, and his partner Oon Yan Chang, 19, emerged as the winners of the Students’ Mixed category, completing the race in just over two hours.

Initially, it didn’t occur to us whether we were able to grab the first position but I think that we deserved the top position after pushing ourselves really hard throughout the race,” Raffuddin added.

In the Student Men’s category, Henry Lee, 19, and Joe Ng, 19, both third-year Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) students, came out tops with a timing of one hour and 59 minutes despite a strong field of participants. Elsewhere, close friends Audrin Sue, 18, second-year Business Studies student, and Seah Xing Wei, 18, second-year ECE student, celebrated their victory in the women’s category with a respectable timing of two hours and 12 minutes.

Audrin told TheBorneo that the pair had no idea what adventure racing was about but “thought it would be cool to join in the fun”.

She added, “If there would be a race again next year, I am looking forward to it.”