

## NP-wide Web

**NPal, NP's new \$16.5 million system, is linking all the students, Schools and Offices. KEH CHIEN YUNG reports on the network, its teething problems and how NP wants feedback to improve.**

**S**tudents and staff now have more self-service options and personal information available online via the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Access for All (NPal) system.

Students can obtain personal school data such as academic results and progress, Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) points, timetables and even register for Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) modules online from home or on campus at the same website.

Previously, students could only get some of this information from different sources such as the Student Service & Information Centre (SSIC) website and through the NP email.

Started in November 2000, the NPal project is "in-line with the Government's e-services drive – Internet-enabled transactions and self-service wherever possible", according to Systems Analyst, Ms Angela Wong, from NP's Computer Centre (CC).

Before NPal, human resource, finance and student administration in NP were run on different applications – the VAX system and Lotus Notes for students and staff, and Disk Operating System-based (DOS) applications.

Both the Finance and Human Resource (HR) services were rolled out in April 2001 and November 2001 respectively.

Statistics Officer Ms Veronica Wong of the Academic Affairs Office (AA) said that in the past, when student data was transferred from different platforms, there were time lapses between the data sent and the same data received. Now with NPal, all data can be accessed at any one time, she said.

### What students say

Generally, the students interviewed by Tribune said NPal is all right but pointed out some teething problems.

Sandy Seah, 22, first-year Building & Real Estate Management (BEM) student, showed

Tribune her two-page timetable and said that it was "stupid".

Students like Sandy have issues with the new timetable format mainly because the older format came in just one page.

The new format includes more details such as module section numbers and full names of lecturers.

In the first two days of this semester, some 6,000 sheets of paper were used to print student timetables alone at the SSIC, said Mrs Tan Shuet Fung, SSIC's supervisor.

Mrs Tan said that there was even a case of a timetable spanning five pages. She handed that timetable to the Administrative Officer at the Student Services Office, Mr Vickneshwaran Thangavelu, as feedback.

"More students prefer to have simpler timetables all in one page, but that will take more development. We don't know if we want to move in that direction," Mr Vickneshwaran said.

He added that the online timetables are more convenient as students can check lecturers' free time slots by clicking on the lecturer's name.

He also explained that the detailed timetable in NPal is mainly for online use. He hoped there will soon be no need to print timetables once all students become "connected". To date, almost all first-year students own a laptop due to the increasing popularity of NP's Mobile e-Learning (MeL) programme.

But for now, taking out the option to print their timetables may be "too big a jump" for students, Mr Vickneshwaran said, because having a printed timetable is "in their comfort zones".

NPal also runs only on Internet Explorer 5.5 and above.

"It will be great if they can have more compatible browsers," said Goh Yong Luk, 17, a first-year Information Technology student.

The reason behind NPal's exclusivity is that other browsers like Netscape do not support cascaded style sheets, a feature used in NPal, said Ms Angela Wong.

She explained that cascaded style sheets give designers more control over what and how each page should look.

Another teething problem reported was access to deferment letters for National Service.

Tan Kuan Han, 21, third-year

Biotechnology (BIO) student, was trying to print his deferment letter for National Service at SSIC when a message appeared on the monitor saying that the service was not available as it was being transferred to NPal.

Kuan Han

then approached SSIC's Mrs Tan who retrieved his letter from the old Lotus Notes application.

Data in NPal had not been updated for repeat students like Kuan Han in their final year, said Mrs Tan. Thus, the students are listed as graduates and may have to enlist if there is no proof that they are still in polytechnic.

To find the updated deferment letters was added work for Mrs Tan since Kuan Han's case was not the first.

Mrs Tan had also helped students to re-format their timetables into one page and explained how to use NPal to around "40 percent" of the students who were at SSIC for the first two weeks of the semester.

"The Lotus Notes system is more up-to-date when it should be the other way round," she said.

Tribune visited SSIC again in Week 5 to find the problem unsolved.

Alvin Goi, 21, third-year Business Studies student, found that his graduating date in NPal was June 30 this year when he is actually graduating next year as he is repeating modules.

Mrs Tan said that she will give feedback directly to AA.

In response to problems similar to such cases, Ms Veronica Wong explained that NPal is

**Student Administration**

**Timetables**

**Academic Affairs**

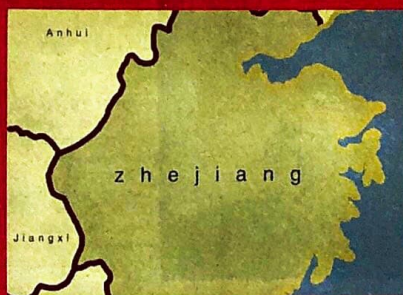
**Human Resource**

**Finance**

**Support & Planning**

**CCA**

**NPal**



**FIRST exchange programme to Zhejiang, China**



**Alternative FIRST choices in the neighbourhood**



**ECE crowned badminton champs for the FIRST time**



# ICT lecturers give bursaries to needy students

BY MARK NG  
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**T**hree lecturers at the School of Information & Communications Technology (ICT) started the new year by digging into their own pockets to give to needy students.

At the ICT Scholarship & Bursary Awards ceremony on 10 January, the lecturers contributed three bursaries, each worth \$750, to students from the School. The money came from grants received from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) for writing their own computer books.

In addition to the three bursaries given by the three lecturers, Ms Hwang Wan Lee, Ms Lim Gek Kheng and Mr Daniel Teh, six scholarships were given to students for outstanding achievements in their respective courses.

While the annual awards ceremony has seen industry vendors such as Microsoft, IBM and Sun Microsystems contribute scholarships to ICT students, the practice of lecturers contributing bursaries started only three years ago.

"We wanted to channel the money (from the grants for their books) into something meaningful, and one good way was through the bursaries," said Ms Hwang.

Fellow contributor Ms Lim said, "Sometimes through interacting with our

students, we find that some of them have to work and study at the same time. We hope that they will be able to focus more on their studies and not get distracted with part-time jobs."

Ms Hwang and Ms Lim had co-written a book and intend to contribute a sum of \$3,000 to the bursaries over two years.

Mr David Chan, Director of the School of ICT, was supportive of his staff's contributions. "We don't want to see our student's education being hampered due to financial difficulties," he said. "I think it is always a good gesture to help others... the bursaries are another form of contribution and it is good to see that charity begins at home."

He also said that students applying for the bursaries must be doing well academically and require financial assistance.

Currently, NP students can apply for scholarships and bursaries through their respective Schools and the Student Service & Information Centre. Although the three ICT lecturers feel that currently there is enough financial assistance within NP, they also said that more scholarships and bursaries would always be welcome as there will always be students in need.

Mr Teh suggested looking into an untapped area for financial assistance for students - the NP Alumni. "I don't think it is uncommon for



**LECTURER-BENEFACTORS:** ICT lecturers Daniel Teh, Lim Gek Kheng and Hwang Wan Lee (left to right) contributed money to give bursaries to students. (Picture: Mark Ng)

other institutions to have distinguished alumni that give to the students. Maybe we could ask successful Ngee Ann Polytechnic alumni to contribute bursaries or scholarships."

But until that happens, the students appreciate their lecturers' generosity. Muhammad Fadhil, 18, a second-year Information Technology (IT) student, is a bursary recipient. He is one of six children in his family and the bursary helped him as both his parents work to support five children who are

still in school. He said, "I was not aware that the lecturers gave out of their own pockets. But when I realised they did, I was really grateful and I sent them a message to thank them."

Another student recipient, Chua Bishuang, 18, a second-year IT student, was also thankful. "I really appreciate the lecturers' effort in helping us and I think the best way we can thank them is by studying hard and to do well for our studies. Hopefully, they'll be able to continue to help others." ■

# Pioneer exchange programme to China

BY DIANA SIM  
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**S**even final-year Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students have been selected and sent for NP's first six-month exchange programme with Zhejiang University City College (ZUCC) in Hangzhou, China.

ZUCC initiated the programme after their staff visited NP two years ago, as they were impressed with NP's facilities and practical teaching methods, said NP's Deputy Principal (Academic Planning), Mr Tan Hang Cheong. He visited ZUCC last May and was satisfied with the university's solid foundation.

"Zhejiang University is one of the top ten universities in China so it is a reputable university. At the polytechnic level, I think Zhejiang is the right level of university to partner with," he said.

Four schools are involved in this inaugural programme - the School of Business & Accountancy, the Electrical Engineering (EE) Division under the School of Engineering, the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) and the School of Information & Communications Technology.

Mr Goh Eng Kee, Director of EE Division who visited ZUCC with Mr Tan, said the cost of sending each student for the exchange is about \$3,500. The expenditure includes air tickets, insurance and some allowances. Students will have to pay for their own living expenses.

Mr Tan hopes the exchange will give the students a "first-hand experience of what China is like" and in the long run, establish

relationships with the Chinese students.

Sophia Soh Hui Ping, 19, from Banking & Financial Services, will be doing a project on China's stock market at ZUCC. She said this was a good chance for her to seek employment opportunities in China after graduating.

"If I really want to work in China, it is good that I have the experience to convince my employer that I have research in the financial sector," she said.

According to Mr Tan, the first batch of students was chosen based on their command of the Chinese language, academic results and inter-personal skills. Some were hand-picked by lecturers while others had to undergo an interview and produce an essay in Chinese on why they applied for the programme.

Hui Yoon Yee, 22, an EE student from Malaysia, said she was initially disappointed that the programme was only open to Singaporeans and permanent residents, but she persuaded her lecturers to let her apply. She beat three other students and was selected.

"I feel challenged as I don't know the other three students' Chinese standard, but I think having a good foundation in Chinese helped me do better," she said.

As the students will be doing modules and projects relevant to their field of study, Mr Tan said NP will allow a credit transfer where students can use the grades they obtained in ZUCC to fulfill the requirement for their NP diploma and graduate with their peers.

"We didn't want the university to just conduct lessons especially for our students. We want our students to fit into the timetable, so

that they can mingle with the local students and sit in with them," said Mr Tan.

Mr Tan added that both NP and ZUCC hoped to sign a Memorandum of Understanding "by the middle of this year" to make this a regular bi-annual exchange.

Eight students and two lecturers from ZUCC came for the exchange last semester and spent about five months in NP. The NP representatives left in mid-February and will return in mid-July.

Teo Ying, 21, a Mass Communication student who will be attending lessons with the ZUCC students, said she is looking forward to seeing her Zhejiang friends, whom she knew from their earlier visit.

"When they were here, I tried to help them in their projects. Hopefully, when my friend and

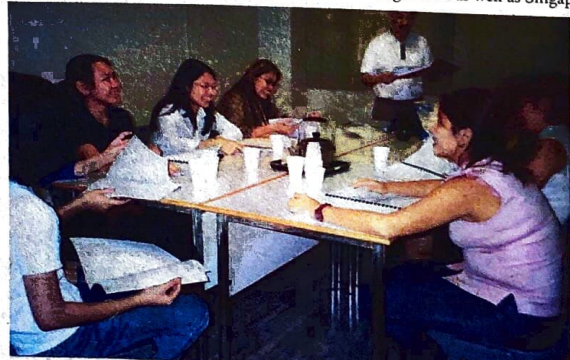
I are over there, they'll be able to help us too," she said.

Although the students were excited to learn more about Chinese culture and to travel in China, some were already missing their family and friends before departing.

"I think I'll come to a point where I'll get very homesick," said Chua Huijun, 20, a Multimedia Computing student.

Mr Peter Yeo, an FMS lecturer who will teach video production in ZUCC, will accompany the seven students to China.

"As the students will be there for one whole semester, they will benefit in terms of their language, education, and culture," said Mr Yeo. "They must try their best because they are not just representing their courses or themselves, but Ngee Ann as well as Singapore." ■



**BOUND FOR CHINA:** These NP students are preparing for their six-month exchange programme with Zhejiang University City College. They will complete their final semester at the university. (Picture: Priscilla Tang)



# New CCA system online

BY PRISCILLA TANG  
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**N**gee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students will now be involved in keying in Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) points through the new NP Access for All (NPAL) Student CCA System.

According to Mr Colin Chiam, 25, Student Affairs Officer from the Student Development & Alumni Relations (SDAR) office and Officer-in-charge of the NPAL Student CCA System, the new record system is activity-based.

"The system works more efficiently in a sense that one activity, many students take part in it," said Mr Chiam. An appointed student-in-charge of a CCA will collate the list of students who have taken part in a particular activity, fill in the activity list and get the endorsement from the staff advisor, he added.

The old record system used CCA record cards where "every student will have to submit a CCA card and on individual basis," he said.

He said most students would like to know activities they have taken part in and how many points they are given. "In this new system, because you can inquire your own records online, you know what's going on. So this way is much better. It involves more participation," said Mr Chiam.

The student-in-charge will pass the activity list to a CCA coordinator who will, with the staff advisor's advice, appoint the student-in-charge to key in the data. Should the student be overseas or on industrial attachment, the coordinator will appoint someone else instead.

Prior to the implementation of the new system, SDAR conducted a few briefing sessions to teach selected members from all the CCA clubs and societies how to use the system.

"It was quite useful, giving us demonstration, like how and when to use it," said Puvaneswari d/o Sandirasekaran, 18, second-year Information Technology (IT) student and Secretary of the Indian Cultural Society (ICS).

Samuel Lim Dao Yang, 19, a third-year Biotechnology student and student-in-charge of logistics for NP's Dragon Boat Club, said that a lot of time has to be sacrificed to manage the system, especially since his club has "so many activities to fill in and an average of ten activities per semester".

"They can maybe make it more user-friendly, like have a template for every club," he said.

Puvaneswari feels more ambivalent. "Even though it's very tedious now, it's a better thing, more IT-savvy, very systematic and organised," she said. "But you are also afraid that you are missing out someone, and not giving points to someone."

Eddie Lee Ming Sheng, 19, a third-year Biotechnology student and a member of NP's Akido Club, is in favour of the system.

"I checked out my CCA points. It's quite convenient and people can just go online and check their stuff," said Eddie.

However, some students do not know much about this new system. "Maybe they should publicise more, instead of having it all on the Internet," said Karmila Abdullah, 17, a first-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student who does not take part in any CCA.

For non-club and society-related CCA points such as participation in individual School events, Mr Chiam said that a student-in-charge or staff advisor-in-charge will collate a list of students involved, and appoint a student or staff member to do the mass record submission.

The awarding of CCA points has not changed under the new system. CCA points will still be awarded through the PEARLS grading system, which stands for Participation, Enrichment, Achievement, Representation, Leadership and Service.

The old system will work alongside the new system for the next two years, mainly for reference purposes, said Mr Chiam. Should a student report an incorrect entry, he could then check the past records, he explained.

One challenge for the new system is reaching out effectively to all the NP staff and students, so that they will know how to use it.

"In order to efficiently use the system, everybody must be aware of how the system functions. Apparently, quite a number of staff and students have not actually had any hands-on session of the system, so they have no idea how to use, so you're trying to reach out to this portion of staff and students," said Mr Chiam.

He said SDAR will continue to educate staff and students through emails and online notices, and will provide assistance wherever possible.

SDAR also takes steps to prevent students from making mistakes and abusing the system. For example, the staff advisor will do random sampling to check if the records keyed in are similar to those in the activity list. After that, the entries will be routed back to the Officer-in-charge for approval.

The deadline for keying in past and current CCA records for all students is 15 March.

For graduating students, Mr Chiam said that they should ask the student-in-charge of their CCA to collate the list for any activities they have taken part in from this semester onwards, and submit via the new system.

However, for cases of past activities that have not been submitted, CCA record cards will still be accepted. The deadline for such card submissions is 28 February.

"I urge them to have more urgency in checking their records. Because they are graduating, I want to ensure that everything is run smoothly, they are actually given recognition for their participation in CCAs," he said.

*Even though it's very tedious now, it's a better thing, more IT-savvy, very systematic and organised.*

- Puvaneswari d/o Sandirasekaran, 18, Secretary, Indian Cultural Society

## ... NP-wide Web

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Both Mr Vickneshwaran and Ms Veronica Wong invite students to be more proactive in giving feedback and gave the assurance that feedback will be looked into.

### What staff say

For staff, response to the NPAL system was mixed.

Human Resource Manager, Mr Benedict Ong, said that the NPAL system reduces the hassle of manual transactions and increases accountability.

For example, staff members applying for reimbursement online are required to keep their receipts for three months.

Leave approval for staff is now simpler, he added. Instead of going through an average of three people, NPAL allows staff to go through their reporting officers and then straight to HR.

Senior Lecturer of Mechanical Engineering (ME), Mr Phua Lai Pueh, told Tribune that with NPAL, he could closely monitor his students because he could call up information on students' performance, especially the weaker ones, so as to take necessary action.

However, Principal Lecturer of ME, Mr Kwai Poh Loo, 49, was not able to get his class list when Tribune interviewed him in the second week of the semester.

"I just can't get the attendance," he said. "I've been struggling with this for the last one-and-a-half weeks and I've checked with my own

ME people who are in NPAL, who say they've have done everything to map me in."

Mr Kwai's problem has since been resolved in Week 3.

The NPAL system also integrates all procurement systems.

Previously, while the Finance Office had the

last say for claims, there were "different procurement systems in different departments," said NP's Director of Finance, Mrs Ang Beng Wah. Her Office ended up doing duplicate work.

With NPAL, if there is over-spending in a department's budget, the system will automatically reject the claims. "There's an improvement in control in that sense," she said.

Some lecturers are unsure on how to submit information on additional courses via NPAL to get reimbursement from the polytechnic, said Corporate Support Officer, Ms Susan Lim from the School of Business & Accountancy.

"Sometimes, the lecturer will key in wrongly and I have to verify for them," she said. She added that she would "go down to their work stations to show them" each time a lecturer had a problem.

However, such instances have now become less common than it was when NPAL was introduced, added Ms Lim.

Mrs Ang said that initially, there may be some "resistance" on the part of the staff because they may perceive that some clerical work is being added to their workload.

Besides training conducted by CC, she said, each department has an NPAL coordinator who will help when their colleagues meet with problems.

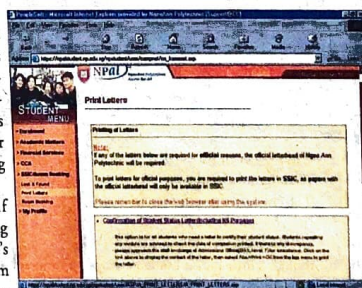
She added that staff can also approach the Finance Office.

Senior Lecturer of the Electronic & Computer Engineering Division, Mr Bill

Timmins told Tribune that one of the suggestions they sent to CC was to have options to reduce the timetables to one page.

Their suggestion was implemented a day before Tribune interviewed Mr Timmins.

Ms Angela Wong said that she receives about "30-plus feedback on busy days". She added that CC collates the feedback, and depending on the problems highlighted, will take a different amount of time to resolve each problem.



ONE-STOP WEBSITE: Students can access personal data and school services, such as results and deferment letters, through NPAL. (Graphic: NPALStudent)

### More about NPAL

NPAL is a system tailored for NP, according to Ms Angela Wong.

"It wasn't something that we saw, came back to say we want that," she said. "We studied the solution provided by various vendors... and adopted the best practices where it is relevant in Ngee Ann's context."

When the polytechnic gave NPAL the go-ahead, NP commissioned Accenture, a global technology and networking company, to work on the \$16.5 million project at the end of October 2000, she said.

The sum includes warranty and training for selected staff members.

During the planning stage, different user committees were formed, depending on the requirements of each committee. For student administration, department directors, lecturers, SS and AA were among those who were brought together to recommend a "seamless kind of application" for students, she said.

Students were involved in testing the system in April 2002 when they used NPAL to register for IS modules and again in December 2002 when modules from the School of Information & Communications Technology were added for online registration.

As for back-up systems, Ms Wong said that NPAL has an additional server should the default one break down. CC is also forming a Disaster Recovery Centre (DRC) for emergencies.

More NPAL self-service options, like a kiosk payment system, are in store, said Mrs Ang.



# 15 minutes a

## Clementi: Bustling food haven

BY MICHELLE GOH  
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**B**ustling with activities from day to night, Clementi Town Centre never seems to rest. Most might think that the place is old and unfashionable but the shops are definitely worth checking out, as they won't burn a hole in your pocket.

Clementi Town Centre is a mere 10-minute bus ride on 154 or 184 from the bus stop opposite Ngee Ann's main gate.

For starters, try timing the number of "tu-tu" cakes (flour cakes stuffed with coconut or peanut) the uncle can churn out in a minute at the Block 449 coffeshop behind NTUC. He is reputed to be one of the fastest tu-tu cake-makers around.

The soft-spoken "tu-tu" uncle is Mr Tan Cheong Chun who has been selling "tu-tu" cakes for more than 35 years. He said, "I never count, but I think I can make about 25 'tu-tu' cakes in a minute."

His "tu-tu" cakes can be kept overnight because the fillings are cooked first. He said proudly, "My 'tu-tu's' sometimes people buy back to Australia, USA and UK."

The mix of traditional and fashionable stores in this mature town adds to the town centre's quaint

The all-important hawk centre at the heart of the centre serves mouth-watering local favourites like fried carrot cake at low prices. Snacks like goreng

pisang (fried bananas) cost 50 cents to

a dollar. But a word of warning, you may need to wait 20 to 30 minutes for a plate of wanton noodles at the popular Boon Kee.

You can get a glass of sugar cane juice at \$1 and delicious wanton noodles from Boon Kee at \$2.50, which will have you going back for more. If you do not mind paying about a dollar

more, the coffeshop next to DBS Bank has a slightly larger serving of roasted meat rice. The Western food is also worth trying. Highly recommended is their deep-fried spring chicken and hot crunch french fries.

Third-year Quality Assurance



character. There are stores selling cloth for curtains and fashionable retail outlets like Giordano. Traditional bakeries like Swee Heng, which sells old-time favourites like sugar bread, go head to head with established names like Bengawan Solo.



Engineering (QAE) student Muhammad Nazri, 20, finds that the food is cheap and economical, and the plus-point is the accessibility of the place. He said, "It is very near to school... and the Malay store here (Block 449) is famous."

After eating, relax at Funland Amusement Centre & Cyber Game, where an hour of playing LAN games costs you only \$1.60 if you go during their happy hours from Sunday to Friday from 10am to 3pm. It usually costs \$2.60 after happy hours, and \$3.10 on Saturday and public holidays.

Although the other arcade located at Empress Cinema looks small, there are familiar arcade games like Dance Dance Revolution. Each token costs only 40 cents compared to 50 cents at

established arcades in E-Zone.

Comic fans can head to Heng Lee Bookstore located at Block 445, just behind the busy market.

you can read comics for as long as like. The store also stocks a wide range of novels you can browse through, including novels by J.R.R. Tolkien of Lord of the Rings fame. There are even tables and chairs placed outside the shop for readers to sit and read.

Try also the nameless clothes store on the same stretch as the well-known BATA shoe shop. Located at #01-2 beside Chip Lee Jewellery, get their sleeveless T-shirts at three for \$12 in various designs and colours.

Before heading back to school, might want to share a bowl of No. 1 Snow Ice with friends for about \$2 at Bestway Clementi. Snow ice is shaved slices and juice poured over ice, quite similar to "ice kacang" with fruits instead of syrup as toppings.

## Bukit Timah bargains beyond

BY UMA CHANDRAN  
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**B**ukit Timah seems deserted but basks in the presence of its expatriate and student crowd.

The few eateries to sit and chat are a good way to while away your time, given that it is only five to ten minutes away from Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

Galeria Venezia is in Guthrie House, on Sixth Avenue, the same building housing Cold Storage. Get

by an array of home-made ice cream, in unique flavours such as pink grapefruit and tiramisu.

Galeria also has specially concocted ice cream. An example is "Zabajone", made with Italian spices and wine.

Joyce Ho, 19, a Nanyang Technological University (NTU) student, said, "They have quite a lot of flavours, uncommon flavours." Her schoolmate, Ho Chong Jin, 19, added that the "place is pretty good to have a chat with your friends".

Wong Yiwen, 17, the owner's daughter, said the shop gets busy during weekends when expatriates from around the area visit. On weekdays, the store is usually filled with students from neighbouring schools, she added.

Galeria Venezia's ice cream comes from Italy and is cheaper than premium brands such as Haagen-Dazs. One scoop costs \$2.50, well worth your effort getting there.

Further down Bukit Timah, you can find cheap food and bargains along Coronation Road.

The area offers uncovered gems of bargains, especially at the Yong



Chye Chicken Rice stall across the road, right behind King's Arcade. The chicken rice and roasted pork rice cost a mere \$2 per plate.

Coronation Shopping Plaza, though a little old, is home to shops like Golden Rooster and bargain shop Coronation Wearmart.

Golden Rooster at #03-07, a food stall on the plaza's top floor, is always packed with school students during lunch-time. It serves local favourites like nasi lemak and Western classics such as fish and chips. Drinks like bubble tea are also available to wash down the chow.

The L-shaped stall may seem a little small, but owner Mr Soh Gim Bock, 45, manages to accommodate his customers, mostly students. He usually receives take-away orders

when the shop gets especially busy from about 12pm to 3pm.

The servers are friendly ladies who will recommend their set meal specials, which change every day and cost between \$3.50 to \$4.50.

Coronation Wearmart is a cosy shop on the second level,

which sees housewives and students as their main patrons. The coloured T-shirts and shirts go for about \$6, with accessories such as ladies' handbags in retro designs at about \$5. Though you might need some time to go through the racks, you may just find a special deal.

Mage Heaven Games City on the second floor is great to chill in if you are looking for food and cheap entertainment. The store serves set meals of nasi lemak at \$2.80 as well as a variety of bubble teas from \$2. The shop adds extra pearls at no added cost.

LAN gaming is also available with a variety of popular programmes such as Half-life, Counterstrike and Diablo II. Release some stress by shooting away for two dollars.

## Value-for-money

BY HILARY ISAAC HOE  
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**T**he stretch along Upper Bukit Timah road holds value-for-money food and entertainment for students who have time to spare, but little money to waste.

Along Cheong Chin Nam Road, opposite Bukit Timah Shopping Centre (BTSC) lies a wide variety of food, from Muslim bites to Chinese delights. A popular choice is Johnson's Lock Roasted Duck and Chicken at 17A, an eating house which offers chicken rice, duck rice, char siew rice and roasted pork rice for a mere \$2.50. Despite the price being



relatively higher than NP's canteen prices, the portions are reasonable.

The Beauty World Centre (BWC) Food Court, located on the



to Sixth Avenue by taking services 74, 151 or 154 from NP.

Galeria Venezia is an Italian-inspired ice cream cafe where students can often be found mugging or chatting over ice cream.

As you enter, you will be greeted



# Way...

Tried every variation of rice, noodles and sandwich in school? Read every magazine in the library from cover to cover? Tribune brings you alternative options on how to spend your time and money in the neighbourhood. From Bukit Batok to Clementi, we suss out the best places for food, shopping and entertainment on your student budget, all within a 15-minute bus ride.

## So much for so little in Bukit Batok

BY NEO CHAI YING  
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**W**ith a wide range of food, shopping and entertainment outlets, Bukit Batok Central has much to offer you.

The 15-minute bus ride on service 61 to Bukit Batok Central is a scenic one, passing the green landscape of Bukit Batok Nature Park. You can take your first detour there for a refreshing jog or slow walk, providing a refreshing break from your routine.

At the end of the ride, the most popular hang-out here is West Mall. You can choose to eat, shop, grab a good read from the library or catch a movie.

West Mall houses several shops selling accessories and jewellery costing below \$10. Silver Heart carries a wide range of silver earrings costing \$3 to \$6 per pair. Your purchases are carefully gift-wrapped in a little gift box, just in case it is a



gift for a special someone.

Uncle Titbits on the fourth floor is a one-stop shop to satisfy any cravings of your sweet tooth. It is stocked with candy, snacks, cookies and chocolates for those sudden hunger pangs.

Yellow, a boutique on the fifth floor, offers students a 10 percent discount, giving you reason to shop. A good range of silver accessories is available for under \$10. Bracelets cost \$6.90, anklets \$9.90 and a pair of earrings for under \$5.00.

To unwind after a long day, treat yourself to a movie at Eng Wah Cinemas on the fifth floor. Catch the latest movies at only \$6.50 from Monday to Wednesday, \$7.50 on Thursdays and \$8.50 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The S-11 Coffeeshop located next to Bukit Batok Interchange, offers a wide selection of local favourites at affordable prices, from Indian rojak (\$2.50 to \$3.50 per plate) to popiah (\$1.00 each) and traditional Chinese rojak (\$2.00 per plate). While usually crowded with students during the lunch hours, the food makes up for the discomfort.

"I would rather eat here than at McDonald's. Food is cheaper and there is much more to choose from," said Jessie Ho, a third-year Communication Studies student from Nanyang Technological University.

One interesting dish here is the hand-made 'soon kueh', an authentic steamed Chinese snack with fragrant radish and dried shrimp filling

wrapped in a thin rice flour skin. Increasingly rare to find a stall that specialises in selling just that, the bite-sized 'soon kueh' by Ace Delicacy is steamed in a traditional wooden multi-tier steamer and costs \$2 for 5.

Rex Nasi Ayam is especially popular with patrons of this coffeeshop. Originally located at the former Rex Theatre on McKenzie Road, the stall serves halal chicken cooked Malay style at \$2.50 per plate. Portions are generous but be prepared to stand patiently in the queue while waiting for your order to be taken.

For a quick and cheap haircut to tame your mane, two salons within Bukit Batok Central offer a haircut at \$10. They are Keng's Hair Salon at Block 643 and Joyce Andy Hair and Beauty Salon (Unisex) at Block 639.

For guys who prefer a barber to cut their hair, Uniq-growth Barber at Block 643 #01-47 charges \$8 for students. The bright, colourful and cool interior of this salon lets you relax while you get your hair cut.

## Way along Upper Bukit Timah Road

oor of the complex, a good selection of extensive food - from vegetable rice to edge and pork rib - from \$2.

After a good meal, there also provides alternatives for recreation. For example, a 15-minute walk from Ngee Ann Polytechnic to Bukit Timah Plaza will

and you with a good game of pool. While there are three other pool halls in the area, Mambo Billiards at Bukit Timah Plaza offers something an amateur pool player can ask for. Although its already existing student rate of \$4.80 per hour is beaten by BTSC's Master Billiards, which offers 10am to 6pm, Mambo's passed quality of cues, balls and tables makes it the best value-for-money venue.

requent Mambo patron, new Quik, 15, a student of St. Andrew's School, agrees. "Mambo is a place that is very comfortable to play in as the cues and balls are good as they are very well taken care of."



Outlet Manager, Mr Eric Ong, 31, believes its proximity to NP and low student rates are major pulls. He said, "We are also unique in that we have more tables here, so customers don't have to wait too long for a game."

Mechmaster, however, also provides the alternatives of billiards and LAN gaming. So although its cues, balls and tables look a little less well-maintained, it is a good choice for those who want to sample all three forms of recreation.

If you are only interested in LAN gaming however, Brother Game Cybergaming at BWC offers an unbeatable price of just a dollar an hour, so you can click away to "Counter Strike" and "Diablo II", knowing you will not burn a hole in your pocket.



### Mambo Billiards

Pay only \$4.50 per hour at Mambo Billiards when you present this coupon and your NP student card.

Expiry date: valid till 31 March 2005. Coupon valid for one-time usage only. #01-01 Bukit Timah Plaza.

TRIBUNE  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic campus newspaper

## Just 'round the corner

BY MUHD HAFIZ  
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**T**he newly-renovated Bukit Timah Hawker Centre is now back in business, with a capacity of 84 stalls.

Housed directly above the Bukit Timah Wet Market, the hawker centre is a seven-minute walk from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP). Alternatively, one can take any of the TIBS bus services from the NP bus-stop and alight two stops away.

The facelift now give the hawker centre a fresh look with clean facilities, including a lift for the disabled, wide staircases and clean toilets.

Tables are comfortably spaced apart and the whole seating area is well-lit with fans all over the hawker centre. Unlike the old centre, which was walled in, the open-air concept and the high ceilings make the hawker centre well ventilated.

A quarter of the stalls are presently open, while the rest are expected to be open by April.

Drinks stall owner Goh Hong Kwang had

mixed feelings about the renovations.

He said, "Now the place is breezy on sunny days. But on rainy days, the rain can come in."

Nineteen-year-old Guo Yu Jia, who is serving his National Service, said, "The place looks nicer and cleaner, but I think that the tables now are a bit too low. Not only residents of Bukit Timah frequent this hawker centre, but people from all over Singapore come here to buy famous food like the carrot cake and the 'chwee kueh'," he added. The famous 'Bedok Chwee Kueh' stall sells the snack at five pieces for a dollar.

Other famous food from the hawker centre include its fried carrot cake and 'char kway teow', which cost \$2 onwards.

Chawlahargopal, 20, a third-year Business Studies student, loves going to the hawker centre for its Hainanese Chicken Rice, at \$2.50 per plate.

Chinese dishes like fish ball soup, minced meat soup and fried rice are also amongst the selection of food available at the hawker centre. The dessert stall offers both hot and cold sweet offerings like 'cheng tng' and even durian ice kacang.

*This issue marks Tribune's first step out of school, exploring the community and happenings in NP's immediate neighbourhood. NP is not stranded on an islet and is very much affected by what goes on outside. Tribune now brings you community news "because it concerns you", the NP student. If you know of any interesting happenings in NP or in the community, please let us know.*



# My Tribune and I



BY AMANDA KOH  
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The Chinese New Year has seen me being around well-meaning aunts who chant year after year, "Wah! So big already ah? Last time I saw you, you were this tall," while flinging their arms at you and implying that you have grown from knee-tall to Amazonian height in less than a year. This unabashed affection rubbed off on me, albeit rather uncomfortably. So, choked up with pride, I say this – my, look how Tribune has grown.

Ten years ago, Ngee Ann Polytechnic saw the birth of the ancestor of the title you are now holding. Since its inception, the Ngee Ann Tribune has evolved along with the campus and its students. Year after year, the editorial teams have shed sweat, blood, tears and hair to bring you, the NP student, news that affects you.

The Tribune, in ancient Rome, was the

elected representative who protected the rights of the common people and served as their advocates. Today, the 10-year-old Ngee Ann Tribune strives to do the same.

As the more observant would have noticed, Tribune is now brought to you in full-colour glory, after its black-and-white and partially coloured past. A sign of the times, as some might say.

Two years ago, Tribune revamped its more solemn image by implementing conceptual splash covers and reducing the size from A3 to a more manageable tabloid size.

Over the course of the last semester, the editorial team has received a record number of letters from students. For this, I thank you on behalf of my co-editors and reporters, for reading our newspaper and taking enough notice of our existence to react and respond.

The team and I have also tried and hopefully succeeded in making Tribune more relevant and reader-friendly. We have revived the Front Page Story, and started community-based stories, for which I am proud of.

During a recent research writing trip to Cambodia, I realised how fortunate I was. It may sound clichéd, but it changed my outlook


on life, and taught me not to take things for granted. Things like my family, money, education, and even being able to write this column are seen from a new perspective.

What I do for Tribune may be trying at times, but I'm loving every minute of it. I love the rush it brings, as well as the responsibility of being your Tribune.

When a former editor dropped by Tribune's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary exhibition in January at The Atrium, she recounted her days as editor and likened every issue of Tribune to the birth of a child. Each exhibit was a source of pride. "These are my babies," she said. I totally agree with her.

Putting together every issue is like carrying a child to full term – long, emotional and full of tribulations. Layout week is, put simply, labour pain.

When the crisp stacks of Tribune arrive hot off the press with the smell of newsprint, I almost tear with happiness and a sense of inexplicable pride.

We've had both a frustrating and fulfilling time putting this issue together – our latest baby, and I'll have you know, it has grown. 

The Ngee Ann Tribune is a publication by third-year print journalism students of the Diploma in Mass Communication course.

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

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If you have anything to say, contact us and be published here in the forum. Let your story be known. We also welcome our readers' feedback and suggestions on each issue. Please write to:

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# Campus 2015

## Students challenged to envision future NP

BY HILARY ISAAC HOE  
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Students can present their vision of "Ngee Ann Polytechnic in 2015" by joining "Project: AVI", a drawing competition organised by NP's Students' Union (SU).

Unlike most drawing competitions, "Project: AVI", which stands for Advancement through Vision and Imagination, does not test a participant's drawing ability.

"This is not about a good or bad drawing. It is about freedom of expression, putting your ideas and expressions on paper. So, it's the idea behind the drawing that's more important," said SU's Project Chairperson, James Tan Jun Yuan, about the concept of the competition.

James, 17, a first-year Mechanical Engineering student, said the project aimed to make people envision the future through drawing any part of campus. He said, "Singapore has a very small economy, so vision and imagination will help us survive."

"Everything we go through as students is very pre-planned on paper. This is different from what we do in class," James said. "By taking part in the competition, we want to help students think long-term... and help them put their ideas on paper, through a less academic approach."

"It is good for those who are creative," said second-year Building & Real Estate Management student, Daphne Chew Hao Li, 19. "It's a good

chance for the students to give and maybe even improve on some things on campus."

Charles Poh, 19, a second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student, agreed, "This is a way for students to show the artistic side of them... their potential in drawing."

However, as with most of the students Tribune spoke to, the two students shied away from actually joining the contest, convinced that they had no drawing talent.


At the same time, there are some who have the interest, but are unable to take part, such as Lai Guoxiong, a third-year Civil &

Environmental Engineering student. The 20-year-old said, "It's pretty interesting, but I can't take part in the competition now. I don't have the time, because I'm busy with many final-year projects at hand."

A panel of four judges will choose the winning entries. Although James declined to name the judges until competition results

are posted, he said that lecturers and heads of department would officiate. Each entry will be judged on design, originality, level of imagination, technology or usefulness of the submission, and the possibility of being realised 20 years from now.

Apart from trophies for the top three entries, the eight best entries will win cash prizes, said James.

The closing date for the competition is 24 February. Students may participate as individuals, or in groups of up to four members. 

*This is not about a good or bad drawing. It is about putting your ideas and expressions on paper.*

*- James Tan Jun Yuan, 19,  
Project Chairperson,  
Students' Union*

# EnterpriZe-ing students get funding

BY LENA IRYANTI  
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The first round of the EnterpriZe! Programme, which started last year, saw two students awarded funding for their entrepreneurial ventures in mobile web content and photography.

Lim Ren Jie, 20, final-year Information Technology student, is developing a website that enables the downloading of web content via mobile devices such as handphones and personal digital assistants into personal computers.

The other winner, Terry Ng Yi Hao, 20, final-year Film, Sound & Video student, made use of his experiences in photography classes to create a darkroom in his home to develop black-and-white photographs commercially.

Hosted by InnoHub, a service centre to develop technology expertise in NP staff and students, the EnterpriZe! Programme is an incentive funding scheme to encourage NP students to be innovative and enterprising.

Whether as individuals or in teams, successful applicants get 70 percent funding, up to a maximum of \$3,000, from the EnterpriZe! scheme grant provided by NP, while they have to fund the remaining 30 percent themselves. The students keep any profit generated.

For Terry, he saw the programme as a chance to realise his dream of a home darkroom, since he could not rent a commercial darkroom to process and develop his photographs. He set up his darkroom with advice from his lecturer and contacts in the photography business.


Terry received \$2,100 which helped him expand his business and cater for a larger clientele. "It built up my confidence in the area of business start-up," he said. His win has also prompted him to register his business formally.

For Ren Jie, his idea is still being developed and he is in talks with potential business partners. He was unavailable for comment at press time.

All three of the first round proposals were vetted by Mr Ee Wee Jin, the programme administrator. He decides which innovative ideas might be commercially viable and selects them for evaluation by the EnterpriZe! panel members. Winners are then given the awards.

The panel members include InnoHub Director Mr Cheng Wee Sik; a representative each from the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, the School of Business & Accountancy and the Students' Union; and two members from the relevant industry sector.

Application for EnterpriZe! is open throughout the year with forms available at the InnoHub, offices of the various Schools and Divisions, and the NP website.

According to Mr Cheng, the ongoing second round of the EnterpriZe! programme is seeing more students come forward to pitch their ideas. He believes this is a result of more publicity for the programme, which he described as a "co-investment" between NP and its students who then become stakeholders in their own ideas. 

- Additional reporting by Jessica Ann Thomas

## Clarification

In the October 2002 issue, Tribune reported in its cover story, "Only so much", that Ngee Ann Polytechnic does not use the Ministry of Education's (MOE) grant to fund financial assistance schemes. This was incorrect. MOE funds the Tuition Fee Loan Scheme. Also, in our page 2 story "Wednesday walks to promote H.E.A.L.T.H.", Mrs Sim Ai Ling was designated wrongly as Assistant Human Resource Manager, instead of Assistant Human Resource Officer.



# Cai Lilian makes a comeback

BY LIN MEITONG  
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**N**gee Ann Polytechnic (NP) graduate and local singer Cai Lilian promoted her long overdue debut album in a concert on 17 January at Lecture Theatre 26.

The singer, who graduated with a Diploma in Banking & Financial Services in 1994, is best known for her hit single, 'Guan Huai Fang Shi' or 'A Style of Caring', also released in 1994.

Lilian had sung the duet with MediaCorp actor Chen Hanwei for the Channel 8 Mandarin telemovie, 'Cupid Love'. The song is so popular that the concert audience still remembered the lyrics after so many years and sang along with Lilian. First-year Accountancy student, Wendy Zeng, 17, who enjoyed herself at the concert, said that "Cai Lilian's songs are very soothing" and that the singer has a "very cute" personality.

Lilian entertained the audience with songs from her new album, 'A Piece of My Dream', which includes songs like 'September', 'Ke Yi Deng' or 'I Can Wait', 'Over the Rainbow' and of course, 'Guan Huai Fang Shi'. Although Lilian admitted that she sang off-key a few times, she said with a smile, "This proves I'm singing live."

The bubbly singer joked with the audience and her guitarist, and even revealed that she will turn 29 this year, feeling that it was "not a big deal" to disclose her age. Speaking to Tribune in an exclusive interview after the concert, Lilian revealed that she initially had a chance to cut an album after 'Guan Huai Fang Shi', but the offer "didn't work out", she said, and she only had

another opportunity to record an album a few years ago. It took three years to complete, and her album, released in December 2002, has sold more than 3,000 copies in Singapore.

Lilian was so involved in the production that the studio became her second home, she said. She composed the music for some of the songs and also co-produced the album.

"In a way, the album reflects my personality, but I can also be childish, playful and short-tempered at times," she said. Lilian had lost her temper a few times during the production, mainly because she was frustrated with being at a loss, as she was new to the production process.

When asked how she was differentiating herself from other local singers, Lilian replied frankly, "I didn't even think of it," and explained that she did not release 'A Piece of My Dream' for commercial reasons. She works full-time in organisation development and produced the album because she "just love[s] singing".

The concert was a collaboration by NP's Chinese radio station, Yiwei Dian Tai, local radio station UFM 100.3 and Lilian's record company, Music & Movement. Lilian had performed at the National University of Singapore a few days before her concert in NP.

The attendance for Lilian's NP concert was notably poorer compared to other campus concerts - with about 100 people turning up, while other concerts usually see about 350 people attending, said co-organiser Yiwei Dian Tai. Its Assistant Chinese Music Director and third-year Mass Communication student, Shavone Yeo, 20, explained that the low turnout was largely due to "bad timing" for the collection of concert tickets.

Due to time constraints, the station held the collection from 2 to 3pm, when most students were attending classes. In addition, the collection took place at the Canteen 2 walkway instead of the more crowded Atrium, which was holding a bazaar then.

In spite of the turnout, Cai Lilian still put in her best for the concert and was very grateful to those who attended. "Even though it's only for one-and-a-half hour, everyone could have done a lot of things within this time, but they chose to attend this concert," she said.

# CCA Fiesta receives mixed response

BY MICHELLE GOH  
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**T**he Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) Fiesta held on 14 and 15 January at the Octagon received a mixed response from students.

Students manning the 22 booths observed that students visited during their lunch break from 12pm to 2pm when cultural clubs like the Indian Cultural Society and the Song Composing Club performed. After lunch however, hardly anyone walked into the Octagon.

The location of the fiesta was one reason why students did not know much about the event. "I think last year got more people as it is outdoors. We make noise outside so more people are curious," said Low Pei Zhi, 19, a third-year Information Technology (IT) student who is also the ex-president of the NP Concert Band. The last fiesta was held at Car Park 27 beside the Octagon.

Organiser of the fiesta and Student Affairs Officer Mr Colin Chiam explained that there was insufficient budget for outdoor events which cost more than indoor events. "I am sure that the response would be better if it is held outdoors like the Atrium," he said.

However, Mr Chiam was quite pleased with the turnout, he said. Some clubs had thought of setting up booths at Canteen Two to recruit members so he decided to get them together "as a combination of clubs at a centralised venue would be better".

Publicity for the event included banners around campus, flyers given out by helpers and an announcement on the school website. Clubs

like the Japanese Tsubasa Club, which often plays host to Japanese students, also did their own publicity.

Fabian Eng, 18, a second-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student and President of the Japanese Tsubasa Club, said, "We got people giving out brochures... basically, they come in with a club to join already and response is overwhelming during lunch break." As a result, the club recruited 47 new members.

Other clubs such as the Malay Cultural Club managed to recruit seven new members while more popular clubs such as the NP Strings recruited 97 new members.

However, not all clubs at the fiesta were planning to recruit more members, such as Poly Stage Production (PSP), a club that organises concerts and events, as well as supports other clubs with basic lighting and audio equipment.

"We haven't been planning to recruit, and basically we just want to increase awareness," said PSP's President Adrian Kong, 19, third-year IT student. Still, the club attracted 30 students to sign up.

This semester's CCA fiesta showcased only various cultural clubs such as the Chinese Orchestra and the Harmonica Club,

and special interest groups such as the Astronomy Club. Past years' CCA Fiestas also included the sports clubs.

Explaining the change, Mr Chiam said, "There will be a Sports Fiesta organised solely for sports clubs around March or April. Therefore, this fiesta is only meant for special interest groups and cultural clubs."

*I think last year got more people as it is outdoors. We make noise outside so more people are curious.*

- Low Pei Zhi, 19,  
Ex-president,  
NP Concert Band

# Dragon Boat loses IVP title after collision

BY MICHELLE GOH  
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**N**gee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) dragon boat team lost the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) Mixed Team title to strong contender National University of Singapore (NUS) at the 20th Annual River Regatta, held on 14 and 15 December at the Singapore River.

The loss of the title was especially heartbreaking for the team. Consisting of 11 women and 13 men, the team was leading in the heats to qualify for the finals. But Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) in the next lane steered into NP's lane and collided with the right side of NP's boat.

With only half of the 24 rowers paddling, NP lost precious time trying to break free. When they eventually did, the team charged towards the finishing line in the 300-metre race with the fifth fastest time, while NYP was disqualified.

Said NP's coach Mr Lynus Li, "Just like in the 100 metres race when somebody cuts into

your lane, we can't just run into another lane because you will be disqualified, so the coxswain (the person who steers the boat) should steer the boat to the correct lane."

In the finals, NP was given lane one, the most unfavourable lane due to choppy waters and strong currents caused by the passing of huge ships.

This proved a big disadvantage for the rowers as they struggled to overcome the currents as well as NUS' challenge, thus finishing fourth with a time of 1 minute 36.24 seconds, about two seconds behind champions NUS. Temasek Polytechnic (TP) in lane four was a close second.

Mr Li said, "The lanes played an important role and our lane placing was not very good, but we still managed to finish fourth so I think it is fine."

Vice-president of NP's dragon boat team and third-year Information Technology student Cowan Li, 19, was philosophical about the defeat.

"We were definitely disappointed because

we trained so hard but got no choice, we got to prepare for the next race," he said.

NP certainly did not disappoint in the next race in the National Mixed Open category. They came in first with a time of 1 minute 33 seconds while competing against the National Junior College Team 'A', the Singapore Armed Forces Sports Association (SAFSA), the Singapore Armed Forces Reservists Association (SAFRA) and NYP.

Mr Li was pleased with the results, as he did not set any targets for the team which only entered the competition to do their best.

In other races watched by NP's Principal, Mr Chia Mia Chiang, NP put on inspired performances to clinch second place in the 24-member IVP Men's Final and third place in the 12-member IVP Women's Final.

Mr Chia said, "Overall, it (was) quite a good outing. We are not out to win everything. What is important is to have targets and have an end point... we can train harder for results but the important thing is to have fun and take away pleasant memories."



# Women soccer's IVP struggle

BY UMA CHANDRAN  
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**N**gee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) women's soccer team had a poor outing in their first 11-a-side competition at the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) soccer tournament. National University of Singapore (NUS) hosted the IVP Women's Soccer Championship from 16 to 30 January.

Even though NP gave improved performances towards the end, the team still ended up at the bottom of the IVP table with favourites Nanyang Technological University

(NTU) winning the competition.

NP played four matches against Nanyang Polytechnic, the combined Institute of Technical Education team, NTU and NUS.

Last semester, the women played in a 7-a-side IVP competition.

One of the better matches that NP played was against NUS. NP drew 1-1 with NUS, a positive score-line as it was the first match that did not end in defeat for NP.

NP scored in the 85<sup>th</sup> minute, with NUS equalising towards the closing moments of a fiercely contested match.

The NP goalkeeper, Rebecca Ling Zi Yi, 18,

second-year Biotechnology student, put up an inspired performance, making a few crucial saves, including a fifth minute free kick.

The early save meant NP could concentrate on going for goal instead of fighting to get back into the game.

However, despite having its share of opportunities, NP was let down by poor finishing throughout the match.

The NP team had struggled to get in form before the tournament. The women, their coach and advisor knew their team's playing standards and expectations were not high.

Mr Mike Wong, Under-20 National Men's team coach, said there were "no targets and no goals [for the women], just to go participate and enjoy the game".

He started coaching the team for four sessions before the competition.

The team also had to work hard to keep their club which "almost closed down because nobody wanted to turn up for training", said Rebecca.

She had started a drive last year to raise awareness about women's soccer in NP and recruit more players for the team.

"There were posters put up and we tried to spread the word around," Rebecca said. Though some first-year students joined, "some of them couldn't take the pressure, couldn't take the training and thought they were lousy... and gave up", she added.

Presently, there are 16 team players but not all are regular trainees with the squad.

Though training for the competition began during the November-December holidays, intensive training was conducted only two weeks before the tournament.

During the holidays, attendance was a poor average of five players turning up in each session. It improved only before the competition began, said Rebecca.

The poor turnout was partly due to outside commitments such as family, friends and work which "added pressure" to an already heavy school load, she added.

Neo Chien Han, 21, third-year Civil & Environmental Engineering student and defender for the NP team, also linked the team's IVP loss to the pre-tournament preparation.

"We didn't train. That's why the standard is not there," she said. Chien Han felt that the players "have other concerns and soccer is not their main priority".

Angie Tan Xue Yun, 19, vice-president of the NP Football Club and third-year Business Studies student, said if they had a good full-time coach, the women could have performed better. The women's team did not have a coach before Mr Wong, and their club advisor had been helping with their training.

Mr Wong said that the NP women soccer players will have to train more regularly than once a week, with good coaching, to improve.

Although NP did not win, he said that as long as the players learnt from the defeats, he has taken them one step further.

Observing the team during the tournament, he said, "I cannot say I am satisfied. But I am very happy with their commitment."

He was impressed with the NP team, the first women's team he has coached, he said.

"They show they want to learn, even though some can't even kick. I think some of them will excel as football players if they go much further than this [tournament]," he added.



**POOR PERFORMANCE:** Ngee Ann's women's soccer team struggled in this year's IVP. The team faced poor attendance during soccer practices and lacked a proper coach for much of the preparation period. (Picture: Uma Chandran)

# ECE crowned badminton champions for the first time

BY AARON WONG  
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**E**lectronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) won its first Inter-Programme Badminton Tournament by beating Accountancy (ACC) 4-1 in the final on 24 January.

The match was not as easy as the score line suggested, as the ACC2 team had their chances to win the match. After ACC2 had reduced the deficit to 2-1 in the best-of-five series with a win in the women's singles, ECE dug deep to take an unassailable 3-1 lead with a 15-6, 15-17, 15-4 win in the men's doubles.

The ECE pair of Junaidy Tanjung, 21, and Chen Zhi Zhong, 19, managed to hold their nerve to prevent the match from going to the high pressure deciding match of the men's singles rubber. This was despite being given a scare when ACC2 took the second set with some inspired play. But the ACC2 pair of Feng Wenzhang and Norman Lim, both 17, was clearly out of their depth as they meekly surrendered the third set.

Junaidy, who is also an Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic player and the Badminton Club President, acknowledged that the victory was made more satisfying as they had overcome

strong teams en route to the title. There were 11 teams this year, compared to eight teams for the previous two years.

"We're very happy, as we've never won before. There were new teams this year, and no doubt the other teams are getting stronger. But we won because we had the more balanced team," said Junaidy, who was referring to the change in tournament format from last year's format, with four individual titles in the men's and women's singles and doubles categories.

This year's format is similar to that of the SEA Games - a best-of-five series including a new mixed doubles category - requiring teams to have good male and female players.

ACC2's deficiency in this respect was its undoing, as they forfeited the mixed doubles match in a walkover, leaving them with a 0-2 mountain to climb.

But ACC2 captain Gilbert Chua insisted it was all part of the plan, as they also forfeited the mixed doubles during the earlier group stages, and managed to beat ECE 3-2 then.

"It was a tactical move, but we lost because the opponent was stronger. Actually, we're quite lucky to get this far," said Gilbert, a 17-year-old first-year student.

Mechanical Engineering and Business Studies 2 finished third and fourth respectively.



**ECE CHAMP:** Junaidy Tanjung (above) was one of the key players in ECE's inter-programme tournament win over the Accountancy 2 team. (Picture: Priscilla Tang)

## IVP competition round-up

It has been a busy first two months for sports in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), with soccer, dragon boat and badminton having their share of the sporting limelight. But the show is not over yet, as IVP season is just warming up. Tribune brings you a mid-semester update.

### Future IVP competitions

#### Canoeing

Date: March 2003  
Place: NP  
NP's previous results: 2nd in 2002

#### Sepak Takraw

Date: 10 to 26 March  
Place: Singapore Polytechnic  
NP's previous results: 3rd in 2001

### Ongoing IVP Competitions

#### Contact Rugby

Date: 20 January to 28 February  
Place: Temasek Polytechnic

#### Touch Rugby

Date: 13 to 28 February  
Place: Nanyang Polytechnic

- Compiled by Uma Chandran and Michelle Goh