

# TRIBUNE

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

Volume 37 - Issue 1 - October to December 2007



## Just Swipe It

Is your credit card clearing out your bank account?

Pg 5



## More Than Words

Get in touch with your inner child.

Pg 6

# Chill Out At New Student Lounge

BY ALICIA TAN  
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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 OurSpace@72, accommodating the most popular among the suggestions that have come in when names were sought among students and staff.

Liu Jiawen, 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



REST AND RELAX: (ABOVE AND ABOVE RIGHT) Artist's impression of the new student lounge includes plush seats and brightly-coloured decorations. (BOTTOM RIGHT) Students can also access the lounge from the road, which is more convenient than taking the lift. (RIGHT) Students will have an alternative place to eat and drink on campus. (Photos courtesy of Estate Management)

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 Yip, 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 drafts 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 peak 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 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.

Lest 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 overlooks 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



KONGSI'S GENEROSITY: Ngee Ann Polytechnic students will benefit from a \$15.6 million donation from annual donor the Ngee Ann Kongsi, presented to NP on 8 October. (FROM L TO R) Principal Mr Chia Mui Chiang, NP Council Chairman Mr Tan Hup Fui, Guest of Honour Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister of State, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Manpower, Ngee Ann Kongsi President and Honorary Treasurer Mr Teo Chiang Long, and Mr Richard Lee. (Photo courtesy of NP)

## Planting Seeds of Change

BY CALVIN YANG  
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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 contest.

In the Educational sector, NP will be sharing its expertise with three tertiary institutions in the region, including Sekayu Polytechnic in Musi Banyuwangi (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."



## Our Struggle To Manage Time And Money



BY CHANG QIAOLIN  
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While most people I know sleep in on Sundays, I wake up at 7.30 am, slap on thick makeup, put on a black long-sleeved top and a pair of black pants, slip on my black kitten heels and go to work as a cosmetics salesgirl at Raffles City.

I have been working part-time for two-and-a-half years, since completing my O-Levels. And sometimes I wonder if I should just go to the school labs to create my own line of makeup to sell [see pg 10], so I can be the one needing part-time workers, instead of being a part-time worker burning my weekends.

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 an 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 to an alarming sum.

I am reminded of a friend whose bills for his 10 credit cards snowballed 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 swiping his plastic. Whenever he felt he wanted something, he would apply for additional cards for the perks they offered, such as dining discounts.

At first, 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 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. ■

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**TRIBUNE**  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

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## More Students Want To Be Part Of TDP

BY CHERYL HOON  
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In a poll of 80 Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students done by **Tribune**, two in three students revealed that they would like to be included in events and workshops held by the Talent Development Programme (TDP).

Formally started in 2002, the TDP was designed to identify talented students early and develop them to excel.

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 Mun Kwok 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 Medalists Denise Tan who was awarded the Public Service Commission Scholarship, and Alvin Lim who was awarded the National University of Singapore (NUS) Global Merit Scholarship.



BEST OF THE BEST: A group of Talent Development Programme students listening intently to their schoolmate during the Scholarship Preparation Workshop on 1 September. (Photo courtesy of the TDP Unit)

Silver Medallist Ronald Yeo, 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 up the NUS Undergraduate Scholarship as the MoE scholarship required him to change his course of study.

Ronald might not have been offered the MOE scholarship if he did not get the chance to try out the sample psychometric test. "I was not in the TDP, and it was my lecturer who asked TDP to open up the sample test to me," he said.

The access to such crucial tests could possibly be why students who want to be in the programme but are not found the programme "elitist". 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 (elitism) 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 Laura Heng, 18, a second-year Early Childhood Education student.

Mr Mun clarified that the involvement in CCAs is not based on TDP criteria and is open to all students.

Lin Sicheng, 19, a third-year Biotechnology student, added, "It's just another reflection of the past primary school 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 stereotyping."

According to Joyce Lee, a first-year TDP student from Accountancy, this 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 scholarship-holders 'a package deal' of the various workshops, seminars and talks to enhance their potential," he explained.

According to Mr Mun, TDP students are also not "labelled" or identified in classes or tutorial 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 demand for any workshops, TDP unit is open to opening it up to interested students as well, subjected to availability of resources to support it".

If a school nominates the students with justification, the unit will be open to their participation. ■



## NP Graduates File Patent For Tennis Ball Retriever

BY YEHE WEI XUAN  
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Quality Management and Engineering graduates Zhang Kewang, 20, and Taufik Bin Jasmin, 21, filed a patent at the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore in May for their invention – a tennis ball retriever which can retrieve up to 100 balls as well as mop water off the tennis court.

Partly funded by Ngee Ann's EnterpriseZ! 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 waist-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.

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

## NP Top In Marketing Competition

BY JOYCE PEH  
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A team of third-year students emerged overall champion at the Annual International Marketing Competition organised by The Chartered Institute of Marketing, Singapore (CIMS), on 27 October.

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

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) beat 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, Teo Yi Fang, 19, and third-year Multimedia and Animation student, Loh Jun Wei, 19.

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

The panel of judges praised NP's team for their in-depth market analysis and strategic marketing concepts.

Dr Lim Cheng Hwa, 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 market."

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 (BA) had boosted the team's creativity.

Jun Wei's expertise in multimedia and animation was tapped on 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 Montessori International and a judge for the competition, said he would consider sponsoring the team's idea.

Ms Tan Lai Wan, Assistant Academic Manager of BA and advisor to 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".



PATENTED BY NP: QME graduates Zhang Kewang and Taufik Bin Jasmin with their invention. (Picture by: Zhang Kewang)

## FMS Alumni Win Nine Crowbar Awards

BY SELENE YAP  
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Four teams from the Ngee 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 Phuang, 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 Cheo, 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 Kam and Ms Kampira Dowsuparaj, 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 mates and his supervisor, Mr Adam Habib, for their honest and constructive comments.

"As this is our first real award... it



SETTING THE BAR: Film still from FMS students' final year specialist project, "Tan Xin". (Photo courtesy of Justicia Phuang)

would definitely give us the upper hand when applying for jobs in the industry considering that the Crowbar Awards is a distinguishing 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 Andie 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 Phuang  
Graduate  
Film, Sound & Video (FSV)

Mr Yip, the school is supportive of alumni working on projects and encourages current students to persevere. "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."



# Time Is In Your Hands

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

BY XU LITING  
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Melvina Prananta, 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.

It is not a new story but it 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 3.79 and 3.82 in her first year, and 3.85 for the first semester of her second year in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP).

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

"I have to slot in my studying time after work, sometimes even burning the midnight oil," she shared. "Even if I'm busy, I would still squeeze in time to do my online quizzes and tutorials, because it really helps me to remember what I had learnt in class."

Like Melvina, Lee Ci 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 said.

She added, "If classes start at eight, I would reach school at seven to finish my tutorials. That was one of my ways to revise what I have learnt, so I always make it a point to finish tutorials."

Not everyone, however, is able to cope with the excess workload. While these success stories may inspire students to do likewise, Mr Vickneshwaran 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



HARD AT WORK: Melvina working at GymWerkz during one of her breaks in between classes. (Picture by Xu Litling)

and how much time you have to spare for work," Mr Vicknesh 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 Ci Hui like working part-time for the experience and learning opportunity, not just because of financial constraints.

Ci 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 it is like in the real working world."

"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 relationships. You're surrounded by friends and lecturers in school who you can be comfortable with, but sometimes working with colleagues can be challenging. Because they are harsher with you, the more you have to be more responsible. These are things that you can't learn in school."

Working part-time helped Ci Hui pick up skills she could not have learnt in school.

"I think it is very important to learn through practical experience. When you apply for a part-time job, there is a greater sense of responsibility because you are there as a paid worker," she said.

"Things like customer service skills are very important in the working world, and because I already have prior experience working as a waitress, I was a lot more prepared for my current job now which requires me to interact with the customers all the time."

Unfortunately, not everyone can experience these benefits and learning experiences without a cost. Noor Faizal bin Zainudin, 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 tests and 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, advised, "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 without time management and sheer hard work.

Ci 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 Vicknesh 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 EUNICE KOW  
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Beside 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 \$6.50, which is pretty good for most students," said Mr Vickneshwaran s/o Thangavelu, Manager of Student Services. Food and Beverages jobs such as waiting tables pay around \$5.50 an hour.

Muhammad Tasnim, 19, a third-year Banking & Financial Services student is a customer service officer at GymWerkz. He said that compared to part-time work outside campus, the treatment and pay is much better in school. Tasnim rakes in about \$300 to \$400 a month for about 11 hours of work per week.

"My part-time job at the Information Technology (IT) Helpdesk Centres has

*These part-time jobs also open more doors of opportunities for students.*

Mr Vicknesh  
Manager  
Student Services

certainly given me a much-needed financial boost," said Joseph Low, 17, a first-year Biomedical Science student who works part-time helping other students with the installation of softwares on their laptops. He can choose to work at any of the three centres at any time he is free.

Mr Vicknesh said another advantage is that students' work schedule will be drawn

up to accommodate their Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) and school time table.

For students like Tasnim, who are very involved in both school and their CCAs, flexibility in work schedule for on-campus jobs have allowed him to juggle school, work and his CCA commitments.

Joseph also uses his long breaks to work at the IT Helpdesk Centres, so he usually works before or in between classes.

"Holding a part-time job in school also allows students to save on transport costs and time," said Mr Vicknesh.

He added, "These part-time jobs also open more doors of opportunities for students as they get to put what they learn to good use or learn new things while on the job."

Joseph said that his job at the IT Helpdesk Centres has been a great learning ground for him, as he has picked up technical skills such as troubleshooting and knowledge of NP software applications.

Students can get more information about available on-campus jobs at <http://np.jobscentral.com.sg/index.php>. ■

### 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



# Handling Credit Cards - Easier Said Than Done

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 balance. 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 to.

Mr Samson Tanuwidjaja, 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 Tanuwidjaja 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 student  
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, 19, a second-year Nursing student shared her experience of owning the Citi Clear Card. "When I got my card, I ended up splurging and in two weeks, I had already reached the credit limit. My mum was really

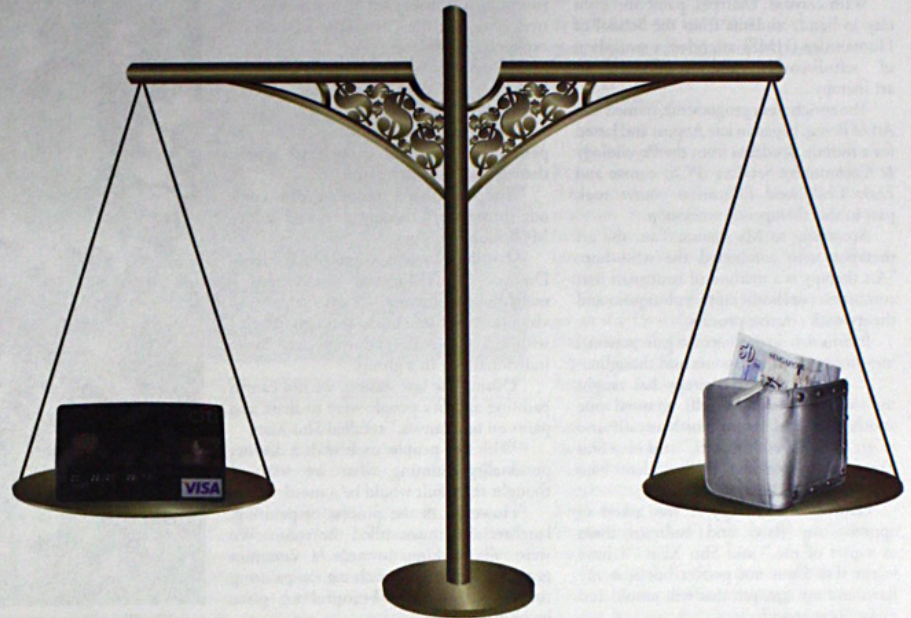


Illustration by: Stephanie Goh

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 for me 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 Zouk, Velvet Underground, Phuture and Power House at St 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 chock 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 constitute 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, bankrupts 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 up," 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."

## All About The Citi Clear Card

### Application Requirements:

- Must be a Singaporean or PR
- Eligible for 18 years old and above (Applicants below 21 require parental consent)
- Must not be an existing primary/basic Citibank Credit Card or Citibank Ready Credit customer

Credit Limit: \$500

Annual fee: \$28 (First year waived)

Repayment grace period: 25 days from the date of statement of account

Termination charges: A termination fee equivalent to the annual fee will be charged if you terminate your card account within 12 months from the approval of your card account

### Interest:

- Applied rate – 2.34 percent per month
- Effective interest rate – 28 percent per annum
- Minimum interest charge – \$3

Cash advance charges: \$10 or five percent of amount drawn, whichever is higher

### Late fees:

- a) A fixed charge of \$40 and
- b) Late payment interest charge computed in a manner similar to interest charges at a rate of 0.25 percent per month

Minimum payment: \$25 or one percent of the current balance, plus the sum of interest charges

Over limit fees: If the current balance on your Card exceeds your credit limit, an over limit fee of \$30 shall be charged to your card account.



# Art Therapy Can Help Students To Open Up

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

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

According to Ms Joanna Tan, the art therapist who conducted the workshop, "Art therapy is a method of treatment that combines psychotherapy techniques and theory 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 Hey Shu Xian, 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 Shu Xian. "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 work," said Ms Glenney Besson, a certified art therapist.

Instead, most of the session can be 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 Besson.

"Sometimes we may not know we are bothered, for example, by our parents' comments," 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 Besson.

According to Mrs Choo Cheh 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 Xian.

"With five people, each with a distinct personality painting what we want, I thought the result would be a mess!"

"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 Teng, a lecturer at HMS. "Their self-esteem grew and they have become less frustrated. There is more hope in them, more positive thinking."

Ms Tan said, "I'm impressed by a



COLOUR YOUR LIFE: Students express their inner selves through activities such as painting. (Picture by Deborah Ngil)

handful of students who really went deep and are now sorting out 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 Xian added sharing sessions about their artwork required them to show "empathy and a non-judgemental attitude", which are important qualities for her future in the helping profession. ■

## FMS Inks New Agreement With Beijing University

BY CHARITY GOH  
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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 (NP).

The Deputy Dean of School of Television and Journalism, Professor He Suliu 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 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 CUC 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 NP model of education and FMS staff will likewise be sent to China for the same. Mr Tan sees 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 cultures, the values of different societies." ■

## School Of ICT Launches New Diploma Plus Programme

BY PAUL HO  
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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 October.

ICT has been offering enrichment programmes in mathematics to its students for three years. Students who benefited from such programmes when they went on to universities, sparked the birth of CACM. It is an optional add-on to a basic ICT diploma. Its objective is 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 subsequent 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

### CACM Entry Requirements

- Passes in all Level 1.1 Modules
- Minimum GPA of 3.0 based on Level 1.1 results. Grade "B" minimum in either Computing Mathematics or Business Statistics

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 curricular. 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 GOH  
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) has collaborated with SPRING Singapore to initiate the Marine & Offshore Technology (MOT) Centre of Innovation (COI) on campus. The \$5.5 million COI "will help marine and offshore companies, especially Small-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 chose MOT as first-choice for the 2007/2008 academic year has increased almost three-fold from 49 to 138. The cut-off point 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 Drawing, Thermodynamics, Naval Architecture and Project Management.

In their third-year, MOT students can choose between specialising 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 shipyards

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 the 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 Sembawang Shipyards, his 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 job offers in the marine industry.

Said Mr Chin, "There has been an increasing demand for more talents in the maritime ancillary service sectors, including ship brokering, 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



AT THE FOREFRONT: The money will roll for MOT students as they may design a ship like this in the future. (Photo courtesy of Tan Jun Wei)

shipyards. Employees might even have to be on 24-hour standby, even though the pay is good.

Ms Louisa 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." ■

## Get Ahead With Rolls-Royce

Every year, one lucky student at Aerospace Technology is selected to intern at the prestigious British company.

BY A. B. RICHARD  
richard.tribune@gmail.com

He has dreamt of interning at Rolls-Royce since his first-year and in May this year, Tan Choon Kiat beat 12 other students to become the only student from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) to intern at the Rolls-Royce at Derby in the United Kingdom.

"I feel honoured to be the only person to go on the Overseas Industrial Attachment Programme (OIAP) at Rolls-Royce," said Choon Kiat, 19, a third-year student from Aerospace Technology (AT).

This stint is set to put Choon Kiat head and shoulders above many other students, said Dr S N Mukherjee, a senior lecturer and section manager of the Engineering Materials Section, Mechanical Engineering (ME) Division at the School of Engineering (SoE). He spearheaded this project in 2004.

"I certainly believe that students who have been there will have an edge over other people because they have seen what kind of research goes on in the area of aircraft engines in Rolls-Royce," Dr Mukherjee told **Tribune**.

According to Dr Mukherjee, Choon Kiat is one of a selection of 13 short-listed candidates. Only one place is given to a student each year.

Mr Lee Yong Him, a senior lecturer and manager of the AT programme at ME, believed that the key factor is to be able to adapt to new environments and situations.

He said that being able to adapt well - as well as the ability to communicate effectively - are important factors for a student on an overseas attachment.

"A student is on his own, when he comes to an issue or crisis he is to learn how to survive in a new environment and the challenges and constraints that come along with it," Mr Lee said.

In fact, Dr Mukherjee said that during the selection process, students were grilled on their life skills. He himself made a point to "switch from technical questions to the non-technical, and vice-versa".

He stressed, "I want to see how mentally agile and mature a student is, how articulate he is."

He added, "When we send a student, he is an ambassador for NP and for Singapore. So how he comes across is very important. Whatever country they are going into, they must be familiar with basic facts."

Initially, Choon Kiat had to submit a one page write-up on why he was interested in the OIAP at Rolls-Royce.

Later he was interviewed by a team of senior lecturers from NP till four students were short-listed.

"Then there was a representative from Rolls-Royce Singapore that came to NP to do a short interview and we got the results the next day," Choon Kiat said.

He noted with a laugh, "What is important is that we learn from the people there, experience their lives, experience their working style and get paid in pounds."

Ultimately, he said, his stint may make it easier for him to work at Rolls-Royce in the future. ■

## Fitting Education In The Palm Of Your Hand

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

BY CHARITY GOH  
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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 \$387,000 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 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 Yen Ping, 20, 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 nursing profession.

Dr Phang Chiew Hun, the Director of the School of Health Science said that



KNOW-IT-ALL COMPANION: Nursing students have education in the palm of their hands. (Photo courtesy of the School of Health Sciences)

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 as a career.

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 Yen 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 to hospitals.

"It is a pity I can only use my PDA till the end of my attachment in 2008," Yen Ping lamented. ■



# Always Something Extra At Red Camp Four

BY TIMOTHY SIM  
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**A**paches, Centurions, Ninjas, Spartans and Vikings stormed Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) in the Roadmap to Explore and Discover (RED) Camp, with Student Leaders (SL) 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 NP student Ambassadors 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



A TRIBAL FRONT: The SLs of the Ninja Tribe showing off their moves at the SL Camp. (Picture by: Jeremy Toh)

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.

Muhammed Fauzi Bin Azzhar, 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 heading 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, Brecks 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 initiated a new programme called 'RED Camp Plus', which will provide the graduating O-Level students with a 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

撰稿: 武琦

为期19个星期的中国浸濡之行, 义安理工学院首届中文专业课程, 42名学生返回新加坡, 为中国之旅划下完美句点。

在古老的东方——中国, 狮城温室里的胡姬花放出了怎样的异彩呢?

## 第一回 课堂心“经”——林佳德

“笔记”实录: 在新加坡, 老师会把学习资料上载网络, 以方便同学取阅。在中国可没有这项便利, 听课时就往往得处于“警戒”状态, 生怕遗漏了讲师所讲的重点。这倒是让同学们专心的好方法。

“群体”与“个体”的相对论: 在新加坡, 学校往往更注重群体上的合作。新加坡的社会环境给予我们一个群体的“影像”。

在中国上课时, 上课往往是“单向”进行, 讨论的方式是老师与学生的一种交流。这种方式很“个体化”。其实中国的社会竞争更为激烈紧张, 但是我却往往在这股氛围中感受到一种群体的“膜”, 更显得“群体化”。

思考更深入:

师所设的思考题常常是在“万能”的网络里搜索不到的, 我们必须进一步思考, 这也使得我们的思考变得更深、更宽广、更透彻。

## 第二回 神州大地走几遍?——卢秋灵

在中国的时间虽然只是短短的



19个星期, 但是却超幸运地在中国的江南大地如上海、苏州、周庄、杭州、绍兴、横店影视城还有首都北京等地留下了我们的足迹。

## 历史、文化让她不平凡——北京之旅

刚到北京, 觉得没什么, 空气不佳, 看不到蓝天白云。但是北京的确有什么, 是历史、文化让她散发不平凡韵味。

艳阳高照下, 我们漫步天安门广场, 这地方散发着权威的气息。故宫气魄非凡, 这一趟除了认识历史, 也了解到有些历史会不断地重演, 也有必要一直保留下来。万里长城, 我们去的是八达岭段, 人山人海。都说不到长城非好汉, 想当

好汉不容易, 得爬也得挤, 长城是智慧的结晶, 也是汗水和泪水筑成的。

人们感慨时光的流逝, 但是北京这个古都越老越有价值。原来并不是所有的东西会随着时光的流逝而流失, 至少历史和文化是如此。这些古迹在我心里留下烙印之后, 我似乎拥有了另外一种眼光。

## 第三回 书上看不到的中国城市——李信仪

到杭州学习, 我们感受到中国大学教学风格的不同, 也体会到当地的生活习惯, 看到了书本外的中国城市。

没去之前觉得那是一个落后的发展中国家, 深怕自己不能够习惯那

里的生活。但是, 在杭州生活的日子, 改变了我们的想法。杭州是个大城市, 很先进。学校内安装着感应器的水龙头, 宿舍走廊有监视器等高科技设施。光是看到这些设备, 谁能说中国“落后”?

经济的发展和全球化, 使得世界各个国家的大都市生活没有什么差别, 中国的“城市特征”和新加坡一样明显。因此, 我们很快地适应了那里的生活, 不知不觉融入那里的社会群体。

在回程的飞机上, 有一种奇怪的感觉, 中国……杭州……浙大一切都在梦里。这梦很精彩, 因为在梦里, 我们放飞的是自己的梦想。无论如何, 我们都要为自己鼓掌, 因为我们曾经远离家, 远离父母, 在杭州奋斗生活过19个星期。讚!

## 荷兰村, 温故知新的宁静绿洲

撰稿: 侯志敏

考试期间, 忙着 K 书的莘莘学子们是否在担心放学后找不到地方温书? 不妨考虑到荷兰村, 那里的幽静的氛围将会带给你意想不到的收获。上午时分的荷兰村, 空气里弥漫着一股幽静的氛围。这格外宁静的荷兰村也有几间适合同学们温书的咖啡厅, 里头情调都很不错, 非常适合同学们耗上一整个下午在这里好好地温习功课。

### Coffee Club - 喧哗中的西式宁静



Coffee Club 就坐落于荷兰村里, 偏僻的一个角落, 环境清幽, 叫人心旷神怡。这里的幽静与远处繁忙的快速公路相映成趣。

到了二楼的阳台, 这里少了人们用餐时的谈笑风“声”, 只有草丛里轻轻传来的蟋蟀声, 一阵一阵凉凉的轻风漂移着, 远处快速公路上川流不息的车辆, 楼下的

街坊人来人往。在这如此平静气氛里, 时间仿佛停顿了下来。

李晓清(21岁, 淡马锡理工学院产品及工业设计系)说: “我比较喜欢在下午的时候来这里读书, 因为在这里我可以在一个角落边吃东西边做功课。”晓清也建议大家在温书的时候尝一尝这里的百香果茶, 这果茶的味道酸酸甜甜的, 格外提神。

### 星巴克 - 避风港内的安心

荷兰村的星巴克, 店外虽然是一条长长的大马路, 可一踏进店门, 其内部氛围却如世外桃源般平静。

装潢简单大方, 没有浮夸的点缀。柔和的灯光配上清音乐, 感觉犹如回到了家, 回到了自己的避风港。这种温馨的气氛, 非常

适合那些喜欢在家里温书却又担心家里的电脑、电视令人分神的同学们。

许安琪(18岁, 义安理工学院幼儿教育系)说: “喜欢在这里背书。店里会播我喜欢听的爵士音乐, 很有家的感觉。”

### 哈根达斯 - 一刹那的宁静



哈根达斯就坐落于一排排的酒吧前。白天时, 满街的酒吧都还

处于“睡眠”中。

昨晚曾经热闹非凡的大街显得特别的清静, 但街尾哈根达斯的这一天才正要开始。

一片片落地窗散发出诱人的平静。外头的阳光透过长长的落地窗, 直射至店内, 整间店顿时变得生气勃勃。在偶尔温书休息时的一刻, 大街上的人潮来来往往, 心里却倍感平静。

店长沈振丰(19岁)建议同学们: “最好还是过了3点才来, 因为那个时段店里比较不忙。还有, 在读书的时候来杯柑橘茶, 可以舒缓紧张的情绪。”

沈振丰也推荐店里所售卖的各式咖啡。他说, 店里采用了来自阿拉比卡的顶级咖啡豆, 炮制出来的咖啡浓郁提神。



# FMS Studios Backdrop To Wedding Photos

Remembering their polytechnic days in their wedding photos.

BY ELAINE WEE  
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Like many students, Low Shir Li, 27, and Daryl Chua, 29, first met on campus 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 nostalgia. 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



ONLY LOVE: Shir Li and Daryl both agreed that the countless nights working at the multi-track studio was one of the most memorable period in their lives. (Photos courtesy of Eric from Volano Culture)

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.

"That 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 ELAINE WEE  
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Students can look forward to discounts at more outlets in Singapore with the new Ngee 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 Spizza. Students can collect their free cards during Prestige Card fairs throughout their student years in NP.

The NPSU, together with campus radio station Radio Heatwave 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 giving us discounts for their buffets."

Serene Chen, 19, third-year student from Quality Management and Engineering and Project Chairman of NPSU, said, "The previous card schemes focused on fashion and entertainment, but we're expanding into food and hotels."

"We're also venturing into mobile phone discounts and we're looking into different companies right now."

New on the list of participating outlets are Grand Plaza Park Hotel along Orchard Road, Saucony, and two online apparel

*I like the idea of customising the Prestige Card because there is a sense of ownership.*

Ng Wei Ting  
Third-year student  
Chinese Studies

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 barcode 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 a sense of ownership."

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

The NPSU 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.

He 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 ANISAH AHMAD  
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Aspiring cosmetologists island-wide were found concocting their very own cosmeceutical products in Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) laboratories in September.

In conjunction with science.07, NP's School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT) 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 Ngee 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.

Cosmeceutical, 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 handouts 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 lip balm.

"The highlight of the programme was letting students experiment and play around with their concoctions, colourings and the different fragrances as their creativity led them," Ms Soh said.

In a field so often deemed as "dry", she added, "The main aim of this hands-on session was to keep them interested, 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, these programmes act as a teaser for LSCT's admission drive. The strategy was to give participants a taste of what the Diploma in Pharmacy Science course in NP has in 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.sciencemonth.org.sg](http://www.sciencemonth.org.sg) ■



# Dragon Boaters Top IVP And Nationals

BY ANISAH AHMAD  
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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 one after 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 also won 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. ■



FOR GLORY: NPDB Team, in Lane One, perfecting each stride and beating the other teams hands down. (Photo courtesy of Eleanor Kwok)



STAFF AND STUDENT ALIKE: A warm-up session led by the students of NPDB. (Picture by Adeline Yee)

## Rowing Bonds Staff And Students

BY ENG YUWEN  
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Tides were turned as the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Dragon Boat (NPDB) team schooled the staff in the art of paddling up at Regatta 2007.

Staff and student rowed together in the heat of the sweltering sun in the latest effort by the S21 organising committee to boost student-teacher relations.

NPDB conducted rowing lessons for the staff of the polytechnic, equipping them with the skills for their staff race. The chairman of the S21 committee, Mrs Chan-Ko Tzu Yun, praised the school rowers as having "confidence, good organisational skills and teamwork".

Both teams that the NP Canoeing Club sent in clinched the top two spots yet again in the student race in Regatta 2007. Duncan Chew, 20, third-year Information Technology student and vice-president of the Canoeing Club, said that it was possible because they "ensured that every member in the club feel bonded together".

The Electrical & Computer Engineering team won the staff race, followed by the Life Science & Chemical Technology and Mechanical Engineering teams.

Pre-event preparations included water-conditioning sessions for staff unfamiliar or uncomfortable with water.

Students who coached lecturers during rowing practices before the race said the lecturer "put away everything work-related and enjoyed themselves thoroughly". Adrian Phoon, 19, a third-year Marine

*"[They] ensured that every member in the club feel bonded together."*

Duncan Chew  
Vice-President  
NP Canoeing Club

& Offshore Technology student, who conducted the practice sessions, found the experience of coaching lecturers an amusing case of role reversal as he "felt like a teacher for once, with students much older" than he.

Mrs Chan, the chairman of S21, felt that such student-driven initiatives should be encouraged in the future.

However, she stressed that in order "for students to be in charge, the staff has to be ready to facilitate or help the students whenever needed".

Lamenting that such opportunities for interaction between student and staff are rare, Adrian expressed an eagerness for future bonding sessions. "They build up the relationship between student and staff. In the classroom, improved bonds will lead to smoother learning journeys for all involved," he said.

The school of Film & Media Studies (FMS) sent in their first team this year. Mr Felix Tan, captain of the FMS team, expressed his pride in his teammates as "at no point did anyone give up". "Although the FMS team did not win, I really think that we put up a good fight," he added. ■

## International Students Compete In NP



BY A. B. RICHARD  
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A ROLLICKING GOOD TIME: (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) Students of all nationalities battled it out in a wacky relay race, donning fartsuits to sumo wrestle and jousting gladiator-style. (Pictures by A. B. Richard)

three international students in each team.

There was a total of 300 students who turned up for the event, including supporters and helpers.

"Some of the games that we organised are dodge ball, an obstacle relay race, a shooting game, dunking as well as sumo wrestling and jousting," Ilung Pranata said.

He added that the event had been in the planning stages for the past three months before finally making its way into NP.

Wai Moe Kyaw, 20, a student from Myanmar studying at PSB Academy was delighted about the event. "This event allows friends from many different schools to come together and it's fun playing games like these."

"And they took a lot of time to prepare for this event. I also met my old friends whom I've not 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," Ilung Pranata said. "I believe more students will take part next year." ■



# Students Unaware Of NAPFA Training Programmes

BY SELENE YAP  
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With the compulsory National Physical Fitness Award (NAPFA) test conducted throughout the year, third-year students at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) are given ample time 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 NP 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 NP 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, NP 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 channelled

back to the students in the form of a messenger bag.

The MINDEF Physical Fitness Performance Award scheme for Learning Institutes is aimed at raising the physical fitness profile of pre-enlistees. 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.

As such, Heikal Shafrudin, 19, 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) enlistment 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



EE JOGGING CLUB: Student instructors warming up before the 2.4Kil run. (Photo courtesy of EE Jogging Club)

training with six sessions held over a month before the NAPFA test.

For Dai Zi Xing, 21, a third-year Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) student, such compulsory training sessions were "extremely 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. Donn 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 should have a sense of responsibility towards the NAPFA test, considering the effort made by the schools to help its students.

However, Juan Qishen, 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



BOYS LIKE TOYS: The team and their modified cars brought them to the top of the grip racing category. (Photo courtesy of RCC)

BY PEARLYN HOON  
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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.

"It took four months of planning to get us 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 Sng 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 persistent advertising in online forums, according to Wei Jie. The RCC has demonstrated in the CCA Fiesta, F1 in Schools, the Ngee Ann Challenge, and

Roadmap 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 aimless driving or flying around."

"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.*

Sng 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 For The Highest Pinnacle

BY CALVIN YANG  
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It was all smiles despite the rain as adventure-lovers ran, abseiled and navigated their way into the record books at Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) 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 Pinnacle 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 Pinnacle, 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's and Student Women's.

Jamie 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 Raffiuddin, 19, the mere thought of the race was a challenge in itself. A member of the Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) invitational 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 NP itself."

Undeterred by the stumbling block, he and his partner Onn 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," Raffiuddin 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 Audris Sua, 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.

Audris told *Tribune* 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." ■