

Tribune

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NP students win PRISM award

BY JOANNE FANG

It was a surprise win for a group of former Mass Communication (MCM) students, when their final year public relations project was given the Excellence award at this year's Public Relations in the Service of Mankind (PRISM) Awards ceremony.

The MCM graduates had come up with a proposal to review Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) corporate image.

Their student PR agency named Image Works did not get to pitch their project to the client (NP), and thus did not even expect to get nominated.

"Their ideas were creative and precise. They were willing to think out of the box to challenge the norm. They also used the research findings very well to support the strategies that they recommended," said Mrs Yeoh Mei Fong, the lecturer who nominated the proposal.

The aim of the award-winning proposal, was to give NP a more fun and sporty image to draw potential students amidst stiff competition from the other polytechnics.

The group came up with two NP-based events, which included holding a band performance, screening a movie, and organising an extreme sports competition.

"We had to come up with really wacky ideas," recalled Mariam Cheok, 21, one of the group members. "And we worked really, really hard."

One member, Ng Woan Jiun, 21, who is now a deejay at UFM, said that the group was quite shocked to receive the news that they had won, as they had beaten other entries from NP, as well as those from Singapore Polytechnic. This year's PRISM awards competition saw the judges having a tough time deciding on the winner in the students' chapter.

"We had a hard time deciding because of several reasons. All projects were outstanding," said Ms Ida Bachtar, executive producer of Naga films, in an email reply to Tribune. "It was debated, deconstructed and finally decided on a consensual basis. Mind you, the judges were not the type to agree for the sake of agreeing and sometimes decisions took longer because there were strong opposing viewpoints. But we felt we owed it to the candidates to give their submissions serious thought and to weigh every point properly."

Ms Bachtar also said that the fight was pretty close, but what finally swung the judges over was the overall excellence displayed by Image Work's submission.

"It showed a consciousness of the process, of the principles that should be applied, and was strong by itself without needing the 'song and dance' routine of a team presenting it to a panel of judges," she said.

This is the second time in a row that NP students have bagged the Excellence award. The group which won in the last PRISM awards for their proposal on the Association for Educationally Subnormal children, was also from The School of Film and Media Studies.



Changing their alma mater: That's what (from left) Cheryl Ye, Jehanne Lin, Ng Woan Jiun, Sean Tay, Mariam Cheok and Lesley Chew did in their PR proposal for NP.

The PRISM awards ceremony was held at the Fullerton Hotel on 22 February, and is organised biennially by the Institute of Public Relations of Singapore "to recognise outstanding public relations activities that benefit an organisation and its target publics".

Tribune online

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Live and let live



LIM WEILIN

It has been more than six months since the attacks on the Twin Towers of New York's World Trade Centre.

The dust has settled, the fires have ceased but the pain remains.

President George W. Bush has announced the world's second step in fighting terrorism. Countless articles in newspapers, magazines, websites have dwelt on the aftermath of the attacks. But all I am left with is just so much pain.

When will all this end?

Revenge – a word which promises so much but delivers so little. Immediately after the attacks, people all over the world were calling for blood. For revenge. Swiftly and effectively.

Has the United States delivered? No.

Their multi-billion dollar attacks on Afghanistan to force Osama bin Laden out created only more pain. More innocent people are simply being punished for crimes they did not commit.

The Afghans were forced to leave what little they had. Their medical supplies consisted of little more than hot water. When not squashed in packed tents, children died because of horrendous hygiene conditions.

Is this justice?

How I wish someone would stand up and say "We will fight this war with forgiveness. With love." But I know it is impossible because Bush claims to listen to what his people want and the people are still hurting

from what happened.

What really saddens me is knowing that even if Osama is captured, tortured and killed, the victims' loved ones are still not likely to have closure. Simply because revenge is unable to bring closure.

As statistics have proven in studies done on the death penalty, after the perpetrator of the crime has been executed, families and friends of victims who thought they would find closure realised that they were simply left with a sense of emptiness.

People might ask, "What if your loved one died in the terrorist attacks?" My answer would simply be that revenge is a vicious cycle. If someone close to me was killed, by seeking revenge on that person, I would be in turn killing someone who is loved by his or her own family and friends. When will the cycle end?

Never. Or at least not until one of us is willing to stand up and beat all this hatred with forgiveness.

What I am suggesting might be idealistic but it is what I live by.

I have been through situations whereby it might have seemed easier to drag the protagonist to a police station and let him stew there for a couple of hours. But at the end of the day, deep down inside, I know I would have gained no satisfaction out of it. I chose to forgive and hope that the both of us have learnt something from the experience.

As Gandhi once said, "An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind."

The Ngee Ann Tribune
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Tribune

Campus Newspaper of Ngee Ann Polytechnic

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PolyConnect 2000 wins place in Guinness Book of World Records

BY MUHD ASY-SYAFI

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) now has a place in the Guinness Book of World Records after it was confirmed that Singapore's four polytechnics formed the longest chain of human dominoes.

NP sent 3000 students to take part in PolyConnect 2000 on 30 September 2000 where another 7000 students from the other three polytechnics aimed to form the world's

longest human dominoes and create the largest foam party.

The event lasted the entire day and took an enormous amount of planning on the Student Development Unit's part to make the event a successful one. The 3000 NP participants were made up of first-year Sports and Wellness students.

After the confirmation from The Guinness Book of



A thousand legged worm: 10,000 students, of which 3,000 were from NP, formed the world's longest chain of human dominoes.



Another for the records: The largest foam party also went to PolyConnect 2000 held at Sentosa on 30 September 2000.

World Records came through, an appreciation lunch was held at Goodwood Park on 16 March.

20 representatives from NP attended the luncheon and received a replica of the Guinness Record plaque.

Shahfik Amasha, 19, second-year Information Technology student, who was one of the participants said that "it was really fun. It feels good being part of a world record" when asked how he felt about the event.

After breaking one world record, the four polytechnics are aiming to break another world record soon, according to Chong Kok Hwee, 20, chairman of the organising committee of PolyConnect 2000.

"After the success of PolyConnect 2000, [the committee] has been thinking of breaking another record," said Kok Hwee.

He added that "people have been giving us good ideas and we're in the process of planning now."

Although not much is known about the new project right now, Kok Hwee disclosed that it would be "on a much smaller scale".

A splashing good time

BY NANCY HUANG

Members of the School of Information & Communications Technology (ICT) spent two consecutive Saturdays – on 16 and 23 March – washing their lecturers' cars to raise funds to organise activities for staff and students of ICT.

Said Mr Andy Ng, 33, ICT lecturer and the society's assistant advisor, "The reason we're doing this is to raise funds for bonding activities for our students and staff, to get them to participate and interact with one another. For example, for the past two years, we've held karaoke competitions, mooncake appreciation during the lantern festival and also sports activities."

Mr Ng added that their activities are held twice a year and they are meant for students and external companies. These activities provide students with the chance to network with these external organisations.

President of the ICT's society, Priscilla Lim, 21, a second-year Information Technology (IT) student said that aside from raising funds, the society also hoped to "show our appreciation to the lecturers for supporting the events we organise".

The car washing service costs five dollars with an additional five dollars for car waxing. Priscilla said the society did not set a minimum amount of money to be raised.

Mr Ng helped the students inform ICT lecturers about the service while the students went door-to-door in Blocks 27 and 31 to promote their service.

The students raised a total of \$170 in the two Saturdays and the money will go towards funding the activities ICT has planned for the next month.

But what seemed to matter more to them was not the



ICT students raise funds, by washing cars on campus, to organise activities for ICT staff and students.

amount of money raised but the experience of washing the cars together, even though they were short-handed.

Said Delphine Chng, 19, the society's vice-president and also a second-year (IT) student, "We've only our year-two members with us today because the year-ones have to attend an Interdisciplinary Studies talk, so we're pretty short-handed. But this activity really helps our members to build better rapport with each other."

And when the going gets tough, these students encouraged themselves with "small competitions to see who finishes washing the car first", according to Priscilla.

"It's okay as long as we earned something," said second-year IT student, Cheryl Tan, 19, referring to the amount raised. "Washing the car may be a little tiring, but it's quite fun doing this together with your friends."

ME's big beach clean up

BY AARON LOH

In an effort to keep Pulau Ubin green, Mechanical Engineering (ME) students and staff headed down to Pulau Ubin on 2 March for a beach clean up.

Beginning the day at 8.30 am, participants gathered on campus, journeyed to Changi Point, and embarked on a bumboat trip to the island.

At the beach, students combed the entire stretch and gathered litter into trash bags.

According to Mr Goh Keng Sua, ME lecturer, the division has been organising the annual event since 1997.

Mr Goh was pleased with the response and enthusiasm students showed.

He said, "We were actually targeting to get 120 student but a total of 135 of them turned up."

The event was open to all ME students on a voluntary basis to give students a chance to do something for the environment and the community.

A first-year student, Bernard Tong, 17, said, "It is actually quite fun to be doing this. I have never been to Pulau Ubin before. It is like doing something for the environment and having fun at the same time."

Mr Goh stressed that the objectives of the beach clean-up were not only to care for the environment, but also to foster better relationships within the division.

"The beach clean-up helps to enhance student and staff bonding," he said, "it helps to bring out leadership qualities in students too."

Students who participated in this event were awarded co-curricular activity (CCA) points for their efforts.

LSCT- Changes ahead

BY KELVIN SOH

New facilities, continually updated syllabi and new electives are helping staff and students at the School of Life Sciences and Chemical Technology (LSCT) to succeed in the new bio-economy.

Revealing this to Tribune, the School's Acting Director Dr Wayne Lee Forday said that LSCT had already made many changes to move together with the government's push towards life sciences.

"There's a lot of constant change. Within our Biotechnology programme for example, we've introduced new modules related to drug discoveries, bio-informatics, genomics, and a few others."

These new modules have proven to be popular with students, and the School will continue to introduce new modules as and when there is a need for them.

There are however no immediate plans to introduce any more new diploma courses. "We take it cautiously, we see what the need of the economy is, and we also have an obligation to provide a quality education," said Dr Forday.

Nonetheless, he agreed that the interest in courses related to the life sciences was growing, and the School has seen an increase in the number of applicants for its courses.

"We have a very active outreach programme. We actually also bring in many students every year for our laboratory enrichment programmes, and that attracts thousands of students to the polytechnic," said Dr Forday.

On industry training, Dr Forday said that a number of students are being sent to research institutes like the Institute of Agro-Biology and the Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology as part of the School's six-month Industrial Attachment Programme (IAP).

"We see that our industry partners can provide very good training for our students. The IAP as compared to the two month Vacation Training Programme gives students more time to learn and develop within a particular project area," he said.

In the same way as the National University of Singapore (NUS) received a five-fold increase in funding for life sciences research to \$40 million, LSCT will continue to compete for grants.

Last year, the School received over a million dollars from the National Science and Technology Board in research grants. These funds, said Dr Forday, have gone to various research activities including projects to detect helicobacter, a bacteria which may cause stomach cancer, and the use of retrovirus in the expression of genes for zebra fish.

LSCT students such as Lim Chuan Bian, 19, a third-year Biotechnology student have benefitted by being involved in a number of research projects as part of his final-year studies.

"There are always a number of unforeseen costs whenever we undertake any sort of project, and obviously some money will come in handy when we have to go attend conferences or present papers," he said.

The smart

BY JOANNE FANG

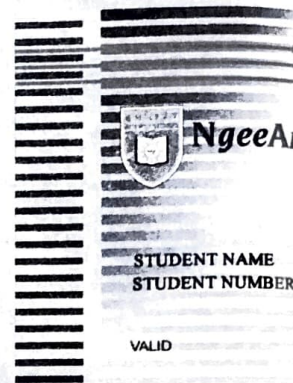
First and second-year students in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) are in the midst of replacing their student cards with a new contactless, smart card. Staff in NP will also be given the smart card.

The new student card can be used to borrow books and resources at the Lifestyle Library, access the swimming pool and facilitate participation in various campus activities and courses.

Students will also be able to use the smart card to record their attendance at classes come July.

Efforts to ease the transition will take place at the Lifestyle Library, where new equipment will be installed to interface with the existing library system.

"The introduction of the new student card promises to provide better security and ease of integration with campus systems and infrastructure," said Ms Priscilla Neo, a systems analyst at the Computer Centre.



A smart piece of plastic: Among other attendance and access facilities.

Training infocomm professionals

BY YONG JUN



Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) School of Engineering is offering a new diploma in Internetworking and Communications (INC) to meet Singapore's demand for skilled info-communication professionals.

Available in July, the new diploma aims to equip graduates with the skills and knowledge to utilise infocommunication technologies including video and multimedia applications.

NP is the only polytechnic to offer a diploma in INC.

The move is in response to Singapore's need for at least 250,000 infocomm professionals, according to a survey done in 1999 by the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore.

The course syllabus includes digital electronics, internetworking, telecommunication principles and digital communication systems and techniques. There are 80 places offered for this first intake.

"Students would also get to collaborate with Cisco Systems USA, and cover two Cisco certified modules, Advanced Routing and Remote-Accessed Networks," said INC course manager and lecturer, Mr Chan Kum Weng.

Cisco Systems is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet with an annual turnover of US\$22 billion and more than 35,000 employees worldwide, according to their website.

INC students are required to purchase notebook computers for this course. NP will offer financial assistance to needy students.

On top of being armed with a diploma, INC graduates will receive the Cisco Certified Network Associate certification and the Cisco Certified Network Professional certification.

According to Mr Chan, job opportunities are also abundant for INC graduates. "In terms of skills, infocomm professionals with these skills are very sought after," he added.

INC graduates can expect to pursue a career in internet development, e-commerce development and mobile communications amongst other career options.



way to go

Areas on campus which were previously accessible to both students and staff like the StaffHub will only be able to be accessed by staff in the future. These areas will only recognise the smart cards held by the lecturers.

When asked about the move to change the existing student cards, Ms Neo said that the current cards are based on barcode technology that has been around for quite some time, and NP decided to replace them due to the increasing popularity of smart cards in Singapore.

The student cards currently in use will be phased out completely when the third-year students graduate in July, and a database will soon be set up for feedback and information regarding the new smart card.

"This new student card means I cannot be late for school any more because we have to use the card for attendance," said Ev Boon Yak, 18, first-year Electrical Engineering student.

All NP students can exchange their current student cards with the new smart card through their various Schools offices.



specimen

the new card is used to mark

Mobile computing new course

BY TEO HUIYING

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) is the first polytechnic to offer mobile and internet technology in their curriculum with the Diploma in Information Technology (Mobile Computing) offered in July.

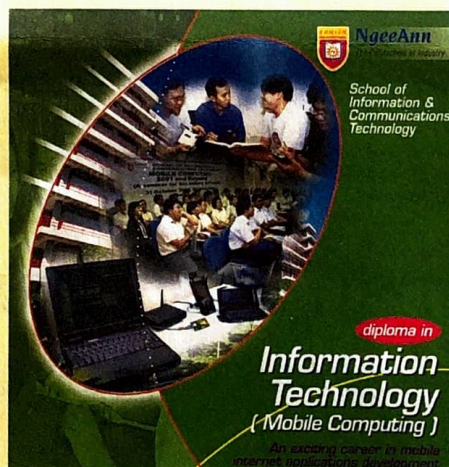
The course is introduced in response to the rapid development of mobile e-commerce and applications. An InfoComm Development Authority (IDA) report in July 2000 projected Singapore's mobile e-commerce revenues to increase by US\$400 million.

The new diploma aims to produce information technology professionals and provide strong fundamentals such as programming skills, computer technology and information analysis.

Students will be taught subjects such as Business Information Systems, Networking, Wireless Technology and M-Business Applications. Students will also be allowed optional modules from the others diploma courses, namely Information Technology and Multimedia Computing.

The students' learning experience is expected to be enhanced by wireless handheld devices provided by Hewlett-Packard (HP). Students will also have access to HP's latest technologies.

This is part of the S\$3 million Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recently signed between the School of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and HP to set up an Extensible Markup Language (XML) Garage Programme and Showroom



here on campus.

XML is a computer programming language similar to HTML and supports a wide variety of applications.

Also, mobile computing students will be able to download Microsoft software into their notebooks free of charge. This is due to an agreement between ICT and Microsoft.

Graduates can expect to be employed as mobile application developers, software developers, software consultants and others.

Possible PDAs for schoolwork

BY TEO HUIYING



Convenience and schoolwork right in your hands: There are plans to introduce the PDA to NP courses.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students may soon be able to use Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) to work on assignments and send them back to their lecturers.

As part of the Mobile Platform project, the Teaching and Learning Centre (Advanced Information Technology Application Centre) hopes to produce educational PDA software.

A student can view simulations of illustrated concepts, download audio and/or video lectures and even learn languages with the pronunciation available for playback.

Mr Preetam Rai, 29, a designer / developer at the Advanced Information Technology Application Centre (AITAC) said that a PDA is versatile.

"This [handheld device] is small and has wireless connection and the current batteries last for seven to eight hours. You can look at those areas and think of a lot of applications," said Mr Rai.

Another area that AITAC is looking into is smart instrumentation where measuring devices like temperature sensors can be connected to the PDA.

Students will no longer need to manually input and calculate the data, as readings from the device are input directly into the PDA without complex procedures.

The project is currently in testing and 20 students will be involved in a pilot-testing programme in July to evaluate the practicality of the project.

However, not everything is smooth sailing as there are constraints to work with. A PDA has a small screen size which limits a user's navigability, unlike a "website where there is a dropdown menu", said Mr Preetam.

AITAC aims to create new PDA applications every two to three months once basic applications are available.

These applications will be customised to the needs of students from NP's different Schools.

Julia strikes the right chords



PHOTOS: CAROLYN LEE

The crowd may have been small but Julia Peng still gave her all to sing her way to NP students' hearts in the two-hour long concert.

BY SIM KOO

Taiwanese singer Julia Peng Jiahui rocked Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) with her strong vocals and charismatic performance on 14 March at Lecture Theatre 26.

Organised by NP's Poly Stage Production (PSP) society and Julia Peng's recording label BMG, this was her first concert in NP. And she relished the opportunity by performing nine songs, including three tracks from her recent released album "Lover's Song".

MediaCorp artist Gurmit Singh, former NP student and Miss Universe 2001 Singapore winner, Jaime Teo, as well as local singer Yong Pang also performed at the event, hosted by Y.E.S 93.3 radio station deejay, Lin Ling Zhi.

The two-hour concert began with Jaime Teo. Singing a catchy song titled "If you feel like jumping, then jump", Jaime tried valiantly to liven up the 300 fans, who were somewhat reserved after braving the rain for the event.

Local funnyman Gurmit Singh was next. Sensing the

crowd's lukewarm response, Gurmit immediately launched into his usual antics of making funny faces and taunts. He soon got the crowd to relax and laugh before his song.

The highlight of Gurmit's performance happened when Lin Zhi came on stage to challenge him to sing a Mandarin song. Although Gurmit declined, the interested audience supported Lin Zhi's call.

The resulting Mandarin solo earned him raucous applause as he crooned Taiwanese singer Sky Wu Shi Kai's famous ballad, "How to say love".

When Julia Peng, in a pink sleeveless top and jeans, blazed into her first song "Raise your hands if you are happy", she delighted her fans.

"I love to sing 'live'! I love the campus setting because of its simplicity and directness. Students will react to your singing whether or not you're a mega star or an unknown."

"The crowd's direct response and the simple expectations of hearing me sing makes school concerts endearing," said Julia in Mandarin, in a face-to-face

interview with Tribune.

Julia bore testament to her sentiments when she mingled freely with her fans, constantly shaking their hands and chatting with them, between songs.

"They (NP students) must learn to cherish their school days. This is the time when they'll have no worries but just friendship and schoolwork to bother with. I wish I could tell them more, that's why I chose to come here to hold a concert," said Julia on her motivation to come to NP.

"Singing is like writing a diary. I see myself as constantly conveying my feelings through my songs. Maybe in 10 years' time, I'll not be able to do fast track songs and my vocal may not be crisp. But I'll be better at expressing my emotions with my songs, just like Barbra Streisand," she said confidently.

Although Julia was delighted with the 320-strong crowd, Jacqueline Chong, 19, project manager for PSP said that the midweek performance prevented a sellout. She explained that having the concert on Thursday was difficult as students had lessons the following day.

A satisfying Urban Strawberry Lunch

BY ALVIN NG

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students were treated to a unique musical experience when Urban Strawberry Lunch dropped by for a performance on 21 February.

Brought in by the British Council, the group of musicians hailing from Liverpool are known for using unconventional recycled materials like wires, pipes and a store dummy's leg as instruments.

Made up of four members - Liz Carlisle, Karl John, Andy Escott and Ambrose Reynolds - Urban Strawberry Lunch started making their own music after a fire destroyed their "normal" instruments.

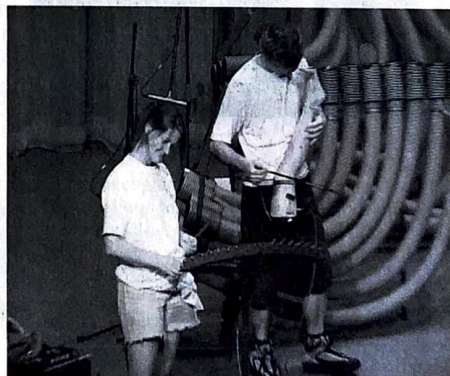
The performance also included a guest appearance by Levi Tafari, a well-known poet who is also from Liverpool.

Besides NP staff and students, the audience also consisted of students from four secondary schools and an Institute of Technical Education. They were treated to an hour-long session of rhythmic and high-powered music emanating from home-made instruments.

The band's poly rhythmic percussion styles which are mainly of Ghanaian origin were brought forth through the use of drum sets made of old pots and pans as well as "batphones" - tuned, hollow pipes of different length struck with a bat to produce sounds like that of a xylophone.

Prior to the performance, Mr Reynolds made an observation about Singaporean audiences.

"Everyone's very polite, they're all nice and quiet."



(from left) Liz Carlisle and Ambrose Reynolds make music on a bowstring and dummy leg with the "batphones" as a backdrop.

The crowd reminded him of their first performance. "The first gig I played, I thought 'God, they hate us. They really hate us.' And it wasn't that. It was just that they were very quiet."

The 300-strong crowd at NP however did not remain quiet once the performance started. Lecturers and students clapped along and even stood up to dance to the many reggae tunes that the band performed.

At the end of the day, Mr Tafari, who rapped, felt that the "crowd response was great. The students

participated, they made plenty of noise, stomped their feet, they chanted with us. I think they were very familiar with the vibes we put forward".

Urban Strawberry Lunch started in 1988 and has played on shows like Top of the Pops and United Kingdom music festivals like Glastonbury.

Before their NP visit, they performed at the Botanical Gardens, Queensway Secondary School and Nanyang Polytechnic.

According to Ms Lena St. George-Sweet, the Assistant Director (Arts) at the British Council, the programme aimed "to make people more aware that England has a lot to offer in terms of the arts and education".

She also expressed her happiness that NP managed to raise student and staff helpers despite it being the term break.

The secondary school students had a particularly good time at the event helped by NP. Chng Yu Han, 15, felt that "it was a really wacky performance especially when they brought out the dummy's leg" while Derrick Wong, 19, said that "it was very interesting to see so much recycled stuff put to such use. It's very creative and environmentally-friendly".

Mr Reynolds told Tribune he wanted to reach out to these students with the band's belief.

"The whole ethos of the group is that you don't need to have money to start a band to be creative. Use your imagination and create something new out of something old, like the phoenix (the mythical bird upon reaching a thousand years immolates itself to give birth to a new phoenix)".

PICTURE COURTESY OF JACK SHOU

NP NAPFA pass rate lowest among 4 polys

BY KELVIN SOH

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) NAPFA pass rate for its male students is currently the lowest amongst the four polytechnics, according to figures released by the Ministry of Defence.

Only 21 percent of NP's male graduating students from the last academic year achieved a Gold or Silver award for their NAPFA. The latter is the minimum pass rate for male students who wish to be exempted from the two-month Physical Training Programme during their National Service.

Nanyang Polytechnic had the highest passing and participation rate, scoring close to 40 and 90 percent respectively.

The low pass rate is despite NP's position as the polytechnic that had the second highest participation rate among the four polytechnics at 69 percent.

Explaining this trend, Mr Thomas Tan, student development officer said that the NAPFA pass and participation rate do not always move in tandem.

"If we're only interested in getting the pass rate up, we can just look at the students who get the Bronze award, work on this group, and obviously our pass rate will go up. But what we're doing now is to work on the participation rate, then the pass rate," he said.

The Student Development Section (SDS) is working together with the various academic schools to increase the participation, said Mr Tan.

He expects to see more students participating this year as a result. "What the Schools are doing is helping us inform their students as well as scheduling the NAPFA test dates at times that are convenient for their students," he said.

However, Mr Tan conceded that while the SDS could try to interest more students into taking part in the

NAPFA, ultimately it was up to individual students to take part in the test.

"Let's put it this way, you can bring the horse to the water but you can't force it to drink. You can put up posters and do a whole song and dance, but if students don't want to come or don't want to train for their NAPFA there's really nothing we can do about it," he said.

Agreeing with him, Mr Siow Chow Sid, manager of SDS said that the lack of awareness was not an excuse for not turning up for the NAPFA.

"Not knowing when is not an excuse because when they take their Sports and Wellness programme in Year

One, we tell them about the NAPFA in Year Three. We'll remind them when they're in Year Two, and remind them again when they're in Year Three. But some who don't want to come just won't come," he said.

Mr Siow also said that SDS had no immediate plans to introduce short courses aimed at helping students pass their NAPFA.

"Students are taught in Year One during their Sports and Wellness on how to prepare for the different stations in



Students do not want to train for NAPFA, according to Mr Siow, manager of SDS.

NAPFA. They should use that knowledge and train for their NAPFA. Anyway, they can always approach any of the staff here if they've forgotten. We'll be happy to give them training tips," he said.

Students interviewed by Tribune gave a wide array of reasons for not preparing for their NAPFA. Lack of time and insufficient publicity were the most commonly cited reasons for not participating in the test.

Ashley Khaw, 20, a third-year Electronics and Computer Engineering student said that he was already bogged down by his school work and it would be difficult for him to find time to train for the NAPFA.

"I mean it's not that I don't want to take the NAPFA or anything. If I get less work in class than maybe I'll be able to find time to train," he said.

Parking will still be free

BY KELVIN SOH

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) staff and student drivers will continue to enjoy free parking in the polytechnic's car parks despite the National University of Singapore's (NUS) decision to implement paid parking in June last year.

Revealing this in a written reply to Tribune, Mr Ng Say Kiat, 53, director of the Estates and Development Office (EDO) said that NP has enough car parks to meet current needs.

However, he conceded that this was only so if drivers were willing to park at car parks in the fringe areas of campus.

NUS currently charges drivers 1.5 cents per minute for parking in its car parks, with the exception of two car parks located in areas outside the university where drivers can park free of charge.

Mr Ng explained that paid parking might not be suitable for NP as the polytechnic had many parking lots that were on the roadside. Paid parking would not do much to regulate parking as drivers would still choose to park at car parks near their offices or classrooms.

Student drivers Tribune spoke to seemed to disagree with Mr Ng's assessment that there are enough parking lots on campus, but were also not in favour of paid parking as a solution to solve the parking problem. Most

of them expressed a desire to see more parking lots built near major classrooms or office blocks.

In response, Mr Ng said that when NP's fifth developmental phase is completed in 2003, a car park would be built over the existing Blk 56 to cater to the new convention centre and an adjacent teaching block.

Joel Gn, 20, a third-year student at the School of Life Sciences and Chemical Technology who drives to the polytechnic regularly, welcomed news of the new car park but said that more could be done now to ease the parking problem.

"I don't think it's just drivers who are affected by this problem right? I mean even those who don't drive will have to put up with those drivers who cannot find a place to park and park on the kerb and then block pedestrians' way," he said.

When Tribune spoke to NUS student drivers on whether paid parking had improved the parking situation there, most of them expressed a consensus that it had not. Anthony Prakasam, 20, a first-year student at the Faculty of Engineering, said that surprisingly, it was the free car parks that often had available parking lots.

"What I usually do these days is to just park at Kent Vale [a free car park located outside the university's campus] and take the free shuttle bus service in. It's not that I'm trying to be stingy with the parking fees, but there're always no lots in the car park near my workshops," he said.

Learn to fly a plane for \$10

The Flying Club in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) is offering students the chance to learn how to pilot a plane at a basic \$10 membership fee.

To receive their Private Pilot's License (PPL), students will also need to fork out another \$30 to \$40 for study materials throughout the course.

According to the Flying Club president, Manogaran Kathiravan, 19, a second-year Electronic and Computer Engineering student, the actual cost of the flying course is about \$26,000. The fee students pay is subsidised by the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF).

The flying course, spread over three phases, covers ground and flying classes.

Interested parties should be full-time Singaporeans students, between the ages of 16 and 23. They should not have short sightedness of more than 300 degrees and astigmatism of less than 75 degrees in each eye. They should be between 1.62m and 1.90m tall, with at least five credit passes in the GCE 'O' Level exams, including English, Mathematics and Science and not have any major illnesses or physical impairments.

- Anita Gupta

New online magazine

URBANWIRE, an online magazine launched on 27 February, is created by a team of five third-year Mass Communication students for their specialist project.

Urbanwire will be "a working template" for Online Journalism, which will be offered as a new elective for third-year Mass Communication students in July, according to Mr Robin Yee, 34, lecturer-in-charge and content supervisor of the web-site.

"I hope in time it'll become truly a community of people in NP. Right now, there really isn't a mechanism to collect feedback from the student population. But hopefully they (NP students) will take Urbanwire as something that will allow them to give voice to their aspirations and their concerns and that we'll be some sort of a conduit as well to the powers that be," said Mr Yee.

Safinah Bte Hassan, 18, a second-year student from Information Technology thought the site provides interesting articles that are very readable and relevant to NP students.

"The site has quite a lot of information that's useful to us. It's also very easy to navigate," she said.

Urbanwire can be accessed at <http://www.theurbanwire.com>

- Nancy Huang

Ooh La La!

AN estimated 200 Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students from various Schools registered to take part in Ooh La La 2002, the annual talent quest organised by NP's Students' Union.

The competition was split into two parts, dancing and singing, and was held over two days at LT26.

Of the 200 participants, 99 participated in the solo singing category but it was the dancing category that drew a full house of supporters.

Roslan Rahmat, a first-year Mechatronics students and an ardent supporter of the competition attended both days of the competition. "I like the vibe. Both days were really entertaining and I had a lot of fun."

"The competition is a great platform for talents to be discovered. Who knows, you may find out something new about yourself," said Mohd Hisham Rahmat, 24, a freelance dancer and one of the judges at the event.

- Muhd Asy Syafi'i

NP punished for complacency

BY SIM KOO

Initial hopes that Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) would get its first water polo medal in five years were dashed when Singapore Polytechnic (SP) pipped them to third place in the recently concluded Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) games.

SP, which had been underrated throughout the competition, fought valiantly to win the match 9-7. Although the score suggested a close contest, NP was outplayed and outfought throughout the match.

NP drew first blood after two minutes when Captain Frederick Foo, 21, third-year Electronic and Computer Engineering student, latched on to a through pass from team-mate Bernie Choy, 18, a first-year Business Studies student, to open NP's account. But within split seconds, SP equalised. Both teams then fought evenly to end the first quarter 1-1.

When play resumed, SP began to dictate the game with precise passing and cohesive teamwork. NP became predictable and lethargic, relying mostly on Foo to create opportunities.

SP's strong tactics enabled them to pulled ahead 4-1. Foo then cut the deficit to 4-2 when he swam half the length of the pool to beat the keeper at the near post. Choy rallied a mini revival by turning in a great pass from Foo to narrow the score 4-3. Both players combined to keep NP's hopes alive.

But with 10 seconds of the first half remaining, SP scored what proved to be the crucial goal that tilted the match in their favour.

SP's centre Jonathan Soh collected a long pass from his keeper and under the pressure of an expiring clock, shot from halfway across the pool.

SP was even more determined in the second half. After just two minutes, they widened the score to 7-3. Although some momentary lapses allowed NP to narrowed the score midway, SP's grit and aggression saw them triumphing eventually.



NP goalkeeper Boo Ghim Yew makes a save at the game which NP lost to SP 9-7.

"We won because we put in 51 percent effort as both teams were quite equal," said a delighted Mr Leong Hoe Yin, 36, coach of SP's water polo team.

"Teamwork won us the match. Our defensive tactic was also the factor. Before the tournament, I said our only chance was to play defensive. We've only four months to train and we work very hard on it (defence). I'm happy

that my boys carried out my instruction fully."

SP's key player Winston Tang, 20, a third-year Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE) student, felt that team spirit and strong commitment compensated for their inexperience.

"We take every instruction seriously and stick to our game plan. It's 50-50 chance but we just play ourselves out. That's the turning point for us," Tang said.

Captain Ong Hong Chew, 20, a third-year EEE student, also attributed their success to their inspirational coach.

For NP, the lack of tactics and big match temperaments showed. The players were both jittery and one-dimensional in their game.

While SP was focused and enterprising in attack; spraying their passes and involving the whole team, NP was too obvious as its defence simply threw hopeful passes forward and expected Foo and Choy to create chances from there.

"We're probably too confident about winning," said a disappointed Foo. "They (SP) wore us out and we wasted our chances."

However Foo maintained that NP players were technically better but conceded in terms of teamwork and fitness.

For the record, NP made it to fourth place because of convincing victories over Nanyang and Temasek polytechnics, winning 12-6 and 17-5 respectively. Though NP was thrashed 21-4 by National University of Singapore, NP lost to Nanyang Technological University 13-8.

This coach will go on and on

He is more than three times older than the athletes he coaches. Yet Mr Lim Tiang Quee, 70, still shines as NP Track & Field club's coach. Joanne Fang meets the man.

He survived the Japanese occupation and started training almost immediately. Since then, Mr Lim Tiang Quee has spent more than fifty years in track and field, breaking records as a young athlete and coaching others to do the same.

Mr Lim's humble beginnings as an athlete began when a group of young, aspiring sportsmen and women decided to train together.

"When the Japanese left... nobody coached us... we

were a group of very dedicated athletes who trained five to six days a week," recalled Mr Lim. "We read books, and between ourselves we'll sit down and discuss... combining our knowledge and working it out ourselves."

Athletes in those days had neither the comfort of a proper track to run on, nor mattresses to land on. "At that time there was only grass!" Mr Lim said.

Through sheer determination, his hard work paid off. On his birthday in August 1954, Mr Lim broke the national record for the long jump, clearing 20 feet and 11 inches, rewriting a record that had stood since 1926.

In 1956, Mr Lim proceeded to break the then-Malaya triple jump record, but retired as an athlete soon after to embark on his career in teaching and coaching.

He became a national coach in 1968 and remembers fondly the time when he attended a talk given by the late Jesse Owens, the world-famous American athlete who gave Mr Lim valuable tips on the long jump.

Other career milestones in Mr Lim's life include being the first Physical Education Head of Department at Hwa Chong Junior College, co-founder of the Swift Athletes Association, and coaching school teams in inter-school competitions.

Having retired as national coach and PE teacher, he currently coaches other student athletes from various schools besides coaching Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Track and Field club.

Mr Lim has been training the NP athletes since the eighties, taking a break for only three years from 1997 to 1999. "Most of the lecturers in Ngee Ann know me so well, when they come down for jogging, they will come and ask me for advice... very friendly folks over there."

Mr Lim particularly enjoys coaching current Track and Field athletes in NP, as some of them were his former students.

In fact, Mr Lim's relationship with them can extend beyond his coaching, as he assumes the roles of a mentor, counsellor and friend to one particular group of NP athletes he coached back in the mid-1980s.



Mr Lim (centre in white) and the team who came in third at the recent IVP games.

This close-knit group of former athletes have invited Mr Lim to their weddings and have never failed to visit him during Chinese New Year.

Mr Lim's success as a coach is evident from the numerous newspaper clippings he keeps of his athletes, with the outstanding ones making the headlines.

In 1995, Mr Lim was awarded the Singapore Amateur Athletic Association Excellence award for coaches, in recognition of his outstanding dedication in track and field coaching.

When asked why he has never stopped coaching, he replied, "It's good for my health... I'm only waiting for the teachers at the schools to tell me, 'Ok, Mr Lim, you're old enough, you got to step down'... but nobody has ever wanted to stop me."

Mr Lim has no plans to retire, "Even now when I'm coaching, some teachers who want to learn coaching, I accept them," he said. "I tell them, see what I'm coaching, how I'm coaching, write it down. So next time when I'm not around, you can take over any time... I want to pass on the knowledge."



Mr Lim participating in the long jump event at the Swift AAA Sports meet in July, 1953.

PICTURE COURTESY OF MR LIM TIANG QUEE

JOANNE FANG